



D10.3

**MID-TERM REPORT ON PROJECT
MANAGEMENT**

Project Name	EmpoWering EDUC for Inclusive Development of the ERA
Project Acronym	EDUC-WIDE
Grant Agreement No.	101136533
Programme	HORIZON.4.1 - Widening participation and spreading excellence
Topic	HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-03-01 - European Excellence Initiative
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File Name	Mid-term Report on Project Management
Work Package	WP10
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Name responsible Institution	Masaryk University (MUNI)
Key Words	Project governance, project monitoring, data management, risk management, Ethical issues
Abstract	Drawing on the extensive experience of its member universities, the project has established essential governance bodies to ensure effective coordination and strategic oversight. Regular meetings and structured reporting mechanisms enable transparent communication and informed decision-making across all levels of the project. Key processes such as project monitoring, risk management, data governance, and ethical oversight have been systematically integrated.



History of changes

Version	Publication Date	Change
0.1	08.04.2025	Initial draft
0.2	30.06.2025	Second draft adjusted to partner's comments
0.3	04.07.2025	Adjustments to partners' comments
1.0	20.8.2025	Final version

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Abbreviations

EDUC – European Digital UniverCity
 PMG – Project Management Group
 WP Leader – Work Package Leader
 R&I – Research and Innovation
 KPI – Key Performance Indicators
 SPEP – Seed panel Expert Group

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1. Introduction

This document describes activities within each task belonging to Work Package 10 connected with the project management and administrative aspects of the project implementation. It covers an 18-month period - the first half of the project - spanning from March 2024 to August 2025.

Given the project's complexity and the number of partners involved, effective project governance and management are essential for a smooth project implementation.

The structure and functioning of the project's governance bodies and operational procedures are outlined. It provides an overview of how the EDUC-WIDE project is organized and how progress and possible risks are monitored and reported.

Handling the research data is discussed in this document only briefly, as Data Management Deliverables and updates (Mid-term and Final) of the Data Management Plan are separate deliverables.

Ethical considerations are addressed through the appointment of an Ethics Advisor, ensuring compliance with institutional and research standards, particularly in sensitive research areas.

The changes that occurred during the first half of the project implementation are outlined as well, as an inevitable feature in the implementation process.

All together, these structures and procedures ensure the EDUC-WIDE project remains aligned with its goals while maintaining integrity, accountability, and adaptability.

2. Establishment and Operation of Project Governance Bodies (T10.1)

The EDUC Alliance is composed of experienced members and reputable universities with a strong track record in research projects and participation in both national and international funding calls. All member institutions are familiar with the opportunities and challenges that come with project implementation. While each university has its own organizational structure and operational preferences, and operates within distinct national, political, and sociological contexts. Sharing best practices and exploring the most effective ways for all partners to contribute remains a core aspect of the Alliance's collaborative efforts.

The EDUC-WIDE consortium consists of 9 universities:

1) Masaryk University	Coordinator
2) Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University	Beneficiary
3) University of Cagliari	Beneficiary
4) University Jaume I	Beneficiary
5) University of Potsdam	Beneficiary
6) University of South-East Norway	Beneficiary
7) University of Rennes	Associated Partner
8) University Paris Nanterre	Associated Partner
9) University of Pécs	Associated Partner

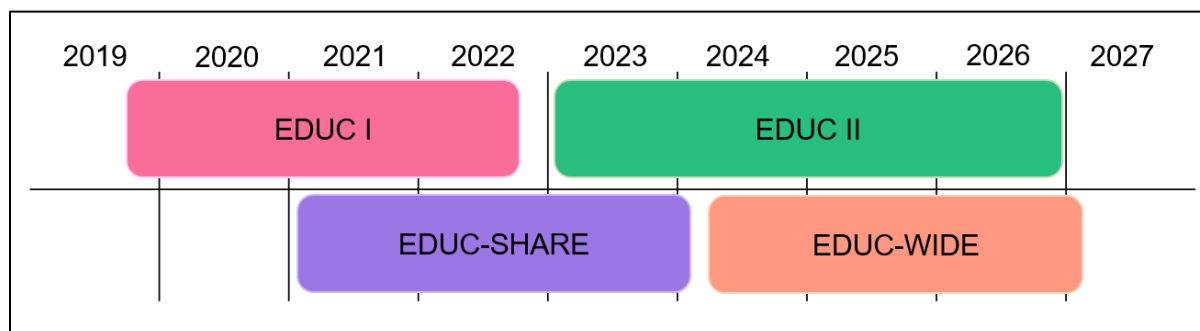


Fig. 1 – Chronological Overview of EDUC projects

EDUC-WIDE builds on the experience (Fig. 1) of the EDUC Alliance, which has been active since late 2019, supported by the ERASMUS+ program. In addition to the educational dimension, the Alliance cooperates in a research-oriented one as well. The EDUC-SHARE project, which preceded EDUC-WIDE, identified common areas of interest and laid the groundwork for future infrastructure collaboration. Several areas are now being further developed within the scope of EDUC-WIDE.

A close look at EDUC-WIDE is given by the EDUC project, as the progress of EDUC-WIDE is from time to time presented at the EDUC II Steering Committee Meetings, while the selection of research infrastructures for the 1st Call to Access to Research Infrastructures was presented to the EDUC Board for Research, represented by Vice-presidents for Research.

Effective project organization is key to achieving the project's goals. It involves structuring your team, clearly defining roles and responsibilities, and establishing strong internal communication channels (keeping everyone informed throughout the project).

2.1. Establishment

The EDUC-WIDE team held its first official gathering during the **Kick-off meeting in Brno** on March 11-12, 2024. At this meeting, MUNI appointed a dedicated Project Manager for EDUC-WIDE, while all partner institutions designated their representatives for the Project Management Group (PMG) and the Steering Committee Members. This initial assembly was a key step in establishing the project's governance and enabling partner coordination.

At the beginning of the project, each Partner's university nominated representatives for the following groups:

- The **Steering Committee** is the main decision-making body, consisting of 1 representative from each partner. The Steering Committee meets every 12 months.
- **WP Leaders** monitor the progress within their work package. WP Leaders and **Co-Leaders** coordinate activities on their respective Work Packages with the aid of dedicated expert groups.
- **Expert Groups** are working groups of researchers and innovators responsible for development within the 4 focus areas: Open Science, Research Assessment, Career Diversity, and R&I Collaboration. These teams work on developing and implementing R&I initiatives that align with ERA priorities
 - In addition to the main expert groups, certain tasks required the formation of **dedicated expert task forces** to address specific topics. Special task forces were established for: EDUC Fellowships, Research Management Training, Seed Projects.
 - Tasks related to Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) and Career Diversity varied across institutions. Some partners appointed the same representatives across these areas, while others designated different experts based on institutional needs and relevance.
- The **Project Management Group** comprises the Lead project manager (from Masaryk University) and project managers' representatives from all universities. This group is responsible for overseeing the project's overall progress, ensuring timelines are met, and coordinating efforts across different expert groups.
- **Outreach and Communication Team:** led by the University of Pécs, handles internal and external communications, highlighting the project's achievements.

MUNI, responsible for *WP10 Project Management*, has established an electronic project repository in MS Teams to keep all documents available to all partners.

Linkage and relations in the implementation team (Fig. 2)

- **Coordinator (Masaryk University):** The coordination role is held by Masaryk University, represented by the Principal Investigator and the Lead Project Manager. They are responsible for maintaining communication with the Granting Authority as well as with all project partners. The coordinator also serves as the main point of contact for the EDUC-WIDE Steering Committee and the Ethical Advisor.

- **Project Management Group:** This group oversees the implementation of all work packages and tasks at their respective institutions. Its members serve as key contact points for updates and internal coordination, with a clear understanding of how to mobilize relevant experts and resources within their organizations.
- **Work Package Leaders:** WP Leaders are responsible for coordinating the work of expert groups assigned to their respective packages. While the composition of teams in WP1 and WP3 has remained consistent, WP5 and WP7 involve a broader range of tasks, often requiring contributions from different institutional experts depending on the topic.

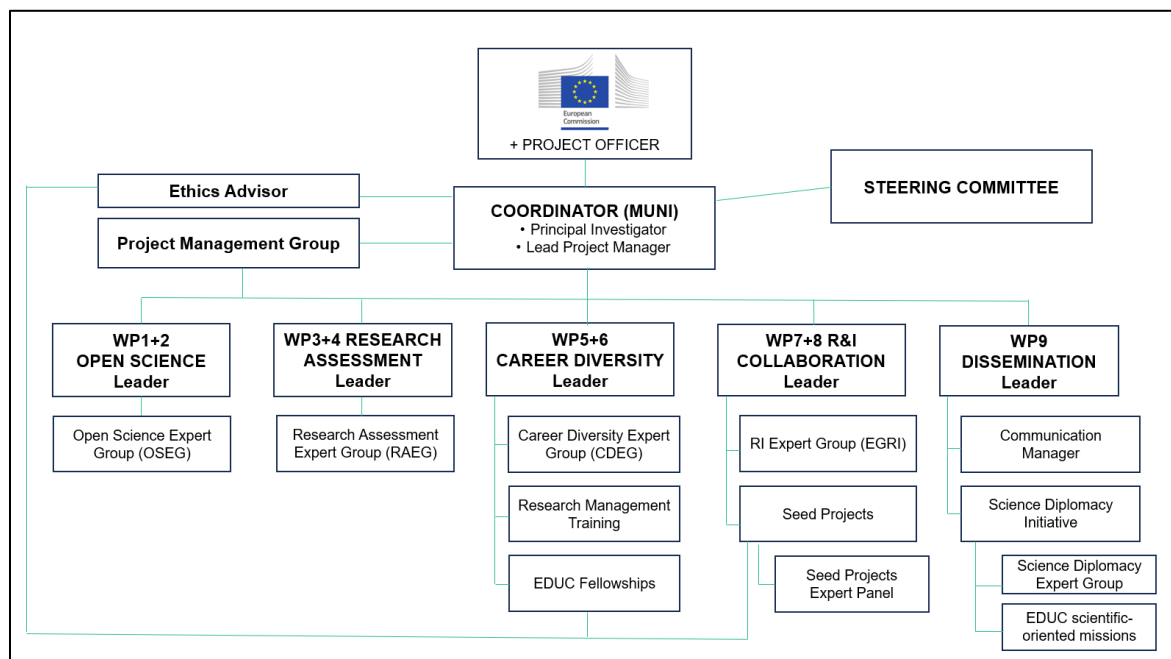


Fig. 2 – EDUC-WIDE Project Governance Structure

- **Ethical Advisor:** Ethical oversight is provided by the coordinator, whose designated expert evaluates the ethical relevance of activities and determines whether formal approvals are required for specific calls under EDUC-WIDE. This includes the 1st and 2nd Calls for Access to Research Infrastructures, the Call for the Knowledge Exchange Scheme for Research Infrastructures, the Seed Projects, and the EDUC Fellowships.
- **Seed Project Expert Panel:** This panel was established specifically for the evaluation of Seed Project proposals and the selection of the successful applications. In addition to the initial review, the panel is also responsible for assessing final reports and evaluating the overall impact and benefits of the call.

2.2. Operation

The Steering Committee holds annual meetings; typically, vice-rectors are appointed from partner universities to review implementation progress, alignment with the schedule, and the achievement of KPIs.

The first Steering Committee meeting was held on February 26, 2025. During the session, updates were presented on several key work packages—WP1: Open Science, WP3: Research Assessment, WP5: Career Diversity, WP7: Research & Innovation Collaboration, WP9: Dissemination & Communication, and WP10: Project Management—to ensure top-level management remained informed about the project's progress.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 2026, where ongoing developments will be reviewed and strategic adjustments considered as necessary.

In addition to meetings, the Steering Committee issued written approvals on specific topics outlined in the Grant Agreement.

- Authorization of Dissemination, Communication, Exploitation Plan (M6)
- Authorization of the Seed Project Call documentation (M8)
- Authorization of Seed Project Expert Panel Members (M11)
- Authorization of Seed Projects selected for funding (M15)

Every two months, **WP Leaders and Co-Leaders** take part in the PMG Meeting to present updates on the activities and progress of their respective expert groups.

They report on achievements in their expert area in relation to the Grant Agreement, provide the status of upcoming Milestones and Deliverables, and summarize recent or planned meetings. They also share plans for events designed to engage local research communities, experts, RMAS, or (top) management (open science, research assessment).

Monthly project manager meetings serve as the primary channel for information flow. During these meetings, an overview of upcoming meetings and events is provided, and the status of the planned event organization is reviewed. Participants are informed about forthcoming deliverables, milestones, and their schedules. Additionally, current topics and issues are discussed.

An in-person Project Management Meeting in Pécs was held on June 12th, 2025 (Fig. 3).

- During the session, each partner presented how EDUC-WIDE is perceived and integrated within their home institutions. These presentations provided valuable insights into each partner's organizational structure and working methods, helping to clarify why certain processes may take longer at some universities.
- The meeting then moved on to review draft versions of two deliverables: the Mid-term updated Dissemination and Communication Plan, and the Mid-term Project Management Report.
- The final part of the agenda focused on exchanging lessons learned and discussing practical matters related to the transition of Leaders and Co-Leaders, as well as the submission of deliverables.

Personal contact plays a vital role in the project by enabling direct information sharing, facilitating in-depth discussions of processes, and guiding the identification of the most effective implementation strategies.

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PMG Meeting Schedule

Venue: University of Pécs, Szentágothai Research Centre, Ifjúság útja 20, Pécs 7624 Magyarország

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Wednesday June 11th

Arrival to the beautiful city of Pécs.

19 - 20 Social Dinner (city centre restaurant)





Thursday June 12th

9:00 - 9:10 Welcome & Introduction

9:10 - 10:00 Partners' Perspective on EDUC-WIDE: each partner explains the position and perception of EDUC(-WIDE) at the partners' university + stakeholder analysis

10:00 - 10:45 Science Diplomacy Introduction

10:40 - 11:00 Caffeine and sugar refueling

11:05 - 11:45 D10.3 Mid-term report on Project Management
D9.2 Mid-term report of DCEP (Communication)

11:45 - 12:00 Project (Management) Quiz

12:00 - 12:45 Wrap-up, Lessons Learned

12:45 - 13:15 Joint sandwich lunch with RAEG



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Fig. 3 – EDUC-WIDE Project Management Meeting in Pécs, held on 12th June 2025

3. Project Monitoring and Reporting (T10.2)

Monitoring project progress (Tab. 1) is essential for keeping your project on track and ensuring timely delivery. By effectively managing project progress, one can identify potential issues early, keep the team focused, and ensure the project stays aligned with its objectives.

Progress and performance are regularly checked at the **PMG Meeting with WP Leaders**. The main project manager oversees the course of the project activities, which is supported by the insight of the local project managers at partner universities.

The **6-month progress report** is the system that tracks the performance and course of the project activities within the Work Packages. WP Leaders fill in the template, focusing on progress reached within the given time period, organized events, and outcome-related KPIs. Institutional administrators provide a report on budget utilization, mobility, and impact indicators.

Regular **reporting to the Steering Committee** (yearly meetings) plays a vital role in keeping the senior leadership of partner institutions informed, strengthening their understanding of how EDUC-WIDE activities align with and contribute to broader institutional priorities.

	Purpose	Medium	Frequency	Audience
Meetings with WP leaders	Progress overview	Online meeting	Every 2 months	WP Leaders and Project Managers
PMG meetings	Actual issues and topics, event organization	Online meeting	Monthly	Project managers
6-month reporting	Gathering of the information on the budget draw and WP completion	Written report	6 months	Lead Project Manager
Steering Committee meeting	Implementation status, risks, deviations	Online call / in-person meeting within EDUC 2	Once a year	EDUC-WIDE Steering Committee members
Periodic Report + Project Review	Provide evidence of project implementation.	online	M21, M36	Granting Authority, EDUC-WIDE Leadership
Communication and Dissemination Report	Monitor communication and dissemination activities linked with EDUC-WIDE across the partner institutions	Collaborative Excel Sheet in MS Teams	continuous	PM Managers and Communication Manager

Tab. 1 – Overview of Reporting and Monitoring activities within EDUC-WIDE. These regular check-ins help ensure the project remains on track and aligned with its objectives.

Finally, **reporting to the granting authority** involves two planned submissions: a continuous report after the first 18 months, scheduled for submission in Month 21 (M21), and a final report at the end of the 36-month project period, due in Month 36 (M36).

In addition, the EDUC-WIDE team has developed a shared Excel spreadsheet for **reporting communication and dissemination activities** at each partner university. The spreadsheet is structured to align with the F&T portal tables, making it easier to collect and organize outreach activities.

4. Data Management (T10.3)

Task 10.3 generates separate deliverables, including the Initial Data Management Plan (M6), the Mid-term Update on the Data Management Plan (M18), and the Final Data Management Plan (M36). The Data Management Plan is reviewed every six months, incorporating new inputs from EDUC-WIDE activities, particularly research-related ones.

The **Initial Data Management Plan (D10.1)** was approved by the Project Management Group (PMG) and submitted in August 2024 (M6) according to the project timeline. This document provides essential information, primarily focusing on administrative outputs relevant to the first six months of the project.

The **Mid-term update of the Data Management Plan (D10.2)**, scheduled for submission in M18 (August 2025), will also be a separate deliverable. It will integrate inputs from the 1st Call for Access to Research Infrastructures.

The **Final update of the Data Management Plan (D10.4)**, due M36) will encompass remaining calls, including Seed projects, EDUC Fellowships, and the second Call for Access to Research Infrastructures.

5. Ethical Issues Management (T10.5)

In the context of the EDUC-WIDE project activities - namely, Seed Projects, EDUC Fellowships, and Access to Research Infrastructures - an ethical evaluation is required to assess the ethical aspects of the research conducted.

Masaryk University provides an Ethics Advisor, a member of the MUNI Research Ethics Committee, to carry out this evaluation. The advisor will assess the winning research applications to determine whether formal approval from an Ethics Committee is necessary (e.g., biomedical research, projects in the psychology field, or projects where sensitive personal data are collected and processed).

If a project or fellowship is deemed to require ethical approval, the applicant must contact the Ethics Committee of their home institution to initiate the approval process. In the case of Seed Projects involving multiple partner institutions, ethical approval must be obtained from all participating institutions.

So far, only one Seed Project has been identified as requiring approval from an Ethics Committee. This project must obtain ethical clearance from all three participating partners/institutions.

6. Risk Management (T10.4)

Risk Management serves to understand risks and opportunities, how they could affect a project, and how to respond to them. To ensure the successful completion of a project, it is essential to monitor and manage risks continuously.

Risk Analysis

To manage risks effectively, they must be assessed, ranked, and prioritized.

A dedicated document, **Risk Register** (Annex 1), was developed at Masaryk University to track risks systematically. This register will be updated regularly throughout the project to ensure ongoing identification, assessment, control, and monitoring of risks.

Risk Monitoring

Risk monitoring at all levels is based on high-quality communication between the different actors and timely reporting of any problems

- **Each Work Package (WP) Leader** is responsible for updating the Lead Project Manager on the progress and status of their respective WP. Any unexpected risks must be reported promptly.
- Newly emerging risks will be reviewed and discussed in regular project management meetings.
- **The Lead Project Manager** is responsible for overseeing regular risks and implementing appropriate mitigation measures.
- **Risks that significantly impact** the project's scope, timeline, or budget will be escalated to the Steering Committee, which will determine the necessary mitigation strategies.
- Each project Partner is accountable for their financial decisions and financial reporting.

Risks Encountered

During the first 18 months of project implementation, the risks encountered primarily aligned with two types outlined in the project's risk register:

- **Risk No. 7 – Unfavorable Security Situation in Ukraine:** This was addressed by organizing the OSEG meeting in a hybrid format to ensure participation despite the challenges.
- **Risk No. 11 – Frequent Staff Turnover:** A leadership change in WP1 (Open Science) in M7 and in M15 slowed down the implementation for a while as the leaders required a little time to familiarize themselves with the scope and timeline of the EDUC-WIDE project.

7. Changes

Change is an inevitable part of project implementation. Deviations from the original Grant Agreement have arisen, particularly concerning milestones, deliverables, and key performance indicators (KPIs).

These changes have been discussed and approved by the Project Officer.

Milestones

- **MS1 RIs participating in the Knowledge Exchange Scheme selected**
Original due date: August 2024 (M6)
New submission date: November 2024 (M9)
- **MS5 EDUC Strategy for Reforming Research Assessment Formulated**
Original due date: May 2025 (M15)
New submission date: August 2025 (M18)

Deliverables

- **D7.1 Report on the First Call for Access to Research Infrastructures**
Original due date: August 2025 (M18)
New submission date: November 2025 (M21)
- **D3.1 EDUC Strategy for Reforming Research Assessment**
Original due date: May 2025 (M15)
New submission date: August 2025 (M18)

KPIs

- **No of Seed projects implemented**
Original value: 10
New approved value: 8

8. Conclusions

The EDUC-WIDE project setup is carefully crafted to foster collaboration, innovation, and excellence across its member institutions; the project is on a clear path to achieving its goals.

At the operational level, cooperation among local management teams has been smooth and effective, allowing for efficient day-to-day coordination and seamless implementation of activities. This solid foundation has strengthened mutual trust among partners and ensured that work packages are delivered in a coherent and timely manner.

Simultaneously, top-level leadership remains actively engaged through ongoing strategic dialogue, regular updates, and key decision-making processes. Their involvement not only ensures alignment with the broader vision of the alliance but also serves as a catalyst for institutional transformation and innovation, amplifying the project's long-term impact.

Establishing of dedicated governance and management bodies — such as the Steering Committee, Project Management Group, Work Package Leaders, and Expert Groups — ensures coordinated and efficient project execution across all partner institutions. These entities play a critical role in ensuring coordinated, transparent, and efficient execution of the project across all partner institutions.

Regular meetings, structured reporting, and clear communication channels have fostered a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

Risk monitoring at all levels is based on high-quality communication between the different actors and timely reporting of any problems.

Data management is conducted in alignment with project calls and encompasses a wide range of disciplines and research domains.

Ethical oversight mechanisms further safeguard the integrity and sustainability of project activities.

By building on the strengths and experiences of each partner university, EDUC-WIDE is not only achieving its core objectives but also laying the groundwork for long-term collaboration and integration within the European Research Area.

The successful implementation in the research area has demonstrated clear benefits for the partners, prompting the entire EDUC-WIDE consortium to seize the opportunity presented by the open WIDERA EEI call. The consortium aims to further strengthen and expand its established collaboration.

7. Annexes

Annex 1 – EDUC-WIDE Risk Register

No.	WP		Probability	Severity	Risk Rating	Risk response
1	1,2	Lacking consensus and commitment on Open Science recommendations for EDUC	3	2	6	We will present the intermediate outcomes of OSEG to EDUC-SC to ensure a common understanding in EDUC. We may choose different speed in adoption of certain measures at certain partners, if there is no consensus.
2	3,4	Lacking consensus and commitment on research assessment priorities for EDUC.	2	3	6	We will present the intermediate outcomes of RAEG to EDUC-SC. Many aspects will rely on national level, and will thus be addressed variably at individual institutions.
3	1,2,3,4	Low interest from top management in training on Open Science and research assessment	3	3	9	We will address the EDUC-SC which comprises (vice-) presidents/rectors to reach top level in EDUC Universities. Alternatively, we will train leading researchers as pioneers
4	5,6,7,8	OpenUp fails to deliver a suitable environment for interaction spaces and calls.	2	3	6	We can work via e-mail, or other project / team management tools, though the efficiency and level of integration would not be as high as we foresee with OpenUp
5	5,6,7,8	Low interest of researchers in EDUC Fellowships and Seed Projects.	2	4	8	EDUC-WIDE calls will directly follow up on the development of the Long-term R&I Agenda of the alliance; the underlying survey will give us a good contact database for direct address.
6	7,8	Low interest in using RI of Widening partners	2	3	6	We are already working to promote EDUC RI via virtual intro sessions, which we may repeat if needed.
7	1-10	Unfavorable security situation in Ukraine	3	3	9	If the situation does not allow in-person meetings in Ukraine, we will use our rich experience with virtual environments to organize the meetings online.
8	1-10	Poor internal communication - information does not reach people involved in the activity/Task	3	4	12	There is a project contact list, and Expert Groups have mailing lists with dedicated members from each partner. Regular Expert Group meetings, together with 2-month reviews with PMs, provide an overview of activities in the project, which will help get members informed.

No.	WP	Description of Risk	Probability	Severity	Risk Rating	Risk response
9	1-10	Poor outer communication. The propagation of events has a low impact.	3	4	12	DECP gives the standard dissemination guidelines and workflows for partners. A monthly PMG meeting discusses upcoming events and can prevent a lack of event/project propagation in case of insufficient communication.
10	1-10	Unfavorable global pandemic situation	3	1	3	Considering the long COVID-19 era with many restrictions on personal contact, we can organize smaller or online meetings or work online completely.
11	1-10	Frequent changes in the staff on the project.	4	3	12	The key is to keep strict evidence of work done. All project materials should be kept in EDUC-WIDE MS Teams.
12	1-10	Delayed implementation according to the project schedule	3	3	9	Regular meetings with PMs, WP leaders, and Co-leaders are sufficient indicators to detect delays and possible schedule issues. However, small-time deviations in the project are permissible if the logical frame of the project is preserved.
13	1-10	The exit of a partner from the EDUC Alliance	2	3	6	The consortium is built on previous cooperation; many members have known each other for a long time and have strong partnerships. If a vital team member leaves, project partners will select an alternative team member capable of implementing the tasks.
14	1-10	Expenses exceeding the budget.	2	3	6	Experienced Financial Managers will regularly review (6-month frequency) expenditures and work with partners to ensure timely and accurate cost certification.