



# Quality Plan

## **KA2 ERASMUS+ CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE FIELD OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME**

### **About ILHAM-EC**

ILHAM-EC aims at increasing the professionalism of young students by supporting the development of a new inter-university postgraduate Master on Sustainable Land Management (SLM). The new curriculum will take into account new approaches to tackle land degradation and desertification processes. The new Master will be designed to be student-oriented, based on new innovative learning methods and adjusted to the Bologna process requirements. In addition, a cooperation agreement signed by the involved universities and other stakeholders will establish an international educational network on SLM, thus creating new cooperative opportunities and relationships.

### **Members of the Consortium**

- [Desertification Research Center, University of Sassari, Italy](#)
- [University of Leeds](#), United Kingdom
- [Aristotle University of Thessaloniki](#), Greece
- [UNIMED, Mediterranean Universities Union](#), Italy
- [Advanced Computer Systems A.C.S. S.p.A.](#), Italy
- [University of Cairo](#), Egypt
- [Alexandria University](#), Egypt
- [Damanhour University](#), Egypt
- [Zagazig University](#), Egypt

More at <http://www.ilham-ec.eu/>



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# 1. Introduction

The ILHAM-EC project aims at increasing the professionalism of young students by supporting the development of a new inter-university postgraduate Master on Sustainable Land Management (SLM). The new curriculum will take into account new approaches to tackle land degradation and desertification processes. The new Master will be designed to be student-oriented, based on new innovative learning methods and adjusted to the Bologna process requirements. In addition, a cooperation agreement signed by the involved universities and other stakeholders will establish an international educational network on SLM, thus creating new cooperative opportunities and relationships.

## 2. Quality plan

### 2.1 ILHAM-EC quality principles

The project quality principles are:

- *Flexibility*: Requests to make changes or deviations are notified and explained in written form. The changes or the deviations are approved by all partners before becoming effective. The project is amendable to adapt to emerging needs identified during the project life-cycle.
- *Participation*: All partners take part in all project meetings and events related to the tasks or activities they have to carry out (according to their role into the project). All decisions taken together with the operational specifications of the activities are recorded in written form and made available to all partners.
- *Documentation*: The working documents and operational specifications of the activities are written and stored to facilitate project review and management.
- *Efficacy and Effectiveness*: The processes/phases produce the expected results in terms of planned outputs in the timeframe foreseen and within the remit of working plan. The corrective measures are agreed and approved by all partners. The level of the resources employed for carrying out the activities is coherent with the resource level anticipated in the approved project. All corrective measures are approved by all partners.
- *Innovation*: The value commitment of the partners and stakeholders supports innovation.
- *Coherence*: The processes/phases produce the expected results in terms of planned outputs.
- *Transparency*: The nature and level of resourcing available and all processes are transparent to all members of the partnership.



- *Relevance*: Relevance of the processes and results/outcomes is validated periodically. If necessary corrective measures are put in place.

These principles will be considered in every quality assurance activity of the project.

## 2.2 Structure of Quality Plan

The aim of the evaluation is to support project coordinator and WP leaders in ensuring highest quality of project outputs, activities and results, as well as in improving project performance. It should support decision making by delivering necessary evidence to introduce any significant changes, should they be needed. The evaluation will increase the quality of project activities and outputs and measures to what extent they reach the short-term project goals and results set in the application. The quality and evaluation is composed of two interwoven stages named as process and progress evaluation.

Process evaluation is one of the key elements for quality assurance as well as project performance along with responsibilities and procedures. It aims at actual developing and implementing the project. It is considered as a joint learning process as it generates relevant and necessary information for partners in order to improve the practices and keep the project running efficiently. Progress evaluation. Inseparable from process evolution, progress evaluation approach is widely applied to measure the level of achievement of expected results, hence project objectives. It involves the measurement of effectiveness of the project outcomes.

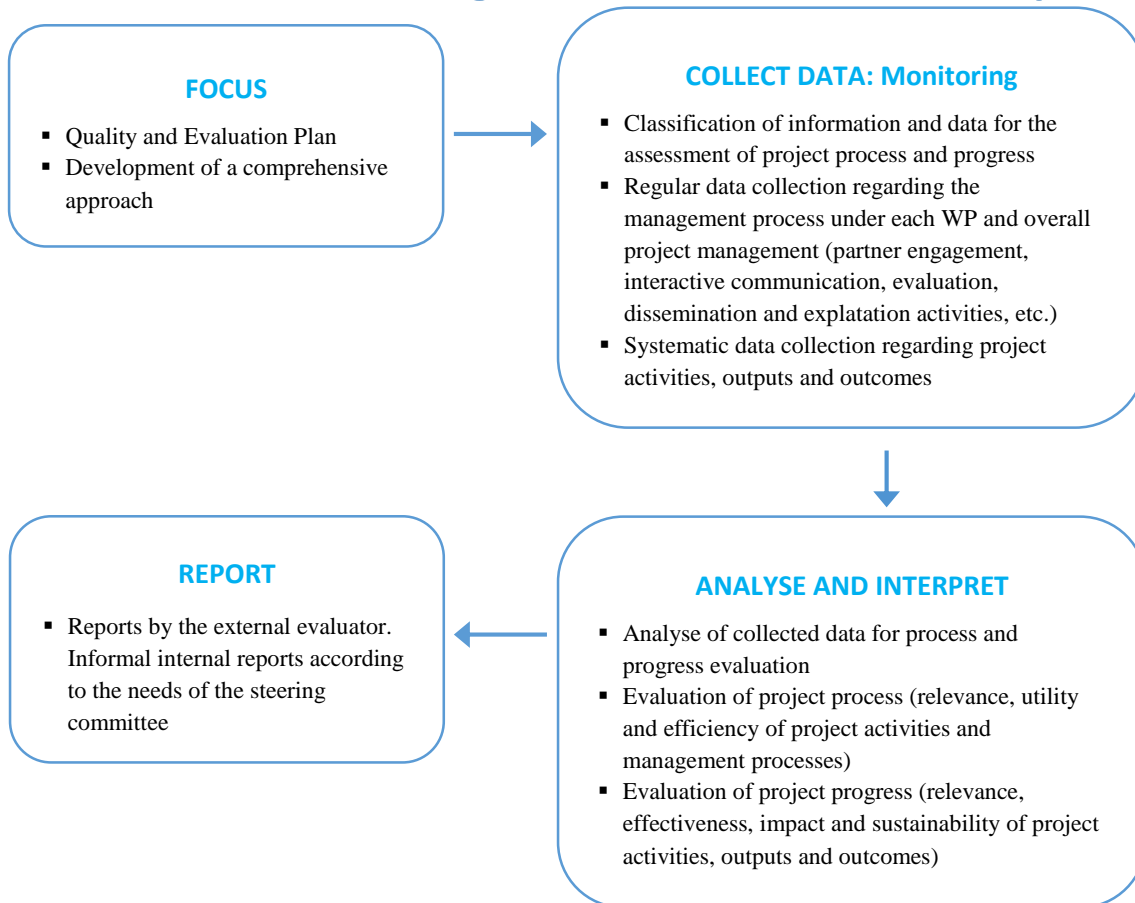
Both evaluation stages requires a participatory approach with full engagement of project partners by means of interactive communication, continuous track of management tasks under each WP, self-assessment and regular feedbacks. It involves measurement of effectiveness (compliance with time schedule), relevance (extent of contribution to project deliverables and objectives), utility (utility of the inputs, participation and commitment of the resources), communication, dissemination, exploitation as well as sustainability.

In the process of evaluation there are 4 areas of interest to be assessed in the course of the project.

1. Testing and evaluation of project outputs. It will examine the quality of project deliverables as well as to what extent they are useful and relevant for end-users.
2. Process evaluation. It embraces the **assessment of project management (overall management and management under each WP) as well as monitoring in order to measure the alignment of the project process with the project outputs and outcomes.**
3. Progress evaluation. Examination of the level of achievement of expected results hence of project objectives.
4. Mid-term and final evaluation of project progress. It will indicate to what extent project activities were consistent with the work plan (effectiveness) and to what extent activities undertaken lead to achieving project goals (relevance)



## Monitoring and evaluation road map



The following table presents the project's work package leaders:

Work package N°	Type of work package	Title of work package	WP Leader
<b>WP1</b>	Preparation	Need assessment	NRD-UNISS
<b>WP2</b>	Development	Curriculum development	University of Alexandria
<b>WP3</b>	Development	Implementation of learning environment	ACS
<b>WP4</b>	Development	Training of teachers	University of Leeds
<b>WP5</b>	Development	Implementation of the inter-university high quality Master on SLM	University of Alexandria or Cairo



<b>WP6</b>	Quality plan	Quality plan	UNIMED
<b>WP7</b>	Dissemination and exploitation	Dissemination and collaborative network	UNIMED
<b>WP8</b>	Management	Project management	NRD-UNISS

### External Quality Expert

The External Quality Expert will be responsible for monitoring the quality of the educational contents, reports and public outcomes and deliverables of the project. This external quality control will be achieved by giving to the external expert all available project documents and information collected in the internal quality monitoring mechanism.

The results of the external quality monitoring will be presented in 2 evaluating reports which will be discussed and analysed during the Steering Committee and Coordination meetings.

## 2.3 Monitoring the Project Workplan

The scope of monitoring the project processes is to ensure as follows: a) the work in each task is consistent with the general workflow of the project; b) the resources are used properly as planned and committed, and c) a reasonable time-plan is adopted.

In order to ensure the above-mentioned issues, the following procedure is introduced:

1. Before the starting date of a work package, the work package leader enter in contact with the project manager to discuss about work package workplan.
2. The project manager checks the quality of the proposal for verifiability and feasibility, together with the project quality leader.
3. The work package leader and the project manager monitor the on-going work against the work package plan and establish together issues and deviations from plan. Issues which concern only the work package are handled directly within the work package team. Long term actions and issues where the interdependence with other work packages are concerned or where the success of the project is affected, are dealt within the overall project management. Short term corrective actions are taken by the work package leader in accordance with the project manager.

Each WP leader is responsible to monitor the progress of its own WP. The project Coordinator is responsible to monitor the overall progress of the project. In case of deviations from the original plans within a specific WP, corrective actions should be taken through a bottom-up approach and should primarily be adopted within the respective work package itself.



The main concern of corrective actions on a project management basis is the quality and timeliness of project deliverables. Deviations from plan of formal project output will be documented by the project manager. Based on each monitoring report the project manager will decide whether an issue can be settled within a work package or whether interdependencies with other work packages are concerned.

If only one WP is concerned, the work package leader will agree to modify new deadlines which will substitute the original plan. If the work of other work packages or the success of the whole project is endangered because of late or poor performance of a work package, the project manager will inform the main project coordinator, who will agree about new measures in order to guarantee the project lifetime.

## 2.4 Internal Communication and Information Management

**Circulation of documents** will depend upon their nature:

- Official deliverables: the project Coordinator will be responsible for the delivery of the approved documents to the Agency.
- Progress and final reports, cost statements will follow the rules provided in the Grant Agreement and the instructions provided on the “E+CBHE Guidelines for the Use of the Grant”<sup>1</sup>.
- Working documents will be spread among partners through the project mailing list or will be sent to a selected set of partners collaborating on the specific document (depending on the nature of the document). The project Coordinator will always be copied.
- As for project administrative documents, the project Coordinator will assure the circulation of cost statements and all relevant documents. English is the official language of the project.

## 2.5 Deliverables: Submission Procedures and Quality Assurance

Each Deliverable is assigned to one leading responsible partner. This partner will have the responsibility that the deliverable is approved in terms of content, presentation and linguistic quality and is submitted to the European Commission through the Coordinator on time.

More specifically the responsible partner assures that the content of a deliverable is consistent with the output of the team working on the deliverable and that the overall goals of the project are met. Any issues endangering the success of the work package or the project have to be reported immediately to the project Coordinator. Each deliverable will be reviewed by the Quality and Evaluation Team through a peer-reviewing process

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<sup>1</sup> [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/beneficiaries-space/capacity-building-in-higher-education\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/beneficiaries-space/capacity-building-in-higher-education_en)





The submission procedure for deliverables ensures that the formal output of the project has met the agreed internal quality standards.

Deliverables have to be submitted in standard form and layout, available in the shared folder. A complete list of ILHAM-EC deliverables is presented in the table below.

**WP1: Needs Assessment**

- 1.1 Curriculum Evaluation Report

**WP2: Curriculum Development**

- 2.1 Business plan for the high quality Master on SLM
- 2.2 Master accreditation

**WP3: Implementation of learning environment**

- 3.1 10 Modules realized
- 3.2 E-Learning platform with the 10 modules implemented
- 3.3 Report on platform management
- 3.4 Educational game
- 3.5 Suitable learning environment implemented

**WP4: Training of teachers**

- 4.1 Teaching best practices guidelines
- 4.2 32 certificate of attendance awarded

**WP5: Implementation of the interuniversity high quality Master on SLM**

- 5.1 Events of communication to attract potential students
- 5.2 Selection of students

**WP6: Quality Plan**

- 6.1 Report on external project quality control and monitoring
- 6.2 Quality plan

**WP7: Dissemination and collaborative network**

- 7.1 2 dissemination conferences
- 7.2 Newsletter
- 7.3 Cooperation agreements

**WP8: Project Management**

- 8.1 Periodical coordination Meeting/Minutes of Meeting
- 8.2 Memorandum Of Understanding



- 8.3 Steering Committee Meeting/Minutes of Meeting
- 8.4 Annual and final reports for EACEA

Quality assurance of the submission procedure will be guaranteed by the following subsequent steps including several feedback loops between the originator and reviewer of a deliverable:

1. Deliverables must be sent to the project coordinator (UNISS) prior to the due date by the WP leader.
2. At the same time, the partner responsible for the deliverable makes the deliverable available to all project partners either by email or through the project platform for internal review and collects remarks and suggestions. The feedback period for project partners depends on the time schedule. Feedback is sent directly to the responsible partner with the mailing list in cc, to allow social commenting on the documents.
3. The project Coordinator identifies at least one partner who will be responsible for reviewing the deliverable. A feedback cycle between the authors and the other project partners will be established in order to optimise the deliverable in terms of content and consistency with the overall project. If substantial changes have been made to the prior draft, the new draft version will be again made available for reviewing to all project partners.
4. Simultaneously to the internal review process, the project Coordinator, in collaboration with the partner in charge of project evaluation, reviews the formal criteria of the deliverable and checks the contents against what is described in Description of Work (DoW) and suggests appropriate changes to the responsible partner.

## 3. Project evaluation

### 3.1 Purpose and principles

The main purpose of the project evaluation within the ILHAM-EC project is to ensure a suitable quality assurance mechanism of the project and to create a quality control mechanism that will receive critical feedback allowing the results to feed back in the same mechanism

The main evaluation principles are the following (not listed in priority order):

- Beneficiaries focus: to meet beneficiaries' requirements and to strive to exceed their expectations.
- Engagement of people: competent, empowered and engaged people at all levels throughout the organization are essential to enhance its capability to create and deliver value. Recognition, empowerment and enhancement of competence facilitate the engagement of people in achieving the project quality objectives.



- **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.
- **Improvement:** it is essential for a project to maintain current levels of performance, to react to changes in its internal and external conditions and to create new opportunities of sustainability.
- **Evidence-based decision making:** Decisions based on the analysis and evaluation of data and information are more likely to produce desired results

## 3.2 Evaluation Subjects and Sources

Jointly with Quality assurance, evaluation will focus on:

- **Project Management performance:** being evaluation responsive to the lifecycle of the project development process, the evaluation approach emphasizes on linkages between the evaluation itself and the activities that are traditionally associated with project management.
- **Communication patterns:** the communication mechanisms set up in the Quality Plan will be constantly monitored to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Communication activities:** The evaluation of dissemination will mainly concern the assessment of the website and of the foreseen events. An “Evaluation and assessment” form will be used in the key project events, so to get a feedback on quality and users’ satisfaction.
- **Quality of the outcomes obtained:** the quality of outcomes, will undergo a process of internal and external evaluation. The actors involved in the monitoring of quality will be project partners as well as the members of the Steering Committee, in collaboration with the External Quality Expert.

As detailed below, the main sources of data for the evaluation within the project are:

- **Project partners**, that will provide inputs through evaluation discussions at project meetings and by replying to evaluation questionnaires;
- **Associated Partner**, that will provide inputs through exchange with the Coordinator;
- **Other Stakeholders:** participants in project events, university staff involved in the project, experts and practitioners in education and training

## 3.3 Project evaluation methods and sources

The evaluation activities are the following:

1. Interim evaluation questionnaire administered to partners;
2. Evaluation brainstorming sessions;
3. Meeting/workshop evaluation questionnaires;



4. Feedback gathered from experts and professionals during the **project events**, in order to collect feedback and comments on the project and the perception of the outcomes. N this purpose, interviews may be used as well
5. **Final evaluation questionnaire**, administered to partners towards the end of the project in order to assess if the project objectives had been achieved and suggest future actions. The results will feed the Final Evaluation Report. (See Annex 2)

### 3.4 Evaluation of main project outcomes

The impact of the main ILHAM-EC outcomes will be evaluated according to some dimensions, aligned with the medium and long-term needs of the project key target stakeholders:

- Usability, the extent to which the project outcomes can be readily used by the intended target users and have been accurately developed;
- Congruity: the extent to which the project outcomes are consistent with the needs expressed by the project background and context;
- Flexibility and adabtability, the extent to which the project outcomes can be adapted to changing needs / circumstances and to different geographical environments and context;
- Timeliness, the extent to which the achievement of the outcomes have been obtained in due time without compromising the overall structure and workplan of the project
- Originality, the extent to which the project outcomes represent an original and innovative solution according to the context in which they have been generated.

The above dimensions will be used to analyse the project outcomes with a higher potential for future-oriented impact of the project. In the final evaluation report, the following table will be used to run the impact evaluation analysis, with data coming from both project sources and input from the project Steering Committee.

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Project outcome	Target group reached	Usability	Flexibility	Extensibility	Transferability





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