

Quality assessment and Risk management

D1.2 QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN



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1. Project overall management

To ensure that the partner network fulfills the project's objectives, a Steering Committee (SC) and an Advisory Board (AB) will be established in connection with the project's initiation. Below, their roles and compositions are described. As evident, there have been some changes in the original composition, and there are still vacant positions. We expect that a final composition for both the SC and AB will be in place by the end of February. The role of the SC and AB) is described below.

1.1. 1.1 Steering Committee (SC)

A SC plays a vital role in guiding and governing an organization. Comprising key stakeholders and decision-makers, the committee ensures strategic alignment and effective decision-making. According to the MCEU Project the key functions of the SC will include:

- **Strategic Planning:** Overseeing the implementation of the organizations strategic plan.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** Providing direction on critical matters.
- **Risk Management:** Actively engaging in risk assessment and management to secure the progress of the MCEU project.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Overseeing the implementation of strategic initiatives and monitoring organizational performance against established goals.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Fostering collaboration and communication among various stakeholders, both internal and external.
- **Governance Oversight:** Ensuring adherence to legal and ethical standards, establishing policies for transparency and. accountability.

In summary, the SC dynamic functions contribute to organizational success, resilience, and adaptability in a competitive environment.

In practice, the SC at MCEU Project will play a role as a strategic board throughout the project. This includes instances where there is a need for changes, as well as when we require input regarding each work package and the materials being developed.

Further details about the role of the SC can be found in the 'Grant agreement - MCEU Hospitality.' It specifies that the SC will serve as a board in the event of unforeseen challenges in the project. For instance, if challenges arise for one of the parties, the committee may explore the option of transferring the activity to another partner.

The SC, guided by the coordinator, will make decisions regarding division of budget, consortium agreement and level of cooperation with relevant stakeholders as well as set up the strategy and focus of the MCEU Project. The SC meets regularly, two times a year, but will also meet on an ad hoc basis when needed.

The SC is as mentioned, composed of two representatives from each project partner. As indicated in the above section, the SC is still not finalized but is expected to be in place by the end of February.

The current SC combination is shown in Figure 1.

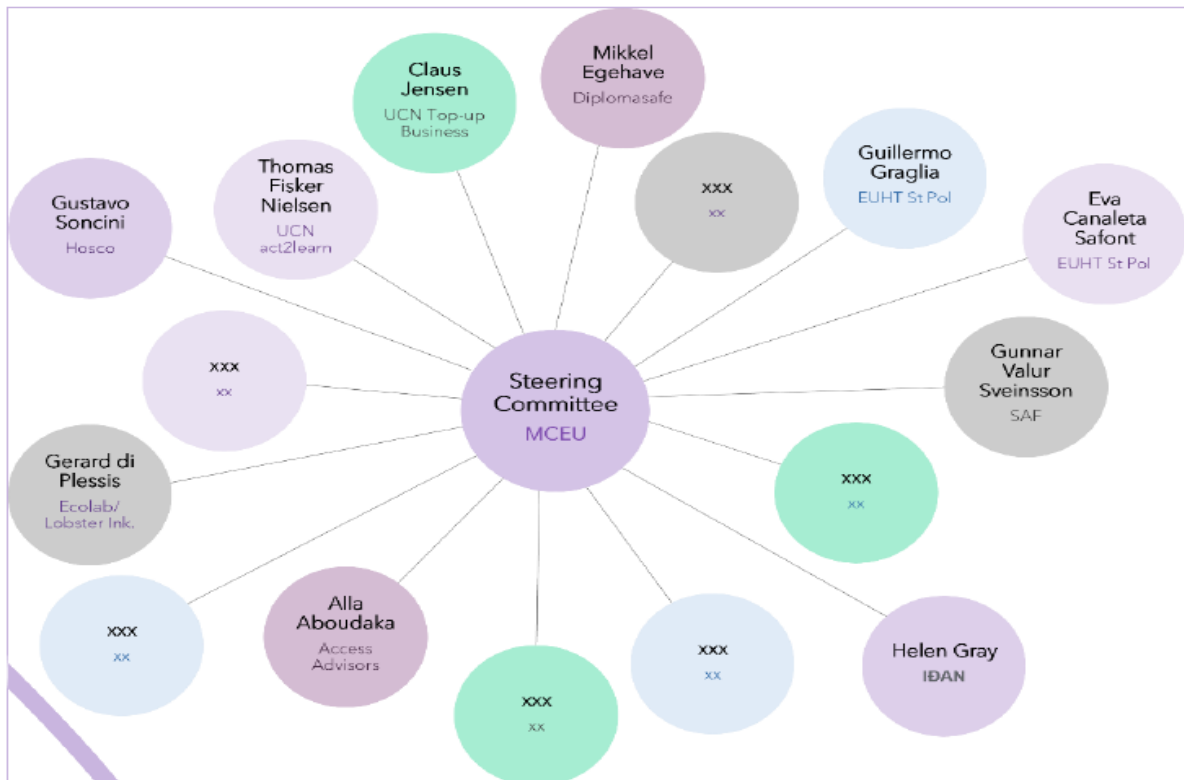


Figure 1

1.2. Advisory Board (AB)

An Advisory Board (AB) in a project serves as a group of external experts or experienced individuals who provide strategic advice, guidance, and insights to support the project's success. While they don't have the decision-making authority that a SC or project team might have, their input is invaluable in shaping the project's direction. Here are key aspects of the role of an AB in a project:

- **Strategic Guidance:** AB offer strategic advice based on their expertise and experience. They help the project team navigate challenges, make informed decisions, and capitalize on opportunities.
- **Industry Insights:** Members of the AB typically have a wealth of industry knowledge. They can provide insights into market trends, best practices, and emerging technologies, helping the project stay relevant and competitive.
- **Risk Mitigation:** By leveraging their experience, AB members can identify potential risks and suggest mitigation strategies. This proactive approach enhances the project's ability to anticipate and manage challenges effectively.
- **Network and Connections:** AB members often bring extensive professional networks. Their connections can open doors to valuable resources, partnerships, or opportunities that can benefit the project.

- **Mentorship and Coaching:** AB members may act as mentors, providing guidance to PMT.
- **Stakeholder Relations:** They may assist in managing relationships with key stakeholders. AB members, with their credibility and experience, can contribute to building trust and rapport with investors, clients, or other critical stakeholders.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** AB's bring flexibility to the project by offering diverse perspectives. Their external viewpoint can challenge assumptions and promote innovation, helping the project adapt to changing circumstances.

In summary, the AB's role is to provide valuable external perspectives, expertise, and advice, contributing to the project's overall success and enhancing its ability to navigate challenges and capitalize on opportunities.

1.3. Project Management Team (PMT)

The Project Management Team (PMT) is composed of all the partners' project managers along with an EU project coordinator and an EU financial advisor. The EU project coordinator will oversee all the project's activities, communicate with the European Commission, and send deliverables and reports to the European Commission on time. It will organize and prepare documents for the SC. The PMT is responsible for the overall implementation of the activities and the financial management of the project. It will meet at least once a month to outline the work for the month ahead, monitor timelines and activities, implement any risk management needed, and ensure the necessary coordination between the partners.

Each WP project manager (WP leader) will be meeting the executors of the WPs, also called Task Force (TF), on a bi-weekly basis to ensure the smooth implementation of the work package activities.

Each WP has its own TF. These appointed TFs consist of specially selected subject matter experts who, together with the WP leader, are tasked with developing the WP and delivering WP deliverables.

The current project organization is shown in Figure 2. The WP level is not shown in the figure.



Figure 2

2. Development of the MCEU Project guide

Following the kick-off meeting with the commission the 15th of February 24, an MCEU Project Guide is being developed. The guide will encompass administrative and budget management instructions for the project with the aim of facilitating the work for partners and ensuring compliance with the commission's requirements for project implementation and reporting.

The project guide will include all requirements related to:

Communication Obligations in the Project according to SUPPORT KIT FOR EU VISIBILITY 2021-2027:

- Description of communication obligations, including logo usage, posters, social media strategies, conferences, etc.
- Quality assurance (QA) for communication obligations
- Development of templates for communication materials, agendas, etc.

Documentation Requirements:

- Specification of what needs to be documented in the project, such as meeting minutes, work materials, overheads, etc.
- Secure storage of documentation
- Utilization of documentation within the project

Budget Management Plan:

Based on the requirements from the commission, which will be presented at the kick-off meeting 15th of February, the lead partner will develop a budget management plan. This plan must be approved by all partners to ensure that all partners are familiar with the requirements.

- Expense management requirements by partners
- Financial reporting requirements, including deadlines.
- Development of templates for financial reporting

The lead partner is responsible for instructing and guiding partners in the use of the guide.

A part of the guide will constitute a Budget Management Plan. The lead partner will host a meeting with the financial representatives of each partner and present the plan, along with the corresponding templates and deadlines.

3. Risk Management

Risk management constitutes a crucial component in the overall project management. During the application process, potential threats and uncertainties have been identified. As a result of this effort, a risk management plan has been developed with the aim of handling risks to minimize negative consequences and optimize decision-making. The risk management plan will be available to too all members of the consortium on the collaborative platform. The risk management plan will make sure that the risks are routinely monitored, and the register is maintained at both project and WP levels, and new risks are identified and added to the Risk Register as required. A fixed agenda is being developed for the project management meetings. One of the recurring items on the agenda will be risk management.

3.1. Risk Management plan

The MCEU Risk Management Plan includes the following elements:

Identification and Assessment of Risks:

Potential threats and uncertainties have been identified and described. Risks have been evaluated regarding the likelihood of occurrence and the consequences if they occur.

Preventive Actions:

Preventive actions describe the measures taken to prevent or reduce the likelihood of identified risks occurring or to mitigate their potential consequences. The goal is to minimize risk and improve the project's chances of success.

Mitigation Mechanisms:

Mitigation mechanisms describe the measures or strategies implemented to reduce the consequences of identified risks if they were to occur. These measures aim to reduce the impact of a risk if it couldn't be prevented or avoided.

Responsibility for Risk Management:

The individual responsible for carrying out agreed-upon actions is referred to as the responsible party. The responsible party must clarify solutions, plan the implementation of risk actions, ensure the implementation of agreed-upon risk actions, and report status and changes in risk resolution, plan, or resource usage to the project manager.

Monitoring of Risks in the Implementation Phase:

Continuous monitoring at project management meetings of identified risks ensures that risk management strategies remain relevant and effective. Project management meetings include a systematic review of identified risks, with a focus on reducing probabilities and/or consequences for the most significant risks. Emphasis is placed on reporting the project's risk profile and actions regarding significant risks, informing risk owners, and following up on the implementation of agreed-upon actions. Additionally, the project's risk buffer is continually adjusted, and attention is directed toward new risks and changes in the likelihood and/or consequences of already identified risks.

The risk management plan will make sure that the risks are routinely monitored.

The below Figure 3 illustrates the structure of the developed risk management plan, where all project risks are described and evaluated based on likelihood and impact. Additionally, preventive actions, mitigation mechanisms, and responsibilities are outline.

Risk management plan									
Task number	Description	Work Package Number	Impact	Likelihood	Risk score	Preventive actions	Responsible person and responsibility for risk management	Mitigation actions	
1	Change of priorities in the partners will lead to loss of motivation internally, slow the project and cause delay in the project implementation as tasks assigned to partner are not delivered on time. Impact: Low/Likelihood: Low	WPT	4	2	8	The email presented several of the TSCD project is presented and even in the smaller partners such as the EUHT. Some of the tasks have been included in designing the project, and instructional knowledge about the project results.	In the event that an unexpected person responsible for the management of the partner is located, the partner's responsibility to ensure comprehensive understanding of the project. The responsibility for the partner to ensure that the incoming partner member's knowledge and communication between concerning task involvement in the project. Furthermore, should a new member person be introduced to the project, the partner is tasked with the preparation of a European for the individual in question.	The risk management plan is systematically reviewed. All project management meetings, which concern project management, which are held on a regular basis. A standard agenda is prepared for the meetings, consistently incorporating risk management as a standing item.	
2	Potential of another pandemic, which would hinder national authorities of VET, MBO, and Vocational Universities, and the communication between EU countries could lead to delay in the project implementation. Impact: Low/Likelihood: Low	WPT	3	1	3	Most of the collaboration between partners has been designed to already take place online. This is person invited with a consortium. Furthermore, can be implemented in the mobility mobility system and to monitor the number of online events as well as the media communication in order for the project to keep to initial impact. The constant communication between the partner's teams will avoid any delays in the implementation of the project.	In the event that an unexpected person responsible for the management of the partner is located, the partner's responsibility to ensure comprehensive understanding of the project. The responsibility for the partner to ensure that the incoming partner member's knowledge and communication between concerning task involvement in the project. Furthermore, should a new member person be introduced to the project, the partner is tasked with the preparation of a European for the individual in question.	The risk management plan is systematically reviewed. All project management meetings, which concern project management, which are held on a regular basis. A standard agenda is prepared for the meetings, consistently incorporating risk management as a standing item.	

Figure 3

3.2. Risk Matrix

Based on the developed risk management plan, a "risk matrix", shown in Figure 4, has been created. The risk matrix is a visual representation of the project's risks and will assist in assessing and prioritizing risks based on their likelihood and consequences. The tool will be utilized during the project implementation by providing a structured method for the analysis and presentation of potential risks in the project, and it is continuously updated during project management meetings to ensure up-to-date information.

The combination of these two factors creates different risk zones or levels, often color-coded or labeled, indicating the severity of each risk. This allows for a focus on high-priority risks that have both a high likelihood of occurrence and significant potential consequences.

In the matrix below, the project risks are categorized based on likelihood and impact, providing an overview of which risks require attention during implementation. Special attention should be given to the risks framed within the circle below.

For each project management meeting, this is on the agenda along with the risk management plan.

Risk matrix MCEU



Figure 4

The overview below in Figure 5 highlights the risk factors that the project management team will pay special attention to during the implementation of the project. This means that these specific risk factors are being closely monitored. That risk management is a dynamic process through the project, and the identification and evaluation of risks will be an ongoing part of the MCEU Project.

Risk number	Description	Work Package No(s)	Impact	Likely hood	Risk indicator
5	Low response rate to the survey. This would impact the quality of the results on the skills needs in the hospitality sector. The data gathered could be insignificant and not provide any insight. This would greatly lower the quality of the research reports and their potential for impact as well as prevent the project from developing much- needed, demand- led micro-credentials courses. Impact: High/ Likelihood: Medium	WP2	5	3	15
10	Delays in the integration of existing EU tools and infrastructures (Europass, EDC for learners, EBSI) because of technical challenges (unstable connection to Europass, use of the wrong protocol for integration, etc.). The integration of existing EU tools in one platform for micro-credentials is one of the main appeals for the target groups of the MCEU project (employers, employees, learners, VET providers, etc.) to use the platform. Delays in integration would diminish the appeal of the platform and less the impact of the MCEU project. Impact: High / Likelihood: Medium	WP4	4	3	12
12	Lack of time due to workload could prevent learners signed up to the pilot sessions to follow the micro- credential course. This could potentially lead some learners to drop out of the course, some to fail the assessment, thus lowering the success rate of the courses. High failure rate of learners would prevent the MCEU project from achieving its objectives of 100 micro-credentials issued over the implementation period. Impact: High/ Likelihood: Medium	WP5	4	3	12
14	Insufficient funding for project sustainability. It would lead for instance to the shutdown of the MCEU website with all the results and deliverables of the project accessible to the general public. This would seriously limit the long-term impact of the project on its target groups as well the capacity of the project to be a role model for other similar projects in Europe in the same or in different industries. Impact: High/ Likelihood: High	WP6	5	5	25
15	Inadequate dissemination of project outcomes. This would limit the impact of the project on its target groups and prevent the project from achieving the systemic impact it would like to create. Impact: High/ Likelihood: Medium	WP6	5	3	15

Figure 5

4. Quality assessment

The monitoring and quality assessment that will be used during the three-year implementation of MCEU Project are all embedded within WP1, which deals with the overall management of the project, and are defined as one of the main responsibilities of the SC. WP1 will constantly monitor and ensure that all foreseen activities and deliverables are being completed on time and that the interaction between the different WPs is producing the desired outcomes.

Central to this plan is the idea that quality assessment is linked to two points: firstly, the strict monitoring of the timing of the WP deliverables, and secondly the quality of the deliverables through a process of peer-review.

Before each meeting of the SC, the PMT led by the coordinator will produce a progress report on the implementation of the project's activities and the quality and impact of the outputs produced so far.

4.1. Quality Assurance in the Implementation

Efficient communication and collaboration structures are essential to the success of the MCEU project. The centerpiece of the project's overall communication will be a protected online collaboration platform, MCEU Project team. This platform provides each partner access to important reference documents, code, working documents, meeting agendas, supporting materials, individual to-do lists, and other project information.

However, this platform cannot stand alone in the implementation and quality assurance of the project. Ensuring quality in the project will occur through four interdependent methods:

- Continuous meetings to ensure communication and collaboration.
- Follow-up on tasks and milestones in the portal
- Quality assurance of deliverables
- Continuous monitoring and assessment of quantified indicators

4.1.1. Continuous Meetings to Ensure Communication and Collaboration

Quality assurance during the implementation of the project involves a systematic process to ensure that the project's outcomes meet the specified standards and requirements. This requires close communication and ongoing collaboration across the partners.

To facilitate this, the following series of meetings have been planned within the project:

- SC meetings (every six months) throughout the project period.
- 36 Project Management Team (PMT) meetings (every month) except during the summer break.
- 50 Task Forces (TF) meetings.

Roles and responsibilities of SC, PMT, and TF are described at the beginning of the document. The meeting schedule is planned based on the following timeline and activity plan, see Figure 6. This plan will also be available in the MCEU Project team.

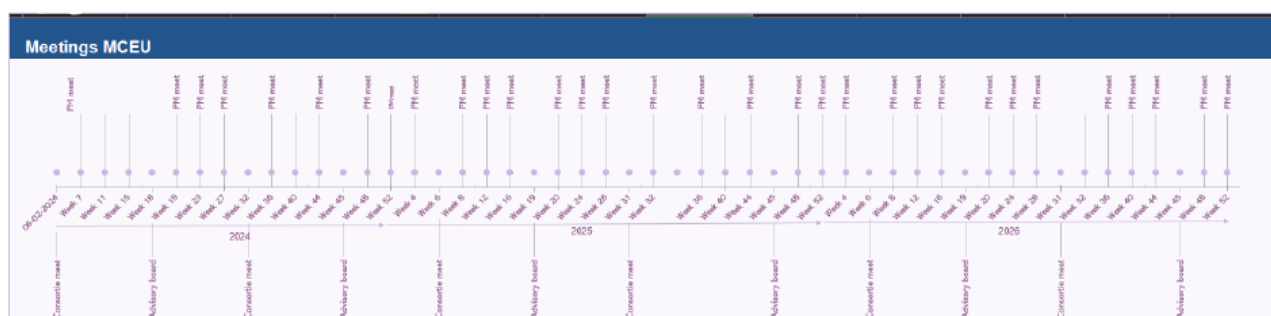


Figure 6

4.1.2. Follow-up on Milestones and Deliverables

Monitoring of milestones and deliverables is recorded in the EU portal, see Figure 7. The status of this is discussed at each project management meeting.



Mile	Milestone Name	Work Package No.	Lead Beneficiary	Means of life	Delivery Date	Delivery Date (actual)	Achieved	Comments
1	MS1	WP1	UCN	D 1.1	31 Jan 2024		<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	MS2	WP1	UCN	D 1.2	31 Jan 2024		<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	MS3	WP1	UCN	D 1.3	31 Mar 2024		<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	MS4	WP1	UCN	D 1.4	31 Jan 2024		<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	MS5	WP1	UCN	D 1.4	31 Jan 2024		<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	MS6	WP1	UCN	D 1.5	30 Jun 2025		<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	MS7	WP2	Hosco	D2.1	31 Jan 2024		<input type="checkbox"/>	
8	MS8	WP2	Hosco	D 2.1 D 2.	29 Feb 2024		<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	MS9	WP2	Hosco	D 2.1 D 2.	30 Jun 2024		<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	MS10	WP2	Hosco	D 2.1 D 2.	30 Jun 2024		<input type="checkbox"/>	

Figure 7

4.1.3. Quality Assurance of Deliverables

All deliverables undergo quality assurance before being submitted to the Commission. The lead partner is responsible for the quality assurance and must receive the first draft of the deliverable at least one month before submission to the Commission. The lead partner reviews the deliverable to ensure that all activities related to it have been completed and documented before it is sent to the Commission.

A time and activity plan has been developed for each work package, providing an overview of submission deadlines and quality control. The time and activity plan can be accessed in the project collaboration platform, MCEU Project teams. Please refer to Figure 8 below for the structure of the plan.

Each WP leader will furthermore receive an email when a specific WP deliverable approaches its deadline. This email will be generated by Microsoft Planner which is integrated within the MCEU Project team.

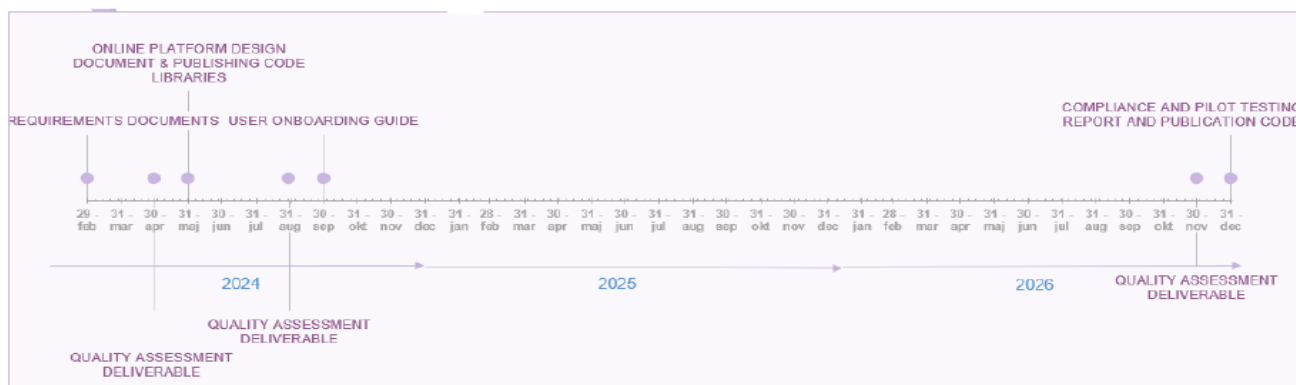


Figure 8

Additionally, the lead partner involves the AB in the quality assurance process if the AB possesses the necessary expertise to ensure the quality of the prepared deliverable. This ensures that all deliverables to the Commission undergo quality assurance before submission. Quality assurance of deliveries is also ensured through the involvement of the SC. With each delivery, the SC is engaged to ensure that their comments are incorporated into the developed document. A schedule of time and activities for the quality assurance of deliverables has been developed and can be found in MCEU Project team.

Any uncertainties regarding tasks and deliverables are addressed in the project management meetings held monthly. For major decisions regarding changes in the project, the SC must be involved before preparing an amendment for the Commission.

4.1.4. Quantified indicators

The project has defined a set of measurable quantitative indicators. These indicators refer to specific and quantifiable measurements used in the project to evaluate and measure performance as well as results. They enable an accurate assessment of progress and monitoring of goals and outcomes in the project.

A monitoring diagram has been developed for the quantitative indicators with the purpose of tracking progress and identifying any issues in real-time. The diagram is created at the work package level, where the fulfillment of the indicators is recorded by the person responsible for the respective work package. This ensures a systematic monitoring of progress and results, providing data for the reports and summaries that need to be prepared for the SC and the Commission.

The monitoring diagram is closely monitored during project management meetings and is on the agenda at least once a quarter. This ensures regular follow-up and adjustments to the project's course to address any challenges or opportunities.

The monitoring diagram is available for all members in the MCEU Project team.

Figure 9 below shows the monitoring diagram for WP1.

Indicator	Description	Measurement	Goal	Result	on/off track	Updated achievement %
1	Number and pace of Steering Committee, Project Management Team, and Task Force meeting.	Numbers steering committee	6	0		0
		Numbers PMT	36	0		0
		Numbers meetings TF	50	3		6
2	Timeline and deliverables accomplished (Number of tasks delayed, the number of work packages delayed, and final delay percentage).	Deleverables in time	27	2		8
3	Implementation of digital tools project management and collaborating.	Number of tools	5	1		20
4	Number of internal methodology and strategy reports produced and published. At least 1 internal methodology and strategy per WP.	Number of reports	6			0
5	Number of progress reports.	Numbers of reports	6			0
6	Satisfaction of people involved in delivering MCEU outputs	Numbers of satisfied people (according to survey)	min 75%			
7	Number of people participating in activities from stakeholders	Numbers	5000			0
8	Publication and quality plan for data management. Quality assessment and risk management plan published. data management and IPR management plan published.	Number of plans	2	1		50
9	Overall percentage of utilisation of co	number of users ind the consortium	min. 85%			
10	Budget deviation per WP (total deviation).	Procentvis afvigelse	less than 5%			

Figure 9

4.2. External Quality Evaluation

To ensure that the project is optimally implemented, we have planned for the project to be evaluated twice by two external experts. Those external evaluations have high value since they provide unbiased views on the project's strengths and weaknesses. The experts' experience working on similar projects and their expertise make their recommendations an asset for the project.

They will evaluate the implementation of the project twice. The first time halfway through the project (M17-18) and the second time towards the end of the project (M34-35). They will present their recommendations on the project's implementation to the SC of the MCEU project, which will put the PMT in charge of integrating them. Their views on the implementation of the project at the end of the funding period will feed into the final report of the MCEU project as lessons learned aim to facilitate the development of similar projects in different sectors.

