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D10.2 DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PLATFORM WP10. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION



Deliverable 10.2. Development of internal communication platform

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Document Revisions Table

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1.3	10.04.2019	Prof. Dr. Renata Kongoli Dr. Luziana Hoxha	AUT	Final Draft

Approved on behalf of STEPS

Name

Partner

STEPS Management Team

Position

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1. STEPS PROJECT BACKGROUND

In STEPS project are involved 11 partners, 3 (three) EU institution/universities (CULS, USAMVB, AUA) and a private company (ReadLab) and 7 (seven) HEIs from partner countries, which are HEIs from WB: 2 (two) HEIs from Albania (AUT and EUT), 2 (two) HEIs from Kosovo (UHZ and UC), 2 (two) HEIs (UNBI and UNSA) and also Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Una-Sana Canton in Bosnia and Herzegovina (MESCS USK).

The most important outcome of the project will be the launching of an educated and skilled workforce, able to face the challenges of food production systems. This outcome will be as a result of the implementation a modern MSc program focused on “Sustainable Food production systems”. The goal is to implement a joint master within each WB countries involve in STEPS project. Furthermore, this accomplish will help HEIs of WB to develop capacities, infrastructure and improve the level of education that will be offered. The master program should be in compliance with Bologna convention. More important the master program will be designed in accordance with the recommendation and the needs of the target groups and stakeholders, needs that will be emphasized during the preparatory activities of the project.

2. Communication channels

Communication channels should be followed for achieving the main objectives and the desired results of the project. The project management team of STEPS consortium are responsible for finding the best forms of communication between project partners and to other actors involved in this project.

2.1 Main forms of communication

Also, the main forms of communication in STEPS Project are:

- formal and informal e-mails,
- regular meetings (both at project level and at partner country level),
- G-Drive;
- FTP connection;
- LMS Platform;
- online chats,
- round tables,
- video-conferences,
- documents,
- memos,
- deliverables, progress, technical, financial reports,etc.

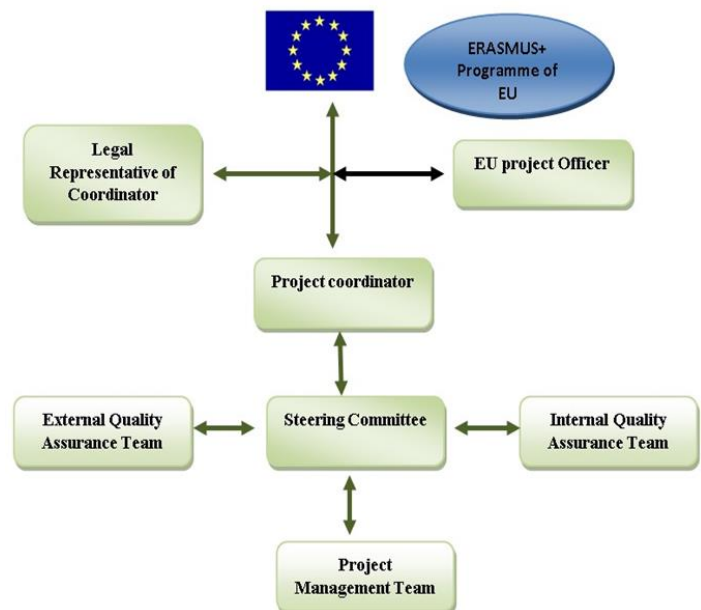
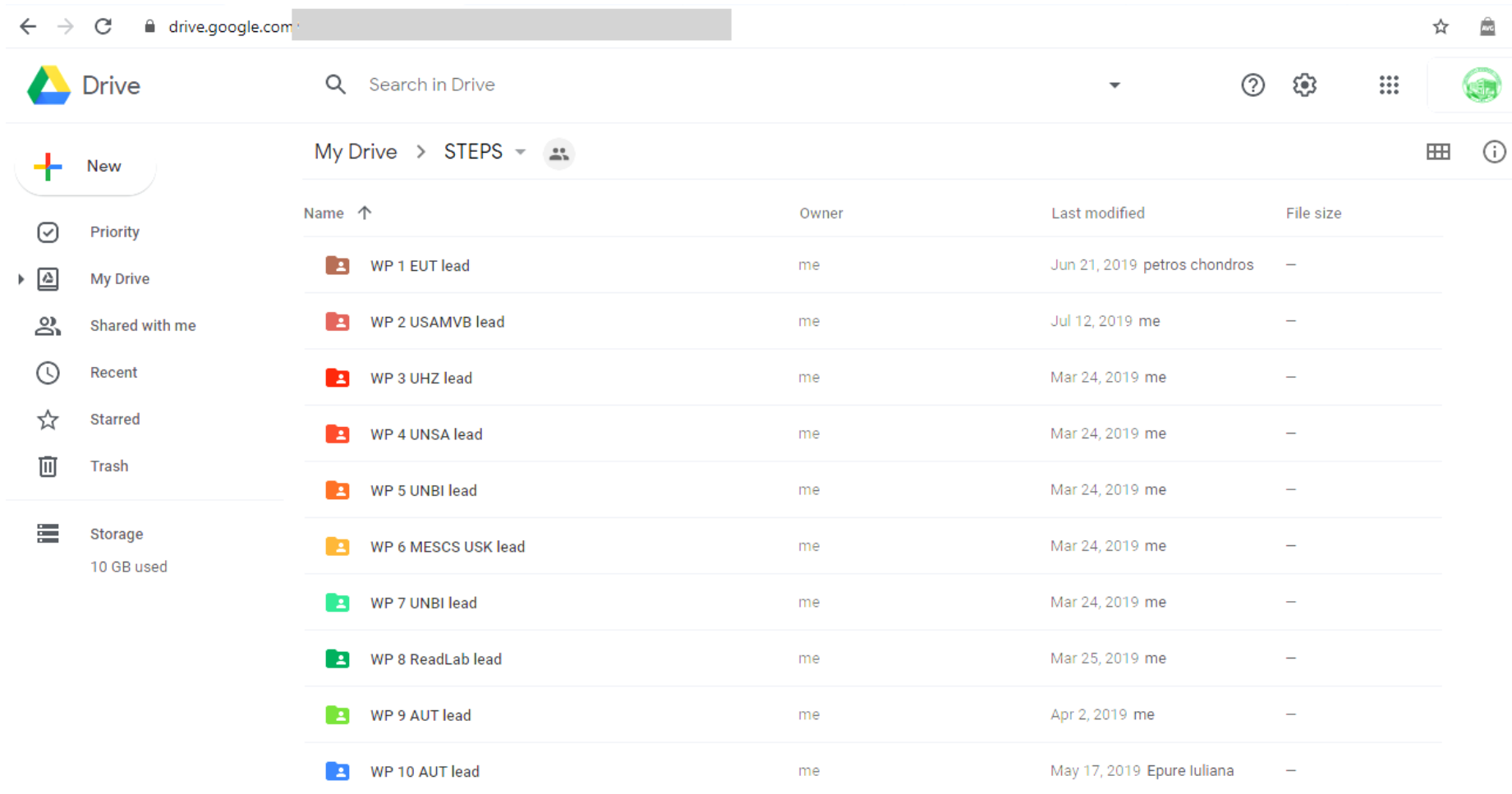


Figure1: Hierarchy of communication for STEPS project

2.2 Google Drive Platform

The communication platform created and maintained using **Google Drive Platform** in the frame of STEPS project consortium, and structured according to WP1-WP10, and all documents for WP implementation are included under the main folders:



Name	Owner	Last modified	File size
WP 1 EUT lead	me	Jun 21, 2019 petros chondros	—
WP 2 USAMVB lead	me	Jul 12, 2019 me	—
WP 3 UHZ lead	me	Mar 24, 2019 me	—
WP 4 UNSA lead	me	Mar 24, 2019 me	—
WP 5 UNBI lead	me	Mar 24, 2019 me	—
WP 6 MESCS USK lead	me	Mar 24, 2019 me	—
WP 7 UNBI lead	me	Mar 24, 2019 me	—
WP 8 ReadLab lead	me	Mar 25, 2019 me	—
WP 9 AUT lead	me	Apr 2, 2019 me	—
WP 10 AUT lead	me	May 17, 2019 Epure Iuliana	—

Figure 2: Structure of G-Drive for STEPS project

2.3 FTP connection

FTP connection is created and each partner is provided with a username and password for the FTP Server. The credentials can access one's proper data, and that data are private to only the owner (i.e partner). After successfully logging in, each partner has created his own structure of folders.

The following structure has been implemented:

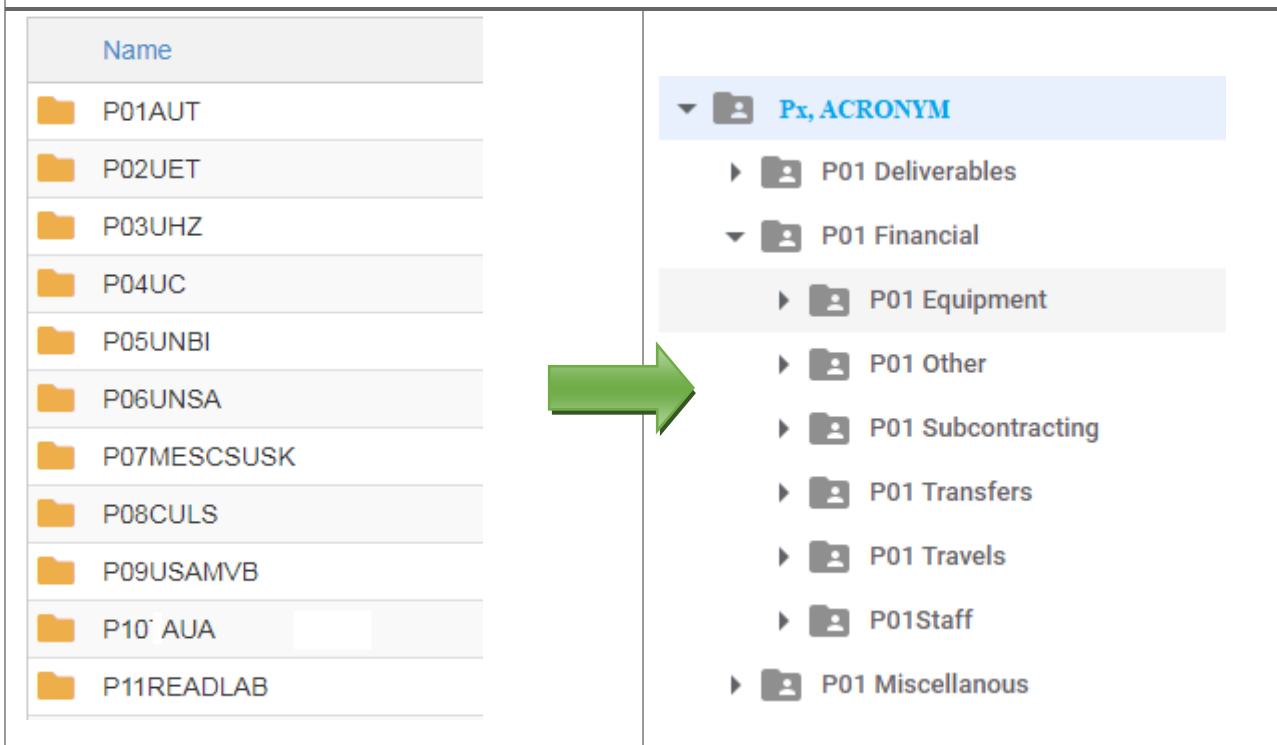


Figure 3: Structure of FTP for STEPS project

2.4 STEPS LMS Platform

The STEPS LMS Platform will be tailored to the training needs of the STEPS target groups. It will take advantage of the Open edX platform capabilities. Since Open edX is an open-source LMS, it will be modified to meet any specifications necessary and STEPS LMS structure and learning sequence is:

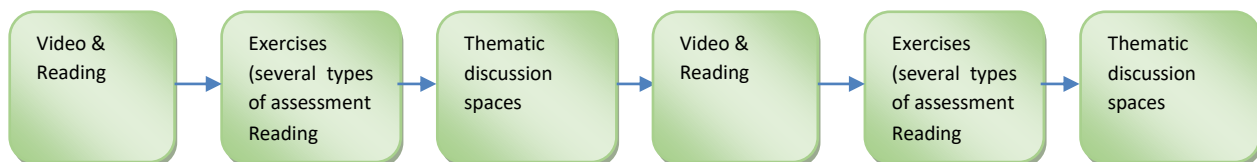


Figure 4: Structure of LMS for STEPS project

The centerpiece of the STEPS LMS is the Open edX platform which contains the learning management and course authoring applications (LMS and Studio, respectively). This service is supported by a collection of other autonomous web services called independently deployed applications (IDAs).

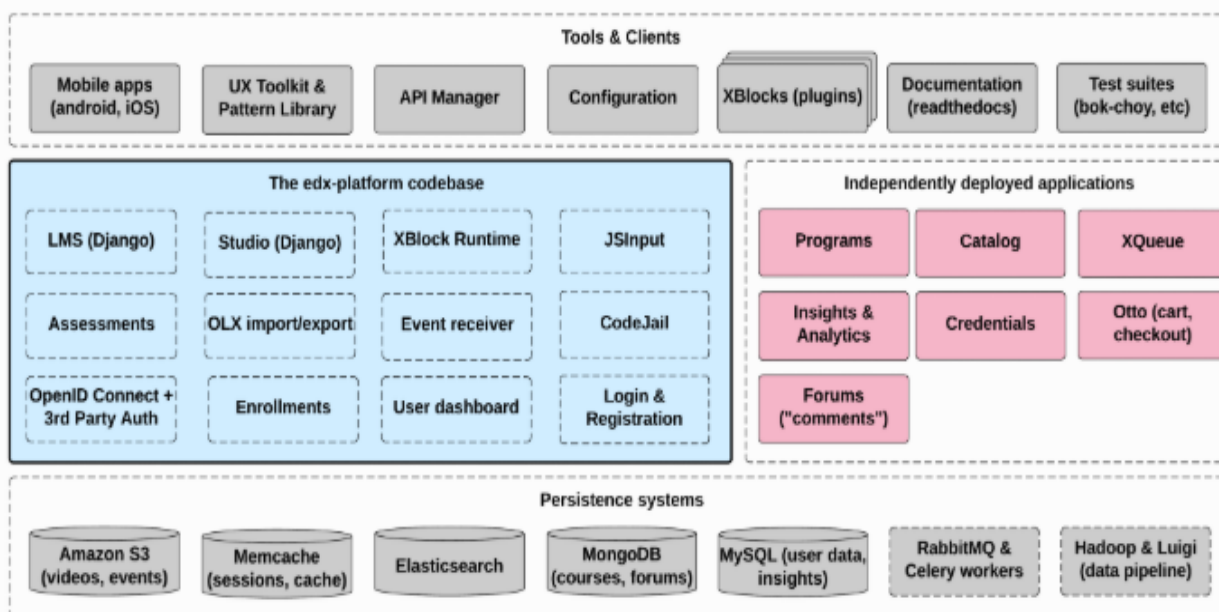


Figure 5. STEPS LMS Architecture

3. Organisation of effective project meetings

During the whole life of STEPS project are going to be organized 9 (nine) project meeting with the participation of all the partners involve in the project. Is the responsibility of the Coordinator for taking care of meeting organization matters such as disseminating the agenda, specify the duration of the meetings and chairing the discussion on for different issues and tasks that will be arise during the implementation of STEPS. Furthermore, the project meeting will give a major contribution in informing the partners about the project development, deliverables, and outputs or of specific issues that will affect STEPS implementation. MT meeting will concede with Project Meeting in order to reduce the budget costs for the Travel Cost heading. The number of meeting combine with different deliverable from different WP is reflected in the table below:

Table 1: PM and MT meetings combined with other deliverables

Deliverable	Month no.	City/Country	Host Organization	Combined with deliverables
D10.4.a	2	Tirana/Albania	AUT	
D10.4.b	6	Bucharest/Romania	USAMVB	D2.3
D10.4.c	9	Peja/Kosovo	UHZ	D3.2.a
D10.4.d	12	Bihac/Bosnia- Herzegovia	UNSA	D3.2.b
D10.4.e	15	Bihac/Bosnia- Herzegovia	UNBI	D3.2.c
D10.4.f	18	Pristina/Kosovo	UC	D3.2.d,9.4.a,9.5.a
D10.4.g	21	Tirana/Albania	AUT	D3.2.e,9.4.b,9.5.b
D10.4.h	34	Sarajevo/Bosnia and Herzegovia	UNSA	D9.4.c,9.5.c
D10.4i	36	Tirana/Albania	AUT	

In order to organise effective meetings is necessary to follow a guideline, consisting in:

- Defining all the purposes and outcomes of the meeting
- Providing an agenda before the meetings to all the participants
- Preparing all the necessary materials and distribute them to all the participants
- Organizing a professional meeting

4. Conflicts

A conflict is a normal part of relationship between partners involved in a working group of a project. It can arise from different point of views and there are some steps should follow in order to manage and give a resolution to any type of conflicts. Some type of conflicts that may arise at intra-organizational level are:

- vertical conflicts (that can occur between employee and the supervisor);
- horizontal conflicts, that can occur between employees of the same hierarchical level for many reasons, including ideas, decisions making and distribution of duties;
- role conflicts, that can arise from incomplete or misunderstanding of an assignment given to an employee;
- Structural conflicts that may arise from behavioural predispositions, social pressures, incentive structures and rules.

As in any other multi partner project, all the potential conflicts lie on:

- Goal-oriented conflicts; associated with end results, performance specifications and criteria, priorities, and objectives.
- Administrative conflicts refer to the management structure and philosophy and are mainly based on definition of roles and reporting relationships and on responsibilities and authority for tasks, functions, and decisions.
- Interpersonal conflicts resulting from differences in work ethics, styles, egos, and personalities of the participants

4.1 Anticipating conflicts

Every project manager should create a working plan to anticipate conflicts and their impacts on over well going of the project. In a multi partner project, as STEPS project is, an effective way of avoiding any kind of conflict is learning from similar project. For this reason, it is necessary, from time to time, to invite colleagues that have been part of similar projects in the past, exchange experience with them and learn from their mistakes (management and financial issues).

- To avoid conflicts over project priorities, the project manager must prepare a master plan compatible with long-term strategies.
- To avoid conflicts regarding administration procedure, the project manager must clarify role, responsibilities and reporting relationship since the begging of the project.
- To avoid conflicts over technical and performance opinions, project manager must create teams and other quality and steering comities to review specification and design.
- To avoid conflicts over human resources, the project managers must develop a breakdown structure and responsibilities for everyone involved.

- To avoid conflicts over cost and budget, the project manager must develop an overall project budget, supported by a detailed budget and cost for every task and activity planned.
- To avoid personality conflicts, it is important that project managers, create an environment that emphasize respect, equality and diversity.

4.2 Mechanism for conflict resolution

Besides other factors the success of a project relies on project coordination and understanding between all the beneficiaries in order to achieve a common goal, implementation with success and on time of the project.

Conflict within a team environment require the ability from the coordinator to solve problems, set goals, compromise, settle personality difference, and resolve conflicts. The challenge of a project coordinator is to maintain the right balance within the working team by being fair, communicate, being able to establish an environment in which creativity and innovation is encourage and the project goals are accomplished. This is going to be achieved if the coordinator applies in a correct manner the project management principle, understands the dynamic of a conflict and knows the approaches to a conflict resolution. Modes to approach to conflict resolution include steps such as confronting, compromising, smoothing, forcing and avoiding.

4.2.1 Communication as an important key for resolving conflicts

A tool for avoiding conflicts and misunderstanding among partners is the communication arrangements within the consortium. It is clearly specified in the description of the action that a core task of the MT is to establish a common understanding and a fruitful information exchange based on the acceptance and respect for the diversity in culture, opinion, approaches etc. The management team will be responsible to provide a forum for discussion, collaboration and decision making, and allow the partners to be actively involved in matters of the project work and spread the responsibility. Decision making will be based on majority opinion. In case the latter is not clear, a voting procedure will be organized with votes of equal weight of all partners.

In case of draw, external experts, key stakeholders or European/national officers will be invited to advise the MT and voting will be repeated. Discussions on warning signs, i.e. variances in schedule or budget and quality issues of deliverables that could lead to a conflict will help the MT to act proactively and plan reformative actions. In case of conflicts, the coordinator will organize an MT meeting to resolve the conflict immediately.