



AGRO4AGRI

DELIVERABLE 1.1 PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLAN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AGRO4AGRI's details

Project name	FOSTERING THE ADVANCED USE OF AGROCHEMICALS FOR A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
Project acronym	AGRO4AGRI
Grant Agreement number	101130890
Duration and dates	48 months (1 May 2024 – 30 April 2028)
Call and topic	HORIZON-CL4-2023-RESILIENCE-01-34: Advanced (nano and bio-based) materials for Sustainable Agriculture
Granting authority	European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HADEA), under the powers delegated by the European Commission
Official project website	TBU (M6)

The AGRO4AGRI consortium

N°	NAME	ROLE	COUNTRY
1	AINIA (AINIA)	Coordinator	Spain
2	FUNDACION CENTRO TECNOLOGICO DE COMPONENTES (CTC)	Beneficiary	Spain
3	SYDDANSK UNIVERSITET (SDU)	Beneficiary	Denmark
4	DANMARKS TEKNISKE UNIVERSITET (DTU)	Beneficiary	Denmark
5	FUNDACION GRUPO CAJAMAR (FGC)	Beneficiary	Spain
6	PROEFCENTRUM HOOGSTRATEN (PCH)	Beneficiary	Belgium
7	F. INICIATIVAS, CONSULTADORA E GESTAO, UNIPessoal, LDA (FIG)	Beneficiary	Portugal
7.1	F. INICIATIVAS ESPANA I MAS D MAS I SLU (FI GROUP)	Affiliated Entity	Spain
8	SIPCAM OXON SPA (SIPCAM)	Beneficiary	Italy
9	INSTITUT FUR HÖHERE STUDIEN - INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES (IHS)	Beneficiary	Austria
10	SYSPRO AUTOMATION SL (SYSPRO)	Beneficiary	Spain

N°	NAME	ROLE	COUNTRY
11	MIRAT FERTILIZANTES SL (MIRAT)	Beneficiary	Spain
12	OPTIMAT LIMITED (OPTIMAT)	Associated partner	United Kingdom

Project's summary

Agrochemicals are chemical products used in agriculture such as fertilizers, plant-biostimulants or pesticides. The application of fertilizers in synergistic combination with biostimulants provides the nutrients required for enhancing the crop's yield, while pesticides are used to reduce the risk of loss from plant diseases and weeds in agricultural production. Today, the agricultural sector faces several challenges, namely the loss and leaching of fertilisers, the large amounts of pesticides used, the bioaccumulation and bioconcentration of them and the high dependency on water availability.

In this context, nano and biotechnology strategies have recently gained more interest in the agricultural sector compared to conventional agricultural techniques.

AGRO4AGRI seeks to provide ground-breaking and Safe and Sustainable by Design solutions for plant nutrition and protection consisting of nano and biobased controlled delivery fertilisers and plant biostimulants, and target-specific biopesticides based on RNAi technology, both for enhanced agrochemicals use efficiency. AGRO4AGRI involves R&D and validation stages, aiming to minimize in the long term the use of agrochemicals in agriculture by more than 50% to be aligned with the Farm to Fork Strategy, among other EU initiatives. Further project developments include the evaluation of safety, social and economic impacts, and activities to promote society and policymaker engagement to bring wider impacts and better fulfil EU targets and position Europe at the forefront of the agroindustry.

Document details

Deliverable type	Document, report
Deliverable n°	1.1
Deliverable title	Project Management Plan
Lead beneficiary	AINIA
Work package and task	WP1, Task 1.1
Document version	(To match the revision history below)
Contractual delivery date	31 August 2024 (M4)
Actual delivery date	28/08/2024
Dissemination Level	Public
Purpose	Provide a summary of the management structure and procedures

Document's abstract

The Project Management Plan provides a summary of the basic management rules and internal procedures agreed among all partners to ensure that AGRO4AGRI delivers the established outputs and results on time and with the expected quality level. Based on the framework established by the Grant and Consortium Agreements, the present deliverable aims to serve as a guideline for all partners for the correct and homogeneous implementation of the activities planned, the generation of the project outputs and the reporting of the work carried out and resources consumed to the financing body.

Document's revision history

The following table describes the main changes done in the document since it was created.

REVISION	DATE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR (PARTNER)
V.0.1	10/07/2024	First draft shared with all partners	Julia Ponce (AINIA)
V.0.2	31/07/2024	Second draft shared with all partners	Julia Ponce (AINIA)
V.0.3	07/08/2024	Third draft (formatting revision)	Sofia Oliveira (FIG)
V.1.0	28/08/2024	Final version to be submitted, incorporating feedback from the AGRO4AGRI consortium	Julia Ponce (AINIA) Carla Páez (AINIA)

Terminology and acronyms

TERM/ACRONYM	EXPLANATION
ASAR	Active substance adsorption ratio
BRL	Business Readiness Level
dsRNA	Double-stranded RNA
D&C	Dissemination and Communication
EC	European Commission
EEAB	External Expert Advisory Board
F&T	Funding and Tenders
FAIR	Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable
HDES	Hydrophobic Deep Eutectic Solvent

IC	Innovation Committee
IP	Intellectual Property
KER	Key Exploitable Results
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LCA	Life Cycle Assessment
MSN	Mesoporous Silica Nanoparticle
NC	Nanocellulose derivative
NCH	Nanocellulose hydrogel
NCL	Nanoclay
NF	Nanocellulose foam
NFC	Nanofibre of cellulose
NUE	Nitrogen Use Efficiency
ORE	Open Research Europe
PB	Plant Biostimulant
PC	Project Coordinator
PCT	Project Coordination Team
PO	Project Officer
PPP	Plant Protection Products
RNAi	RNA interference
SAP	Super Absorbing Polymer
SC	Steering Committee
SEIA	Social, economic and sustainability impact assessment
SO	Specific objective
SSH	Social Science and Humanities
SSbD	Safe and Sustainable by Design
STC	Scientific & Technical Committee
TRL	Technology Readiness Level

USP	Unique Selling Proposition
WP	Work Package

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INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

1.1. Introduction

AGRO4AGRI's management is based on several principles which are important for the internal organizational collaboration within the consortium:

- The parties of the consortium are collaborating to achieve a common objective, share experience and know-how, and develop results with complementary skills.
- Work must be organized and planned in a result-driven way. Common planning must hence be a reference for everybody and must always be up to date.
- The collaboration inside the project involves different levels of decision-makers in various domains (strategic, technical, financial, and administrative). The rules for such decision making need to be clear.
- The effectiveness of meetings is absolutely critical to the progress of the work. An inconclusive meeting can cause serious delays, risks and costs.

Procedures are defined to facilitate operations and management of the project. Their objectives are not to create management tasks with a heavy structure, but to give simple tools, allowing all activities to be managed properly.

1.2. Objectives

The main objectives of the project management are to set-up AGRO4AGRI's management structure, to prevent managerial and financial risks as soon as possible and to plan, organize and control activities so that the project is completed successfully in time and in the use of resources.

AGRO4AGRI's management structure is designed to reach the following objectives:

- Ensuring compliance with EC rules and contractual commitments.
- Measuring the objectives of the project within the agreed budget and timeframe.
- Coordinating the project partners and activities and ensuring effective communication.
- Carrying out the quality control of the work performed and deliverables.
- Identifying risks or conflicting situations and resolving them.
- Maintaining the required reporting activities towards the European Commission (EC).

1.3. Structure of the document

The Project Management Plan provides guidelines concerning:

- **Management structure:** Several bodies have been established to govern the different aspects of the project. The structure includes the Coordinator (PC), Steering Committee (SC), two Specialists Teams, and the External Expert Advisory Board (EEAB). In addition, information about the project decision making process is presented.
- **Communication:** Three different kinds of communication are distinguished: internal, external, and with the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HADEA). Details are included in this plan.
- **Document management:** During the lifetime of the project, many documents will be produced, and some simple rules should be followed to facilitate the management of this production. Responsibilities of documents are specified in this plan, as well as other general rules of formats and instructions on the level of confidentiality of the documents.
- **Risk management:** To identify potential risks, we will assess their potential impact, and develop strategies to mitigate or minimize them. This includes the different phases such as risk identification, risk assessment, risk response, and risk monitoring.

- **Change management:** To complete the project according to the established level of quality, some changes and adjustments might be necessary throughout the project life. The rules to proceed are included in this section.
- **Periodic reporting:** The HADEA will monitor the progress of the project through Periodic Reports (PR), deliverables, project reviews and meetings. Besides, consortium meetings will be carried out every six months to track technical progress and internal financial reports have been planned between official reports to assess and present all partners an update on resource consumption. The information provided will be used to detect eventual deviations by comparing actual and planned resources. A set of financial rules applicable to AGRO4AGRI will also be summarized. Good Practices regarding the keeping of records and supporting documents for the justification process are also included, as well as the EC Audit process.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The AGRO4AGRI project is underpinned by a management structure able to deal with the complexity of coordinating the work of the different actors involved in the project execution, as represented in Figure 1.

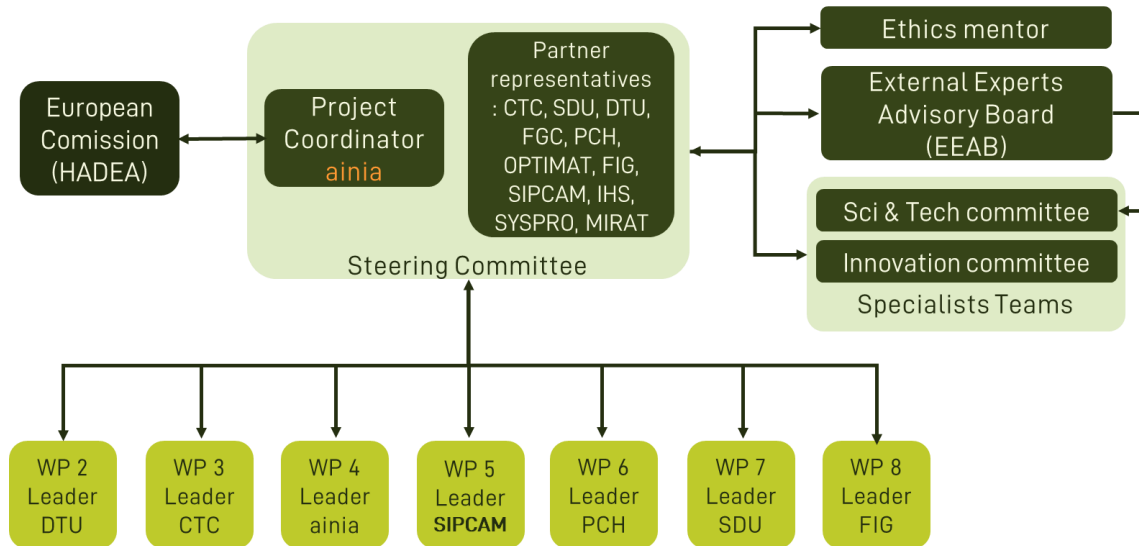


Figure 1. AGRO4AGRI’s management structure.

The **Project Coordinator (PC)** and the **Steering Committee (SC)** form the Management Team and both will act alongside each other for the administrative and technical management of the AGRO4AGRI project. They will count on the support of two external advisory bodies: the **External Expert Advisory Board (EEAB)** and the **Ethics mentor**, an individual tasked with guiding the consortium on their lab and field trials to avoid damaging non-targeted nematode species.

In addition, two specialist teams have been created to discuss separately the main issues related to scientific and technical developments and pilots (**Scientific & Technical Committee**) and the communication, dissemination, and exploitation of results (**Innovation Committee**).

Given the importance of this project to the consortium, key staff members within each partner organization will be involved in and committed to the AGRO4AGRI project. In the event of departure of any key member, as a contingency plan the consortium must be informed and updated to ensure their absence has the least possible impact on the project.

1.4. General assembly

The highest decision-making body in AGRO4AGRI project is the General Assembly, which consists of one representative from each party. The PC will chair all meetings of the General Assembly at least once every six months, with all partners convening to discuss the progress and important matters of the project.

Also, extraordinary meetings can be scheduled at any time, upon written request of any Member.

In these meetings, every member:

- Should be present or represented at any meeting.
- May appoint a substitute or a proxy to attend and vote.
- Shall participate in a cooperative manner.

The following decisions shall be taken by the General Assembly:

- Content, finances and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR):
 - proposals for changes to Annexes 1 (Description of Action) and 2 (Estimated budget for the action) of the Grant Agreement to be agreed by the Granting Authority
 - changes to the Consortium Plan
 - modifications or withdrawal of Background in Attachment 1 (Background Included) of the Consortium Agreement
 - additions to Attachment 3 (List of Third Parties for simplified transfer according to Section 8.3.2) of the Consortium Agreement
 - additions to Attachment 4 (Identified entities under the same control) of the Consortium Agreement
- Evolution of the consortium:
 - entry of a new Party to the Project and approval of the settlement on the conditions of the accession of such a new Party
 - withdrawal of a Party from the Project and the approval of the settlement on the conditions of the withdrawal
- proposal to the Granting Authority for a change of Coordinator
- proposal to the Granting Authority for suspension of all or part of the project
 - proposal to the Granting Authority for termination of the Project and the Consortium Agreement
- Breach, defaulting party status and litigation:
 - identification of a breach by a Party of its obligations under this Consortium Agreement or the Grant Agreement
 - declaration of a Party to be a Defaulting Party
 - remedies to be performed by a Defaulting Party
 - termination of a Defaulting Party's participation in the consortium and measures relating thereto
 - steps to be taken for litigation purposes and the coverage of litigation costs in case of joint claims of the parties of the consortium against a Party (Section 7.1.4 of Consortium Agreement)
- Appointments of:
 - SC Members
 - EEAB Members

1.5. Project Coordination Team (PCT)

Dr Julia Ponce González, EU Project Leader at AINIA, together with her team, will comprise the PCT, which is responsible for the project coordination, management and the project strategic monitoring. The main contact for the administrative, financial, and contractual management will be MSc Carla Páez Oliva.

In regards of the technical management of AGRO4AGRI, the SC consists of individuals proposed by consortium members. They will support the PC in technical management. Together, those two bodies are in charge of guaranteeing the correct development of the project and enabling the monitoring of the overall project progress, ensuring effective project management and fluent communication and achievement of project objectives.

The PCT is the focal point for all technical and administrative content of the project, and for ensuring that the guidelines are followed. The PCT's responsibilities will be the following:

- Scheduling, calling and chairing the General Assembly meetings.
- Managing the Grant Agreement.
- Ensuring that the deliverables and publications produced by the project meet the necessary requirements, with the support of the SC.
- Assessing progress reports, with the support of the SC and STC.
- Providing timely and efficient legal, contractual, financial and administrative support to the project.
- Handling the financial contribution of the Granting Authority and fulfilling the financial tasks described in Section 7.2 of the Consortium Agreement.
- Maintaining the interface with the Project Officer (PO) assigned by the EC.
- Ensuring global coordination among the partners with the aim of meeting the project schedule and objectives.
- Ensuring the preparation, production and distribution of all deliverables of the project, with the support of the SC.
- Constantly monitoring project progress and reporting potential problems, with the support of the SC.
- Monitoring compliance by the Parties with their obligations under this Consortium Agreement and the Grant Agreement.
- Keeping the address list of Members and other contact persons updated and available.

The PCT will be in charge of the following actions:

1. **To organize the Consortium meetings** with representatives from each partner.

In these meetings the WP leaders will be responsible for reporting the progress of each work package. They will centralize the tasks of:

- Technical Execution of the WP.
 - Compilation of relevant documentation.
 - Follow-up of deviations.
 - Direct communication with the management team for the follow-up of possible deviations.
 - Risk management control.
2. **To organize the Steering Committee meetings.** The SC will have bi-monthly meetings to implement appropriate follow-up of the project progress, cover the needs at each moment, and communicate with the leaders of each WP to undertake the necessary actions.
 - **To monitor and report the project progress.** The team will closely monitor project progress, track milestones, and identify any deviations from the plan. They will prepare regular status reports, highlighting key achievements, risks, and issues, and provide updates to project stakeholders.
 3. **To manage the official reporting periods and monitoring of 'gender' issues.** The PCT will propose the tasks and schedule for the successful completion of the periodic reporting requirements set by the EC.
 - **To manage risks.** The team will identify potential risks and develop strategies to mitigate them. They will conduct risk assessments, implement risk response plans, and monitor risk factors throughout the project lifecycle.
 - **To carry out financial control by performing regular interim financial reports.** All costs incurred by each beneficiary will be reported to the PCT to have real-time financial control.
 3. **To liaise with the EC** regarding any contractual issues. They will be responsible for informing the Project Officer (PO) of possible deviations or changes well in advance, the impact this will have on the project and possible mitigation measures: amendments, modifications, etc.
 - **To offer team support and solve conflicts** on issues that might have an impact on project objectives, resources or progress. The team will provide support to project team members, fostering collaboration, resolving conflicts, and promoting a positive team environment. They will facilitate teamwork and ensure that everyone has the necessary resources and information to fulfill their roles effectively.

- **To facilitate effective communication and coordination** among project stakeholders, team members, and other relevant parties. They will coordinate meetings, disseminate information, and ensure everyone is aligned with project goals and objectives.
- **To oversee documentation and data management:** The team will maintain project documentation, including plans, reports, meeting minutes, and other relevant records. They will also facilitate knowledge-sharing and capture lessons learned for future projects.

1.6. Steering Committee

The SC represents the executive body of the project and shall be responsible for the proper execution and implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly.

The SC is chaired by PC and shall consist of the PC and the leaders of the Work Packages appointed to it by the General Assembly. However, due to the relatively low number of consortium members, representatives from every partner are invited to join the SC meetings. The members of the SC are included in Table 1.

Table 1. Steering Committee composition.

AGRO4AGRI SC	Member	Lead beneficiary
Project Coordinator (CO) and WP1 Leader	Julia Ponce	AINIA
WP2 Leader	Steffen Foss Hansen	DTU
WP3 Leader	Dr. Angel Yedra	CTC
WP4 Leader	Paloma Juárez	AINIA
WP5 Leader	Giulio Testa	SIPCAM
WP6 Leader	Vincent Greffe	PCH
WP7 Leader	Morten Birkved	SDU
WP8 Leader	Sofía Oliveira	FIG

The SC will meet bimonthly to ensure proper implementation of the project plan. In such meetings each WP leader will be responsible for reporting the progress of the WP, planning next steps and informing about new risks and deviations from the project plan.

The duties of the SC include:

- To propose decisions and prepare the agenda of the General Assembly.
- To implement the decisions taken in the General Assembly.
- To monitor the effective and efficient implementation of the Project.
- To monitor the preparation, revision, and submission of deliverables.
- To support the PC in preparing meetings with the Granting Authority and in preparing related data and deliverables
- To verify the accomplishment of project milestones.
- To review next dissemination and communication actions such as press releases and joint publications by the consortium.
- To advise the General Assembly on ways to rearrange tasks and budgets.

The SC meetings also serve as a valuable platform for the discussion and alignment of deliverables within the consortium. Through these meetings, the consortium members can identify the specific expertise (within the consortium) required to review each deliverable effectively. The SC will assign evaluators from the consortium based on their relevant knowledge and expertise, ensuring a thorough and comprehensive review process.

The SC possesses the capacity to propose amendments and escalate them to the GA in cases where project activities and deliverables are consistently delayed due to certain partners. These proposed amendments may include adjustments to timelines, reallocation of tasks or resources, or even re-evaluation of partnership agreements. The primary objective is to address the issues hindering progress and ensure that the project stays on track to achieve its goals. Once the SC has formulated the proposed amendments, it has the power to elevate them to the GA for consideration and approval.

By having this mechanism in place, the SC can effectively address delays caused by specific partners and take necessary measures to mitigate any potential negative impacts on the project's success. This will ensure that project activities and deliverables remain aligned with the established timeline and objectives, while also maintaining accountability among the partners involved.

1.7. Specialist teams

1.7.1. Scientific & Technical Committee (STC)

The STC will oversee the technologies and scientific knowledge generated within the project.

The participants of the STC will come from the consortium and from the EEAB. The selection of profiles for the STC requires individuals with a significant background and extensive knowledge in key topics relevant to the committee's work. The members of the STC are included in Table 2.

Formed by the academic and R&D partners and external experts from the EEAB, the SCT will be in charge of:

- Reviewing and analyzing the progress and results achieved in the project during the reporting period.
- Verifying the accuracy and validity of the data and results presented in the technical reports.
- Collaborating with the PCT to ensure alignment between the technical reports and project objectives.
- Participating in meetings or discussions to clarify technical aspects and provide additional information or insights for the reports.

Table 2. AGRO4AGRI's STC Composition.

Partner	Expertise	Member
AINIA	Project Coordinator	Julia Ponce
AINIA	Precision plant pesticides and delivery systems technology	Concha Bosch Daniel Rivera Paloma Juárez
CTC	Delivery systems technology	Dr. Francisco Borja Aguirre Yagüe
SDU	Environmental sustainability assessment	Morten Birkved
DTU	Human and ecotoxicological assessment, SSbD framework implementation	Steffen Foss Hansen
IHS	Social and economic impact assessment	Robert Braun

PCH	Agronomy	Vincent Greffe
FGC	Agronomy	Carlos Baixauli
EEAB members	Nanosafety, biotechnology, agronomy, responsible innovation	-

The STC will maintain regular communication via email. Meetings shall be chaired by the PC. Any member of the STC can request a meeting by emailing the PC.

1.7.2. Innovation Committee (IC)

The IC will play a pivotal role in driving the success of a project by coordinating the effective dissemination and exploitation of results to achieve the expected project impact.

The IC will comprise Diss & Comm managers, exploitation and IP managers, technology providers and industrial partners. The members of the IC are included in Table 3.

By leveraging their collective knowledge and experience, the Innovation Committee will strive to transform project outcomes into marketable solutions, driving innovation, and contributing to long-term business success. The Diss & Comm manager will take the lead in developing and implementing a comprehensive dissemination and communication strategy to raise awareness and increase the visibility of the project's innovations, achievements, and outcomes. They will work closely with the Exploitation Manager, who is responsible for identifying opportunities for commercialization and ensuring the project's outcomes are maximized through strategic exploitation actions. Together, they will collaborate to target relevant stakeholders, coordinate the creation and distribution of communication materials, organize clustering and stakeholder events, and assess the impact of dissemination activities. The industrial partners of the project will bring industry expertise and resources and will be key to shape the strategy for the development of commercial products and services.

The IC shall be in charge of:

- Coordinating communication and dissemination activities with the exploitation and IP protection strategy.
- Reviewing any Diss & Comm material generated for the promotion of the project before public disclosure. The IC will ensure that the granting authority visibility requirements are met and will review the quality and approach of the publication according to the target public.
- Monitor and maximise the impact of the project through the promotion of the project's innovations, achievements, and outcomes to relevant stakeholders.
- Support the partners to ensure that the legal obligations to protect, exploit and disseminate the results of the project are met, and the expected impact of the project is achieved.
- Collectively agree on the results to disseminate and the most appropriate channels to do so.
- Evaluate the convenience of using external resources such as the Horizon Results Booster or Horizon Results Platform for IP exploitation purposes.

Table 3 AGRO4AGRI's IC Composition.

Partner	Role	Member
AINIA	Project Coordinator	Julia Ponce
AINIA	Precision plant pesticides and delivery systems technology	Concha Bosch Daniel Rivera Paloma Juárez

FIG	Diss & Comm manager	Sofía Oliveira
OPTIMAT	Exploitation manager	Jolanta Beinarovica
CTC	Delivery systems technology provider	Angel Yedra
SYSPRO	Material production upscale engineering	Miguel Carmody
SIPCAM	Pesticides and plant biostimulant products development and commercialisation	Giulio Testa
MIRAT	Fertiliser products development and commercialisation	Patricia Rivera

The IC will maintain regular communication via email. Meetings shall be chaired by the PC. Any member of the IC can request a meeting by emailing the PC.

1.8. External Expert Advisory Board (EEAB)

The EEAB is formed by a group of experts distinguished for their scholarly and business achievements. This body aims to act as a supporting team for technical and scientific issues in the frame of the project development by providing solutions to resolve any matter to ensure the implementation and exploitation of the expected results. Besides, this committee will be responsible for the verification of some of the project milestones.

The EEAB members will be appointed and steered by the General Assembly and shall be allowed to participate in General Assembly meetings upon invitation but will not have any voting rights. STC meetings will be carried out in a timely manner so that the EEAB can assist and facilitate the decisions made by the Steering Committee.

The PC will ensure that a non-disclosure agreement will be developed between all parties and each EEAB member.

1.9. Ethics Mentor

Following the recommendations made in the Ethics Summary Report of AGRO4AGRI, an Ethics Mentor has been appointed to guide the consortium on their lab and field trials to avoid damaging non-targeted nematode species.

The **Ethics Mentor** of the project shall offer recommendations, suggestions, and expertise to ensure that the project maintains high ethical standards throughout its execution. Their goal is to safeguard the rights, welfare, and dignity of individuals involved in the project and to promote ethical conduct in research and innovation.

The Ethics Mentor of AGRO4AGRI will be Dr. ALICIA MARÍA GONZALEZ CESPEDES, who is a full-time researcher at Cajamar Las Palmerillas Experimental Station. Dr. González Céspedes is an expert in Vegetable production and Microalgae biotechnology. She carried out her degree project at the University of Almería on: 'Root System, Aerial Part and Productivity of an Almeria-Type Cucumber Crop in Greenhouse under Different Irrigation Frequencies'. In 2003 she was awarded the Doctoral title in PhD in Agricultural Engineering by the University of Almería for her thesis on 'Irrigation Programs for Horticultural Crops in Sanded Greenhouses in Almeria'. She has worked as a researcher in nationally-funded projects such as: 'Obtaining proteins and lipids by microalgae using MICROAQUA waste' and 'Research in advanced technologies for the comprehensive valuation of algae. VIDA Project'. More recently she has participated in several European Innovation Partnership Task funding programmes including 'Forces Creation of the Andalusian Observatory of Agricultural Bioeconomics, Hort-Obser-Tic' (2022-2024) and 'Circular Economy for the Production of Biostimulant Extracts of Microalgae through the Recovery of Nitrogen and Residual Phosphorus' (2023-2024). Dr. González Céspedes has authored more than 12 publications in high-

impact journals in the fields of Agronomy and participated in the writing of six book chapters (<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7295-6464>).

As Ethics Mentor, Dr. González Céspedes will advise the participants of WPs 4, 5 and 6 on the best way to carry out the field trials to test the efficacy of novel nematicides based on RNAi while preventing damage to other non-parasitic nematode populations.

COMMUNICATION

1.10. Internal Communication

Internal communication refers to the process of information exchange among AGRO4AGRI consortium members. Communication within the consortium should follow certain rules to ensure that key message is received by the right recipient. Guidance on how to choose the right recipients for each issue is provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Internal communication flows.

ISSUE	BODY/PARTNER	MAIN CONTACT
Administrative, financial and/or legal	Project Coordination Team	Main: Carla Páez CC: Julia Ponce (PC)
Technical	WP leader	WP leader
	Scientific & Technical Committee	Main: Julia Ponce (PC) + all STC members
Diss & Comm actions, exploitation of results, IP protection	Innovation Committee	Main: Julia Ponce (PC) + all IC members

Although the main decisions should be taken within project team meetings, through daily internal communication a high amount of project tracking is performed. Therefore, procedures for the "registration" of the communications are defined.

1.10.1. Communication channels

The PCT, led by [Julia Ponce González](#) (AINIA), will oversee the coordination of the necessary actions for the correct execution of the project across the rest of the consortium members. Although other channels may be used, only "traceable" communications will be taken into account in the scope of the procedure and thus encouraged as the most suitable way to consult and proceed.

Since other channels keep no evidence of the communication, communication through the following channels is encouraged:

- e-mail (please use "AGRO4AGRI" as a reference on subject field).
- Videoconference to hold online meetings, via Microsoft Teams. The PCT will have periodic meetings to make the correct follow-up of the progress of the project and cover the needs at each moment, communicating with the leaders of each WP to take the necessary actions.
- Microsoft Teams Repository. AINIA has set up a Microsoft Teams Repository where all the project documents will be archived.
- Telephone.

1.10.2. Consortium meetings

The PCT will oversee the organization of Consortium Meetings every 6 months (online and face-to-face every other meeting). The aim will be for the consortium to provide updates about the project progress, plan next steps, discuss critical issues and key actions to be taken.

A tentative schedule for Consortium meetings has been included in Table 5, which will be adapted according to the project needs.

Ad hoc virtual meetings will be organized when necessary.

Table 5. Consortium meetings tentative schedule.

MONTH	DATE	FORMAT	COMMENTS
KOM	28-29 May 2024	Hosted by AINIA at Paterna, Valencia (Spain)	Visit to AINIA facilities
M6	November 2024	Online	
M12	May 2025	Hosted by CTC at Santander (Spain)	Visit to CTC facilities
M18	November 2025	Online	
M24	May 2026	Hosted by SIPCAM or MIRAT	Visit formulation laboratories and pilot testing fields
M30	November 2026	Online	
M36	May 2027	Hosted by PCH, FGC, SIPCAM or MIRAT	Visit pilot testing fields
M42	November 2027	Online	
M48	April 2028	Hosted by AINIA at Paterna, Valencia (Spain)	Consortium meeting + Project review + showcase of project results

1.11. External communication

FIG, as D&C manager, will be in charge of defining the Communication and Dissemination plan and activities. The 'First Plan for Dissemination and Exploitation including Communication activities' (D8.1) will be submitted in M6 and will establish the strategy for the project's Diss & Comm actions.

Alongside the project execution, the IC will review all material generated for Diss & Comm purposes such as:

- The **project's logos and visual identity**.
- **Project website**: It will be the means through which the results achieved in the project are communicated to external stakeholders. The website will be a channel for announcing the latest news and promoting relevant events.
- **Social Media content**: AGRO4AGRI will be actively promoted on its own social media accounts such as LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, YouTube, etc. in order to ensure a strong media presence.

- Supporting **communication and dissemination materials** (e.g. Infographics, success stories, printed materials, etc.)
- **Explicative videos** containing interviews, best practices, lessons learned, and so on.
- **Press releases** and general media publications.

Any kind of public dissemination and communication material, social media posts or media articles will need the previous authorization of the IC and/or the Steering Committee. The main reasons for this pre-acceptance step are:

- First, to ensure fulfilment of the funding programme requirements in terms of visibility;
- Second, to review the quality and approach of the publication according to the target public.
- Finally, to ensure that the IPR and public image of the partners is not compromised by any publication or information disclosure.

For that reason, any D&C material will be sent to the IC members at least 10 days in advance of public sharing. The IC will review the publication and assess if it is necessary to obtain approval from the SC. In such a case, the D&C manager will forward it to the SC members for acceptance or request modifications. Where the IC considers the D&C material fulfils the CA and GA, it will approve directly the D&C material concerned.

1.11.1. Funding programme visibility requirements

As stated in Article 17 of the GA *'all communication activities of the beneficiaries related to the action (including media relations, conferences, seminars, information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.), dissemination activities and any infrastructure, equipment, vehicles, supplies or major result funded by the grant must acknowledge EU support and display the European flag (emblem) and funding statement (translated into local languages, where appropriate).'*

Two possible orientations for the EC emblem are given, see Figure 2.



Figure 2. EC emblems.

Moreover, it must include the disclaimer shown in Figure 3 (translated into local languages where appropriate):

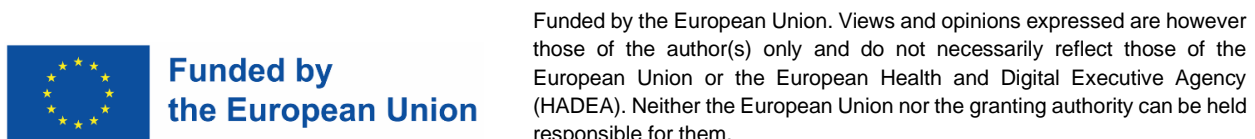


Figure 3. Acknowledgements disclaimer, EU flag and funding statement.

1.11.2. Dissemination procedure

All partners are encouraged to disseminate their results to target audiences and comply with the obligation to disseminate stated in Article 17 of the Grant Agreement. Moreover, **the dissemination obligation is subject to any restrictions linked to the protection of IP**, as written in the GA.

Open Science obligations and dissemination obligations in Horizon Europe are NOT a general obligation to disseminate and should not conflict with **IP rights**. **For this reason, IP rights should be prioritized.**

To prevent any dissemination of background or foreground from third parties and to avoid IP breach conflicts, any dissemination actions must have the prior consent from all partners before they take place. To obtain consent, a Dissemination procedure has been set in place.

This procedure is compliant with article 8.4.2.1 of the Consortium Agreement, which states that: *'Prior notice of any planned publication shall be given to other Parties at least 30 calendar days before the publication. Any objection to the planned publication shall be made in accordance with the Grant Agreement by written notice to the Coordinator and to the Party or Parties proposing the dissemination within 30 calendar days after receipt of the notice. If no objection is made within the time limit stated above, the publication is permitted. Authorship will follow the Vancouver Guidelines. The dissemination activities including but not restricted to publications and presentations will acknowledge each Party's contributions to the Results being published or otherwise disclosed in accordance with academic standards and custom. Proper acknowledgment and attribution will be made for the contributions of each Party to the Results being published.'*

*By exception to the 30 calendar days' notice, **the prior notice period shall be reduced to 20 calendar days for the following dissemination activities: poster presentations, slides and abstracts for oral presentations at scientific meetings.** In this case, any objection to the planned dissemination shall be made in writing to the Coordinator and to the Party or Parties proposing the dissemination within 15 calendar days after receipt of the notice. If no objection is made within the time limit stated above, the dissemination is permitted.'*

The **Dissemination procedure** must be followed by any consortium member wanting to publish or perform **any public disclosure of results from the project** in any media during the course of the Project and for a period of 1 year after the end of the implementation.

The Dissemination procedure sets two different timelines depending on whether the dissemination action consists on a scientific publication (e.g. scientific journal publication, thesis, etc.), or a poster or an oral presentation in a conference, sectoral fair, workshop or event, which are outlined in Figure 4 and Figure 5, respectively.

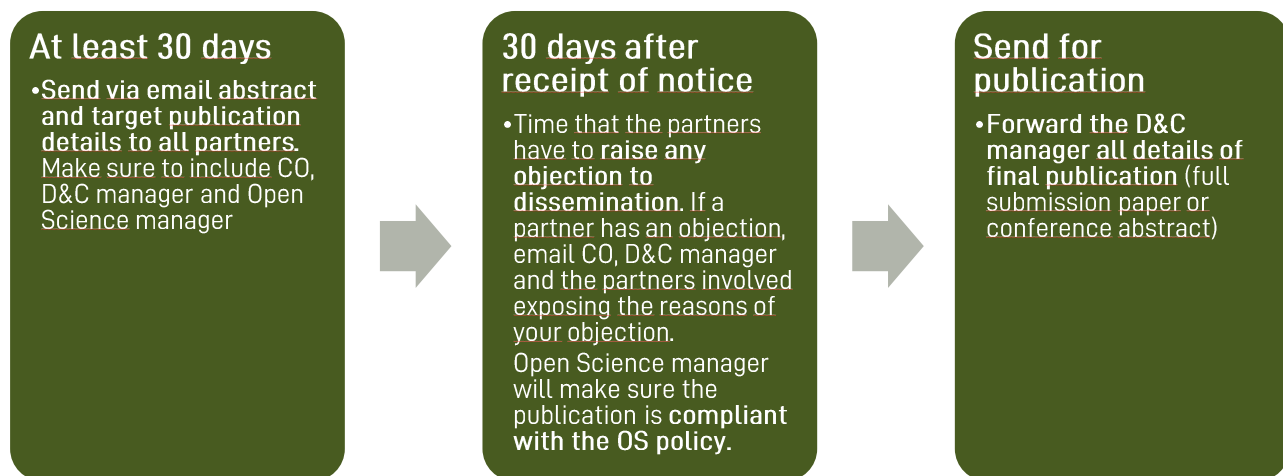


Figure 4. Dissemination procedure for publications (e.g. scientific journals publication, thesis).

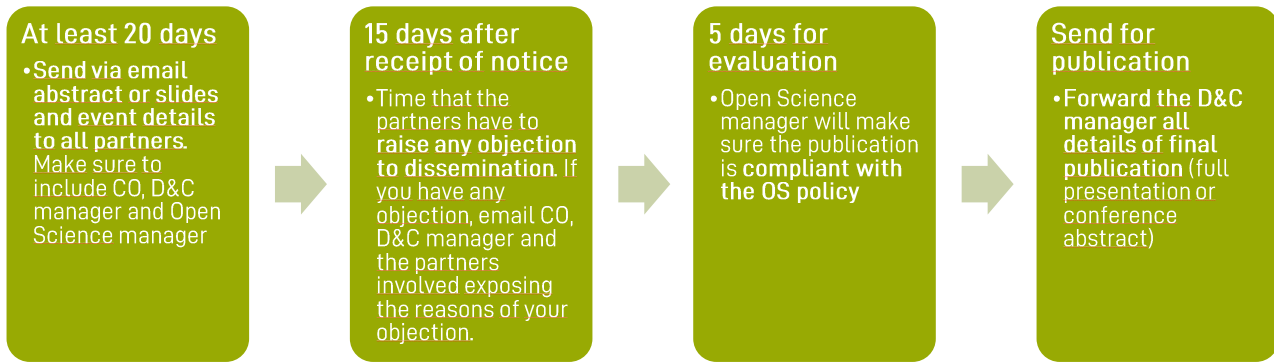


Figure 5. Dissemination procedure for poster presentations, slides and abstracts for oral presentations at scientific conferences, sectoral fairs, workshops or events.

Project coordinator and IP manager	Julia Ponce González (AINIA)
D&C manager	Sofia Oliveira (FIG)
Open Science manager	Carla Páez (AINIA)

Once the dissemination action has been completed the responsible partners must send the details to the D&C manager to evaluate and keep track of the progress in reaching D&C KPIs.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

Documentation means the set of files related to the work carried out under the AGRO4AGRI action by each partner within the consortium.

The documentation will be intended to be used internally and following the dissemination rules stated by the Grant Agreement with the HADEA.

1.12. Format

The following guidelines must be followed:

- Documentation will be shared in formats compatible with: MS Office 365.
- Preferably the above-mentioned software should be used for its generation.
- Language used for official written documents and all the reporting will be English.
- Templates for the production of documents (such as presentations, deliverables, agendas and minutes) are available in the MS Teams Repository.

1.13. Naming of documents

The codification of documents aims to clearly identify a relevant set of information: the type of documentation, the dissemination level, author/responsible and version.

Files will be identified according to the following structure:

AGRO4AGRI-[DOCUMENT TYPE AND REFERENCE]-[DISSEMINATION LEVEL]-[AUTHOR]-[VERSION NUMBER]

Table 6. Document identification codes.

DOCUMENT TYPE AND REFERENCE	
Dxxxx	Deliverable number according to the Grant Agreement.
PRx	Contributions to Periodic Report x (including financial statements)
PUB	Documentation addressed to direct dissemination/publication
XX_meeting	Presentation for a SC meeting, Project meeting
XX	General documentation not specifically linked to any D or WP, but in the framework of the project.
DISSEMINATION LEVEL	
PU	Public
SEN	Sensitive
AUTHOR	
XXXX	Participant short name as it appears in the Description of Work of the Grant Agreement. Consolidated PRs or Deliverables will not state author.
VERSION NUMBER	
Intermediate versions	v01 to v09
Final versions	Final
Template	template

Table 7 shows some examples of the application of the codification system.

Table 7. Examples of document naming.

Intermediate version of D1.1	AGRO4AGRI_D1.1_PU_AINIA_v04.doc
Final version of D1.1	AGRO4AGRI_D1.1_PU_Final.doc
Periodic Report 2 (first version)	AGRO4AGRI_PR2_SEN_AINIA_v01.doc
Periodic Report 2 (final version)	AGRO4AGRI_PR2_SEN_Final.doc
WP1 presentation SC meeting	AGRO4AGRI_SC_meeting_WP1_AINIA_v01.ppt
WP presentation SC meeting template	AGRO4AGRI_SC_meeting_WP_template.ppt

1.14. Document storage

All AGRO4AGRI Project related documentation must be archived in AINIA's Microsoft Teams Repository. This Repository is organized by channels (one for each WP) to which all consortium members will have access. Each channel must contain the folder structure shown in Table 8.

Table 8. AGRO4AGRI's Microsoft Teams Repository Structure.

AGRO4AGRI's Microsoft Teams Repository Structure	
WP 1	AGREEMENTS
	EXTERNAL EXPERT ADVISORY BOARD
	FINAL DELIVERABLES WP1
	GENERAL ASSEMBLY
	PROJECT MEETINGS
	PROJECT REPORTING
	STEERING COMMITTEE
	RISK MANAGEMENT
	TEMPLATES
	WORKING DOCUMENTS
	Contacts list
WP 2-8	FINAL DELIVERABLES
	MEETINGS
	WORKING DOCUMENTS

WP leaders are responsible for the tidiness of their respective WP channel. They are allowed to add new folders to their channels, always maintaining the ones set originally. The final version of every submitted deliverable must be stored in the Final Deliverables folder of their respective WP channel.

1.15. Quality assurance procedures

Quality assurance procedures aim at ensuring that the project delivers the defined results on time and at the expected quality level.

1.15.1. Deliverables

The elaboration of the deliverables is the responsibility of the Lead Beneficiary assigned in the GA. Nevertheless, other partner's contributions may be requested for the elaboration of each deliverable, which must be delivered on time. WP Leaders shall be responsible for ensuring that all requested contributions are delivered on time and that deliverables under its WP are prepared correctly and on time. The PCT will also check the status of upcoming

deliverables during the Steering Committee meetings where follow-up actions and corrective measurements will be proposed, if needed.

All deliverables prepared in AGRO4AGRI, before being submitted, must undergo an internal review process, which will propose reviewers within the consortium to generate a final version of the deliverables and send it to the PCT for its submission through the Funding and Tenders (F&T) Portal. Upon revision, iterations between the reviewers and the partner responsible of the deliverable might be required to produce a final version internally approved for submission.

Finally, the PC will approve the deliverable and submit it through the F&T Portal.

Table 9. List of deliverables.

N°	Deliverable Name	WP	Lead Beneficiary	Type	Dissemination Level	Due Date
D1.1	Project Management Plan	WP1	1 - AINIA	R -Document, report	PU - Public	M4
D1.2	First Data Management Plan	WP1	1 - AINIA	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M6
D1.3	Final Data Management Plan	WP1	1 - AINIA	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M48
D2.1	Scientific SSbD evaluation for material and production processes	WP2	4 - DTU	R -Document, report	PU - Public	M2
D2.2	Report on the agrochemical products regulatory framework and market uptake potential barriers	WP2	8 - SIPCAM	R -Document, report	PU - Public	M2
D2.3	Social acceptance, ethics review and reflection plan and SRTt reports	WP2	9 - IHS	R -Document, report	PU - Public	M6
D2.4	Plan and definition of the materials and processes employed in the development of controlled delivery fertilisers, PB and precision-plant nematicides	WP2	1 - AINIA	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M6
D3.1	Development and characterization of biochar	WP3	2 - CTC	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M25
D3.2	Development and characterization of nanocellulose	WP3	1 - AINIA	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M25

D3.3	Development and characterization of delivery systems in laboratory	WP3	2 - CTC	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M25
D3.4	Report on the delivery systems screening and selection	WP3	2 - CTC	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M25
D4.1	Technical protocol of target gene selection and dsRNA design for target-specific pest control	WP4	1 - AINIA	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M15
D4.2	Report of dsRNA bioproduction for nematodes pest control	WP4	1 - AINIA	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M25
D4.3	Report of the dsRNA encapsulation process for its controlled release	WP4	1 - AINIA	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M25
D5.1	Report of controlled delivery systems scaled-up production	WP5	2 - CTC	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M30
D5.2	Report of controlled release fertilisers formulation and production	WP5	11 - MIRAT	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M32
D5.3	Report of dsRNA formulation process and application protocol for nematodes pest control	WP5	8 - SIPCAM	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M32
D5.4	Report of biostimulants development for enhanced controlled delivery fertiliser efficiency	WP5	8 - SIPCAM	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M32
D6.1	Determination of dosage per crop, per type (nutrients, biopesticide)	WP6	5 - FGC	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M40
D6.2	Report on validation and demonstration	WP6	6 - PCH	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M47
D7.1	First Hazard assessment and ecotoxicological evaluation of R & D, lab-scale and large-scale production of advanced agrochemicals	WP7	4 - DTU	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M24

D7.2	Early environmental sustainability indicators and post-ante LCA	WP7	3 - SDU	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M24
D7.3	SEIA report	WP7	9 - IHS	R -Document, report	PU - Public	M48
D7.4	Final multicriteria analysis of the safety and toxicity of advanced agrochemicals along their life-cycle	WP7	4 - DTU	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M48
D7.5	Final Hazard assessment and ecotoxicological evaluation of R & D, lab-scale and large-scale production of advanced agrochemicals	WP7	4 - DTU	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M48
D7.6	Final Environmental sustainability assessment, indicators and post-ante LCA	WP7	3 - SDU	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M48
D8.1	First Plan for Dissemination and Exploitation, including Communication activities	WP8	7 - FIG	R -Document, report	PU - Public	M6
D8.2	Website of the project	WP8	7 - FIG	DEC -Websites, patent filings, videos, etc	PU - Public	M6
D8.3	First version of the Stakeholder engagement plan and stakeholder database	WP8	12 OPTIMAT	- R -Document, report	PU - Public	M12
D8.4	First version of the Business models for the exploitation of project results	WP8	12 OPTIMAT	- R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M12
D8.5	Long-term Sustainability Strategy and final conclusions	WP8	12 OPTIMAT	- R -Document, report	PU - Public	M48
D8.6	Final Report on Dissemination and Exploitation, including Communication activities	WP8	7 - FIG	R -Document, report	PU - Public	M48
D8.7	Final Business models for the exploitation of project results	WP8	12 OPTIMAT	- R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M48

D8.8	Final engagement and stakeholder database	Stakeholder plan and	WP8	12	-	R -Document, report	SEN - Sensitive	M48
				OPTIMAT				

1.15.1.1. Deliverables preparation

All project deliverables must be elaborated following the template produced for that purpose and which can be found in the project 's MS Teams repository under WP1 Project Management > Templates.

This template depicts the structure that all deliverables categorized as Document or Report must follow:

- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary
 - AGRO4AGRI's details
 - The AGRO4AGRI consortium
 - Project 's summary
 - Document details
 - Document 's abstract
 - Document 's revision history
 - Terminology and acronyms
 - Disclaimer
- Introduction and objectives of the deliverable and where it fits in the context of the AGRO4AGRI project. The introduction should also explain the interdependences related to this deliverable, whether this work is drawing on earlier tasks and deliverables and what other tasks will use this deliverable as input or for structuring their work.
- Main body of the report – this section will explain the work that was carried out and the results generated and illustrate the technical and scientific progress made within the deliverable.
- Conclusions
- References
- Annexes – Annexes of data or further information not suitable for the main body of the report either due to its detailed nature or separated for confidentiality purposes.

The deliverable's lead beneficiary is the partner responsible for producing the document according to the guidelines described herein. WP leaders must be involved from the beginning of the process of deliverable preparation. The scope, methodology employed, and high-level structure of each deliverable must be agreed between the WP leader and the lead beneficiary, as well as the needed contributions from other partners. Such discussions can be managed in the respective WP meetings or in dedicated meetings arranged for that purpose.

1.15.1.2. Deliverable review and submission

To ensure expected quality levels are met, all deliverables must be subjected to an internal review process before submission through the F&T portal. At least two reviewers will be assigned for every deliverable: the WP leader, and an internal reviewer from the consortium who has not been involved in its preparation. In those cases where the WP leader is also responsible for the deliverable, two internal reviewers will be assigned. Deliverable internal reviewers can be members from any of the participating partners and will be nominated in the SC meetings at least two months before deadline.

The partner responsible for each deliverable must provide a first version to the WP leader at least 44 days before the official submission deadline. WP leaders have 14 days to provide their revisions to the document's lead beneficiary and pass it to the internal reviewer assigned. Internal reviewers have 14 days to send their document revisions to the deliverable's responsible and WP leader. The final version of the deliverable, amending all revisions introduced by the reviewers, must be sent to the Project Coordinator at least 2 days before the final submission deadline. Final submission will be done by the PCT.

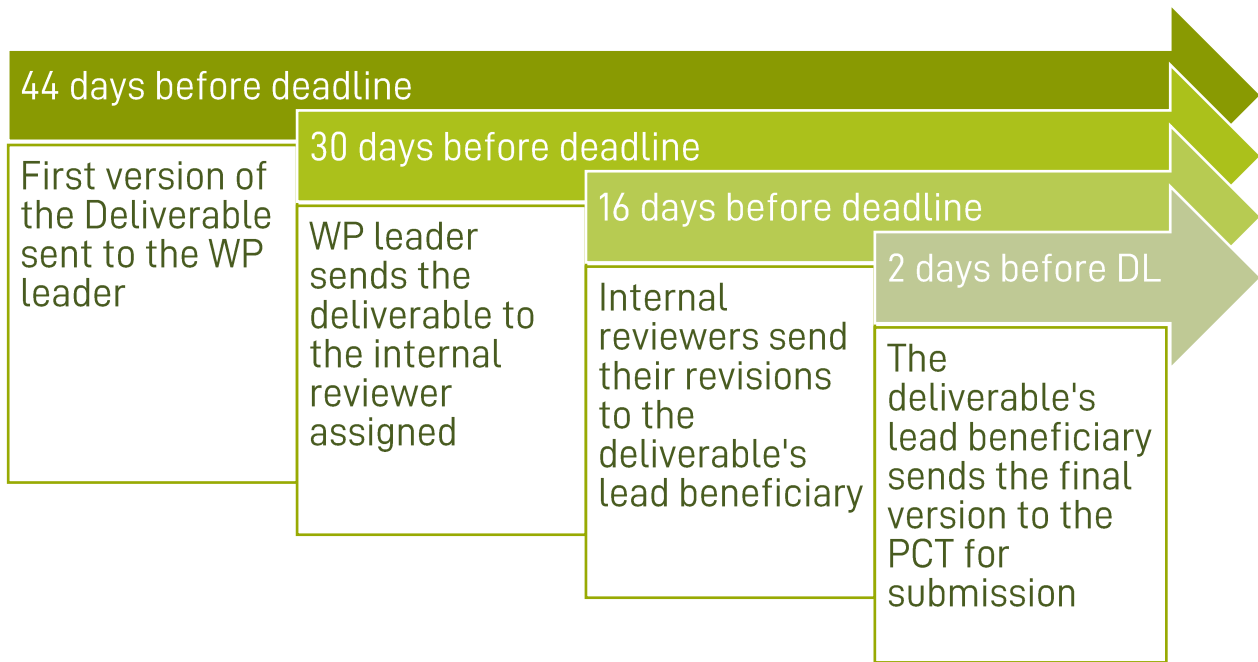


Figure 6. Deliverable’s internal review process.

The following checklist will be used by WP leaders and internal reviewers to assess the quality of the Deliverables.

Technical criteria	YES/NO
Does the report address properly and match the description of the workplan?	
Does the report reflect the effort foreseen in the workplan/task?	
Is the contribution from all partners involved in the WP effectively reflected in the report?	
Does it have enough technical detail: description of work performed, methodology, technology used, experimental design & trials, and results?	
Final versions	YES/NO
Has the report been written using the right template?	
Are the pages numbered correctly?	
Are all figures, tables and diagrams clear, easy to understand and duly referenced in the report?	
Are all photos, tables and diagrams titled?	
Is the content clear and easy to understand?	

Unless otherwise stated, submitted deliverables will be made available to all project beneficiaries under the respective WP channel folder. Those deliverables containing data or information which is confidential or commercially valuable have been classified as Sensitive, and no public dissemination must be made outside the

project consortium by any of the project beneficiaries. By contrast, public deliverables will be automatically posted online on the Project Results platforms and published on AGRO4AGRI's website, once approved by HADEA.

1.15.2. Milestones

The PCT and the SC share the responsibility of effectively monitoring the defined project milestones throughout the project's lifecycle.

The PCT is in charge of the day-to-day oversight and management of the project. They closely track the progress of activities, ensure adherence to schedules, and identify any deviations or obstacles that may impact milestone achievement.

Working closely with the PCT, WP leaders play a critical role on reporting the progress of the different WPs. They review milestone progress reports and actively engage in discussions to assess the overall project trajectory at each SC meeting. Their valuable insights and expertise help identify potential risks and suggest necessary adjustments to keep the project on track.

The collaborative effort between the PCT and the SC ensures timely milestone monitoring and allows for proactive decision-making. By leveraging their combined knowledge and experience, they can promptly address challenges, allocate resources effectively, and make informed adjustments when required, thereby maximizing the project's chances of success.

Table 10. List of Milestones.

Nº	Milestone Name	WP	Lead beneficiary	Means of verification	Due Date
1	SSbD approach set and regulatory framework analysed	WP2	4 - DTU	Evaluation of the candidate materials and production processes to be employed in the agrochemical solutions. Set of the regulatory framework; market authorisation needed for the post-project commercialization of the results of the project. Supervision of the project coordinator.	M2
2	Materials and processes employed in the development of controlled delivery fertilisers, PB and precision-plant nematocides defined	WP2	1 - AINIA	Selection of the materials and processes to be employed in the development of delivery systems for fertilisers, PB and precision plant pesticides that will be developed in WP3, WP4 and WP5. Supervision of the External Advisory Board.	M6
3	Project website launched	WP8	7 - FIG	Website launched and D8.2 submitted. Supervision of the Project coordinator.	M6
4	Selection of most lethal genes	WP4	1 - AINIA	Selection of most lethal genes (2-3) from the nematode species genome to be suppressed or silenced by iRNA technology.	M15

5	Selection of best performing delivery systems for fertilisers	WP3	2 - CTC	First batches of nanocarriers and biobased carriers produced at laboratory scale and characterised. Selection of the best delivery systems to be formulated in WP5 for slow delivery fertilisers. Supervision of the External Advisory Board.	M25
6	Stablished procedure for RNAi based nematocide principle production	WP4	1 - AINIA	Establishment of the bioproduction process of double-stranded RNA (dsRNA) for nematode pest control, including its encapsulation for stabilisation and controlled delivery. Supervision of the External Advisory Board.	M25
7	Candidate novel formulation based on RNAi technology for the control of Meloidogyne incognita nematode	WP5	8 - SIPCAM	Delivery of the final formula of encapsulated dsRNA and application protocol to be employed in the subsequent validation field trial. Supervision of the External Advisory Board.	M32
8	Dosage per crop and per type (nutrients, biopesticide) established	WP6	5 - FGC	Determination of dosage per crop and type of the slow-delivery fertilisers, plant biostimulants and nematicides. Supervision of the External Advisory Board.	M40
9	AGRO4AGRI solutions validated and demonstrated	WP6	6 - PCH	Validation in field trials of the slow-delivery fertilisers target (> 2 weeks for nanomaterials and 42 calendar days for cellulose hydrogels prototypes release duration) and nematicides efficacy (reduction of gall index on roots > 50%). Supervision of the External Advisory Board.	M47
10	Safety, toxicity, environmental, and socioeconomic assessment performed	WP7	3 - SDU	SSbD assessment (including hazards and ecotoxicological risks) of materials and production processes involved in the preparation and use of new agrochemical solutions and LCA concluded. Identification of potential "prohibitive" issues that must be identified and addressed. Assessment. Supervision of the External Advisory Board.	M48
11	Social acceptance of AGRO4AGRI solutions enhanced	WP7	9 - IHS	Social, economic and sustainability impact assessment (SEIA) report concluded. Delivery of recommendations for the future and organisation of 3 reflexive workshops.	M48

12	Stakeholders engaged	WP8	12 OPTIMAT	- Organisation of workshops for the agrochemical industry, academia, stakeholders working in sustainable agriculture for the dissemination of project results.	M48
13	Exploitation pathways and business models defined	WP8	12 OPTIMAT	- Exploitation strategy ready and agreed among all partners. Supervision of the External Advisory Board.	M48

RISK MANAGEMENT

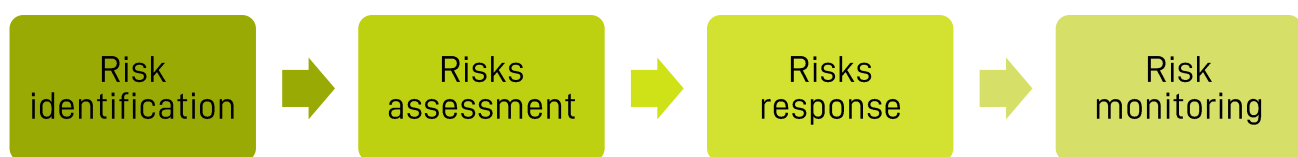
Risk management aims at ensuring that no critical deviations or risks occur during the project lifetime. Critical risks refer to any non-planned situation which could affect the project execution, causing a delay, a conflict, or even having an impact in terms of technical results, exploitation, etc.

In AGRO4AGRI, risk management is led by AINIA as project coordinator under the framework of Task 1.2 'Scientific & technical coordination and risk management'. Technical risks will be monitored periodically in WP and SC meetings. During SC meetings, a monitoring of risks throughout the project lifecycle will be carried out by the PC in cooperation with each of the WP leaders. This proactive approach will enable the consortium to maintain an updated risk register, capturing new threats and reassessing existing ones. By incorporating mitigation measures into the discussions, we will ensure effective risk management and enhance the project's overall success.

Thereby, any deviation from the scheduled workplan will be identified at an early stage, and corrective measures applied where necessary. Other potential risks refer to Consortium relationships. If any conflict is detected, the PC or the SC will intervene to ensure that the conflict is solved and to reduce the impact on the project execution.

Risk Management is an ongoing process over the life of a project and the Risk Register must be considered a 'snapshot' of relevant risks at any one point in time. AGRO4AGRI's risk register is a live document, allocated in the MS Teams repository under WP1 Project Management > Risk management.

The Risk Management process proposed consists of four steps which will involve participation of all partners.



The different steps of the risk management plan and actions are explained below.

AGRO4AGRI's risk management is based on the list of critical risks which were identified during the project proposal stage. These initial risks have been uploaded to the online Risk Register document and will be reviewed and updated regularly.

For this purpose, all WP leaders must report at every SC meeting, the status of the current risks identified involving their WP and propose any new risk which was not initially foreseen. Time to discuss any new risks will be reserved in every WP meeting.

Risks can be identified at any time, as well as mitigation measures. If any person working on the project detects a risk they must directly notify the responsible WP leader, since they are responsible for reporting risks to the PC, who is in charge of the overall risk management. The PC has the authority to recognize any new identified risk and the proposed mitigation measures and add it to the risk register.

For any new risk, a description as detailed as possible should be provided in terms of defining the source of the uncertainty. It is important to also include the consequences of the risks in the description.

The wording or articulation of each risk should follow a simple two-step approach:

- Consider what might be a 'trigger' event or threat (e.g., 'poor or inadequate identification of requirements') - several triggers may reveal the same inherent risk. Then,
- Identify the risk - use a 'newspaper headline' style statement - short, sharp and snappy (e.g., 'budget blow out') then describe the nature of the risk and the impact on the project if the risk is not mitigated or managed.

All risks identified must be assessed to identify the range of possible project outcomes and propose mitigation measures to lower their probability and impact. Risk rating can be used to determine which risks are the most important risks. The probability (Low/Medium/High) and impact (Low/Medium/High) of occurrence for each identified risk will be assessed by the WP leader and confirmed by the PC during the SC meetings.

WP leaders are authorized to implement the mitigation measures as soon as possible. In every SC meeting, they will report to the PC on the risk mitigation measures applied and their effects on the respective risks.

The rating of every risk will be tracked, monitored and reported throughout the project lifecycle.

During project implementation, the following points will be monitored and assessed:

- Progress in reducing the risk,
- Occurrence/frequency of risks that call for initiation of contingent risk responses,
- Effectiveness of implemented risk reduction actions and any needs to modify these actions.

Risk status will be reported in every Project Official Report.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Changes to the project plan shall occur. In case adjustments are needed on the project, any partner can inform the PCT, about any operational, financial or administrative matters to be discussed at a SC meeting.

1.16. Amendments to the GA

An amendment to the Grant Agreement will be required when the intended changes involve a substantial change of the original document approved by HADEA. The amendment cannot modify the general objective of the project nor increase the maximum contribution. Only the non-substantial changes can be accepted by simplified procedure. The conditions and procedure that apply to an amendment to the GA are described in Article 39 of the GA.

The following are considered as **substantial changes**:

- Nature and content of deliverables.
- List of deliverables.
- Name, legal address, legal status, bank account and/or VAT of the coordinating beneficiary.
- Name of any beneficiary.
- Partnership structure (addition or withdrawal of beneficiary or affiliate).
- Withdrawal of a co-financer or significant reduction of its contribution.
- Project duration.
- Financial structure.
- Addition of amounts for subcontracts not initially foreseen.

The budget breakdown may be adjusted — without an amendment — by transfers between budget categories, as long as this does not imply any substantive or important change to the Description of the Action. Table 11 summarizes the need for amendments in budget reallocations.

Table 11. Guidelines on the need for an amendment.

Budget transfers and re-allocation	Amendment needed?
From one beneficiary to another	YES (advised)
From one budget category to another	NO
Re-allocation of Annex 1 tasks	YES
Transfers between forms of funding (actual costs, unit costs, etc.)	YES, if no budget was foreseen for the "form" receiving the transfer
New subcontracts	YES (strongly advised)

If a partner needs to propose an amendment to the GA, it must be formally requested to the PC by e-mail. A short description of the amendment request together with a detailed justification must be provided by the partner.

The amendment justification letter must include:

- The reasons why
- How the proposed changes would affect the project
- The appropriate supporting documents

If the amendment affects the partner individually, the PC will inform all other partners and proceed with the amendment. If the request applies to or affects other partners of the project, the PC will forward the request to the General Assembly for approval.

If the changes are approved by the General Assembly, the PCT will then inform the Grant Authority HADEA about the adjustments the consortium wishes to make, to follow official processes to obtain approval for the changes, if undertaking the simplified procedure, or propose and submit an official amendment request via the F&T Portal. Official amendment requests must be managed by the PCT.

The EU services must accept or reject the request within 45 days. In case corrections are needed, the PO will reopen the Amendment for revision to the consortium. If the amendment is accepted, the document will be signed by HADEA, and the Grant Agreement data updated in the system accordingly.

If an amendment is started at the same time as a payment is requested, the payment will be suspended until the amendment is resolved.

PERIODIC REPORTING

Reporting consists of two different processes: internal progress monitoring of the project and Official Reporting according to the project's contractual obligations.

The PO shall be informed in case of:

- Events or problems encountered that are likely to affect/delay the implementation.
- Circumstances affecting the decision to award the grant or compliance with the agreement.
- Delays in the submission of deliverables or periodic official reports.
- Milestones that cannot be achieved on time.

The progress and achievements of the AGRO4AGRI project will be assessed through:

- **Internal Financial Reports (IR)**, which will be carried out at M11 and M32 to track the project's financial performance. The first IR will gather the costs incurred by all partners from all M1 to M10. The second IR will gather the costs from M19 to M31.
- **Official Periodic Reports (RP)**, which are the official reports requested by the financing body at the end of each reporting period. These periodic reports include a technical and financial report. Three reporting periods are defined in the GA of AGRO4AGRI:
 - Reporting Period 1 from M1 to M18
 - Reporting Period 2 from M19 to M36
 - Reporting Period 3 from M37 to M48

The complete reporting calendar for AGRO4AGRI is shown in Figure 7.

Year	1												2												3												4																							
Month (total)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53							
YEAR	2024												2025												2026												2027												2028											
MONTH	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9							
Reporting Periods	RPO1												RPO2												RPO3																																			
Reports	RPI1												RPI2												RPI3																																			

RPO: Reporting Period Official
 RPI: Reporting Period Internal

Figure 7. Reporting calendar for AGRO4AGRI.

1.17. Internal financial reports

The resource consumption will be tracked per Work Package and expenditures according to the cost categories identified in the EC financial statement form.

Internal financial monitoring will be managed by AINIA. The PCT will send a template for all partners to complete before the end of the corresponding monitoring period. This template contains tables for collecting the partners' incurred costs per Cost Category and WP, personnel costs (staff involved in the project, implemented PMs, days-equivalents and corresponding costs spent from the beginning of the IR period).

The PCT will check the declared costs are assigned to the right category and properly described and detect any unforeseen charges and make sure these are justified. Besides, this internal monitoring will allow the coordinator to assess the allocation of effort and resources (actual vs foreseen) and monitor its evolution along the project. The PCT may ask the partners for further clarifications of their incurred costs if needed.

1.18. Official periodic reports

1.18.1. Structure of the periodic report

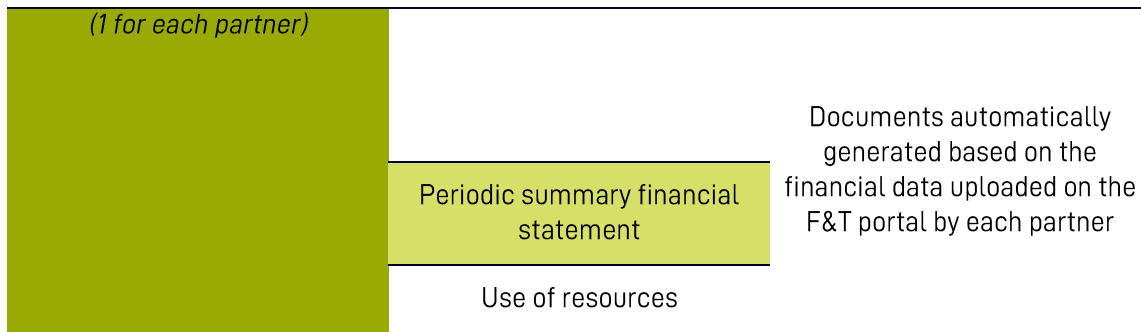
The Periodic Report must be submitted by the PC within 60 days following the end of each Reporting Period (RP). It contains different forms for the technical and financial reporting:

- The technical report is divided in two parts:
 - **Part A** includes a publishable summary (that must not contain any confidential information), an overview of the work performed and main achievements (including deliverables, milestones and critical risks), and an update on the project pathways to impact (results, publications, datasets, IPR, standardisation activities, D&C activities, impact, sustainable development goals, etc.). It will be generated from the information provided by the continuous reporting.
 - **Part B** is the narrative part of the technical report, and it comprises an explanation of the work carried out and of progress achieved in the corresponding Reporting period. It includes a description of the work done detailed by Work Package and the next steps ahead. Partners must also report any deviations that have taken place and the corrective measures applied. This report must be concise, clear and informative.
- The financial reporting includes:
 - Individual financial statements created from the financial data provided by each partner through the F&T portal. All partners must be aware that all claimed costs must be registered and compliant with the accounting practices of their organisation.
 - The periodic summary financial statement generated from the consolidated Individual Financial Statements of all partners, which corresponds to the Request of Payment.
 - The Use of resources report which contains explanations on the use of resources per beneficiary. It includes: the direct personnel costs (PMs by WP), the description of subcontracting and purchase costs. For those costs that were not foreseen, further explanations will be needed.

Table 12. Structure of the periodic report.

Technical reporting (1 for all the consortium)	Part A	AINIA will upload this info into the F&T portal (continuous reporting)
	Part B	PDF document uploaded by AINIA to the F&T portal
Financial reporting	Individual financial statement	





For additional information on the financial reporting rules, see Article 6 of the GA.

1.18.2. Preparation and submission of the periodic report

The official periodic report is generated from information from two sources:

- **Continuous reporting** functionality in the F&T Portal: this is activated at the time the project starts and is continuously open to submit deliverables, to report on progress in achieving milestones, to follow up of critical risks, ethics issues, publications, communication activities, and the answers to the questionnaire on horizontal issues. It will generate **part A of the Periodic Report**.
- **Periodic reporting** functionality in the Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal: following the end of each reporting period, the functionality of periodic reporting in the F&T Portal will be activated. While the periodic reporting session is open in the electronic exchange system each partner will be able to complete its own Financial Statement online, including explanations on the use of resources.

The PCT will upload Part B of the periodic technical report as a pdf document (containing the explanation of the work carried out and the overview of the progress as well as an explanation on deviations from the DoA) and include the financial statement in the report. The full technical report must be prepared using the appropriate template and each partner will be responsible for filling out the sections corresponding to the tasks they participate in the template provided by the coordinator.

The PCT has 2 months to prepare and submit Part B of the Periodic Report before the deadline. The elaboration of this document will require the participation of all partners and, in particular, the WP leaders and the STC. To ensure the timely submission of a good quality Part B report the following timeline has been proposed, see Figure 8.



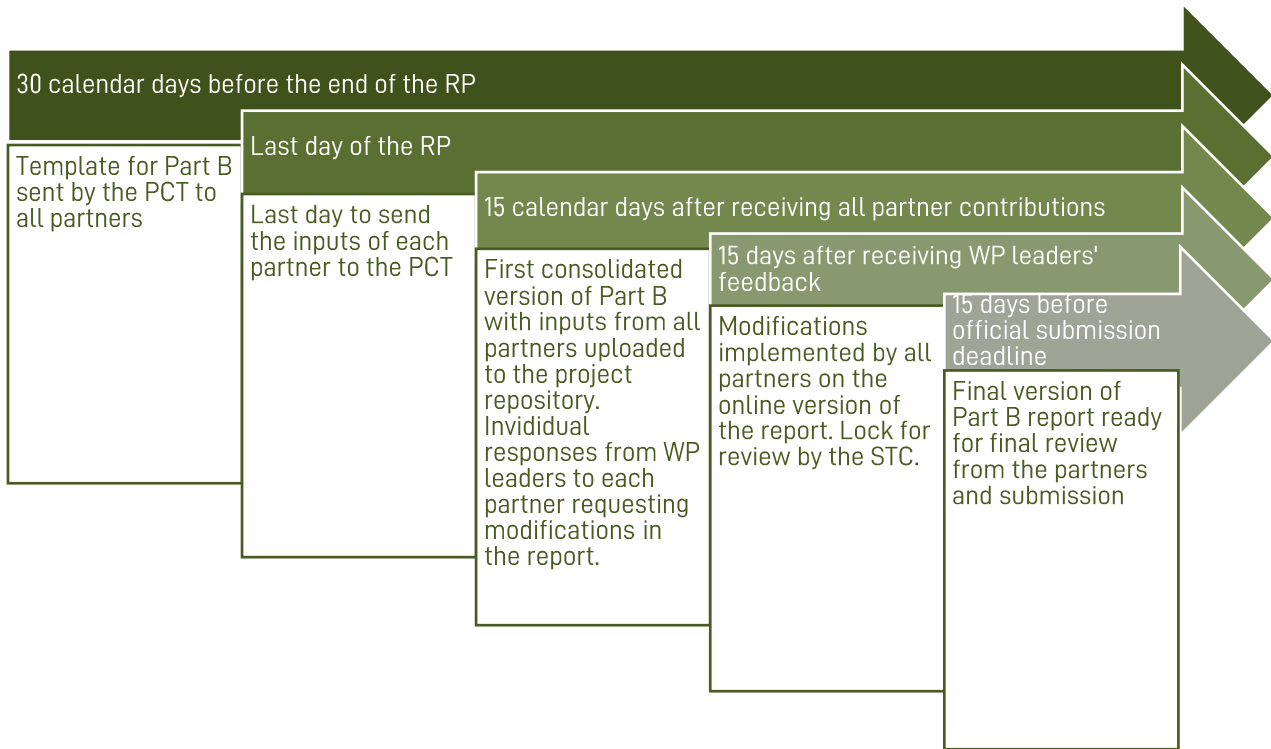


Figure 8. Procedure for the elaboration of the periodic report (Part B).

30 days before the end of the reporting period, the PCT will send the templates for the technical and the financial reporting. The inputs of each partner to the technical report must be sent by each partner on the last day of the reporting period. Within 15 days after reception of all the partners' inputs, the PCT and WP leaders will integrate all contributions and upload a first consolidated version of Part B in the project repository and send their feedback to every partner. Partners must implement the requested modifications in the online version of the report within 15 days. Then, Part B will be locked for review by the STC during the following two weeks to generate the final version of the report, 15 days before the submission deadline. The last two weeks before submission, Part B will be available for final revision by partners. The PCT will submit the report through the F&T portal before the deadline.

After submission through the F&T portal, the report will be available to all partners to be downloaded. The EC, through the granting agency HADEA, will review it and ask for clarifications and/or reject some expenses. A review meeting with the PO and external evaluators may be requested by the PO. In case the PO requests modifications of the PR, the PCT must correct the information following the Commission's suggestions and resubmit it. The timeline for this process is shown in Figure 9.



Figure 9. Reporting period submission and approval timeline.

A Certificate of Financial Statements (CFS) will be necessary only if the requested EU contribution to costs at beneficiary level is \geq EUR 430 000.00.

1.19. Keeping of records and supporting documents

All partners must keep records and other supporting documents to verify the proper implementation of the action in line with accepted standards in the respective field (if any) and keep the following to justify the amounts declared:

- **Actual Costs**
 - Adequate records and supporting documents must be kept to verify the costs declared.
 - Examples include contracts, subcontracts, invoices, and accounting records.
 - Beneficiaries' accounting and internal control procedures must enable reconciliation between declared amounts, recorded amounts, and supporting documents.
- **Flat-Rate Costs and Contributions:** Adequate records and supporting documents must be maintained to prove the eligibility of costs or contributions subject to flat rates.
- **Simplified Costs and Contributions:** As indicated in the Grant Agreement:
 - **Unit Costs and Contributions:** Adequate records and supporting documents must be kept to verify the number of units declared.
 - **Lump Sum Costs and Contributions:** Adequate records and supporting documents must be maintained to prove the proper implementation of the work described in Annex 1 of the GA.
 - **Financing not Linked to Costs:** Adequate records and supporting documents must be kept to verify the achievement of results or fulfillment of conditions described in Annex 1 of the GA.
- **Unit, Flat-Rate, and Lump Sum Costs and Contributions** (according to usual cost accounting practices)
 - Beneficiaries must maintain adequate records and supporting documents to demonstrate consistent application of cost accounting practices based on objective criteria.
 - These records should demonstrate compliance with eligibility conditions stated in Articles 6.1 and 6.2 of the GA.
- **Personnel costs**
 - Time worked for the beneficiary under the action must be supported by monthly declarations signed by the person and their supervisor.
 - Alternative evidence supporting declared time worked may be accepted by the granting authority if it offers an adequate level of assurance.

The records and supporting documents must be made available upon request as outlined in Article 19 of the GA. They should also be accessible in the context of checks, reviews, audits, or investigations, as stated in Article 25 of the GA.

If there are ongoing checks, reviews, audits, investigations, litigation, or other pursuits of claims under the Agreement, including the extension of findings (refer to Article 25 of the GA), the beneficiaries are required to retain these records and supporting documentation until the conclusion of these procedures.

All partners are required to keep the original documents. Digital and digitalized documents will be considered originals if authorized by the applicable national law. In certain cases, the granting authority may accept non-original documents if they provide a comparable level of assurance.

1.20. Financial management

The following section sets out a number of financial rules applicable to EC funded projects and which apply to AGRO4AGRI.

- **Actual Costs:** AGRO4AGRI is a cost-sharing contract, which is based on the actual costs incurred for the work under the project, except for two partners (please, refer to the following point). No estimated,



budgeted or imputed rates are allowed, and the consortium cannot make any kind of financial profit from their participation in this project. The amounts that have been negotiated for the technical annex are only estimates and, as such, they cannot be claimed as actual costs. The fact that HADEA will make periodic payments for the costs claimed does not mean that these costs have been accepted. Costs can be considered as definitively accepted only after the final review by the Project Officer.

- **Unit costs:** According to Annex 2a of the Grant Agreement, financial reporting based on unit costs is allowed for those partners declaring personnel costs of *A.4 SME owners/natural person beneficiaries without salary* and those partners having *D.2 Internally invoiced goods and services* foreseen in their Budget. Work for the action by SME owners/natural person beneficiaries without salaries may be declared as unit costs, if they fulfil the general eligibility conditions and are calculated as indicated in Annex 2a of the Grant Agreement. Costs for internally invoiced goods and services directly used for the action may be declared as unit cost according to the partners' usual cost accounting practices if they fulfil the general eligibility conditions.
- **Indirect costs identification:** The EC will consider, as a general rule, 25% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except subcontracting costs, financial support to third parties, internally invoiced goods and services and exempted specific cost categories, if any).
- **Timesheets:** Time worked by the partners under the action must be supported by declarations signed monthly by the given person and the supervisor unless another reliable time-record system is in place. The actual number of hours spent on the project must be stated in the periodic reports and the financial statements. The absence of timesheets will make it impossible for the European Commission to contribute to the costs claimed for the activities carried out.
- **Justification of Costs:** All the documentation to support and justify the costs reported must be kept in order and made available for possible checks, reviews, audits, investigations, litigation or other pursuits of claims under the Agreement.

It will be taken into account that the EC does not finance deductible value added tax (VAT).

Beneficiaries must keep original documents for 5 years after the final payment. Digital and digitalized documents are considered originals if they are authorized by the applicable national law.

1.21. Audit

- **Audits:** The granting authority has the authority to conduct audits to ensure proper implementation of the action and compliance with the Agreement.
- **Audit Initiation:** Audits may commence during the action's implementation and continue until the time-limit stated in the Data Sheet of the Grant Agreement. The beneficiary will be formally notified of the audit initiation, and the audit period will begin from the notification date.
- **Audit Options:** The granting authority can choose to use its own audit service, delegate audits to a centralized service, or employ external audit firms.
- **External Audit Firm:** If an external audit firm is used, the beneficiary will be informed and granted the right to object on grounds of commercial confidentiality or conflict of interest.
- **Cooperation and Information Provision:** The beneficiary must cooperate diligently and provide requested information within the specified deadline to verify compliance with the Agreement. This information may include complete accounts, individual salary statements, or other personal data. Sensitive information and documents will be handled in accordance with Article 13 of the Grant Agreement.
- **On-Site Visits:** During on-the-spot visits, the beneficiary must allow access to sites and premises, including access for external audit firms. The beneficiary must also ensure that the requested information is readily available.
- **Accuracy and Format:** The provided information must be accurate, precise, complete, and in the requested format, including electronic format.
- **Draft Audit Report:** Based on the findings, a draft audit report will be prepared.



- **Observations:** The auditors will formally notify the beneficiary of the draft audit report, and the beneficiary will have 30 days from the notification to provide observations through a contradictory audit procedure.
- **Final Audit Report:** The final audit report will take into account the observations provided by the beneficiary and will be formally notified to them.
- **Language:** Audits, including audit reports, will be conducted in the language of the Agreement.



CONCLUSIONS

The present deliverable aims to provide a guideline to all partners to reduce overheads, ease the management work and increase the efficiency and quality of the work carried out in the project. The structures and procedures described herein have been agreed among all partners. Thereby, all persons involved in AGRO4AGRI project tasks should understand and use these rules, procedures and recommendations.

Besides, with AGRO4AGRI being a long-term project, the individuals involved in project may change during the project lifetime. Clear procedures will assist newcomers joining the project and help them to become quickly operational.

The present document should be considered as a complement to all other important documents which should be used for reference while the project is running: the Grant Agreement and its Annexes as well as the Consortium Agreement.

