



RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

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1 ABSTRACT

This report describes extensively all the risk identified and the procedures and mitigating actions followed by the risks. Furthermore, it explains the Project Management structure and tasks and responsibilities of all the partners to ensure timely and efficient management and sufficient quality of performed tasks.

The report first elaborates on the approach that is discusses for Risk Management based on the project proposal, the Grant Agreement and feedback from the SC. After, when a conflict occurs, all following steps are carefully explained with corresponding partners. The PC and the SC have initially identified 11 risks for the NECTAR project. These risks include:

- Organisational or staff change
- Delays in time schedule
- Not fulfilling reporting procedures
- Technical failure
- Failed communication & dissemination
- Cultural barriers
- Lack of awareness and information among the main stakeholders
- Scare availability of contextual information
- Lack of an EU reference Occupational Profile of the specialised chef
- Not enough participants for pilot sites
- Differences in EQF Level
- Insufficient quality of work

However, when the project proceeds, considerable risks will be added to the lists.

2 INTERNAL REVIEWERS

REVIEWER NAME	ORGANIZATION	DATE OF APPROVAL
Reviewer 1	xxxxx	25/11/2020
Reviewer 2	yyyyyy	

3 VERSION HISTORY AND AUTHORS

Version	Name / Organization	Status*	Date	Provided Content/Comment/Summary of Changes
1	Marjolein Winters	A	10-12-2020	Draft Version 1
1	Willem vanden Berg	IF	17-12-2020	Spelling Check
1	Regina Roller-Wirnsberger	IR	07-01-2021	Feedback on the first Draft Version
1	Geertrui Vlaemynck	IR	07-01-2021	Feedback on the first Draft Version
1	Serena Alvino	IR	07-01-2020	Feedback on the first Draft Version
1	Heidemarie Müller-Riedlhuber	IR	08-01-2021	Feedback on the first Draft Version
1	Bart Geurden	IR	08-01-2020	Feedback on the first Draft Version
2	Marjolein Winters	A	11-01-2020	Draft version 2

*Status indicates if:

- A - Author (including author of revised deliverable)
- C - Contributor
- IF – Internal Feedback (within the partner organization)

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5 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to identify any possible risks to the NECTAR project following a 'Risk Management' approach. This is in accordance with Task 1.3 Risk Management and Conflict Resolution, led by Odisee, that will take place the entire duration of the project (M1 – M36).

A Risk Management Plan (RMP) will be developed by M3 considering the main project objectives and expected results, the main risks identified at the proposal stage and at the kick-off of activities. The main tool for the risk management will be the Risk Register (RR). A RR is a tool in risk management and project management. It is used to identify potential risks in a project or an organization, sometimes to fulfil regulatory compliance but mostly to stay on top of potential issues that can derail intended outcomes.

The RMP, starting from the already identified project risks, will define procedures and tools for analysing and managing possible risks affecting the project by defining and explaining the risks, including the impact, likelihood and risk rate.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 Approach

Firstly, the risks will be extensively elaborated and corresponding mitigating actions explained. Secondly, the risks will be summarised in a Risk Register which will also include the impact, likelihood and risk rate.

At consortium level, **project management** will be implemented through **Steering Committee** (SC). The task of the SC is to initiate and supervise all activities through constant communication with the partners. Communication among partners will be organized on regular basis. All partners will prepare activity reports and send it to the **Project Coordinator** (PC), on semi-annual basis. The Alliance has strong collaborative ties between the partners and the cohesiveness of the project is not perceived as posing a threat for major conflicts. In any case if there is a need for a mechanism for conflict resolution, the PC has a task to establish a consensus between the conflicting members. In the case of technical disagreements, the SC will resolve the problem, and may ask, if necessary, for recommendations from experts for this purpose.

Decision making will follow the project management structure of SC, PC and **General Assembly** (GA). In addition, decision making will take into account that WP Leaders will be expected to inform the PC of any significant unforeseen event (e.g. delay in the completion of deliverables) that may concern the WP. PC supported by the SC will decide the proper actions. The final approval of major interventions is in charge to the General Assembly.

Project conflict management will be based on 3 main actions, i.e. conflict (i)prevention, (ii) identification and (iii) resolution.

Conflict identification will be carried out by the PC in coordination with WP8-Quality Assurance. Each partner will be invited to point out to the PC any possible conflicts inside the Alliance.

Conflict resolution will be handled through daily activities of support, mediation and mitigation carried out by the PC, on the base of the decision-making rules.

Monitoring strategy support the PC to guarantee the successful completion of tasks against a schedule of dates agreed by the partners. Internal progress and financial management reports are the responsibility of the PC; it will be managed through 6-monthly internal reporting sessions, to continuously monitor the status of each member/WP.

As in all projects, **conflicts, delays** and other problems could always occur due to multiple reasons. These issues will be solved by the Task Leaders (TLs) at a first stage. When TLs face risks that they do not manage to solve, they will contact the Project Coordinator (PC) for coordination and support. If the situation remains unsolved, the tasks not being accomplished will be reassigned by the PC to

another appropriate partner and changes are corresponded to the EU Project Officer (PO). The corresponding budget will also be transferred from the partner not being able to perform to the one replacing him/her. In case of very serious delays or/and budget issues, a voting step is required by the GA. As previously mentioned, the GA (composed by 1 member for each partner) will provide input into strategic and organizational issues and define the project standards and agree on all project policies that must be formally and explicitly stated. Tasks assigned to consortium partners will become contractual obligations. The responsibilities of the GA will be to: (1) Review project progress and control the activities; (2) Ensure that the project maintains its relevance; (3) Be aware of relevant activities in other projects; (4) Resolve any technical administrative or contractual issues, which have not been resolved by other means within the project; (5) Be the overall quality manager of the project. Decisions will be taken on a consensual basis, and in case of disagreement, they will make the final decision.

A specific solution will be found in agreement with the PO, such as for instance a specific amendment to the project proposal which transfers part of the budget to another partner taking in charge of the specific task. If the partner can't guarantee the delivery, no costs or budget will be paid by the promotor.

Nevertheless, the PC will follow up the evolutions in each WP very closely and support and encourage the involved partners as much as possible. She will report the Steering Committee (SC) on the state of play on each meeting. If problems in the timing or budget management would appear, the SC will decide how to solve.

As previously mentioned, multiple common risks in European projects could happen during the project. Each activity (e.g. Intellectual Output, event) is supervised by the PC or a national leader as the leader of that activity. Partners are assigned to activities related to project implementation and to a given intellectual output reporting directly to the leader of that activity. Timely execution and quality of deliverables is monitored in first-hand by the corresponding TLs, overall supervised by WP8 Quality Assurance (QA). QA will be an ongoing process and based on:

- A well-described quality management system (QA Plan)
- Established quality standards (e.g. EQAVET)
- Methods/tools to ensure high quality of all deliverables, processes and products (e.g. MAFEIP, Quality Register, Advisory Group feedback, Peer Review, Quality Management Report covering external evaluation and VET quality results).

All partners are skilled communicators in the consortium language, English. Some of the partners have worked with each other in previous European projects and therefore have well-established working relationships. Due to extensive European project management experience, the PC has developed skills and abilities in effective project management which aim to facilitate and foster collaboration and prevent any conflict escalating and requiring resolution. The regular meetings with the WP Leaders, the SC and the consortium in general, should prevent risks to fall unnoticed.

Building a successful transnational consortium requires harmonisation of personalities and also that of languages, cultures, ways of thinking, behaviours and motivations. Based on this, partners have been chosen who are suited to the project and known to the PC. Added to this, a clear strategy and framework for communication and delivery of project results will help to ensure that conflict does not arise. Roles will be discussed and clarified in the initial meetings to ensure that expectations are clear from the start and any misunderstandings are cleared up as early as possible. Role clarity is essential for all partners to understand their own role in the project and other partners' roles and how these interact and overlap in order to develop a sense of shared understanding of the project's direction and vision.

These elements will be discussed in detail with each partner in order to establish a sense of where there may be potential problems and develop a strategy to minimise these from the beginning of the project. All partners have been personally contacted or visited by the PC before the kick-off meeting

in October and November 2020, to ensure that any problem is early noticed. For example, if a partner has a suggested deadline which they know will be unrealistic, they will be encouraged to discuss this with the PC during the first meeting in order to prevent a problem later.

If problems or conflicts did arise, the PC would apply the principles elaborated in the project proposal and the Grant Agreement, seeking a win-win situation between partners and aiming to reconcile underlying concerns, needs, or interests of the partners involved. In order to maintain high levels of co-operation, all partners will be encouraged to avoid criticism or blaming in the event of any dispute. Exploring the root of any issue will be key to effective communication across the consortium and implementing swift solutions.

Regarding the general data protection regulation (GDPR), the PC's legal office will assess the data collected during the project and particular on the platform to see which actions have to be taken to be fully GDPR compliant. Additionally, a specific responsible for GDPR should be identified for each activity which implies data collection, such as the Pilots Delivery in WP5.

6.2 Conflict Resolution

If in certain situations there is a need for a mechanism for conflict resolution, firstly, PC has the task to establish a consensus between the conflicting members. In the case of technical disagreements, the SC will resolve the problem, and may ask, if necessary, for recommendations from experts for this purpose. The conflict case must be presented at the regular meetings, and the solution of the conflict will be resolved by unanimous decision by all the partners of the consortium. If unanimous decision is not reached, conflicted parties will have one week to resolve the problem, with help of PC or an external expert. In a last phase, if no consensus can be reached, the General Assembly (GA) should vote on the ultimate solution.

The PC has well established skills and abilities in effective project management to minimise risks. Discussions and decisions about the nature of activities and partner requirements have been established from the outset with partners, to ensure that everyone is fully aware of the expectations for their organisation before the proposal is submitted, hereby minimising the potential for conflict arising once the project has been approved.

Theory states that conflict of itself is not necessarily a bad thing, as long as it is resolved effectively; it can lead to personal and project growth. Working in a group of diverse people with different professional backgrounds, from different countries, speaking different languages may cause conflicts brought about by misunderstandings. By resolving conflicts successfully, the consortium will benefit from:

- Improved self-knowledge: Conflict pushes individuals to examine their goals in close detail, helping them understand the things that are most important to them, sharpening their focus, and enhancing their effectiveness;
- Increased group cohesion: When conflict is resolved effectively, team members can develop stronger mutual respect, and a renewed faith in their ability to work together;
- And an overall increased understanding.

In resolving conflicts, the consortium will adopt the conflict resolution strategy "Interest-Based Relational (IBR) Approach" which respects individual differences while helping people to stay clear from becoming too entrenched in a fixed position and its guidelines:

- to ensure that good relationships are the first priority, to treat others calmly and with mutual respect;
- to keep people and problems separate, the issues can be debated without damaging working relationships;

- to pay attention to the interests that are being presented;
- to listen first and to talk second;
- to agree and establish the objective that will have an impact on the decision, to put a plan in action;
- to explore options together and to be open to ideas/solutions.

6.3 Identified Risks

Considering the content of the NECTAR project, a number of risks are identified. All identified risks will be listed below, but will be updated throughout the project.

Firstly, it is possible that partners have an **organisational change** or **staff change** during the project, which results in the project no longer being a priority. The impact would be minor as partner organisations already unable to fully commit to the project have withdrawn after the submission of the concept note and replacement partners have been found for the application form phase. It is important to ensure engagement by several different staff members at different levels, so if one of the staff members must withdraw, the organisation can still perform its dedicated tasks.

Also, possible **delays** in the foreseen **time schedule** are known to the partners. This could be due to several reasons, such as inadequate estimations (budgets, timeframes, human resources), complexity of tasks, unexpected events, organisational strategy in which some projects are prioritised over others, and inadequate coordination. Therefore, it is necessary to regularly check on the administrative departments of the organisation for budgets, have regular meeting with the SC to identify the complexity of tasks, and ensure that the PC will timely inform and gain feedback from all partners considering task performance.

It could also happen that partners do not fully understand the requirements to run an Erasmus+ project and consequently not **fulfilling reporting procedures**, compiling with project management standards or underspending their allocated budget, especially those partners who do not have much European project experience. Therefore, the PC will run a workshop in January 2021 with the administrative/financial contacts of all the partners, of which a list has been established in December 2020. This workshop will fully brief them on all administrative / financial management and reporting requirements. The PC will also monitor closely all partner budgets on a monthly basis, and as such be able to intervene if any particular partner seems to be at risk. If needed, guides and points of reference will be produced and circulated to all partners.

A small, but potential risk in NECTAR is **technical failure** of the videoconference system for the virtual exchange between the project partners or during webinars that will be organized in WP7 Dissemination, Exploitation, Scaling-Up and Sustainability of Project Results. As the possibility of meeting in real life remains unstable in the spring of 2021, the use of videoconferencing is essential. Therefore, the ICT teams of the participating project partners are involved. They will test the systems extensively before the meetings and will be standby at the moments these meetings take place. Furthermore, the use of Microsoft Teams is necessary and compulsory for the partners to work with (as this is also the platform NECTAR uses), to ensure technical feasibility and lesser delays occur by video conferencing.

Getting back to WP7, the **communication** and **dissemination approach** could be proven unsuccessful. Target groups are not receptive to the NECTAR potentials and outreach and consequently, do not engage. This would of major impact for the project, however the likelihood of this happening is small. The members forming the Reference Sites Collaborative Network (RSCN) have much experience of working on European level and have a huge network, and the consortium

has much experience working in the field of Primary Food Care and knows the most important stakeholders to reach out to. The target groups have been identified through a stakeholder map in T7.1 with all partners, and will be fully involved throughout the project in all phases when necessary.

Cultural barriers and **taboos** could also happen, but most partners are aware of these barriers. For example, the partners in Belgium / the Netherlands and Italy have already collaborated much the past few years in the EIPonAHA on Food & Nutrition. Cultural differences, mostly related to eating behaviours (potato vs. pasta culture, individual vs. family dinners) are known to the consortium.

As a new profession is established in the NECTAR project, **lack of awareness** and **information** among the main **stakeholders** about the need of specialized chefs in PFC is to be considered, even as the **lack of proper national and regional qualifications**. Firstly, it is necessary to ensure to involvement of VET and labour market stakeholders. Also, healthcare professionals and chefs working in healthcare could be difficult to educate and provide courses to. Especially as the pressure on healthcare workers was already increasing, it has only increased more rapidly due to the Covid-19 crisis. Therefore, it is highly important to involve these healthcare workers early on in the process, as it is proven that implementation in healthcare only works when all personnel is involved and understand the urgency and necessity of the solution. Also, a number of the partners are, or work directly with, healthcare professionals and the need for training and improving the education of the Chef Gastro Engineering (CGE) and how to approach it has been made evident in the development of this project.

To follow up on the previous matter of creating a new profession, an additional risk could be the **scarce availability of contextual information** that could feed WP2 Definition of a Chef Gastro Engineering Occupational Profile. The preliminary analyses and best practices defined in the involved countries could be difficult to perform, as information could not be published (or at least not in English), not been formalised or is so-called 'hidden information'. Therefore, experts in the field of Gastro Engineering should be consulted to ensure that all the gaps are known. If the information is truly lacking, the information gap should be used instead of filled, so the limitations can be analysed and published.

To elaborate on the risk above, the **lack of an EU reference Occupational Profile of the specialised chef**, the lack of an EU reference curriculum based on 'culinary / clinical integrated approach' and lack of **guidelines for VET providers** supporting the instantiation of local curricula and validation of prior learning are identified. Due to experiences of the partners in other European projects in different professional fields, the risk of collecting pre-existing content is known to the consortium. This risk has been defined when writing the proposal and during a meeting with the SC, and it was agreed to have an additional consultation on this matter and to involve all relevant (external) stakeholders according to the stakeholder map developed in T7.1 Dissemination & Communication. This is to ensure that the ground of the Definition of the CGE Occupational Profile is comprehensive and covers all the European levels.

Also, during the pilot phase, it is also possible that the **number of participants** will not be reached in one or more **pilot sites**. It could be possible that CGEs do not have the time, nor the resources to attend the pilots. However, the preparation of the pilots already starts early 2021, one year before the pilots start, and the necessity of the project is known. Also, if the right stakeholders are reached according to the dissemination strategy elaborated in T7.1, the recruitment process should succeed.

Another very important issue in the NECTAR project is the **difference** of European Qualification Framework (**EQF**) **level** of the involved countries. For example, Belgium aims for a EQF5 level, whereas Portugal aims for a EQF3 level. These differences should be strongly aligned and considered from the start of the program, and the courses should be able to be expanded / moderated according to the different EQF levels of the countries, consequently leading to a modular

approach. This has also been discussed during the kick off meeting, and the lead partners of the pilots are aware of these differences.

Lastly, a common risk is the lack of appropriate **quality** of **work** and in submitting **Deliverables**. TEs could not meet up to the European standard, and the level of quality would not be met. In T8.1, WIAB will deliver a Quality Register for every Deliverable, in order to ensure that the quality standards are met. This document has been reviewed by the PC and by SI4LIFE. Other relevant Deliverables will also be reviewed by the External Reviewer (ER) and / or the Advisory Board.

6.4 Risk Register

As previously indicated, a Risk Register has been created to easily overview the most pressing risks in the NECTAR project, as illustrated in Table 1. The Risk Register has been differentiated between the content of the Risk, Impact, Likelihood, Risk Rate and Mitigation Measures to be taken. The Impact is defined in Low (L), Medium (M) and High (H), whereas the Likelihood is measured in Improbable (I), Remote (R), Occasional (O), Probable (P) and Frequent (F), and the Risk Rate in Low (L), Medium (M) and High (H). However, the previous section 'Identified Risks' has elaborated on the content of the Risk and much more closely on the mitigation measures.

The Risk Register can be found on the following page.

NECTAR Risk Register					
Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Risk Rate	Mitigation measures	Responsible
Organisational or staff change	L	P	M	Ensure engagement by a number of different staff members	All

Delays in time schedule	M	F	M	Close contact with partners and timely feedback required	WP / Task Leader of Deliverable
Not fulfilling reporting procedures	M	R	L	Workshops will be organised by PO and closely monitored	Odisee
Technical failure	L	F	L	Microsoft Teams will be used as platform	Odisee
Failed communication & dissemination	M	R	L	There's much experience of partners and a stakeholder map has been created	RSCN
Cultural barriers	M	R	M	There's a high understanding and much previous collaboration between partners	Pilot Leaders
Lack of awareness and information among the main stakeholders	M	O	L	They will be involved early on in the process, as implementation is only successful then	RSCN & Odisee
Scarce availability of contextual information	L	F	M	Consult experts and use the gap instead of filling it	All
Lack of an EU reference Occupational Profile of the specialised chef	M	F	M	Organise an additional consultation meeting	WIAB & Odisee
Not enough participants for pilot sites	H	R	L	The preparation will already start one year ahead	Pilot Leaders
Differences in EQF Level	M	F	H	Differences will be discussed and courses will be expanded accordingly	SI4LIFE, MUG, Odisee
Insufficient quality of work	H	R	M	Quality Register for meeting the standards	WIAB & Odisee

Table 1. NECTAR's Risk Register

7 CONCLUSION

The NECTAR project has identified multiple risks in the early phase of the project, but as the project evolves, many others could occur. The risks will be evaluated by the PC and the SC regularly, as early identification and mitigation measures are key to a successful project. Initially, risks have been identified by the PC, reviewed and supplemented by the SC. As the risk have been defined in Impact, Likelihood and Risk Rate, the most pressing risks are timely evaluated.

8 REFERENCES

None available.



ANNEX 1 – QUALITY CONTROL CHECK LIST

Quality Control Check	
Generic Minimum Quality Standards	
Document Summary provided (with adequate synopsis of contents)	xx
Compliant with NECTAR format standards (including all relevant Logos and EU-disclaimer)	xx
Language, grammar and spelling acceptable	xx
Objectives of the application form covered	xx
Work deliverable relates to adequately covered	xx
Quality of text is acceptable (organisation and structure, diagrams, readability)	xx
Comprehensiveness is acceptable (no missing sections, missing references, unexplained arguments)	xx
Usability is acceptable (deliverable provides clear information in a form that is useful to the reader)	xx
Deliverable specific quality criteria	
Deliverable meets the 'acceptance Criteria' set out in the Quality Register:	xx
Checklist completed and deliverable approved by	
Name:	Date: