



SHERPA

Shaping the ethical dimensions of smart information systems– a European perspective (SHERPA)



Deliverable No. 6.3

Quality Assurance Plan

V 1.1

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Document Control

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Abstract	This document describes the Quality Assurance mechanisms of the SHERPA project to ensure high-quality Deliverables. The mechanism is based on peer review.
Key Words	Quality Assurance, Peer Review

Revision History

Version	Date	Author(s)	Reviewer(s)	Notes
1.0	1/6/2018	Doris Schroeder	Bernd Stahl	Short discussion with Bernd Stahl to decide which documents fall into which reviewing category.
1.1	5/6/2018	Doris Schroeder	All	Sent out to consortium
1.2	19/6/2018	Doris Schroeder	Bernd Stahl and Nitika Bhalla	Incorporated useful suggestions

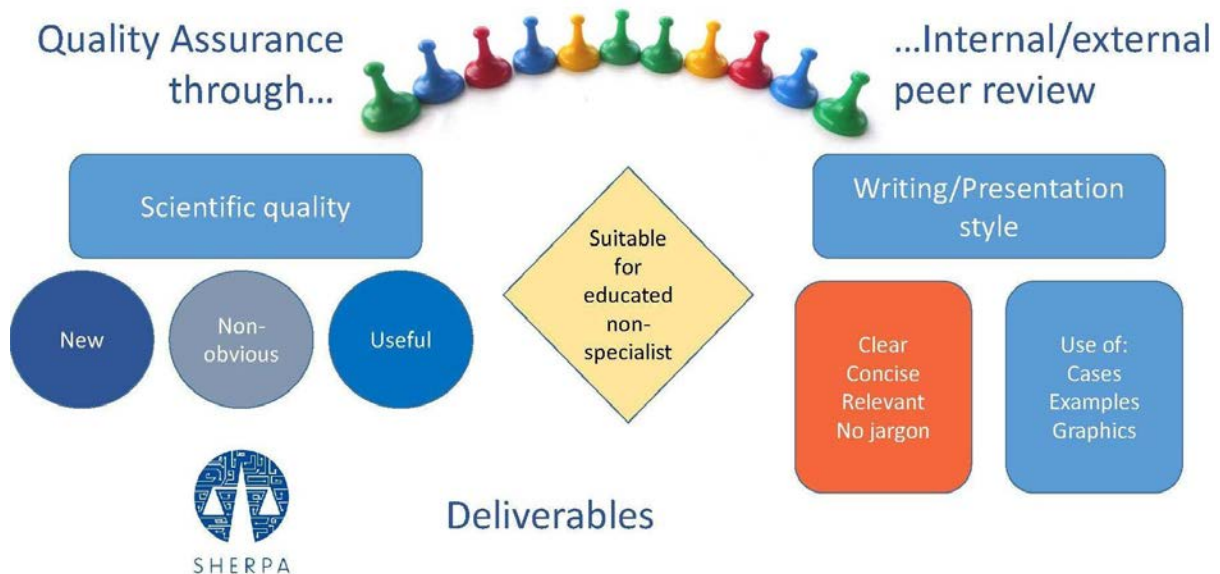
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1. Executive Summary

The SHERPA consortium is committed to achieving high-quality Deliverables. This is particularly important in publicly funded projects. This Quality Assurance (QA) Plan describes the procedures that have been agreed by the SHERPA Consortium. They are summarized in the diagram below.

Diagram 1 – SHERPA Quality Assurance Plan



2. Introduction

Quality Assurance in the project is based on the following principle:

- QA is Job Two. Job One is maintaining pride in one's work and delivering good quality outputs.

The process by which quality will be assessed is:

- Internal and/or external peer review; the widely accepted standard for ensuring quality in academia and research.

Taking pride in one's work is Job One.
SHERPA QA Principle

2.1. Scope of Document

The document applies to all SHERPA partners. How each Deliverable is linked to specific QA mechanisms is explained in Section 3.1 below.

3. Quality Assurance System

A project consists of many elements, not all of which can be monitored through peer review. We therefore defined specific targets for the quality assurance system (QAS).

3.1. Targets of Quality Assurance System

The main target of QAS are text-based Deliverables. The QAS mechanism proposed is not suitable for conferences, workshops, and milestones, for instance. The following provides a list of the Deliverables covered by QAS.

Table 1: Deliverables covered by QAS

No	Title	Contractual Submission Month
D1.1	Case studies	11
D1.2	SIS scenarios	12
D1.3	Cyberthreats and countermeasures	11
D1.4	Report on ethical tensions and social impacts	14
D1.5	Current human rights framework	12
D3.1	SIS Workbook	36
D3.2	Guidelines for the development and use of SIS	18
D3.3	Report on regulatory options	20
D3.4	Report on standardisation activities	32
D3.5	Technical options and interventions report	24
D3.6	Terms of reference for SIS regulator	30
D4.2	Evaluation report	28
D4.3	SHERPA final recommendations	36

The remaining Deliverables fall into two categories.

First, those Deliverables that cannot be quality assessed on the output alone will be exempt from the QAS. For instance, whether the report on the interview analysis is of high quality could only be assessed by listening to the interview tapes, discussing the methodology for analysis etc. Such Deliverables will be subjected to an internal Basic QA test, which includes checks for:

- clarity of language
- general presentation and
- usefulness of Deliverable for further work.

This Basic QA test will be undertaken by one reviewer alone. Where possible, the aim is for the reviewer to be a person whose SHERPA work relies on the relevant document.

Table 2: Deliverables covered by the Basic QA mechanism

No	Title	Contractual Submission Month
D2.2	Report of interview analysis	30
D2.3	Online survey report	21
D2.4	Delphi study report	30
D4.1	Evaluation and validation strategy	15

Second, Deliverables which are not suited to scientific peer review such as social media accounts and their activity will be exempt from both QAS and from the Basic QA mechanism. Instead these Deliverables will be shared with the Consortium by the Lead Author to obtain general feedback.

Table 3: Deliverables not covered by QAS or the Basic QA mechanism

No	Title	Month
D2.1	List of stakeholders including their main concerns	4
D2.5	Report of Stakeholder Board activities and stakeholder recommendations	42
D5.1	Dissemination, communication, exploitation and advocacy plan	4
D5.2	Website and social media accounts	5
D5.3	Artistic representation	36
D5.4	Dissemination, communication, exploitation and advocacy report	42
D6.1	Project management handbook	2
D6.2	Risk register	4
D6.3	Quality assurance plan	2
D6.4	Data management plan	6
D7.1	POPD - Requirement No. 1	2
D7.2	H - Requirement No. 2	2
D7.3	H - POPD - Requirement No. 3	2

3.2. Criteria for Quality Assurance

QA needs criteria against which outputs are assessed. The Consortium have agreed the following criteria.

Scientific Quality

In our efforts to deliver excellent work, we have three sub-aims:

- 1 We aim for new or innovative outputs and endeavour to avoid "cut and paste" from other work. This does not mean that one can omit building on relevant work. This is essential. What is meant here is that previous publications or reports will not simply be "cut and pasted" into "new" Deliverables to reduce workload. Previous work, whether one's own or others', is an essential building block of good Deliverables, but must be adapted for purpose and integrated with new work.
- 2 We aim to avoid obvious messages that any lay person could have derived using their common sense. Our work will be based on know-how and fact-finding. For instance, in almost any area of human rights discourse where improvements are desired, one could easily say, "more education is necessary to ensure audiences are aware of their human rights". If we make such claims, we will make them in a targeted rather than a general manner.
- 3 We aim for useful outputs that are also useful to groups outside of academia. This third criterion ensures that our Deliverables are ready-built for impact in the real world.

Our three criteria for quality are therefore:

- A. New or innovative
- B. Non-obvious (requires know-how)
- C. Useful across a range of audiences

Match to Audience

Unless otherwise specified, educated non-specialists are our audience. This is the best way to ensure wider dissemination and possible take-up by our target groups. To achieve a good match to the audience, the writing style is highly important.

Writing Style

The following writing style criteria were agreed, which will maximise our impact. We will write:

- Clearly and precisely
- Concisely (short is better than long)
- With relevance (no unnecessary detours)
- Without jargon
- With good use of cases and examples
- In British English

We aim to avoid obvious messages that any lay person could have derived using their common sense.
SHERPA QA Principle



Bought from Shutterstock and modified

To supplement our clear and concise texts, using additional engagement elements is desirable.

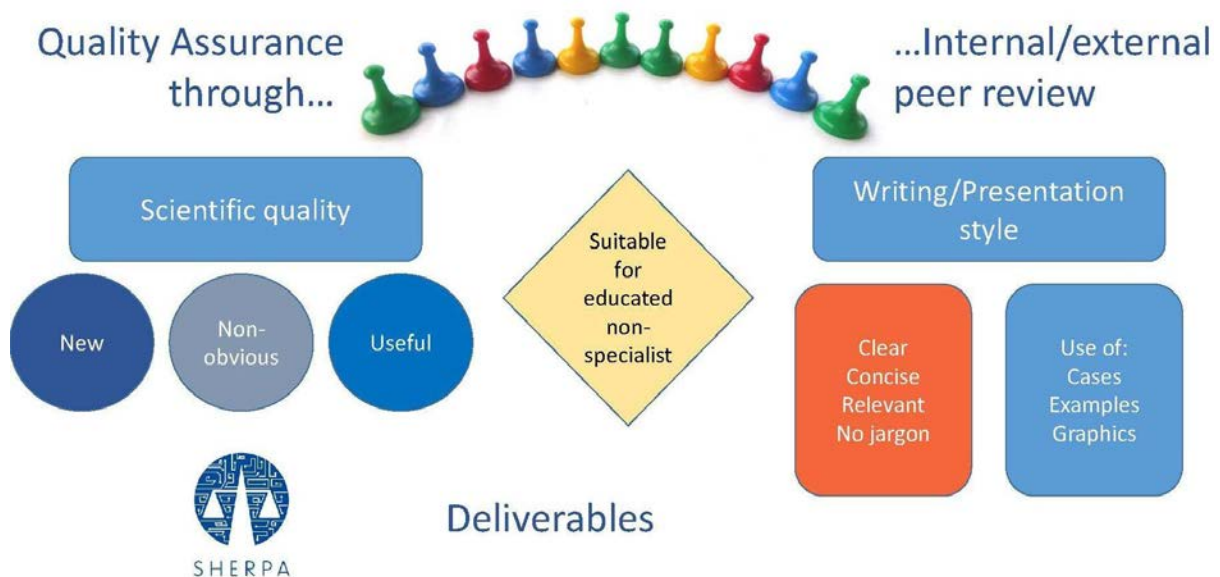
Presentation Style

The outputs of EU projects are competing against ever more outputs from other groups, all aiming to reach ever busier people. The One-Pager, Executive Summaries, the elevator pitch etc, are all signs that we have little time to catch people's attention. Whilst our outputs have to be based on the knowledge that could fill hundreds of pages, we need to ensure that our readers can understand the essence of what we are saying even if they cannot read the full output.

Books about creative and informative writing all emphasize that visual aids can help the reader significantly.

Diagrams are a good way to transfer knowledge concisely (and also sometimes a good way to ensure that what one has written makes sense). Likewise, tables, bulleted lists and photos can help busy readers.

Diagram 1 (repeated) – SHERPA Quality Assurance Plan



Our Processes - How we will do it

As noted above, our mechanism for assuring quality (QAS) is through internal and external peer review. In addition, the Coordination team provides an English editing service to ensure that all Deliverables are submitted after an English check.

Who is the QA Lead and who are the Reviewers?

The QA Lead is Prof. Doris Schroeder, UCLan Cyprus. If she is unavailable, another member of the UCLan Cyprus group will take her role.

The following approach was agreed with regard to reviewers:

- The QA Lead is committed to providing comments on all Deliverables listed in Table 1.
- An English language editor is part of the DMU Team.
- Each member of the SHERPA team commits to undertaking two peer reviews, if invited.
- If peer reviewers are not available (e.g. if Deliverables are delayed), the Coordination team will undertake review as a priority together with the QA Lead.
- Additional external peer reviewers will be drawn from the wide international networks of the Consortium, where appropriate.

What are the procedures?

- Each of the Deliverables listed will be reviewed by two members of the Consortium (partners and/or advisors), or one internal reviewer and one individual from outside the Consortium. However since external reviewers are working for free, it is necessary to give them considerable time, so this second option might not always be possible.
- All reviewers will be provided with a template to help their assessment, see below.
- The QA process will be managed by the QA Lead.

Timing of Reviews

Unless otherwise agreed, submission of the final draft Deliverable to the QA Lead is required three weeks prior to the EC's submission deadline (which is given in table 1). The QA Lead will not chase deliverables, as this is a management function for task leader and work package leaders.

Peer reviewers will return comments within 1 week.

This leaves 1 week for revisions by the authors, and 1 week for a final English language check. Thereafter, lead authors will submit the Deliverables on the ECAS system.



Looking forward to reading high-quality SHERPA Deliverables.

Prof. Doris Schroeder June 2018

Review Template SHERPA



Deliverable Title:

Spectrum from AGREE = 5 to DISAGREE = 0

1. Scientific Quality

- 1.1. New or innovative _____
- 1.2. Non-obvious (requires know-how) _____
- 1.3. Useful _____

2. Match to Audience

- 2.1. Suitable for educated non-specialist _____

3. Writing Style

- 3.1. Clear and precise _____
- 3.2. Concise (short is better than long) _____
- 3.3. Relevant (no unnecessary detours) _____
- 3.4. No jargon _____
- 3.5. Good use of cases _____
- 3.6. Good use of examples _____

4. Presentation Style

- 4.1. Emphasis on "engaging", i.e. use of diagrams _____

5. Comments to Author for Improvements/Changes: