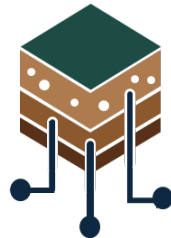


Organisation Wageningen University (WU)
Main Authors Abhishek, Abraham; Rezaei, Mahrooz; Ritsema, Coen



SOILPROM

Project Management Plan

Deliverable 7.1

Date: November 30, 2024

Doc. Version: 1.1



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation program under Grant Agreement No. 101156589. This output reflects only the author's view, and the European Union cannot be held responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

Document Control Information

Settings	Value
Deliverable Title	Project Management Plan
Work Package Title	WP7- Project Management and Ethics
Deliverable number	7.1
Description	An outline of the processes and mechanisms to ensure the efficient implementation of the project
Lead Beneficiary	Wageningen University
Lead Authors	Abhishek, Abraham; Rezaei, Mahrooz; Ritsema, Coen
Contributors	
Submitted by	Wageningen University
Doc. Version (Revision number)	1.1
Sensitivity (Security):	Public
Date:	30/11/2024

Document Approver(s) and Reviewer(s):

NOTE: All Approvers are required. Records of each approver must be maintained. All Reviewers in the list are considered required unless explicitly listed as Optional.

Name	Role	Action	Date
Work package leaders	Reviewers	<i>Approved</i>	29/11/2024

Document history:

The Document Author is authorized to make the following types of changes to the document without requiring that the document be re-approved:

- Editorial, formatting, and spelling
- Clarification

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Revision	Date	Created by	Short Description of Changes

Configuration Management: Document Location

The latest version of this controlled document is stored in the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#)

Nature of the deliverable		
R	Report	

Dissemination level		
PU	Public	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This report is part of the deliverables from the project "SOILPROM" which has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation program under grant agreement No 101156589.

More information on the project can be found at: <http://www.soilprom.eu>

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document presents the various tools that have been prepared in the first three months of the SOILPROM project to facilitate its management by partners. It also acts as a guide showing the participants their roles in different phases of the project.

Various elements of the project management protocols have been discussed and validated by a cross-section of the project team, at an online kick-off meeting (September 6, 2024), and thereafter at a physical kick-off meeting in Carthage, Spain (October 22-24, 2024). This document itself has been reviewed by leaders of the various work packages. This process was facilitated by the project coordination team, which comprises of team members from Wageningen University (designated project coordinators) and Euroquality (who have specific project management-related responsibilities assigned to them in the grant agreement).

The day-to-day project management and internal communication will be carried out through a number of meetings, themed around specific work packages (bimonthly) and use cases (quarterly). Additionally, two consortium-wide meetings will be organized annually, one online and one physical. Task and work package leaders will organize additional meetings as per need. A two-monthly meeting including work package leaders and the coordination team will deliberate on project-wide issues with cross-work package implications.

To facilitate communication between consortium members, and to share information and documents, a Microsoft Sharepoint space has been set up, accessible to all individuals identified as members of the project team by their institutional leads. These individuals are listed in an online spreadsheet accessible to the entire team, along with their contact details, and the various tasks and work packages they are involved in.

To ensure high quality, project deliverables will be put through a robust review process before submission to the EU, comprising of reviews by appointed project partners. The GANTT chart will guide the consortium's efforts to ensure timely completion of tasks, achievement of milestones, and production of deliverables.

In line with good communication practices prescribed by the EU, acknowledgement of EU's funding of the project will be duly acknowledged.

The project's monitoring and evaluation will be guided by the periodic technical and financial reporting requirements laid down in the grant agreement. Additionally, the coordination team will provide updates to the Project Officer every three months, apprising him of latest developments and needs for changes in plan/corrective actions, if there are any.

I. INTRODUCTION

A management plan is important to facilitate the management of a project. It serves as a documentation of standard processes, operational arrangements between consortium members, roles, and responsibilities towards completion of tasks laid down in the grant agreement-- for members to refer to when need arises. It comprises of tools, strategies, and activities that factor in the interests and capacities of beneficiary organisations; while creating a plan for achieving the objectives set out in the grant agreement.

This project management plan reflects discussions and agreements between the representatives of the SOILPROM project consortium members, over the course of an online kick-off meeting, a physical kick-off meeting, and in course of finalization of this deliverable. All project partners must take cognizance of this plan, and use it appropriately to plan their activities and monitor progress along the way.

The general rules of the grant agreement form the basis for this plan. Other related documents include:

- The SOILPROM Consortium Agreement
- D7.2- Quality Management Plan
- D7.3- Result Ownership List (due month 48)
- D7.4/5/6- Data Management Plan (due month 6, with updates in months 24 and 48)

This document contains several links to key SOILPROM-related documents stored in the project's Microsoft Sharepoint space. They will be accessible only to project team members. They have been included nevertheless as it is expected that team members will find it useful to refer to this document in course of the project's implementation.

2. MANAGEMENT PLAN

2.1. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND INFORMATION FLOW

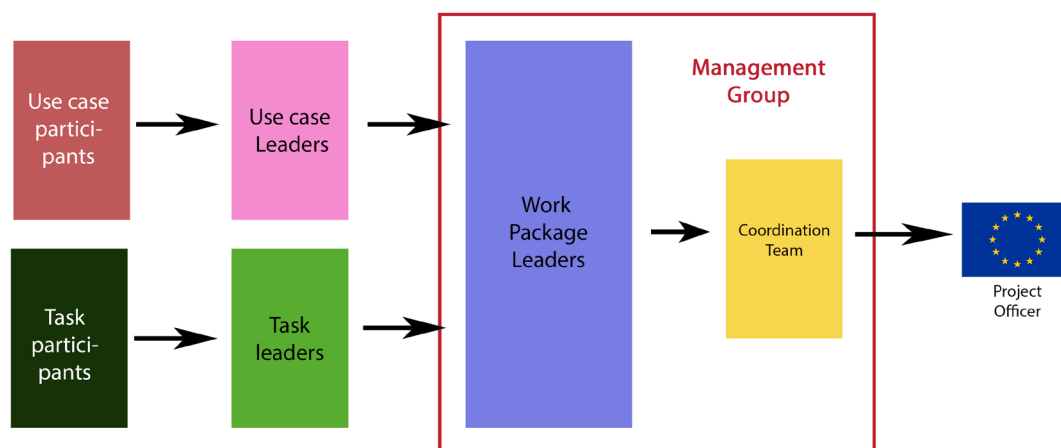


Figure 1: Flow of information in SOILPROM

As the designated project Coordinator (COO), Wageningen University (WU) takes overall responsibility of the project. As per the terms and conditions of the grant agreement, any project-related communication with the EU must be routed through the coordinator.

The coordination team comprises of WU and Euroquality (EQY). Together, the two organisations divide the responsibilities related to project management between them.

Decision-making regarding project management issues with cross-work package implications will include work package leaders.

The appointment of certain consortium partners as WP leaders has been indicated and explained in the grant agreement. WP leaders shall coordinate the completion of activities tasks in their work packages. They have technical expertise for the work package content, are responsible for work package communication, and are in a natural position to communicate the implementation and completion of the work package.

Task leaders have similar responsibilities, except that they are limited to specific tasks.

Use case leaders will guide and facilitate implementation of the data collection and modelling work within the local physical and institutional context.

WP leaders will work closely and regularly with task leaders and use case leaders, and will therefore be well-positioned to represent and raise issues emanating from the various processes from across the project.

2.2. MEETINGS

A set of periodic meetings will be the main mechanism for internal communication and execution of project management.

Table 1 SOILPROM meeting schedule.

	Consortium meeting	WP Leaders' meeting	Use-case meeting	WP meeting
When	Once per year (in person), one online in between	Every 2 months	Every 3 months (before M9), Every month (after M9)	Bimonthly
Aim	General discussion on the project progress, issues and next steps on long period	Share every WP's progress in the last few months and inform on next steps.	Gather insights on the use-case owners' needs in continuation of WP3	Discuss the progress, issues and next steps of each task within a WP.
Organiser	WU & EQY	WU & EQY	WP3 leader (WR)	WP Leaders
Attendees	All partners	WP Leaders	Use-case leaders (WU, FZJ, UPCT, VITO, NIBIO, GUT) and involved experts (WR, AUA, SAV, UFZ, ISMC)	Task Leaders

The grouping of attendees and frequency of the meetings is guided by the concern to ensure that ample opportunities and forums are created to address all issues arising in different corners of the project in course of implementation, while avoiding duplication of discussion and unnecessary diversion of person months towards organising and attending meetings. At the same time, it is also understood that organisers can organise additional meetings or alter the meetings' frequency from time to time, as per need.

Meeting discussions will be documented through minutes, which will be accessible in the project Sharepoint space for any team member to refer to when they want. The meetings will be recorded (as and when needed, and when there is consent to do so from all participants involved), and the recordings stored in the internal repository as well. Access to the minutes and recordings will be limited to members of the project team who will have access to the shared space. (see Section 4- 'Online Storage and Working Space')

2.3. INTERACTION BETWEEN WORK PACKAGES

The SOILPROM workplan is organised along 7 Work Packages (WPs). WP1 is dedicated to laying the ground for upcoming activities of SOILPROM. It will define

the requirements for the models to be used in the use-cases and the needs of the users of the project results, as well as the knowledge gaps on key SOILPROM topics. WP2 is a central WP: it aims at upgrading and integrating the models that will be used in the use-cases and included in the Modelling Platform (MP). WP3 will quantitatively assess the impact of soil pollution and of the input of pollutants to soil for certain land uses on ES, and design realistic and suitable scenarios at use case scale. WP4 is devoted to the application of the models, the Modelling Platform and the Decision Support Tool (DST). WP4 aims at developing conceptually and technically both the MP and the DST. WP5 is key to ensuring close collaboration with future users of the MP and the DST, and with local stakeholders in use-cases. This task will run along the project's lifetime and support the activities of the other tasks whenever collaboration with end-users and local stakeholders is needed. WP5 will also gather the results of the project to translate them into recommendations dedicated to EU policy makers, and to local stakeholders. WP6 focuses on communication, dissemination, and exploitation, and activities to ensure that the project outputs reach the widest possible audience across Europe. WP7 integrates project management activities for an effective coordination, risk management, mitigation, as well as the alignment with ethics requirements and IPR issues.

Figure 2 represents the relationship between the work packages. The arrows represent the direction of flow of results.

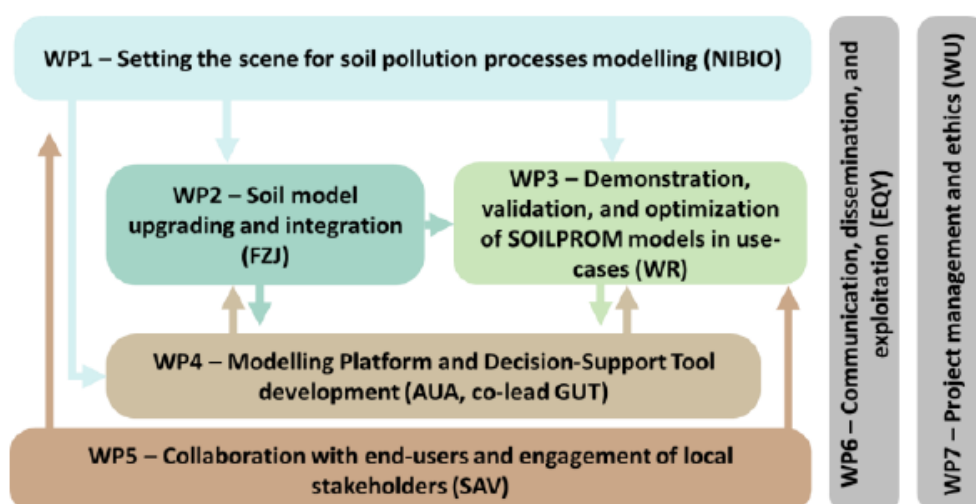


Figure 3 Interaction between SOILPROM work packages.

2.4. DELIVERABLES REVIEW PROCESS



The lead institutional partners responsible for each deliverable have been identified and recorded as such in the grant agreement. In the [deliverables and milestone tracker tool](#), partners organisations have been provisionally assigned to each deliverable as reviewers. This may be reviewed, validated, or modified by the work package leaders from time to time.

The leads will be asked to present a deliverable development plan (DDP in figure 3 above) 8 weeks ahead of the deadline. The plan will outline the intended structure, scope, and content of the deliverable. The designated reviewers will then take two weeks to provide feedback to the leads on the DDP, following which the leads will commence work on the deliverable. The DDP-review is built into the process in order to ensure that work on the deliverables is streamlined and does not cost the leads an inordinate amount of time.

The deliverable leads will be asked to draft the deliverables 3 weeks ahead of the deadline and submit it to the reviewers. Reviewers will provide their feedback within two weeks, following which the leads will have a week to finalise the deliverable and forward it to the coordination team to submit it on the EU portal.

While committing to this timeline, this plan recognises that it might take a longer period of time to produce some deliverables. Such deliverables will be identified and flagged sufficiently in advance by the deliverable leads to the coordination team. Key to the process will be ensuring that the reviewers are identified and informed about the timeline sufficiently in advance, so that they are able to incorporate the review into their schedules.

2.4. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

If necessary, the project coordinator will organise a conflict resolution meeting within 30 days following the reception of a written request transmitted by any of the SOILPROM partners. Attempts at arbitration will be carried out in increasing order of authority:

- Within the team of each work package under the management of the work package leader

- Within the management group (comprising of WP leaders and coordination team, see Figure 1) under the management of the project coordinator

Any risks or discrepancy within work packages shall be first resolved at the work package level by means of dialogue and mutual concession. In case of failure, decisions from the management group will be requested, and suggestions for potential solutions and answers will be prepared.

3. ONLINE STORAGE AND WORKING SPACE

The Sharepoint working space is a working platform accessible only to consortium members, where they can share the project working documents and deliverables. Hosted by Euroquality (EQY), the Sharepoint space is a Microsoft tool, integrating all the usual Microsoft Office features, enabling working together online on Word, Excel or Power Point documents.

The organisation of the Sharepoint space in terms of folders will evolve in course of the project, responding to emerging needs and preferences of team members. To begin with, it consists of folders containing [reference documents](#) (such as the grant agreement, the proposal, and consortium agreements), material related to the various [meetings](#), [deliverables](#), periodic [reporting](#) to the EU, and the various work packages. The space also contains the spreadsheet [SOILPROM_general file](#), which contains all the information necessary for facilitating internal communication such as team members' contact details, composition of work packages, tools for tracking progress towards deliverables and milestones, and meetings' schedule.

As of month 3, all individuals indicated by organisational partners as members of the SOILPROM team have been provided access to the Sharepoint space. Individuals will be added to/ removed from the space in course of the project, upon directions by the organisational partners.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF EU FUNDING

With SOILPROM being a beneficiary of EU funding, the EU flag and a declaration of funding will be displayed in all deliverables, communication and dissemination material/activities, results, and at all project events. Depending on the format of deliverable/ output, one of the following two displays will be used.



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More details on this will be provided in the Plan for Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication (deliverable 6.1)

5. MONITORING AND PERIODIC REPORTING

The monitoring of the project will follow the periodic technical and financial reporting requirements laid down in the grant agreement.

In order to facilitate financial reporting, a detailed financial reporting template (in the Sharepoint space, in the [reporting](#) folder) has been provided for use by partners. The template is based on the financial reporting system on the [EU Funding & Tenders portal](#), which partners will be required to fill out every reporting cycle. It contains statements of person months, personnel costs, other direct costs, and other costs incurred—per person, per work package. The template is indicative and its use optional. Partners are free to use their own internal templates and time registration systems. Partners will be encouraged to share their financial reports with the coordinator (WU) before submitting them on the EU portal, in order for the coordinator to be able to check them for compliance with grant agreement and EU rules and regulation in general. This can help identify and eliminate any irregularities in the reports before submission, reducing the possibility of rejections by the EU and consequent delays in the disbursement of funds. If necessary, subject to discussion, the coordinator will organise a workshop on financial reporting for the partners. It will also be WU's task to make sure that the submission of financial reports follows the EU deadlines.

Along with the financial reports, technical reports will have to be provided to the EU, documenting progress of work during every reporting period. The technical report templates will be made available by the EU at the end of each reporting period. Within the report, each Work Package leader will provide an explanation of the work carried out and progress made during the reporting period, within their work package. WU will coordinate this process, and will be in charge of compiling, completing, and submitting the report on the EU portal.

As per the grant agreement, the following reporting schedule will be followed:

Table 2: SOILPROM periodic reporting schedule

Reporting					Payment	
			Type	Deadline	Type	Deadline (time to pay)
RP No	Month from	Month to				
N.A.					Initial prefinancing	30 days from entry into force/10 days before starting date – whichever is the latest
1	1	18	Periodic report	60 days after end of reporting period	Interim payment	90 days from receiving periodic report
2	19	36	Periodic report	60 days after end of reporting period	Interim payment	90 days from receiving periodic report
3	37	48	Periodic report	60 days after end of reporting period	Final payment	90 days from receiving periodic report

Additionally, the coordination team will provide updates to the Project Officer every three months, apprising him of latest developments and needs for changes in plan/corrective actions, if there are any.

Please refer to the [grant agreement](#) for all the rules, terms, and conditions regarding SOILPROM technical and financial reporting. Please refer to the [annotated grant agreement](#) for detailed explanation of the rules. Following is a selection of rules the coordination team would like to highlight in this document, as a handy reference for project partners:

- Eligible personnel costs: ONLY costs for personnel assigned to the action (i.e. working for the project according to internal written instructions, organisation chart or other documented management decision) can be eligible.
- Record keeping: The monthly declaration of days worked in the project correctly signed (see Article 20) OR reliable time records will normally be sufficient proof of the assignment to the action – unless there is other contradicting evidence (e.g. the employment contract indicates that the person was hired to work on another project).
- Budget transfer:
 - A transfer can NOT lead to an increase of the maximum grant amount.
 - As a general principle, beneficiaries may transfer budget among themselves, between affiliated entities or between budget categories (without requesting an amendment; see Article 39) and – at the time of reporting – declare costs that are different from the estimated budget provided that the action remains in line with the description of the action in Annex 1 (if this is not the case, an amendment is needed, under the conditions of Article 39).

- If the incurred eligible costs during the action implementation turn out to be lower than the estimated eligible costs, the difference can thus be allocated to another beneficiary or another budget category. The amount reimbursed for the other beneficiary/other budget category (to which the budget transfer is intended) may thus be higher than planned.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

Following are the critical risks identified by the consortium, and corresponding mitigation measures. The risks will be continuously tracked. Any changes/updates be reported in the Continuous Reporting section of the [EU funding and tenders portal](#).

Risk number	Description	Work Package No(s)	Proposed mitigation measures
1	One of the partners withdraws from the consortium	WP1, WP6, WP7, WP5, WP2, WP4, WP3	Regular and fruitful collaboration during the proposal drafting phase has strengthened the working atmosphere. Nevertheless, if this occurred, the consortium would reallocate tasks and responsibilities to some extent, use its network to identify another partner to fill the role of the lost partner, and conduct a use-case in the same country.
2	Poor communication flow between partners	WP6	T7.1 has been specifically made to limit this risk. If the tools provided by EQY and the consortium meetings are not sufficient, new measures will be decided to ensure that internal communication works.
3	Budget deviation	WP7	Budget has been deeply discussed with the partners to ensure it meeting their needs. In addition of this good planning, regular status updates to reveal possible deviations, especially in the context of inflation, at early stage will be done and the coordination will plan resources/ activities reallocation among partners if needed.
4	IPR of models owned by organizations outside the consortium	WP2, WP4	The consortium gathers owners from various models and modules that will be used in the project. Concerning models owned by organizations from outside the consortium, potential exploitation right to acquire have been pre-identified in the proposal phase, and owners have been contacted, and specific budget has been foreseen.
5	Delay in the setting-up of a use-case	WP3	Technical requirements and needs will be discussed in T1.1 and T2.3. In addition, the task T3.1 will begin early to allow a smooth development of the use-cases.
6	Lack of data generated in the use-cases	WP3	Use-case sites have been selected based on areas already monitored in ongoing programmes, which ensures available data. In addition, all partners have agreed to contribute to data collection.
7	Handling and preserving samples and risk of losing or damaging samples.	WP3	Sampling protocols will be developed to ensure secure sampling, will be carefully designed and revised when needed, samplings will be repeated in the first possible date if needed. Methodology of sampling will be adjusted to needs and regional characteristics of use-case areas.
8	Delays in the delivery of integrated and upgraded models for the MP	WP2	Partners will all agree on planning for these activities. In addition, as WP leaders AUA and FZJ will be closely collaborating for the timely capture and addressing of any upgrade-/integration-related issues.
9	Low computational efficiency of the models hampering the use of DST	WP4	To overcome potential difficulties ample time has been allocated to the development of MP and DST. This will allow to test various models and their combinations and choose the ones with best performance.



10	Difficulties in model upgrading and integration	WP2	A careful analysis of existing models will be performed to identify which are most amenable for upgrade and coupling. Partners will share their experience to support each other in models' modification.
11	Interest and capacity of JRC to carry out activities decided in the project	WP1, WP6, WP7, WP5, WP2, WP4, WP3	Relationships with JRC are good and JRC has been already informed about the initiative. In case of low interest, an alternative will be sought to ensure that activities will be executed as planned even without JRC participation.
12	Lack of access to technical details of other database setup to enable database integration and interoperability with DestinE and EUSO	WP1	The update of the inventory of databases to consider for establishing connections and interoperability by focusing on those for which database setup technical details can be made available. In addition, SOILPROM will work in close collaboration with JCR, which manages some databases.
13	Low engagement of stakeholders	WP5, WP3	WP5 is dedicated to involving end-users and to shape project's results according to their needs.
14	The project does not reach enough targets for good exploitation	WP6	The DEC plan will be restructured and re-evaluated if needed during the project. Also, the involvement of the technology provider board and end-user board will ensure the good exploitation of the project results.

6. KEY CONTACTS

WORK PACKAGE LEADERS

Work package	Leader	Organisation	Email
1- Setting the scene for soil pollution processes modelling	Jian Liu	The Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research (NIBIO)	jian.liu@nibio.no
2- Soil model upgrading and integration	Lutz Weihermüller	Forschungszentrum Jülich (FZJ)	l.weihermueller@fz-juelich.de
3- Demonstration, validation, & optimization of SOILPROM models in use-cases	Louise Wipfler	Stichting Wageningen Research (WR)	Louise.wipfler@wur.nl
4- Modelling platform and decision support tool development	Anna Selini Petropoulou	Agricultural University of Athens (AUA)	a.petropoulou@aua.gr
5- Collaboration with end-users and engagement with local stakeholders	Tuomo Eskelinen	Savonia University of Applied Sciences (SAV)	tuomo.eskelinen@savonia.fi
6- Communication, dissemination and exploitation	Charles-Edouard Dubail	Euroquality (EQY)	charles-edouard.dubail@euroquality.fr
7- Project management and ethics	Coen Ritsema	Wageningen University (WU)	Coen.ritsema@wur.nl



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KEY INSTITUTIONAL CONTACTS

Organisation	Key contact	Email
1- Wageningen University (WU)	Coen Ritsema	Coen.ritsema@wur.nl
2- Stichting Wageningen Research (WR)	Louise Wipfler	Louise.wipfler@wur.nl
3- The Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research (NIBIO)	Jian Liu	jian.liu@nibio.no
4- Vlaamse Instelling voor Technologisch Onderzoek N.V. (VITO)	Ingeborg Joris	ingeborg.joris@vito.be
5- Forschungszentrum Jülich (FZJ)	Jan Vanderborght	j.vanderborght@fz-juelich.de
6- Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena (UPCT)	Nazaret Gonzalez Alcaraz	nazaret.gonzalez@upct.es
7- Agricultural University of Athens (AUA)	Ioannis Seremetis	i.seremetis@aua.gr
8- Politechnika Gdańska (GUT)	Adam Szymkiewicz	adam.szymkiewicz@pg.edu.pl
9- Savonia University of Applied Sciences (SAV)	Tuomo Eskelinen	tuomo.eskelinen@savonia.fi
10- Helmholtz-Zentrum für Umweltforschung (UFZ)	Jessica Stubenrauch	jessica.stubenrauch@ufz.de
11- Euroquality SAS (EQY)	Charles-Edouard Dubail	charles-edouard.dubail@euroquality.fr
12- Masarykova Univerzita (MU)	Jakub Hofman	jakub.hofman@recetox.muni.cz

COORDINATION TEAM

Name	Role	Organisation	Email
Coen Ritsema	Project Coordinator	Wageningen University (WU)	coen.ritsema@wur.nl
Mahrooz Rezaei	Project Coordinator	Wageningen University (WU)	mahrooz.rezaei@wur.nl
Abraham Abhishek	Project Manager	Wageningen University (WU)	abraham.abhishek@wur.nl
Antoinet van Kessel	Administration & Legal Expert	Wageningen University (WU)	antoinet.vankessel@wur.nl
Charles-Edouard Dubail	Communication & Dissemination Expert	Euroquality SAS (EQY)	charles-edouard.dubail@euroquality.fr
Hannah Rebiffé	Project Management Expert	Euroquality SAS (EQY)	hannah.rebiffe@euroquality.fr