

Technical Report

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Guidelines for the EUBrazilOpenBio Project Quality Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EUBrazilOpenBio Quality Plan will define the guidelines and procedures of the project in order to ensure efficient project execution as well as high quality project results. The purpose of the present Technical Report is to facilitate the co-operation within the EU-BR consortium providing its members with a point of reference and a common understanding of project methods and procedures, with particular emphasis on the fulfillment of the contractual obligations towards the European Commission and the CNPq.

This report will guide all beneficiaries in order to reduce project overhead and increase the efficiency and quality of the work to be performed. The rules, templates, suggestions, and means of communication specified in this document aim to guide the EUBrazilOpenBio beneficiaries providing a framework for operation in different managerial aspects. The ultimate objective of the Quality Plan is to serve as tool, or handbook, for consistent use by project participants to ensure concrete and quality results in line with the work plan the EUBrazilOpenBio project is committed to achieve.

The document complements all other documents that the coordination team should have read and have access to while the project is running; the EC Grant Agreement (GA) and its annexes, the Consortium Agreement and the various EC guidelines.

This report is organized as follows:

- Section 1 – Introduction and intent of the Quality Plan
- Section 2 – Management structure governing the operation of the project, including coordination procedures between European and Brazilian consortium and the different management boards. The organizational structure and decision-making mechanisms will support the consortium in its day-by-day activities. This section mainly describes what is already defined in the Description of Work (DoW) and in the Coordination and Consortium Agreements (CooA and CA).
- Section 3 – Project management and communication tools: distribution lists, project shared workspace, wiki, etc.
- Section 4 – Procedures and practices governing project meetings and Reviews.
- Section 5 – Process of deliverable production including division of deliverable review responsibilities and timeline to follow to ensure on time delivery to the EC, and to the CNPq when necessary.
- Section 6 – Planning and control of activity and financials for progress reporting.
- Section 7 – List of acronyms and abbreviations used throughout the project documents.
- Annex 1 – First version of the distribution of deliverables review and production

1 INTRODUCTION

These guidelines for the Quality Plan are designed to guide the EUBrazilOpenBio project participants through all aspects of the project's management and research activities through the description of standards, quality practices, resources and procedures.

The purpose of the present report is to serve as a reference tool for preserving the overall quality in the coordination of project's activities and results delivery.

1.1 PURPOSE

The objective of this report is to define the process and tools to be used to ensure the quality of the project results. This present project Quality Plan identifies which quality standards are relevant to the EUBrazilOpenBio project and defines how they should be followed throughout the execution of the project. It describes the organization, the structure, the general rules and the standards to be maintained during the course of the project.

The purposes of this report are as follows:

- To describe a quality standard guide to be followed throughout the entire project duration.
- To define the quality practices, activities and tasks for the delivery process of products while focusing on achieving quality standards.
- To provide each EUBrazilOpenBio participant and the European and Brazilian funding bodies, European Commission (EC) and National Council for Scientific and Technological Development of Brazil (CNPq), with sufficient information about the quality practices of the consortium.
- To inform all the EUBrazilOpenBio participants about the main decisions taken to assure the quality of their work.

1.2 TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Some abbreviations will be used alternately in this report and throughout the project in general. The selection of a particular term for use depends on the context of its usage, as well as the habits or prior experience of the people involved in the project. Each report should contain Glossary of acronyms as in Section 7.

2 PROJECT ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

2.1 MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The EUBrazilOpenBio Project is based on a management structure coping with the inherent complexity of collaborative research projects and the added complexity of a coordinated call.

The project management structure is designed to ensure effective and balanced coordination between Brazil and European beneficiaries, covering from strategic to technical and logistical aspects, as detailed in the Description of Work. A schematic representation of the various levels of management activities is shown in the figure below.

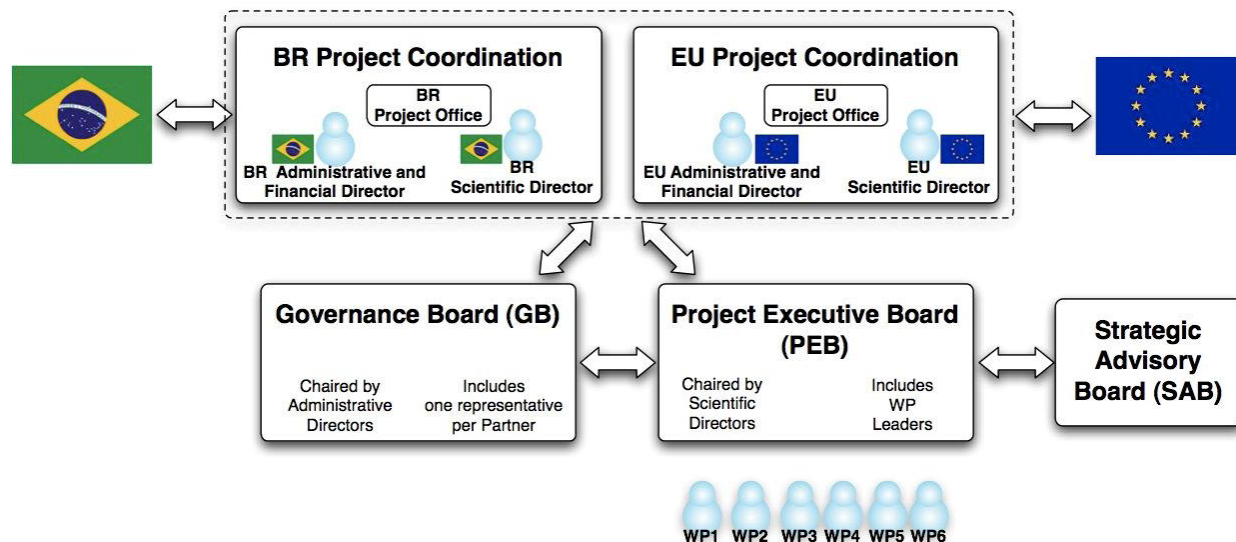


Figure 2.1 - EUBrazilOpenBio Management Structure

2.2 ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.2.1 Project Coordination

The European and Brazilian Project Coordinators, also named in DoW Administrative and Financial Directors (AFDs), are the intermediaries between the participants and the corresponding Funding Agency (the EC and CNPq) and have the responsibility regarding the overall strategic direction of the project and administrative and financial management: monitor the project planning and progress and ensure that all project participants comply with their obligations under the Coordination Agreement (CooA) and the corresponding Funding Agreement and Consortium Agreement (CA).

Periodic activity and resource reporting will be carried out under the AFD's responsibility with the support of European and Brazilian Project Offices.

Scientific Directors (SDs) lead the scientific activities of the project in collaboration with AFDs. They are responsible of supervising the project scientific progress and monitoring the timing of related activities, the organization of project reviews from the scientific perspective and creating the conditions necessary for successful and effective collaboration within the EUBrazilOpenBio team.

Project coordination serves as the bridge between the governance and management activities. The complementarities of the coordination and the balanced distribution between Europe and Brazilian representatives allows a supervision of the project workplan from different perspectives, each addressed by who has the most appropriate background and expertise for dealing with it.

2.2.2 Governance Board

The Governance Board (GB) is the ultimate decision-making body of the project, validating the major decisions concerning the project and serving collectively as the supervisory body of the project. The GB is responsible for decision-making affecting the CooA composition, resources allocation and project's work plan. It covers all aspects of the relations between partners, their responsibilities, liabilities,

ownership of IPR, licensing, and exploitation issues. GB decisions will require two-thirds of the votes, with one representative per partner voting on behalf of his or her organization. The EUBrazilOpenBio CooA and CA are the point of reference for further detailed information regarding the GB such as voting rules and quorum, veto rights and list of decisions to be taken, etc.

The GB is composed of the Brazilian and European coordinators and one senior, decision-making representative for each partner. The chairing of the board is shared by the Brazilian and European Coordinators and alternates every 6-months with the exception of the first period which is 10 months.

The GB will meet in person at least once per year, with telephone conferences convened as relevant issues arise.

2.2.3 Project Executive Board

The Project Executive Board (PEB) is responsible for managing the project execution. The PEB leads the diverse technologically and cooperation-oriented activities encompassing the development and implementation of the EUBrazilOpenBio data e-Infrastructure through the integration of Brazilian and European resources. It also formulates the project strategy, including the creation of synergies with other initiatives and supervises the daily project activities including the initiation, planning, execution and closure of project phases. Voting of the PEB will require a two-thirds majority.

The PEB is composed of the Brazilian and European Scientific Directors and all Work Package Leaders and their deputies.

The chairing of the board is shared by the Brazilian and European Coordinators and alternated every 6-months with the exception of the first period which is 10 months.

2.2.4 Strategic Advisory Board

The Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) is the entity that reviews and advises the scientific development of the Project, and contributes to the analysis of the benefits of industrial and technological cooperation between Europe and Brazil. The SAB will serve as consultant for the definition of the EU-Brazil Joint Action plan on Open Access e-Infrastructure in the Biodiversity Area, also providing advice to the PEB in planning project activities.

The SAB is composed of four high level stakeholders of Brazilian and European Infrastructures and leading scientists in the Biodiversity, Climatology and Life Science domains, two SAB members being from Europe and two from Brazil.

The SAB will meet once per year with all the Project partners, once in Brazil and once in Europe, with call conferences when needed.

3 COMMUNICATION AND MANAGEMENT TOOLS

There are two main classes of tools supporting project activities: (i) those oriented to promote the cooperation among project members and the community in the large, namely the public website; and those oriented to promote the communication and cooperation among the project members, namely mailing lists, shared workspaces, and an issue-tracking system.

3.1 PUBLIC WEBSITE

The public EUBrazilOpenBio channel (<http://www.eubrazilopenbio.org/>) is a dynamic, multimodal and multilingual platform which animates a community of users in response to their specific interests, thanks to interactive features and innovative web-based education services. EUBrazilOpenBio channel serves as the public image of the project and it has a multiple scope:

- to inform about the project, its scope and focus as well as promote the activities performed by each of the partners, through sections such as About (including Consortium and experts' profiles) News, videos, EUBrazilOpenBio resources;
- to share information and material useful for project awareness raising produced throughout the project (events, publications sections, use cases, etc.);
- to engage new EUBrazilOpenBio community members (individuals, organisations and institutions) thanks to web channel registration and user profilation: the platform automatically proposes content of interest according to the interests indicated during the registration process and navigation habits within the Channel to registered users;
- to animate the EUBrazilOpenBio community through open social networks and content comment facilities;
- to sustain EUBrazilOpenBio synergies providing information and visibility to EUBrazilOpenBio partner resources, projects and initiatives;
- to collect and access EUBrazilOpenBio resources: a working area, restricted to consortium members only, to allow direct access to the project management tools such as the web channel integrated wiki; the BSCW repository and Issue Tracking System;
- to promote the "EUBrazilOpenBio results" through web sections that are open to all visitors and collect public available results.

The public website is compliant with the FP7 Guidelines for Communication on Projects and is part of the planned Dissemination activities.

3.2 INTERNAL SUPPORTING TOOLS

A series of tools are set up to facilitate the collaborative work within the project. These tools include an array of distribution lists, a shared workspace, a Wiki and an issue tracking system. An LDAP-based mechanism for Authentication has been deployed by CNR in order to facilitate the access to all supporting tools with a unique user name and password for each project member.

4 PROJECT MEETINGS AND REVIEWS

The organization of a meeting, either face-to-face as conference call meetings, shall be in accordance with the general procedures described in this section.

Management meetings include the meetings of the Governance Board, the Project Executive Board and the Strategic Advisory Board, and are previously programmed meetings, often in connection with other project events, with regular conference calls set for following issues. Management meetings are chaired by the corresponding chair of each board.

Technical meetings include specific tasks meetings and Work Packages' meetings within the project activity and have no specific meeting schedule but are intended solve specific technical problems, preparation of events, etc. Chairing of technical meetings correspond to the initiator of the meeting or, alternatively, task/WP leader.

4.1 MEETING PROCEDURES

4.1.1 Agenda, planning and logistics

Meeting dates should be chosen sufficiently in advance to ensure the possibility for all participants concerned to attend. If possible, face-to-face meetings with different purposes should be combined to save both time and money.

Meeting organisation and logistics are under the responsibility of the hosting partner organisation, in collaboration with the corresponding Coordinator's Project Office. All meeting information including logistics (address, maps, travel details, contact details & hotel's recommendations) will be distributed to the partners by mail, and it will also be made available on the internal project repository.

4.1.2 Minutes

Each meeting will be documented afterwards by minutes summarising the results, and by a list of Decisions and Action Items agreed upon during the meeting. The minutes are produced by the chair of the meeting and later reviewed by the Coordinators before the draft is distributed to the partners.

Draft minutes must be circulated and placed on the EUBrazilOpenBio repository within two (2) weeks after a meeting, and will be subject to approval by all Partners. The minutes shall be considered as accepted by the consortium if within seven (7) calendar days from receipt, no member has objected in a traceable form to the meeting chair.

4.2 REVIEW PROCESS

Review objectives are to assess the work carried out under the project over a certain period by evaluating the project reports and deliverables relevant to the period in question and covering scientific, technological and other aspects relating to the proper execution of the project. Reviews are carried out by the corresponding officers of the funding agencies granting the project with the assistance of external scientific or technological experts previously appointed, altogether referred to as *Reviewers*.

EUBrazilOpenBio reviews will be carried out in coordination between the EC and CNPq, dates coinciding with other projects of the EU Brazil Call reviews. Two reviews are planned, first one after month 16 in Europe and the final review after month 28 in Brazil. The participation of one representative of each partner is required.

5 DELIVERABLES

The project deliverables constitute documentation of project results, and are indicators of the project progress. The list of deliverables appearing in section B1.3.3 of the DoW are contractually bound to be submitted to the EC and are strictly tied to the breakdown of the work into Work Packages that constitutes the structure of the project. A folder on the project repository is dedicated to hold the deliverables and related tables such as the Deliverables and Milestones list. Deliverables nature may be Report, Prototype or Other (e.g. website, wiki page) and shall follow certain quality standards.

5.1 DELIVERABLES STRUCTURE

An EUBrazilOpenBio Deliverable Template in Word format is available at the project repository and should be used when preparing deliverables of type "Report". Other types of deliverable (prototypes, wikis, ...) need to be documented with a written document, e.g. a user manual, specifications, demo scenario description, evaluation report, or other appropriate documents.

5.2 PRODUCTION OF DELIVERABLES

Each deliverable tackles a specific subject, and has an owner responsible for the production of the document. The owner of the deliverable is responsible for the definition of the Table of Contents, the coordination and merging of partner contributions, and the production of the different versions of the document. Each deliverable will go through two reviews before being sent to the corresponding funding agency(ies), if it is required.

The deliverable owner should take into account realistic timings for the submission of the several versions, and therefore require partner's contributions sufficiently in advance, in order to meet the established date for its submission to the Commission, as indicated in the DoW.

6 PERIODIC REPORTING AND PROGRESS MONITORING

Periodic and progress activity reporting assist project management, the EC and the CNPq, to monitor the project in terms of progress according to the work plan and any deviations, achievements and difficulties encountered. During the course of the project, activity reporting will be conducted in two forms: through two Progress Activity Reports prepared respectively at the end of months 10 and 22 of the project, and Periodic Activity Reports prepared at the end of each effective year (months 16 and 28) and including financial information.

Periodic Activity Reports are contractual obligation for both the European and the Brazilian projects.

The EU consortium must provide each Periodic Report at the latest 60 days after the completion of each period. Periodic Reports in this case are established following a template provided by the EC.

6.1 ACTIVITY/PROGRESS REPORTING

Progress and Periodic Activity Reports preparation is led by the project Coordinators with close collaboration and contributions from Work Package Leaders. WPLs are responsible for collecting and merging the contributions from Task Leaders in order to complete the "*Work progress and achievements during the period*" section of the reports.

6.1.1 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Key Performance Indicators are quantifiable measures that will be used to set specific targets for activities monitored that are deemed critical to the successful outcome of the project. KPIs also serve as performance management tools for the project consortium and its milestones, ensuring the effective and successful delivery, dissemination, deployment and exploitation of the EUBrazilOpenBio results.

KPIs are also reported in the periodic reports producing a valid picture for the performance of the project and its partners as a whole. The Strategy & Plan for Communication and Education Services will establish co-ordinated activities and KPIs to ensure effective and successful dissemination outcomes and measure community engagement.

6.1.2 Table Resources consumption and financial reporting

Effort consumption reporting is part of Progress and Periodic activity Reports, while financial reporting is required to be included in Periodic Activity Reports uniquely.

EU and BR Coordinators are in charge of collecting this information from each partner in order to complete the Activity Reports and to monitor the progress of the project.