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**Strategic Platform for Ameliorating Tunisian Higher Education on Food Sciences and
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SPAAT4FOOD 585729-EPP-1-2017-1-TN-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN OF SPAAT4FOOD



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Definitions, acronyms and abbreviations

EU	European Union
LFM	Logical Framework Matrix
PU	Public
QB	Quality board
QAP	Quality Assurance Plan
QM	Quality Manager
PIU	Professional Integration Unit
R	Report
VL	Virtual laboratry

P1	University of Sfax-Tunisia
P2	University of Gabes-Tunisia
P3	University of Jendouba-Tunisia
P4	Unversity of Manouba-Tunisia
P5	University of Teramo (UNITE)-Italy
P6	University Catholic of Porto (UCP)-Portugal
P7	University of Lucian Blaga (LBS)- Romania



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INTRODUCTION



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The aim of SPAAT4FOOD project is to improve the quality of the Tunisian higher education by developing innovative teaching tools and promoting effective collaboration between University and the socio-economic sector.

In order to achieve the main objective, SPAAT4FOOD will work to respond to the urgently needed capacity build-up for the growing FST capacities. Tunisian HE needs to respond and educate/train young student for the sector that will significantly grow relationship between universities and food industries. In this process SPAAT4FOOD will also strengthen our institutions and build capacities of vocational HE institutes in FST, thus further improving our position as educators, training providers and consultancy experts.

The Quality Control and Monitoring Manual formalizes the approach that will be followed by the partners of the SPAAT4FOOD project to ensure the highest possible quality of the project activities, outputs and outcomes and project management.

Quality Assurance Plan (QAP) presents a set of quality procedures that will be implemented/applied during the SPAAT4FOOD project. The deliverable at hand defines the project organization, roles and responsibilities with emphasis on the quality control and quality assurance activities that will be carried out. It describes how the project will execute its day-to-day activities from a quality perspective, and ensures that standards, processes, and procedures are defined and their execution is continuously monitored and improved. A reference to all the necessary mechanisms and structures for the management and administrative coordination of the project capitalizing on the governance, change management, communication plan, project calendar, stages, milestones and reporting roles, as well as responsibilities for all the partners.

The QAP is mandatory material for each project team member to read. Adherence of processes and procedures, set out in this plan, are mandatory for all activities carried out within the project.

On the project-wide level, the quality control will be conducted by self-evaluation process of the Project Management Team, whose evaluation reports will be submitted for Consortium meetings. During the Kick-off Consortium Meeting, the Quality Committee will be elected.

Quality control will focus on the content of the projects, objectives, adopted





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methodological models, timely realization of the activities, dissemination, exploitation, coordination within and among working groups and effectiveness of the whole process. This will provide the basis for a critical overview of the project progress, achieved outcomes in the past project year or.





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QAP APPROACH



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OVERALL QAP APPROACH

The QAP contributes in establishing the relevant to the project quality control and quality assurance activities for ensuring an efficient collaboration among the Consortium partners and delivery of project results, whereas the 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. Generally, QAP of SPAAT4FOOD is focused on reaching of defined the wider SPAAT4FOOD objectives.

Also, QAP is focused to provide the highest quality levels outcomes, that enable reaching of defined specific objectives of SPAAT4FOOD, such as:

1. Setting up a network of industrial and professional partners willing to implement a sustainable cooperation with institutions of higher education and scientific research;
2. Improving the visibility of national and international communities of experts in food studies;
3. Developing innovative teaching tools in food studies;
4. Rinsing of student's internship quality;
5. Developing a technology platform to ameliorate the cooperation and mobility between universities and food industries.

Quality of project deliverables

The deliverables of SPAAT4FOOD have to be formatted into appropriate deliverables such as reports, publications, plans, printed and electronically available promotional material, as well as deliverables in the form of organized events (trainings, conference, seminar, info days, etc.). The relevance of deliverables is most important issue. Time agenda and outcomes have to follow project work plan according the Application Form.

Quality of promotional materials

Communication and dissemination activities of the project will adhere to the Dissemination and Exploitation Plan (D6.1) of the project. All promotional materials will reflect the visual identity of the project and the Erasmus+ Programme. The project coordinator P1 and partner P4 are responsible for design of all promotional material. The draft version has to be approved by all partners before printing,



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publishing and distribution. Also, the materials will be disseminated by all project partners at events which are relevant to reach the project's objectives (generally all tangible events).

The process of distribution of project results will include the establishment of PIU, VL and technology platform will serve for student internships and teachers skills, and also to provide consultancy services to all interested parties.

Quality of websites and other electronic tools

The project envisages setting up the public SPAAT4FOOD web-site (<https://www.spaat4food.com/>). The web site has to be optimized and build on the interactive, friendly- user platform. All representation tools have to be continuously updated by the partners and are intended to effectively communicate the results of the project. All partners are asked to promote SPAAT4FOOD project on their websites and other electroning tools by providing short description of the project, logo and link to SPAAT4FOOD website.

US will be responsible for setting up and maintaining the project web-site with all information and materials received from project partners. Moreover, all tools will be implemented with high performance, good functionality and stability, emphasizing the maximum reach and awareness of the target audience.



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Quality of Project Management

All SPAAT4FOOD partners actively participate in all activities, but their contribution to WPs differ in both volume and specific roles. We have tried to optimally match the specific expertise and existing capacity of each partner against their interests and benefits expected from the project outcomes. Hence the management tasks are distributed in a similar way. P1 to P4 have a greater volume of overall work and will participate in the management of every WP via selected responsible of Work Team (WTs) and other US staff, as explained below. EU partners P5, P6 and P7 are experienced in management of various project types. So they have multiple roles: steering, advising, monitoring, producing Rulebooks, etc. They participate and coordinate the WPs of the project. Project management will be performed as follow: SPAAT4FOOD consortium provides strategic project management and ensures that the project is progressing according to the work plan.

In case of problems, unexpected obstacles or subjective delays, the consortiums decide on efficient course of action and eventual amendments of the project plan, in order to continue the timely project execution. SPAAT4FOOD consortium consists of contact persons of all six partners, plus the Grant Holder and a consortium secretary from P1. The consortium will be formed at the 1st Kick-off meeting. It will name the Chairs and Co-chairs for the eighth SPAAT4FOOD WPs.

The Chairs and Co-Chairs of these WPs will be from all partners selected for their expertise and interests as follows: WP1 Chair P1 Co-chair P5 WP2 Chair P1 Co-chair P5 WP3 Chair P5 Co-chair P6 WP4 Chair P1 Co-chair P7 WP5 Chair P1 Co-chair P5 WP6 Chair P1 Co-chair P4 WP7 Chair P1 Co-chair P7 WP8 Chair P1 Co-chair P3 WP1 Each partner defines internal WT. P1 create project website with participation of P5. WP2 P1 and P5 prepare survey with collaboration of P2, P3 and P4. P1 to P4 to gather information and compile the reports. P1 to P5 partners meet to define the survey procedure mode. P1 and P5 collect, analyze and disseminate the survey results. WP3 P1 to P4 analyze the current Tunisian educational system and



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methodology.

Tunisian teachers go to training period to P5 and to P6. P1 to P4 develop new teaching tools and methodology in TN. Universities. P1 to P4 receive and activate the virtual laboratory (VL) equipments. WP4 P1 to P4 implement a Professional Integration Unit (PIU). P1 to P4 Staff go to training period to P7 to learn the student’s internship process. P1 to P4 ensure the follow-up of student’s internship. WP5 P1 and P5 form internal team to define platform equipment. P1 to P4 receive and activate the platform equipment. WP6 P1 and P4 ensure dissemination of project results through seminars and Website. WP7 P1 and P7 produce minutes, manuals and reports. Quality committee produce quality assurance plans, manuals and reports. WP8 P1 and P3 involved in a continuous management and support of the project. External financial audit will produce quality assurance plans.

Each partner is equally and independently responsible for assigned activities. Contact persons have the responsibility for the local management. In order to ensure better visibility as well as dissemination within the SPAAT4FOOD staff, the monitoring and quality control reports will be published on the project Website.



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MONITORING



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Project Quality Assurance Strategy

On the project-wide level, the quality control will be conducted by self-evaluation process of the project management team, whose evaluation reports will be submitted for consortium meetings. During the the Kick-off consortium meeting, the quality committee will be designed. It will contain one designed staff from all partners, with chair from P1 and co-chair from P3.

The material for regular quality committee meetings will be prepared by the project coordinator, universities coordinators and dissemination & exploitation committee, as well as leaders of every activity, when appropriate.

Quality control will focus on the content of the project's, objectives, adopted methodological models, timely realization of the activities, dissemination, exploitation, coordination within and among working groups and effectiveness of the whole process. This will provide the basis for a critical overview of the project progress (in every activity and overall progress), achieved outcomes in the past project years or.

The overview will allow to plan smooth implementation of future activities, envisage problems and suggest/define (if any) changes in planned project execution in order to reach the objectives in the best possible way.

It is planned that the Quality Committee will meet twice a year, once at and once between the Consortium meetings. At all meetings an interim assessment of 6-month activities/results will be carried out. Interim reports will be written and disseminated internally to the project partners.

On the next level, quality control will be performed by universities coordinators, working on specific outcomes of the project. On this level, quality control will focus on the contents of the outcome, timely realization of the WP-wide activities, coordination within the WP and effectiveness of task groups within WP. The WT chairs, as leaders of particular activities, will provide interim reports and reviews on each completed activity for Consortium and Quality Committee meetings.

On the other level, staff members of project partners will provide feedback questionnaires for every activity they participate in. These will be passed either to the corresponding WT chair or to the university coordinator.

In order to ensure better visibility as well as dissemination within the SPAAT4FOOD staff, the monitoring and quality control reports will be published on the project Website.



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Quality assurance will result in both internal and external quality assurance mechanisms being established and implemented. In line with project management methodology, quality assurance includes the regular organization of coordination and evaluation meetings of the project consortium in order to report on, inspect and adapt to the work organization, work plan, and budget. These meetings are intended for the monitoring and evaluation of work progress and the planning of activities and work iterations. During the project lifetime, feedback from all project members will be formally collected and published. The coordinator will ensure the consortium responds to the partners' feedback. In order to ensure external quality assurance, an external expert will be invited to evaluate the project deliverables. An external audit of the project will also be carried out.

Quality Control Committee

The Project Coordinator, together with the project managers appointed by the Consortium, will constitute the internal Quality Control Committee which will implement quality assurance mechanisms and procedures to assure that:

1. Deliverables presented to the Commission meet adequate quality levels;
2. Project activities are planned and monitored periodically in order to guarantee the project successful implementation and the timely resolution of any drawback;
3. Information flow is respected;
4. Documentation and deliverables are implemented, handled and stored adequately;

The Quality Control Committee will be in charge of monitoring periodically:

- Advances in the activities in charge to each partner: exceptional problems, related for instance to difficulties in carrying out the planned work, will be dealt by the Steering Committee.
- Adherence to the procedures described above.
- Global satisfaction of teachers about training in Catholic university of Porto and Teramo University.



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Quality responsibilities

Different roles are identified with reference to the development of the project activities and in particular the project quality assurance procedures. Different responsibilities are associated with the different roles.

Task Leader (main author of the deliverable)

- Is responsible for coordinating the development of the deliverable(s) according to the deliverable template,
- Is responsible for assigning parts of the work to other partners involved in the activity,
- Is responsible for coordinating the work of other partners involved in the activity, providing guidance when necessary,
- Is responsible for aligning the contributions of the other partners involved in the activity, in order to produce the deliverable,
- Is responsible for the submission of the draft deliverable to the WP leader, QB and the project coordinator
- Is responsible for implementing the suggestions of the QB assigning certain amendments as appropriate,
- Is responsible for sending the amended draft deliverable,
- Reports to the WP Leader for any problems occurring during the implementation of the activity,

Quality Board and Quality manager (QB, M)

Quality Board

- Is coordinated by the QM, as agreed by the consortium board at the Kick-off meeting,
- Is responsible for the Quality Assurance of deliverables,
- Receives each draft deliverable from the Task Leader and provides feedback,
- Sends the Checklist for review of deliverable to the Task Leader and the Coordinator,
- Verifies the satisfactory implementation of the recommendations included in the Checklist for review of deliverable, in co-operation with the WP Leader,
- Cooperates with the Project Coordinator on general issues related to the level of



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quality of the project's deliverables as appropriate

Quality Managers (QM)

- Is responsible for assessing the deliverables' quality, super-ving the testing phases,
- Is responsible to scheduling appropriate evaluation scenarios and verifying compliance with all quality evaluation policies and procedures
- Is responsible to detect risks as early as possible and plan systematic activities to ensure achievement of quality objectives.
- Is responsible to assess the technical deliverables and approve their release guaranteeing the highest possible quality. Is responsible for creation and maintenance of the Quality Plan, defining processes, rules, standards, success/risk criteria and project metrics are in the responsibilities of the QM

Project Coordinator

- Cooperates with the QB and the Task Leaders on all matters arising relevant to ensuring the quality of the project's deliverables,
- Accepts the deliverable or provides final comments to the TL and WPL
- Cooperates with the WP Leaders in order to ensure that all WPs are progressing in conformity with each other and that any cross-WP inputs and outputs are being delivered as foreseen by the WP description,

Informs the QB, the WPL and the TL of any changes in the Partnership Agreement and the related Work Plan or any implicit changes in the implementation of the project that may affect the timing or the content of the relevant deliverables,

Quality feedback by the target groups

The satisfaction of stakeholders, beneficiaries and end users will also be investigated. It will take into account a variety of information from different sources using visits, interviews, questionnaires to target groups and consultation with the project beneficiaries.

In order to allow the impact assessment of the project activities, a template for feedback for different meetings / events was developed. It needs to be adapted to the specific needs but the main items shall not be deleted.



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RISQ MANAGEMENT



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METODOLOGY

As the work package 7 of the project, which means the quality control, it will be necessary to apply mechanisms of statistical approach to:

- Develop and adopt the quality control mechanisms and
- Conduct internal and external peer reviews in a timely manner. Besides the standard statistical methods, it will be implemented.

This approach it will certainly contribute to quality control and monitoring content of the whole project, objectives, adopted methodological models, timely realization of the activities, dissemination, exploitation, coordination within and among working groups and effectiveness of the whole process. This will provide the basis for a critical overview of the project progress (in every activity and overall progress), achieved outcomes in the past project year.

SPAAT4FOOD Risk Management Methodology

Risk management is an continuous process throughout the lifetime of a project and addresses the planning of risk management, identification, analysis, monitoring and control. This document outlines policies and procedures for identifying and handling uncommon causes of project deviations that may compromise objectives, i.e. risks. Risk assessment will be updated throughout the project lifecycle as unexpected sources of risk can be identified at any time. It is the objective of the risk management plan to decrease the probability and impact of events adverse to the project. In contrast, any event that could have a positive impact should be exploited.

Transparency and a good communication between the Management Team (MT), Work Package (WP) leaders and the project members are key to avoid problems and conflicts before they arise. A good communication strategy will favor the cohesion among the participants, while giving a positive image of the project to the outside.

The goal of this document is to allow the Management Team to accurately and timely try to avoid unwanted risks and, as necessary, take action in mitigating or applying corrective measures to control potential negative effects to the project.



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Risk identification and assessment

Risk identification is analyzed throughout the life-cycle of the SPAAT4FOOD project. The following issues shall be considered as tools and techniques for risk identification:

- Analysis of deliverable status
- Analysis of WP schedules and scopes
- Regular communication of the Management team with the WP leaders

In Figure 1 a schematic representation of the SPAAT4FOOD risk management process is shown.

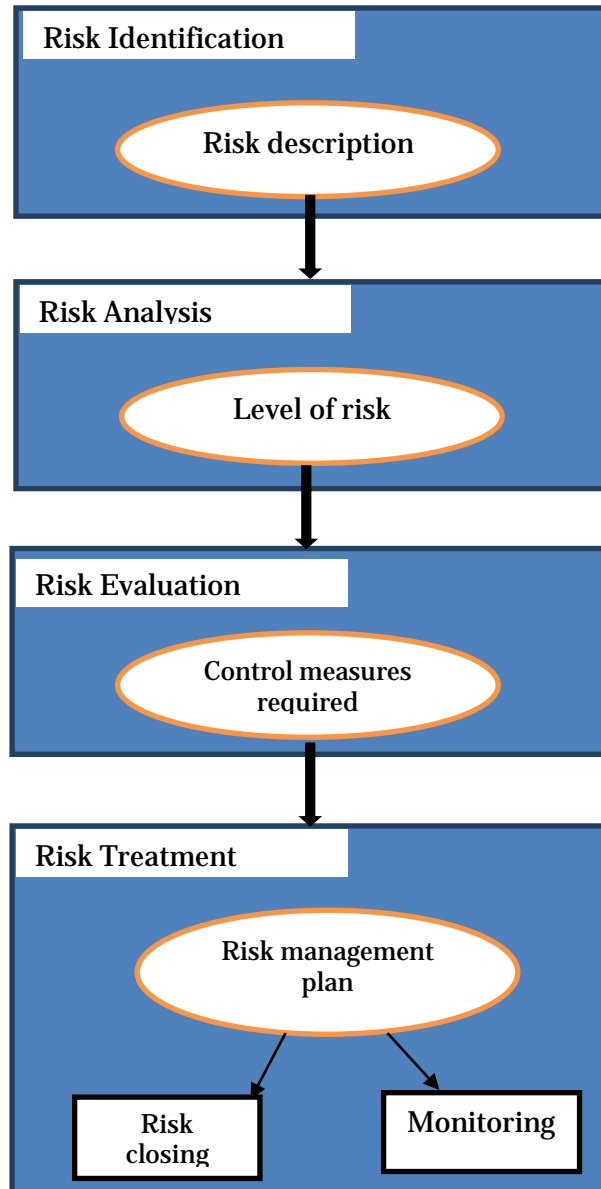


Figure 1 – SPAAT4FOOD risk management process



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Risk Identification by WPs

The risks identification list in SPAAT4FOOD is taken from the LFM, regarding the project work packages. The SPAAT4FOOD consortium decided to collect and compile all assumed/supposed risks and to make an action plan for their eventual appearance. Also, some risks appeared during the later analysis of the project plan.

The following tables displays the SPAAT4FOOD project risk events, derived from the analysis of the project plan.

Table 1: Potential SPAAT4FOOD risks

ID	RISK	DESCRIPTION
1	Reluctance of industrial partners in FST field to actively contribute in the development of teaching and internship scripts.	The problems encountered during the implementation of new teaching methodology and internship model will be solved in accordance with company procedures and needs.
2	Experts from industrial partner may not be talented teachers	The lack of methodical/pedagogical skills of lecturers from the industrial sector. Training in teaching methods will be provided for industrial partners as possible.
3	Delays in the implementation of study visits	The possibility that EU partners, because of their commitments, do not provide workshop in innovative teaching tools in the programmed delays.
4	Industrial will not respond adequately in the survey procedures	The possibility that industrial partners, because of their commitments, do not provide a sufficient contribution to, the achievement of these objectives.
5	Procedural problems during the equipment purchase	Delay in equipment delivery. The problem of public procurement procedures, time limits, as the weak capacity of market for large scale equipment for technological platform acquisition.
6	Various problem about adaptation of developed teaching/training materials to new methodological	Poor cooperation of industries and high education in a previous period is a constant threat to the implementation of the project results, such as new



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	approach	Teaching tools methods and internship model.
7	Resist of the industrial to accept a novel methodological internship approach,	The interaction between the professionals and the HE academic and administrative staff is a cornerstone in this project. The different cultural background, priorities, and points of view might cause ineffective implementation of advices.
8	Conflict between the different managers of the work packages	Managers of various tasks, with different interests and points of view, might be reluctant to exchange relevant information, thus damaging the overall progress.



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Risk Assessment

Tools to Assess Risks

Risk assessment is normally performed using tools such as: team brainstorming, distribution of questionnaires, analysis of historical data and professional consulting services. In the current project we used for the preliminary assessment phase several tools:

Brainstorming – Members of the project management team and an expert from the project management field attended a brainstorming session, in which everyone provided his/her estimation for the project risk events.

Qualitative risk method is applied in order to present the Risk Index (RI) values that can be calculated and arranged in a prioritized list.

The value of the risk index is calculated by multiplying the probability (P) value by the Impact (I) value:

$$\text{Risk Index} = \text{Probability} * \text{Impact}$$

The possibility of an event occurrence is defined by an ordinal scale method, ranging from low (1) to high (3).

Table 2. Estimate of Risk Event Probability

VALUE	PROBABILITY	Details
1	Low (Normal or Unlikely)	The event actually occurred in the past, but it never happened in this type of projects
2	Medium (Likely)	The event seldom occurs in this type of project
3	High (Very likely)	Very common event that actually happened in most projects

The impact value is based on three parameters: performance cost and time. It is defined by an ordinal scale method, ranging from low (1) to high (3).



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Table 3: Estimate of Risk Event Impact

VALUE	IMPACT	Details
1	Low (Light)	The event might cause minor changes in the project plan
2	Medium (Moderate)	The event will probably cause changes in the project plan that will require some changes in the project schedule and budget plans
3	High (Extreme)	The event will cause fatal damage to the project and might cause its termination ahead of time

Performance is of extreme importance in the SPAAT4FOOD, since it indicates the level of compatibility between the project goals and specific objectives as defined in the formal application and the actual deliverables.

Cost is important in this project because the budget allocated for the project represents a meaningful investment of the EU aimed to promote higher education in Tunisian universities.

Time is defined as a solid framework, which requires that all the project activities will be executed during the 36 months between October 2017 and October 2020.

Risk Assessment Evaluation

The method of evaluation is based on three steps: an evaluation of the probability of the event to occur, an assessment of the impact, and a calculation of the risk index values, (Table 4.)



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Table 4: Risk Matrix

IMPACT		PROBABILITY		
		Low	Medium	High
		1	2	3
Low	1	Insignificant risk 1	Low risk 2	Medium risk 3
Medium	2	Low risk 2	Medium risk 4	High risk 6
High	3	Medium risk 3	High risk 6	Extreme risk 9

The following table presents the assessment values for the risk events:

Table 5: Risk Events Matrix

ID	RISKS	Probability	Impact	Risk Index
1	Reluctance of industrial partners in FST field to actively contribute in the development of teaching and internship scripts.	2	3	6
2	Experts from industrial partner may not be talented teachers	2	2	4
3	Delays in the implementation of study visits	2	2	4
4	Industrial will not respond adequately in the survey procedures	2	3	6
5	Procedural problems during the equipment purchase	2	2	4
6	Various problem about adaptation of developed teaching/training materials to new methodological approach	1	2	2



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7	Resist of the industrial to accept a novel methodological internship approach,	1	2	2
8	Conflict between the different managers of the work packages	2	2	4



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Priority of Risk Events Responses

The response priority plan is divided into three level indicators that are defined by the risk index of the event.

High-Risk Index – High-risk index is a combination of extreme impact and high or very high probability. An occurrence with a high-risk index requires immediate response, since it might endanger the success of the entire project.

Medium-Risk Index – Medium-risk index is a combination of one parameter with a high value and the other with a low value. Although these are not events with fatal implication on the project, they must be closely monitored and adjusted throughout the project.

Low-Risk Index – Low-risk index is a combination of two low value parameters. Events of this nature create only a local impact on the project and can be corrected by the working teams, close to the occurrence.

Risk Response

The risk management team prepares a plan to avoid significant project performance deficiencies due to risk occurrences. The team monitors each of the high-risk index events and the medium-risk index events. Mitigation plan is discussed on a bi-weekly basis and in every case that partners' involvement is required, the project management team contacts the parties and updates them about required actions.