

**Modernization and Internationalisation of Iranian HEIs via collaborative TEL-based curriculum development in engineering and STEM**

Project №617496-EPP-1-2020-1-IT-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

Deliverable 7.1 UNITEL Project Handbook

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**Acronyms**

GA – Grant Agreement

PA – Partnership Agreement

EC – European Commission

KoM – Kick-off Meeting

PM – Project Manager

SC – Steering Committee

WT – Work Team

WP – Work Package

WPL – Work Package Leader

QA – Quality Assurance

TEL – Technology Enhanced Learning

HEI – Higher Education Institution

EU – European Union

IR – Islamic Republic of Iran

**Abstract**

The UNITEL Project Handbook, deliverable 7.1 of Work Package 7 (WP5) – Project Management. WP7 activities aim at providing efficient, responsible, transparent and accountable management of the project.

The handbook is intended to support the partnership in the effective and efficient administration, procedural and financial management of the project. It outlines project implementation procedures, structures and coordination and sets out key responsibilities for engagement and interaction during the project's lifetime. Its aim is to support the achievement of the project objectives, the effective management of partners’ progresses and the timely delivery of project results.

The UNITEL Project Handbook describes the following aspects of the project:

- Key documents

- Consortium and work packages

- Management and decision-making structure

- Internal Communication

- External Communication

- Deliverables and milestones

- Financial rules

- Reporting procedures

The handbook includes as well a list of annexes to be used by partners to monitor and report their activities. These are made up of the reporting templates (technical/narrative and financial); template for deliverables; template for presentations; work plan.

# Introduction

The purpose of the UNITEL Project Handbook is twofold. First, it is a reference document for Consortium partners containing the main information of the day-to-day project management and providing links to further information where required. In addition, the document outlines the standard procedures the UNITEL consortium will implement when delivering project reports and other deliverables, including the use of agreed procedures and templates where relevant.

The handbook can be updated whenever necessary. The implementation of the project activities at all levels follows rules and regulations set by the EC in a hierarchical order (please check the pyramid below) however, for the avoidance of any doubts, we hereby state that the Grant Agreement and Partnership Agreement take precedence over the present handbook. These official documents can be found on the UNITEL google drive common folder: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QG6hebwP5qCZb-2z4UNrpeGWMIEDjKpV?usp=sharing

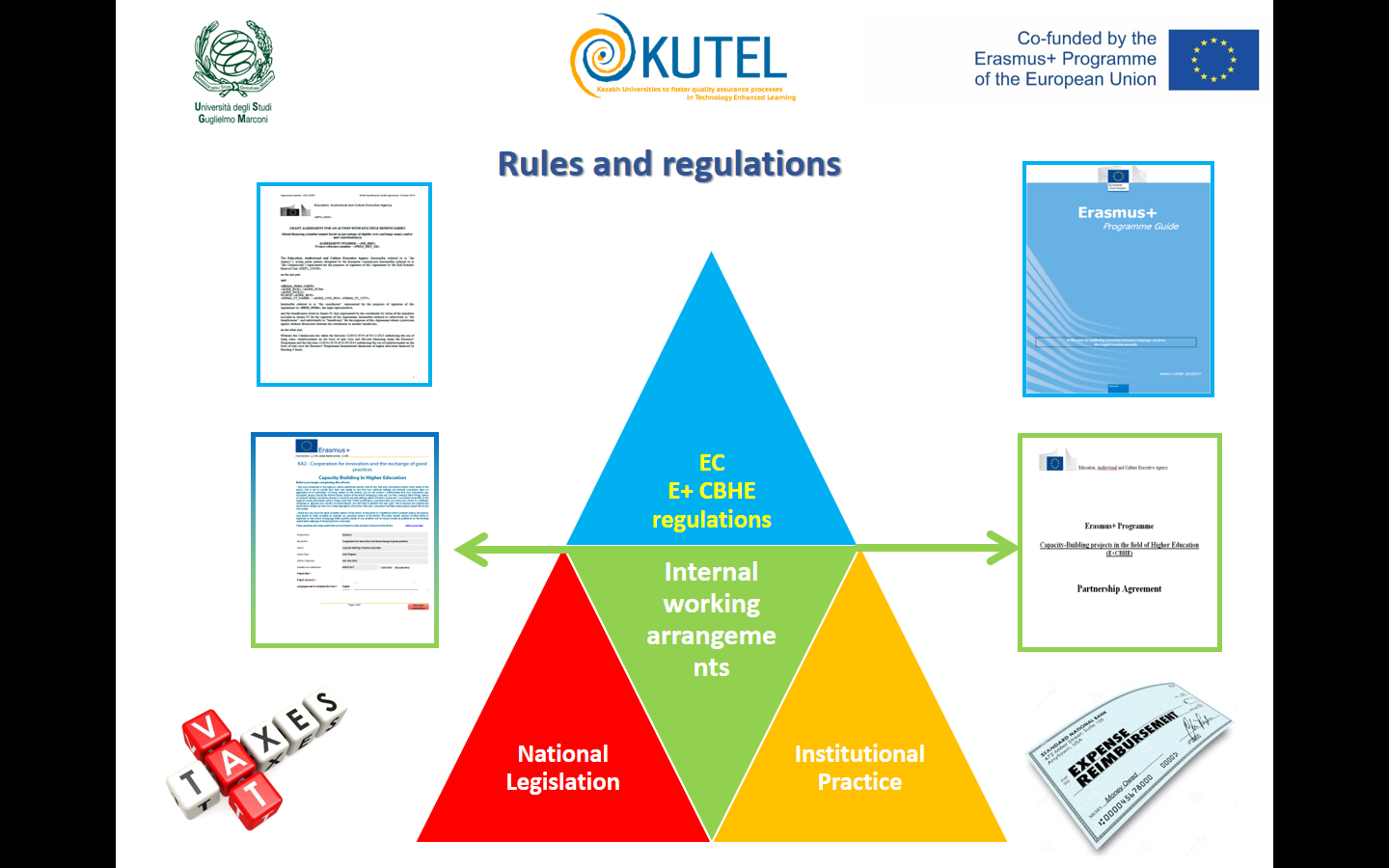


Figure 1. Rules and regulations

## Consortium

The project consortium brings together state-of-the-art expertise and capacity for evaluating and promoting new approaches in support of Technology enhanced learning provisions enhancement at Higher education institutions. It combines partners from the EU, with decade-long experiences in ICT-based learning practices with partners that bring in excellent skills and innovative approaches for innovative pedagogical methodologies, dissemination methods, impact indicators and policy recommendations design and implementation, with partners from IR made up of universities and one company in the field of engineering and research. In total, twelve partners are present in the consortium: four are from EU countries i.e. Italy, Finland, Portugal and Greece; eight are from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
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Table 1. Consortium members

## Work packages

The work plan consists of 7 work packages (WPs), classified into common "horizontal" activities involving all partners, and "vertical or core" activities that regroup expert partners in the different sub-domains guided by work teams (WTs).

**WP1 – Baseline Analysis**: consists in research activities and reports drafting on the State of the Art of HEIs in Engineering and STEM studies both in Iran and in Europe, aiming at creating a common body of knowledge for harmonization and strengthening the accessibility of higher education in Iran in line with the objectives defined by the Bologna Process and Lisbon Strategy.

**WP2 – UNI-TEL training path development:** the data and findings from the baseline analysis will be used to develop the UNITEL training path. The training concept will be defined outlining the course objectives, knowledge, skills development and learning outcomes.

**WP3 - UNI-TEL training delivery:** the training path will be piloted in PC HEIs as an e-course for professors and instructional designers in order for them to acquire key competences and skills crucial for integration of TEL-based pedagogical approaches in University curricula.

**WP4 – UNITEL curriculum modernisation:** trained beneficiaries will have to implement the knowledge gained and trial it in their curricula.

**WP5 – Quality Assurance and Evaluation:** its aim is to draw up the “Quality & Evaluation plan” in order to define the indicators and illustrate the monitoring procedures, the quality evaluation processes and tools and to ensure that the monitoring is performed adequately and accurately.

**WP4 – Dissemination and Exploitation:** aims at promoting the project results and products giving visibility to ongoing and forthcoming activities, helping to maximize the impact on the target groups.

**WP5 – Project Management:** aims at ensuring effective and efficient management of all project activities in the estimated time for the achievement of planned results according to the overall management of the project in order to ensure the effective and efficient achievement of all project aims and activities, within the time designed.

Each work package is structured as a series of finite, effective and well-defined tasks resulting in a work plan that clarifies dependencies between tasks, partners and work packages. Each work package addresses a clearly specified and coherent set of tasks, allowing it to deliver key results to dependent work packages. This structure ensures that project management functions are clear and verifiable.

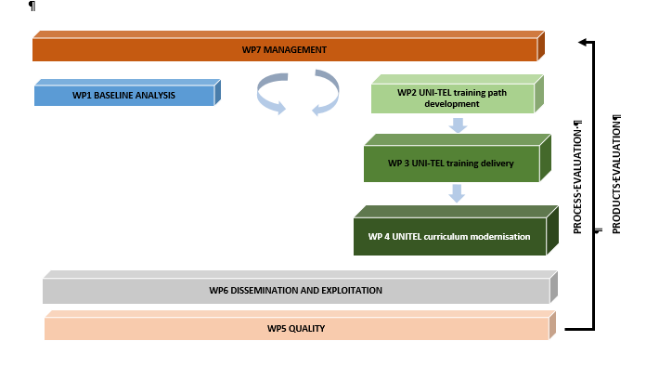


Figure 2. UNITEL structure

# Project management

## Project management structure

The objective of the UNITEL management procedures will be to optimize resources in terms of budgetary, strategic and technical efficiency. The Consortium consists of a relatively large number of partners spread across Europe and Iran representing different social and organisational environments. The contextual heterogeneity shall be the basis to the necessary flexibility of the technological and methodological solution to be chosen within the UNITEL framework.

The detailed management structure is shown in the graph and described below.

**European Commission Project Officer**

**Project Coordinator (USGM)**

**Project Coordinator (USGM)**

Steering committee (all partners)

**DT**

**QAT**

**PT**

**PDT**

**Consortium Management – Workflow Scheduling – Workflow Control – Contractual and**

**Strategic Issues – Project Technical Steering**

***IR National coordinator – Facilitator***

WP5

UaB

WP1

SUT

WP2

UTU

WP7

USGM

WP4

USGM

WP3

PRISMA

WP6

SU

Figure 3. UNITEL Management Structure

The project can be successful only if effective and efficient project management structures and procedures are implemented and project ground rules are agreed among all partners. This section describes the scientific and organizational management of the project, the project bodies as well as the major procedures for decision-making and project management that will be set up and implemented in UNITEL.

The project management structure is concerned with the following main issues:

* The accomplishment of the scientific and technological objectives of the project.
* The accomplishment of all technical targets, such as the punctual delivery with the requested quality within the given budget constraints.
* The overall management and synchronization of all activities of the work packages.
* The management and administration of all EC requirements.

## Steering Committee

It will consist of one top-level appointed delegate from each partner for strategic decision taking. A representative of each partner chairs the steering committee (SC) which reviews the workplan and finally validates it. Decisions are agreed following the unanimity rule; if this is not possible, the majority rule will be applied. Each partner has one seat and one vote in the SC creating joint responsibility and ownership. The Coordinator (P1) has a veto power for major changes to the workplan or the budget complying with the Agency rules.

The SC will be mainly responsible for:

1. the definition of overall project strategy;
2. fulfilling the Agency requirements pertaining to preparation of progress and financial reports;
3. deciding on long-term exploitation plans;
4. conflict resolution within the consortium, under chairing of the project coordinator;
5. technical coordination and decision-making (assessment of the technical work, interchange of technical information amongst partners, submission of deliverables, etc.); and
6. risk management.

In urgent cases, the SC may take decisions through the Project Coordinator consulting with all members via teleconference and/or via e-mail, phone, etc. An ordinary meeting must ratify such decisions. The SC will meet at least **once a year**, even via teleconference and/or via internet, at the request of the PC, or, when necessary, at any other time at the request of one of the partners with duly justified reasons.

The SC co-ordinates and manages those items which affect the contractual term fixed at the outset of the project or which involve changes in project orientation.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Partner | Institution | Role | Contact person |
| P1 | Università degli Studi Guglielmo Marconi | Coordinator | Monica Fasciani  [m.fasciani@unimarconi.it](mailto:m.fasciani@unimarconi.it) |
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| P3 | Universidade Aberta | Partner | Antonio Texeira  [antonio.teixeira@uab.pt](mailto:antonio.teixeira@uab.pt) |
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| P6 | University Of Sistan And Baluchestan | Partner | Leila Sargazi [l.sargazi@gmail.com](mailto:l.sargazi@gmail.com) |
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| P8 | University of Isfahan | Partner | Seyed Komail Tayebi  [sk.tayebi@ase.ui.ac.ir](mailto:sk.tayebi@ase.ui.ac.ir); [komail38@yahoo.com](mailto:komail38@yahoo.com) |
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| P11 | Sharif University of Technology | Partner | Arafesh Bigdeli [a.bigdeli@sharif.edu](mailto:a.bigdeli@sharif.edu); [ia\_deputy@sharif.edu](mailto:ia_deputy@sharif.edu) |
| P12 | NAMVARAN P&T COMPANY | Partner | Saeed Maghsoudi [s.maghsoudi@namvaranpt.com](mailto:s.maghsoudi@namvaranpt.com) |

Table 2. UNITEL Steering Committee members

For each meeting held a report will summarize the decisions that the Consortium will take regarding the project activities to be developed. It will describe results achieved and deliverables carried out, the activities expected, grids and graphs for monitoring project activities.

## Project Coordinator – USGM

The Project Manager has the overall responsibility for the running of the project, ensuring delivery to time, cost and required quality. (S)he has a major involvement throughout the duration of the project, being responsible for delivery of the overall project objectives through:

* Definition and implementation of the management framework (structure and procedures) to be adopted throughout the project, and the maintenance of detailed work plans;
* Coordination at consortium level of the management, technical and quality activities of the project, ensuring co-operation among partners, anticipating and managing potential conflicts;
* Project Reporting and coordination of management material, managing change control and provision of appropriate guidelines for each of the participants;
* Coordination of cost statements and certificates on financial statement.

The PC collects monitors and integrates financial and administrative data from the partners at M10, M21, M28 and M36, and prepares the technical and financial data for submission to the EACEA (Technical Implementation Report and Financial Statement).

The PC works in close consultation with the other members of the SC and handles all operational relations with the Agency. (S)he works closely with the project’s partners to ensure that the UNITEL objectives are achieved.

## Work Package Leaders and Managers

Each Work package is under the responsibility of the WP Leader to oversee the work process that is supported by a WP co-leader. The WP Leader organises, in coordination with the participating partners and other Work Package leaders, the detailed schedule of the Work package and it is in charge of the realization in due time of the project deliverables and milestones related to the WP. The WP leader is also in charge of producing periodical WP reports to be delivered to the PC. Workpackages implementation is also carried out at team level as follows:

WP1: Pedagogical Development Team

WP2: Piloting team

WP3: Quality Assurance Team

WP4: Valorisation team

Team members can be found at:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1mk4PfszHZSgcLTBLEB9wqsYDRQTNnMdG3DGdqWKqlTA/edit#gid=324176458>

Meetings of the Work package team will be called by the Work package Leader as often as needed for ensuring an effective work progress, to solve work matters and other related issues; however, electronic conferencing facilities can be used as much as possible to limit travel expenses. Other meetings can be organised at task level by participants involved in the task. The appointed WP Leaders are:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Partner | Partner | Role | Contact person |
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| WP3 | P4 - Prisma Electronics ABEE | Partner | Chrysa Rompidou [chrysa.rompidou@prisma.gr](mailto:chrysa.rompidou@prisma.gr) |
| WP4 | P1 - Università degli Studi Guglielmo Marconi | Partner | Ilaria Reggiani  [i.reggiani@unimarconi.it](mailto:i.reggiani@unimarconi.it) |
| WP5 | P3 - Universidade Aberta | Partner | Antonio Texeira  [antonio.teixeira@uab.pt](mailto:antonio.teixeira@uab.pt) |
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| WP7 | P1 - Università degli Studi Guglielmo Marconi | Partner | Monica Fasciani  [m.fasciani@unimarconi.it](mailto:m.fasciani@unimarconi.it) |

Table 3. UNITEL Workpackages leaders

## Internal communication

**Emails**

Day-to-day communication will be based on emails. The approach of email communication is that group emails will be sent to all partners, with individual and/or group reminders sent if needed.

**Monthly discussions with WP leaders**

In order to discuss the progress of the tasks and work plan, USGM will organise monthly discussion online with WPL. During the summer these discussion might be held once in two months. But during busy periods teleconferences might be held once in two weeks or upon the request. Monthly online discussions will be held in the beginning of each month.

**Project meetings**

Plenary and virtual meetings will be organized, based also on the epidemiologic progresses due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to discuss on regular basis about the review of the project activities expected and carried out by the Consortium. For each meeting held a report will summarize the decisions that the Consortium will take regarding the project activities to be developed. It will describe results achieved and deliverables carried out, the activities expected, grids and graphs for monitoring project activities.

The expected results will be compared with those reached/achieved in order to evaluate possible inconsistencies. Meetings will be organized as follows:

Kick off meeting in Rome hosted by P1 USGM – 1st and 2nd February 2021 – HELD ONLINE

2nd project meeting hosted by P3 UTU – August/September 2021

3rd project meeting hosted by P8 IU - February 2022

4th project meeting hosted by P5 IKIU – June/July 2022

5th project meeting hosted by P10 SCU – January 2023

6th project meeting hosted by P7 SU – May 2023

7th project meeting hosted by P9 UT – December 2023-January 2024

All in presence meetings will be rearranged online in case the situation would not allow to travel. Virtual meetings will be in any case continuously organized.

## File storage

The consortium has decided to use Google drive for file storage and sharing. The drive can be accessed here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1QG6hebwP5qCZb-2z4UNrpeGWMIEDjKpV>

For privacy reasons the coordinator allows the access to the google drive folder only to contact with which the folder has been previously shared. No access will be guaranteed only using the folder link. All partners were added to the project drive. Google drive will be used for sharing working documents, project management information and working documents of deliverables.

# Deliverable submission

The Deliverable author is the responsible for the definition and editing of a deliverable. The author of the Deliverable is included in the document information table. He/she must address potential comments from the reviewers and provide an improved version of the deliverable.

The QA Plan will include and specify the PEER-REVIEW process and goals strategy, while indicators to Deliverable production and submission follow a set of rules that will be described in the following sub-sections.

## Structure of Deliverables

The template UNITEL document template\_v1.0.doc, or successive versions, (ANNEX I) should be used when preparing deliverables. The Disclaimer, requested by the EU Commission, should be included in all dissemination outcomes.

The document should comprise nine parts described as follows:

Part I - Cover Page, it contains the information related to the deliverable, project logo, project title and ref. number and name of the deliverable. The footer will be filled with the Erasmus + logo and disclaimer and project website.

Part II - contains a table with indication of the author of the document, contributions, version and date of release, Work Package N° and title, Deliverable N° and title, Dissemination level and Language etc. Partners are requested to fill in the table ensuring that all the information is correctly provided, particularly those appearing in the contract. Besides, include the information for dissemination level of the deliverable.

Part III -Version History, table reporting the changes made when delivering a new version of the document should be provided. For each version, the author(s) and the related unit, the date, the status of the document and a short description of the changes made are reported.

Part IV - Table of contents (Table of figures/Tables etc.), an index of the deliverable contents should be provided.

Part V – Abstract of the document: it contains enough technical information for the readers to become acquainted with the full document without reading it and should be 1 page.

Part VI – Descriptive section, it should include the introduction, technical remarks, purpose, outline, methodology used, the specification of the deliverables and the work done to achieve the relevant tasks and the detailed results.

Part VII - Deliverable content, this will include the main sections of the deliverable, and shall be the deliverable body or substance.

Part VIII – Final section, it will include a conclusion and references used for the production of the deliverable

Part IX – Annexes, including all information that is relevant to the deliverable with the aim of clarifying the report, that is, all relevant and additional information.

## Peer Review template

In accordance to the Quality Assurance Plan (Del 5.1), in order to ensure the highest quality of the most important deliverables and consequently to maximize the impact on target groups, a Peer Review Form (Annex II) will be administered to qualified reviewer/s with a specific expertise to assess the core deliverables. The Peer Reviewer/s role could be assigned to the one/more of the project partners with specific technical expertise in the assessment of such deliverable.

## Deliverables production and submission

All documents must follow a delivery process in order to assure their consistency. There will be three different actors involved for each deliverable: the author, peer reviewer/s and the QA leader. Once the deliverable is finished, the author must submit the deliverable to reviewer/s and to the QA leader for reviewing it. All this process lasts 2 weeks and it is ahead of due date. Reviewers’ choice is an informal procedure; usually deliverable first author selects one people with right skills for providing useful feedback. WP leader should be aware of all deliverables working progress as well as reviewing process. The reviewer and the QA leader check for format and content, and have one week to provide comments to the author. These comments will be done on a shared google drive document that tracks the review process.

The author answers to the comments and makes changes accordingly to generate the final version of the deliverable, within one week.

In case of official deliverables, the author shall submit that final version of the deliverable to the Project Coordinator (PC) for approval at least two days before the due date. Once the internal review is finished, the document is sent to the PC for the final delivery. The PC can ask for a review to the author (informing the QA leader) motivating it on project's features. The author has 3 days to review the deliverable (informing the QAL) and send it back to the PC. Once the PC accepts the deliverable, (s) he uploads it in the Project Repository.

Licensing to be decided.

## Project schedule

The UNITEL project started on 15th January 2021 and will end on 14th January 2024. Project schedule is available through Annex III.

## Risk Management

### Risk Management in a project

A risk (risk/hazard) is a measure of the likelihood and consequences of not achieving one or more objectives of the project.

The word 'risk' usually does not exclude the positive sense of the term: a risk may have a positive impact. For example, the decision of the project manager to complete a WP in 80 % of the planned time, to more effectively boost project dissemination is risk that may become a problem (if something goes wrong) or advantage (if all goes smoothly). Usually a risk is more likely to become a problem for the project and as such it will be referenced throughout this section.

Risk includes uncertainty. It is associated with probabilities (the risk to become a problem) and impact (e.g. on project activities). These two parameters should be treated jointly rather than separately.

The analysis of risk in two parameters (probability, impact) does not help managing it because both parameters are difficult to estimate accurately even with the use of statistical methods.

In general, a risk is comprised of three (3) parameters:

* + - An event (which is usually an undesirable change)
    - A possibility (for the event to occur)
    - Consequences (on one or more objectives of the project)

There are generally, three types of risks to a project:

* + Quality: this risk is related to the quality of processes and deliverables that in turn affect project performance.
  + Cost: This risk relates to the ability of the project to meet its economic goals.
  + Planning: this risk relates to the ability of the project to meet its time schedule.

The sources from where the risk of a project originates are internal and external. Internal risks originate from:

* + The project itself. The size of the project includes the duration, estimated cost and resources needed for implementation.
  + The development team of the project. Factors such as experience, qualifications and relations between partners may create either beneficial or harmful events.
  + Project management. Operations Management or bad policies may create risks.

External sources of risk include:

* + Stakeholders. Stakeholders may change or miscommunicate requirements while the work is in progress.
  + Technology. The use of new technologies that are unstable, incompatible or have high costs for the project are a source of risk.
  + Environment Status. Changes in economic conditions, national or regional policies is a source of risk and may affect the cost and / or duration of the project.
  + Outsourcing. The problems from subcontractors or outsourcing may constitute a serious risk to the project.

### Risk Management Processes

Risk Management includes processes (procedures) regarding planning, identification, analysis, treatment and monitoring of risks and their causes. Most of these processes are active throughout the project life-cycle. Their goal is to increase the probability and consequences of positive events for the project and to reduce the likelihood and consequences of negative ones.

Risk Management usually includes the following processes:

1. Risk Management Planning: deciding on how to design and implement the risk management procedures. Proper design ensures the proper functioning of the remaining five activities for Risk Management. It focuses on the way in which risk management procedures are enacted.

2. Risk identification: identification of risks that may affect the work and recording of their characteristics. Risk identification is performed by project members such as the project manager, the development team, etc. or by external experts. This process is continuous since new risks may arise during the project life-cycle. The tools that are used to identify risks include meetings between key actors of the project (brain storming), the application of techniques such as the Delphi method, SWOT analysis and diagrammatic techniques (cause and effect diagram, flow charts, etc.).

3. Qualitative Risk Analysis: Ranking of risks based on the probability of occurrence and the impact.

4. Quantitative Risk Analysis: Quantitative analysis on the impact of identified risks to project goals.

5. Risk Response Planning: design of actions for the mitigation of risks that have a great probability to become problems for the project. This process defines the actions that should be followed to reduce the possibility of these risks becoming a problem. The most common tactic used is to draw a Contingency Plan. This plan records all the actions to be taken when a risk becomes a problem:

a. the strategy to be followed if the risk becomes a problem

b. the time frame in which the plan is to be active

c. who is responsible for the activation of the plan

d. a list of people (internal or external to the project) which will be notified that the plan is active.

6. Monitoring and controlling risks: tracking identified risks, identifying new application response plans and ongoing evaluation of risk management processes.

### Risk Identification, Risk Analysis, Risk Response Planning/Mitigation actions

Initial risk identification in the UNITEL project stems from the general objectives of the project as they are stated in the contract. Since the project sought to actively involve external stakeholders not only as end-users but as co-designers of main project policies, special attention is given to user enactment, sustainability, relevance and impact of results. Risks are directly mapped to quality factors and criteria of section 3. Common risks to project management (time and economic scheduling) are ignored since they are continuously monitored by Project Management. Quality Assurance in projects should acknowledge individual, organizational and environmental factors that may influence the fulfillment of the project plan. These factors are here explored both on a theoretical and practical level.

Individual factors may include e.g. motivation and commitment to the project work, which, oftentimes is additional to regular roles and tasks of the individual. In a larger perspective, international projects may also interfere the power structure of the work organization and its members. In each organization, individuals have a certain power distance, they have a personal way of dealing with uncertainty avoidance and experience individualism and belonging to groups differently.

Organizational factors may consist of e.g. available managerial and technical support to adopting TEL, online learning platforms and systems. Leadership and management influence also the division of labour and work time to projects and other ongoing activities. Organizational factors may also include the social and cultural capital of the participating stakeholders in the partner organizations, e.g. their capacity to interact in foreign language and engage in development work that entails new and innovative methods and tools. There may also be lack of interest or refusal to adopt a new learning paradigm that changes the traditional views of roles and asks of a teacher and of a student in learning and teaching.

Environmental factors may include e.g. local codes and practices, social systems, cultural norms and values. The political or economic environment may favor or hinder the project implementation, dissemination and making use of the project products.

Risk response planning is the process of determining actions that reduce risks before they become threats (risk mitigation) or reduce their impact when they do become threats (contingency planning).

UNITEL uses a proactive approach based more on risk mitigation than contingency. That is, risk probability/impact is reduced by taking early actions such as conducting multi-level assessments of project deliverables (engaging stakeholders at an early stage, consulting experts with different areas of specialization, beta testing early versions of tangible outputs before scaling up). On the other hand, contingency is difficult to implement since most risks become threats near or right after project-end where the consortium momentum (at least in most funded projects) is somewhat lower. The involvement of stakeholders comprises both the nature of most risks in UNITEL and the means to mitigate them. Being a highly user-centered project, this additional risk may prove to be rather an opportunity than a hazard.

Risk response planning includes the identification of risk owners, that is, the persons or committees responsible for monitoring risks. In UNITEL, risks span the whole range of project deliverables. For this reason, every project partner which is responsible for a deliverable is the owner of the risks associated with it. It is, however, most probable that a risk that becomes a hazard in a deliverable that plays a major role in UNITEL strategy, creates a domino effect increasing the probability/impact of risks in other outputs. The interlinked nature of risks is a matter to be monitored by the Steering Committee. Corrective action may be decided during risk audit sessions, if appropriate.

Based on the theoretical aspects explored above, the following potential, practical risks and corresponding mitigating actions have been identified in the UNITEL project.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Risk** | **Risk Mitigation Actions** |
| Political, legal, regulatory and economic chances | * active participation of partners within and outside the consortium, communication with the Erasmus Plus EACEA Agency, IR Embassy, Ministry of education and labour in the partner country |
| Stakeholders become disengaged, have inaccurate expectations or do not support the project | * use appropriate stakeholder management techniques (stakeholder identification, recurring analysis, communication plan, attitude identification) * engage on mutually beneficial outcomes |
| Conflicts among partners | * sharing cultural traditions and paying respect to different values and traditions in EU and PC and their institutions |
| Process inputs are of low quality | * stakeholder identification * cross-check inputs for inconsistencies * track changes in the quality of stakeholder relationships |
| Delayed, insufficient or incomplete analysis | * constant communication and support among partners |
| Lack of motivation and interest among individuals | * team building actions and identifying progress on individual level |
| Individuals´ lack of time and resources | * ongoing dialogue between project management and team leaders in partner organizations |
| Lack of mandate and agency | * making sure that individuals are authorized and entitled to participate in project work and that work is in line with organizational strategies |
| Not enough academic staff or public authorities and accreditation centers participating in the project activities | * all schedules must be established well in advance to attend events |
| Poor language and communication skills in a digital environment | * Making sure each organization has an English speaking person available in project meetings, use of visual aids in presentations, using clear and understandable language * Designing training in a way that it develops language and communication skills in a digital environment, involving potential speakers of partner country languages in participating EU partner organizations |
| Impacted individuals aren't kept informed | * design and continuously test communication plan * plan for continuous dissemination * bridge language and cultural barriers to communication (e.g., communicate key results in local language) |
| Design lacks flexibility | * engage experts group in the design phase * take into consideration multiple factors and their interdependencies (e.g., cost/gain ratios, hidden costs) |
| Requirements are ambiguous | * engage key stakeholders in the identification phase and verify outcomes with larger group of stakeholders * monitor current and future trends |
| Project results poorly communicated | * benchmarking and using best practices in communication * design and continuously test communication plan * tailor the information to the different stakeholders |
| Training activities demonstrate little impact on STEM knowledge and working methods | * thorough planning and piloting |
| Project results difficult to be used, eg. problems in integrating UNITEL deliverables and approach in existing policies of universities | * ongoing interaction with key stakeholders * beta testing |
| Project results out of date | * monitor current and future trends |
| Less than expected number of returns in user feedbacks | * constant communication with users to increase the number of returns in feedbacks |

## External Communication

External communication is considered towards parties outside the consortium, target groups of the project, stakeholders and the EU Project Officer.

The external communication is part of WP6 Dissemination and Exploitation and for which one of the partners (P7 SU) is responsible.

Communication of project results is an important part of a CBHE project. You will find more information in deliverable D6.1 Valorisation Plan to be found in the Dissemination and Exploitation Folder on the project google drive archive

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1d6L4bBQQ2lonICjL6HS5oN0LnS97bQZ4>

## Project website

The project website is set up for external communication purposes and can be found at [www.unitelproject.eu](http://www.unitelproject.eu). The project website provides information about the project, its objectives, results, partners and events. The website includes also a link to the Google drive private area where all the UNITEL internal documents will be shared and stored and it will be connected with the UNITEL LMS.

## General requirements

Visibility rules for CBHE project are regulated by Art I.15 ‘Publicity Obligations’ and Art I.16 ‘Dissemination and Exploitation of results’ of the Grant Agreement. All dissemination materials:

* must display Erasmus+ Logo 
* must include this sentence: "with the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union"
* Must include disclaimer: "This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein".

For all info and official documents, please check:

https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20210122031341/https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about-eacea/visual-identity-and-logos-eacea/erasmus-visual-identity-and-logos\_en

## Privacy Statement

Each individual of Partner organization will sign the Privacy Statement (Annex IV) in which He/She will authorize the project Coordinator and the EACEA to use his/her personal data for the only purpose of the UNITEL project in accordance to the Regulation 2018/1725, which lays down the data protection obligations for the EU institutions and bodies when they process personal data, and repeals Regulation (EC) 45/2001 as detailed in the link to the Regulation: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32018R1725>

In accordance with Articles 14-16 of this Regulation, data subjects She/He will declare that She/He have been informed of privacy statements’ legal framework related to the 2020 projects available at the following official webpage https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-01/privacy\_statement-eacea\_grants\_new\_2020\_combined.pdf

# Financial rules

UNITEL is a 36-month project. The budget of costs has been developed based on three main classes of project activities, basically divided into management, core actions and support activities (which include dissemination).

The eligible costs regard the personnel expenditure, the material and components purchased for the project implementation and the travel costs fulfilled for the project activities. Some services will be outsourced through sub-contracting.

**All the procedures and issue must strictly follow the contents of the Grant Agreement nr./617496-EPP-1-2020-1-IT-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP and the signed Partnership Agreement.**

## Financial overview and rules

The grant is calculated on the basis of *Actual costs* for the budget headings *Equipment* and *Subcontracting*, and of *Unit Costs* for the budget headings *Staff* costs, *Travel* costs *and Costs of stay*. Cost eligibility period: 15/01/2021 – 14/01/2024

**Budget Overview (Annex III Grant Agreement)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **BUDGET** |
| **STAFF** | **€ 348,284.00** |
| *MAN* | *€ 51,443.00* |
| *RES* | *€ 240,238.00* |
| *TEC* | *€ 36,658.00* |
| *ADM* | *€ 19,945.00* |
| **TRAVEL** | **€ 121,885.00** |
| **COST OF STAY** | **€ 179,040.00** |
| **SUBCONTRACT** | **€ 69,300.00** |
| **EQUIPMENT** | **€ 158,550.00** |
|  | **€ 877,059.00** |

Figure 4. UNITEL budget Overview

## Actual costs

Financial reporting for budget items based on actual costs (**equipment**, **sub-contracting**) will be based on the principle of the **expenses actually incurred** which will need to be duly documented.

1. ***Equipment:*** *This budget heading may be used to support the purchase of equipment on the condition that such equipment is directly relevant to the objectives of the project.*

Equipment is intended exclusively for the Partner Country Higher Education Institutions that are included in the partnership; it must be installed in Universities as soon as practically possible after the start of the project.

Considering the particular nature of the Capacity Building action under the Erasmus+ programme, the total purchase cost of the equipment will be taken into account and not the equipment's depreciation. Therefore, equipment costs will be reimbursed on the basis of the eligible costs actually incurred.

Equipment could include, for example, (e-)books and periodicals, fax machines, photocopying machines, computers and peripherals (including notebooks/laptops and tablets), software, machines and equipment for teaching purposes, laboratory supplies (teaching purposes), video-projectors (hardware) and video-presentations (software), television sets, installing/setting up of communication lines for internet connection, access to databases (libraries and electronic libraries outside the partnership) and clouds, equipment maintenance, insurance, transport and installation costs.

The approved budget already includes a list of equipment. In case a partner intends to modify some of the items, it should produce a **letter with the comparative list of the old and the new equipment and the reasons why this is needed for the project**. This should be approved by the Executive Agency before proceeding with the equipment purchase

According to the EU Commission recommendations, the list of revised equipment actually needed, should be sent to the Executive Agency within 6 months from the beginning of the project (June 2021) and the equipment should be purchased and installed not later than 12 months before the end of the project. (See the Financial PPT Guideline ANNEX V)

1. ***Sub-contracting:*** *Subcontracting is intended for specific, time-bound, project-related tasks which cannot be performed by the Consortium members themselves.*

Typical activities which may be sub-contracted (provided they are not carried out by beneficiaries' staff) are: Evaluation activities and auditing (Certificate on the Financial Statement), IT courses, Language courses, Printing, publishing and dissemination activities, Translation services, Web design and maintenance, Logistic support for the organisation of events, etc.

Sub-contracting initially not foreseen in the budget will need prior **written authorisation from the Agency during project implementation**.

Subcontracting must be done on the basis of a contract, which should describe the specific task being carried out and its duration. It must include a date, project number and the signature of both parties.

For both **equipment and sub-contracting** **costs**:

* When the threshold of EUR 25.000 is exceeded and below EUR 134.000, documentation on the tendering procedure and three quotations from different suppliers.
* When the threshold of EUR 134.000 is exceeded, documentation on the tendering procedure applied according to national legislation.

It is recommended to ask for at least 3 quotations regardless of the thresholds in order to guarantee the budget efficiency and the best value for money.

## Unit costs

A unit cost is a fixed contribution that is multiplied by the specific number of units to cover the costs linked to the implementation of a specific activity or task.

Financial reporting for budget items based on unit costs (contribution to **staff costs**, **travel costs** and **costs of stay**) will be based on the principle of the **"triggering event"** 🡪 Beneficiaries will have to prove that the activities have been actually and properly implemented and/or that the expected output(s) have been produced but they will *not* have to *justify the level* of spending.

1. ***Staff costs:*** *This budget heading contributes to the cost of staff for all beneficiaries when they are performing tasks which are directly necessary to the achievement of the objectives of the project.*

The existence of a formal contractual relationship between the employee and the beneficiary institutions is required.

Each unit cost corresponds to an amount in Euro per working day per staff.

**The calculation of staff costs is based on 3 variables**: staff category, country, number of days

**a) Category (**Managers, Researchers/Teachers/Trainers, Technical, Administrative).  
The category corresponds to the **nature of work performed**, **not to the status** of an individual.

**b) Country** in which staff is employed, independently of where tasks are executed

**c) Number of days proportioned to the work carried out** (not more than 20 days per month/240 days per year)

1. ***Travel costs:*** *The grant contributes to the travel of staff and students involved in the project, from their place of origin (home institution within the partnership) to the venue of the activity and return (including visa fee and related obligatory insurance, travel insurance and cancellation costs if justified).*

For each participant, the grant is calculated by applying for each travel the unit cost corresponding to the applicable distance band. Each unit cost corresponds to a fixed amount in Euro per travel per person.

In order to apply the correct unit cost, the beneficiary must identify the travel distance of a one-way travel (from their place of origin - home institution within the partnership - to the venue of the activity) using the distance calculator supported by the European Commission (<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/distance-calculator>). The travel distance identified will be used to calculate the corresponding unit cost. Each unit cost applied will contribute to the costs of travel for the round trip, regardless of the expenses actually incurred.

1. ***Costs of stay:*** *Costs of stay can be reported for staff or students involved in the project for activities taking place outside the city of the participant's home institution. These costs contribute to the subsistence, accommodation, local and public transport such as bus and taxi, personal or optional health insurance.*

In order to apply the correct unit cost, the beneficiary must identify the duration in days of the activity (including the travel from their place of origin to the venue of the activity and vice-versa) and apply the corresponding unit costs. Each unit cost applied will contribute to the costs of stay regardless of the expenses actually incurred. Please check the Programme Guide “Version 1, 2020”.

## Exchange Rates

All transactions must be declared **in EUR** in the Final Report.

Beneficiaries with general accounts in a currency other than the euro must convert costs incurred in another currency into euros at the average of the daily exchange rates published in the Official Journal of the European Union, determined over the corresponding reporting period, available at:

http://www.ecb.europa.eu/stats/exchange/eurofxref/html/index.en.html

Beneficiaries with general accounts in euros must convert costs incurred in another currency into euros in accordance with their usual accounting practices.

As concerns the applicable rates with general accounts in a currency other than the euro, the following periods should be taken into account:

1) From start of eligibility period until receipt of second pre-financing;

2) From date of receipt of second pre-financing until end of eligibility period

To calculate the average of the reference period, please use the ‘financial Statement’ file, in particular, the Exchange rate sheet, in which is possible to automatically calculate the average through the European Central Bank and INFOREURO websites.

## VAT (Value Added Tax)

VAT can only be claimed if it cannot be recovered by a beneficiary. If VAT is claimed under the project, in case of sampling of supporting documents, the Coordinator will request an official document from national tax authorities stating that the institution concerned can not recover VAT. A self declaration of the beneficiary organization does not comply with financial requirements.

## List of supporting documents

The following supporting documents must be submitted with the periodical reports. *All invoices should include the translation of main items into* ***English****.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Equipment* | Invoices  Bank statements  Quotations for all expenditure and Tendering procedure for expenses exceeding 25.000€ (check art. 5.2)  Proof that the equipment is recorded/included in the inventory of the institution. |
| *Subcontracting* | Subcontracts  Invoices  Bank statements  Quotations for all expenditure and Tendering procedure for expenses exceeding 25.000€ (check art. 5.2)  Tangible outputs/products |
| *Staff* | Joint declaration for each person involved *(in case one person covers more than one role, one Staff convention per figure must be submitted for the same person)*  (Annex VI)  A Copy of the formal employment contract which proves an existence of a formal contractual employment relationship between the employee and the employer (beneficiary organization)  Summary of the formal employment contract (English)  (Annex VII)  Time-sheets (attached to each staff convention). They must indicate the following:   * + the project reference   + the name of the person performing the tasks, his/her position and the staff category   + the institution and the country where the person is employed   + the number of days worked for the corresponding month and year   + the description of the tasks performed, the outputs produced and the related work package.   *(in case one person covers more than one role, one timesheet file per figure must be submitted for the same person)*  (Annex VIII)  Any material evidence allowing to verify that the declared workloads correspond to actual activities/outputs;  Copy of the payslips/ bank statement as an evidence that the costs are really paid;  Statement from the beneficiary’s accounting department for all the charges paid by the employer such as social security contributions and related costs according to Country legislation. |
| *Travel and Costs of Stay* | A duly filled-in Individual Travel Report (Annex IX)  Supporting documents:   * + travel tickets, boarding passes with points of departure and destination, dates and name of the person travelling;   + hotel invoices and receipts;   + proofs of attendance in meetings and/or events - agendas, list of participants, tangible outputs/products, minutes of the meetings   + a document from the beneficiary organization or bank statement approving that the money for Travel Costs and Cost of Stay are really received by the person or reimbursed (Expenses report and/or reimbursement request confirming the receipt of money by the involved person) . |

Table 4. UNITEL list of supporting financial documents

# Reporting procedure

Over the course of the project a Progress Report and a Final report must be submitted to the EACEA. The former will be submitted at the project mid-term stage (30 days after M18) and one at the concluding stage of the project (60 days after M36). General reporting principles will be as follows:

* USGM will request WPL to report on their WP;
* WPL will prepare inputs for the periodic report by collecting inputs from their WP team members;
* USGM will combine all this information into a coherent report.

In addition, two mid-term internal reports will be arranged every 9 months. The plan for all reports is as follows:

* M10 covering the period M1-M10
* M21 covering the period M1-M21 (corresponding to the progress report)
* M28 covering the period M21 - M28
* M36 covering the period M1- M36 (corresponding to the final report)

## Internal Mid-term reports

A mid-term report is an internal project document, meaning that it is not sent to the EACEA. The objective of this internal report is to monitor project expenditure and technical progress. It should be a brief summary of the technical work completed as well as a brief explanation for any deviations (budget and content).

An internal mid-term report includes:

* A description of the **technical progress**, per work package:

1) The project coordinator provides a template (based on the official Technical Implementation Report): a preview can be found in the UNITEL Google drive area.

2) WPL’s are responsible to gather all information about the technical progress in their WP from their WP team members and compile a WP report before sending it to the coordinator.

3) The coordinator consolidates the provided information and sends the complete report to the consortium for review. This will not be sent to the EACEA.

* And a **financial overview** from each partner: The process of handing in the financial overview goes as follows:

1) The project coordinator provides an Excel template (Financial Statement Annex X): a preview can be found on Google drive a month before the deadline;

2) This template should be filled out by all the consortium partners. This excel sheet provides the coordinator with valuable information needed for monitoring purposes and management reporting;

3) The coordinator consolidates the provided information and sends the complete report to the consortium for review. Again it will not be sent to the EACEA.

## Progress and Final reports

The internal Progress/Final reports will be described in Annex XI and Annex XII. They will be available at a later stage as soon as the official reporting templates will be published in the Official webpage of the “Capacity Building in field higher education Beneficiary Space” (<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/beneficiaries-space/capacity-building-in-field-higher-education-2020_en>). Both Annexes will be then available in the Project DRIVE Folder

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1kSGCiJ-6-_LgpD5s4Y8BzhJ77Bb_VtC_?usp=sharing>

These reports will include:

a) Periodic technical report:

* An explanation of the work carried out
* An overview of the progress towards the objectives of the action

b) Periodic financial report:

* An individual financial statement
* Supporting documents as listed in the section 5.6 of this document.

The Progress and Final reports production process will follow the rules indicated for the Internal Mid-term reports.

# List of Annexes

Annex I - UNITEL deliverable template\_v1.0.doc

Annex II – Peer Review Form

Annex III - UNITEL GANTT

Annex IV – Privacy Statement

Annex V – Financial PPT guideline

Annex VI - Cbhe\_joint\_declaration\_2020

Annex VII – Summary\_employment\_contract

Annex VIII - Timesheet\_version\_2020

Annex IX - Individual\_travel\_report

Annex X - Financial\_statement

Annex XI- (Progress) Technical Implementation Report

Annex XII- (Final) Technical Implementation Report