FEM4FOREST

FOREST IN WOMEN'S HANDS (FEM4FOREST)

QUALITY CONTROL REPORT

Deliverable: D.M.3.1

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Imprint

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- ✓ Forest Trainings Center PICHL (Austria)
- ✓ NOWA Training Counselling Project management (Austria)
- ✓ Bavarian State Institute of Forestry (Germany)
- ✓ Forest Owner Association Styria (Austria)
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Disclaimer

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Contents

1. Guiding Principles of the Quality Management

Quality management is the process of ensuring that all project activities required to design, plan, and implement a project are effective and efficient with respect to the purpose of the objective and its accomplishment. Quality management of a project is not a separate, independent process that occurs at the end of an activity to measure the quality level of the output. Quality management is a continuous process that begins and ends with the project. It is more about preventing and avoiding poor quality than measuring and correcting it.

Although the full application of the most widely used standard ISO for quality assurance is not possible within the Fem4Forest project, because not all organisations have a seal of approval and the required effort is too high compared to the project budget, the seven principles of quality management mentioned in ISO 9000 and ISO 9001 are applied:

1.   Customer Focus
The ultimate focus of quality management is to meet and exceed customer expectations. In the framework of Fem4ForestORESDA, the customer or beneficiary is represented by the JS and requirements are the ones listed in the subsidy contract, inducing all annexes.

2.   Leadership
Leaders at all levels provide consistency of purpose and direction and create conditions in which people (project partners) are committed to achieving the organisation's (project's) quality objectives. This principle has been implemented in the project management structure (see also D.M.1.1 Implementation Manual).

3.   Engagement of People
Competent, empowered, and engaged people (project partners) at all levels of the organization (the project) are essential to improving the ability to create and deliver value. This principle has been translated in the project management structure (see also D.M.1.1 Implementation Manual).

4.   Process Approach
Consistent and predictable results are achieved more effectively and efficiently when activities are understood and managed as interrelated processes that function as a coherent system. In addition to project meetings, regular conference calls have been held to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the activities and their interrelationships among all project partners.

5.   Improvement

Risk-based thinking and quality management aren't one-time events. Successful organisations (projects) have a continuous focus on improvement. Intensive exchanges between partners (e.g., through conference calls) should enable efficient transfer of project-relevant knowledge and practises among partners. The project management team strives to improve project processes and results throughout the entire duration of the project.

6.   Evidence-Based Decision Making

All decision making involves some degree of uncertainty. However, decisions based on the analysis and evaluation of data and information are more likely to produce the desired results. Continued monitoring of activities in accordance with the requirements of the Danube Transnational Programme enables informed decision making.

7.   Relationship management

For sustained success, an organisation (project) manages its relationships with interested parties, such as suppliers. In the case of the Fem4Forest project, the interested parties are the relevant stakeholders in the project regions. Targeted project activities ensure that they are involved in the project: they were informed, consulted, invited to workshops and project activities where relevant. In addition, the following principles are followed:
- All persons involved in the Fem4Forest project are responsible for ensuring that their work is of high quality.
- Work Package Leaders (WPL) are responsible for monitoring quality thinking and quality deliverables in the work within each Work Package (WP).
- Quality assurance measures are planned, implemented and evaluated in all project activities.

2. Quality Management of the Project

2.1 Management Structure

The Management Structure of the Fem4Forest project consists of the following:
o   Project Management Team (PMT: project manager, financial manager, project administrator, quality assurance manager and communication manager)
o   Steering Committee (decision-making body, SC)
o   Technical Committee (TC)
o   Work Package Leaders (WPLs)

The following figure 1 presents the project management structure and lists the PPs involved in the project coordination.
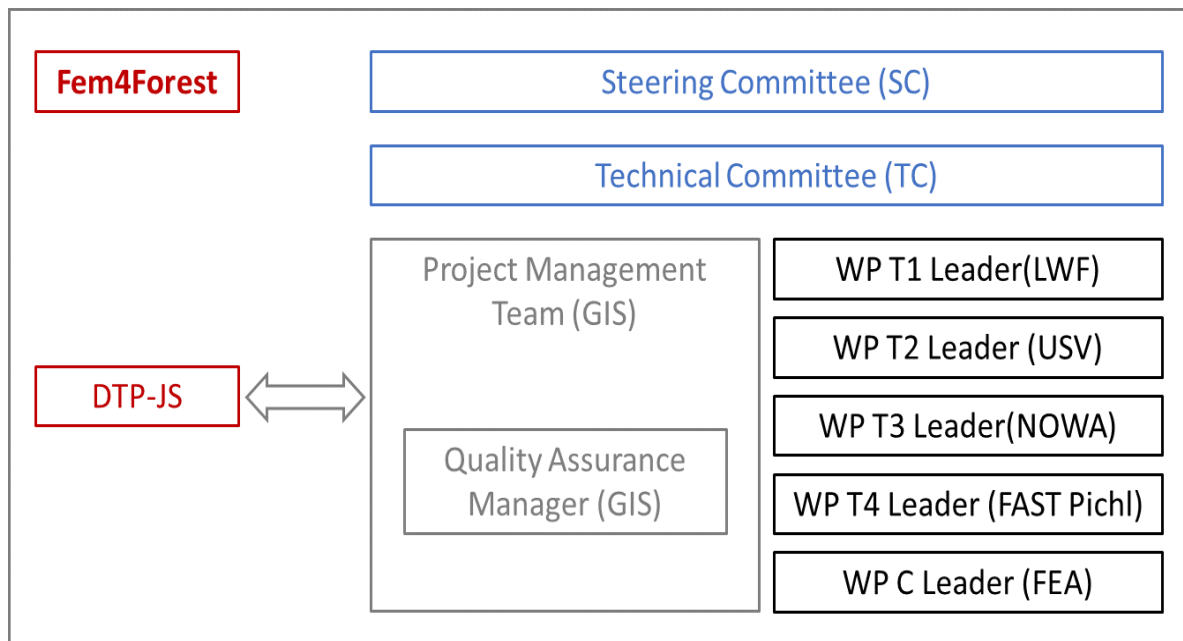
Figure 1. Schematic representation of the Fem4Forest management structure.

The quality management is fully integrated in the overall project management as described in the project Implementation Manual (D.M.1.1).

2.1.1 Quality Assurance Manager (QM)

In accordance with the maxim "A high quality process leads to a high quality result", the SC has appointed Dr. Jožica Gričar (GIS) as Quality Assurance Manager (QM). QM is thus an expert from the LP management team. The main tasks of QM are proofreading, analysis and peer review of the project outputs from a qualitative point of view according to the predefined quality standards, as well as the preparation of the quality report according to the instructions of the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme. QM will work closely with PM (project manager) and the WPLs. At the end of each reporting period a short report on quality management was prepared.

A Output Quality Report is a written opinion (including both positive and negative aspects) issued by the Quality Assurance Manager of the project in order to validate the quality of a delivered project output based on his/her assessment. The Quality Report is to be prepared separately for each single finalised output, based on Annex C1 template and uploaded to the relevant Project Progress Report to which the delivered output belongs to.

Thus, to ensure a high quality of project implementation QM (together with PML) will:

- o Stay in regular contact with all WPs in order to have a clear overview of activities that are implemented. Through this exchange it will be possible to provide guidance and to ensure a good quality of deliverables and outputs (in terms of contents, extent, timing, layout, etc.).
- o The quality assurance activity should always have a follow-up. The QM should ensure that his findings/recommendations are included in the final outputs to be submitted to the JS.
- o Closely monitor project progress and performance, e.g. in terms of: progress of implementation (activities, deliverables, outputs of all work packages, indicators); identification of potential risks and problems, deviations and modifications.
- o Carefully plan the reporting process so that PPs provide necessary information in time. Set up clear internal responsibilities and deadlines for getting PP information needed for reports.
- o Perform validation by checking the quality of information and supporting documents (deliverables, outputs, etc.) provided by PPs in their PP reports. This should be done when consolidating the provided information into the joint progress report before submitting it to the JS.
- o Conduct internal reviews in order to analyse the current status and progress as well as to plan ahead for the next activities.
- o Informing the JS about any obstacles/problems encountered.

2.1.2 Further Management Bodies and their Roles in Quality Management

As mentioned above, all partners are required to deliver good quality. According to the project Implementation Manual (D.M.1.1), the following governing bodies have specific responsibilities related to Quality Management.

Management body	Specific role with respect to Quality Management
Steering Committee	o Monitoring and validation of project implementation and achievements: This includes verifying that project implementation is in line with activities and outputs defined in the approved application form. Furthermore, it means validating the quality of main project outputs and of progress towards achieving the set objectives. o Review of the management performance and of the quality of progress reporting towards the programme bodies.
Project Manager	o Manages overall the quality control of deliverables and outputs
Technical Committee	o Ensures smooth implementation of foreseen activities in each WP: checks the progress of activities and prepares the program, topics as well as proposes solutions to be discussed at PP /SC meetings.
Work Package Leaders	o Coordinating the activities of the work plan (including reporting and deliverable preparation) by respecting the quality requirements.

2.2 Quality Assurance of Deliverables

2.2.1 Deliverables Preparation

The WPLs shall send to the Project Manager and Quality Manager:

o Either the project deliverables (for which they are responsible) according to the required specifications and format;

o Or a notification that the project deliverables are available on SharePoint for final review.

All deliverables are in a standard format based on the template provided to the Consortium.

Each WPL is responsible for the quality of their deliverables, but everyone PP involved in the WP is expected to provide their input in a timely and high-quality manner. The QM, along with the LP, oversees the final internal peer review of each contribution prior to submission.

The figure below shows schematically the timeframe for the preparation of deliverables, which is intended to ensure high quality of deliverables submitted on time. This timeframe is indicative and must be adjusted to account for specific vacations such as summer holiday, Christmas, etc. Minor delays are acceptable; the WPL, LP and QM shall be informed of such delays.
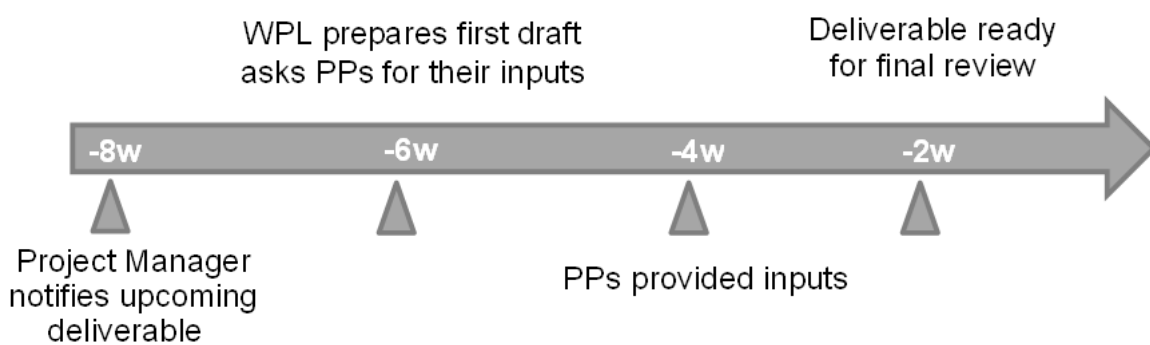

Fig. 2. Schematic representation of the time frame for deliverable preparation and approval.

2.2.2 Deliverables Review

All project deliverables are reviewed internally. Any quality deficiencies will be addressed prior to final approval and submission of deliverables to JS or publication of the report.

QM is not involved in the preparation of the deliverables/reports. The QM's comments should be as specific as possible. Comments that are too general often cannot be adequately responded to. The role of the QM is to monitor the quality of the deliverables /reports to the best of her ability. The goal of the review is to improve the deliverables. The authors will consider the comments when finalising the deliverables /reports. If, after reviewing the deliverables /reports, the QM deems them inadequate or technically incorrect, she will forward her remaining concerns to the WPL and LP.

The PM acts as the final reviewer. Appropriate action may be taken as a result of quality control by the QM and the WPL:

- **Acceptance** = The deliverable fully complies with the rules and reference standards.

- **Adaptation** = The deliverable does not fully comply with the rules and reference. Some improvement is required by the project decision-making bodies to achieve full compliance.

- **Rejection** = The deliverable does not comply at all with the rules and reference standards and/or the issue is not addressed to the satisfaction of the project decision-making bodies. Significant revision of the deliverable is required.

If agreement cannot be reached between the author of the deliverable (WPL) and the QM, the reviewed evaluation document should be submitted to the PM and TC for review and decision on action to be taken.

Each deliverable should be reviewed for the following:

- **Scope of the content** (the extent to which the deliverable contains all requested information, i.e., the table of contents).

- **Quality of content and information** (the extent to which the content is of sufficient quality and relevant to the topic being addressed; cross-check as necessary to ensure that there are no contradictions or unnecessary overlaps between deliverables).

- **Conformity to schedule** (check the delivery date, which must be consistent with the agreed deadline).

- **Attached documents** (verification that all required supporting documents are attached).

- **Compliance with formal requirements** (compliance with the template, specific format if applicable...).

The QM will be notified by the author of the deliverable QM on the availability of the corresponding document, which will be available on SharePoint.

The results of the review that are included in the completed checklist will be part of the progress report.

2.2.3 Overview of the Review Process for Deliverables

According to the above, the following timeline and reviewers have been defined for the project deliverables, including the progress reports. In table 1, overview on project outputs is presented as defined in the work plan.

Overview on project outputs as defined in the work plan:

No.	Output Title	Deliverable Title	Deliverable Responsible	Date of Quality Report
1	T1.1 Status of Women in Forestry sector in Danube region	D.T1.1.1 Report on current situation and position of women in forestry in Danube region	LWF	December 2021
2	T1.2 Common methodology to identify needs of women in forestry	D.T1.1.2 Report on "Collected needs of women and wider gender perspective in forestry sector"	LWF	June 2021
3	T2.1 Transnational Innovation Roadmap and National Action Plans	D.T2.1.1 Transnational Innovation Roadmap; D.T2.2.1 National Action Plans	USV	June 2022
4	T3.1 Transnational guidelines for empowering women in forestry	D.T3.1.1 Transnational gender reflected guidelines	NOWA	August 2021
5	T3.2 Transnational Awareness raising campaign	D.T3.2.1 Transnational Awareness Raising Campaign Model	NOWA	December 2021
6	T3.3 Training and mentoring program for women in forestry	D.T3.3.1 Training program for women in forestry; D.T3.4.1 Gender reflected mentoring program for female forest owners	NOWA	December 2021
7	T4.1 Pilot actions implemented in forestry sector	D.T4.1.1 Transnational report on awareness raising activities; D.T4.2.1 Reports on pilot activities	FAST Pichl	September 2022
8	T4.2 Joint model for measures regarding gender equality in the forestry sector	D.T4.3.1 Transnational Final Report with recommendations	FAST Pichl	December 2022

3. References

Implementation manual, Version 3.1, June 2020, Danube transnational programme, 52 pages

Jemec T., Krajnc, Nike. 2022. Implementation manual: Forest in women's hands (Fem4Forest) : Deliverable: D.M.1.1 : Project number: DTP3-500-1.2 Fem4Forest : Project Coordinator: Slovenian Forestry Institute. Slovenian Forestry Institute, Ljubljana: 28 pp. https://dirros.openscience.si/IzpisGradiva.php?id=16217.

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