DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION
OF ASIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

R 1.2.1
RISK MITIGATION PLAN

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RESULT OVERVIEW

Title:	RISK MITIGATION PLAN
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Abstract:	In the Erasmus+ project DIGITAsia, the risk management is performed as part of Work package 1– Management of project activities and it is under the responsibility of Faculty of Organization and Informatics, University of Zagreb. The Project Coordinator (FOI) will ensure the communication of risks to the project teams and develop project staff awareness of risk management. Risks and risk strategy plans along all types of project risks will be continuously reported in the Periodic Activity Reports.
Key words:	risks, mitigation action, risk map, impact

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1. Introduction

Risk is defined as the possibility of the occurrence of an event associated with a damaging impact on the project. The risk is measured by two factors: (i)the probability of the event to occur, and (ii) the intensity of the damage to the project in case the event actually occurs.
The process of risk management starts at the planning stage and follows the project throughout its lifecycle. Three tasks are included in the planning process: the identification, the assessment and the response planning. Risk control is a process that follows the project until its completion. The project coordinator, together with work package leaders and Risk and Quality Manager, is responsible to monitor and manage the risk management.
In the Erasmus+ project DIGITAsia, the risk management is performed as part of Work package 1– Management of project activities and it is under the responsibility of Faculty of Organization and Informatics, University of Zagreb.

The Project Coordinator (FOI) will ensure the communication of risks to the project teams and develop project staff awareness of risk management. Risks and risk strategy plans along all types of project risks will be continuously reported in the Periodic Activity Reports.

1.1 Consortium Risk Management

The consortium has considered consortium related risks that deal with (1) underestimation of some tasks, (2) low productivity and (3) low quality of work.
These risks are already minimized during the selection stage of partners.
Most of them have been selected following specific criteria:

- They are leaders in their areas of expertise;
- They are selected after previous successful cooperation, with coordinator or with other trusted members of the consortium;
- They all have evidence of a history of successful completion of research projects.

However, these risks will be further minimized and managed by using established methodologies for hardware/software cost estimation, continuous project planning, monitoring and control (e.g. PMI (2021) PMBOK Project Management Body of Knowledge 7th ed., PMI). Such methodologies are standard practice in the professional work of the consortium partners.
The risk management methodology recommends ongoing control (Work package 1) and reports to monitor new risks and to update the partners regarding the status of identified risks.

1.2 Risk Identification

This section presents key risks identified in the Erasmus+ DIGITASIA project, regarding project work packages. All identified risks within work packages are revised and some new risks (much more important) are identified, so the version of the project risk plan is updated/ innovated.
The Table 1 displays the DIGITASIA project risk events, derived from the analysis of the project plan:

Table 1. Key risk events

NO	RISK EVENT	DETAILS
1	Project budget transfer	Project budget shall be transferred to partners on-time, otherwise, the realization of project activities will be difficult.

2	Insufficient infrastructure at DIGITAsia partners	Insufficient infrastructure within project management offices at partner institutions
3	Organizational changes in DIGITAsia institutions	Organizational changes in partner institutions might change the willingness to take part in this project, the priority of the project in the institution portfolio, and the people involved in the project.
4	Poor cooperation between the EU and Asian Institutions	The interaction between the EU professionals and the academic, administrative staff and students in Asia is a cornerstone in this project. The different cultural background, priorities, and points of view might cause ineffective implementation of instructions.
5	Conflict between the different managers of the work packages	Managers of various tasks, with different interests and points of view, might be reluctant to exchange relevant information.
6	Erroneous managerial decisions.	Improper managerial decisions might have delayed impact on the project. A wrong decision taken by management at a certain point of the process might not be detected before creating accumulative serious damage. Thus, creating budget overruns and time delays.
7	Poor cooperation and information exchange between partners.	The project partners, EU and Asian are part of one network that should work together to achieve the project goals and objectives. A collaborating atmosphere should be applied throughout the project to enable deliveries on time and in budget.
8	Change in the partners' preferences for implementation	Changes in the partners' preferences, during the project lifecycle, might require alternative developments in the project scope. These might cause disagreements and slow down the implementation.

1.3 Risks identified by work packages

Table 2 List of identified risks and mitigation strategies

WP	RESULT NO	RESULT TITLE	RESPONSIBLE PARTNER	DESCRIPTION OF RISK	RISK LEVEL A-D *	EARLY WARNING INDICATORS	PREVENTIVE STEPS/MITIGATION STRATEGY
WP 1	R 1.1.1.	Project Management Plan (including horizontal principles and data management Plan)	FOI	Unclear responsibilities, Lack of understanding	C	/	Clear structure, clear task assignment
	R 1.1.2.	Project Reports	FOI	Accuracy and reliability Inadequate documentation Delayed reporting	A	/	Clear structure, clear task assignment

				Lack of reporting format Poor communication			
	R 1.2.1.	Risk mitigation plan	FOI	No significant risk	/	/	/
	R 1.2.2.	Risk mitigation report	FOI	No significant risk	/	/	/
	R 1.3.1	Quality assurance plan	MNU	Unclear responsibilities, Lack of understanding	C	/	Clear structure, clear task assignment
	R 1.3.2.	Quality assurance reports	MNU	Unclear responsibilities, Lack of understanding	C	/	Clear structure, clear task assignment
	R 1.4.	Project Meetings Reports	FOI	Lack of participation, Uncertainty about goals, bad communication, technical problems during the online-meetings, travel-related risks	C	/	Clear structure, clear task assignment, follow-up communication, ensuring technical support
WP 2	R 2.1.	Training plan for specific target groups	SLTC	Missing data from partners,	/	/	Clear structure, clear task assignment, early recruitment process
	R 2.2.	Training modules	UoP	Missing data from partners,	/	/	Clear structure, clear task assignment, early recruitment process
	R 2.3.	Training report	SLTC	Not enough participants (according to the number of trainees planned)	/	Result 2.22 delayed	Clear structure, clear task assignment, sound and regular communication and dissemination activities
WP 3	R 3.1.	Piloting methodology and plan	IUM	Unclear responsibilities, Lack of understanding among partners, missing data from partners, Lack of existing materials for new study programme or extraordinary efforts for creation, long and	C	/	Clear structure, clear task assignment, sound and regular communication, plan and communicate study accreditation

				complicated accreditation procedures			
	R 3.2.	Piloting guide for educators	VCM	Unclear responsibilities, Lack of understanding among partners, missing data from partners, Lack of existing materials for new study programme or extraordinary efforts for creation, long and complicated accreditation procedures	C	Result 3.1, delayed	Clear structure, clear task assignment, sound and regular communication, plan and communicate study accreditation
	R 3.3.	Pre-piloting course design and implementation catalogue	VCM	Unclear responsibilities, Lack of understanding among partners, missing data from partners, Lack of existing materials for new study programme or extraordinary efforts for creation, long and complicated accreditation procedures	C	Results 3.1, 3.2, delayed	Clear structure, clear task assignment, sound and regular communication, plan and communicate study accreditation
	R 3.4.	Onboarding workshops report	VCM	Unclear responsibilities, Lack of understanding among partners, missing data from partners, Lack of existing materials for new study programme or extraordinary efforts for creation, long and complicated accreditation procedures	C	Results 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 delayed	Clear structure, clear task assignment, sound and regular communication, plan and communicate study accreditation
WP 4	R 4.1.	Student profiles report	IUM	Clear structure, clear task assignment, lack of participation	/	/	Clear structure, clear task assignment, clear

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							dissemination of the event
	R 4.2.	Piloting report	MNU	Clear structure, clear task assignment, lack of participation		Results WP2 and WP3 delayed	Clear structure, clear task assignment, clear dissemination of the event
	R 4.3.	Post-piloting course design and implementation catalogue	MNU				
WP 5	R 5.1.	Framework for the Digital Teaching Transformation, focusing on academic leaders, educators and support staff	UOC	Unclear responsibilities, Lack of understanding among partners, missing data from partners, late duty, deficient information	C		Clear structure, clear task assignment, sound and regular communication
	R 5.2.	Toolkit and implementation Guide	UOC	Unclear responsibilities, Lack of understanding among partners, missing data from partners, late duty, deficient information	C		Clear structure, clear task assignment, sound and regular communication
WP 6	R 6.1.1.	Dissemination and Communication Plan	UTM	Unclear responsibilities, Lack of understanding	C	/	Clear structure, awareness of responsibilities among project partners
	R 6.1.2.	Dissemination Reports (12 -18 months)	UTM	Clear structure, clear task assignment	C	/	Clear structure, clear task assignment
	R 6.2.1.	Project Impact Framework	FOI	Clear structure, clear task assignment	C	/	Clear structure, clear task assignment
	R 6.2.2.	Project Impact report	FOI	Clear structure, clear task assignment	C	/	Clear structure, clear task assignment
	R 6.3.1.	Sustainability Plan (Draft and Final version)	UKM	Clear structure, clear task assignment	C	/	Clear structure, clear task assignment

RISK LEVEL *	CRITERIA	ACTION REQUIRED
A	Unacceptable under existing circumstances requires immediate action	Risk mitigation mandatory
B	Manageable under risk control & mitigation	Risk mitigation required

C	Acceptable after review of the operation. Requires continued tracking and recorded action plans	Risk mitigation is optional
D	Acceptable with continued data collection and trending for continuous improvement	No further risk mitigation required

2 Risk Assessment

2.1 Tools to Assess Risks

Risk assessment is normally performed by the use of tools such as: team brainstorming, distribution of questionnaires, analysis of historical data and professional consulting services. In the current project we used several tools for the preliminary assessment phase.
Brainstorming – during the kick-off meeting all project partners will estimate the project risk events in brainstorming session. Results will be entered into this document.
Historical data – The project management team evaluated and analysed historical data and information from previous projects taken place at DIGITAsia institutions.

2.2 Risk Assessment Method

Qualitative risk method is applied in order to present the Risk Index (RI) values that can be calculated and arranged in a prioritized list.
The value of the risk index is calculated by multiplying the probability (P) value by the Impact (I) value:
Risk Index = Probability * Impact

2.2.1 Probability (P)

The possibility of an event occurrence is defined by an ordinal scale method, ranging from very low (1) to very high (5).

Table 3. Estimate of Risk Event Probability

VALUE	PROBABILITY	DETAILS
1	Very Low	The event may occur, but never actually occurred.
2	Low	The event actually occurred in the past, but it never happened in an Erasmus+ project.
3	Medium	The event seldom occurs in Erasmus+ projects.
4	High	The event occurs frequently and actually happened several times in similar projects.
5	Very High	Very common event that actually happened in most projects.

2.2.2 Impact (I)

The impact value is based on three parameters: performance, cost and time. It is defined by an ordinal scale method, ranging from very light (1) to extreme (5).

Table 4. Estimate of Risk Event Impact Table

VALUE	IMPACT	DETAILS
1	Very Light	The event will have no direct impact.
2	Light	The event might cause minor changes in the project plan.
3	Moderate	The event will probably cause changes in the project plan that will require some changes in the project schedule and budget plans.
4	Severe	The event will cause substantial changes in the project scope and ability to deliver the planned results. It will require major changes in the project schedule and budget plans.
5	Extreme	The event will cause fatal damage to the project and might cause its termination ahead of time.

Performance is of extreme importance in the Erasmus+ DIGITASIA project, since it indicates the level of compatibility between the project goals and specific objectives as defined in the formal application and the actual results.
Cost is important in this project because the budget allocated for the project represents a meaningful investment of the EU aimed to promote higher education in Asia. In the current project there is no option for budget overruns, thus the tasks must be performed in accordance with the budget.
Time is defined as a solid framework, which requires that all the project activities will be executed during the 36 months between November 2024 and October 2027.

3 Risk Assessment Evaluation

The method of evaluation is based on three steps: (i)an evaluation of the probability of the event to occur, (ii) an assessment of the impact, and (iii) an arithmetical calculation of the risk index values. The following table presents the assessment values for the risk events.

Table 5. Probability & Impact Assessment table

No	Risk Event	Probability	Impact	Risk Index
1	Project budget transfer	Medium (3)	Moderate (3)	3 * 3 = 9
2	Insufficient infrastructure at DIGITAsia partners	Medium (3)	Moderate (3)	3 * 3 = 9
3	Organizational changes in DIGITAsia institutions	High (4)	Moderate (3)	4 * 3 = 12
4	Poor cooperation between the EU Institutions and partner institutions	Low (2)	Light (2)	2* 2 = 4
5	Conflict between the different Managers of the work packages	Low (2)	Light (2)	2* 2 = 4
6	Erroneous managerial decisions.	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	2 * 3 = 6
7	Poor cooperation and information Exchange between partners.	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	2 * 3 = 6

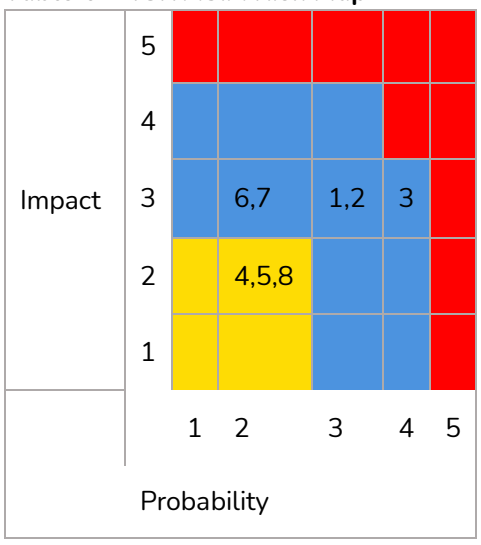
8	Change in the partners' preferences for implementation	Low (2)	Light (2)	2* 2 = 4

Table 5 is filled out at the Kick-off meeting by all project partners and calculated into average marks. In accordance with calculated risk index, the Table 6 is filled out with numeric values of risk index for each risk event.

3.1 Risk Map

The following risk map presents the values of the risk events. The X-axis presents the Probability and the Y-axis presents the Impact. The chart is divided into three areas, informed by experience and professional literature.
The first area (green) represents the low end of the response requirements, which includes low values of probability and impact. This area contains most of the risk events.
The second area (yellow) represents medium risks and is defined by average levels of probability and impact.
The third area (red) represents high-risk index, this area is the smallest and contains no events. Nevertheless, these events would be fatal for DIGITASIA.

Table 6: DIGITASIA Risk Map



3.2 Priority of Risk Events Responses

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

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

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

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

3.3 Risk Response

The risk management team prepares a plan to avoid significant project performance deficiencies due to risk occurrences in accordance with evaluated key risk events in Table 5. The team monitors each of the high-risk index events and the medium-risk index events. During internal and external controls special attention will be dedicated to impact of risks and their avoidance for all project activities, and is monitored via use of online project management tools.

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