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Quality Assurance Plan

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Introduction

The Quality Assurance Plan is the document setting out the quality practices for the project, and is to provide assurance that the quality requirements are planned appropriately. Once accepted by the Consortium, it becomes part of the documents. The Quality Assurance Plan should be adjusted, where applicable, to include co-ordinating instructions. This Quality Assurance Plan will be used by:

- The Partners of the Consortium (Beneficiaries BEF), responsible for preparing and amending deliverables

- Internal Quality Experts of Consortium Partners responsible for reviewing completed quality plans

- Any responsible of a Consortium Partner for approving work to be done by third parties, in order to complete deliverables

Quality Assurance planning is an integral part of management planning. It has been prepared in an early stage of the project, in order to demonstrate and provide the Consortium with the assurance that:

- The Grant Agreement requirements and conditions have been reviewed

- An effective quality planning has taken place

- The quality system is appropriate

The Quality Assurance Plan specifies the activities to be implemented, including their sequence, in order to ensure that the project and its deliverables conform to specific requirements. Those responsible for ensuring that the required activities are carried out, and the resources, which are crucial for their successful completion, are identified within the subsequent chapters of this document. In that respect, the Quality Assurance Plan includes explanation, necessary to show how quality requirements for activities are met.

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Quality Assurance Team

For assuring the proper quality of the work conducted during the project, a Quality Assurance Team (QAT) has been created. The QAT team is a subgroup of the project management board (as it is defined in the Project Grant Agreement).

The Quality Assurance Team (QAT) is defined with responsibility for the administration of the Quality Assurance Plan, and has the authority to identify problems during internal audits, and to initiate actions, resulting in effective problem solutions. All problems should be raised within the project meetings, unless an urgent problem, which is realized as a significant constraint to project progress work, comes up and should be handled via email exchange. The minutes of a project meeting should describe the exact problem and record the agreed solution, as well as the time bound action to be taken to solve it. Once a problem has been identified, there is a requirement to provide sufficient evidence that the problem has been cured. All involved in providing the Consortium with services are to be qualified in the area they are to work within, inspect or verify.

The QAT performs and verifies all work affecting the project quality. This is documented in the manual and is meant to encompass the following aspects:

1. Initiate action to prevent the occurrence of any non-conformity,

2. Identify and record any relevant problem,

3. Initiate, recommend and/or provide solutions through the reporting system,

4. Verify the implementation of solutions,

5. Monitor and control further processing, delivery or installation of any preferred solution to ensure that any reported non-conformance has been corrected.

The QAT should also ensure that the Quality Assurance Plan is available to all concerned and that its requirements are met.

The QAT will ensure the quality of the envisaged project results. Thus, it will be responsible, for:

- Developing a detailed quality strategy and criteria for each deliverable.

- Assuring the conformity of all deliverables with the initial criteria defined for them and guaranteeing that the deliverables are in accordance with the technical proposal.

- Consulting the Work Package Leaders, on the expected technical characteristics of the deliverables.

In that respect, the QAT members will undertake the following main tasks:

- Make an overview of the technical reports produced.

- Check the quality control of all deliverables submitted.

- Provide the WP Leaders with guidance (upon request) on the expected characteristics and contents of the relevant Deliverables.

As a result of the above mentioned responsibilities, the QAT members are to ensure that:

- All the outputs are consistent with the requirements as per the Grant Agreement.

- All the project reports / documents do have the highest quality, regarding their overview and context.

In order to meet the objectives, the QAT consists of one representative per partner and will be chaired by the representative of NCSR "D" (Anastasia Krithara). Table 2.1 presents the BioASQ Quality Assurance Team, as agreed in the kick-off meeting of the project by all partners.

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Anastasia Krithara	NCSR "D"
Michael R. Alvers	TI
Eric Gaussier	UJF
Axel Ngonga	ULEI
Patric Gallinari	UPMC
Prodromos Malakasiotis	AUEB-RC

Table 2.1: Quality Assurance Team

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Peer Review

3.1 Deliverable Peer Review process

The QAT will comment, whenever a technical report is released among the partners, and provide the WP leaders with guidance, based on their experience and relevance to the objectives of the respective WP.

As far as the Project Deliverables are concerned, two (2) examiners / evaluators are considered per each deliverable:

1. The first examiner / evaluator is a representative from the Consortium Members, who will act as an internal inspector and will be the most relevant (technically wise) one with the deliverable under consideration / examination. This member will be selected by the QAT representatives.

2. The second examiner / evaluator is the QAT representative of the partner the first examiner belongs to.

The process for the peer reviewing of a deliverable is as follows: The deliverable under consideration / examination will be forwarded, through the Work Package Leader, to all the members of the QAT. The deliverable must be in its pre-final draft version, from the authors' perspective, and must be available for review at least 15 days before its contractual delivery time as per the Grant Agreement. The first examiner as selected by the respective QAT member will study and revise the deliverable, within five (5) working days, and each of them prepares a draft "Peer review Report" (see chapter 5), which is collected by the QAT of the respective partner. The latter upon receiving the above report and consulting his/her "Peer Review Report", compiles a list with all the approved deviations that have to be repaired. Furthermore, he/she compiles a "Corrective Actions List", along with the person responsible for carrying this action and the required date to be done, always up to two (2) working days. The above list is, also, forwarded to the corresponding Work Package Leader(s), for their information. All the proposed corrections should be incorporated immediately within the specific deliverable, so as the final draft will be ready on time.

In table 3.1, the list of the partners who are responsible for reviewing each Project Deliverable is presented.

TASKS	Leader	DELIVERABLES	Reviewer
T1.1 Project Administration	NCSR'D'	D1.1 Project Wiki	-
T1.2 Reporting & Quality Assurance	NCSR'D'	D1.2 Quality assurance plan	AUEB-RC
		D1.3 6-monthly management report 1	-
		D1.4 12-monthly management report	-
		D1.5 6-monthly management report 2	-
		D1.6 Final management report	-
T2.1 Project Publicity	ULEI	D2.1 Project web site	-
		D2.2 Press releases - 1st version	-
		D2.4 Project leaflets – 1st version	-
		D2.7 Project leaflets – 2nd version	-
		D2.9 Project showcase	-
		D2.10 Journal special issue	-
		D2.12 Press releases - 2nd version	-
T2.2 Community Activities	ULEI	D2.6 BIOASQ social network	-
T2.3 Expolitation planning	TI	D2.3 Exploitation and dissemination strategy	UJF
		D2.11 Exploitation and dissemination plan	UJF
T2.4 Workshop Organizations	ULEI	D2.5 1st workshop	UPMC
		D2.8 2nd workshop	UPMC
T3.1 Establishment of Biomedical Expert Team	NCSR'D'	D3.1 Expert Team	-
T3.2 Data Source Selection and Data Collection	TI	D3.2 Report on existing and selected datasets	UJF
T3.3 Annotation Tool	ULEI	D3.3 Annotation tool - 1st version	NCSR'D'
		D3.6 Annotation tool - 2nd version	NCSR'D'
T3.4 Tutorials and Guidelines	AUEB-RC	D3.4 Tutorials and benchmark creation guidelines - 1st version	UPMC
		D3.7 Tutorials and benchmark creation guidelines - 2nd version	UPMC
T3.3 Creation of Benchmark Sets	NCSR'D'	D3.5 Benchmark set 1	TI
		D3.8 Benchmark set 2	TI
T4.1 Evaluation framework and data pre-processing	UPMC	D4.1 Evaluation framework specification – 1st version	ULEI
		D4.5 Evaluation framework specification – 2nd version	ULEI
		D4.2 Pre-processed benchmark set 1	-
		D4.6 Pre-processed benchmark set 2	-
T4.2 Evaluation Infrastructure	UJF	D4.3 Evaluation infrastructure software for the challenges – 1	AUEB-RC
		D4.7 Evaluation infrastructure software for the challenges – 2	AUEB-RC
		D4.9 Evaluation infrastructure software for future oracle use	AUEB-RC
T4.3 Technical Support	UPMC	D4.4 Report on challenge operation and technical support	ULEI
		D4.8 Report on challenge operation and technical support 2	ULEI
T5.1 Technology Overview	UJF	D5.1 Technology Overview Report 1	NCSR'D'
		D5.3 Technology Overview Report 2	NCSR'D'
T5.2 Challenge Evaluation and Roadmap	AUEB-RC	D5.2 Challenge Evaluation Report 1	TI
		D5.4 Challenge Evaluation Report 2 and Roadmap	TI

Table 3.1: The list of partners responsible for reviewing each project deliverable

3.2 Control of non-Conforming Deliverables

This section provides the procedures to be followed, when a Deliverable is not conforming to fundamental requirements. As it has, already, been stated in the previous section, the Deliverables peer reviewing is undertaken by the QAT members.

The responsible QAT members, after having studied the specific Deliverable under consideration, must evaluate it with respect to a set of key points and must conclude whether the Deliverable should be accepted or not. These key points can be distinguished into two categories and the assessment for the acceptance or rejection of the Deliverable is based on both groups.

The first category has to do with general comments and includes the following key points:

- Layout of the Deliverable

- Deliverable contents thoroughness

- Innovation level

- Correspondence to project and programme objectives

- Particular remarks in format, spelling, etc.

Apart from the above mentioned general key points, a set of specific comments are to be inspected for the specific Deliverable and are summarized in the following:

- Relevance

- Response to user needs

- Methodological framework soundness

- Quality of achievements

- Quality of presentation of achievements

The relevant comments produced by the QAT members will be included in a Deliverable Peer Review Report (see chapter 5).

All reviewers will send their Peer Review Reports within 5 working days from Deliverable draft receipt to the responsible Beneficiary for revising the Deliverable and to the Project Coordinator. The responsible Beneficiary will also forward the peer review report to the QAT. In order to achieve the synthesis, the QAT is delegated the authority to disregard some comments of the reviewers, for example in the case of conflicting comments coming from different reviewers.

The final rating of the Deliverable draft will be marked as:

- acceptable in the current state.

- acceptable with minor revisions.

- acceptable with major revisions (new quality assurance review required after revision).

The relevant Beneficiary has to respond by email, providing justification on whether corrections indicated by the peer reviewers can be accepted or not.

4

Conclusions

This document presented the processes for providing assurance, that the quality requirements are planned appropriately. This document, once accepted by the consortium, must be followed by all project Beneficiaries and members during the whole project life time.

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Annex: Peer Review Report

In this annex, the report of the peer review form is presented:

BioASQ: A challenge on large-scale biomedical semantic indexing and question answering

http://www.bioasq.org

FP7-318652
Quality Assurance Review

Deliverable No:
Deliverable Title:

Distribution: Restricted

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1. Objectives
Assess the satisfaction of the objectives of the document, as set BioASQ DoW:

(a) High

(b) Fair

(c) Poor

Comments:

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2. Technical Completeness
Regarding the technical completeness, this document is justified as:

(a) Excellent

(b) Good

(c) Poor

Comments:

3. Innovation
Regarding the innovation of the work presented, this documents innovative aspects are

(a) High

(b) Moderate

(c) Poor

Comments:

4. Presentation
Regarding the presentation of the work in this document, this is justified as:

(a) Excellent

(b) Good

(c) Poor

Comments:

5. QA confidence
Assess your confidence in reviewing this document:

(a) High

(b) Moderate

(c) Poor

Comments:

6. Final recommendation
This document is:

(a) acceptable in the current state.

(b) acceptable with minor revisions.

(c) acceptable with major revisions (new quality assurance review required after revision).

Comments:

Comments to the coordinator *(not to be sent to the authors):*