

# PROJECT MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK SM-TMC

Work Package 7:  
Project Coordination  
and Administration



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## 1. Introduction

This Project Management Handbook is a practical guide designed to support all partners involved in international cooperation projects in managing and coordinating their joint efforts. It provides a structured framework for achieving shared objectives, promoting transparency, and ensuring quality implementation across institutions, countries, and stakeholder groups.

The handbook defines the core management structure, responsibilities, communication procedures, and quality assurance mechanisms required for a successful and sustainable project. It aims to facilitate collaborative decision-making, risk mitigation, and efficient reporting.

Whether the project involves capacity building in higher education, curriculum development, research cooperation, or the creation of new institutional structures, this handbook can be adapted and applied across diverse contexts.

## 2. Project Objectives (Illustrative Example)

### **Main objective:**

To modernise and strengthen the higher education and training system in a strategic sector (e.g. maintenance engineering) in order to enhance national industrial performance, innovation capacity, and employability.

### **Specific objectives:**

- Implement modernised academic programmes aligned with industry needs in higher education institutions.
- Establish a Centre of Excellence as a national hub for knowledge transfer, innovation, and lifelong learning.
- Foster active collaboration between universities, enterprises, and public stakeholders.
- Develop and deploy a digital learning platform for professional and academic training.
- Improve access to specialised training opportunities for underrepresented groups such as women and unemployed youth.

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### 3. Project Planning and Management

Effective implementation of international cooperation projects requires rigorous activity planning, transparent financial management, and continuous coordination between partners. This section outlines a replicable project management model built around structured planning, monitoring, communication, and evaluation mechanisms.

#### *3.1 Activity Planning*

A well-structured work plan is critical to align the efforts of all partners and ensure timely delivery of outputs. Each Work Package (WP) follows a detailed schedule with predefined milestones and responsibilities.

- **Activity schedule:** A comprehensive Gantt chart is established at project inception to monitor the progress of tasks across all WPs.
- **WP leadership and accountability:** Each Work Package is led by a designated partner responsible for planning, executing, and reporting on tasks according to agreed timelines.
- **Risk monitoring system:** A dynamic system is used to identify potential delays or bottlenecks and to implement corrective measures in real time.

#### *3.2 Administrative and Financial Monitoring*

Robust administrative and financial management ensures compliance with funder requirements and reinforces the trust and credibility of the partnership.

- **Budget follow-up:** A dedicated financial tracking table is used to monitor expenses against the approved budget.
- **Interim and final financial reporting:** Reports are submitted according to the funding agency's schedule to ensure transparency and alignment with contractual obligations.
- **Audits and verification:** Internal controls and external audits validate the use of resources and the proper implementation of activities.

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### 3.3 Coordination and Partner Communication

Regular and structured communication among consortium members strengthens collaboration and enables adaptive project steering.

- **Monthly coordination meetings:** Operational follow-up, WP updates, and short-term planning.
- **Biannual strategic meetings:** In-depth progress evaluation, strategic alignment, and readjustments.
- **Communication channels:** Coordination is supported by institutional emails, video conferencing tools, shared document platforms, and official digital platforms, such as:
  - Project website
  - Learning management system (LMS)
  - Social media channels (Facebook, LinkedIn)

### 3.4 Project Monitoring and Reporting Tools

To support evidence-based management and continuous improvement, several tools are put in place:

- **Gantt chart:** Visual overview of project phases and key deadlines.
- **Deliverable dashboards:** Track submission, review, and completion status for each WP output.
- **Document repository:** Centralised digital storage for internal reports, templates, and evidence.
- **Progress reports:** Regular reports document completed activities, highlight issues, and recommend follow-up actions.

## 4. Quality Assurance and Assessment

Ensuring the quality of results and activities is a key success factor in international cooperation projects. This section presents a practical quality assurance (QA) framework that combines European standards, continuous improvement processes, and stakeholder engagement to monitor performance, enhance outcomes, and support decision-making.

#### 4.1 Quality Assurance Approach

A rigorous QA approach is essential to guarantee the relevance, coherence, and impact of project deliverables.

- **Assessment framework:** Inspired by European academic and industrial standards, the framework ensures the consistency of content, teaching quality, and alignment with market needs.
- **Internal and external review:** All deliverables are subject to dual-level validation (internal peer review and external expert evaluation) before final approval.
- **Stakeholder feedback:** Academic and industrial partners are systematically involved in reviewing materials and programmes to ensure responsiveness to real-world challenges.

#### 4.2 Performance Indicators

Project evaluation is based on a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) designed to measure the relevance, effectiveness, and impact of project activities.

- **Deliverable completion rate:** Compliance with deadlines and quality standards.
- **Beneficiary satisfaction:** Feedback collected from students, instructors, and trainees regarding the value of the training.
- **Employability impact:** Tracking graduate insertion in the labour market and job placement within the targeted sectors.
- **Industry engagement:** Number of companies involved in training delivery, curriculum design, or collaborative innovation activities.

#### 4.3 Assessment Models and Case Studies

Several evaluation models and field-based assessment practices are recommended to collect evidence and guide continuous improvement.

- **Training evaluation grids:**
  - *Criteria:* clarity of content, relevance of materials, level of interactivity, alignment with learning outcomes.
  - *Rating scale:* 1 (unsatisfactory) to 5 (excellent).
- **Student satisfaction surveys:**
  - Example questions include:
    - Were the learning objectives clearly defined?
    - Did the training meet your expectations?
    - Have you applied the acquired skills in a professional context?
- **Impact case studies:**
  - Skills assessments conducted before and after training sessions.
  - Follow-up of graduates who transitioned into roles in relevant industries.

#### 4.4 Quality Assurance Tools

To enable structured monitoring and adaptive management, the following tools are deployed:

- **Course evaluation templates:** Structured tools to assess teaching quality and learner engagement.
- **Satisfaction surveys:** Administered among students, trainers, and external partners.

- **Biannual quality review meetings:** Sessions dedicated to analysing results and proposing corrective actions.
- **Digital dashboards:** Real-time tracking of quality indicators and data visualisation for informed decision-making.

## 5. Risk Management Strategy

A robust risk management strategy is essential to anticipate obstacles, maintain operational continuity, and safeguard project objectives. This section outlines an integrated approach to risk identification, prevention, and mitigation.

### 5.1 Risk Typologies and Mitigation Measures

Type of risk	Preventive measures	Corrective action
<b>Deadlines</b>	Rigorous planning, regular monitoring of deliverables, frequent coordination meetings	Reallocation of tasks and resources, team reinforcement
<b>Technical</b>	Preliminary testing of tools and infrastructure, team training	Technical support, expert consultation
<b>Technical</b>	Preliminary testing of tools and infrastructure, team training	Technical support, expert consultation
<b>Governance</b>	Clear role distribution, effective communication protocols	Management restructuring, mediation mechanisms

### *5.2 Risk Monitoring and Assessment Process*

A structured methodological framework is in place to ensure continuous monitoring and adaptation to evolving risks:

- **Quarterly updates** to the risk registry and mitigation logs
- **Biannual evaluations** conducted by the Project Management Committee
- **Integration of corrective actions** into updated work plans
- **Use of performance indicators** to measure mitigation impact and residual risks

### *5.3 Risk Management Tools*

The following tools support evidence-based and transparent risk management:

- **Interactive risk monitoring table:** Tracks likelihood, severity, and response status in real time
- **Internal audit reports:** Identify vulnerabilities and propose improvements
- **Compliance checklists:** Ensure alignment with best practices and funder requirements
- **Scenario simulations:** Model potential impacts and test contingency strategies

## 6. Communication and Dissemination

A strong communication and dissemination strategy is essential to ensure visibility, stakeholder mobilisation, and the transfer and replication of project results. This section outlines the key audiences, strategic goals, and tools deployed to share knowledge and enhance impact.

### *6.1 Communication Strategy*

The project's communication approach is designed to inform, engage, and connect with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, from academic institutions to policy-level actors.

- **Target audiences:**  
Academic institutions, partner universities, industry stakeholders, students, public authorities, and the wider public.
- **Strategic objectives:**
  - Ensure the wide dissemination and accessibility of project results across institutional and national contexts.
  - Raise awareness about the relevance of maintenance engineering education and its role in industrial competitiveness.
  - Strengthen the links between universities, industry, and government bodies to encourage cooperation and innovation.

## 6.2 Communication Tools and Channels

The following tools and channels are used to disseminate information and engage audiences:

Communication Tool	Main Objective	Frequency of Use
<b>Project Website</b>	Central platform to disseminate key information, activities, and deliverables of the project	Updated quarterly
<b>Social Media Networks</b>	Engage the public, promote visibility, and share progress and milestones	Monthly posts
<b>Newsletter</b>	Inform and update institutional partners, stakeholders, and external audience	Every 6 months
<b>Conferences and Seminars</b>	Present project results, promote academic exchange, and foster networking opportunities	Once per year (minimum)
<b>Academic Publications</b>	Disseminate scientific knowledge and enhance the educational and research impact of the project	According to project progress and publication opportunities

## 6.3 Dissemination Activities

Dissemination activities are key to ensuring that the knowledge, tools, and innovations developed during the project reach a wide audience and can be replicated or adapted by other institutions. A variety of actions were conducted throughout the project lifecycle to maximise visibility and impact.

**Main dissemination activities include:**

- **Workshops and public presentations:**  
Organisation of project-specific sessions during university events, Erasmus+ Info Days, and national/international education fairs to share results and collect feedback.
- **Participation in academic conferences:**  
Results and methodologies of the project were presented at renowned scientific events such as IEEE EDUCON, enabling peer recognition and exchange with international researchers.



- **Engagement in specialised fairs and exhibitions:**  
Project partners showcased SMTMC outcomes during major events such as:
  - *MEDIBAT International Construction Fair*
  - *Salon de l'Entreprise*
  - *UnivExpo*These platforms facilitated interaction with industry actors and other academic initiatives.
- **Media and press coverage:**  
The project received wide exposure through press articles, TV reports, and online publications in national outlets like *La Presse*, *Entreprises Magazine*, *Managers.tn*, and *Ikigai.tn*.
- **Publications on scientific platforms:**  
Articles published on ResearchGate and IEEE Xplore contributed to the academic valorisation of the project.
- **Online dissemination via digital platforms:**
  - Regular updates on the official website ([smtmc.org](http://smtmc.org))
  - Engagement through the LMS platform ([ent.smtmc.org](http://ent.smtmc.org))
  - Presence on social media (Facebook, LinkedIn) to reach younger audiences and the general public
- **Collaboration with the Erasmus+ National Office:**  
Participation in national workshops and visibility actions supported by the Erasmus+ Tunisia office.

These dissemination actions collectively ensured that the SMTMC project extended its reach beyond the initial consortium and contributed to policy dialogue, institutional change, and future project generation.

## 7. Dissemination and Sustainability

A strategic dissemination and sustainability plan ensures that the project's results extend beyond the consortium and are adopted by a wide range of beneficiaries over time. The goal is to foster institutional change, support lifelong learning, and build long-term partnerships between academia and industry.

### 7.1 Dissemination Plan

The dissemination strategy is designed to promote the project's outputs and encourage their replication and adaptation in other contexts.

- **Internal dissemination:** Regular sharing of results between academic and industrial partners through reports, coordination meetings, and shared digital platforms.
- **External dissemination:** Presentation of results at international conferences, publication of scientific articles, and networking with other Erasmus+ and European initiatives.
- **Long-term impact:** Integration of developed content into university curricula, continuing education programmes for professionals, and open access to digital learning resources.

## 7.2 Tools and Resources for Sustainability

The following tools have been developed to ensure long-term sustainability and exploitation of results:

- **TMC-Knowledge platform:** A digital learning management system offering free access to online courses, training modules, and educational resources.
- **Best practice guides:** Methodological documents and case studies that facilitate replication in other institutions.
- **Dissemination events:** Conferences, seminars, and workshops organised periodically to engage new audiences.
- **Sustainability governance structures:** University-industry steering committees established to ensure ongoing programme development, certification, and adaptation to labour market needs.

## 8. Success Indicators

The effectiveness and reach of communication, dissemination, and sustainability actions are measured using a set of key performance indicators:

- Number of visitors to the project website
- Number of subscribers and interactions on social media platforms
- Attendance and participation rates in organised events
- Number of academic publications and citations
- Feedback collected from stakeholders through satisfaction surveys

These indicators allow for data-driven monitoring and continuous improvement of the project's visibility and impact.

## 9. Governance and Operational Structure

The project is implemented through a structured governance model that ensures transparency, accountability, and effective coordination across all levels.

- **Steering Committee:** Composed of institutional coordinators from each partner university, along with representatives from industry and academia. It validates strategic orientations, oversees project execution, and approves key deliverables such as academic curricula and industry collaboration frameworks.
- **Project Management Group (PMG):** Led by the coordinating institution, the PMG supervises daily operations and implementation. Each WP leader reports to the PMG and ensures progress monitoring within their domain.
- **Work Package Teams:** Each WP is assigned to a dedicated team with clearly defined roles, objectives, and timelines. WP leaders ensure timely reporting and manage potential adjustments.
- **Academic and Industrial Partners:** These stakeholders contribute directly to programme development, training delivery, and evaluation. Their involvement ensures alignment with labour market needs and fosters knowledge transfer.

## 10. Roles and Responsibilities

Effective coordination in international projects requires a clear definition of roles and a shared understanding of responsibilities among all partners. The structure adopted allows for both centralised coordination and distributed implementation through specialised Work Packages (WPs).

Role	Responsibilities	Responsible Entity
<b>Coordinator</b>	Overall project management, communication with the funding agency, budget oversight	University of Sfax
<b>Work Package Leaders</b>	Planning, implementation, and monitoring of WP activities and deliverables	WP-designated partner(s)
<b>Academic Partners</b>	Development of training content, teacher training, and local implementation of modules	Partner universities
<b>Industrial Partners</b>	Support in training, validation of content, and skill transfer based on market needs	Associated companies
<b>Quality Manager</b>	Oversight of quality assurance procedures and evaluation of deliverables	University of Galati

## 11. Decision-Making Process

The project applies a transparent, collegial, and structured decision-making process to ensure accountability and effective coordination.

- **Steering Committee:**  
Holds biannual strategic meetings to assess overall progress, approve any major changes, and define future orientations.
- **Project Management Group (PMG):**  
Meets monthly to handle operational decisions, track WP progress, and solve emerging challenges.
- **Ongoing Evaluation Mechanism:**  
Periodic assessments are conducted to ensure alignment with strategic objectives. Adjustments are made based on performance indicators and feedback.
- **Monitoring Reports:**  
Each WP leader submits regular progress reports summarising key activities, challenges encountered, and proposed corrective actions. These are reviewed collectively by the PMG.

## 12. Governance Tools and Models

To support the management, monitoring, and internal communication of the project, the following tools and templates are made available to all partners:

- **Meeting minutes templates:** For structured documentation of decisions taken
- **WP Progress Report templates:** To standardise and facilitate monitoring across all Work Packages
- **Risk and Timeline Dashboards:** For real-time tracking of deadlines, milestones, and risk levels

- **Collaboration and Communication Charter:** Defining principles of coordination, internal communication protocols, and conflict resolution
- **Digital Project Workspace:** A SharePoint-based platform allows centralised access to documents, live tracking of deliverables, and collaborative editing

### 13. Work Packages

The project is organised into seven Work Packages (WPs), each with specific objectives, deliverables, and leadership responsibilities:

WP	Type	Title	Lead	Co-lead
WP1	Preparation	Development of the SM-TMC framework and specifications for education and training	CCIT	UVIGO
WP2	EDU Development	TMC-EDU: Development of maintenance engineering specialisation	UCAR	EFW
WP3	VET Development	TMC-VET: Development of the maintenance engineering training programme	CCIT	PLAS
WP4	Quality Plan	Quality assurance, monitoring and control	UDJG	UGABES
WP5	Dissemination	TMC-Knowledge: Broadcasting and operation of the Knowledge Platform	EFW	CCIT
WP6	Exploitation	TMC-ORG: Operation and institutionalisation of the Centre of Excellence	ULYON	Socomenin
WP7	Management	Coordination and project administration	USFAX	—

### 14. Glossary

- **TMC-ORG:** National Centre of Excellence for Maintenance in Tunisia.
- **TMC-Knowledge Platform:** A digital platform for maintenance-related training, learning resources, and collaboration.
- **TMC-EDU:** Refers to WP2, which focuses on academic specialisation in maintenance engineering.
- **TMC-VET:** Refers to WP3, which targets the development of vocational training in maintenance engineering.