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Nature	Name	Role	Partner	Date
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REVIEWED	Gunter Schreier	Partner 2	DLR	24/01/2016
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Summary

This document represents the Quality Assurance (QA) guidelines for the ATHENA project. The aim of this deliverable is to describe the mechanisms that will be used throughout the project in order to ensure the quality level of the project deliverables and the project outcomes.

This document will also serve as a guide for the project coordinator, in order to be easy to identify important tasks and dependencies that are critical for the success of the project. This document will also serve as a detailed guide to the ATHENA consortium in order to establish effective cooperation within the consortium and ensure the highest level of quality of project documentation. This document should be used as a reference by the project coordinator and all project partners.

Table of Contents

Summary..... 5

1. Introduction..... 7

2. General QA guidelines 7

3. Objectives of the QA guidelines 8

4. QA guidelines for reports (deliverables) 8

4.1. Delivery procedure..... 8

4.2. Document Status11

4.3. Preconditions.....11

4.4. Document Sign-Off11

5. QA guidelines for publications.....12

6. QA guidelines for training activities13

Appendix14

1. Introduction

The aim of present QA guideline is to enforce quality control standards by applying the planned systematic quality activities and working in order to improve the processes that are used in producing all the project deliverables. The benefits of this QA guideline are to communicate to all parties, the specifications for implementation of the project design and to ensure that all the objectives are for the project being received.

Quality assurance examines the processes of implementation from input to output during the entire project's life cycle. Quality control involves the formal and systematic use of testing to measure the achievements of specified standards and recommendations.

All procedures described in this deliverable are tailored to meet the requirements of the ATHENA project. This QA guideline is applicable to all the deliverables and in particular to written project deliverables and / or documents produced by the Consortium and dissemination activities (e.g. working papers, conferences/workshops papers, dissemination materials).

2. General QA guidelines

Each partner undertakes to take part in the efficient implementation of the Project, and to cooperate, perform and fulfil, promptly and on time, all of its obligations under the Grant Agreement and the Consortium Agreement of the ATHENA project.

Therefore each partner shall take reasonable measures to ensure the accuracy and the quality of any information or materials it supplies to the other partners. For more information please refer to the Grant Agreement and the Consortium Agreement of the ATHENA project. All the partners are committed to the management of the project, assuring quality and compliance as described in this document and the D1.2 (Reporting and financial management guidelines).

The quality procedures are applicable:

- by all partners,
- for all deliverables to the European Agency,
- for documents exchanged between project partners,

In particular quality assurance procedures will concern:

- Written document deliverables
- Training delivery
- Project dissemination activities

3. Objectives of the QA guidelines

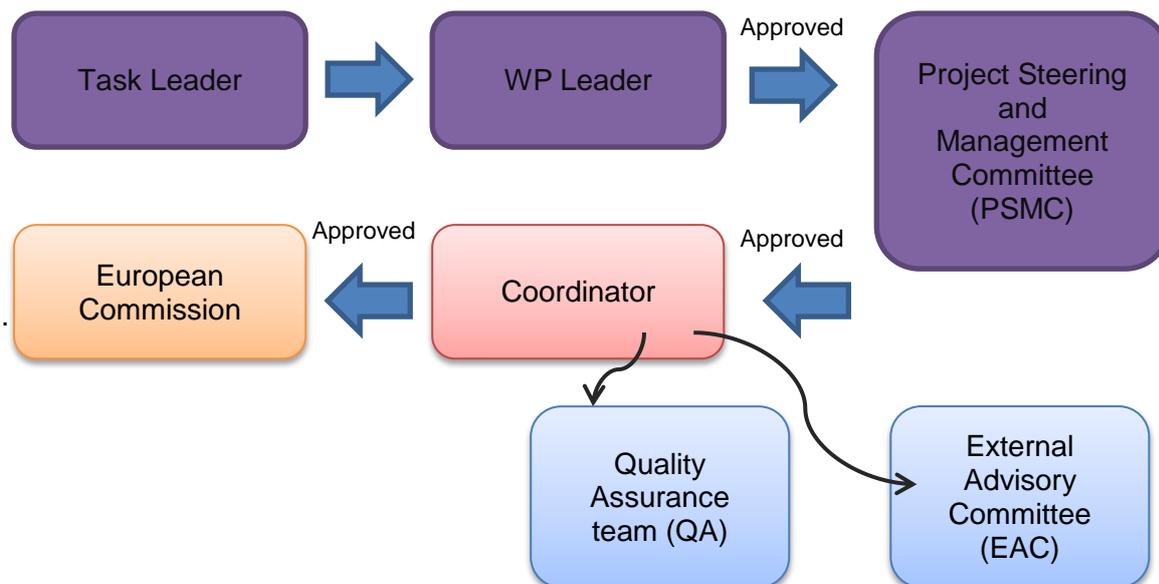
The QA guideline is designed to meet the following objectives:

- Defining the structure, participants, levels of responsibility and working processes of the project;
- Providing a means by which the quality of information produced can be maintained throughout the project;
- Assuring that all project outcomes are delivered in an appropriate way in order to provide a sound basis for documenting, evaluating and verifying the accuracy of results of project activities;
- Providing guidelines for the preparation and review of project plans and reports.
- The QA guideline will validate whether the major deliverables of the ATHENA project are according to an acceptable level of quality, following criteria of Completeness and Correctness.
- The project team should agree in advance on conditions when each major deliverable is considered correctly completed. The deliverables are then evaluated according to these criteria before they are formally approved.

4. QA guidelines for reports (deliverables)

4.1. Delivery procedure

All documents produced within the project with the intention of being published, have to follow these guidelines. All procedures described below are conducted by the project partners, unless explicitly mentioned otherwise. Each WP Leader addresses the responsible persons that will figure out each deliverable following the hierarchy described below:



For a submission to the Agency, a document should have at least three entries in its final section: **Drafted, Reviewed, Approved**, Submitted. The internal review activities are intended to commence only after the first draft version has been completed (and all major parts from other involved project partners have been added).

After completing a deliverable in form and content, the task leader will set the deliverable so as to be reviewed internally by other project partners. Each deliverable is thereby evaluated according to criteria all the responsible project members agreed upon beforehand. The criteria for written deliverables are to a certain level subject to the project member's individual judgment.

Comments have to be reported to the author via reliable and traceable electronic correspondence (email or using the intranet of the ATHENA website: Members Area). The author(s) shall then update the deliverable according to these review comments, then a new version of the deliverable is ready to be issued to the project partners. Quality criteria as applied to written deliverables in ATHENA are as follows:

- **Format:** the correct format of the document, the lay out, the identification, the front pages, the summary, the glossary, the annexes, references, production rules according to the document templates of the ATHENA project
- **Internal coherence:** coherence of the content itself regarding all the information necessary for clear comprehension;

- **External coherence:** coherence and compliance of the document with other relating documents to prevent contradiction;
- If the deliverable has to be incorporated into another document, the resulting document's coherence also requires checking.

Generally, the internal Quality Assurance Process consists of the following steps that should begin at the latest three weeks before reaching the deadline of submission. Upon accord with the Task Leader, the WPL may adjust the timeline for the review to the actual situation.

1. Peer Review

The peer review will be conducted by all the authors at WP level. After completing the deliverable, the WPL decides about conducting a first draft review (called “peer review” here): the WPL will electronically forward copies of the deliverable to all involved WP team or project partners and ask for comments and suggestions. This step usually will not require standardized communication or procedures and will be conducted informally. It is supposed to last up to one week and should start not later than 3 weeks before the deadline.

According to the nature of the comments, the WPL decides about re-work and/or fill in a new entry (entitled “Reviewed”) in the document sign-off section of the written deliverable.

2. Final Internal Review

After completion of a Final document version, the WPL will conduct an internal review by requesting comments from the partners in ATHENA that are invited by the WPL and by the Task Leader for this review. The Final version will be forwarded electronically to all the project partners and is accessible for commenting and Project Steering and Management Committee (PSMC).

Based on the nature of the feedback, the WPL will decide whether the deliverable needs to undergo further re-work or whether it can be approved. Final Internal Review will have to be conducted at the latest two weeks before the deadline and should last up to one week. After conducting these quality assurance procedures on WP and Project level, the deliverable has new entries in its Document Sign-Off section “Approved” (added by the PM after Final Internal Review).

3. Submission

After approval of the Final version, the deliverable is sent to the will be ready to be submitted to the Agency. It is here, where the PM has the last chance to trigger further treatment.

Otherwise, the deliverable will be submitted to the Agency by the Coordinator on time and with the expected level of quality. It should be noticed that the Coordinator may ask the assistance of the QA team as well as the EAC of the ATHENA project for further commenting. The Coordinator may ask the WPL for further clarifications if this is necessary.

4. Follow-Up

Submitted deliverables will have to be stored in an adequate way on the reserved area of the Project website. Public deliverables will have to be made accessible on the public part of the ATHENA website while all documents and deliverables will be also uploaded in the Intranet (Members Area at the ATHENA project).

4.2. Document Status

The current status of a document appears on the document front page of the deliverable.

Document status in the ATHENA project can belong to four different classes:

1. Drafted, no final approval yet. The project partners involved in creating the deliverable have completed their work on the document, but it is still open to major comments by the internal reviewer.
2. Reviewed, the deliverable has been completed with the feedback and information provided by the internal reviewer. The document is ready for distribution among the project partners for a review, which will end with the ultimate version. Comments upon this version will imply minor changes.
3. Approved, this status implies that no further corrections will have to be added to the final version; publicly available documents (media releases, etc.) can then be published upon consent from the PM (Submitted status).
4. Submitted, deliverables to the Agency will then be submitted by the PM.

The different status will appear in the document Sign-Off section.

4.3. Preconditions

A precondition for performing an internal review is the deliverable's completeness. The Work Task Leader with the WPL will have to decide when the deliverable is complete and ready for a first peer review among project partners involved in the creation of the document.

4.4. Document Sign-Off

The different review stages of a written deliverable will have to be indicated in the sign-off section in each of the deliverables. The document sign-off section should include the following tabular fields:

- Nature of Sign-off (Drafted / Reviewed / Approved / Submitted)
- Partner's acronym
- Name and surname of the contributors
- Role (e.g. WPL, PM)
- Date

5. QA guidelines for publications

Due to the significance of the dissemination and exploitation activities in achieving the objectives of the project ATHENA manages and coordinates its diverse dissemination activities through a dedicated Work package (WP6). A coordinated dissemination and exploitation of the project results is a key objective for all partners during all phases of the ATHENA project.

In order to maximize the impact of its results, ATHENA will engage in a diverse set of dissemination and exploitation activities throughout the duration of the project. These activities encompass knowledge transfer and training activities, summer schools, as well as scientific publications, conference presentations and mass media release.

Dissemination quality control focuses on the operational techniques and activities used by those involved in the project to:

- Fulfill the requirements for quality.
- Fulfill the rules for acknowledging the EC funding.
- Fulfill the rules for Open Access.

The authors must send sufficient information at least 14 days in advance of a publication submission or presentation to the Coordinator and SB by email. For a publication, submitting the paper into a review process counts as dissemination. The main author is responsible to keep this issue updated as the dissemination is worked on.

The authors must include the acknowledgement and disclaimer texts in their dissemination exactly as described in D1.2 (Reporting and financial management guidelines).

For peer-reviewed scientific publications, the authors must comply with the EU's open access policy.

6. QA guidelines for training activities

In order to maximize the impact of the training activities the trainer (CNR or DLR) shall fill in the template found in the Appendix at least 1 month prior to the event. The CUT members will have to make any modifications or clarifications 1 week after the receipt of the template. The trainer will aim to achieve through the presentations high quality.

After the end of all training activities of the project (such as virtual trainings, summer schools, workshops), CUT members might follow 1 month exercise to improve their capabilities and achieve high performance. The trainer will follow up (remotely) and participate to this training via exchange of emails.

Appendix



TRAINING FORM
ATHENA
H2020-TWINN2015



Title of the training:

- Workshop
 Virtual training
 Summer School
 Other

Brief description of the training

Proposed period	<input type="text"/>	Alternative period	<input type="text"/>	Note: Dec. 2015 is considered as Month 1. e.g. 3 days or 3 hours
Month (e.g. M16)	<input type="text"/>	Month (e.g. M16)	<input type="text"/>	
Duration	<input type="text"/>			

Any special request for the specific event (e.g. computers; data etc)

computer
 internet
 software
 data
 other

Name of the trainer 1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> CNR	<input type="checkbox"/> DLR
email of the trainer 1	<input type="text"/>		
Name of the trainer 2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> CNR	<input type="checkbox"/> DLR
email of the trainer 2	<input type="text"/>		

Questions? for any questions please contact:

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