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SYNERGIES

*Innovating Preparedness by Leveraging SYNERGIES and
Enhancing Results of DRM Projects*

Grant Agreement No. 101121172

Starting date: 1st December 2023 – Duration: 36 months

Deliverable D7.2 Project Handbook

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Deliverable number	D7.2
Deliverable title	Project Handbook
Work Package	WP7
Deliverable type¹	Report
Dissemination level²	Public
Due date	29.02.2024 (Month 3)
Document version	1.0
Lead author(s)	Alessia Golfetti, Alberto Pasquini Deep Blue (DBL)
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Suggested citation	Golfetti, A., Pasquini, A. (2024) D7.2 Project Handbook, <i>SYNERGIES Project: Innovating preparedness by leveraging synergies and enhancing results of DRM projects</i> , funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe Innovation Programme (No. 101121172).

1 Type: ORDP: Open Research Data Pilot; R: Report; D: Demonstrator

2 Dissemination level: C: Confidential; P: Public



DOCUMENT CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Date	Author	Description
0.1	10.01.2024	Alessia Golfetti DBL	Creation of the ToC
0.2	15.02.2024	Alessia Golfetti, Alberto Pasquini DBL	Preparation of the first draft
0.3	22.02.2024	Nathan Clark VU, Matthieu Branlat, SINTEF	Peer review of the document
0.4	27.02.2024	All	Collection of final comments
1.0	28.02.2024	Alessia Golfetti DBL	Preparation of the final version



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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The SYNERGIES project aims to strengthen a culture of disaster preparedness by fostering a cohesive and coordinated engagement of various stakeholders in disaster management such as first and second responders, citizens, communities, research and education systems, authorities and public administrations, and businesses. SYNERGIES concentrates on five preparedness needs:

- involvement of all relevant actors in building preparedness
- strengthening preparedness education and training
- communicating with citizens
- management of spontaneous volunteers
- ensuring the sustainability of solutions for preparedness

The project leverages from the results of past Horizon 2020 projects under the call for Disaster Resilient Societies (DRS01) (e.g., LINKS, RESILOC, BUILDERS, ENGAGE, etc.). These “component projects” will integrate their results into SYNERGIES with the best practices and experiences of practitioners, refining and elevating their maturity.

Three Preparedness Cases will guide the project, allowing for orientation, progress evaluation, and demonstrations of the final results. These cases involve real-life scenarios where stakeholders, such as first responders, authorities, citizen associations, and NGOs, seek to enhance preparedness by better involving and empowering citizens.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document establishes a Project Handbook for the SYNERGIES project and states the way in which the Project Management should coordinate the project activities.

The document complements the project information provided in the Grant Agreement (GA), Description of Action (Annex 1 part B) and in the Consortium Agreement (CA). It establishes a framework for the project coordination team to effectively carry out all quality activities and monitor the project for actual and potential risks in order to avoid negative effects.

This document is divided in four sections and constitutes a Project Management guide for the Consortium. The first part (Chapters 2-3) describes the organisation, roles, and responsibilities of each consortium body. It also details the project management plan, defining the quality principles, the work plan, the project management procedures, as well as the possible risks that may arise during the project's lifetime.

The second part of the document (Chapter 4) describes the quality monitoring objectives and the review process for the deliverables including the process's deadlines. This is to ensure that the deliverables are produced with high quality and delivered within the required due date. This deliverable is intended for an internal use in the project and provides guidance to the project partners.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Description
AB	Advisory Board
CA	Consortium Agreement
DoA	Description of Action
GA	Grant Agreement
LST	Local Support Team
PC	Project Coordinator
PMS	Project Management structure
REA	Research Executive Agency
TL	Task Leader
WP	Work Package
WPL	Work Package Leader



1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope of the document

This document presents the principles and procedures that will be followed by the SYNERGIES consortium to ensure compliance with the work plan and contractual obligations, thus the effective progress toward the achievement of the project goals. This document informs the SYNERGIES project partners about the project’s structure, activities, schedules, deliverable review process, responsibilities, risks and mitigation measures. It serves as a set of guidelines for the partners to ensure optimal collaboration, efficiency and high-quality work, and compliance.

All the SYNERGIES partners will use the rules, suggestions and standards as specified in these guidelines. This document captures the current of the project management manual at the current stage; however, this will be a living document that will evolve throughout the project.

1.2 Deliverable Structure

This document is structured around four chapters:

- Chapter 2 provides an overview of the project organisation and main bodies.
- Chapter 3 describes the project management Plan. It describes the work plan and details the project management structure and procedures.
- Chapter 4 describes the overall review process, the internal deadlines, the supporting materials, procedures and rules³.

1.3 Relevant documents

This document complements the information provided in the Grant Agreement (GA), the Description of Action (Annex 1 part B) and in the Consortium Agreement (CA).

The table below synthesises the type of information to be found in each of these documents and where they can be found.

Table 1: Other relevant documents

Document	Type of information	Folder
Grant Agreement (GA)	Is the contract between the SYNERGIES project and the European Commission. The GA is composed of several Annexes. In particular Annex 1 and 2 are described below.	SYNERGIES (shared)\WP7 Project Management\General documents
Description of the Action (DoA)	Annex 1 (Part A and B) of the GA describes the work to be performed during the project. It contains information on the objectives, structure, methodology, roles and responsibilities.	SYNERGIES (shared)\WP7 Project Management\General documents

³ Some of the content and templates in this deliverable have been inspired by the input of past and ongoing EU research projects and initiatives (e.g., STRATEGY project - Grant agreement ID: 883520).



<p>Consortium Agreement (CA)</p>	<p>Information on the budget estimated for the action is provided in Annex 2 of the GA. Is the contract that defines the relationship between the parties involved in the project. It outlines the organisation of work between Parties, the management of the project, the rights and obligations of each Party regarding access rights and dispute resolution.</p>	<p>SYNERGIES (shared)\WP7 Project Management\General documents</p>
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2. Organisation

2.1 Composition of the consortium

The SYNERGIES consortium is composed of 16 partners from 7 European countries (Italy, Malta, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Estonia, and Ireland) and one associated country (Norway). Project partners were selected based on a combination of criteria to ensure ideal conditions of collaboration and to address the objectives set up for the project.

The consortium is well balanced and includes a variety of competencies and expertise needed for the successful implementation of the project activities.

The SYNERGIES partners can be divided into 6 main categories:

- Research and education systems;
- Civil society organisations;
- Business companies;
- Authorities and public administrations;
- First and second responders;
- International organisations.

The Consortium activities will be supported in the different phases by two bodies of external volunteer experts and other stakeholders⁴: The Advisory Board (AB) and the Local Support Teams (LST), as detailed in the following paragraphs.

1.1.1 Advisory board overview

SYNERGIES will set up an AB consisting of experts with different backgrounds and expertise representing practitioners, authorities and academia involved in disaster preparedness. They range from different levels of authorities to first responders, and civil society organizations representing the citizens. The overall aim of the AB is to act as consultation bodies for the SYNERGIES consortium by providing their valuable feedback at key stages of the project aimed at better aligning project outcomes with the needs of their users and stakeholders. The members of the AB will be informed about the project strategic goals and progress and will provide feedback and valuable knowledge based on their own experience.

AB members have been proposed by the project partners to support the project by providing meaningful knowledge and expert advice to the project activities.

The list of AB members will be kept updated throughout the entire duration of the project. The current list consists of an excel file including information on the organisation name, country and role (more details on the current list of the AB are available in D5.1 -Communication and Dissemination Plan V1- due in M3). The list will be managed by the project coordinator (Deep Blue), as leader of T5.1 “Communication and Dissemination”, and it will be used to invite experts to participate to specific project activities.

All the input provided by AB members will be adequately taken into consideration during the implementation of the project.

1.1.2 Local support teams overview

During the overall project lifecycle, the consortium will be supported by three LSTs in order to facilitate the overall collection, implementation, and validation of the project activities in the

⁴ AB and LST members will contribute voluntarily to the project activities and will be reimbursed for their travel and subsistence costs for attending project events.

three Preparedness Cases (Reġjun Tramuntana/Northern Region Malta, Reunion Island, and Rotterdam).

The LST are composed of local actors (e.g. municipalities, communities, citizen organisations) having a role in the planning, design, and execution of the actions of the Preparedness Cases. During the proposal preparation phase, some key actors of the Preparedness Cases were already identified and involved as partner of the Consortium or of the LSTs. The composition of the local support teams is currently in progress and will be finalised in the context of WP1 (T1.1-1.4).

1.2 Management bodies

As described in Figure 1, the SYNERGIES Project Management structure (PMS) is composed of the following management bodies:

- the Project Coordinator
- the General Assembly
- the Project management team
- the WPs leaders and tasks leaders

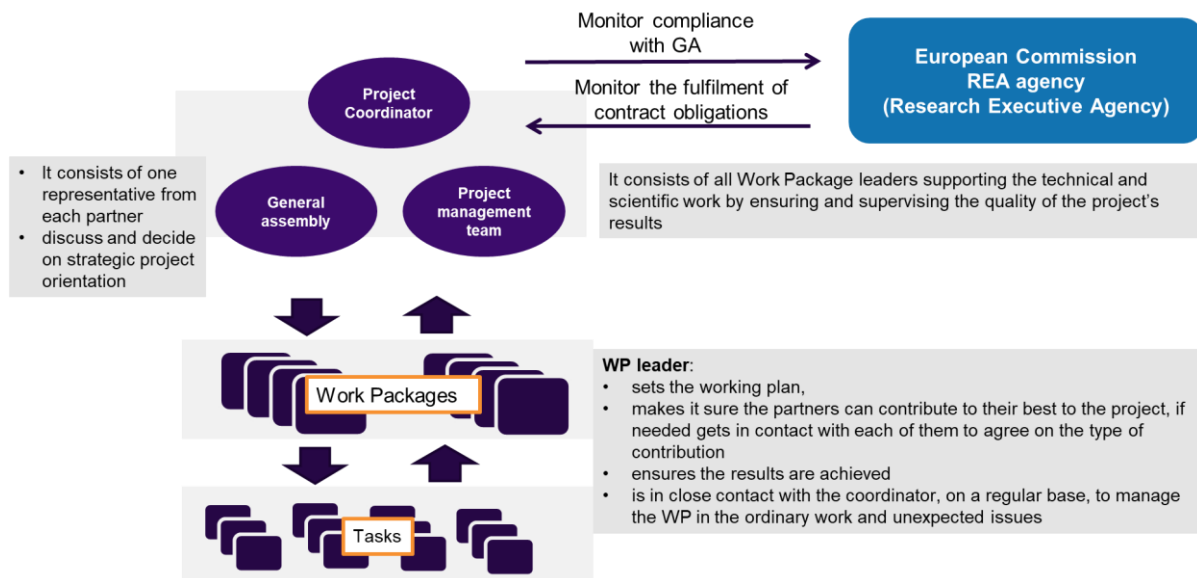


Figure 1: Project management board structure

All the necessary the project management bodies included in the PMS will ensure an effective project implementation; performing the financial, legal, administrative and technical coordination; establishing the communication flow and methods for reporting, monitoring the progress and checking quality assurance; managing knowledge and intellectual property; promoting gender equality and networking with other related projects and networks. All the management bodies are described in the next sections.

1.2.1 Project Coordinator

DBL is the SYNERGIES Project Coordinator (PC). The PC is the legal entity acting as the intermediary between the Parties and the Granting Authority, the Research Executive Agency (REA).



The PC will be responsible for the appropriate use of the funding by the recipients and will ensure that they comply with certain obligations under the GA through control measures and corrective actions. The main responsibility of the PC is to ensure the timely and effective overall progress of the project. The PC, appointed by the coordinating partner will chair the General Assembly, and is in charge of the overall coordination and management of the project. PC is mainly responsible for:

- communicating with the European Commission on behalf of the consortium; dealing also with contractual, administrative and financial matters in addition to overall responsibility for project progress reporting.
- Monitoring of the project progress and of the compliance by the Parties with their obligations under the Grant Agreement;
- Collecting, reviewing, and submitting progress reports and other deliverables to REA
- Contacts with REA on any project management, control, financial management or audit activities and transmitting promptly documents and information connected with the Grant Agreement.
- Monitoring and managing the risks and implementing mitigation strategies when necessary.
- Organising the plenary and progress meetings, chairing the meetings, preparing the minutes of the meetings and monitoring the implementation of decisions taken at meetings.

Further details about the role of the PC can be found in the CA (section 6.4).

1.2.2 General Assembly

As stated in the CA, the General Assembly is the main decision-making body which holds the highest level of authority in the project, being responsible to ensure agile and effective decision making and project completion. It consists of the Project Coordinator and one representative from each Partner.

The General Assembly will discuss and decide on strategic project orientation, updated work programmes, approval of Periodic Reports and Deliverables, and resource allocation. Finally, the General Assembly will act as the highest conflict resolution body within the project.

Further details about the responsibilities of the parties, the voting rules, the types of decisions taken by the General Assembly can be found in the CA (section 6.3).

1.2.3 Project management team

The Project Management Team (PMT) consists of all Work Package leaders, and it is chaired by the project coordinator. The PMT supports the coordinator on the technical and scientific work by ensuring and supervising the quality of the project's results through the revision of each deliverable. This includes planning and control of the activities within the WPs, the preparation of deliverables and the collection of the contributions from other partners participating in each WP for internal and external reports. The PMT can raise important issues and propose solutions to the GA but does not have a decision-making capacity. Finally, the PMT with the coordinator will ensure an effective knowledge transfer with external bodies and initiatives. Regular coordination meetings will be organised to discuss relevant issues across WPs and provide a proper overview of project progress.



1.2.4 WP leaders and task leaders

The Work Package (WP) leaders are the partners responsible for WPs. Each WP leader is responsible for coordinating and ensuring suitable progress of technical activities involved in the WP. This includes planning and control of the activities within the WPs, quality check of activities, preparation of deliverables and collection of partners' contributions, reporting of progresses and issues to the PC and the whole Consortium. The Task Leader (TL) is covered by the partners responsible for tasks and involves coordinating and ensuring suitable progress of technical activities involved in the task, aligning with and reporting to the WP leader.

The table below provides a summary of the lead beneficiary of each WP and task.

Table 2: WPs' overview – duration and effort

WP n.	WP Title	Leader	Task	Task leader
WP1	Steering, Evaluation and Demonstration	DBL	T1.1 Evaluation & Validation Plan	DBL
			T1.2 Preparedness Case 1	ASREU
			T1.3 Preparedness Case 2	ISTC
			T1.4 Preparedness Case 3	GB
WP2	Empowering Disaster Management Actors	UT	T2.1 Atlas for Empowerment	ISIG
			T2.2 Preparedness Self Assessment	TU
			T2.3 Roadmap and Training Modules	TU
WP3	Innovative Channels and Communication	SIC	T3.1 Knowledge Base for Innovative Channels and Communication	SIC
			T3.2 Knowledge Management Methodology	SIC
			T3.3 Tool for Early Warning Messaging	IES
WP4	Management of Spontaneous Volunteers	SINTEF	T4.1 Spontaneous volunteers in disaster management	SINTEF
			T4.2 Integration of Spontaneous Volunteers	SINTEF
			T4.3 Lessons learned on management of spontaneous volunteers	VU
WP5	Impact Management	GB	T5.1 Communication and Dissemination	DBL
			T5.2 Exploitation	GB
			T5.3 Moving to Market	GB
WP6	Ethics and Legal Issues	VU	T6.1 Ethics	VU



			T6.2 Legal Issues on Results	DBL
WP7	Project management	DBL	T7.1 Project management and coordination	DBL
			T7.2 Data Management Plan	DBL
			T7.3 Impact Supervision	GB

3. Project management plan

3.1 Quality principles

The SYNERGIES management is based on several quality principles that are important in inter-organisational collaboration:

1. **collaboration:** the SYNERGIES partners will collaborate and cooperate, share their experiences, know-how and network in order to achieve a common objective.
2. **result-driven plan:** the project work will be organised in a result-driven way. Each partner will be responsible for its internal organisation and planning, but the overall consortium workflow will be driven by a common plan which will be always kept up to date taking into account the WP/task planning.
3. **joint-decision making:** the collaboration between participants will be based on consensus and joint decision-making;
4. **periodic meetings and reviews:** the SYNERGIES consortium will meet periodically to ensure consistency of WPs activities, and quality and timeliness of work.

The success, quality and feasibility of SYNERGIES is strictly dependent on the effectiveness of the collaboration between the partners. Therefore, all the partners shall understand and use the information, suggestions and standards as specified in this document.

3.2 Work plan

The project has started on December 1st - 2023 and will last 36 months. The project work plan is shown in the GANTT chart in Figure 2.

The monitoring and coordination of the work plan is under the PC responsibility. The WPLs are responsible for the schedule within their WPs. The WPLs must communicate with the coordinator in case any problems or delays rise during the project timeline.

At month 18, the SYNERGIES project will provide the reporting on activities and resources, and any deviations from the original work plan will be explained and justified in the periodic reports. The PC will revise the GANTT chart, accordingly, updating it with actual effort reported, actual month of submission of the deliverables and main project meetings that took place.





Project Month	Year 1												Year 2												Year 3												
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12	M13	M14	M15	M16	M17	M18	M19	M20	M21	M22	M23	M24	M25	M26	M27	M28	M29	M30	M31	M32	M33	M34	M35	M36	
Reporting period 1	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26	Oct-26	Nov-26	
Reporting period 2																																					
Milestones																																					
VP1 Steering, Evaluation and Demonstration																																					
T1.1 Evaluation & Validation Plan							VS	D1.1								VS																					
T1.2 Preparedness Case 1																																					D1.2
T1.3 Preparedness Case 2																	VS																				D1.3
T1.4 Preparedness Case 3																		VS																			D1.4
VP2 Empowering Disaster Management Actors																																					
T2.1 Atlas for Empowerment																																					D2.1
T2.2 Preparedness Self Assessment																																					D2.2
T2.3 Roadmap and Training Modules																																					D2.3
VP3 Innovative Channels and Communication																																					
T3.1 Knowledge Base for Innovative Channels and Communication																																					D3.1
T3.2 Knowledge Management Methodology																																					D3.2
T3.3 Tool for Early Warning Messaging																																					D3.3
VP4 Management of Spontaneous Volunteers																																					
T4.1 Spontaneous volunteers in disaster management																																					D4.1
T4.2 Integration of Spontaneous Volunteers																																					D4.2
T4.3 Lessons learned on management of spontaneous volunteers																																					D4.2
VP5 Impact Management																																					
T5.1 Communication and Dissemination																																					D5.1
T5.2 Exploitation																																					D5.2
T5.3 Moving to Market																																					D5.3
VP6 Ethics and Legal Issues																																					
T6.1 Ethics																																					D6.1
T6.2 Legal Issues on Results																																					D6.2
VP7 Project management																																					
T7.1 Project management and coordination																																					D7.2
T7.2 Data Management Plan																																					D7.1
T7.3 Impact Supervision																																					D7.3
																																					D7.4

Figure 2: SYNERGIES project gantt



3.2.1 Milestones

Below we include the list of project milestones including verification measurers, and deliverables including responsible partners.

Table 3: list of milestones

n	Milestone name	WP	Lead	Verification	Due date
1	Mutual Understanding	WP7 WP5	1-DBL	Communication and Dissemination Plan and Project Handbook are ready , shared and accepted by all partners	3
2	Plans and Project Guidelines Ready	WP6,WP7 WP5	6-VU	Plans and guidelines guiding project activities are completed : Exploitation, Ethics, DMP, Website is online	6
3	Steering phase	WP3,WP1 WP2,WP4	2-SINTEF	Preparedness Cases are presented in plenary meetings with all the relevant information	8
4	Evaluation Phase	WP3,WP1 WP2,WP4	8- UTARTU	Initial versions of the project results are available and all the three planned Workshop for their evaluation are done	19
5	Validation Phase	WP3,WP1, WP6,WP5, WP2,WP4	3-RAN	Final versions of the project results delivered for Validation , New Exploitation Plan released and Activities for moving to market started	31
6	Final Event	WP7,WP5	9-GB	Final event held with all stakeholders and partners, proceedings, and participant list online	36

3.2.2 Deliverables

Table 4: List of deliverables

Deliverable	Title	WP	Lead	Type	DL	Due date
D5.1	Communication and Dissemination Plan V1	WP5	1 - DBL	R	PU	3
D7.2	Project Handbook	WP7	1 - DBL	R	PU	3
D5.2	Website	WP5	1 - DBL	DEC	PU	6
D6.1	Ethics Guidelines	WP6	6 - VU	R	PU	6
D7.1	Exploitation Plan V1	WP7	9 - GB	R	PU	6
D7.3	Data Management Plan	WP7	4 - IES	DMP	PU	6
D1.1	Evaluation & Validation Plan	WP1	1 - DBL	R	PU	9

D4.1	Solutions for Volunteers	WP4	2 - SINTEF	R	PU	12
D3.1	Knowledge Base for Communication	WP3	5 - SIC	OTHER	PU	24
D4.2	Integration of Volunteers	WP4	2 - SINTEF	OTHER	PU	24
D2.1	ATLAS for improvement	WP2	7 - ISIG	OTHER	PU	27
D4.3	Table-top Game	WP4	2 - SINTEF	OTHER	SEN	27
D3.2	Knowledge Methodology	WP3	5 - SIC	R	PU	29
D2.2	Platform for Self-Assessment	WP2	8 - UTARTU	OTHER	SEN	31
D2.3	Training modules	WP2	8 - UTARTU	R	SEN	31
D3.3	Tool for Early Warning	WP3	4 - IES	OTHER	SEN	31
D1.2	Validation Case 1	WP1	13 - SRUN	R	PU	33
D1.3	Validation Case 2	WP1	12 - ISTD	R	PU	33
D1.4	Validation Case 3	WP1	9 - GB	R	PU	33
D4.4	Guidelines for volunteers	WP4	6 - VU	R	PU	33
D5.3	CEN Workshop Project Plan	WP5	3 - RAN	OTHER	PU	35
D5.4	Applicability of Project Outcomes	WP5	9 - GB	R	PU	36
D6.2	Legal Issues	WP6	1 - DBL	R	PU	36
D7.4	Impact Analysis	WP7	9 - GB	R	PU	36

3.3 Meetings

Periodical meetings will be organised with the aim to monitor and discuss the status of the project. Further details about the types of meetings can be found in the table below.

Table 5: Types of Meetings

Type	Participants	Goal	Frequency	Duration	Attendance
Plenary meeting	PC + WPLs + All partners	To monitor the work of different WPs discussing the project work progress, outstanding actions, issues and mitigation measures.	Every 2 months (online) 1-2 plenary meetings will be organised in presence every year	2-3 hours	Online and face to face



WP leaders recurrent meetings	PC + WPLs + interested partners	To monitor the work of different WPs	Monthly	1h30	Online
Technical recurrent meetings	PC + WPLs + interested partners	To discuss main problems or analyse scientific aspects of the project	Monthly	1h	Online
WP coordination meeting	WPL + Partners involved in the WP	To focus the work within each WP	<i>Each WPL defines frequency, duration, and type of attendance according to WP needs. Suggested frequency: monthly</i>		
Other meetings	Bilateral partner meetings, case team meetings, etc.	For small coordination between partners	<i>When needed</i>		

3.3.1 Physical meetings

For Face-to-face meetings attention will be paid to travel costs, leveraging on video conferences, and attempting to combine them with key events that SYNERGIES partners plan or may have an interest in participating in.

A tentative time plan for the physical meetings was shared during the KoM (see the table below). The dates can change and will be updated during the project.

Table 6: tentative schedule of the physical meetings

Tentative schedule	Meeting
2024	In presence Plenary meeting 11-13 December 2023 - Rome In presence Plenary meeting + WP1 workshop in the week 17-19 June 2024
2025	In presence Exercise and Plenary meeting February 2025 Malta In presence Exercise meeting April 2025 - Rotterdam In presence Exercise meeting June 2025 – La Reunion
2026	In presence Plenary meeting February 2026 In presence Final Plenary meeting November 2026

3.3.2 Partners responsibilities

For the in-presence meetings, the hosting partner should give information related to arrival and departure times and, where appropriate, suggest recommended hotels. The hosting partner is responsible for the coffee breaks, lunches and dinners' organisation considering special dietary requirements. A call link will be created, when possible, to facilitate the participation of people who cannot join physically.

The PC has the responsibility of contributing to the definition of meeting objectives, preparation of decisions, agenda, and minutes. The PC is the chairperson for the general assembly and plenary meetings. Agendas and minutes will be prepared and shared by the chairperson of the meeting and shall be made available to all consortium members on the Google Drive project repository.



Each participant to a meeting should contribute to the meeting preparation by providing in advance to the meeting (when requested/relevant):

- Contributions to the agenda.
- Preparation of presentations.
- Working documents: normally the main subjects discussed during a meeting will be documented by discussion papers or presentations. As far as possible, these means should be distributed in advance and not during the meeting itself, since otherwise the participants will be unable to prepare for the meeting.
- Feedback on the minutes in case of disagreement.
- Execution of actions and respect of decisions.

3.3.3 Meeting agenda

Each meeting must have an agenda. The draft agenda should be distributed in advance, to inform participants about the topics to be discussed and to give them the opportunity to suggest changes to the final agenda, which must then be re-circulated.

As mentioned in the CA, the chairperson shall prepare and send a written agenda no later than 7 calendar days preceding the meeting, or 3 calendar days before an extraordinary meeting.

Each agenda should contain some standard subjects with the following structure:

1. Type of meeting
2. List of participants
3. Place
4. Date
5. Objectives of the meeting
6. Actions

During a meeting the agenda can be modified by adding items if necessary, or by removing items for time management.

A dedicated agenda template has been created and it is available in the project's shared folder: SYNERGIES (shared)\Meetings\Agenda Template.docx.

3.3.4 Minutes of the meeting

Particular attention must be given to the follow-ups of the meeting; send the minutes quickly, check commitment on decisions and actions with absent partners, ensure that decisions are respected, and actions executed.

The chairperson oversees the minutes. They can appoint a person to produce written minutes, which shall be the formal record of what was discussed during the meeting. The minutes shall be sent to all project members (preferably within 10 calendar days of the meeting). The minutes shall be considered as accepted if no one sends an objection (within 15 calendar days from receiving them).

The minutes will therefore constitute a sort of "pocket handbook" with all the data that each of the participants will always have to keep an eye on. The minutes will reflect major issues that have been discussed. All minutes of periodic meetings will have the same structure. Minutes should contain the following information:

- Date
- Location
- Author



- Participants
- Objective of the meeting (brief)
- Actual agenda
- Summary of discussion (if relevant)
- Open issues
- Action
- Place and date of the next meeting (if applicable)

Further details about the minutes can be found in the Consortium Agreement.

A dedicated template for the Minutes has been prepared and it is available in the project shared folder: SYNERGIES (shared)\Meetings\MoM Template.docx.

3.4 Decision procedures

The general principle will be to try to achieve decisions by informal means and consensus, using formal procedures such as voting only when essential. All decisions that can have an impact on project progress (whether reached formally or not) will be documented for clarity and common understanding within the Consortium.

The SYNERGIES Consortium recognises that the resolution of problems and conflicts must be handled systematically. Establishing a good working relationship and fruitful collaborations among project team members will be a pre-requisite for the quick resolution of problems and issues.

Conflicts will have to be resolved at the lowest possible level with the parties involved; those that cannot be solved will be taken by the PC through a negotiation process focused on optimising outcomes and maximising the benefits of all parties involved. Additionally, specific decisions and corresponding voting procedures are defined in the Consortium Agreement.

3.5 Cooperative working environment

SYNERGIES uses Google Drive as a collaborative platform procured and administered by DBL. Google Drive contains functionalities for sharing files and collaborative authoring of documents, with file versioning. Using Google Drive enables secure storage for project assets during the entire project. By reducing dependency on email for communication, active use of Google Drive will ensure that project history is accessible to any future project members, whenever they may be introduced to the project. The use of Google Drive will be managed at WP level.

A default repository structure has been already created for SYNERGIES, based mainly around the WP structure of the project as defined by the proposal (see the figure below).

Name	Date modified	Type
Actions	20/12/2023 15:18	File folder
Deliverables	20/12/2023 11:10	File folder
Mailing Lists	10/01/2024 10:36	File folder
Meetings	04/01/2024 16:55	File folder
WP1 Steering, Evaluation and Demonstration	10/01/2024 10:22	File folder
WP2 Empowering Disaster Management Act...	20/12/2023 11:11	File folder
WP3 Innovative Channels and Communicati...	20/12/2023 11:11	File folder
WP4 Management of Spontaneous Volunteers	20/12/2023 11:11	File folder
WP5 Impact Management	20/12/2023 11:12	File folder
WP6 Ethics and Legal Issues	20/12/2023 11:12	File folder

Figure 3: Google Drive project repository structure



- If you do not use the mailing list, address information ONLY to involved parties in communication: do not systematically put everyone in copy.

For all email communications, it is recommended to use explicit subject title (e.g., SYNERGIES – WPn – Short description of the contents).

Another mean of communication can be teleconferencing, a powerful tool for organising short meetings. DBL offers Google Meet and WebEx as teleconferencing tools.

3.7 Reporting

The submission of periodic reports is covered by the Grant Agreement Article 21. The action is divided into the following Reporting Periods (RP):

- RP1: from month 1 to month 18.
- RP2: from month 19 to month 36.

The coordinator must submit a periodic report within 60 days following the end of each reporting period.

Each beneficiary must submit to the coordinator in good time the financial statements and if required, Certificates on the Financial Statements (CFS) and their contribution to the technical reports.

Each WPL should submit a WP Report to the PC, who assembles the parts and elaborates the Technical Report.

The PC must submit to the EC the technical and financial reports, including when needed the requests for payment and must be drawn up using the forms and templates provided by the EC.

An internal check is foreseen at M12 and at M28, figures concerning effort and budget spent will be collected by the coordinator from all partners based on a template developed specifically for HE projects. This template consists of an excel file composed by a sheet per each partner and contains the following information to be filled in in the blue column:

e.g Deep Blue					
Effort x WP @ M12					
	Tot Planned da GA	Tot Planned @ M12	Actual	Delta in %	Explain deviations of more than 20%
50%	PM		PM	%	%
WP1	14	7,0	4	57%	43%
WP2	12	6,0	8	133%	-33%
WP3	8	4,0	8	200%	-100%
WP4	10,5	5,3	7	133%	-33%
WP5	1	0,5	1	200%	-100%
WP6	10,5	5,3	6	114%	-14%
WP7	19	9,5	11	116%	-16%
WP8	20	10,0	12	120%	-20%
WP9	5	2,5	3	120%	-20%
TOT	100,0	50,0	60,0		
Personnel Costs x WP @ M12					
	Tot Planned	Tot Planned @ M12	Actual	Delta in %	Explain deviations of more than 20%
50%	PC		PC	%	%
	€ 607.500,00	€ 303.750,00	€ 342.444,59	113%	-13%
Monthly Salary as x Budget	€ 6.075,00				
Actual Monthly Salary	€ 5.707,41	94%	Please explain deviations of more than 20%		
Other Direct Costs @ M12					
	Tot Planned	Tot Planned @ M12	Actual	Delta in %	Explain deviations of more than 20%
50%	ODC		ODC	%	%
Travel & Subsistence	€ 35.000,00	€ 17.500,00	€ 41.461,25	237%	-137%
Other Goods, Works & Service	€ 37.000,00	€ 18.500,00	€ 26.125,91	141%	-41%



This methodology, tested over the years on Horizon 2020 projects, ensures the proper financial management of the project and enables the coordinator to be aware of any deviation and changes that might occur during the project lifetime.

Moreover, on occasion of the KoM detailed information was given to the participants about the reporting methodology and the eligibility of costs with the recommendation to share this with the administrative staff of each organization. The presentation can be found in this folder: SYNERGIES (shared)\Meetings\11-13.12.23_KoM\KoM Presentations\Day 3\SYNERGIES_Admin.pptx.

3.8 Risks management

The following main critical risks related to the implementation have been identified and are listed with the relevant mitigation measures in Table 7.

Table 7: List of critical risks

n.	Description	WP n.	Proposed mitigation measures
1	The project is unable to recruit and engage sufficient participation in Advisory Board workshops, meetings, webinar etc. or in the Local Support Team helping in the Preparedness Cases. Likelihood: Low; Severity: High	WP3, WP1, WP5, WP2, WP4	The project has already secured an adequate number of participants who confirmed their interest with a commitment letter. For those participants the project will reimburse travel costs to facilitate participation. More accessible meeting such as webinars and teleconferences will be used when possible. In some cases, the need for a special support, not foreseen in advance, could emerge in the Preparedness Cases. In those cases, the extensive network of local partners will support the identification of the needed figures.
2	WPs need more time than envisaged and deliverables are delayed with an impact on other WP or Deliverables Likelihood: Medium; Severity: Medium	WP3, WP1, WP6, WP7, WP5, WP2, WP4	Frequent meetings (online and face to face) and close collaboration between WP leaders will allow an early detection for potential delays. Mitigation measures can be support from other partners, or eventually the adaptation of the work plan or deliverables.
3	Insufficient involvement of practitioners and citizens in field validation during the Preparedness Cases Likelihood: Medium; Severity: Medium	WP3, WP1, WP2, WP4	The main actors of the Preparedness Cases have already been identified and involved as partner of the Consortium or of the Local Support Teams. These actors include citizen representatives and practitioners. In case of needs there will be a timely information and involvement of practitioners and citizen representatives using the extensive network of the local partners.
4	The size of the Consortium and the limited experience of some of the partners may hinder or	WP3, WP1, WP6,	The project leader was responsible for coordinating international collaborative projects of the same size several times in the past. The standard set of management tool



	delay the activity of the project Likelihood: Medium; Severity: Medium.	WP7, WP5, WP2, WP4	will support his role. For each Preparedness Case (that could see the presence of less experienced partners) the Consortium has involved a well experienced partner (DBL for Malta, VU for Rotterdam, SINTEF for Reunion).
5	Partners are not delivering, over-spending, go bankrupt or must withdraw from the project. Likelihood: Low; Severity: Medium.	WP3, WP1, WP6, WP7, WP5, WP2, WP4	Progress and resource spending are monitored constantly by the project coordinator with management support tools (measure of earned value vs effort). In consultation with the Commission, the project will consider replacement of partners. The extensive network of the partners will facilitate identification of replacements
6	Low quality of Deliverables Likelihood: Low; Severity: High	WP3, WP1, WP6	Establish good QA procedures in the Project Handbook released early in the project (M3).

Risks in the project will be managed through the use of a “Risk register” available in the WP7 folder of the project’s Google Drive.

Risks can arise at any level in the project, so it is responsibility of WP leaders as well as project members to raise these risks to the appropriate project level (see below) as early as possible. Following the assessment of the risk a mitigation action should be identified and if necessary, an action taken. Risks and agreed actions will have an owner who will be responsible for the follow-up of the risk and implementation of the mitigating action.

Responsibilities:

- The project coordinator sets up the initial risk register using information from the Description of Action (DoA).
- It is the responsibility of the PC to manage this register.
- The WP leaders are responsible for the control and maintenance of the register for their specific WPs.
- PC and WP leaders are responsible for the risk assessment and the identification of the related mitigation measures.

3.9 Ethics and data management

Procedures for data management will be developed in WP7 in the Data Management Plan (due in M6) in collaboration with WP6 “Ethics and Legal issues” outlining how research data and meta-data will be collected, processed, stored, protected and exploited within the project. Within the project a strong attention will be given to the compliance of all solutions produced and activities performed to ethics, privacy and legal requirements and regulations.

In this regard, in the context of WP6 an independent Ethics Advisor will be appointed to carry out several ethics tasks and monitor the ethics issues throughout the entire duration of the project. Additionally, an internal Ethics Advisory Board will be established within the project to monitor and mitigate any ethics related issues that may arise during the project. More detailed information will be provided in D6.1 “Ethics Guidelines” (due in M6).



4. Deliverable review process

4.1 Overview of review process and internal deadlines

An overview of the review process and internal deadlines defined for SYNERGIES is provided in Figure 5.

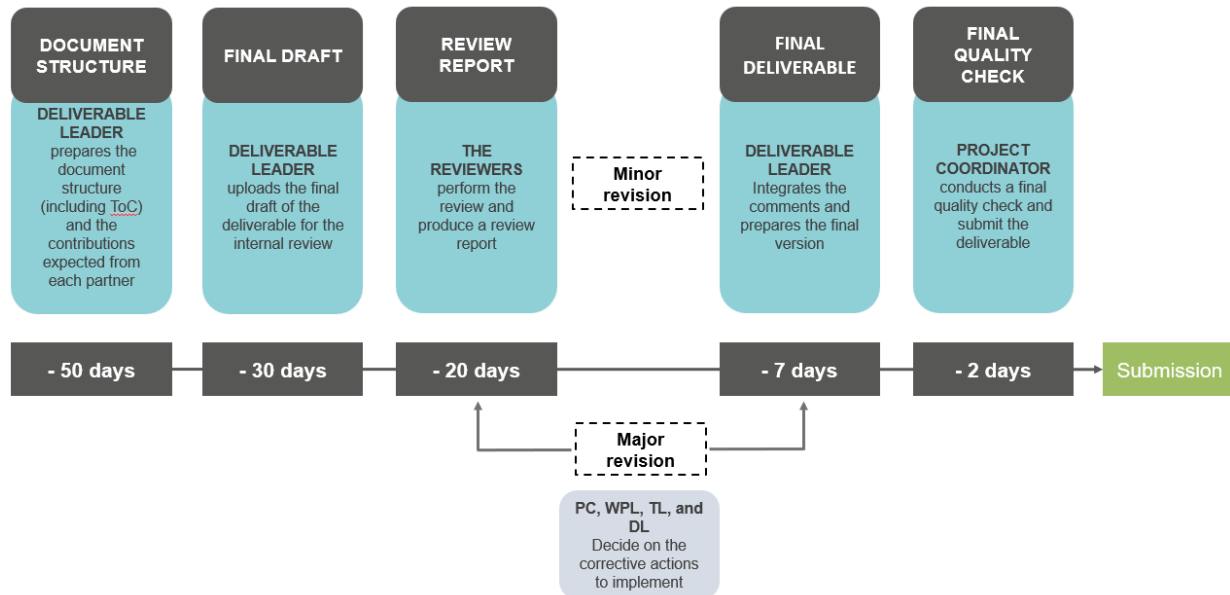


Figure 5: SYNERGIES review process

The review process steps can be synthesised as follows:

- The **deliverable leader** defines the **document structure** (including ToC) and the contributions expected from each partner in a preliminary document (**50 days-before-deadline**) and proposes a timetable for the meetings s/he may consider necessary for the development of the deliverable. The document structure and the contributions expected should be shared and informally reviewed by the deliverable contributors. In order to signal the start of work on the deliverable, the deliverable leader must inform the PC. At least 50 days before the deadline the reviewers for the deliverable should also be notified/reminded of the dates they will receive the deliverable for review and when their feedback is needed.
- The **deliverable leader** uploads the final **draft of the deliverable for the internal review** at least one month (**30 days**) **before the due date** and sends a notification to the reviewers that the deliverable is ready for the review. In addition, the deliverable leader should always share the review report with the reviewers (see section 4.2.2).
- The **reviewers have normally seven days** (or maximum until 20 days before due date) to **perform the review and produce a review report**. The Work Package leader can optionally provide comments. Usually, the WPL will have been involved in the production of the deliverable and provided comments directly to the deliverable leader, since the WPL is responsible for the quality of the results and deliverables of its WP.

It is strongly recommended to involve the reviewers at an earlier stage, so that they are familiar with the task and the expected deliverable prior to the review. This can be at the stage of an "extended Table of Content (ToC)", i.e., the ToC with brief information of the content and assignment of contributing partners to each chapter/section.

- The review report will distinguish between the need for minor versus major revision. In case of minor revision, The DL prepares and submit the final deliverable to the PC within 13 days or minimum seven days before the due date. In case of major revision, corrective actions are needed in which the PC decides on necessary measures in close cooperation with the WPL, TL and DL. The DL starts immediately working on the comments requiring major revision, with the same deadlines as for minor revision.
- The deliverable leader integrates the comments and feedback received by the reviewers and prepares the final version of the document (**7 days before the due date**).
- The PC conducts a final quality check and submit the deliverable to the EC within the due date.

4.2 Details about the review process

4.2.1 Purpose of the review

The main purposes of the review process are to:

- Improve overall quality of the deliverables.
- Make sure that the output produced is useful, relevant and usable.
- Minimise the risk that deliverables will be rejected at EC project reviews.
- Achieve "knowledge transfer" within the project. By involving people in the review process who were not involved in the production of a deliverable, they can learn (with relatively little effort) about the work of other WPs, and perhaps influence the work.

4.2.2 Review report

A review report will be used to support the review process. When conducting the review, the assigned peer reviewers should fill in the review report template reporting their feedback on the overall quality of the document including the following aspects:

- Overall structure of the document
- Readability
- Technical accuracy

Each peer reviewer assigned to a deliverable will use the review report to conduct the review as described in section 4.1. The review report is available on the Google Drive shared repository under the folder "Review process" and in Annex 1.

4.2.3 Selection of reviewers

Each deliverable will have two assigned peer reviewers.

The complete overview of the reviewers assigned to the deliverables is provided in the reviewer plan uploaded under the "Review process" folder on Google Drive.

The selection was based on the following criteria:



- Reviewer not from partner that is deeply involved in the corresponding task/activity (if possible)
- Reviewer (preferably) part of task which might use the reviewed deliverable as input.

If changes are needed to the plan shortly before the review, then reviewers are selected by the PC and WPL in cooperation. It should be emphasised that all partners are expected to participate as reviewers.

The reviewer plan is a living document that will be kept updated by the PC throughout the entire duration of the project.

4.3 Documents production guidelines

All deliverables will be written with contributions from several partners. In order to minimise the effort for handling such documents, it is hence important to agree on standards for formats and tools to be used in document editing and exchange following an agreed delivery process in order to assure their consistency and their quality and minimise the risk that deliverables will be rejected by REA.

For the deliverables due in M3 (D5.1 and D7.2) a fast-track process will be followed to speed up the preparation of the deliverables and submit them on time.

Deliverables production and quality control is a key activity in the project. The deliverables are defined in the DoA and constitute the primary KPIs - Key Performance Indicators.

4.3.1 How to review the documents in Google Drive

It is strongly recommended that reviewers avoid using Google Docs while reviewing the deliverable, as it may cause issues with table and image formatting as well as page numbering.

During the review process, reviewers should download the word document, rename it, and upload it to the designated folder on Google Drive (see section 4.3.3).

4.3.2 General documentation standards, file naming, classification and version control

A standardised word template for deliverables is available in the Google Drive under WP5 folder: SYNERGIES (shared)\WP5 Impact Management\T5.1\Visuals & Templates\02. Templates".

The naming convention for deliverables is the following:

SYNERGIES_Dx.y_shortname_V0.X._dd/mm/yy (e.g., SYNERGIES_D5.1_
Communication and Dissemination
Plan V1_v0.3_30012024)

Where:

- **Dx.y** is the deliverable number, as reported in DoA, where x is the work package number; and y is a number for each deliverable. The resulting identifier must be one of that listed in List of Deliverables of the proposal.
- **Short name** is name of the deliverable as reported in the DoA
- The version numbering **0.x** is used for draft versions, whereas v1.0 indicates a final version. For the final version, the initials are removed, e.g.: SYNERGIES_D5.1_XX_v0.3_30012024
- **dd/mm/yy** indicates the date of the release of the different version of the document.

The version number has to be also visible on the front page.

Status is the status of the document, that can be a) draft or b) final.



All relevant documents will include a document history showing the evolution of the document. The authors of a document and the internal approval process will be included in each document.

4.3.3 Document Storage

All the project’s documents will be managed with Google Drive under the folder “Review process”. For each deliverable (e.g., D1.1) belonging to a specific task and work package (e.g., WP1) there are three sub-folders one for each step of the review process: "1-Draft for review", "2-Review report" and "3-Final deliverable".

The folders in Google Drive used during the review process are illustrated in Figure 1.

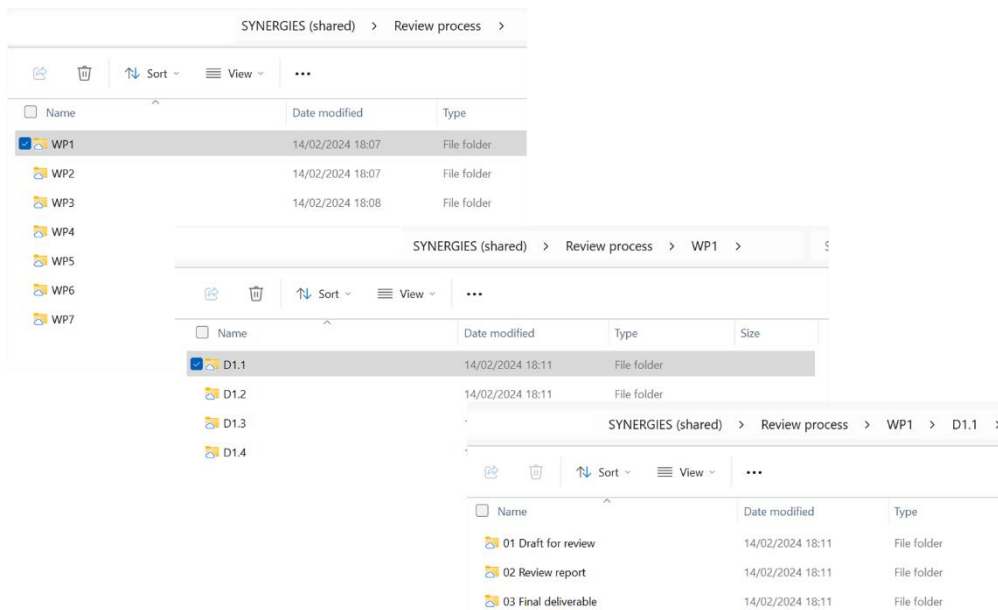


Figure 6: Review process folders

As mentioned in section 4.1 and as shown in the figure below:

- The deliverable leader prepares a final draft for internal review one month (30 days) before the due date, uploads the draft in the "1-Draft for review" folder and notifies the pre-selected reviewers.
- Peer reviewers upload the review report in the "2-Review report" folder.
- The deliverable leader uploads the final version in the “3-Final deliverable” folder and notifies the PC.



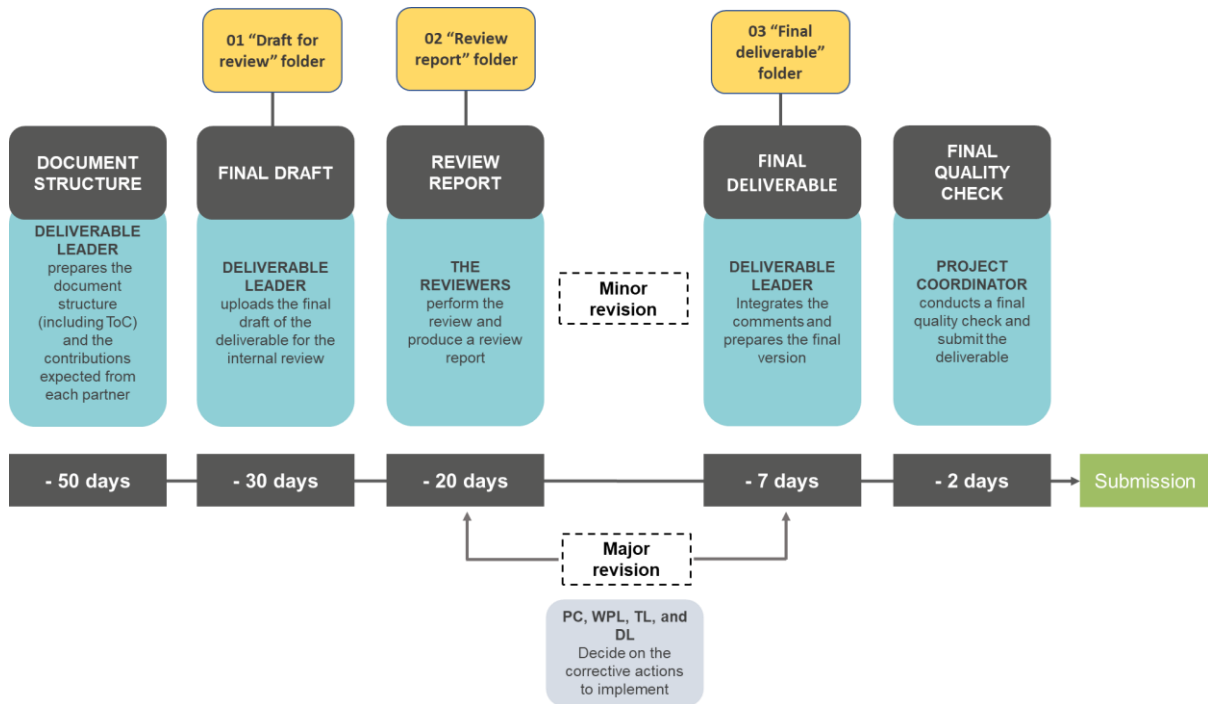


Figure 7: mapping of the folders with the review process

5. Conclusions

The project handbook serves as a set of guidelines for the partners to ensure optimal collaboration, efficiency and high-quality work, and compliance and offers the SYNERGIES partners an outline of the quality assurance objectives and guidelines for the internal review process of deliverables including internal deadlines, the review report, assigned roles and responsibilities, reviewers' selection and document storage. Finally, the deliverable provides recommendations on reviewing deliverables. The project handbook will be a living document and it will be updated during the course of the project if necessary.



ANNEX I



SYNERGIES Internal Review Report

Read D7.2 Project handbook for information about the review process

Fields to be filled in by:	Editor/TL	Reviewer
----------------------------	-----------	----------

General information		
Deliverable number	Deliverable title	
Reviewer number	Reviewer [name, company]	Date of review
		dd/mm/yyyy

The reviewer can also provide detailed comments in the body of the deliverable itself. For minor corrections use always the track changes.

Editor response in the tables below is only mandatory when the overall reviewer assessment result is approved if updated (and reviewer needs to approve updates) or it is rejected, requiring major revision and corrective actions by PC/WPL.

Formal Questions (3 questions)
<p>1. Was the deliverable template used correctly for the project? Would you agree that the tables and figures used within the deliverable, are well formatted i.e., size and text formatted appropriately and easily readable?</p> <p><i>Reviewer comments:</i></p>
<p><i>Editor response:</i></p>
<p>2. Would you agree that the executive summary for the deliverable is well constructed and includes all relevant information?</p> <p><i>Reviewer comments:</i></p>
<p><i>Editor response:</i></p>
<p>3. Is there a concluding part at the end, such as "Conclusions," "Future work," or something similar?</p> <p><i>Reviewer comments:</i></p>
<p><i>Editor response:</i></p>

Content based questions (5 questions)	
4. Is the deliverable's objective clearly stated? Is it in line with the description of the task or deliverable listed in the DoA?	
<i>Reviewer comments:</i>	
<i>Editor response:</i>	
5. Does the deliverable clearly describe who are its expected readers?	
<i>Reviewer comments:</i>	
<i>Editor response:</i>	
6. Is there anything important missing within the deliverable? If yes, could you please specify for the same?	
<i>Reviewer comments:</i>	
<i>Editor response:</i>	
7. Is this deliverable clearly structured? If not, could you please provide any suggestions to improve the structure?	
<i>Reviewer comments:</i>	
<i>Editor response:</i>	
8. Are you overall satisfied with the quality of the deliverable. If not, could you please specify other remarks or suggestions to improve the document?	
<i>Reviewer comments:</i>	
<i>Editor response:</i>	

Overall reviewer assessment (mark with "X" in one row)	
1. Approved, no changes required	
2. Approved, if updated – no new reviewer assessment needed	
3. Approved, if updated – reviewer needs to approve updates	
4. Rejected, major revision needed (triggering corrective actions by PC/ WPL)	

In the case of 3. and 4. a new review template should be filled in by the reviewers.