



PROJECT QUALITY PLAN

March 2025

Deliverable 7.3

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Summary

This deliverable presents the APRENDE Project Quality Plan (PQP). It describes the guiding principles for quality planning, quality assurance, and quality control procedures.

This deliverable is effective throughout the project's lifetime but is open to revision if necessary.

Keywords

Project Management, Project Quality Plan, Quality Planning, Quality Assurance, Quality Control.

Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Description
CA	Consortium Agreement
COO	Coordinator
D	Deliverable
DoA	Description of the Action
EC	European Commission
ExCom	Executive Committee
GA	Grant Agreement
GeAs	General Assembly
PMO	Project Management Officer
PQP	Project Quality Plan
PR	Project Report
QA	Quality Assurance
RP	Reporting Period
WP	Work Package
WPL	Work Package Leader

1 Introduction

APRENDE is a research project with 7 Work Packages (WPs) and 41 partners, coordinated by CIEMAT, including 36 beneficiaries, 5 associated partners, and 3 affiliated entities, under the control of the CNRS. The coordinator (COO) acts as the project leader and will be responsible for the innovation management and scientific coordination of the project. He is assisted by LGI, acting as Project Manager Officer (PMO).

1.1 Purpose

The present document is the Project Quality Plan (PQP) for the APRENDE project. It describes requirements and procedural regulations that will help the consortium to complete the project. It presents an instruction guide for participants in APRENDE, as regard information management, document publication, quality assurance issues, project organisation, and contact information. Technical rules, e.g., rules for design and licensing procedures, are not included in the present document.

1.2 Application and validity

The requirements contained in this PQP apply to all personnel engaged in APRENDE. Revisions to the contents of the PQP become valid from the date of issue.

1.3 Administration

LGI is responsible for the administration of the project quality and management plan. Proposals for modifications or additions must be submitted to LGI, which updates and issues the revisions of the PQP. All revisions need approval by the Coordinator. Each new issue will be indicated in the revised document by means of a revision number.

1.4 Dissemination

The PQP is public, and can be circulated outside the beneficiaries without any approval.

Each beneficiary of the project will receive the PQP at the issue date. It will also be available on the project collaborative platform, APRENDE SharePoint.

2 Project Management and Governance

2.1 Project management strategy

Project management includes all core activities to ensure the successful completion of the project within all technical and financial aspects set out in the Grant Agreement (GA). WP7, led by CIEMAT, is dedicated to the management and coordination of the project to ensure that it stays on track in terms of scope, costs, resources, and quality. All changes and optimisations essential for facilitating this goal are always under discussion with the partners and the decisions are taken based on the partners' approval.

Good communication management practices are crucial for ensuring that information reaches the appropriate partners, and that timely, efficient decisions can be taken. Quality management contributes to establishing the relevant project quality control and quality assurance activities to ensure an efficient collaboration among the consortium partners and the delivery of project results. Risk management is necessary for providing the process and techniques for the evaluation and control of potential project risks, focusing on their precautionary diagnosis and handling.

2.2 Project management structure

The overall organisational structure of APRENDE is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

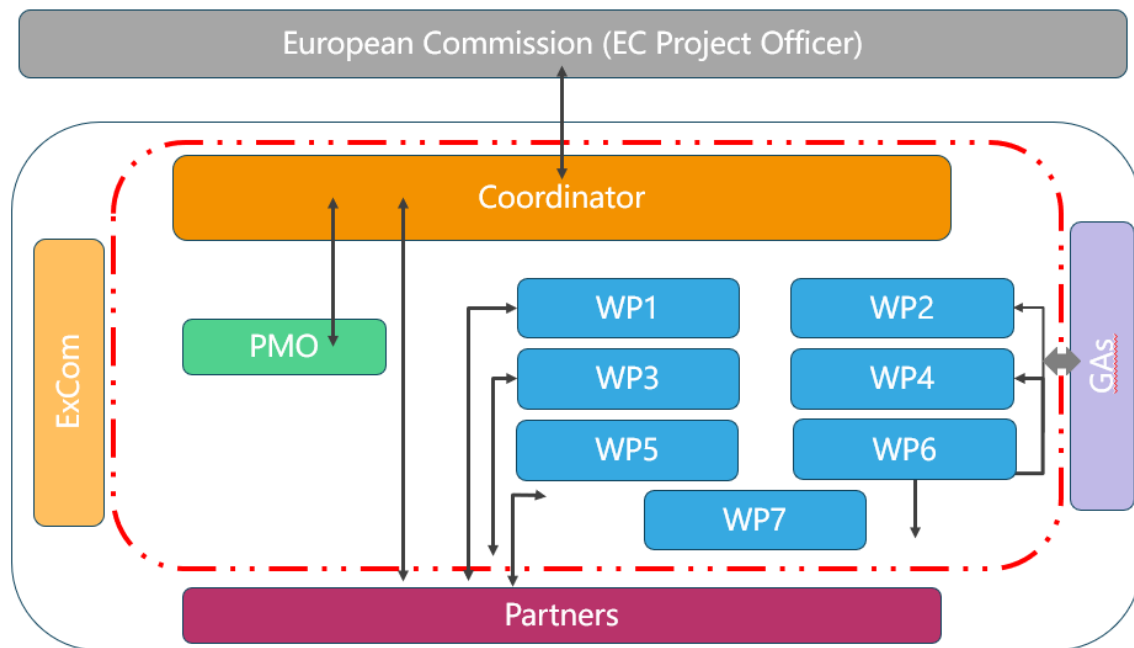


Figure 1: Project management structure of the APRENDE project.

The APRENDE project bodies, the decision-making process, as well as the responsibilities are described in the Consortium Agreement (CA) and in the Grant Agreement (GA) and are summarised in Figure 2. The interaction, responsibilities and decision-making power are clearly split between the established project bodies.

Body	Who
General Assembly	All partners (mandatory, at least 1 person per partner)
ExCom	WPLs (mandatory, ensure backup in case of absence) + PMO
WP	WPL & partners involved + COO
Project Coordination	COO + PMO (in case of a particular issue, a specific partner will be invited)

Table 1: Project bodies.

The General Assembly (GeAs) is the assembly of all partners. The GeAs is composed of one representative (Member) from each partner, as established in the proposal and outlined in the CA (see CA Art. 6). A complete contact list of all partners is available on the project's collaborative platform (SharePoint).

The Executive Committee (ExCom) is the assembly of all Work Package Leaders (WPLs), including the PMO and is chaired by the project COO. A complete contact list of WPLs is available on the project's collaborative platform. The ExCom functions as the supervisory body for the proper execution of the project. It monitors and manages the day-to-day operations and is accountable to the GeAs.

WP Leaders (WPLs) are responsible for: i) planning the scientific and technical work of the WP, in coordination with all partners that are involved in this WP; ii) ensuring that the time maintained and indicate any discrepancies to the COO; iii) initiating corrective actions for project deviations (if required); iv) consolidating partner information and preparing the reports for submission to the COO; v) ensuring that the objectives and milestones of the whole WP as well as of the detailed activities within the WP are achieved in time; vi) ensuring that the deliverables are provided according to the time schedule.

3 Collaborative web platform of the project

The project document management tool is created for internal exchanges and the review process prior to publication of reports and deliverables.

The technical documents foreseen in the framework of APRENDE are requested to be uploaded and updated at the APRENDE collaborative platform. The platform is maintained and administrated by LGI (PMO). LGI is in charge of account creation and access right configuration; requests for a new account or proper access should be sent to both joan.diaz@lgi.earth and clara.demange@lgi.earth.

Screen capture of the APRENDE SharePoint is shown below.

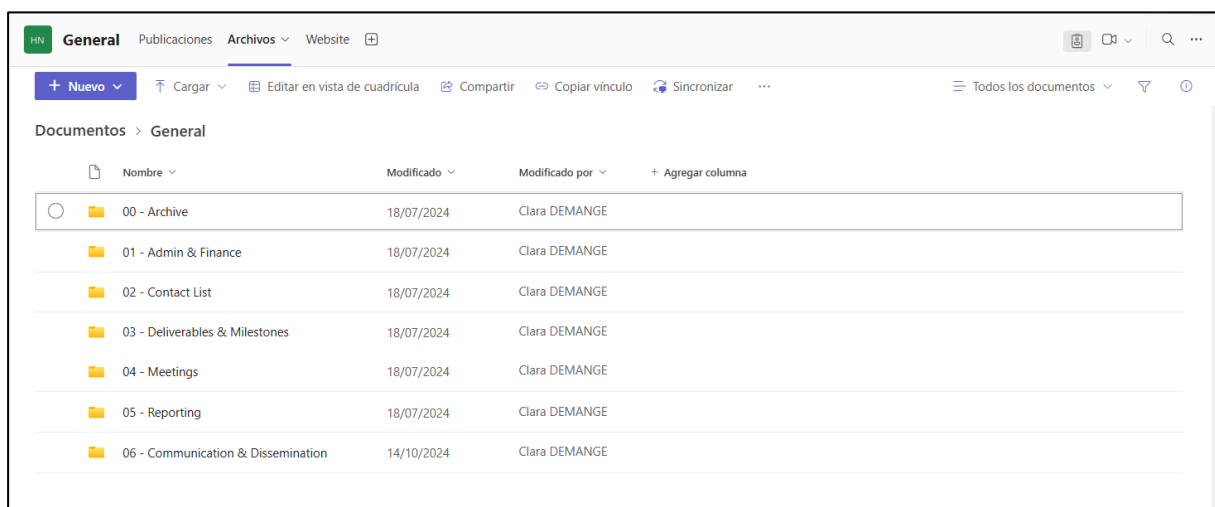
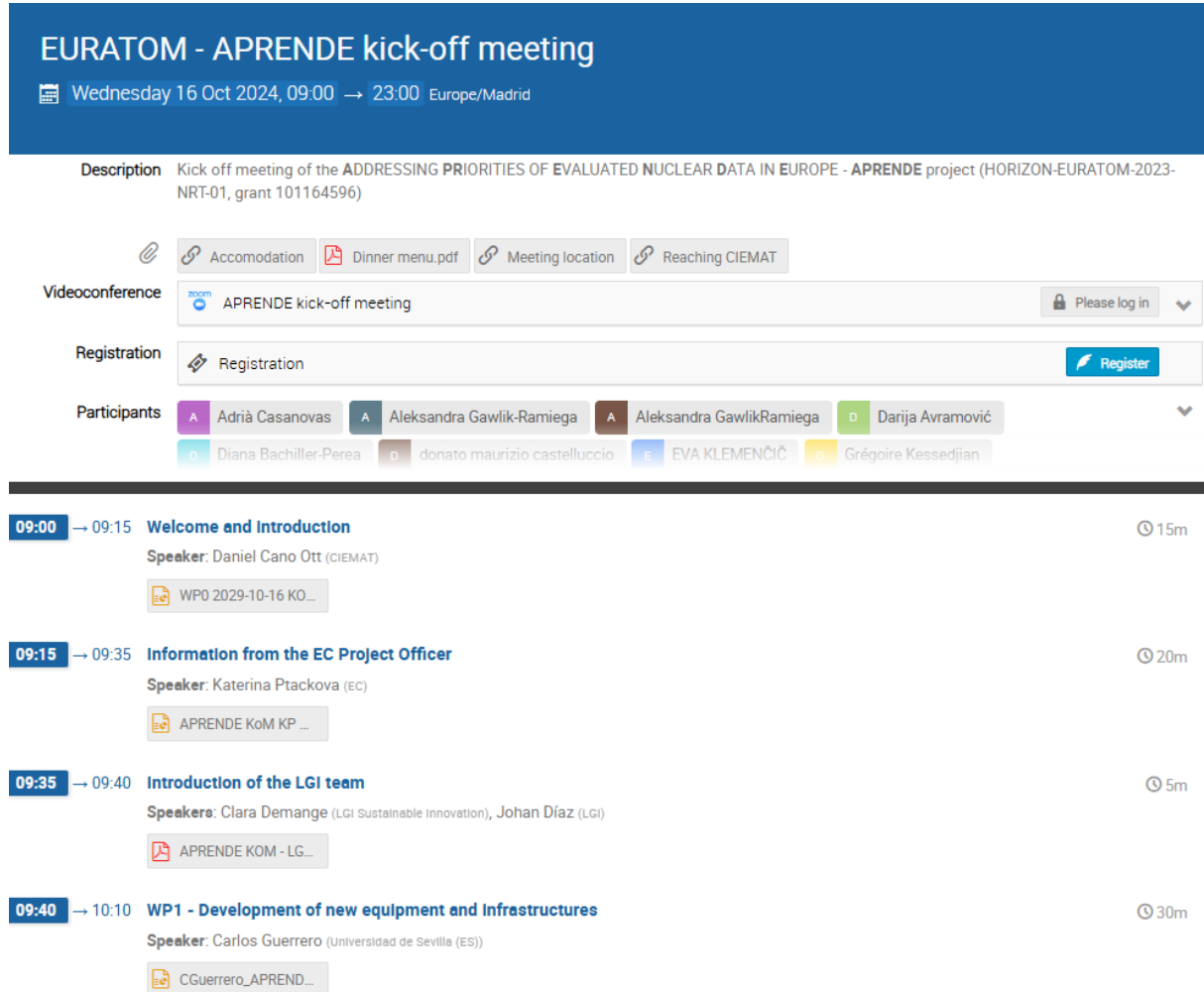


Figure 2: APRENDE Teams channel

Additionally, the Indico platform is used for organising conferences, meetings and workshops. Its usage will be explained in the next section, Meetings.

4 Meetings

For the organisation of conferences, meetings and workshops, the COO will use the platform Indico, an open-source event management tool. This platform offers key features such as agenda management, facilitating participant registration, uploading presentations and providing general event and project information, as it is presented in Figure 3.



The screenshot displays the Indico interface for the event "EURATOM - APRENDE kick-off meeting". The event is scheduled for Wednesday, 16 Oct 2024, from 09:00 to 23:00 in Europe/Madrid. The description states it is a kick-off meeting for the "ADDRESSING PRIORITIES OF EVALUATED NUCLEAR DATA IN EUROPE - APRENDE" project (HORIZON-EURATOM-2023-NRT-01, grant 101164596). The interface includes links for Accommodation, Dinner menu.pdf, Meeting location, and Reaching CIEMAT. It also features a Zoom videoconference link for "APRENDE kick-off meeting", a registration link, and a list of participants including Adrià Casanovas, Aleksandra Gawlik-Ramiega, Aleksandra GawlikRamiega, Darija Avramović, Diana Bachiller-Perea, donato maurizio castelluccio, EVA KLEMENČIČ, and Grégoire Kessedjian. The agenda is as follows:

Time	Topic	Speaker(s)	Duration
09:00 → 09:15	Welcome and Introduction	Daniel Cano Ott (CIEMAT)	15m
09:15 → 09:35	Information from the EC Project Officer	Katerina Ptackova (EC)	20m
09:35 → 09:40	Introduction of the LGI team	Clara Demange (LGI Sustainable Innovation), Johan Díaz (LGI)	5m
09:40 → 10:10	WP1 - Development of new equipment and infrastructures	Carlos Guerrero (Universidad de Sevilla (ES))	30m

Figure 3: Organisation of the KoM through the platform Indico.

In addition to the already planned meetings, conferences and workshops, both the COO and WPLs can organise periodic or ad-hoc technical progress meetings. After the first consultations with participants, a preliminary agenda should be uploaded to the "Meetings" folder on the APRENDE SharePoint. All technical participants, as well as the COO, shall then be notified electronically. Other participants will be notified on a case-by-case basis.

After the meeting, the organiser or the PMO must write minutes and make them available on the project platform. A specific folder related to the meeting shall be created in "Meetings" folder.

All rules of meetings are detailed in the Consortium Agreement.

5 Information management

Non-sensitive documents can be shared on SharePoint such as:

- Contractual technical documents, including technical deliverables and milestones. The validation process is described in the section below. The APRENDE SharePoint will be used to prepare the deliverables and to monitor the quality process. WP leaders and Coordinator will perform respectively a technical and consistency check.
- Non-technical documents, including administrative and financial documents, general communication, etc. are restricted to APRENDE participants and the EC.

The platform is not suited for restricted documents containing sensitive information and private communications are the responsibility of the partners involved in the discussion.

5.1 Project document templates

Mandatory templates to be used for APRENDE documents are available on the collaborative platform. For any questions regarding the use of these templates, the PMO can be contacted.

These templates are as follows:

- Template for APRENDE Deliverable Word document
- Template for APRENDE Minutes Word template
- Template for APRENDE PowerPoint presentations

The format for the final documents should be a PDF file.

5.2 Preparation of contractual technical documents

5.2.1 General Principle

The main principle regarding document preparation and internal dissemination is that each beneficiary applies its own rules and procedures. Each partner organisation should use its own Quality Assurance (QA) procedures to prepare its contribution to APRENDE documents. If the beneficiary is not obliged to use internally controlled guidelines and templates, these shall be provided by the PMO and should be used for all documents.

Additionally, some specific rules are required for information management at the project level in order to ensure conformity of view, consistency of administration, and traceability of documentation. The object of this chapter is to define these rules.

5.2.2 Quality process for Deliverables

The various steps necessary to issue contractual technical documents, such as deliverables and milestones, are presented below.

The process looks as follows:

- a. The main author, who is responsible for elaborating the document, asks all involved participants to write their contribution to the document (c.a. two months before the delivery date, as a general rule, a draft should be ready one month before the

- submission deadline). It is recommended to use the Deliverable Word Template APRENDE for all contributions to facilitate the preparation step.
- b. After gathering and consolidating all participants' contributions, the main author uploads the finalised version of the deliverable in editable format (Word format is the preferred option) on SharePoint under the 'Deliverables under review' folder and informs the COO, PMO and respective WPL via email.
 - c. The WPL reviews the technical content of the document.
 - If the report does not require any modifications, the WPL informs the main author and COO via email.
 - If modifications are needed, the WPL will comment on the document and inform the author. Once the updates are implemented, the main author can upload the revised deliverable and inform the COO and WPL. At this point, the process will go on until the validation.
 - d. The COO will then check the deliverables' coherence, following the same way: either modifications are required and the report will be revised, or there are no modifications needed and the report is validated. The COO then shares an email with the main author and WPL.
 - e. The PMO will then do a final quality check to ensure the document doesn't have any typos and is in the right format, according to shared templates. If modifications are needed, the PMO will comment on the document and inform the author.
 - f. After every verification, the PMO will prepare the final deliverable for publication in the SharePoint platform "Final deliverables" folder and submit it to the EC Portal.

Note: The size of the pdf document is limited to 52 MB, which is the size limit imposed by the EC Portal

This workflow process can be illustrated as shown below.

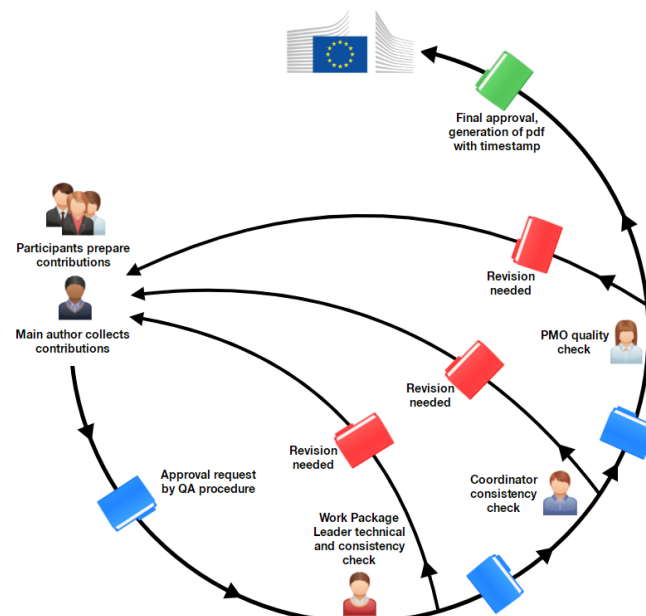


Figure 4: Review process to ensure the quality of APRENDE.

5.2.3 Milestone validation process

The quality process for Milestone is as follows:

- a. The responsible partner for a Milestone writes to the concerned WP leader and COO to notify them of the completion of the Milestone and uploads any documents related to the means of verification on the collaborative platform under the Milestones folder.
- b. The Project Management Team inform the European Commission via the EC Portal through the Continuous Report tool.

5.2.4 Distribution

When approved, the PMO is responsible for distributing the contractual documents to the EC following procedures established between the EC and the COO.

The distribution of the deliverables, milestones, and other reports within the consortium is made via collaborative platform. The publication rules are defined in the CA.

5.3 Specific case of periodic reporting for the EC

According to the GA, the COO is responsible for issuing the periodic reports (financial report and activity report) to the EC. The procedure to prepare these reports starts from the top level of the project and goes down through the various management levels. The reporting is divided into a financial part and a technical part. To ensure high quality and timely reporting, the PMO will use the approach outlined below. Being responsible for the execution of the entire reporting process, the PMO will provide support to the COO to ensure the quality of this reporting. For the financial part of the reporting, the procedure is shown below.



Figure 5: Procedure for the financial periodic reports.

On the other hand, for the technical part of the reporting (project progress) the process is as follows:

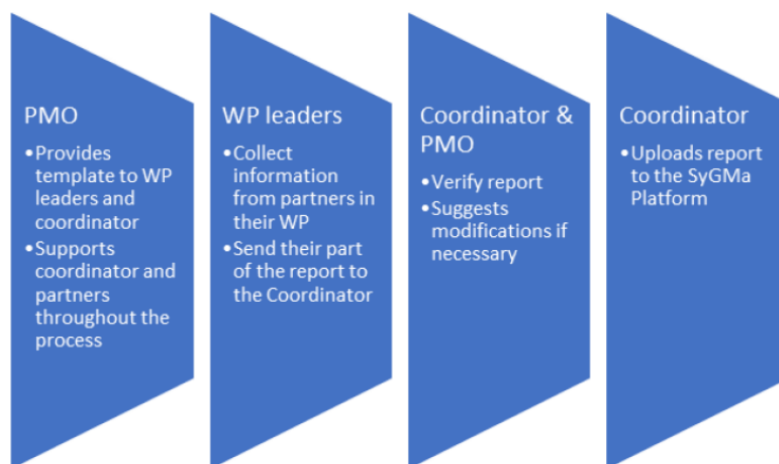


Figure 6: Procedure for the activity periodic reports.

Moreover, the WPLs are responsible for verifying and confirming the consistency between the funding needs and the resources as defined in the GA. If adaptations appear to be necessary, the WPLs have to inform the COO, who may propose to the ExCom some adaptations of the distribution of tasks and funding between the WPs, and if necessary, between beneficiaries (N.B. such changes require approval from the GeAs).

5.4 Conflict resolution

Project and quality management activities, as well as the awareness of all partners about their commitments, will ensure the proper implementation of the project plan and the realisation of its objectives. Decisions will normally be taken by the responsible partners based on the work to be conducted, as described in the GA. Transparency and good communication among the project members are key to avoiding challenges and conflicts before they arise. It is expected, though, that during the project, the partners may need to resolve various issues and reach agreements. The processes to be followed start with informal contacts as a first step, such as an oral discussion or ad-hoc meeting and further on include written notification in terms of email, minutes, etc.

The COO is responsible for resolving conflicts overall. The general principle is to solve conflicts at the lowest possible level, starting from the task level with a strong emphasis on the use of negotiation skills.



Figure 7: Conflict resolution instances.

Task leaders and WPLs should notify the COO as soon as possible when conflicts arise so that intermediate corrections can be proposed. Conflicts that are not being solved on the COO level will be communicated to the GeAs. Any correction measures will be in accordance with the GA and the CA. Good communication among all involved parties is a key point for resolving any conflicts.

6 Risk management

To guarantee the achievement of the objectives of the APRENDE project, it is essential to identify and understand the significant project risks. Risk management refers to all activities undertaken for identifying, analyse, monitor, and control potential risks that could affect the execution of the project. Risk management is a continuous process that will be undertaken throughout the lifetime of the project.

The continuous risk management process is based on the early identification of, and the fast reaction to, events that can negatively affect the outcome of the project. The frequent meetings of the project bodies, therefore, serve as the main forum for risk identification. The identified risks are then analysed and graded, based on impact and probability of occurrence.

The risks will be monitored on a regular basis and an updated risk table will be provided within the RP. Risks will be minimised and managed by using well-established methodologies for project planning and project control. The splitting of project work into work packages also minimises internal risks. The COO and the PMO, in cooperation with the ExCom members, will be mainly responsible to handle risks and inform all partners when necessary.



Figure 8: Schematic of the risk management process.

Technical risks were analysed and graded, based on their probability of occurrence in order to answer the governing question: “How big is the risk and what is its impact?” Knowing how a risk impacts the project is important, as several risks of the same type can be an indication of a larger problem.

The risks defined in the DoA will be evaluated based on the risk assessment matrix¹ against its impact and likelihood, according to the Figure 9. This results in an easily comprehensible way of visualising the potential risks. Depending on the severity of each risk, different mitigation measures will be taken.

		IMPACT				
		VERY LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY HIGH
PROBABILITY	VERY LIKELY	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Red
	LIKELY	Green	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red
	POSSIBLE	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Red
	UNLIKELY	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange
	RARE	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow

Figure 9: Risk Assessment Matrix.

¹ <https://www.maintworld.com/PartnerArticles/Using-a-Risk-Assessment-Matrix-to-Improve-Maintenance>

The definition of the risk level is calculated based on the relation between Probability/Likelihood and Impact, with the “Impact value” weighting more than the “Likelihood value”. The risk levels are explained as follows:

Risk level	Definition
LOW	Has little potential to cause disruption of schedule, increase in cost, or disruption of performance. Normal effort will probably be able to overcome difficulties
MODERATE	Can potentially cause some disruption of schedule, increase in cost, or disruption of performance. However, special effort will probably be able to overcome difficulties.
HIGH	Likely to cause significant serious disruption of schedule, increase in cost, or degradation of performance even with special effort and close monitoring of the contracting activity.

Figure 10: General definition of risk levels.

7 Public events and external communications

All partners shall take appropriate measures to engage with the public and the media about the project results and highlight the EC's financial support. Any publicity, including at a conference or seminar or any type of information or promotional material, must specify that the project has received EC funding and display the project logo, the European emblem with appropriate prominence, and the following acknowledgment and disclaimer:

“This project has received funding from the Euratom Research and Training programme (2021-2027) under GA No 101164596”

AND

“The content of this document reflects only the authors(s)’s views. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains”.

The EU emblem and the project logo:



Figure 11: EU emblem.



Figure 12: Project logo.

For any public presentations, a beneficiary should use the APRENDE templates available on SharePoint.

For external communications, the consortium will establish its own website (www.aprende-project.eu/) and communicate with external stakeholders by e-mail.

All partners are expected to produce high-quality presentations in specialised conferences and public events. For this, the APRENDE PowerPoint template has been produced and partners must use it, respecting the corresponding guidelines, without exception.

For more information about the use of logos and external communications, please refer to the Deliverable “D6.1 Communication Plan”.

8 Publications

The beneficiaries can submit articles to peer-reviewed journals or present communications at conferences on the studies performed in APRENDE. The following rules apply for submission:

- Under no circumstances can a beneficiary publish the contribution of another beneficiary without its approval.

The main author must upload the document to the “Publications under review” folder in SharePoint and provide partners with (minimum) 45 calendar days before the publication. Any objection to the planned publication shall be made by writing to the Coordinator and to the Party/Parties proposing the dissemination within 30 calendar days after receipt of the notice. If no objection is made within the time limit stated above, the publication is permitted.

- All accepted publications related to APRENDE shall be uploaded in the dedicated “Publications approved” folder on the collaborative platform and APRENDE website.
- “Normal circumstances” exclude cases with a severe external deadline (e.g., Ph.D. thesis manuscript submission). In this case, a preliminary version should be sent to the WP Leader and the COO for formal validation. The final version should be uploaded to the platform.

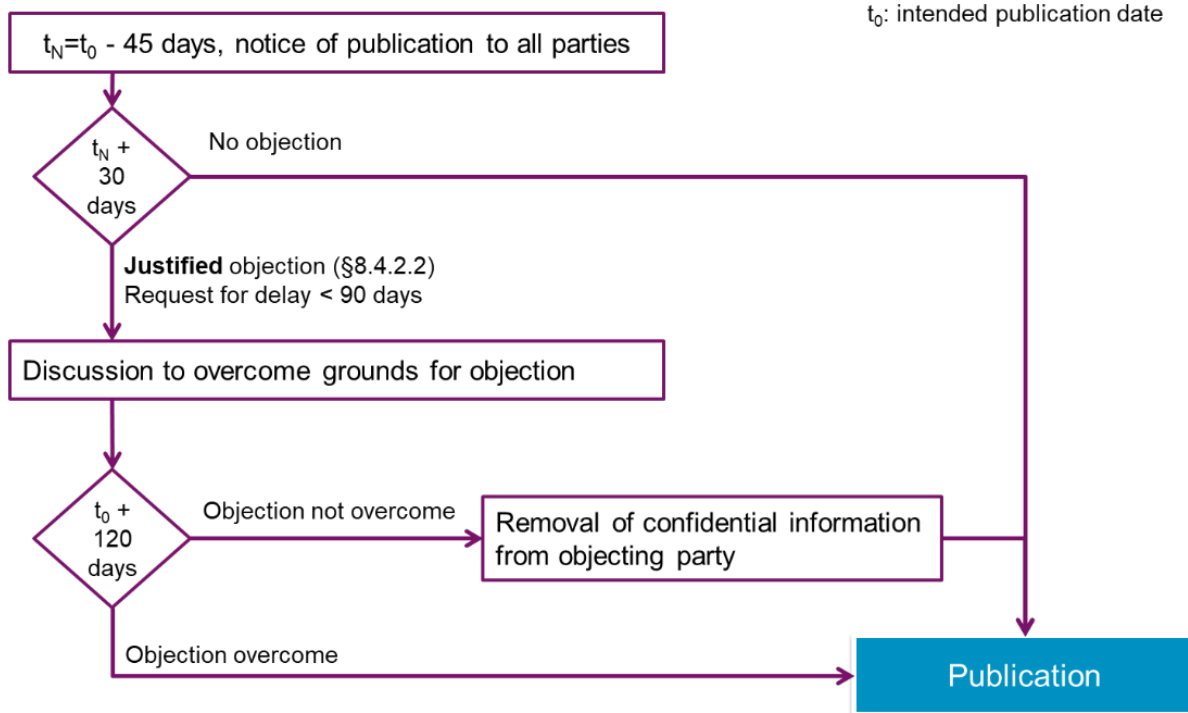


Figure 13: Description of the validation process for dissemination activities.

9 Conclusion

This PQP demonstrates that quality aspects are taken into account in a variety of processes and activities within the APRENDE project. The project aims at obtaining a high degree of quality, where outcomes are achieved in terms of the effectiveness and efficiency of working practices, as well as products and standards of project deliverables and outputs. This plan seeks to establish the procedures and standards to be employed in the project and to allocate responsibility for ensuring that these procedures and standards are followed.

The Project Management team (COO and PMO) monitors that the above-described processes are fulfilled. In case of any deviations from the planned work, the management team is in charge of taking necessary mitigation measures. The plan is effective throughout the lifetime of the project, but is open to revision if necessary.