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Deliverable D6.1: Project Management Handbook

Deliverable D6.1

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Abstract

This Project Management Handbook (D6.1) is intended to support partners in the effective and efficient administration, procedural and financial management of the project. It focuses on project implementation procedures, structures and coordination and sets out key responsibilities for EU engagement and interaction. It is intended to support the achievement of project objectives, the effective management of partner progress and the timely delivery of project results.

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Versioning and contribution history

Version	Date	Authors	Notes
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1. Introduction

This Project Management Handbook is intended to support partners in the effective and efficient administration, procedural and financial management of the project. It focuses on project implementation procedures, structures, and coordination and sets out key responsibilities for EU engagement and interaction. It is intended to support the achievement of project objectives, the effective management of partner progress, and the timely delivery of project results.

This Project Management Handbook sets out:

- the procedures and standards to be used in the ACHIEVE project;
- the key roles and responsibilities;
- how the project will be carried out, measured, monitored, accounted for and safeguarded during the project.

2. ACHIEVE

Advanced Cloud and High-performance computing Education for a Valiant Europe (ACHIEVE) aims to enhance the quality of EU higher education in IT infrastructures, particularly High-Performance Computing (HPC). Cloud and Networking Infrastructure, with the emergence of new trends like High-Performance Computing (HPC), are pivotal in driving Europe's key policy objectives like the Green Deal and digital transformation. The project, Advanced Cloud and High-performance computing Education for a Valiant Europe (ACHIEVE) is designed to enhance the quality of EU higher education in the domain of IT infrastructures and in particular HPC which is used to solve several complex questions in computational and data-intensive sciences.

3. Work Package 6

The objectives of Work Package 6 are as follows:

- To oversee project management and provide effective monitoring across administrative, technical, and financial aspects.
- To ensure high-quality content and management practices that drive meaningful project progress.
- To coordinate the participant enrollment process for the ACHIEVE education programs.
- To foster the creation of effective and sustainable partnerships within the project consortium.

This work package focuses on leading the technical and scientific coordination of the ACHIEVE project, along with its administrative and financial management. It will also implement quality control and reporting mechanisms throughout the project.

4.Deliverable 6.1

4.1 Purpose

The ACHIEVE Project Handbook has been prepared with two purposes:

1. to provide the framework within which the coordinator will manage the project;
2. to guide project participants through all aspects of the project's management and coordination activities and provide a clear set of rules and expectations to be followed in conducting the project.

4.2 Objectives

- To define the procedures and standards to be used in the ACHIEVE project.
- To define key roles and responsibilities.
- To demonstrate how the project will be carried out, measured, monitored, accounted for, and safeguarded during the project.

5. Management of ACHIEVE project

5.1 Management structure

ACHIEVE implementation work plan requires effective project management to deliver high quality results. The project management approach chosen guarantees transparency and commitment to all partners and facilitates successful project execution. Consortium bodies and key actors in the management structure are depicted in Figure 1.



Figure 1: ACHIEVE Project Management Structure.

Table 1 provides a short description of the key roles in the consortium. Duties, responsibilities, and rights will be codified and agreed upon in the project Consortium Agreement.

Table 1: Key roles in the management of ACHIEVE project.

Key roles	Acronym	Definition
General Assembly	GEA	Composed of consortium members (minimum 1 representative per partner) ; responsible for the project, including any significant changes.
Project Executive Committee	PEC	Composed of PC and WP Leaders, responsible for technical and operational management, quality, risk mitigation and progress tracking.
Project Coordinator	PC	Responsible for overall coordination, content management and liaisons with EC.
Project Manager	PM	Supporting the PC, responsible for administrative and financial progress reporting.
Quality Manager	QM	Responsible for Quality Plan creation and implementation and risk management.
Work Package Leader	WPL	Responsible for planning and progress in a WP and contributing to the PEC.
Task Leader	TL	Responsible for the planning and deployment of the specific actions defined under the task.
Project Communication Officer	PCO	Responsible for external communication activities.

5.2 General Assembly (GEA)

The GEA consists of management level representatives of all consortium partners, each having one vote. This is to ensure ownership of the results and to prove the commitment on all sides. It is chaired by the Project Coordinator. The GEA is the highest decision-making body in the project. The GEA will be called regularly, see Table 2 for the occurrences.

It will assume overall responsibility for project conformance to the contract. The GEA deals with contractual issues escalated to it, or issues requiring GEA confirmation and/or voting according to the consortium agreement. The GEA ensures that the partners give continued support and adequate resources to the project, promotes the results of the

project, and acts as the final level of escalation, should serious conflicts arise during the project. In particular, the GEA is responsible for:

- Major changes to the consortium, work plan, or budgets, especially if requiring EC approval.
- Review, quality check, and approval of project deliverables and, more in general, of any public output
- Guaranteeing confidentiality of internal project results/outputs designated as restricted to the consortium.
- Establishing a controlling and reporting system for resource consumption and progress against schedule.
- GEA delegates, as representatives of consortium partners, are responsible for: 1) Submission of correct financial and administrative data to the Project Coordinator, 2) Commitment of their own organisations, including financial matters and management of their internal resources.

The role, decision responsibilities and powers of the GEA are specified in the Consortium Agreement.

5.3 Project Coordinator (PC)

The PC will cooperate and exchange information with the project management (PM) to guarantee the correct delivery and reporting of the project.

The PC is responsible for the management and coordination of the entire project. The PC also chairs and ensures proper operation of the key consortium bodies GEA and PEC. The PC reports to the GEA. Responsibilities include:

- Execution of all project obligations vis-à-vis the Agency, including submission of project deliverables.
- Acting as the intermediary between the partners and the EC / Project Officer (PO).
- Calling PEC / GEA meetings, informing and chairing PEC and GEA.
- Resolution of financial and contractual issues.
- Overseeing the implementation of administrative processes.
- Organising the consortium or General Assembly meeting in presence or online

As the official interface between the consortium and the EC, the PC monitors project activities, maintains an up- to-date view of progress and will, where appropriate, suggest changes to the original work plan to ensure achievement of project objectives. The PM will support the PC in ensuring all administrative objectives and obligations are met. To meet the scientific and technical goals, the PC is supported by WP Leaders in the context of the PEC.

5.4 Project Manager (PM)

The PM will work closely together with the PC function and ensures that the Project Coordinator receives all necessary support in coordination matters and, in particular, regarding annual cost statements, payments, budget allocations and audit certificates from each partner at the time of financial reporting. In addition, the PM is responsible for the following activities:

- Dealing with all administrative issues arising in the project including data collection from partners
- Preparing meetings with the project consortium, ensuring minutes are taken and approved.
- Supporting communication with the EC in general, and with respect to the preparation of review meetings, and the submission and approval of deliverables.
- Financial Control: monitoring Financial Statements, feedback to the partners and the PC.
- External relations: receive external requests and questions on project, provide interested parties with information issued by the project, follow-up on cooperation with other projects, track events connected with relevant stakeholders and international forums.

5.5 Project Executive Committee (PEC)

The PEC is the project's driving force for project activities. It is chaired by the PC, reports to the GEA and is composed of WPL, WP Team members, QM, IM and the Quality Experts will be invited, in case their expertise is required. The PEC oversees project progress and in particular:

- Implementation of all action plans.
- Coordination of work package dependencies.
- Maintaining communication and ensuring reporting.
- Providing guidance on Intellectual Property issues.
- Supporting implementation of the quality assurance system.
- Ensuring guidance on ethical and (legal) data protection issues is followed.
- Creation of efficient team structures.
- Establishing flexible effective communication and an appropriate meeting schedule.

5.6 Quality Manager (QM)

The QM is responsible for the definition of the Quality Assurance Plan and its implementation by all partners. The QM will manage and coordinate the procedures to assess the quality of project deliverables and learning content for the short-term training programmes, appointing peer reviewers from the partners' staff to support the process.

5.7 Work Package Leaders (WPLs)

Work Package Leaders are responsible for managing their WP as a self-contained entity, as well as managing interfaces to other WPs through the PEC. WPLs coordinate, monitor, and assess the progress of the WP to ensure that output performance, budget, and timelines are met. Their responsibilities include:

- Production of project deliverables according to defined quality processes.
- Monitoring the risks identified at the proposal, and identifying new risks to report to the Project Manager and complying with risk mitigation plans.
- Reporting quality issues and status to the Quality Manager.

- Achievement of the technical objectives of the project in their domain.
- Ensuring conformance of WP results with requirements of succeeding work packages

5.8 Task Leaders (TLs)

Task Leaders are responsible for managing their tasks as a self-contained entity, and in relation to other tasks part of the Work Package and of the project. Their responsibility include:

- Plan and deploy the activities related to the task in accordance with the project timeline.
- Contribute to the deliverables connected to their tasks.
- Identify and flag to the WPL any task related risks while proposing mitigation actions.

5.9 Project Communication Officer (PCO)

PCO will manage and coordinate all dissemination and outreach activities within ACHIEVE project. The PCO will act as the single point of contact for partners for communication-related topics and will lead the communication and update meetings with partners to align on dissemination activities.

5.10 Project contacts list

In order to streamline communication and foster collaboration, we have established a comprehensive contact list for our project. This list serves as a centralized repository of essential contact information for all individuals involved. The contact list is a vital tool for efficient communication, ensuring that team members can readily connect with each other as needed. The contact list is diligently curated to include key details such as names, role in the project, email addresses, and (optionally) relevant contact numbers. This information is pivotal for facilitating quick and effective communication within the project team. The list is created and regularly updated to reflect any changes in personnel or contact details.

To enhance accessibility and ensure that all project members can readily access the information they need, the contact list is securely stored in a shared file within the project repository ([ACHIEVE Contact list.xlsx](#)). This centralized location promotes transparency and collaboration, as the most up-to-date contact details are readily available to everyone involved in the project. The shared file containing the contact list is accessible to all project members, fostering a collaborative environment where communication barriers are minimized. This accessibility ensures that team members can quickly and easily reach out to the relevant stakeholders without unnecessary delays.

5.11 Preparation and organization of meetings

Meeting preparation and organization is described in the Grant Agreement agreed by all participants of the project. Here an extract of the relevant information regarding meeting described in the GA.

5.11.1 Convening meetings

As described in the project Grant Agreement, the following meeting will be called regularly.

Table 2: List of recurrent meetings

	Ordinary meeting	Extraordinary meeting
General Assembly (GEA)	Four meetings: 1 st - within first three month of year 1, 2 nd - within second half of year 2, 3 rd - within second half of year 3, 4 th - within second half of year 4.	At any time upon request of the Project Executive Committee or 1/3 of the Members of the General Assembly
Project Executive Committee (PEC)	Monthly teleconferences. Face-to-face meeting organize every 6 months: in March and September of each project year.	At any time upon request of any Member of the General Assembly
General Assembly and Project Executive Committee	GEA and PEC will meet jointly at the beginning of the project for detailed strategy and planning.	
Work Package (WP)	Bi-Weekly for each WP.	At any time upon request of any Member of the WP or Project Coordinator

5.11.2 Notice of a meeting

The chairperson of a Consortium Body shall give written notice of a meeting to each Member of that Consortium Body as soon as possible and no later than the minimum number of days preceding the meeting as indicated below.

Table 3: Schema of notice period for meetings.

	Ordinary meeting	Extraordinary meeting
General Assembly	30 calendar days	14 calendar days
Project Executive Committee	7 calendar days	4 calendar days
WP	7 calendar days	4 calendar days

5.11.3 Sending the agenda

The chairperson of a Consortium Body shall prepare and send each Member of that Consortium Body an agenda no later than the minimum number of days preceding the meeting as indicated below.

Table 4: Agenda anticipation for project meetings.

General Assembly	10 calendar days, 7 calendar days for an extraordinary meeting
Project Executive Committee	3 calendar days
WP	3 calendar days

5.11.4 Minutes of meetings

The chairperson of a Consortium Body shall produce minutes of each meeting which shall be the formal record of all decisions taken. He/she shall send the draft minutes to all Members within 5 calendar days of the meeting. The minutes shall be considered as accepted if, within 3 calendar days from receipt, no Member has sent an objection by written notice to the chairperson with respect to the accuracy of the draft of the minutes by written notice. The chairperson shall send the accepted minutes to all the Parties and to the Coordinator, who shall retain copies of them.

5.12 Decision Making Process

The decision-making process, and the agreement on how to solve potential conflicts, is described in the Grant Agreement agreed by all participants of the project. Here an extract of the relevant information regarding the decision-making process.

5.12.1 Decision process

Decisions will be taken by the responsible team members, and organisation bodies based on the Description of Action (DoA) to be performed, as stated in the Grant Agreement, the Consortium Agreement, the DoA and the individual Work Package plans. In case there is a dispute between two or more team members, an agreement will be sought by informal communication. If no agreement is reached, the conflict resolution procedure will be resorted to.

5.12.2 Conflict resolution

Agreement on any issue with divergent views is usually to be reached through informal contact. This is to be followed by confirmation via email or in agreed written minutes for substantial issues. In some cases, the agreement may take the form of a short statement or report signed by those responsible. Technical issues/conflicts within given contractual commitments that do not involve a change of contract, a change of budget and/ or a change of resources/ overall focus will be discussed/ solved at the WP level first. Where a potential conflict is identified, the appropriate WPL will attempt to mediate between the parties. The PC must be informed if the solution affects the work plan and expected results or if no resolution is reached. In the latter case, the PC will make every effort to mediate, if necessary, involving other members of the PEC. Should the PEC not solve the conflict, the issue is referred to the GEA. The GEA will attempt to reach a unanimous decision in all cases. Should a consensus not be achieved, decisions will be reached by a simple majority

vote, each delegate having one vote. Should a conflict not be resolved by this mechanism, the project coordinator will make a final decision on the matter after coordination with the EC PO. GEA delegates will ensure that decisions taken at the GEA are carried out by the participants they represent.

5.13 Project Workplan & Implementation

ACHIEVE is broken into 6 WPs where each WP contains a set of associated and related tasks. The overall WP plan has been agreed by all parties and implements a commonly agreed work plan, deliverables, and milestones. The interlinkages and relationships between WP's are illustrated below.

In the ACHIEVE project, the responsibilities and interfaces of the Work Packages (WPs) are structured as follows:

- **WP1-2:** This work package is focused on the deployment of the ACHIEVE Master's programme in Cloud and Networking Infrastructure with specializations in High-Performance Computing, and a minor in Innovation and Entrepreneurship. WP1's primary responsibility is to deliver an education programme that aligns with the labor market needs.
- **WP3-4:** This package plays a crucial role in the project, being responsible for developing and delivering all self-standing modules and related certification schemes. Like WP3-WP4's education programme is designed to address the labor market's requirements and aims to enhance the digital skills of European citizens.
- **WP5:** The responsibility of WP5 is centred around marketing and dissemination. This work package focuses on ensuring that the project's results and outputs, particularly those related to the education programmes of WP1-2 and WP3-4, reach the relevant target audiences as widely as possible.
- **WP6:** WP6 undertakes the crucial tasks of technical and scientific coordination as well as administrative and financial management. This work package ensures that quality control mechanisms and reporting procedures are applied effectively. WP6 is also responsible for managing and monitoring all project activities, including enrolment to the education programmes and building sustainable and effective partnerships.

These work packages are interconnected, with each playing a vital role in the overall success of the ACHIEVE project.

5.13.1 Work Plan

A full description of work plan, including Work Package tasks, deliverables and associated milestones is available in the Grant Agreement Annex 1. This will be used as the main reference point for the project. As a reminder, the project's timetable of WPs and Tasks is available just below.

4.2 TIMETABLE

ACTIVITY	PROJECT YEAR 1				PROJECT YEAR 2				PROJECT YEAR 3				PROJECT YEAR 4			
	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4
WP1 - Education programmes: Master Cycle 1																
T1.1 - Market analysis and curriculum development																
T1.2 - Delivery of the master's programme																
WP2 - Education programmes: Master Cycle 2																
T2.1 - Delivery of the master's programme																
WP3 - Education programmes: Online modules Cycle 1																
T3.1 - Market analysis and modules development																
T3.2 - Delivery of the self-standing learning modules and certification exams																
WP4 - Education programmes: Online modules Cycle 2																
T4.1 - Delivery of the self-standing learning modules and certification exams																
WP5 - Marketing and dissemination																
T5.1 - Marketing and promotion activities																
T5.2 - Dissemination and communication activities																
WP6 - Project management and education programme administration																
T6.1 - Operational, administrative and financial management																
T6.2 - Quality assurance and harmonisation																
T6.3 - Enrolment and scholarship programme administration																
T6.4 - Community, partnership and mobility management																
T6.5 - Data management, ethical and legal issues																

Figure 2: ACHIEVE's timetable

5.13.2 Project Deliverables

All project deliverables are associated with a specific work package task. It will be the responsibility of the task lead to co-ordinate the drafting of the deliverable and ensure the inputs of other partners where necessary.

Table 5 provides an overview of all the deliverables, the lead partner and the deadlines for internal review and submission to the Commission.

Table 5: List of deliverables

N°	Name	WP n°	Lead beneficiary	Type	Dissemination level	Due date
D1.1	ACHIEVE master's programme: Market analysis and curriculum design	WP1	KTH	R	PU	M13
D1.2	Report on ACHIEVE master's programme delivery - First Cycle - 2025/2027	WP1	UNITN	R	PU	M36
D2.1	Report on ACHIEVE master's programme delivery - Second Cycle 2026/2028	WP2	UNITN	R	PU	M48

N°	Name	WP n°	Lead beneficiary	Type	Dissemination level	Due date
D3.1	ACHIEVE self-standing modules: Market analysis and curriculum design	WP3	METU	R	CO	M17
D3.2	Intermediate report on delivery of ACHIEVE self-standing learning modules	WP2	POLIMI	R	PU	M36
D4.1	Final report on ACHIEVE self-standing learning modules	WP4	POLMI	R	PU	M48
D5.1	Marketing and Dissemination Plan	WP5	EITD	R	PU	M6
D5.2	Report on marketing and dissemination activities - Year 1	WP5	EITD	R	PU	M12
D5.3	Report on marketing and dissemination activities - Year 2	WP5	EITD	R	PU	M24
D5.4	Report on marketing and dissemination activities - Year 3	WP5	EITD	R	PU	M36
D5.5	Report on marketing and dissemination activities - Year 4	WP5	EITD	R	PU	M48
D6.1	Project Management Handbook	WP6	EITD	R	PU	M6
D6.2	Data Management Plan	WP6	EITD	R	PU	M6
D6.3	Quality Assurance Methodology and application in the first year	WP6	EITD	R	PU	M12
D6.4	Enrolment to ACHIEVE education programmes and	WP6	EITD	R	CO	M12

N°	Name	WP n°	Lead beneficiary	Type	Dissemination level	Due date
	scholarship allocation–Results (Year 1)					
D6.5	Enrolment to ACHIEVE education programmes and scholarship allocation–Results (Year 2)	WP6	EITD	R	CO	M24
D6.6	Quality Assurance application in Academic Year 2025/2026	WP6	UR	R	PU	M24
D6.7	Quality Assurance application in Academic Year 2026/2027	WP6	UR	R	PU	M36
D6.8	Quality Assurance application in Academic Year 2027/2028	WP6	UR	R	PU	M48
D6.9	Intermediate Report on community, partnership, and mobility management	WP6	EITD	R	CO	M24
D6.10	Final report on community, partnership, and mobility management	WP6	EITD	R	CO	M48

5.13.3 Project Milestones

Project milestones ensure that the work connected to deliverables is on track. Table 6 provides an overview of all the milestones, the lead partner and the deadlines for internal review and submission to the Commission.

Table 6: List of milestones

N°	Name	WP n°	Lead beneficiary	Due Date
MS1	Tentative curriculum of the master's programme defined	WP1	UNITN	M6

N°	Name	WP n°	Lead beneficiary	Due Date
MS2	Labour market needs analysis completed, and curriculum of the master's programme finalised	WP1	KTH	M10
MS3	First two-year cycle of the master's programme delivered	WP2	UNITN	M36
MS4	Second two-year cycle of the master's programme delivered	WP2	UNITN	M48
MS5	Self-standing learning modules and related certification schemes completed	WP2	POLIMI	M16
MS6	First annual cycle of certification exams completed	WP2	POLIMI	M34
MS7	Second annual cycle of certification exams completed	WP2	POLIMI	M46
MS8	Development of a Marketing and Dissemination Plan	WP5	EITD	M4
MS9	Completion of the planned Marketing, Communication and Dissemination activities	WP5	EITD	M47
MS10	Completion of Project Management Handbook	WP4	EITD	M4
MS11	Definition of a Data Management Plan	WP4	EITD	M4
MS12	Definition of a Quality Assurance Principles	WP4	UR	M6
MS13	Completion of the enrolment process of students for the first full cycle of master's programme	WP4	EITD	M10
MS14	Definition of an internship programme for master students	WP4	EITD	M16
MS15	Completion of the enrolment process of students for the second full cycle of master's programme	WP6	EITD	M22

6. Project reporting

6.1 Formal Reporting to EC

Formal reporting to the EC is due 18, 36, and 48 months after the project started. Reporting is carried out using the online platform provided by the EC, which specifies the

required contents: in essence, a periodic technical report and a periodic financial report. These reports are required within 60 days of the end of the period.

Work Package leads are expected to contribute to the technical report, with input from all partners as needed. All funded partners must provide an individual financial statement detailing their eligible costs for the period.

The interim reporting to the EC will happen in the following periods:

- From month 1 to month 18 (October 2024 – March 2026)
- From month 19 to month 36 (April 2026 – September 2027)
- From month 37 to month 48 (October 2027 – September 2028)

As described in the Grant Agreement of the project these periods will be reported within 60 days after the period termination date.

6.2 Internal reporting

In parallel with the formal reporting to the EC, all partners will share interim information regarding efforts, expenses, and achievements in an internal report. The internal reporting process be aligned with the formal reporting to the EC and will allow the Coordinator, and all the partners, to:

1. Collect from all partners information regarding work performed on the project, results and impacts achieved.
2. Collect from all partners their financial statements forecast for the reporting period.
3. Compare project achievements with resource consumptions and confront them with the project plan.
4. Share main findings regarding project execution with all partners.

This internal reporting process will then ease the process of formal reporting by all partners and the production of a consolidated report for the project to be formally submitted to the EC during the interim reporting phases. It will also permit the project Consortium to provide the best representation of the efforts and achievements of the project.

The internal reporting will work on the same information to be collect and shared for the formal reporting to the EC, including:

- Brief written reports of the activities of the partner per work package.
- Updates on work on deliverables, risks, problems, and planned activities.
- A summary of meetings attended.
- Expenses and financial activities.

A template that can support the reporting of this information is provided in Appendix A of this project handbook. The document can also be found on the WP6 workspace of the ACHIEVE SharePoint. When requested, all participants must use this template for the reporting to ease data reconciliation and correct reporting to the EC.

Moreover, core partners which lead work packages are asked to provide updates per task and an overview of the status of the deliverables and milestones. This will enable the PC to track effort and spend against plan and to detect any deviations early. The reporting of the

activities in the different WP will be done during the monthly PEC meetings and will be registered in the minutes for such meetings.

The project's milestones (listed in

5.13.3 Project Milestones

Project milestones ensure that the work connected to deliverables is on track. Table 6 provides an overview of all the milestones, the lead partner and the deadlines for internal review and submission to the Commission.

Table 6) mark the completion of the significant activities of the project and are defined in the Grant Agreement. It is therefore important to report them in a timely fashion. Since each milestone is associated with one or more work packages, it is the responsibility of the Work Package leads to report to the PC on the achievement of the milestone when it becomes due (and not waiting for the periodic report to the EC). The PC will work with the PEC to ensure the reporting of milestones.

Regarding reporting for expenses and financial activities, this can include:

- The staff effort (person-months) expended in the preceding three months.
- A summary of all personal costs.
- A summary of non-staff costs such as travel, workshop costs, etc.

A template for the reporting of this information is provided in Appendix B of this project handbook. The document can also be found on the WP6 workspace of the ACHIEVE SharePoint. All participants must use this template for the reporting to ease data reconciliation and correct reporting to the EC. The document also can be found on the WP6 workspace on the ACHIEVE SharePoint. Project partners are free to use their own forms but have to keep in mind to include all the requirements that are stated in the instructions section of the template.

7. Working methods

With a high number of partners involved in the ACHIEVE project, working methods to facilitate communication and project documentation managed and made available to all partners appropriately are of central importance. The communication tools and working methods introduced in the following sections together will contribute to a working environment in which project members can collaborate and work in a most efficient way.

7.1 Internal communication

Communication within the project will happen through different channels. Whilst face-to-face meetings will be held at a regular basis yet with a rather low frequency, there are a number of virtual communication channels through which project members including advisory bodies and WP teams can communicate on daily basis.

7.1.1 Communication platform

The platform used to support internal project communication is Microsoft Teams. In the Teams instance of EITD, a specific space has been created for the ACHIEVE project. This space enables users to have private conversations via real-time messaging, start, follow, or contribute to discussions on the discussion platform, share documents, and link documents saved in Sharepoint (<https://eitictlabs.sharepoint.com/sites/ACHIEVEProjectManagement>).

Next to the project-wide environment there are also team environments for each work package. If needed, project members can set up additional channels, for instance if the completion of deliverables or milestones requires collaboration between WPs. All project members have access to all teams and documents unless specifically restricted.

Members new to the project should contact the PM to get an invitation to join the ACHIEVE Teams. In order to join WP teams, project members are asked to contact the WP leaders of the respective WP.

7.1.2 Video conferences

Microsoft Teams is used as conferencing softwares for online meetings. Video conferences of managing bodies (such as the GEA, the PEC or WPL meetings) are held on Microsoft Teams.

7.1.3 Face-to-face meetings

Plenary meetings of the whole project will take place three times throughout the project's lifetime: at the beginning (kick-off meeting) and annually up to the end of the project. Every six months the members of the PEC will meet face-to-face to discuss advancements on the project and potential risks or issues. Smaller face-to-face meetings will be arranged back to back with major events.

Additional face-to-face meetings will be undertaken on a work package or cross work package basis, or for other purposes as needed.

7.2 Document sharing and storage

The PC arranged for the project's own Microsoft Teams workspace. Documents can be stored, shared and collaboratively worked on in the SharePoint connected to the MS Teams workspace. All documents created and uploaded there will have ACHIEVE as the document owner which ensures that all documents created for ACHIEVE will be owned by the project. Project members get access to the project Team via Microsoft-associated personal or institutional email addresses.

7.3 Presentations

All presentations prepared for and given at internal meetings, such as face-to-face meetings and side meetings at conferences, will be stored in the ACHIEVE SharePoint. Specificities about the presentation and formal content of external presentations will be covered in D5.1 "Marketing and Dissemination Plan".

8. Quality Control

With regards to quality assurance and monitoring, the Quality Manager (QM) will be responsible for establishing and guiding the implementation of quality assurance procedures. Quality processes include the timely completion and review of all technical achievements (deliverables, milestones) compared to the original time plan, as described in the Grant Agreement contract, and learning content for the education programmes. The Quality Assurance Methodology and application in the first year will be reported in D4.3. Key learnings and improvements to the quality control methodology will be closely monitored.

The QM will ensure that the periodic activity, deliverables, management, and final project reports are completed and of high quality in accordance with the work plan. Additionally, the QM will keep the PEC informed on the status of all active quality processes and raise any issues requiring remedial action. As required, the QM takes part in PEC meetings as required and reports directly to the GEA.

Additionally, the QM will ensure that the learning content used by the training providers is of high quality. The QM will keep the relevant WP Leaders and Task Leaders updated on the development status of the short-term training programmes from each training provider and raise any issues requiring urgent action.

The definition of an effective quality monitoring system and mechanism will allow to monitor the phases of the project, to understand if the project is proceeding as planned and to anticipate problems instead of solving them afterwards. The quality control mechanism will overlook the project deliverables production and learning content production, relying on the expertise of the QM.

The procedure that will be followed for the preparation of deliverables and production of the learning content was agreed the very beginning of the project. Before submission or publication, each project deliverable and learning content is reviewed by a Lead Reviewer and the PM. See deliverable submission process picture below.

Deliverables submission process

The proposed steps are:

- 2/3 months before the submission date: the Lead Beneficiary shares and agrees with all involved partners on the TOC
- 2 months before the submission date: Writing phase (following the previous step)
- 1 month before submission date: the Lead beneficiary closes the deliverable for Technical Review
 - Technical Reviewers are selected among partners with some round-robin schema and have 2 weeks to complete the deliverable review
- The last 2 weeks are dedicated to **consolidating comments** and a **final quality review** by the Coordinator

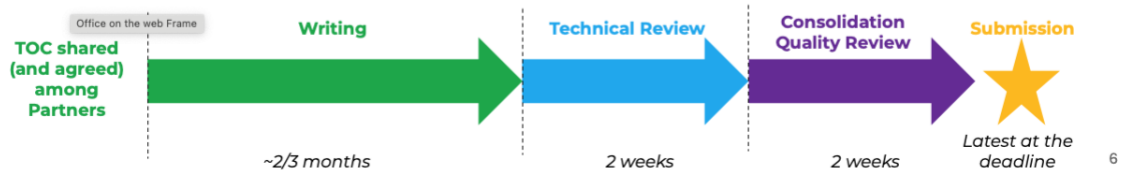


Figure 3: Deliverable submission process

8.1 Deliverables

To ensure the quality of all project deliverables to following conventions.

8.1.1 Template

ACHIEVE project deliverables will all use the deliverable template in MS Word available in the project SharePoint.

8.1.2 Fine Naming Convention

Deliverables will use a file name convention as follows:

- The deliverable number;
- The name of the deliverable (with underscores instead of spaces);
- The name of the project, after a dot;
- The version number, after a dot;

For example, this deliverable would be:

D4.1_Project_Management_Handbook.ACHIEVEv0.1.docx

8.1.3 Internal review

All deliverables will be subject to an internal peer-review. The detailed review process is described in D4.1 Quality Assurance Methodology and application in the first year.

Reviewers will be appointed from within the consortium for each deliverable. It will be their responsibility to review the deliverable in accordance with the review criteria.

It will be the responsibility of the task leader to ensure the deliverable is submitted to the co-ordinator at least 2 weeks before the deliverable is due for submission to ensure this process.

Reviewers will provide feedback one week after this date. Task leads will have one week to finalise the report and provide to the co-ordinator 1 day before the submission deadline.

Before submission or publication, each project deliverable and learning content will be reviewed by the QM.

8.1.4 Version Control

All deliverables will contain a version control table outlining changes made to the document as shown in

Table 7.

Table 7: Versioning and contribution history table

Version	Date	Authors	Notes
0.1	19/10/2023	Name Surname (PRTNR)	Draft version.

9. Visibility – European flag, funding statement and project logo

As per Grant Agreement Article 17, all communication activities of the partners related to the ACHIEVE project (including media relations, conferences, seminars, information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.), dissemination activities and any infrastructure, equipment, or major result funded by the grant must acknowledge EU support and display the European flag (emblem), the project logo, and funding statement or disclaimer (translated into local languages, where appropriate). The emblem must remain distinct and separate and cannot be modified by adding other visual marks, brands or text. Apart from the emblem, no other visual identity or logo may be used to highlight the EU support.

The disclaimer reads as follows: “Funded by the European Union under GA n°101158828. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or HaDEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.”

The EU emblem and ACHIEVE logos are available to download on the SharePoint of partners, under folder WP5. Marketing and dissemination.

10. Scholarships

10.1 Financial support to EU students

A comprehensive scholarship programme is defined to ensure that financial support will be provided to students to participate to the master's programmes offered by ACHIEVE. The scholarship programme will include scholarships dedicated to increasing the participation of women and citizens from [RIS \(Regional Innovation Scheme\)](#) countries, promoting diversity in terms of gender, age, social and economic background.

The financial supports granted within the project will be directed only to EU students and can be of three kinds:

1. half tuition fee waivers: the scholarship will cover 50% of the tuition fees for the student,
2. full tuition fee waivers: the scholarship will cover all tuition fees for the student,
3. scholarships of excellence: consisting of full tuition fee waivers and a monthly allowance paid to the student (around 800€/month, adapted by a coefficient adapted to the host country life-cost, for the duration of the master).

10.2 Scholarship programme

The scholarship programme will award applicants based on merit. To quantify merit, a merit score (on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being the maximum) will be given to each applicant accepted to one of the master's programmes. Three elements will be considered in assigning a merit score:

1. previous academic and professional experience of an applicant,
2. curriculum vitae,
3. letter of motivation, which also includes the motivation for an applicant to receive financial support.

The initial merit score value will be an average of the two merit scores assigned by the two Local Programme Coordinators accepting an applicant (the Local Coordinator at the Entry University and the Local Coordinator at the Exit University). WP1 Leader and WP2 Leader will review the merit scores assigned by Local Programme Coordinators to ensure uniformity between the scores given by Local Programme Coordinators from different universities and different countries. A final meeting including the WP Leader, all Local Programme Coordinators, and Task 4.3 leader will be set at the end of each Recruitment Period to agree and deliberate on the final merit score of each applicant.

In line with SO4 - Supporting students while promoting diversity, the scholarship programme will promote diversity in terms of gender, age, social and economic background. To achieve this objective, the ACHIEVE scholarship programme will include different scholarship opportunities, including:

- an overarching scholarship programme - available to any applicant from any EU country or EU-associated country,
- a scholarship programme for women - available only to female applicants from any EU country or EU-associated country,
- a scholarship programme for participants from RIS countries - available only to applicants from country included in the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS)¹.

ACHIEVE has the ambitious target to reach at least 30% of female graduates from its education programmes.

The scholarship programme for participants from RIS countries is aimed to support the participation of students from countries with moderate or modest innovation score and with lower gross domestic product. Countries eligible to take part to the RIS include

1. EU member states,
2. Horizon Europe associated countries², and
3. outermost regions such as Guadeloupe, and Réunion (France), the Azores and Madeira (Portugal), and the Canary Islands (Spain).

The allocation of scholarships will be done at the end of the review process and before sending the letter of acceptance. This way, communication about awarded scholarships will be provided to applicants when the letters of acceptance are sent to applicants. EITD follows a proven and successful recruitment process, embedded in the EIT Digital Master School.

The exact distribution of scholarships of each type in each scholarship programme will be decided by the ACHIEVE consortium before the closing of each recruitment campaign and will be based on criteria defined in the project and aimed at sustaining enrolments to both master programs and at reaching all project KPIs.

¹ EIT (2025). EIT Regional Innovation Scheme. Information and updated list of RIS countries available at:

<https://eit.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-02/EIT%20RIS%20Implementation%20Framework%20%28Updated%202025-2027%29.pdf>

² Horizonte Europe: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf

Appendix A – Template for progress report

ACHIEVE Quarterly Progress Report

[PARTNER NAME]- M# to M#

TECHNICAL PROGRESS.	
How are you progressing with your work? (Please provide a short overall impression of the progress of your work – max 5 lines).	
Please outline the contribution you made to work package(s) (WP) in the last month (max 3 items).	
WP1	
WP2	
WP3	
WP4	
WP5	
WP6	
Please outline the contribution you foresee making over the next month (max 3 items).	
WP1	
WP2	
WP3	
WP4	
WP5	
WP6	
Are you encountering or do you anticipate problems achieving formal results/deliverables?	
WP1	
WP2	
WP3	
WP4	
WP5	
WP6	
Are you encountering or do you anticipate problems fulfilling your informal commitments? (For example, providing informal input for other work packages)	
Are you encountering or do you anticipate problems meeting your deadline (are you running into time problems?)	
Are you encountering or do you anticipate any budgetary problems (person month allocation and financial budget)?	
Meeting participation and event attendance (please describe all meetings or events participated by some partner's member for the interest of the project):	

Appendix B – Template for reporting expenses

The collection of data regarding PM allocation and expenses will happen quarterly with a declaration from all participant partners. The collection of this data will happen via an exchange of an Excel from all project participants with the PM, after his request. The excel template can be found on the ACHIEVE Project SharePoint on Microsoft Teams.

The information collected will be the following:

ACHIEVE Quarterly Expenses Report

[PARTNER NAME]- M# to M#

INTERNAL MANPOWER				
Employee Name	Activity / Task	PMs	Monthly rate	Activity / Task Description
Name Surname	WP# - T#.#	# PM	€ ###,##0.00	Task description.

OTHER COSTS (including Travel and Subsistence)			
Activity / Task	Cost Type	Amount	Cost Description
WP# - T#.#	Travel and Subsistence / Other goods, works and services	€ ###,##0.00	Description of the cost. For travel and subsistence: name of person travelling, date and destination and purpose of travel. <ul style="list-style-type: none">For Other goods, works and services: description of the good, work or service, cost/value and date of invoice.

References

[DIGITAL] <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/digital-programme>

[ACHIEVE] <https://masterschool.eitdigital.eu/cloud-and-networking-infrastructure>

Glossary

Community	A group of users, organised with a common purpose, and jointly granted access to resources. It may act as the interface between individual users and the resources. (see also [WISE-SCI])
EC	European Commission
EIT	European Institute of Innovation and Technology
KIC	Knowledge and Innovation Community
GA	Grant Agreement
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
R&S	Research and scholarship