

FEMME FORWARD

FEMME FORWARD

Quality Assurance Plan

Deliverable D1.2 | 31 MARCH 2023



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

About the FEMME FORWARD project

FEMME FORWARD targets the low representation of women in digital jobs and start-ups. Through an innovative and comprehensive training programme, women with various backgrounds will be empowered to either start a career in tech or employ their experience and knowledge to set up a tech start-up.

The project team will work to identify, develop and pilot high-quality digital education content that will tackle the current gender gap in the digital economy, enabling at least 500 women to start on the track to tech employment or entrepreneurship.

FEMME FORWARD will support women with various backgrounds with a special focus on:

- migrants and refugees, whose qualifications are not recognized in the EU;
- professionals and women who want to change careers for better job prospects;
- young graduates from non-tech degrees who want to move into tech positions;
- women who have a tech business idea and want to make it a reality;
- women re-entering the labour market after maternity.

The FEMME FORWARD Consortium

The FEMME FORWARD consortium is a partnership of **15 stakeholders and 1 subcontractor** led by Simplon.co, bringing together key industry, technology and education stakeholders in Europe. Its composition is presented in the following table.

Partners	Acronym
Asociatia ETIC	Digital Kids
BeCode	BeCode
Big Blue Data Academy I.K.E.	Big Blue Data
Cyprus Computer Society	CCS
ENGIM Piemonte	ENGIM Piemonte
Hochschule Hannover – University of Applied Sciences and Arts	HSH
Le Techspace	Le Techspace
Simplon.co	SIMPLON.CO
Tech and Teach GGMBH / Codingschule	Codingschule
Consorzio Top-IX - Torino e Piemonte Exchange Point	Top-IX
ASOCIACION FACTORIA F5 (<i>to be added to the project with amendment</i>)	ASOCIACION FACTORIA F5
Associated partners	
Amazon Web Services EMEA	AWS
DIGITALEUROPE	DIGITALEUROPE
Fujitsu Services	Fujitsu
Randstad Enterprise Group	Randstad
Subcontractors	
Schuman Associates	SA

Revision History

Version	Date	Modified by	Comments
1	25/01/2023	Schuman Associates	Initial draft
2	02/03/2023	Schuman Associates	Second draft
3	31/03/2023	Schuman Associates	Third draft
4			
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Project: 101087270— FEMME FORWARD — ERASMUS-EDU-2022-PI-FORWARD

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Quality Assurance Plan, 2023.

Deliverable D1.2: “Quality Assurance Plan”

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 QUALITY ASSURANCE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE	3
2.1 Quality assurance team	3
2.2 Work Package leaders	3
2.3 Contributing partners	4
3 QUALITY MANAGEMENT APPROACH	7
3.1 Quality Policy	7
3.2 Quality Assurance process	7
4. QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT & PROCESSES	13
4.1 Project Management & Control	13
4.2 Internal communications	15
4.3 Partnership meetings	17
5 QUALITY OF PROJECT OUTPUTS & DELIVERABLES	18
5.1 Alignment with EU instruments	18
5.2 Quality of outputs & documents	18
5.3 Quality standards for public events	19
5.4 Communications materials	19
5.5 General Standards and Requirements	20
6 IMPACT EVALUATION	21
6.1 KPIs for Short-Term and Long-Term Results	22
6.2 Expected Impact on the Target Groups	27
6.3 Impact Assessment	31
ANNEX 1 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS GUIDELINES ON AWPC	32
Overview of the process guidelines	32
Key tool and platform: AWPC WITHIN THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING	32
Basics for smooth processes	33
Key Activities Requiring Coordination	33
FEMME FORWARD Meetings	33
Communications Support for technical Work Packages	34
Incorporation of new work package leaders	34
How to empower technical WP interaction and teamwork in a digital collaboration context	34
ANNEX 2 QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW ACTIONS	36
2.1 Template for the quality review of WP key deliverables	36

List of Tables

Table 1: Division of project work	5
Table 2: Overview of the Deliverable/Output Review Process	10
Table 3: Languages covered by FEMME FORWARD partners	10
Table 4: Dissemination and communication material	19
Table 5: KPIs for Short-Term Results	22
Table 6: KPIs for Long-Term Results	25

List of Figures

Figure 1: FEMME FORWARD Quality Assurance Process Lifecycle	8
Figure 2: FEMME FORWARD Pert Chart	32

1 INTRODUCTION

The Quality Assurance Plan (QAP) presented in this document is primarily addressed to the organisations formally participating in the FEMME FORWARD consortium as partners and aims to summarise and document our approach to Continuous Quality Assurance and Management throughout the FEMME FORWARD project. It defines the processes put in place to achieve each of the project objectives, ensure the utmost consistency and quality of project activities and outputs, and maximise the level of internal and external collaboration, impact and outreach of the project overall.

The Quality Assurance Team has set up a hybrid quality assurance and impact evaluation structure with internal and external quality reviews and evaluation processes to ensure that project activities are implemented in accordance with the Grant Agreement.

This process includes the facilitation of Active Work Packages Coordination (AWPC) to align activities and approaches across different Work Packages, and the continuous review of project tasks and deliverables by both FEMME FORWARD partners and the Quality Assurance Team at all stages of implementation, with a particular emphasis on key project deliverables providing the basis for future project steps and / or for public dissemination. The regular bi-weekly Steering Committee meeting will include a specific agenda point on Quality Assurance, ensuring there is continuous focus on the development of each key deliverable and the overall quality assurance of the ongoing tasks.

Overall, the FEMME FORWARD partnership is opting for a proactive and inclusive quality assurance and control approach across all project stages. In the first instance, the QA Team motivates and empowers all project partners to identify and prevent potential risks and failures within each Work Package at an early stage through close cooperation and communication; and secondly, the QA Team will work to mitigate (as early as possible) the impact of any quality issues that may arise on upcoming and inter-dependent project activities and outputs.

Quality Assurance focuses on four areas, which are equally important and strategic to project implementation:

- 1. The quality of project management and internal communication and coordination processes.**
- 2. The level of internal partnership interaction and active collaboration.**
- 3. The level of coherent content and outputs that answer the needs of business sectors requiring advanced digital skills - a decisive factor to achieve relevance, quality and sustainability of WP outputs and FEMME FORWARD final project deliverables.**
- 4. The impact of those outputs and their contribution to achieving the defined FEMME FORWARD project goals overall.**

The first area refers to the **project's internal processes** that a) guarantee - to a large extent - the project's efficient administration and coordination, and b) maintain constant communications and positive relations between FEMME FORWARD partners. This requires the definition of clear roles and responsibilities between partners in quality management across the FEMME FORWARD activity (as established in the FEMME FORWARD consortium agreement among partners and beyond), and the set up and ongoing coordination of structured communication channels and meetings for close partner collaboration throughout the project.

The second area is about **the level of internal partnership interaction and active collaboration**, including remote and digitally supported collaboration. The Quality Assurance Team accompanies and supports the ongoing project work with a particular emphasis on this aspect, seeking to ensure that all work contributors are as actively involved as possible, and outputs are the result of true partnership collaboration that everybody feels part of and supports in all circumstances of implementation.

The third area is about the **delivery of coherent content and outputs that are relevant to the project**, serve and support the accomplishment of project objectives, are suited to each target group and address their distinguished needs, and most importantly provide added value to the topic examined. The information conveyed must be accurate and verifiable, providing a realistic reflection that respectively answers the needs of European business sectors requiring advanced digital skills, with an analysis based on scientifically grounded methodology. This area is also focused on ensuring that the external communication is optimally aligned with the FEMME FORWARD technical developments, working closely with the Communications Team in WP5 to

convert sometimes complex content into appealing messages positioning FEMME FORWARD effectively within the European market for digital skills.

The fourth area is focused on **impact evaluation** which is an integral part of the project's quality assurance approach. It refers to the process of assessing the project's effectiveness in achieving its multi-faceted objectives as well as the desired (expected) impact on both target groups and partnership organisations. The impact of the FEMME FORWARD project is measured both quantitatively and qualitatively against the defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and will be monitored throughout its lifecycle, to allow the uptake of remedial actions if required.

This Quality Assurance Plan (QAP) is designed as a guide for FEMME FORWARD partners on the quality assurance and impact assessment procedures that have been established, assessed, and optimised by the Quality Assurance Team in cooperation with the Project Management Team (section 4.1) since the project kick-off. It outlines criteria and processes for quality support and control, identifies partners' roles collaboratively as defined by the project plan and according to process steps, sets performance indicators, and facilitates guidance, supporting process moderation and templates to ensure the quality and consistency of all project deliverables.

The QAP is not intended to address or elaborate on work allocation and dissemination planning issues/arrangements, since these aspects are detailed in Technical Description Part B annexed to the Grant Agreement and other related documents produced by the Project management Team including D1.1 Project Work Plan. Instead, this QAP aims to provide a clear overall framework for the FEMME FORWARD partnership on preventive and corrective measures, as well as planning and support actions to secure the timely and effective implementation of all project tasks and activities, and more importantly, ensure the project outputs achieve the project objectives and deliver the greatest possible impact to women's employment in digital jobs and start-ups.

2 QUALITY ASSURANCE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The FEMME FORWARD partnership employs a 4-tier internal quality assurance organisational structure, consisting of:

- A **Quality Assurance Team** that is responsible for the overall coordination and overseeing of quality assurance and control procedures. The Quality Assurance Team includes *two senior experts* to advise on strategy, methodology, and review of all relevant project processes, outputs and deliverables.
- **Work Package Leaders & Co Leaders** that lead quality management procedures for their Work Package (WP), assuming authority and taking the ultimate responsibility for the timely delivery and expected quality of WP deliverables.
- **Contributing Partners** who are involved in task implementation in the different Work Packages and are assigned specific deliverables and facilitate quality management procedures through self-assessment.
- **Associated Partners** who oversee and review all project outputs and assess them from an external industry perspective.

2.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE TEAM

To ensure the highest possible level of technical quality throughout the project, FEMME FORWARD has established a Quality Assurance Team with two senior Technical Experts to advise on strategy and methodology and review all project outputs and deliverables.

Technical Experts overseeing strategy and methodology:

- **Alexandre Waldman** - International pedagogical manager
- **Brian Cochrane (brian.cochrane@schumanassociates.com)** – EU project management and communications expert who works closely with the communications team to ensure the widespread dissemination and maximum impact of the project outputs throughout Europe.

The Quality Assurance Team is assigned the following tasks and responsibilities.

- Develop the QAP to document the implementation of continuous quality assurance and monitoring processes for the whole duration of the FEMME FORWARD project.
- Present the QAP to the Consortium and provide explanations/clarifications on quality assurance and monitoring processes to facilitate partners' understanding.
- Develop and oversee the implementation of process guidelines ensuring optimum coordination and alignment of active work packages performance ([Annex 1 Quality Assurance Process Guidelines on Active Work Package Coordination](#)).
- Oversee and lead the implementation of the project's quality assurance and control strategy which is based on the proactive engagement of the Quality Assurance Team within each work package and Steering Committee Meetings to checkpoint maximum aligning of ongoing work and overall progress.
- Ongoing monitoring of project implementation and advising the Project Management Team and Steering Committee ([4.1 Project Management & Control](#)) on adherence to defined FEMME FORWARD quality standards ([5 Quality of project outputs & deliverables](#)).
- Maintain close collaboration with WP Leaders and Co-Leaders to prevent any failure risks, provide support and consultancy for continuous improvement, and ensure that WP tasks are completed in an efficient and positive collaboration environment, seeking highest possible project and sector impact, and on-time.
- Review of all project deliverables and outputs during each of their development stages and before submission, identifying and implementing possible improvements.
- Trigger preventive and remedial actions, to secure the quality of outputs and results.
- Design and implement annual quality reviews on FEMME FORWARD active work packages performance and key deliverables achieved ([Annex 2 Quality Assurance Review Actions](#)).

2.2 WORK PACKAGE LEADERS

Work Package Leaders & Co-Leaders (WPLs) are responsible for the coordination of the technical/research work within a Work Package (WP). Their primary objective is to assure the proper and timely execution of the work program in their Work Packages and the accomplishment of WP objectives, actively involving all WP assigned partners at a minimum, and in accordance with the Detailed Project Description and Workplan provided in the Technical Description Part B and its updates.

WPLs have a substantial role in quality management, assuming authority and taking responsibility for the quality of project deliverables and timely implementation of project activities within their WP. They hold the following duties:

- Shape the priorities and directions for WP and task implementation.
- Provide timely information on the planning of activities and the involvement of partners therein.
- Provide accurate and timely instructions/ documentation to relevant partners if these partners are involved in activities/ tasks.
- Maintain close collaboration between each other to monitor the progress of WP implementation and prevent any failure and underperformance risks.
- Identify and report possible risks and deviations to the Project Manager and the Quality Assurance Team.
- Take all necessary measures to avoid major delays in tasks implementation and low-quality results.
- Monitor the implementation of remedial actions and corrective measures at WP level.
- Perform quality reviews regarding the WP under their responsibility.
- Ensure WP tasks and deliverables are delivered by partners on time, according to the quality standards as detailed in section 5. Quality of Project Outputs & Deliverables.
- Optionally provide improvement suggestions from operational partner technical collaboration experiences on processes, internal and external communication and collaboration methods and/or other related issues.

2.3 CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS

Each partner of the FEMME FORWARD consortium is responsible for their assigned tasks within each WP, as defined in the Detailed Project Description and Work Plan. Contributing Partners facilitate quality management through self-assessments, and their expected contribution includes:

- Active monitoring of their specific activity progress.
- Adopting efficient internal management and coordination procedures to deliver high-quality outcomes on time.
- Making sure that their own completed deliverables or inputs conform to the defined quality standards and FEMME FORWARD templates as detailed in section 5. Quality of Project Outputs & Deliverables.
- Undertaking all necessary actions for increasing the quality of input and deliverables.
- Communicating any delays or problems in the WPLs.
- Proposing improvement suggestions from operational partner technical collaboration experiences on processes, internal and external communication and collaboration methods, and/or other related issues.

Table 1 shows in overview the partners involved in each work package with corresponding roles, in line with FEMME FORWARD proposal and Grant Agreement.

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TABLE 1: DIVISION OF PROJECT WORK

Work Package	Partners involvement	Outputs
WP1: Project Management	<p>Lead: SIMPLON.CO</p> <p>Substantial Contribution: All Partners</p>	<p>Output 1: Project Steering Committee and Quality Assurance Team</p> <p>Output 2: Sustainable FEMME FORWARD partnership</p> <p>Output 3: Online & Offline Collaboration Programme</p>
WP2: Curricula development	<p>Lead: SIMPLON.CO</p> <p>Substantial Contribution: BeCode, ENGIM PIEMONTE, HSH, TOP-IX</p>	<p>Output 4: 9 Piloting scenarios</p> <p>Output 5: Skills assessment tools</p> <p>Output 6: Curricula plans & high-quality digital training materials</p>
WP 3: Programme Set up	<p>Lead: HSH</p> <p>Substantial Contribution: SIMPLON.CO</p>	<p>Output 7: Project learning gateway platform</p> <p>Output 8: Train the trainer support</p>
WP4: Future Start-up Founders	<p>Lead: Codingschule</p> <p>Substantial Contribution: CCS, TOP-IX</p>	<p>Output 9: 5X Future Start-up Founders trainings</p> <p>Output 10: Sustainable Future Start-up Founders training materials</p> <p>Output 11: Training and support for training providers</p>
WP5: Future tech careers	<p>Lead: TOP-IX</p> <p>Substantial Contribution: All Partners</p>	<p>Output 12: 11x Future Tech Careers trainings</p> <p>Output 13: Sustainable Future Tech Careers training materials</p> <p>Output 14: Training and support for training providers</p>
WP6: Transition pathways & community development	<p>Lead: Codingschule</p> <p>Substantial Contribution: TOP-IX</p>	<p>Output 15: Sustainable transition pathways to facilitate entry into tech employment or entrepreneurship</p> <p>Output 16: Test & deliver transition into employment or entrepreneurship</p> <p>Output 17: Engagement benefits map</p> <p>Output 18: Strong women in tech community</p>

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<p>WP7: Dissemination & European Impact</p>	<p>Lead: ENGIM PIEMONTE Substantial Contribution: SIMPLON.CO</p>	<p>Output 19: Communications Strategy & Tools Output 20: Participate in a European Women in Tech Stakeholder Conference Output 21 : EU Dissemination & Rollout Programme</p>
<p>WP8: Long Term Sustainability</p>	<p>Lead: SIMPLON.CO</p>	<p>Output 22: Long Term Sustainability Strategy Output 23: Sustainable Learning Programme</p>

3 QUALITY MANAGEMENT APPROACH

3.1 QUALITY POLICY

Our Quality Policy is focused on consistently providing services and deliverables that exceed stakeholder expectations for the whole duration of the project. Quality means delivering services and deliverables which comprehensively meet the agreed specifications and most importantly deliver a measurable impact on their target audiences. Within the FEMME FORWARD project, we are:

1. Planning effectively for project delivery in line with the requirements of the grant agreement.
2. Ensuring each partner assigns appropriately skilled, experienced, and competent people to staff the project.
3. Ensuring FEMME FORWARD adopts collaboration processes that are inclusive, interactive, transparent, logical and efficient.
4. Supporting project delivery with appropriate technology, infrastructure, and administrative supports.
5. Maintaining open and ongoing communication with all FEMME FORWARD partners and EACEA throughout the project delivery.
6. Ensuring the Quality Assurance Team is actively involved in each Work Package to ensure that we are progressing in the right direction and developing deliverables aligned with project goals and the work programme.
7. Acting on feedback received throughout project delivery to address any partner or stakeholder concerns.
8. Setting objectives and measuring against them in order to improve, paying particular attention to contract, time and communication aspects and quality of our project delivery.
9. Encouraging and providing support for continuous improvement throughout the 4 years of the contract.

We believe that implementing this policy gives confidence to all project stakeholders that we will create quality deliverables and an effective and practical training programmes and related material, which will provide a positive and enduring impact on the lives of young women across Europe.

3.2 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

The Quality Assurance Process has been specifically developed for the needs of the FEMME FORWARD project. The process aims to define core planning elements such as the timing and frequency of quality assessments, responsibility allocation along with anticipated time commitments, expected involvement of responsible Partners, and any other aspect that may be important or unique to the Project and its stakeholders.

The Quality Assurance Process also aims to standardise the methods of managing the project and of work organisation. The main goal of the process is to ensure a consistent and qualitative assessment of the various Work Packages and activities during the project.

The objectives of the Quality Assurance Process are to ensure:

- Project deliverables consistently meet their stated requirements.
- Project management processes including specific work packages performance procedures are well followed and optimally implemented, but also adapt flexibly where needs merge.
- Project team members / Partners excel in their individual roles.
- Project stakeholders are delighted with the ongoing work, quality and impact of the results.

The Quality Assurance Process is based on a set of components or constituent elements. These elements are summarised in Figure 1 and explained in the following paragraphs.



FIGURE 1: FEMME FORWARD QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS LIFECYCLE

Step 1: Effective Quality Assurance Team

The entire FEMME FORWARD project team operates based on a clearly defined internal working structure and a culture of active participation and cooperation between partners, with expert support and advice from the Quality Assurance Team to guide each WP leader in the execution of their deliverables.

As outlined above, the Quality Assurance Team consists of a core team of independent external senior technical experts contracted by SIMPLON.CO, supported by a pool of experts from selected Partner organisations who are leading each Work Package.

The Quality Assurance Team closely interacts with the Project Manager who is responsible for the overall management and monitoring of FEMME FORWARD work progress. The Project Manager also works closely with the Steering Committee that provides feedback and insights on the strategic direction of the project and ensures its overall delivery to the highest quality standards.

Most importantly, the Quality Assurance Team members are actively engaged in the preparation and delivery of each Work Package and coordination between them, alerting and providing support pro-actively and on time rather than adopting a passive external review and post-evaluation role.

Step 2: Proactive Quality Assurance

The quality assurance is put in place prior to starting work and as an ongoing process of empowerment and support to the teams working on each Work Package.

The most effective quality assurance method is to ensure personal motivation and enthusiasm to complete a task or deliverable to the highest possible quality standard in close exchange with other capable partners. The objective of both the Project Manager and the Quality Assurance Team is to actively foster collaboration and engagement between experts working on each Work Package and stimulate an atmosphere of creative thinking, close interaction and professional excellence.

The specialist knowledge and expertise of the Quality Assurance Team and the strategic insights and experience of the Steering Committee provide the required inspiration and quality ‘safety net’ to ensure that no deliverable/ output will fall short of expected quality standards or fail to achieve the desired impact on the target audience.

Step 3: Active Work Packages Coordination

A key part of our Quality Assurance Process includes **Active Work Packages Coordination (AWPC)** with the lead members from each active work package within the bi-weekly Steering Committee meeting and bilaterally as needed. The Steering Committee meeting is hosted via Amazon Chime with the agenda pre-agreed and minutes circulated promptly to all participants via the Discord channel set up to coordinate the project.

During each bi-weekly Steering Committee meeting the leaders of the active work packages present an update on the main activities completed during the reporting period and their ongoing tasks, highlighting activities that may require review, feedback by and further (pro)-active coordination from the other Work Package leaders.

During the meeting, any issues of concern or possible conflict areas are openly discussed between the participants in a frank and honest way, points of view are exchanged, and a resolution to every issue is either negotiated and agreed within the meeting itself or follow up actions are confirmed for bilateral discussions and agreement before the following AWPC.

This proactive communication platform facilitates constructive exchanges between partners and mitigates any potential risks or problems before they have an opportunity to escalate into situations that could impact the quality of deliverables or the project timeline.

The AWPCs have proved to be a highly effective collaboration environment that facilitate the open exchange of ideas and the inclusive involvement of many different experts and inter-disciplinary perspectives in the development of each stage of all key activities and deliverables. It is also an efficient meeting point for agreeing on the FEMME FORWARD Steering Committee agenda, usually requiring precise and clear interactions between all active work package leaders backed by the entire FEMME FORWARD partnership.

Step 4: Quality Review of Deliverables

Quality reviews of all the **project deliverables** are performed by the Quality Assurance Team, the Work Package Leaders / Co-leads and the Contributing Partners for each work package.

The **first level of quality review** is performed by the WP Leader during the first draft development. The WP Leader will ensure that:

- The work performed corresponds to the requirements and methodological standards of the project.
- The drafting and structuring of each deliverable include the contribution of all relevant experts.
- Deliverables use clear and easily understandable language in the text and the design is professional and in line with the project brand identity, guidelines and document template.
- Furthermore, the output is in line with the standards adopted by the European Commission.

Specifically, this review aims to verify and guarantee that all technical and functional requirements are met. WP Leaders check that each deliverable has complied with the rules defined for each output type before circulating the document for input from AWPCs and Contributing Partners within the WP.

A second level of quality review is performed by the Quality Assurance Team and Communications Team. This quality review is comprehensive, checking compliance with the specific Terms of References (ToR) and other requirements, completeness of the content, compliance with format and structure, use of language, style, clarity of expression, etc. During this stage, the Quality Assurance Team constructively works with each WP Leader and the Contributing Partners to further develop and improve the output in an iterative way until a final agreed draft is ready. The Communications Team in WP7 review focuses on alignment with FEMME FORWARD brand guidelines and templates.

The final level of quality review deals with assessing the overall quality and impact of the deliverable. The reviewing partners for this level are selected based on their related expertise and experience. Each reviewing partner is invited to rate the quality and impact of the document, using a tailored **Quality Review Form** developed for each deliverable (please refer to the template of the Review Form in Annex 2.1) and submit their feedback to the Quality Assurance Team. The form inputs are then assessed by the respective WP Leader in order

to create a final draft and pick up possible lessons learned for the future FEMME FORWARD outputs to be developed.

When this review process is complete all updates, inputs and suggestions are incorporated into the final draft by the WP leaders and submitted as a final deliverable for publication and dissemination.

The table below presents an overview of the Deliverable Review Process.

TABLE 2: OVERVIEW OF THE DELIVERABLE/OUTPUT REVIEW PROCESS

Review	Partners	Activities	Timeline
Level 1	Work Package Leader	Verify and guarantee that all technical and functional requirements are met with first draft.	2 weeks
Level 2	Quality Assurance Team and Communication Team	Checking compliance with the specific Terms of References (ToR) and other requirements, completeness of the content, compliance with document templates and structure, use of language, style, and clarity of expression.	1 week
Level 3	Selected Reviewing Partners	Quality Review Form to rate the quality of the final Deliverable / Output against specific metrics.	2 weeks

Step 5: Language Quality Check

One of the key quality requirements during the project will be accurate local language translations for outputs such as Training Materials and Communications Campaigns and Tools. Our network of consortium partners currently covers minimum 7 EU languages. Each partner is tasked with the role of translating and localising training programmes, support materials, and content to reflect their local language and context, particularly for the pilot training programmes. This use of native translation throughout the project ensures the highest possible quality and contextual accuracy of all outputs.

All formal project Outputs, Deliverables and Reports are required to be prepared in English and will be proofread and corrected by native English-speaking members of the Quality Assurance Team before submission.

The table below presents the FEMME FORWARD Partners and the languages covered by each, noting that all partners have the capacity to professionally communicate in English.

TABLE 3: LANGUAGES COVERED BY FEMME FORWARD PARTNERS

	FEMME FORWARD Partners	Languages
1	BeCode LeTechspace	English / French / Dutch
2	SIMPLON.CO	French
3	HSH Codingschule	German
4	Big Blue Data CCS	Greek
5	ENGIM PIEMONTE TOP-IX	Italian
6	ASOCIACION FACTORIA F5	Spanish

FEMME FORWARD Partners		Languages
7	Digital Kids	Romanian

Step 6: Key Performance Indicators

In order to measure the actual achievements and impact of the project, clear outputs and results have been defined for each Work Package and Target Audience. This will not only be useful in highlighting project successes but will also ensure that the activities are targeted as the indicators are a representation of the Project Objectives to be achieved.

The quality and impact of each Work Package and Deliverable are measured against a set of Key Performance Indicators that define the required quantitative and qualitative targets expected. **Section 6 Impact Assessment** below presents the expected impact on each Target Audience and the specific KPIs that will measure both qualitative and quantitative impact.

Step 7: Quality Performance Monitoring & Reporting

Monitoring

Project progress and quality levels are monitored continuously by the Project Manager, WP leaders and the Quality Assurance Team through the regular online collaboration and project management meetings. We will track progress versus KPIs and monitor the impact of each Output on each target group on an ongoing basis throughout the project.

Financial monitoring is based on a continuous check of implementation costs featuring monthly staff engagement evaluation and expenditures reports. Although the system can be time consuming to implement, it is necessary to ensure continuous control of staff costs in order to respect the agreed budget. The system is based on specific forms designed by the lead partner in accordance with the requirement of EACEA.

A **complementary monitoring mechanism, specific to the Communication and Dissemination**, will be put in place to assess the impact of communication actions from the whole partnership in a regular and accurate way within one **Communications Dashboard**. The system will be based on a specific excel sheet, designed by the Communications Manager (WP7), that all partners complete every six months.

Reporting

This Communications Dashboard will be an important component of FEMME FORWARD Quality Assurance Reporting. Complementary reporting and monitoring will take place continuously in the form of periodic internal and external reports and a task monitoring system that monitors and evaluates the performances of each task on the project's Google Workspace channel. We have assigned a WP leader / co-leader to each Work Package and there are a number of partners who are substantial contributors based on their experience and capacity. This structure facilitates a high level of project control and reporting from WP contributors to WP leaders and co-leads, and then centrally to the Project Manager.

The Quality Assurance Team also actively contributes to the preparation of the Annual Reports, providing inputs on the level of quality achieved within each Work Package, the quality of each key Output and Deliverable and the progress on the delivery of KPIs versus target within the Annual Report itself.

Step 8: Continuity of Service

The Quality Assurance Process also establishes the communication framework and the personnel policy for the delivery of this project.

In particular:

- All members of the FEMME FORWARD Partnership consider this assignment as very high priority whatever the potential changes or issues that may arise (e.g., scheduling changes).
- All partners and experts recruited onto each WP team have expressed a strong interest in being involved in this project and are committed to remaining available and engaged for the whole contract duration.

- Backup team members are available within each Partner organisation to complement the core team and to ensure continuity in the event of absence.
- Team members will be continuously informed on project developments to stay updated in order to work within each WP, thus limiting the impact of a change in the team.
- WP Co-Leaders and Contributors act as backup WP Leaders in the unlikely event that a WP leader can no longer perform their functions within the project.
- Bi-weekly meetings between team members involved in each Work Package (AWPC) are held to detect in advance possible instability factors that could reduce the effectiveness and efficiency of the team and to undertake the appropriate remedial actions.

Our project management methodology also ensures that we have the strength and depth of resources to handle any planned or unforeseen absences by expert team members due, for example, to annual leave, maternity or paternity leave or sick leave.

Each Work Package is resourced to ensure sufficient overlap across team member functions to allow for backup solutions in the event of absences and especially unforeseen circumstances. Replacement team members can step in at short notice if necessary and quickly bring themselves up to speed by accessing and reviewing all project documentation on Google Workspace.

The Quality Plan's structure and content will be reviewed by the Quality Assurance Team in collaboration with the Project Manager on an annual basis, based on information and inputs collected or generated by other procedures and tasks defined in the Quality Plan.

During these reviews the following issues will be addressed:

- The appropriateness of the current quality policy
- Review of the achievements so far in terms of performance indicators and feedback by the Contracting Authority on project progress
- Review and update of the targets regarding quality
- Availability and quality of resources

Detailed examinations of these issues may indicate the necessity to revise the Quality Plan, in which case the Quality Manager undertakes to prepare concrete and duly motivated proposals for the changes. Before changes in the Quality Plan are implemented the approval of the Steering Committee is requested on the basis of a detailed proposal. The approved changes are communicated to the relevant consortium members and experts, along with a new version of the Quality Plan.

4. QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT & PROCESSES

4.1 PROJECT MANAGEMENT & CONTROL

SIMPLON.CO is the lead partner of the consortium and in control of the overall project and contract management throughout its 2-year duration.

Project Steering Committee

In order to manage the project effectively and inclusively we have established a Project Steering Committee led by SIMPLON.CO and including representatives from the four Associated Partners together with leaders of each Work Package who are consulted for advice on project work packages rollouts, outputs and quality control.

Project Management Team

SIMPLON.CO will provide the Project Management (PM) Team for the project composed of senior and experienced EU project delivery experts from various fields. The PM team will be supported by the Quality Assurance Team.

The PM team will have a key role in guiding, supervising, supporting the project daily work and monitoring project progress and the quality of its outputs, as well as ensuring resolution of issues arising during implementation.

The PM team will ensure a quality culture is adopted throughout the project by applying the system of rigorous procedures described in this QAP, providing in this way for Quality Control of project outputs and ensuring the quality of all tasks throughout each Work Package.

Communication & Control

At the outset of the project, a detailed Project Work Plan will be developed for the 2-year duration of the project providing more details on the activities, tasks, milestones, timelines, people and resources for each Work Package. Once agreed with EACEA, this document will be used to monitor progress during the rest of the project.

The Work Plan activities and deliverables will be broken out into smaller tasks and assigned to each WP leader and contributing organisation, with progress and communications managed and monitored via the project's Google Workspace channel to provide a high level of visibility of each task and ensure prompt and efficient delivery by each contributor.

Overall communication within the Consortium is based on a shared protocol managed by the Lead Partner SIMPLON.CO. Procedures have been established for standard communication, meeting reporting, exchange of information among the consortium and a shared platform for document management has been set up via Google Workspace Share drive.

Online meetings of the whole partnership happen on a bi-weekly basis. In addition, WP leaders participate in the bi-weekly Steering Committee meetings to discuss progress on each WP, coordinate their actions, and agree the details of every aspect of every deliverable.

WPs leaders are directly responsible for the communication with the partners working/contributing to the specific WPs, whilst SIMPLON.CO is accountable for the overall communication, activities and results, against the Alliance and the European Commission.

Project Management Guidelines

To ensure the highest level of quality and the successful delivery of this complex project, we have adopted the following project management guidelines to achieve excellent performance throughout:

Quality: Quality during the implementation of the project is paramount and should not be sacrificed to any other considerations. Our project management team ensure a quality culture is adopted throughout the project, supported by a system of sound procedures which not only provide Quality Control of project outputs but also assure the quality of all tasks throughout each Work Package.

Robust and flexible organisation: Our approach is designed to maximise efficiency and effectiveness. Along these lines, we have established a robust and efficient organisation to ensure a fast and flexible response to meet any specific requirements and issues, while ensuring the quality of the outputs.

Flexibility of approach: Flexibility and a problem-solving approach are essential to allow us to deal effectively with unexpected circumstances and changes in the environment of the project, which are not uncommon, and adapt its implementation approach, when needed, to achieve the best possible results.

Efficient use of prior work and existing information: We undertake to ensure that all relevant and available existing information, studies, reports and methodologies are collected, reviewed, analysed and suitably incorporated in our work. Additionally, we are actively seeking to identify synergies with other initiatives, platforms, projects and programmes that complement FEMME FORWARD.

Effective project implementation organisation and experts staffing structure: The proposed team organisation has been designed to maximise the effectiveness of project activities. We have adopted a clear delineation of consortium responsibilities and matched the project tasks to the specialised expertise and knowledge areas of our partners, supported by the Projects Leader's overall responsibility and our quality control processes.

Close cooperation and continuous consultation with Partners: We maintain open and informal communication channels with our partners throughout the project in order to ensure that progress, information and ideas are shared, and that execution remains on track and in accordance with the objectives of the call. Openness in communication, with a common commitment to optimum results and to settling any difficulties arising, is always beneficial for achieving a project's expected results and objectives.

Hands-on, proactive management, monitoring and control: Our project management and quality assurance teams have a key role in guiding, supervising and supporting the team of experts involved in assisting resolution of key issues and in monitoring the progress of the project and the quality of its outputs. This approach enables us to: (a) be constantly informed of the needs of the project so as to organise the timely provision of resources and any additional support required for implementation; (b) identify early any difficulties or problems in the implementation of the activities and intervene to offer solutions and put them back on track, thus averting crisis situations; (c) ensure the production of quality outputs and value added.

Strong backstopping capacity: Our entire project delivery team is supported by adequate and expert backstopping resources, for project administration, monitoring and logistics support. We also have access to a broad network of experts from each partner that ensures the prompt identification and provision of expertise to tackle project needs. Project management shall also encompass effective processes, systems and tools to enable the exercise of its function. This capacity enables us to address all main and optional tasks.

Financial Management of the Contract

SIMPLON.CO ensures a sound overall administrative and financial management, while monitoring progress along the lines set in the project roadmap, which includes a clear timeline with key milestones and activities.

SIMPLON.CO's management of the project is enhanced by the combined use of project management and accounting tools. This allows for precise control and monitoring of the budget, associated with regular internal financial reports, and for a forecast exercise to monitor project partners' expenditures. This alerts the Project Manager to early signs of delay or budget overrun. It also allows the Project Manager to view and model the project in numerous ways in order to optimise resource usage, provide corrections for unforeseen problems and produce the various reports required internally and externally.

Internal audit processes enable SIMPLON.CO to manage and respond quickly to project risks and deviations. Using standard audit techniques, the internal audit will review the way in which the project is being carried out and, in particular, verify compliance with SIMPLON.CO's management procedures (including risk management process).

Tailored assistance and support (specific call or face-to-face meetings set up on an individual or group basis as appropriate, explanatory documentation, etc.) will be provided throughout the project to partners who are less experienced in European Union-funded projects.

Ensure Partners collaboration across all project lifecycles and active work packages: Process Guidelines as outlined in the previous chapter act here complementarily.

4.2 INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The quality assurance mechanisms of the project foresee regular internal communication and periodical information flow, to meet the following objectives:

- Communicate project goals and targets, ongoing tasks and activities to the staff of participating organisations.
- Ensure instant and direct implementation of remedial actions and corrective measures.
- Provide SIMPLON.CO with the information required for onward progress and financial reporting to EACEA. More details on reporting and financial administration are provided in the Partnership Agreement.
- Provide the Project Management Team and Work Package leaders with detailed, up-to-date and high-quality information on the state of the project, allowing for constant monitoring and continuous improvement.

Overall, internal communication is mostly facilitated through:

- a) Discord channel / Amazon Chime & Google Workspace Share drive; the project's collaboration platform and document sharing system respectively,
- b) meaningful complementary email messages,
- c) Technical WP internal meetings as emerging from ongoing project work
- d) Bi-weekly Steering Committee meetings online on Amazon Chime

General internal communication rules

The main communication platforms are Discord & Amazon Chime.

The bulk of daily or occasional communication and information exchange among partners is online, through e-mails and virtual meetings/conferences, unless otherwise required by the project's contractual obligations.

Emails among FEMME FORWARD partners should have a clear and meaningful subject line directly providing the purpose of communication. (e.g., "FEMME FORWARD - Shaping the research methodology on skills intelligence gathering activities").

In case of conflict or disagreement, issues should be brought to the attention of the project management / Quality Assurance team.

Virtual meetings or phone calls are also encouraged to address urgent issues. Urgent correspondence over e-mail will be sent with a request for "explicit acknowledgement". Ordinary mail will be used for legal documentation, such as contacts and IPR agreements, i.e., when signatures are required.

In terms of internal collaboration/communication, **Work Package Leaders** are responsible to:

- Provide input and guidance to contributing partners on WP task implementation, deliverables, expected results and processes.
- Organise and chair WP specific meetings, intended to discuss work-planning issues, progress, deliverable production and objectives accomplishment.
- Ensure WP tasks and deliverables are delivered on time, under certain quality standards & requirements.
- Keep the work plan updated (for their WP) and timely communicate changes to the Project Management Team.
- WP Leaders shall be informed about all communications taking place between Parties regarding the WP under their responsibility. They should be in copy of all relevant emails. WP Leaders, in turn, shall regularly update the PMT about the implementation of WP activities, and potential risks that may arise.

In terms of internal collaboration/communication, **Contributing Partners** are responsible for:

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- Providing input and guidance to team members and experts on their expected role/contribution within the task, intended targets and expected results.
- Discuss the progress of task implementation against the project's work plan.
- Ensure the timely delivery and utmost quality of project deliverables within their task.
- Identify and report to Work Package Leaders possible risks and deviations from their assigned tasks and the project's work plan.

Discord, Amazon Chime & Google Workspace Share drive

The Project Management Team has set up three project channels on Discord, Amazon Chime and Google Workspace to facilitate collaboration and resources/materials exchange between FEMME FORWARD partners. The channels' environments are hosted by AWS. All partners' staff involved in FEMME FORWARD implementation have been added as members and have received an invitation email to join in.

In the context of the FEMME FORWARD project, Workspace Share drive is primarily used as a shared deliverables (documents) storage and management platform and is used as the primary tool for online synchronous collaboration on deliverables.

General rules of use

- Workspace Share drive is used as a shared deliverables (documents) storage and management platform. Task allocation and deadline setting are to take place through the work-plan dedicated files/schemes.
- Centralised communication and information exchange among partners can take place through Discord channel / Amazon Chime discussion tools when appropriate, with more detailed exchanges with smaller groups of partners via emails and virtual meetings.
- Depending on the situation, partners' inputs on documents can be collected on an individual basis (where each partner provides input individually in their own copy of the document) or on a single collaborative version of the deliverable, or via email when relevant and specified by the WPL.
- WP Leaders should make sure that all relevant WP documents and deliverables have been timely and properly uploaded to SharePoint.
- Before any partner meeting, the agenda and other possible relevant documents are posted in a timely manner on Google Workspace.
- After any meeting held with partners, steering committee, and associate partner meeting, the involved WP Leaders make sure that the relevant documentation (e.g., presentation slides, additional information) is posted on Google Workspace.
- Simplon.co is responsible for managing members, folders and documents, as well as to ensure coherence, security and privacy following GDPR rules.

Cooperation between Partners

The management structure of the partnership is set up in order to perform a shared but rapid decision-making process. The lead partner, SIMPLON.CO, was selected as a coordinator and possesses extensive experience of project management.

Decision Making

Frequent meetings (especially online and in person) facilitate a rapid decision-making process where the implementation of the project and any related issues are constantly addressed and agreed. The definition of Leader and selected key partners for the implementation of each WP ensures agile but experienced project coordination. Decisions are made on consensus as much as possible; where consensus is not possible, decisions are made by majority or by direction of the project leader.

Conflict Resolution

Preventative measures, such as the Active Work Package Leaders Coordination within the Steering Committee, have been taken to avoid conflict wherever possible, but if conflicts do occur a series of informal and formal conflict resolution activities are implemented to defuse the situation and ensure a continuation of all project activities.

At a formal level, all Alliance partners will sign up to a Consortium Agreement which defines roles and responsibilities in detail to avoid any miscommunications. As a further guarantee of harmony inside the Alliance, work packages and related tasks responsibilities have been shared among the partners keeping in mind the personal attitudes and previous working relationship of key staff involved. Moreover, many of the partners have already been in contact during previous initiatives – not only at European level but also at local one.

4.3 PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS

The international nature of FEMME FORWARD requires most day to day work to take place remotely, and this interaction is facilitated by on-line collaboration events, tools and continuous exchange. Bi-weekly on-line FEMME FORWARD Steering Committee meetings were established from January 2023 onward.

Each meeting adheres to the following quality criteria, regardless of whether they are organised either on-site or virtually.

Before the meeting

- Develop a clearly structured agenda outlining key issues or problems to be discussed. The agenda should be circulated well before the meeting to enable participants to get prepared for meeting's proceedings.
- Have a realistic time-planning including event duration, the number of participants, meeting methods and formats, and issues to be discussed.
- Assign roles within the organisation but also within the partnership (e.g., facilitation, minutes keeping).
- Choose a web-conferencing platform to host the event (*applicable only for virtual or hybrid events*).
- Test the web-conferencing platform and all relevant equipment well before the event. Partners shall also test their equipment as well (*applicable only for virtual or hybrid events*).
- Book a suitable venue for the meeting (*applicable only for onsite events*).
- Arrange catering, meeting logistics, and equipment (*applicable only for onsite events*).

During the meeting

- Keep and update lists of participants.
- Keep notes on the key points and conclusions drawn from discussion. This includes also taking photos and videos for record keeping and promotional purposes.
- Ensure a good mix of plenary reporting, interactive sessions and workgroup slots
- Invite attendants to use the chat box to post their questions (*applicable only for virtual events*)
- Clearly define meeting follow-up actions

After the meeting

- Prepare meeting minutes (Hosting organisation), circulate within the consortium and update according to partners' feedback and reviews.
- Assess the event based on comments made by participants.
- Upload agenda, participants list and presentations (incl. photos) to the project's folder on Freed camp
- Upload photos on the project's website and social media pages.

5 QUALITY OF PROJECT OUTPUTS & DELIVERABLES

5.1 ALIGNMENT WITH EU INSTRUMENTS

In order to ensure sustainability and long-term impact of the training programmes after the project ends, we are defining quality standards and recognition criteria for the digital skills training programme that ensures it matches closely with the standards used by subject specific accreditation agencies, thus creating benchmarks to measure the training programmes against. FEMME FORWARD is designing the programmes to be very closely aligned with all sector relevant European instruments, standards and tools, in particular EQF, ECVET, ESCO, EQAVET, EUROPASS.

5.2 QUALITY OF OUTPUTS & DOCUMENTS

Regardless of their scope (public or confidential) and nature/type (report or tool), all project outputs should be distinguished for the following:

1. **Relevance:** Project deliverables must contribute to the accomplishment of the defined project objectives and suit the intended target audience.
2. **Completeness:** Project deliverables should correspond to WP/Task objectives and the agreed methodology (if relevant). They must also address all the points described in the Part B Technical Description and comply with the directions provided/agreed with the WP Leader regarding the deliverable's content and scope.
3. **Content validity and information accuracy:** The information provided must be accurate and verifiable. Partners should rely on reliable sources of information, avoid biased, personal opinions/views and justify conclusions with data/evidence. Research & statistical analyses should be based on adequate data sets to allow the partnership to reach reasoned judgements and valid results.
4. **Timeliness:** Project deliverables must be delivered on time according to the project's time plan and internal scheduling or when a deliverable shall be delayed, the partner in charge must have obtained a permission by the WP Leader and the Project Management Team for the extension of the deadline. This criterion also requires that the deliverable has undergone the foreseen quality review/control procedures within the agreed timescales.
5. **Readability:** Deliverables should be concise and well-focused. They must include only relevant sections/texts that contribute to building knowledge on the topic(s) addressed and facilitate reader's understanding. Readability allows to efficiently go through the document and take in the information therein.
6. **Language/Grammar quality:** Deliverables must be delivered in proficient level English without grammatical errors, slang (informal language), typos and incomprehensive sentences. The language used must convey the intended meaning and suit the targeted audience.
7. **Adherence to format specifications:** The deliverable must correspond to the prescribed specifications in terms of file format and file layout/design (e.g., cover page, logos, headings, tables, font, font size, line spacing, page margins)
8. **Visual quality:** It is important that deliverables (especially those which are public and addressed to target groups) are aesthetically appealing and have a concise layout, which will essentially contribute to attracting and retaining readers' interest and increasing their engagement.

The Deliverable/Output Quality Review Process is described in detail in section 3.2 and an overview is presented in Table 2.

5.3 QUALITY STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC EVENTS

Quality standards for public project events, organised either on-site or virtually, are defined in a three-stage approach: a) before the events, b) during the event and c) after the event. These should meet the following minimum requirements.

Before the event

- Set themes and objectives and define the target audience.
- Develop a clearly structured agenda (with sessions and time slots), reflecting the type, purpose & time-planning of the event.
- Develop a communications plan to promote the event to the target audiences and send targeted invitations.
- Be compliant with communication standards and specifications, as defined in the project's communication plan.
- Have a realistic time-planning including event duration, the number of participants, and slots for each agenda item.
- Assign roles within the organisation but also within the partnership (e.g., facilitation, chat moderation, recording etc.)
- Choose a web-conferencing platform to host the event (*applicable only for virtual and hybrid events*)
- Test the web-conferencing platform and all relevant equipment well before the event. Speakers shall also test their equipment as well (*applicable only for virtual and hybrid events*)
- Book a suitable venue for the meeting (*applicable only for on-site events*)
- Arrange catering, meeting logistics, and equipment (*applicable only for on-site events*)

During the event

- Monitor registrations and keep/update a participant list
- Have in place a registration desk and dissemination materials for distribution (*applicable only for on-site events*)
- Invite attendants to use the chat box to post their questions (*applicable only for virtual events*)
- Record proceedings (if possible) and keep notes on the main actions and conclusions drawn from the event.
- Clearly communicate main event conclusions and possible follow-up actions

After the meeting

- Prepare a meeting report with a concise summary of the main discussions, comments and next steps (Hosting organisation)
- Assess the event based on comments made by participants.
- Upload photos, videos, presentations (incl. photos) to the project's website and social media pages.

5.4 COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS

Dissemination and communication materials – both print and electronic - such as brochures, posters, leaflets, digital presentations, and newsletters should fulfil the following quality requirements, which are arranged into three categories/sections: “Content and Language”, “Design and Format”, and “Planning and Distribution”.

TABLE 4: DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION MATERIAL

Content and Language	Design and Format	Planning and Distribution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relevance to project themes and objectives ● The material suits the target audience ● Key messages are effectively conveyed ● Clear and simple language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Concise layout (sections, spaces, columns) ● Font is easy read ● High resolution images and logos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Target audience has been specified ● Distribution channels have been specified ● Dissemination targets have been set and communicated to partners

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Content validity and information accuracy ● Use of a motto or catch phrase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Logos (Project and Erasmus+) are placed in a prominent place ● Disclaimer ● Alignment with project's colour selection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On-time release publication
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5.5 GENERAL STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS

Document Templates

The FEMME FORWARD Communication Manager will create and deliver a set of MS Office templates for FEMME FORWARD deliverables with detailed specifications for cover pages, dividers, and pre-formatted styles for headings, text, bullets, tables, captions, and graphs.

The cover page shall also feature a second (internal) page with basic information/details about the deliverable and the document’s reviewing history. This page will display in a tabular format: a) deliverable title and identification number, b) WP and task code and title, c) document’s date of production, version and status, d) revision history, and e) disclaimer.

Overall, project deliverables should contain the following elements: a) cover page (incl. internal page), b) standardised page with short “About FEMME FORWARD” paragraph, list of project partners, revision history table, legal disclaimer, and disclosure statement, c) table of contents, d) list of figures and/or tables, e) glossary, f) list of abbreviations (if needed), g) authors and contributors, h) executive summary and i) introduction. Further to the above, and depending on the type/nature of deliverables, project partners may also include links to project’s website and social media pages, references and annexes with supplementary technical information and forms.

Finally, all logos must be visible in a prominent place (on the cover page, visible, without scrolling on all electronic and mobile devices) and of a comparable size to each other.

FEMME FORWARD Brand Guidelines and templates for Communications Materials will be available to downloaded from Google Workspace when available.

Language

Project documents and files are initially submitted and exchanged in English, unless otherwise specified. When foreseen, translations will be made by each partner in their own national language.

File naming conventions

It is highly recommended that each deliverable produced by partners in the context of the FEMME FORWARD project should have a unique identification name. The name should consist of the elements listed below, separated by underscores, in the following order:

- Project acronym
- Deliverable code
- Document “discretionary” (brief) title
- Document version (e.g., v1, v2, final)

Example: *FEMME FORWARD_WP1_Quality Assurance Plan_v1 25012023*

6 IMPACT EVALUATION

Impact evaluation is an evidence-based procedure intended to measure the effectiveness of the project in achieving its strategic and operational goals, and in achieving the expected impact on partnership organisations and target groups. Overall, impact analysis, in the context of the FEMME FORWARD project, will revolve around three areas:

- The project's performance (impact) against the defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and further performance figures achieved.
- The impact on partnership organisations (consortium partners), focusing on the integration of project results into internal processes.
- The impact on target groups, particularly the adoption and actual use of project results by relevant stakeholders, or a possible future valorisation of project results.

The results to be obtained from this analysis - as an integral part of quality management procedure - will aid the partnership to a) pinpoint areas for improvement, b) put in place remedial actions if project outputs appear to fall short of the objectives set by the project, and c) identify how to maximise post-project impact based on the feedback from stakeholders and target groups.

The impact of the FEMME FORWARD project will be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively, and will be monitored throughout its lifecycle, allowing for the timely uptake of remedial actions if required.

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6.1 KPIs FOR SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM RESULTS

KPIs for short- and long-term outputs are presented in Tables 5 and 6, respectively

TABLE 5: KPIs FOR SHORT-TERM RESULTS

Short term results	Target groups/potential beneficiaries	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators
Output 1 – Project Steering Committee and Quality Assurance Team	Partners in FEMME FORWARD	11 Full Partners 4 Associated Partners	Strengthened industry-education collaboration aiming to better integrate women in tech
Output 2 – Sustainable FEMME FORWARD partnership	Partners in FEMME FORWARD Industry companies	At least 1 partner in each of the 9 participating countries with a balanced representation of VET trainers for women entrepreneurs and women employees.	Industry-education collaboration to continue post project implementation
Output 3 – Online & Offline Collaboration Programme	Partners in FEMME FORWARD	Min. 12 online partner meetings and 1 physical meeting during the duration of the project	Online collaboration tool delivered Exchange of best practice and expertise between partners
Output 4 – 9 Piloting scenarios	Future VET providers Industry companies	Analysis of the labour market situation and staff shortages for the 9 participating countries	Curricula tested in a large number of testing scenarios thus increasing the relevance of the project's results
Output 5 – Skills assessment tool	Future VET providers Industry companies Women in the tech sector	1 widely used assessment tool to identify talents and skills in the target group	Consistent approach for skills assessment in all participating countries
Output 8 – Train the trainer support	VET providers / Higher Education in FEMME FORWARD Women in the tech sector	Min. 14 VET providers / trainers supported by the end of the project	Practical support and assistance to ensure easy delivery of the Curricula and training programmes
Output 9 – 5X Future Start-up Founders trainings	VET providers / Higher Education in FEMME FORWARD	Min. 150 students enrolled for pilot Future Tech Founders trainings.	Graduates acquired skills and competences for starting businesses in the tech sector

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Short term results	Target groups/potential beneficiaries	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators
	Future VET providers / Higher education Women in the tech sector		
Output 10 – Sustainable Future Start-up Founders training materials	VET providers / Higher Education in FEMME FORWARD Future VET providers / Higher education Women in the tech sector	1 Ready to use training toolkit for Future Tech Founder roll-outs	Ready to use package of online and offline training materials for VET providers / HEIs/ Companies to adapt and use in their country. Online training resources that can be accessed by a wide range of women seeking tech entrepreneurship
Output 11 – Training and support for training providers	Future VET providers / Higher education Women in the tech sector	Min 1 support contact point for each of the 9 participating countries	Practical support and assistance to ensure future roll-out of the training curricula
Output 12 – 10x Future Tech Careers trainings	VET providers / Higher Education in FEMME FORWARD Future VET providers / Higher education Women in the tech sector	Min. 300 students enrolled for pilot Future Tech Careers trainings.	Graduates acquired skills and competences for jobs in the tech sector
Output 19 - Communications Strategy & Tools	Policy makers and key stakeholders Industry companies VET Teachers, trainers, educators	Min 200 EU & National stakeholders / policy makers engaged during communications strategy. Significant visits and engagement with the project website, social media channels and promotional content.	Strong awareness and interest among key policy makers, with positive perceptions of the programme. High visibility and awareness of the FEMME FORWARD project across among VET / Education providers across the EU.
Output 20 – Participate in a European Women in Tech Stakeholder Conference	Partners in the FEMME FORWARD Policy makers and key stakeholders Industry companies	Participation in min. 1 high-level conference related to a better representation of women in the tech sector	Vocational education and training recognised as a way to expand talent pool in tech. Highly positive stakeholder perceptions of the VET programme.

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Short term results	Target groups/potential beneficiaries	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators
Output 21 – EU Dissemination & Rollout Programme	Policy makers and key stakeholders Industry companies VET Teachers, trainers, educators	Achieve promotional KPIs for the campaign Engagement of min 50 tech sector companies with the programme by end Y2. Disseminate the outputs across the 9 participating countries	Increase awareness and create significant impact and adoption of the VET programme across the EU by the end of Y2.
Output 22 – Long-term Sustainability Strategy	Partners in the FEMME FORWARD. Policy makers and key stakeholders	Strategy to ensure ongoing rollout of the project post year 2. Create a sustainable funding model and /or secure EU funding to continue promotion and management activities.	Long term viability of the training programmes and continued growth of the tech sector.
Output 23 - Sustainable Learning Programme	VET Providers / Higher Education Industry companies Enterprises VET Teachers, trainers, educators	Curricula adoption within the 9 pilot countries of the project by end Y2.	Build sustainability into the Curriculum and VET training from the start. Recommendations and guidelines for curricula as a useful tool facilitating accreditation of competences by accreditation bodies.

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TABLE 6: KPIS FOR LONG-TERM RESULTS

Long term results	Target groups/potential beneficiaries	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators
Output 6 – Curricula plans & high-quality digital training materials	VET providers in FEMME FORWARD Future VET providers Policy makers Industry companies Women in the tech sector	2 innovative, tested Core Curricula targeting SFIA levels 2 & 3 for fast-tracking women into tech employment and entrepreneurship	Widely tested, industry-recognised Core Curricula for most in demand occupational profiles in tech
Output 7 – Project learning gateway platform	VET providers in FEMME FORWARD Future VET providers / Higher education Policy makers Industry companies Women in the tech sector	1 user-friendly, multi-language, easily accessible learning platform and educational material repository made available	Single point of entry for current and future VET providers and women searching for entry into tech
Output 13 – Sustainable Future Tech Careers training materials	VET providers / Higher Education in FEMME FORWARD Future VET providers / Higher education Women in the tech sector	1 Ready to use training toolkit for Future Tech Career roll-outs	Ready to use package of online and offline training materials for VET providers / HEIs/ Companies to adapt and use in their country. Online training resources that can be accessed by a wide range of women seeking tech careers
Output 14 – Training and support for training providers	Future VET providers / Higher education Women in the tech sector	Min 1 support contact point for each of the 9 participating countries	Practical support and assistance to ensure future roll-out of the training curricula
Output 15 – Sustainable transition pathways to facilitate entry into tech employment or entrepreneurship	Women in the tech sector Industry companies Tech industry at large Policy makers	2 Tested, industry validated transition pathways focusing on women	Blueprint for a better, faster integration of women in tech made available to industry players, training providers, Higher Education and policy makers.

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Long term results	Target groups/potential beneficiaries	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators
Output 16 – Test & deliver transition into employment or entrepreneurship	Women in the tech sector Industry companies Tech industry at large	Min 50 employers engaged to offer internships, apprenticeships, or job placement for the graduates.	Employers access new pool of talents for vacant positions Industry at large benefits from new products and services developed by graduates
Output 17 – Engagement benefits map	Future VET providers / Higher education Industry companies Policy makers Women in the tech sector	Min. 50 download requests for transition pathways blueprints	Practical support and assistance to ensure widespread use of the transition blueprints developed by making them available in open source format on the project’s website, allowing for customization and localization if needed.
Output 18 – Strong women in tech community	Women in the tech sector	Min. 100 graduates and alumni engaging in the project forum	Continued support for participants and graduates to remain in tech employment and entrepreneurship

6.2 EXPECTED IMPACT ON THE TARGET GROUPS

Table 7 details the overall expected impact the project will have on each target group. The key quantitative results will be captured via the KPIs listed above in section 6.1 and the qualitative results will be determined via the Impact Assessment Procedures defined in section 6.3 below.

TABLE 7: OVERALL EXPECTED IMPACT ON TARGET GROUPS

Target Groups	Expected impacts on each target groups
<p>Women in vulnerable situations, including migrants and refugees (non-EU nationalities) whose qualifications are not recognised in the EU</p> <p>Professionals and women who want to change careers for better job prospects</p> <p>Young graduates from non-tech degrees who want to move into tech positions</p> <p>Women who have a tech business idea and want to make it a reality</p> <p>Women re-entering the labour market after maternity</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Quantitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Widespread awareness of the possibility to break into higher paying jobs or to implement business ideas based on secure, long-term support and guidance ● KPIs for the EU campaign to promote tech as a valid career choice for women can be used to measure awareness levels. ● Increasing interest and impact can also be measured based on the number of applications to enrol in the trainings in the participating countries ● Long term impact related to a significant increase in the number of women taking digital skills training who can migrate into tech employment or entrepreneurship <p style="text-align: center;">Qualitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The project outputs will allow women in vulnerable contexts to identify occupational roles they would like, define and follow a transition pathway through VET training
<p>Future VET Training Providers and Higher Education Institutions delivering VET training courses to women</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Quantitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Widespread awareness and interest of the new VET Curricula and Training Programmes among Higher Education Institutions and VET providers across the EU ● This can be measured via the KPIs and results from the pan EU campaign to promote the new VET programme to industry and education providers in each country, including social media and project website engagement ● As a result of the promotional campaigns, we expect a high number of enquiries and downloads of the ready to use training materials and train the trainer programmes among teachers in different EU countries ● We expect a significant number of training providers to adopt the training in the pilot countries, spreading out across Europe ● Ultimately, we expect a high number of new trainees / students who have entered VET training as a direct result of the pilot training and the increased number of VET providers offering the courses across Europe <p style="text-align: center;">Qualitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● VET training providers and higher education institutions will also benefit significantly from the programme. They will be provided with a 'ready to use' package of VET training that they can easily commercialise into a training product for public training programmes and in-company and individual training products

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Target Groups	Expected impacts on each target groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● They will be able to set up the new VET programmes with relative ease, recruit or upskill trainers who can deliver it, access a full portfolio of course material and teaching resources, consider the learnings from the pilot training programmes when designing their training to each target group, and offer accredited EU qualifications and excellent employment prospects at the end of each course ● Their own promotional efforts will be complemented by an EU wide campaign to create interest of women in tech as a career and the widespread promotion of the VET training via various national and EU stakeholders. ● Overall, it creates an excellent opportunity for them to access a lucrative new market and / or keep up to date with tech skills VET training with limited investment
<p>Policy makers and key stakeholders in the digital skills education and employment arena</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Quantitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Widespread awareness and interest of the new VET Curricula and Training Programmes among policy makers at EU and national level ● This can be measured via the KPIs and results from the ongoing communications strategy and the pan EU campaign to promote the new VET programme to industry and education providers in each country, including social media and project website engagement ● We will also measure the number of key stakeholders who will register to join the online Community and their level of engagement in the programme of online and offline meetings ● The number and quality of participants to the stakeholder conference will also be measured ● We expect a measurable uptake of the programme as part of national and EU education and employment initiatives and the successful award of future EU and national funding to sustain the project <p style="text-align: center;">Qualitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FEMME FORWARD provides an excellent platform for EU and national policy makers and sector stakeholders to engage in a highly focused and collaborative programme that will address a range of social and economic issues through one project, with a particular focus on combating gender biases and promoting a better representation of women in the digital economy. They will have access to concrete, proven training solutions that they can implement in their country or sector to help realise their own policy objectives or address national or local issues ● Interested groups and individuals can engage with the consortium at both a high level and on a very practical day to day level, participating in discussions and exchange of ideas with a wide range of interest groups and individuals from all across Europe ● The programme also provides excellent partnership, networking and communication opportunities for individuals and organisations

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Target Groups	Expected impacts on each target groups
<p>Industry companies</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Quantitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Widespread awareness and interest for the new VET Curricula, Training Programmes and qualifications among industry companies facing labour shortages across the EU. ● This can be measured via the KPIs and results from the pan EU campaign to promote the new VET programme to industry and education providers in each country, including social media and project website engagement. ● We also expect increased uptake and enquiries for the training materials from sector companies in different EU countries. ● Impact can also be measured via the number of industry companies taking part in transitioning graduates into tech careers ● A key measure of impact will be the number of vacant tech roles that will be filled as a direct result of the trainings <p style="text-align: center;">Qualitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The primary benefit for industry companies and SMEs is a significantly increased pool of skilled professionals within Europe that they can easily recruit into vacant roles ● The programme will allow them to advertise the exact occupational profile they need to fill, the skills levels and qualifications they need for each role, and different entry points for candidates from different educational and employment backgrounds ● It will also allow them to run apprenticeship programmes to upskill women into tech roles, reskill existing employees and provide continuous professional development for current tech professionals ● Overall, it will ensure they can meet their demand for trained staff and support the ongoing growth and competitiveness of the company and the industry as a whole

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Target Groups	Expected impacts on each target groups
<p>The FEMME FORWARD consortium partners</p>	<p align="center">Quantitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We expect all partners to engage actively during the bi-weekly online stakeholder meetings ● The successful delivery of the pilot training programmes in 9 countries by the educational partners ● The KPIs and results of national promotional activities and stakeholder recruitment by each partner ● The number of tech positions filled in and tech businesses started in Partner companies as a result of the training programmes ● A key result will be the measurable uptake of the programme as part of national and EU education and employment initiatives and the successful award of future EU and national funding to sustain the project <p align="center">Qualitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education and Training partners in the FEMME FORWARD Consortium will receive all the benefits detailed above for future VET providers and Higher Education Institutions except within a shorter time, giving them a competitive advantage over other national training providers in their field ● The industry representative bodies and EU networks will benefit from having a direct involvement in a project that will have a concrete and measurable impact on their member companies. It will also afford them access to numerous high level stakeholders and decision makers through the online collaboration and communication activities ● The private sector digital companies will be able to use the project outputs to address their own internal training and recruitment requirements in a new and innovative way. It will also give them high level access to high level stakeholders and decision makers at EU and national level and facilitate their own promotion, CSR and networking initiatives ● Overall the FEMME FORWARD partners may enjoy direct commercial benefits from the project outputs and indirect benefits from increased profile, European outreach and high level stakeholder contacts

6.3 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

FEMME FORWARD Performance Assessment

During the preparation of annual reports, WP Leaders and the QA Team collaborate to review and assess the impact achieved in relation to the defined Key Performance Indicators for their Work Package (quantitative impact assessment). These results are recorded via a tailored KPI tracking sheet developed by the QA Team and validated by WP Leaders.

For dissemination activities (WP7), the Communication Manager will develop a Communications Dashboard in order to track partners' dissemination efforts and impact achieved every 6 months. This excel will be filled in by each partner with information on their dissemination activities while the Communication Manager shall provide aggregate information on website and social media analytics. The above means that partners shall continuously keep record of their communication and networking activities, and provide communication logs and relevant documents (e.g., participants list) to the Communication Manager.

Impact on Target Groups

An Online Survey will be conducted among key project stakeholders (*as defined above in 6.2 Expected Impact on the Target Groups*) to obtain a more precise picture for the actual adoption/utilisation of project results by relevant target groups. The questionnaire will concentrate on a) stakeholders' familiarity with the FEMME FORWARD project and its results, b) the adoption and use of FEMME FORWARD outputs, and c) the Blueprint's expected, potential impact in the sector. The online survey will be distributed during the third and fourth year of the project when a critical mass of project results/outputs have been delivered and actual impact can be measured. The main channels to be used for promoting the online (impact) survey will be:

- Social media campaigns
- Direct outreach (email) campaigns
- National information days
- Stakeholder conferences
- Exhibition events

Further to the survey, interviews with representatives from key institutional bodies and policy groups can also be conducted to discuss trends and changes in the sector and the labour market and identify how FEMME FORWARD can further contribute to addressing sectoral skills and training challenges, thus maximising its impact.

Impact on Consortium Organisations

In order to assess the impact of the project on FEMME FORWARD Partners, another survey will be developed to explore and measure how the project activities and results have benefited the FEMME FORWARD consortium partners. In particular, a questionnaire addressed to partners will be used to identify the adoption and actual use of project results within the consortium, assess results' usefulness and added value in partner organisations and discuss shortcomings and challenges encountered during application. This questionnaire will be shared to partners during the third and fourth year of the project when a critical mass of project results/outputs have been delivered and actual impact can be measured.

ANNEX 1 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS GUIDELINES ON AWPC

These procedural guidelines are designed to ensure efficient collaboration between all active work packages during all project stages.

Lead responsible:

Brian Cochrane, Quality Assurance Expert, FEMME FORWARD Team

Contributors:

All active work packages leaders and the wider FEMME FORWARD consortium.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS GUIDELINES

A simplified Pert Chart for FEMME FORWARD is provided in Figure 2.

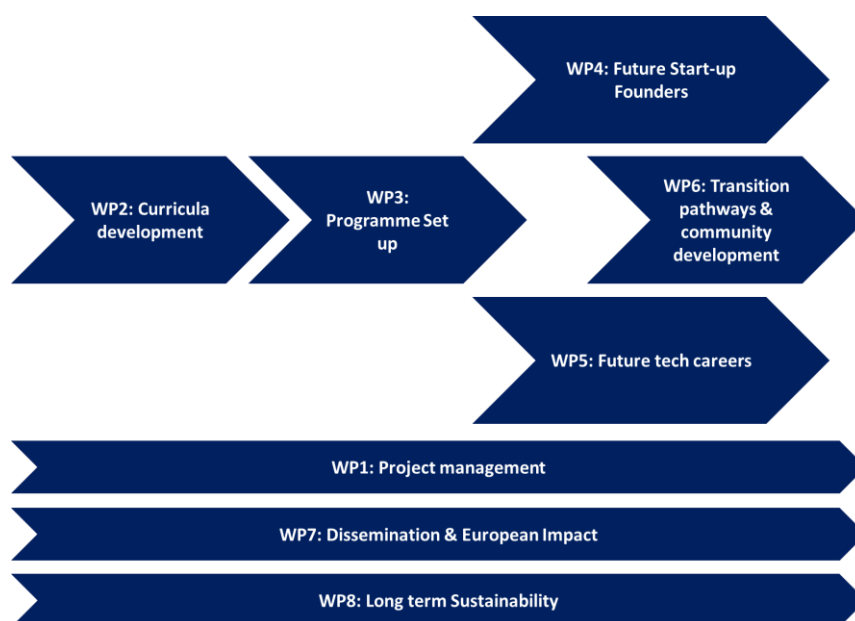


FIGURE 2: FEMME FORWARD PERT CHART

This high-performance project requires consistent, sometimes complex interaction between partner organisations and individuals. The Process Guidelines focus on agreeing and implementing activities together across the following key areas:

1. Some basics for smooth processes
2. Key activities requiring particular AWPC attention
3. FEMME FORWARD steering committee + active WPs meeting procedures
4. Communication support + across WPs alignment
5. Incorporation of new Work Packages leaders
6. How to empower technical WP interaction and teamwork // in a mostly digital collaboration context

KEY TOOL AND PLATFORM: AWPC WITHIN THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The **Steering Committee** takes place bi-weekly every 2nd and 4th week of the month.

- Participants: all active WP leaders/responsible expert assigned. For year 2023/24
- Main goals:

- Brief exchange on all active WPs state of the art and next steps needed
- Clear agreement on next inter-related steps/ tasks/ responsibilities/ timings
- Early clarification of upcoming issues + coordination needs
- Suggestions for timings on AWPC preparation steps needed
- Input agenda from WP's 2 days before each meeting
 - Agenda circulation: morning (24 hours before meeting) via Discord.
 - Possible input for discussion: 12 hours before meeting
 - If really needed flexible incorporation of last minute topics directly in the meeting

BASICS FOR SMOOTH PROCESSES

- Clear WPs lead responsibilities + task assignments
- Transparent and realistic meeting organisation
 - schedule + prepare together on time
 - provide agenda + draft input for discussion on time
 - impartial and promptly provided summary of follow-up steps agreed by all (minutes // 1 hour max after the meeting)
- Coordinated communication actions:
 - WP2, 3, 4: ensure technical correctness of WP related messages
 - WP5: enabling WP2, 3, 4 in line with their particular needs expressed
 - WP5: in charge of all transversal communication activities (branding, website, FEMME FORWARD communication overall)

KEY ACTIVITIES REQUIRING COORDINATION

The bi-weekly Steering Committee ensures coordinated actions on:

- Meeting preparations, in particular the bi-weekly FEMME FORWARD steering committee meeting
- FEMME FORWARD internal Partners communication
 - to all partners
 - between actively contributing partners
- FEMME FORWARD external communication/ key messages
 - for a particular step: e.g., Needs Analysis - Questionnaire
 - FEMME FORWARD overall: e.g., Website content
- Timely and smooth incorporation of new work package leaders (see point 6)
- Early clarifying and pro-active action on upcoming issues and potential risks

FEMME FORWARD MEETINGS

FEMME FORWARD bi-weekly Steering Committee meetings

- Established as a key meeting + progress platform involving all FEMME FORWARD partners.
- Usually: Second and Forth Monday of each month 14:30h-15:00h CET
- Start joined preparation: at least 10 days before the meeting
 - understand all current active WPs needs

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- assign meeting slots according to content load to be managed
- respect format suggested by WPs lead for particular related agenda items
- consider inter-active sessions involving partners actively as much as possible
- Agree on agenda at least 5 days before the meeting
- Meeting written follow-up:
 - agreement by all hosting partners on sum-up and next steps to be circulated
 - focus minutes on a few practical outcomes + next steps

Work package internal meetings

- Under responsibility of the WP Leader
- Other Colleagues are invited if required.

COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT FOR TECHNICAL WORK PACKAGES

Process agreement:

- Active technical content WP (WP2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) asks for support by WP7 on communication that they need
- Active technical content WP (WP2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) in control over the final version (and when to send it out).
- Advantage: The active content WP knows best what the status of things is etc.
- Clear agreement on how to send it out for the sake of optimum messaging outreach.

How to best communicate?

- Preferred channel FEMME FORWARD Discord channel / Amazon Chime.
- Active WP's internally: communicate themselves to the relevant partners on matters of that work package (see PM maintained FEMME FORWARD contact list)
Suggestion: use Discord channel / Amazon Chime if possible
- Between and within active WP's: commit in written form to avoid misunderstandings

INCORPORATION OF NEW WORK PACKAGE LEADERS

- Start the process to train/coach the WP leaders at least a month in advance.
- Set of training/coaching sessions:
 - Session on project management by project coordinator (proposal, Gantt, procedures, online tools, etc.)
 - Session on responsibilities of WP leaders and how to fulfil them by project coordinator
 - Session on collaboration tools and techniques (experience from previous active technical work package)
 - Session on preparing meetings (WP dedicated meetings, AWPC, bi-weekly meetings) by project coordinator
 - Session on coordination with other WPs + QA approach by QA Team leader
 - Session on Communication and Dissemination by WP7 leader
- Project coordinator to carry out a control check after 1, 3 and 6 months.
- Target: new technical active WP leading team

HOW TO EMPOWER TECHNICAL WP INTERACTION AND TEAMWORK IN A DIGITAL COLLABORATION CONTEXT

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- Manage complexity and amount of work to be done
 - Create sub-groups per topics
 - On horizontal axis (e.g. area of technical skills expertise) and vertical (e.g. different elements of a deliverable)
- Be interactive as possible in partner meetings
 - Work in sub-groups/ break-out sessions for discussions and brainstorming
 - incorporate round table listening to everybody in plenary parts
 - assign tasks for the meeting to partners in advance
 - assign moderator roles
- Document development
 - Combine well document draft provisions, co-editing in Google Workspace with comments visible to others or not, where meaningful, active writing and feedback cycles
 - Take best from digital tool support
 - Check-list tool, Miro, Google Workspace
 - Direct interaction: by e-Mail, Google Workspace, telco meetings, and also direct Phone call if helps.

ANNEX 2 QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW ACTIONS

2.1 TEMPLATE FOR THE QUALITY REVIEW OF WP KEY DELIVERABLES

Rate Quality Parameter	1 – very low / strongly disagree	2 – low / disagree	3 – moderate / neither nor	4 – high / agree	5 – very high / strongly agree
<p>1. RELEVANCE The report contributes to accomplishing the FEMME FORWARD defined project objectives and suits the intended target audience.</p>					
Any comments					
<p>2. COMPLETENESS The report corresponds to the WP/Task objectives and the FEMME FORWARD agreed methodology. The report complies with the directions provided/agreed with the WP Leader and Task Leaders.</p>					
Any comments					
<p>3. CONTENT VALIDITY AND INFORMATION ACCURACY The information provided is accurate and verifiable. The report makes evident use of reliable sources of information, avoids biased, personal views and justifies conclusions with data/evidence. Research & statistical analyses are based on adequate data sets.</p>					
Any comments					
<p>4. TIMELINESS The reports were made available on time according to the project’s time plan and internal</p>					

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scheduling, including drafts for feedback loops.					
Any comments					
5. LANGUAGE & GRAMMAR QUALITY The report shows proficient level English without grammatical errors, slang (informal language), typos and incomprehensive sentences					
Any comments					
6. READABILITY Deliverables should be concise and well-focused, as specified					
Any comments					
7. ADHERENCE TO FEMME FORWARD FORMAT The report is presented in line with the prescribed specifications and format in terms of file format and file layout/design (e.g. cover page, logos, headings, tables, font, font size, line spacing, page margins)					
Any comments					
8. VISUAL QUALITY The report is aesthetically appealing and shows a concise layout, contributing to attracting and retaining readers' interest and increasing engagement.					
Any comments					
9. OVERALL QUALITY How would you rate the deliverable's overall quality?					
Any comments					

<p>10. YOUR FURTHER IDEAS Do you have any suggestion to improve, also in view of future FEMME FORWARD outputs for year 2, 3 and 4?</p>	
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Thank you very much for your valuable support in the FEMME FORWARD Quality Review process, it is very much appreciated.