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Project Abstract

Biodiversity protection and restoration are critical for maintaining ecological balance and ensuring the planet's sustainability. In the absence of sustainable management and protection of natural resources, the negative impacts of climate change and other environmental issues will only increase.

Private investment can be a critical tool with the potential to play a transformative role in financing conservation and restoration efforts, as public financing alone may be insufficient to address the scale of these challenges.

By activating innovative sustainable finance solutions and incorporating technological advances within the field of geospatial analytics, private investment can be leveraged in a way that benefits the environment and secures investors' confidence.

BIO-CAPITAL is going to implement an interdisciplinary research and innovation endeavour by combining actions in the three fields of (i) biodiversity protection and restoration, (ii) biodiversity-friendly financing mechanisms and (iii) advanced space technology. Implementation will involve four key steps to leverage innovation:

- BIO-CAPITAL will analyse, understand and learn from use cases.
- BIO-CAPITAL will elaborate, monitor, and demonstrate through use cases.
- BIO-CAPITAL will co-develop, implement and amplify back to the use cases.
- BIO-CAPITAL will engage stakeholders in order to reach shared views on these three steps and how they can be effectively combined to increase financial flows for biodiversity protection, restoration and sustainability.

Foreword

The BIO-CAPITAL Project Handbook is designed to provide a clear and concise guide to the procedures, management practices and tools essential for the successful execution of the project. Its purpose is to ensure that all consortium members have a common understanding of the project’s structure, their roles, and the processes that govern project activities. By establishing a uniform framework for collaboration, this handbook facilitates effective communication, streamlines workflows and fosters a collaborative environment among all stakeholders.

Serving as a vital resource, the handbook offers the necessary information and guidelines to navigate the complexities of the project. Consortium members can effectively contribute to achieving the project’s objectives and fostering a sustainable bioeconomy by adhering to the outlined procedures and best practices.

This framework ensures clarity in roles and responsibilities while encouraging collaboration and innovation—elements crucial for the BIO-CAPITAL initiative's long-term success.

List of Participating Organisations

Participant No.	Participant Organisation Name	Country
1 (Coordinator)	CESKA ZEMEDELSKA UNIVERZITA V PRAZE	CZ
2	GEOSYS	FR
3	AGROSOLUTIONS	FR
4	PRATENSIS	SI
5	INSTITUTUL DE CERCETARE PENTRU ECONOMIA AGRICULTURII SI DEZVOLTARE RURALA BUCURESTI	RO
6	AGCURATE BV	NL
6.1	AGCURATE BILGI TEKNOLOJILERI ANONIM SIRKETI	TR
7	GND TECHNOLOGY	LT
7.1	GND ADVISORY	LT
8	ON YEDI SURDURULEBILIRLIK HIZMETLERI DANISMANLIK AS	TR
9	UNIVERSITE CATHOLIQUE DE LOUVAIN	BE
10	FORUM PER LA FINANZA SOSTENIBILE ENTE DEL TERZO SETTORE	IT
11	JSC ONE S.R.L.	IT
12	Carbone 4	FR
13	AGRI SUD OUEST INNOVATION	FR
14	AARHUS UNIVERSITET	DK
15	OIKOPLUS GMBH	AT
16	COLLABORATING CENTRE ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION GGMBH	DE
17	WESTCOUNTRY RIVERS TRUST LBG	UK

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Table of Contents

Contents

Project Information 2
Project Abstract 3
Foreword 4
List of Participating Organisations 5
Change Log: 6
Table of Contents 7
Definitions and Abbreviations 9
1. Introduction 11
1.1 Purpose of the Handbook 11
1.2 Overview of the BIO-CAPITAL Project 11
1.3 Project Governance Structure 12
2. Project Management Procedures 13
2.1 Project Management Roles and Responsibilities 13
2.2 Communication Procedures 14
2.3 Risk Management Procedures 15
2.4 Ethical Assessment and Ethical Issues 16
3. Project Meetings 19
3.1 Types of Meetings 19
3.2 Meeting Procedures 20
3.3 Reporting and Documentation 21
4. Deliverables and Milestones Management 21
4.1 Deliverable Preparation 21
4.2 Milestones Tracking 23
5. Activity Planning and Management 23
5.1 Work Package (WP) Planning 23
5.2 Task Management and Resource Allocation 24
5.3 Monitoring and Progress Reporting 24
5.4 Change Management 25
6. Templates and Tools 26

6.1 Reporting Templates 26
6.2 Meeting Templates 27
6.3 Financial and Budget Templates 27
6.4 Risk Management Tools 27
6.5 Document Control and Versioning 28
7. Stakeholder Engagement and Communication 28
7.1 Stakeholder Engagement 28
7.2 Public Communication and Dissemination 29
8. Quality Assurance and Control 31
8.1 Quality Review Process 31
8.2 Compliance with European Commission Requirements 32
8.3 Monitoring and Evaluation 32
9. Data Management Plan 33
10. Financial Management and Reporting 33
10.1 Budget Allocation and Financial Planning 33
10.2 Financial Reporting Procedures 34
10.3 Audits and Compliance 35
11. Conclusion 35

Definitions and Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CA	Consortium Agreement
CICES	Common International Classification of Ecosystem Services
CMS	Content Management System
CSS	Cascading Style Sheets
CZU	Czech University of Life Sciences Prague
D.	Deliverable
DMP	Data Management Plan
DoA	Description of Action
EC	European Commission
ESS	Ecosystem Services
EU	European Union
GA	General Assembly
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HTML	HyperText Markup Language
IPBES	International Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MS Teams	Microsoft Teams
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PC	Project Coordinator
PU	Public
SC	Steering Committee
SEEA	System of Environmental-Economic Accounting
SEO	Search Engine Optimisation

TL	Task Leader
UC	Use Case
WP	Work Package
WPL	Work Package Leader

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Handbook

The BIO-CAPITAL Project Handbook serves as a practical tool to support the smooth implementation of the project by offering detailed guidance on administrative, technical, and financial processes. It is designed to streamline project operations and ensure consistency across consortium members in adhering to agreed protocols.

This document provides specific instructions on key management areas, such as reporting requirements, budget management, deliverable submissions, and communication standards. By addressing these elements, the handbook acts as a centralised reference for maintaining alignment with the project's objectives and compliance with both the Grant Agreement (GA) and Consortium Agreement (CA).

Additionally, the handbook aims to clarify procedural expectations, foster accountability, and facilitate the coordination necessary for the project's timely and efficient completion. Through this shared resource, all consortium partners can navigate their responsibilities effectively while contributing to the overall success of the BIO-CAPITAL initiative.

Intended Audience:
The handbook is intended for all members of the BIO-CAPITAL consortium, including work package leaders (WPL), task leaders (TL), consortium members, and any external stakeholders who need to understand the project's internal processes. All members should refer to the handbook regularly to ensure consistent adherence to the procedures and timelines defined within. This BIO-CAPITAL handbook may also be useful and inspirational for other projects.

How the Handbook Should Be Used:
Consortium members are encouraged to consult the relevant sections of the handbook when planning and executing project-related tasks, preparing deliverables, organising meetings, or managing risks. It serves as a living document that will be updated periodically based on the project's evolving needs, lessons learned, and input from consortium members.

1.2 Overview of the BIO-CAPITAL Project

The BIO-CAPITAL project is a collaborative research initiative aimed at integrating biodiversity into European agricultural landscapes to deliver enhanced ecosystem services, improved climate resilience, and sustainable financial solutions. The project brings together a diverse group of partners, including academic institutions, industry stakeholders, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to build upon the benefits of biodiversity for agricultural systems and the wider environment.

Project Objectives:

- To identify and promote biodiversity-rich practices in agriculture that enhance ecosystem services such as pollination, water regulation, carbon sequestration, and flood control.
- To develop new methods of monitoring biodiversity using remote sensing and ground data while validating these tools in multiple ecosystems across Europe.
- To engage stakeholders, including policymakers and farmers, in adopting biodiversity-friendly practices that contribute to environmental and economic sustainability.

Scope of the Project:

The project covers various ecosystems across Europe, including grasslands, river corridors, wetlands, and agroecological landscapes. The project also addresses issues such as water quality, flood management, drought mitigation and the socio-economic benefits of biodiversity.

1.3 Project Governance Structure

The governance structure of the BIO-CAPITAL project is designed to ensure efficient management, decision-making, and coordination among consortium members. It includes key bodies that provide strategic guidance, oversee the implementation of project activities and ensure compliance with the project's objectives and timelines.

General Assembly (GA): The GA is the highest decision-making body within the project. It comprises one representative from each partner organisation and is responsible for major strategic decisions, including changes to the work plan, budget reallocation, and conflict resolution. The GA meets periodically to review project progress and address any high-level issues that may arise. Refer to the BIO-CAPITAL consortium agreement for a more detailed description.

Steering Committee (SC): The SC is responsible for the overall management and coordination of the project. It includes key members such as the Project Coordinator, WP Leaders, and other senior representatives from partner organisations. The SC oversees the day-to-day execution of the project, including tracking milestones, managing risks, and ensuring adherence to the project’s schedule.

Work Package Leaders (WPL) Group: The WPL Group comprises leaders from each WP responsible for implementing specific project tasks. WPLs ensure the coordination of activities within their respective WPs, manage resources and report progress. They also work closely with the Project Coordinator and Steering Committee to ensure deliverables are completed on time and meet quality standards.

This governance structure ensures that all consortium members understand their roles and responsibilities, enabling smooth execution of project activities and effective collaboration.

2. Project Management Procedures

Effective project management is essential to the success of the BIO-CAPITAL project. This chapter outlines the procedures, roles, and responsibilities that ensure the project's smooth operation and timely delivery of objectives. Clear communication and proactive risk management are key to maintaining alignment and addressing potential challenges.

2.1 Project Management Roles and Responsibilities

Project Coordinator (PC): The PC is the central point of contact for the project and is responsible for the overall coordination and management of the consortium. Key responsibilities include:

- Oversee the implementation of the project work plan and ensure the achievement of milestones and deliverables.
- Act as the main liaison with the European Commission (EC) and ensure compliance with the grant agreement.
- Manage financial distribution and monitor the budget to ensure efficient use of resources.
- Organise and lead the General Assembly, Steering Committee, and Work Package Leaders Group meetings to maintain project alignment and communication.
- Identify and address high-level risks, implement mitigation strategies, and resolve conflicts within the consortium.
- Monitor the quality of deliverables to ensure they meet project standards and prepare consolidated reports for the EC.
- Ensure all consortium partners adhere to regulatory, ethical, and contractual obligations in line with the grant agreement.
- Facilitate knowledge dissemination and exploitation of project results, aiming for long-term societal, economic, or environmental impact.

Work Package Leaders (WPL): The WPL are responsible for the management and execution of the tasks within their designated work packages. Their responsibilities include:

- Plan and coordinate activities in their work package.
- Ensure the timely delivery of deliverables and reporting progress to the PC.
- Identify and manage risks associated with their WP, including proposing mitigation strategies.
- Communicate regularly with task leaders and consortium members to ensure the smooth execution of WP activities.

Task Leaders: Task Leaders manage specific tasks within work packages and report directly to the WPLs. Their responsibilities include:

- Lead the completion of task-specific objectives.
- Monitor progress and report on task activities to the WP Leader.
- Ensure that deliverables related to the task are completed on time and meet the required quality standards.

Consortium Members: All consortium members are responsible for participating in project activities, providing expertise and contributing to completing tasks and deliverables. Specific responsibilities include:

- Collaborate with WP and Task Leaders to meet project objectives.
- Attend relevant project meetings and contribute to discussions.
- Report progress and risks associated with their activities to the relevant WPL.

Decision-Making Processes:
Decision-making within the consortium is collaborative, with major decisions requiring the approval of the General Assembly, as outlined in the Consortium Agreement, Section 6.3. The Steering Committee or the Project Coordinator can make decisions related to daily management and operational issues. In cases where consensus cannot be reached, issues may be moved to the General Assembly for resolution.

Escalation Procedures:
For any issues that cannot be resolved at the WP level, the matter is moved to the WPL. If unresolved, the matter can be moved to the Steering Committee. If further resolution is required, the General Assembly will address the issue. Any critical risks or conflicts that could impact the overall project timeline or deliverables will be moved to the Project Coordinator for intervention.

2.2 Communication Procedures

Effective communication within the BIO-CAPITAL project is vital to ensure that all consortium members are informed, aligned, and able to collaborate effectively.

Internal Communication Guidelines:

- **Email Communication:** Email is the primary form of communication for day-to-day project matters. Consortium members should ensure timely responses to emails, particularly those concerning deliverables, meetings, and critical updates. Emails to be with the subject: “BIO-CAPITAL: xxx”. As an example: BIO-CAPITAL: WP2 – topic”.
- **Online Collaboration Tools:** The project will use collaborative platforms such as primary MS Teams for virtual meetings and Google Drive for document sharing and version control. Task-specific discussions and coordination are also facilitated through these platforms. If necessary, alternative online tools for more sensitive materials might be used (Moodle or MS Teams).
- **Meeting Protocols:** Meetings should follow a set agenda, with minutes taken and action items assigned. Regular updates will be provided during scheduled meetings, such as WP leader meetings and the General Assembly.
- **Meeting reports:** For each meeting, including WPL meetings and General Assembly sessions, a report is generated detailing agenda items, minutes, and action points to ensure follow-up. The meetings are also followed and recorded by using Otter AI and Readmi AI, which assist in generating accurate transcriptions and summaries. These

reports serve as a record and reference for consortium members, ensuring continuity and addressing outstanding tasks or issues. The meeting reports will be accessible to all members through the project's document repository.

Frequency of Communication:

- **Steering Committee Meetings:** The Steering Committee will meet quarterly to review project progress and address any high-level issues.
- **WP Leader Meetings:** WP Leaders will meet on a need basis, usually bi-monthly, to coordinate cross-work package activities and share progress updates.
- **General Assembly Meetings:** The General Assembly will meet at least twice per year to review the overall project status and make strategic decisions.

Guidelines for Communication with External Stakeholders:
Any official communication with external stakeholders, including the EC, media, or public audiences, should be coordinated through the WP6 and Project Coordinator to ensure consistency and compliance with the project's Dissemination Communication and Exploitation Plan (D 6.1). WP leaders and consortium members are encouraged to consult the WP6 and Project Coordinator before engaging with external stakeholders on project matters to ensure alignment with overall communication strategies.

2.3 Risk Management Procedures

The BIO-CAPITAL project adopts a proactive approach to risk management, ensuring that potential risks are identified early and managed effectively to minimise impact on project outcomes.

Risk Identification:
Risks are identified at multiple levels: project-wide, WP-specific, and task-specific. Each WPL and TL is responsible for identifying potential risks within their scope of activities.
Risks are categorised as either technical, operational, financial, or related to external factors (e.g., policy changes, regulatory issues).

Risk Assessment:
Identified risks are evaluated based on their likelihood of occurrence and the potential impact on the project. This includes considering both short-term and long-term consequences.
Each risk is assigned a priority level (low, medium, high) based on its assessment.

Mitigation Strategies:
For each identified risk, a mitigation strategy must be defined, outlining steps that can be taken either to reduce the likelihood of the risk materialising or minimise its impact on the project.
Contingency plans are developed for high-priority risks, ensuring the project can continue even if the risk occurs.

Roles in Managing Risks:

- **Risk Owner:** The Risk Owner is the individual responsible for overseeing a specific risk. This is usually the WPL or TL where the risk originates.
- **WP Leaders:** WP Leaders monitor risks within their work packages and report any significant changes to the Steering Committee. They are also responsible for implementing mitigation strategies.
- **Project Coordinator:** The Project Coordinator manages high-priority risks that may affect the overall project.

Risk Identification and Reporting:

A risk is considered any potential event or condition that could impact the project's objectives, timeline, budget, or quality. Risks may arise from technical, financial, operational, or external factors.

Risks should be identified proactively by WP Leaders, the Project Coordinator, or any consortium member who recognises an emerging issue. Once identified, risks must be reported immediately to the Project Coordinator and entered into the project's risk register. The register will be regularly reviewed and updated.

Regular Risk Assessments:

Regular risk assessments will be conducted at Steering Committee meetings, where the status of identified risks will be reviewed, and any new risks will be discussed. The risk register will be updated continuously throughout the project lifecycle to ensure all risks are tracked and managed effectively.

2.4 Ethical Assessment and Ethical Issues

This chapter addresses the ethical considerations and compliance measures integral to the BIO-CAPITAL project. It outlines the project's commitment to maintaining the highest ethical standards in line with European Commission (EC) requirements and international best practices.

BIO-CAPITAL is committed to upholding ethical principles in all activities, particularly those involving human subjects, data collection, environmental impact and stakeholder engagement. The project will adhere to the guidelines set by the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and any relevant national ethical standards.

Core Ethical Principles:

- Respect for Persons: Ensuring the dignity, rights, and autonomy of all individuals engaged in the project.
- Beneficence and Non-Maleficence: Maximizing project benefits while minimising potential risks and harm.

- Justice: Equitable distribution of benefits and burdens across stakeholders and research participants.
- Transparency and Accountability: Clear documentation of all project processes and ethical approvals.

Identification of Potential Ethical Issues

- Data Collection and Privacy:
    - The project's extensive use of data, particularly when involving stakeholder engagement or field research, raises potential ethical issues related to privacy and data protection. Compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is mandatory, ensuring data is processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently. Additionally, the EU Data Act regulation will apply to any data provided by connected products and tools, ensuring compliance with regulations regarding data sharing, access, and usage.

- Informed Consent:
    - All human participants involved in surveys, interviews, or other interactions must provide informed consent. This includes a clear explanation of the purpose of data collection, the voluntary nature of participation, and the right to withdraw at any time.

- Use of Technology and Geospatial Data:
    - The deployment of advanced space technologies for geospatial data analysis must consider potential ethical implications, such as the unintended invasion of privacy or misinterpretation of data impacting local communities. To mitigate these risks, the project will implement data aggregation techniques to anonymise sensitive information, ensuring privacy protection. Additionally, informed consent will be obtained from all relevant stakeholders before collecting or analysing data. If monitoring biodiversity uplift or decline is perceived as an invasion of privacy by any party, the project will take measures to address these concerns through transparent communication and adjustments to data collection methods as necessary.

- Environmental Considerations:

Activities related to biodiversity protection and restoration should ensure that no ecological harm is inflicted during project implementation. Specific examples of mitigation strategies include:

- **Site Assessments:** Conducting thorough environmental impact assessments before initiating activities to identify potential ecological risks.
- **Monitoring Plans:** Implementing biodiversity monitoring plans to track the health of ecosystems and detect any unintended negative effects early.
- **Adaptive Management:** Adopting adaptive management strategies, which allow for adjustments to be made if adverse impacts are identified.

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engaging local communities and environmental experts to ensure that conservation efforts are aligned with local needs and knowledge.

Ethical oversight will be in place throughout the project to assess and mitigate any potential negative impacts on ecosystems, ensuring that all actions support long-term biodiversity goals without causing harm.

Procedures for Ethical Compliance

- Ethics Review Board:
    - The establishment of an internal Ethics Review Board (ERB) ensures that all activities comply with ethical standards. The ERB will include representatives from at least 5 partners, who will be responsible for reviewing and advising on the ethical aspects of project activities, ensuring that the project adheres to established ethical guidelines and regulations. Members of ERB can be nominated by every partner (by submitting a nomination to the Coordinator). After formal approval by the Coordinator, ERB members have to be approved by the General Assembly.
    - Members of ERB can be nominated by every partner (by submitting a nomination to the Coordinator). After formal approval by the Coordinator, ERB members have to be approved by the General Assembly.
    - The ERB will vote among its members to elect the chairman of the ERB.
    - The ERB will draft a protocol for the ethical assessment of all activities within BIO-CAPITAL, particularly those involving human subjects, data collection, environmental impact and stakeholder engagement.
    - The ERB will review, upon request, planned methodologies, data collection protocols, and potential risks, providing approval or recommending adjustments as necessary. ERB will also discuss any potential cases of non-ethical behavior and non-compliance to the ethical standards.
    - ERB will be discussing any case, which will be submitted to the ERB via the chairman.
    - ERB will notify Project coordinator of any outcomes of ERB, which will then be presented to the General Assembly.

3. Project Meetings

Effective meetings are essential for maintaining clear communication, making strategic decisions, and ensuring progress across the consortium. This chapter outlines the types of meetings that will take place within the BIO-CAPITAL project in accordance with the provisions set forth in the Consortium Agreement. It includes details on the procedures for organising and conducting meetings, as well as the necessary reporting and documentation practices, ensuring compliance with the formal requirements of the Consortium Agreement.

3.1 Types of Meetings

To ensure coordinated efforts and smooth project management, several types of meetings are held regularly within the BIO-CAPITAL project. Each meeting type serves a specific function, with defined participants and frequencies.

General Assembly (GA) Meetings:

- **Purpose**: The GA is the highest decision-making body of the consortium, responsible for strategic decisions regarding the project's direction, reviewing overall progress, approving financial plans and resolving high-level issues.
- **Frequency**: The chairperson shall convene ordinary meetings of the General Assembly at least once every six months and shall also convene extraordinary meetings at any time upon written request of any Member.
- **Participants**: All consortium members, including representatives from each partner institution, chaired by the Project Coordinator.

Steering Committee (SC) Meetings:

- **Purpose**: The SC is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the project and ensuring compliance with the work plan. This includes making decisions on operational issues, managing risks, and providing strategic guidance to the consortium.
- **Frequency**: Quarterly, with additional meetings scheduled as needed.
- **Participants**: The SC comprises the Project Coordinator, WP Leaders, and selected representatives from the consortium.

WP Leaders Meetings:

- **Purpose**: WP Leaders meetings are designed to ensure the alignment of work package activities, address interdependencies between WPs, and resolve any issues or bottlenecks. They provide a platform for WP Leaders to share progress, risks, and upcoming tasks.
- **Frequency**: The chairperson shall convene ordinary meetings on a need basis, usually every three months and shall convene extraordinary meetings at any time upon a proposal of a member if needed for Project Implementation.
- **Participants**: WP Leaders and the Project Coordinator.

Ad Hoc or Task-Specific Meetings:

- **Purpose**: These meetings are organised on a need basis to address specific issues or tasks that arise during the project's execution. They may focus on particular deliverables, milestones or problem-solving efforts.
- **Guidelines for Organising**: Any consortium member can request an ad hoc meeting. The requesting party must circulate a clear agenda to relevant participants, and outcomes must be documented and reported to the Steering Committee.

3.2 Meeting Procedures

Effective procedures for organising and conducting meetings ensure time is used efficiently, decisions are documented clearly, and actions are followed up appropriately.

Agenda Preparation and Distribution:

- The meeting organiser should prepare the agenda, typically the Project Coordinator for GA and SC meetings or the WP Leader for WP-specific meetings.
- Agendas should clearly outline the meeting objectives, topics to be discussed and any required materials or reports.
- The agenda should be circulated to all participants at least one week before the meeting to allow for preparation (especially in case of GA or SC meetings).

Meeting Facilitation:

- **Roles**: The Project Coordinator (PC) will chair the GA and SC meetings, while WP Leaders (WPL) will typically chair their respective WP meetings. However, the Project Coordinator may also chair WPL meetings when needed, ensuring consistency and alignment across the project. The chairperson is responsible for ensuring that the meeting stays on track, all topics are covered, and all voices are heard.
- **Minutes**: A designated note-taker will document key points from the meeting, including decisions made, action items, and deadlines. Alternatively, an AI tool can be used as a note-taker.
- **Follow-up Actions**: After the meeting, minutes must be circulated to all participants within one week. Action points should be clearly outlined, with assigned responsibilities and deadlines.

Templates for Agendas, Minutes, and Action Points:

- **Agenda Template**: A standard agenda template includes sections for meeting objectives, agenda topics, time allocations, and required materials.
- **Minutes Template**: The minutes template includes sections for participants, key discussion points, decisions, action items, and assigned responsibilities.
- **Action Points Template**: A simple table format can be used to list action points, responsible parties and deadlines.

3.3 Reporting and Documentation

Consistent reporting and documentation are crucial for tracking progress and ensuring accountability within the consortium. The BIO-CAPITAL project uses standard formats for meeting reports, deliverable updates and progress reports.

Standard Formats for Project Reports and Updates:

- **Progress Reports**: Each WP Leader will submit a Quarterly Technical Reports (QTRs), detailing the status of tasks, key accomplishments, potential risks and upcoming milestones.
- **Deliverable Reports**: Upon completing a deliverable, the responsible WP Leader must submit a report that includes a summary of the deliverable, any supporting documentation and a compliance check against project objectives.
- **Meeting Minutes**: All meeting minutes are documented using the standard template and stored in the project's shared repository for future reference.

Deadlines and Responsibilities for Reporting:

- **Quarterly Progress Reports:** Due on the last working day of each month, submitted by WP Leaders to the Project Coordinator.
- **Deliverable Reports:** Due within two weeks of the deliverable submission date, prepared by the respective Task Leader or WP Leader.
- **Meeting Minutes:** Due within one week of the meeting date, prepared by the meeting's designated note-taker and distributed to participants.

By following these meeting and reporting procedures, the consortium ensures that all project activities are well-coordinated, communication is transparent and progress is continuously monitored. This structured approach facilitates the successful management of the BIO-CAPITAL project.

4. Deliverables and Milestones Management

Effective management of deliverables and milestones is essential to the success of the BIO-CAPITAL project. This chapter outlines the procedures for preparing deliverables and tracking milestones to ensure project objectives are met within the agreed timeframes and quality standards.

4.1 Deliverable Preparation

Deliverables represent key outputs of the project and contribute to demonstrating progress, compliance with project goals, and alignment with the European Commission's expectations. The preparation of deliverables involves several steps to ensure quality, timeliness, and relevance.

Overview of the Deliverable Submission Process:

- **Deadlines**: Each deliverable has a specified deadline in the project's work plan. WP Leaders are responsible for ensuring that deliverables under their work package are completed on time. Deliverables should be submitted to the Project Coordinator at least two weeks before the official deadline for review. The Project Coordinator should inform the WP Leaders about the deliverable's deadline at least three months before the official deadline.
- **Quality Review**: Before submission, deliverables undergo a clear and structured quality review process. Deliverable reports will be made available for review one month before submission to allow adequate time for feedback. The review process includes internal reviews by the responsible WP Leader, Task Leaders, and, if necessary, other consortium members with relevant expertise. To streamline this, an Excel file will be maintained, listing each deliverable along with the partners appointed for review. The Project Coordinator will ensure that all deliverables align with the project's objectives and meet the required standards before submission to the EC.
- **Submission to the EC portal**: After receiving the finalised deliverable from the WP Leader, the Coordinator performs a final review, ensuring compliance with EC requirements, formatting and overall consistency. Once everything is confirmed, the Coordinator submits the deliverable to the EC on behalf of the consortium; however, in certain cases, the responsible WP Leader may also handle the submission.

Templates and Guidelines for Deliverable Formatting and Structure:

- **Formatting**: Deliverables must adhere to a standard format, which includes the following sections:
    - Title Page (Deliverable number, title, lead beneficiary, date).
    - Executive Summary.
    - Introduction.
    - Methodology or Approach.
    - Results and Findings.
    - Conclusions and Recommendations.
    - Annexes (if applicable).
- **Guidelines**: Each deliverable should align with the project's objectives and the description provided in the project's Grant Agreement. Templates for deliverables are stored in the project's shared repository, and all consortium members are expected to use them to maintain consistency and clarity.

4.2 Milestones Tracking

Milestones mark significant events or accomplishments within the project timeline, often linked to critical phases of development or deliverable completion. Tracking milestones ensures the project stays on schedule and provides early warnings of potential issues.

Tools for Tracking Milestones:
- WP Leaders are responsible for regularly updating the status of their work package milestones in the system, allowing the Project Coordinator to monitor overall progress.
- **Milestone Dashboard**: A Milestone Dashboard is maintained to provide a clear overview of the progress towards achieving each milestone. This dashboard is updated monthly and shared with the consortium to ensure transparency and collective oversight.

Procedures for Addressing Milestone Delays or Issues:
- **Risk Mitigation**: In the event of a delay or issue related to a milestone, the responsible WP Leader must notify the Project Coordinator immediately. A risk assessment will be conducted to determine the potential impact on the project's overall timeline and objectives.
- **Escalation Process**: If the delay poses a significant risk to project progress, the issue is escalated to the Steering Committee for resolution. The WP Leader and the Project Coordinator will present a plan to mitigate the delay, including reallocating resources or timeline adjustments, if necessary.
- **Contingency Planning**: The project plan includes contingency measures for critical milestones, ensuring that alternative paths can be followed in the event of unforeseen delays. These plans will be reviewed and activated as needed to keep the project on track.

By following these deliverable and milestone management procedures, the BIO-CAPITAL project ensures that outputs are delivered on time and to the required quality, contributing to the successful achievement of project goals.

5. Activity Planning and Management

Effective activity planning and management ensure that the BIO-CAPITAL project stays on track and meets its objectives and deadlines. This chapter outlines the processes for planning work packages (WPs), managing tasks and resources, tracking progress and handling project scope or timeline changes.

5.1 Work Package (WP) Planning

WP planning is a fundamental aspect of the project, as it aligns the activities of various partners with the project's overall goals.

Overview of WP Planning and Coordination:

- **Aligning Objectives**: Each WP is designed to contribute to the overall objectives of the BIO-CAPITAL project. WP Leaders are responsible for ensuring that the tasks within their WPs are well-defined and aligned with the project's goals.
- **Deadlines and Responsibilities**: WP Leaders, in collaboration with Task Leaders, must ensure that all tasks have clear deadlines, deliverables and assigned personnel. Responsibilities for meeting these deadlines should be clearly communicated to all consortium members involved.
- **Coordination**: WP Leaders will coordinate activities both within their WP and with other WPs to ensure alignment across the project. Regular communication and collaboration between WPs are key to managing interdependencies.

5.2 Task Management and Resource Allocation

Task management is the detailed breakdown of each WP into specific activities, while resource allocation ensures that each task has the necessary personnel and budget.

Guidelines for Task-Level Planning:

- **Setting Objectives**: Each task within a WP should have clear, measurable objectives that contribute to the WP's overall goal.
- **Defining Deliverables and Timelines**: Every task must have a defined output or deliverable and a realistic completion timeline. These details will be documented in the project’s management system for tracking and reporting purposes.
- **Dependencies**: Where applicable, tasks that rely on the completion of others should be identified and scheduled accordingly.

Tools for Resource Planning and Allocation:

- **Human Resources**: WP Leaders will collaborate with Task Leaders and the Project Coordinator to ensure that the necessary human resources (e.g., researchers, technical staff) are allocated to each task. Resource allocation will be regularly reviewed to ensure that the project has sufficient capacity to meet its objectives.
- **Budget Planning**: Each WP will have an allocated budget, which will be monitored to ensure that resources are used effectively. Budget tracking tools will be used to monitor spending against projections.

5.3 Monitoring and Progress Reporting

Progress at both the WP and task levels needs to be monitored and reported regularly to keep the project on track.

Procedures for Tracking Progress at WP and Task Levels:

- **Qarterly Reports**: WP Leaders will submit quarterly progress reports to the Project Coordinator. These reports will include updates on the status of tasks, any issues or delays and expected completion dates.
- **Milestone Reviews**: Regular milestone reviews will be conducted to assess progress towards critical project achievements. The Project Coordinator will review milestone progress and identify any risks or necessary adjustments.
- **Task Progress**: Task Leaders are responsible for tracking progress at the task level, ensuring their teams meet deadlines and achieve objectives. Any significant issues or delays must be communicated to the WP Leader and Project Coordinator.

KPIs and Metrics for Monitoring:

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**: Specific KPIs will be established to measure the project's success in areas such as deliverable completion, adherence to timelines, resource usage and achievement of objectives. The Project Coordinator (PC) will oversee the overall monitoring of KPIs, while WP Leaders (WPL) will track and report KPIs specific to their respective work packages.
- **Metrics**: Metrics will be used to monitor ongoing performance, such as the percentage of completed tasks, progress towards milestones and budget consumption.

5.4 Change Management

Given the complexity of the BIO-CAPITAL project, changes to the scope, timeline, or resource allocation may be required. This section outlines the process for managing such changes.

Process for Submitting and Approving Changes to Project Scope or Timeline:

- **Change Requests**: Any proposed changes to the project's scope, timeline, or budget must be submitted formally via a Change Request Form. WP Leaders or Task Leaders can initiate a change request if they believe adjustments are necessary.
- **Review and Approval**: The Steering Committee (SC) is responsible for reviewing major changes that significantly impact the project, such as major shifts in scope, budget reallocation, or any change that could affect the overall project objectives. Minor changes which do not have a substantial impact on the project's progress or outcomes can be approved by the Project Coordinator (PC) alone without the need for SC review. The PC will ensure that any such minor changes align with the project's goals and timelines.
- **Documentation**: All changes must be documented and reflected in the project's management tools, including updates to the Gantt chart, budget allocation and task lists.

By following these activity planning and management procedures, the BIO-CAPITAL project ensures that all work packages and tasks are well-coordinated, resourced appropriately and aligned with the project's overarching goals. Monitoring and change management processes help to identify risks early and allow for timely interventions to keep the project on course.

Project Amendments

A project amendment is a formal modification to the original project agreement, allowing for adjustments to the project's scope, budget, timeline, or objectives. Amendments are essential for adapting to unforeseen circumstances, incorporating new research findings or responding to changes in stakeholder needs.

Project amendments may be necessary under various circumstances, such as budgetary changes, where reallocating funds is required to address emerging research priorities or unexpected costs. Timeline adjustments may also be needed if project timelines require extension due to delays in deliverables, unforeseen challenges or the necessity for additional research phases. Furthermore, amendments can facilitate the inclusion of new partners into the project, enhancing collaboration and expertise. Additionally, refining objectives may be needed when original project goals must be updated to reflect new insights or shifts in research focus.

The process for implementing a project amendment typically involves several steps. First, a detailed proposal is prepared, outlining the reasons for the amendment, including specific changes to the project scope, budget, or timeline. Following this, it is important to engage with project partners to discuss the proposed changes and gather feedback. Once all necessary consultations are completed, the amendment proposal is submitted by the Project Coordinator to the EC portal for review and approval.

By utilising project amendments, the BIO-CAPITAL project can remain flexible and responsive to the evolving research landscape, ultimately enhancing its impact and effectiveness.

6. Templates and Tools

This chapter outlines the various templates and tools that will be used throughout the BIO-CAPITAL project to ensure consistency in reporting, communication, financial management, and risk assessment. These templates will provide structure for documentation and help maintain transparency and accountability across the consortium.

6.1 Reporting Templates

All consortium members will use standardised reporting templates to streamline the collection of progress data and ensure uniformity in reporting.

Templates for Monthly Progress Reports, Risk Reports, and Deliverable Reports:

- **Quarterly Progress Report Template**: This template will capture updates on the status of each WP and its tasks, key achievements and potential challenges or delays.
- **Risk Report Template**: This will include fields for identifying new risks, updating the status of existing risks, mitigation actions taken and future outlook.
- **Deliverable Report Template**: To ensure quality and consistency, this template will structure deliverables into sections, including objectives, methodology, results, and conclusions, with a final quality check and sign-off section.

6.2 Meeting Templates

Meeting templates will ensure that all project-related meetings are well-organised and documented.

Templates for Meeting Agendas, Minutes, and Action Lists:
- **Meeting Agenda Template**: This will include standard sections such as objectives of the meeting, agenda items, time allocations, and responsibilities. The template will be used for all formal project meetings.
- **Meeting Minutes Template**: This template will capture key discussion points, decisions made, and next steps. It will include sections for attendees, action items, deadlines, and responsible parties.
- **Action List Template**: An action list will be included in every meeting report, outlining tasks assigned during the meeting, along with deadlines and assigned individuals.

6.3 Financial and Budget Templates

Standard financial templates will be used to track financial resources and ensure transparency in project spending.

Templates for Financial Reporting, Time Tracking, and Budget Management:
- **Financial Reporting Template**: A comprehensive template to track project expenses, with breakdowns by WPs, categories (e.g., travel, equipment), and cost centres.
- **Time Tracking Template**: This template will allow consortium members to log hours worked on specific tasks and WPs to ensure compliance with time reporting requirements.
- **Budget Management Template**: This tool will help track the actual spending against the projected budget, highlighting any discrepancies or areas of concern.

6.4 Risk Management Tools

Managing risks effectively is crucial for the success of the project. Risk management templates will standardise how risks are identified, assessed and mitigated.

Risk Assessment and Mitigation Templates (e.g., Risk Log):
- **Risk Log Template**: This template will capture the details of identified risks, including their likelihood, potential impact, assigned risk owner, mitigation strategies, and current status. It will also track the implementation of mitigation measures and any changes in the risk profile. These updates will be incorporated into the Quarterly Technical Reports (QTRs) for each work package, ensuring that risks are reviewed regularly.

- **Risk Mitigation Plan Template**: This will provide a structured approach for WP and Task Leaders to outline steps for mitigating identified risks, including timelines and responsibilities. Updates to these plans will also be included in the QTRs, allowing for continuous oversight and timely adjustments.

6.5 Document Control and Versioning

Proper management of project documentation is essential to avoid confusion and ensure that all project members work with the latest versions of documents.

Guidelines for Naming Conventions, Version Control and Document Sharing:

- **Naming Conventions**: A standardised naming convention will be used for all documents to ensure consistency and easy identification (e.g., [WP Number][Deliverable/Task][Document Type]_v[Version]).
- **Version Control**: All documents will follow strict version control guidelines, with clear labelling of drafts, revisions and final versions. Changes will be logged and a version history will be maintained to track updates.
- **Document Sharing**: Documents will be shared through the project's online collaboration platform. Each document will have a designated owner responsible for uploading the latest version, and authorisations will be controlled to ensure access only by relevant stakeholders.

By using these templates and tools, the BIO-CAPITAL project ensures effective communication, financial transparency, risk management, and documentation control, thereby streamlining operations and maintaining consistency across the consortium.

7. Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

Effective communication and engagement with both internal and external stakeholders are vital to the success of the BIO-CAPITAL project. This chapter outlines the procedures and strategies for maintaining clear communication within the consortium, engaging with external stakeholders and disseminating information to the broader public.

7.1 Stakeholder Engagement

The project's **Stakeholder Engagement Strategy**, currently being developed as part of the project, integrates internal and external stakeholders into a unified framework to ensure alignment, foster collaboration, and maximise impact. Internal stakeholders coordinate and manage the strategy, while external stakeholders—such as advisory boards, industry partners, policymakers, NGOs, and researchers—bring critical insights, expertise, and support. This integrated approach ensures all stakeholders work in harmony to co-create an effective and scalable biodiversity certificate framework.

The following steps are planned or already underway for the development of the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy:

- Joint alignment and definition of interfaces between Project Coordination, Communication, and Stakeholder Engagement to ensure that Stakeholder Engagement Strategy will be integrated with communication and dissemination plans (end of December)
- Conducting interviews with internal stakeholders of the consortium. Analysis and evaluation of the internal interviews (end of December)
- Visualization and mapping of internal stakeholders (end of January)

External stakeholders play a crucial role in shaping and supporting biodiversity certificates. The Stakeholder Engagement Strategy will outline opportunities for integrating external stakeholders into project coordination and communication.

First the interviews, analysis and mapping of internal stakeholders shall be finished. For the external stakeholders following next step is planned:

- Stakeholder Identification & categorisation: The identification of external stakeholders, primarily for WP2, will be carried out in collaboration with the Use Case Owners, with categorisation completed by the end of January. Note that some stakeholders may be categorised but not explicitly mentioned to respect their preference for anonymity.
- Collection of additional relevant stakeholders in collaboration with consortium members (running process).

By implementing this comprehensive approach, the project ensures meaningful engagement, alignment, and impact across all stakeholder groups. The **tasks and interfaces** will be coordinated among the responsible parties for project coordination, communication, and stakeholder engagement, all within the framework of the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.

7.2 Public Communication and Dissemination

BIO-CAPITAL aims to raise awareness of the project’s goals and outcomes among the general public, in line with the overarching Dissemination, Communication, and Exploitation Plan.

Effective communication with the public is essential for enhancing visibility, engagement, and impact.

Overview of Public Communication, Press Releases and Social Media Guidelines:

- **Public Communication**: Clear and concise communication of the project's objectives, progress and results will be shared with the public through press releases, social media, and the project website. The Project Coordinator will review and approve all public-facing materials before release.
- **Press Releases**: Major milestones, such as the project launch, submission of key deliverables, and significant achievements, will be communicated through press releases to relevant media outlets. These press releases will be drafted by the communication team and shared with consortium partners for input.
- **Social Media Guidelines**: The project's social media accounts (e.g.,YouTube, LinkedIn) will be used to provide real-time updates and engage with a broader audience. Content will be curated to showcase project developments, events, and outcomes, with a focus on creating accessible and visually engaging posts. Social media posts should always reflect the project's objectives and comply with ethical guidelines.
    - Regular social media posts will include updates on project progress, upcoming events, achievements, and results.
    - Partners are encouraged to share social media content across their own networks to broaden the project's reach.

Templates for Communication with the Public, Including Project Briefs and Outreach Materials:

- **Project Brief Template**: A concise, easy-to-understand summary of the BIO-CAPITAL project's objectives, methodology and expected impact, designed for public outreach and to be shared with external audiences.
- **Outreach Materials**: Flyers, brochures, and infographics will be created for events and public engagement activities to communicate project goals and progress. These materials will include a mix of visual content and simple language to ensure accessibility to non-expert audiences.
- **Press Release Template**: A standardised format for drafting press releases, including sections for key messages, quotes from consortium members and a description of the project's significance.

This communication framework ensures that internal and external stakeholders remain informed and engaged, as outlined in the Dissemination, Communication and Exploitation Plan, facilitating successful dissemination of project results and achieving its goals.

8. Quality Assurance and Control

Ensuring the highest quality in deliverables, outputs, and overall project management are critical components of the BIO-CAPITAL project. This chapter outlines the processes, tools, and guidelines designed to maintain the integrity and quality of project outputs while ensuring compliance with European Commission requirements.

8.1 Quality Review Process

A structured quality review process will be implemented across the consortium to maintain consistency and high standards in all project outputs. The process involves internal peer review mechanisms to ensure that deliverables meet the expected quality levels before submission.

Procedures for Internal Peer Review of Deliverables and Outputs:

- **Peer Review Panel**: Each deliverable or major output will be reviewed by at least two internal reviewers from different partner organisations who are not directly involved in producing the deliverable. Reviewers will be appointed based on their expertise related to the deliverable's content. The Project Coordinator (PC) will ensure that the appointed reviewers have no direct involvement in the creation of the deliverable to maintain impartiality and ensure comprehensive feedback.
- **Review Timelines**: Deliverable reports will be made available for internal review one month before submission to allow adequate time for feedback, revisions, and final approval. Reviewers, including the responsible WP Leader, Task Leaders, and, if necessary, other consortium members with relevant expertise, will be assigned in advance. To streamline this process, an Excel file will be maintained, listing each deliverable along with the partners appointed for review. The Project Coordinator will oversee the quality review process to ensure that all deliverables align with the project's objectives and meet the required standards before submission to the EC.
- **Feedback and Revision Process**: Reviewers will provide written feedback, including suggestions for improvement, adherence to project objectives, and any necessary corrections. Deliverable authors are responsible for revising their work based on this feedback before final approval.

Guidelines for Ensuring Quality in Technical Outputs and Reports:

- **Technical Accuracy**: All outputs must be factually correct and supported by relevant data or sources. WP leaders are responsible for ensuring that technical reports, papers and other outputs meet high scientific and technical standards.
- **Consistency and Format**: All deliverables should follow established templates and guidelines for formatting, ensuring a consistent and professional appearance. These templates will include methodology, results, conclusions and references sections.
- **Clear Language**: Outputs must be written in clear, concise language, avoiding unnecessary jargon. They should be accessible to both expert and non-expert audiences, especially when intended for external stakeholders.

8.2 Compliance with European Commission Requirements

To ensure that the BIO-CAPITAL project adheres to the European Commission requirements, specific procedures will be in place to review deliverables and activities for compliance with the standards set by H2020 or Horizon Europe.

Procedures for Ensuring Compliance with EC Guidelines (e.g., H2020 or Horizon Europe Standards):

- **Compliance Checklist**: A detailed compliance checklist will be used for each deliverable to ensure alignment with EC guidelines, including ethical standards, data management protocols and open-access publication requirements.
- **Ethical and Legal Considerations**: Special attention will be given to ethical and legal requirements for all project activities, particularly those involving data collection, stakeholder engagement, and dissemination. The internal Ethics Review Board (ERB), supported by the Project Coordinator, will oversee regular reviews to ensure compliance with relevant standards and regulations. WP Leaders will be responsible for monitoring adherence within their respective work packages.
- **EC Feedback and Updates**: The Project Coordinator will regularly communicate with the EC project officer to receive feedback and updates on compliance requirements. Any changes or updates to EC policies will be communicated promptly to all consortium members.

8.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular monitoring and evaluation will be conducted to ensure that the BIO-CAPITAL project remains on track in terms of quality, timelines, and deliverables. This will include both formal evaluations and ongoing project health checks.

Tools and Procedures for Project Evaluation (e.g., Performance Metrics, Project Health):

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**: The project will define KPIs to measure progress against milestones and deliverables. KPIs may include metrics related to the number of deliverables submitted, quality of outputs, stakeholder engagement and the timeliness of reporting.
- **Project Health Reports**: Regular health reports will assess the overall status of the project, including risk levels, adherence to timelines, and resource utilisation. The Project Coordinator will be responsible for preparing these reports, with input from WP Leaders to provide updates on their respective work packages. These reports will be shared with the Steering Committee to ensure proactive management.

- **External Audits**: In compliance with EC requirements, the project may be subject to external audits to evaluate financial management, adherence to ethical guidelines and the quality of technical outputs.

Through the structured quality assurance and control processes outlined in this chapter, the BIO-CAPITAL project will ensure that all outputs meet the highest standards, comply with EC requirements and contribute effectively to the project's overall success.

9. Data Management Plan

(please see deliverable D1.1 Initial DMP)

10. Financial Management and Reporting

This chapter provides a framework for managing and reporting on the financial aspects of the BIO-CAPITAL project. It includes procedures for effective budget allocation, financial planning, reporting requirements and compliance with European Commission (EC) standards.

10.1 Budget Allocation and Financial Planning

Project Budget Overview:
The BIO-CAPITAL budget is allocated across work packages and tasks, reflecting the scope and intensity of activities planned for each consortium member. A comprehensive budget overview table should illustrate the distribution of funds across all WPs and partner institutions. Each partner's budget should also account for specific responsibilities, including any subcontracting requirements or specialised equipment needs.

Cost Categories:
Eligible cost categories should align with the EC guidelines and typically include the following:

- **Personnel Costs**: Salaries and benefits for team members working on the project, tracked by work hours per WP.
- **Travel Costs**: Reimbursable travel expenses, including transportation, accommodation, and daily subsistence, essential for project meetings, conferences and stakeholder engagement.
- **Equipment Costs**: Costs related to equipment purchased exclusively for project purposes, amortised per EC rules.
- Other goods, works and services – any additional expenses directly related to the project, such as consumables and supplies, promotion and dissemination, certificates or software licenses, that are essential for the project's objectives.
- **Subcontracting Costs**: When the required skills are unavailable within the consortium, necessary external expertise must be pre-approved and comply with procurement rules.

- **Internally invoiced goods and services**: which are provided within the beneficiary's organisation directly for the action and which the beneficiary values on the basis of its usual cost accounting practices.
- **Indirect Costs**: These typically cover institutional overheads like electricity, general administrative support, and maintenance, which support the project indirectly.

Contingency Planning:
To manage budget variances, a contingency fund may be designated for unexpected project needs. Budget monitoring will include routine checks to identify variances, allowing prompt allocation adjustments. Financial impact analyses should accompany any major shifts in project direction or WP scope to ensure alignment with overall budget limitations.

10.2 Financial Reporting Procedures

Periodic Reporting:
The project follows the EC's periodic reporting schedule, typically quarterly or bi-annually. Each partner is required to submit a financial report at the end of each reporting period, outlining expenditures and planned future costs. Reports should follow a standard format provided by the Project Coordinator, ensuring all financial data is consistently presented.

Templates for Financial Statements:
To support financial tracking, the project provides optional templates for recording project expenses, ensuring consistency and alignment with EC reporting requirements. These templates include:

- **Personnel Timesheets:** For recording hours worked per task and work package.
- **Travel Expense Documentation:** An itemised format for logging travel expenses, with sections for attaching supporting documents such as tickets and receipts.
- **Equipment and Direct Costs:** A structured layout for tracking expenditures aligned with the pre-approved budget.

These templates are designed to be flexible and easy to use. Partners are welcome to use their own institutional templates if preferred, ensuring compatibility with their existing systems. The provided templates can be adapted or integrated as needed to maintain consistency and streamline reporting across the consortium while meeting the project's requirements efficiently.

These templates facilitate comprehensive reporting and serve as a tool for both internal reviews and EC audits.

Reimbursement Procedures:
Reimbursements are subject to the submission of supporting documentation and approval from the Project Coordinator. Consortium members should submit claims using the standardised reimbursement form, detailing expenses with clear justifications and copies of original receipts. Upon approval, funds will be released as per the terms outlined in the consortium agreement.

10.3 Audits and Compliance

EC Audit Requirements:
Preparing EC audits involves maintaining clear documentation for all project-related costs and ensuring that expenses are easily traceable to specific project tasks or WPs. Partners must retain original records, such as timesheets, invoices, and procurement contracts, as specified by EC requirements.

Internal Audit and Financial Monitoring:
Periodic internal audits will verify that project funds are being utilised according to the agreed budget. Each WP Leaders are encouraged to regularly check in with partners within their WP to confirm that the budget is on track, without the need for detailed documentation unless issues arise. This approach minimizes paperwork while maintaining oversight. Financial monitoring reports, prepared by the Project Coordinator, will highlight spending trends and flag potential budget deviations for resolution.

Risk Assessment in Financial Management:
Potential financial risks include budget overruns, delays in funding allocation and unforeseen costs. To mitigate these risks, the project will establish risk monitoring procedures, including early identification of deviations, regular budget reviews and an escalation process for addressing significant financial issues promptly.

11. Conclusion

The BIO-CAPITAL Project Handbook serves as a comprehensive guide to ensure the smooth and efficient management of our project. By establishing clear processes, roles, and communication protocols, this handbook aims to help collaboration, accountability, and alignment across our consortium.

As we progress now and we will progress in the future through the various stages of the BIO-CAPITAL project, this handbook will be a **living document**, updated as needed to reflect changes and lessons learned. Your collaboration, dedication, and adherence to the guidelines outlined here will be crucial in delivering the project's ambitious goals.

Thank you for your commitment to the BIO-CAPITAL project.