



High-Performance Computing Skills Platform
and European Collaboration for Training

D1.1 – Project Management Handbook

WP1: Management

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Executive Summary

The HPC SPECTRA project management handbook serves as a guiding document for consortium members involved in the project, outlining key structures, processes, tools and standards to be used or followed for project coordination and activities. Led by the Irish Centre for High-End Computing (ICHEC), the project is coordinated and governed by various bodies including the Project Management Team (PMT), Coordination Committee (CC), Work Package Leaders (WPLs). The General Assembly (GA) represents the highest decision-making body within the consortium.

Regular meetings are scheduled to ensure effective communication and coordination among project stakeholders, including plenary meetings, CC meetings, WP meetings, GA meetings, and EuroHPC Training Platform Advisory Group (ETPAG) meetings.

Change management and emergency procedures have been established to address significant deviations or issues affecting project implementation. Conflict resolution processes are also described to address conflicts at various levels within the consortium. Project management also includes a risk management regime where the PMT is responsible for maintaining and monitoring a risk register with assigned owners for mitigation measures as necessary. Collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams and GitLab are utilised for document sharing and code repositories, while online meetings are facilitated using commonly-used platforms.

Communication and dissemination efforts include mailing lists, project websites, presentations, and a dissemination and exploitation plan. Project reporting involves periodic technical reports and financial reporting, with specific guidelines for eligibility and financial monitoring.

Quality assurance processes include the review of deliverables using an internal review processes. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are monitored regularly to ensure project progress aligns with expectations, with a focus on the quality of key project outcomes: the EuroHPC Training Platform and the International HPC Summer Schools.

List of Abbreviations

BSC	Barcelona Supercomputing Centre
CC	Coordination Committee
DoA	Description of Actions
ETPAG	EuroHPC Training Platform Advisory Group
GA	General Assembly
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GWDG	Gesellschaft fuer wissenschaftliche Datenverarbeitung mbH Goettingen
HPC	High-Performance Computing
ICHEC	Irish Centre for High-End Computing (hosted at NUI Galway / University of Galway)
JU	(EuroHPC) Joint Undertaking
KIFU	Kormányzati Informatikai Fejlesztési Ügynökség (Governmental Information-Technology Development Agency, Hungary)
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NUI Galway	National University of Ireland, Galway (rebranded as University of Galway, host of ICHEC)
PC	Project Coordinator
PMT	Project Management Team
PRACE	Partnership for Advanced Computing in Europe
Uni.lu	University of Luxembourg
USTUTT	University of Stuttgart
WP	Work Package
WPL	Work Package Leader



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1 Introduction

This document describes the key structures, concepts, processes and tools that are central to the management of the HPC SPECTRA project. It is intended to be a living document where updates from time to time may be carried out by the Project Management Team (defined in Section 2.1). The handbook serves as a reference for consortium members of agreed structures, procedures, templates and standards that are to be followed in the execution of project activities. It reflects some of the provisions that are formally agreed among the granting authority and consortium partners, i.e. the Grant Agreement and the Consortium Agreement, but does not supersede them.

2 Project Coordination

2.1 Structure and Governance

The Irish Centre for High-End Computing (ICHEC) at the University of Galway (formerly named the National University of Galway, Ireland) is the coordinator for the project. It acts as the intermediary between the consortium partners and the granting authority, the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking (JU). Management of the project involves the following consortium bodies and associated personnel:

Project Coordinator (PC): is represented by Simon Wong (ICHEC) who leads the project and acts as the primary liaison between the project officer from the JU and the consortium partners.

Project Management Team (PMT): is represented by the PC (Simon Wong, ICHEC) and the Project Manager (Tamara Naranjo, BSC). The PMT is responsible for the day-to-day management of the project, from resource utilisation monitoring, collating input for technical and financial reporting, to timely delivery of project deliverables and milestones. It oversees the implementation and adherence to processes for quality assurance, managing change and project risks.

Coordination Committee (CC): is represented by the PC and the Work Package Leaders (WPLs) of the project. It is responsible for supporting the management of the day-to-

day execution of the project and to coordinate activities between the different work packages.

Work Package Leaders (WPLs) and deputy leads: are represented by individuals from the Coordinator and consortium partners designated to lead the 5 work packages associated with the project (Table 1). Each WP also has a deputy lead who will provide support to the WPL, e.g. to deputise for the WPL in meetings when required. The WPL is responsible for overseeing the technical implementation of the respective WPs. This involves managing the contribution of the partners who are involved WP activities, realisation of project deliverables and milestones, coordination with other WPs and periodic reporting of activities within the WP. The WPL may be supported by Task Leaders (see below).

Table 1. Designated Work Package Leaders for the HPC SPECTRA Project

WP	Work Package Leader	Work Package Deputy Lead
WP1	Simon Wong, ICHEC	Tamara Naranjo, BSC
WP2	Oriol Pineda, BSC	Kevin Luedemann, GWDG
WP3	Zoltan Kiss, KIFU	Matthias Eulert, GWDG
WP4	Simon Wong, ICHEC	Matthias Brust, Uni.lu
WP5	Kristine Baecker, USTUTT	Miriam Koch, USTUTT

Task Leaders: are designated by the WPLs to lead specific tasks within individual WPs. Task Leaders provide support to the WPLs in the technical implementation of WP activities.

General Assembly (GA): is a body composed of one representative from each partner of the project consortium. It is chaired by the Coordinator and represents the highest decision-making body within the consortium. The GA meets at least once every six months and provides the setting to deliberate, negotiate and decide on key matters related to the project such as proposed amendments to agreements, changes in the composition of the consortium, legal and financial issues. Each partner shall have one vote, with decisions taken by a majority (>50%) of the votes cast given quorum is

achieved; although partners retain the ability to exercise veto rights. The GA is also responsible for the appointment of the EuroHPC Training Platform Advisory Group (ETPAG), an external advisory board that will provide feedback and input that may influence the direction of project activities by the consortium.

The Consortium Agreement sets out in more details the rules and procedures relevant to the GA. Members of the GA for this project is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Representatives of consortium partners in the General Assembly

Partner	General Assembly Representative
NUI Galway (ICHEC)	Simon Wong
BSC	Oriol Pineda
GWDG	Kevin Luedemann
KIFU	Zoltan Kiss
Uni.lu	Matthias Brust
USTUTT	Kristine Baecker

2.2 Project Meetings

Coordination of the project will be facilitated by a number of recurring meetings at different levels among the consortium bodies and personnel.

Project Plenary Meetings: The project has planned three face-to-face meetings for those working in the project to synchronise and plan key activities. These meetings are to be held in Dublin (M2), Barcelona (M12/M13) and Stuttgart (M23/M24).

CC Meetings: The CC holds regular bi-monthly meetings, convened by the PMT, that will assess ongoing progress across the WPs, as well as to communicate updates on the next period's work plan. The CC will also facilitate communication and interaction between different WPs that are needed to achieve project objectives.

WP Meetings: Each WP holds at least monthly meetings, convened by the WPL, to discuss progress and reporting, resolve technical implementation issues and plan future activities. These may also highlight issues that needs to be brought to the CC.

The frequency of WP meetings is determined by the WPL and may be held more regularly.

GA Meetings: The GA meets every 6 months to review and guide project direction and discuss any major project issues, and make binding decisions by voting where required. These meetings are convened by the Coordinator.

EuroHPC Training Platform Advisory Group (ETPAG) Meetings: It is expected that the advisory group will meet formally at least 3 times over the course of the project. In these meetings, the structure of the EuroHPC Training Platform will be presented and discussed. The feedback from ETPAG members will be included in the follow-up updates and improvements of the platform. Centres of Excellence, National Competence Centres, European HPC Centres, PRACE organisation, European Digital Innovation Hubs, and EuroHPC JU office representatives will be invited to ETPAG; the group will be open to any other European HPC training provider or stakeholder. These will provide important feedback and input for the development of the training platform (mainly WP2 and WP3). These meetings may be complemented by more informal, one-on-one meetings with stakeholders and potential users to help steer platform development.

Project Review Meetings: It is expected that the project will hold 2 review meetings in Luxembourg, one during mid-term and another shortly after the end of the project. These will be convened by the JU in Luxembourg. Each consortium partner and all WPLs (or deputies if necessary) must be represented at these review meetings.

2.3 Project Calendar

The project started in January 2024 (M1) and due to end in December 2025 (M24).

2.4 Change Management and Emergency Procedures

Consortium partners should notify the relevant WPLs and PMT of any significant changes and deviations (e.g. change of project personnel, resource re-allocations) that may impact project implementation and progress as soon as practicable. The impact of such changes will be discussed at regular CC meetings or an extraordinary CC meeting may be convened by PMT for high priority or severity issues. Major changes such as proposed amendments to the Grant Agreement, for example, will require

deliberation and decision by the GA. Any partner may request by writing to the Coordinator an extraordinary meeting of the GA to discuss urgent matters.

2.5 Conflict and Dispute Resolution

In general, it is expected that any conflict shall be resolved initially at the WP level, where possible, with a constructive spirit to achieve consensus and compromise. In the exceptional case that conflicts cannot be solved at the WP level, the issue may be escalated to the CC by the WPLs. If the CC cannot resolve a conflict it must be brought forward to the PMT for decision. If the PMT is cannot provide an acceptable decision by all parties, the issue will then be escalated to the GA. The GA will make a final decision, if necessary, by voting. This decision is then binding to all consortium bodies.

2.6 Risk Management

The PMT is responsible for maintaining and monitoring the risk register (Table 3) on an ongoing basis. However, each risk is associated with WP(s) who has ownership of such risks, i.e. the WPs are responsible for determining and implementing, where practicable, of the mitigation measures. The risk register will be reviewed every 2 months by the PMT and discussed at CC meetings. Any high impact risks with medium or higher probability of occurrence will be raised at CC and GA meetings in order to derive suitable mitigation measures.

Table 3. Risk register along with probability, impact and mitigation measures for each risk.

Risk no.	Description	Prob.	Impact	WP	Proposed Mitigation Measures
1	Core partner leaving the consortium.	Low	High	WP1	The role of each partner is clearly defined. Partners were selected with complementary expertise, in some areas overlapping, which would allow the redistribution of tasks to the remaining partners. All of the

					<p>partners had already successful co-operations in the past.</p> <p>The beneficiaries are stable organisations with a long, excellent track record in European-funded projects. All of them are fully committed to the HPC SPECTRA proposal.</p>
2	Key person leaving the project.	Med.	Low	WP1	The progress of work and processes will be documented to ensure fast onboarding of new staff. Internal communication processes are set up to allow quick knowledge transfer to new hired staff members.
3	Trainers don't use the HPC Certification Forum Competence standard because they lack knowledge.	Med	Med	WP3, WP2, WP5	We provide a support structure to aid the trainers in the process, for example, organise train-the-trainer events and identifying the competences in existing training material.
4	Institutes don't contribute courses to the EuroHPC Training Platform due to several	Med	Med	WP2, WP5	Birds-of-a-Feather sessions and showcases during community events. Furthermore,

	reasons: platform unknown, additional effort.				showing the possible synergies between users and the reduction in local resource usage (no duplicates of courses everywhere)
5	Lack of dissemination success through the ecosystems.	Low	Med	WP5	The consortium is set up in the best possible way to achieve impact in the target groups.
6	Redundancy/Competition with similar portals.	Low	Med	WP3, WP2, WP5, WP4, WP1	The consortium has conducted prior market research and has conceptualised the platform that will be central but co-exists with other portals in the ecosystem.
7	Difficulty of finding sufficient students to participate in the International HPC Summer Schools.	Low	Med	WP4	Start communicating early about the organisation of the schools. The project counts on the existing network of partners organising previous editions of the school.

3 Collaboration Tools

Coordination and collaboration between consortium partners are supported by a number of tools and services, which are described in this section. Some of the tools and services will evolve according to user and project developer requirements, accordingly this document may be updated during the project to reflect any changes.

3.1 Document and File Repositories

The consortium has agreed to utilise the cloud-based team collaboration software, Microsoft Teams, for sharing files and documents between partners. The team is hosted and administered by the PC, under an institutional Office 365 licence that facilitates the creation of the “HPC SPECTRA” team where project partners are able to share project files and documents, e.g. reporting templates, draft deliverables, legal agreements, project documentation. Each WP has a dedicated folder for storing and sharing documents that can be accessed by consortium members (Figure 1). Shown in Figure 2 is an example of the folder structure of WP1 where some of the key project files and information can be found.

Figure 1. Structure of channels and shared folders for different WPs on Teams.

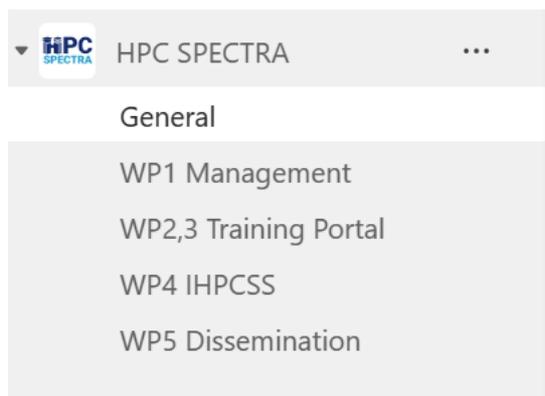
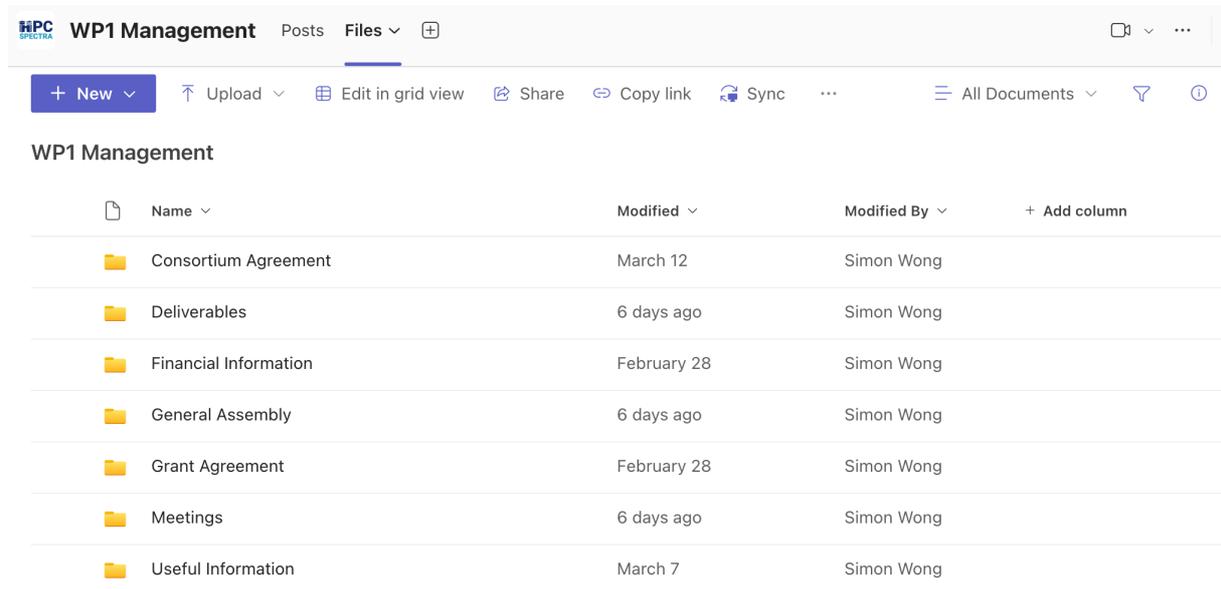


Figure 2. Screenshot of the HPC SPECTRA team on Microsoft Teams to facilitate file and document sharing among project partners.



3.2 Code Repositories

In order to support technical development of the EuroHPC Training Platform as well as the initial skills/certification framework, the project partner KIFU has offered a dedicated Gitlab instance (hosted on a server maintained by the partner organisation) that will allow other partners to join and will act as both a code repository as well as a software engineering environment for collaboration.

3.3 Online Meetings

Many of the project meetings are expected to be held online and the meeting conveners shall have the flexibility to decide on the platform/service that will be used to host such meetings, given that the chosen platform/service is commonly used, e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WebEx, GotoMeeting, BigBlueButton.

4 Communication and Dissemination

4.1 Mailing Lists

To facilitate e-mail communication within the project, the Coordinator has set up the following mailing lists:

- hpc-spectra@lists.ichec.ie: which allows a convenient way to communicate and make announcements to all members of the project consortium.
- hpc-spectra-pmt@lists.ichec.ie: which is used to contact the PMT. This address should be mainly used for project management related purposes, e.g. reporting, administrative and financial matters.

Due to the size of the consortium, it was deemed unnecessary to set up individual WP mailing lists as all partners are involved in the development of the training platform and the International HPC Summer School already has a dedicated mailing list (see below). However, additional lists may be set up by the Coordinator where the need arises.

Additionally, and in accordance with the GDPR, all members have been informed of their rights and have been given their consent to be included in the lists indicated. Requests to add new members to the mailing lists should be directed to the PMT.

In addition, the organisation of the International Summer School series is supported by another mailing list (ihpcss@ncsa.illinois.edu), managed by the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA), the U.S.-based partner in organising the ongoing series of the summer schools.

4.2 Project Website

The project is in the process of finalising the project website with the domain name “hpc-spectra.eu”. This website provides the relevant information about the project, e.g. objectives, public deliverables, partners and contact details of the project.

The EuroHPC Training Platform will be deployed on a different website and domain name. This de-coupling is done with a view to the persistence of the platform beyond the lifetime of the HPC SPECTRA project.

4.3 Presentations

The project has developed template presentations for dissemination of project information, activities and outcomes. This will be used for reporting, user engagement and outreach events.

Figure 3. Presentation template for the HPC SPECTRA project



4.4 Dissemination & Exploitation Plan

WP5 of the HPC SPECTRA project will produce a dissemination and exploitation plan by M4 of the project. This will provide a roadmap for how the project will target specific audiences and implement engagement, dissemination and outreach activities in order to ensure wide awareness of the project activities and outcome, as well as to engage feedback from the wider user community, e.g. potential users of the training platform either as trainees (looking to develop HPC skills) or training providers.

5 Project Reporting

5.1 Periodic Reports

The Project Coordinator submits 2 periodic reports with the contributions of the consortium members. Periodic reporting must be submitted 60 days after end of the reporting period, which is established at M12 and M24.

- Reporting Period 1: from 1st of January to 31st of December 2024 (deadline for submission: 28th of February 2025)
- Reporting Period 2: from 1st of January to 31st December 2025 (deadline for submission: 28th of February 2026)

Each periodic report consists of technical and a final report that must describe the technical activities and cost incurred over the corresponding period stated above.

5.2 Technical Progress Reports

The technical report is composed by two parts: Part A and Part B.

Part A can be updated at any time during the lifetime of the project. This is has to be done through the Funding and Tenders portal under the “Continuous Reporting Module”. It consists of the following sections:

- Project summary
- Researchers involved in the project
- Deliverables
- Milestones
- Critical risks
- Publications
- Results
- Dissemination activities
- Communication activities
- Standards
- Intellectual property rights (IPR)
- Datasets
- Financial support to third parties

- Impact
- Impact continuation
- Other results
- JU contributions

With regards to dissemination and communication activities, the WP5 (Dissemination and Outreach) leader, will keep track of the project's dissemination actions for the purpose of periodic reporting. Participants will be asked regularly to notify the WP5 leader of any dissemination activity related to the project. WP5 Leader will integrate these actions in a table that covers the dissemination activities of the project.

The Project Coordinator will be responsible to collect and introduce the information indicated above through the Funding and Tenders portal.

Part B is the core part of the report and follows the template of Part B Periodic Technical Report made available by the European Commission. It has to be updated to the "Report Core" tab of the System for Grant Management (SyGMA), as a single pdf document, including:

- Description of the work carried out by all beneficiaries during the reported period.
- An overview of the progress towards the project objectives, justifying the differences between work expected under Annex I (DoA) and work actually performed, if any.
- Explanations on the deviations from planned budget.

The Project Coordinator, in collaboration with the project partners, is responsible to elaborate Part B of the periodic technical report and upload the file in the Funders and Tenders portal.

5.2.1 Explanation on deviations from the planned budget

An explanation of any deviation on the use of resources should be provided in Part B of the periodic technical report, in addition to the financial statements for each beneficiary. Moreover, information on unforeseen subcontracting or in-kind contributions provided by third parties (if any) should be provided and justified

properly. The PMT is responsible for collecting and compiling the information from all beneficiaries.

5.3 Financial Reporting

5.3.1 Eligibility

In order for costs to be considered eligible, and therefore approved by the JU and the Digital Europe Programme, costs must fulfil the following general conditions:

- Incurred by the beneficiary.
- Incurred during the duration of the project, with the exception of costs relating to the submission of the periodic report for the last periodic report.
- Indicated in the estimated budget for the action in Annex II of the Grant Agreement.
- Actual and necessary for carrying out implementation of the HPC SPECTRA project.
- Identifiable and verifiable and recorded in the participants' accounts.
- Determined in accordance with the usual accounting principles of the participants.
- Comply with the applicable national law on taxes, and social security.
- Reasonable, justified and must adhere to the principle of sound financial management.

5.3.2 Financial statements for each beneficiary

The financial report is composed by individual financial statements for each beneficiary, together with an explanation on the use of resources. Financial statements are specific documents in which each participant declares all the costs incurred over the corresponding reporting period.

The justification of costs is done through the Funding and Tenders portal by using the Periodic Reporting Module (which is made available to the participants usually right after the end of the corresponding reporting period by the Project Officer). The costs must be filled by each participant through the system (users with the role Participant Contact) which uses the Financial Statement model available in Annex IV of the HPC SPECTRA Grant Agreement. Once all the information is completed, each beneficiary

shall electronically sign the financial statement. Only users with the role of Project Financial Signatory (PFSIGN) can perform this action. Once all financial statements have been signed by all beneficiaries (including the Coordinator), the Project Coordinator must check that all information included is correct and incorporate the different financial statements in the Periodic Report composition.

Specific guidelines for accessing the Periodic Reporting Module will be prepared by the PMT. These guidelines will include screenshots and instructions for adequate reporting and will be made available to all participants as supporting material.

5.4 Internal financial monitoring

To ensure the consumption of the resources occur according to the plan, the PMT requests to the consortium members to complete a financial template every 6 months, indicating the person months incurred for each WP, as well as the rest of the cost categories. This exercise allows the PMT to detect any potential deviation and take corrective actions if necessary.

6 Quality Assurance

6.1 Deliverables and Review Processes

Project deliverables are the outcome of the WP technical progress. As a general rule, the generation of deliverables is a responsibility of the corresponding WPLs, who need to gather contributions from WP participants as appropriate. Prior to the submission to the Funding and Tenders Portal, deliverables are examined against a quality criteria and undergo an internal review process, as detailed in subsections 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 respectively.

6.1.1 Quality Criteria for Deliverables

The review procedure uses the following quality criteria as reference:

- **Completeness:** Information must address all aspects related to the purpose for which the information is produced. On the other hand, a redundancy of information must be avoided, as it may obscure the clarity of the deliverables. Information should be provided to the depth needed for the purpose of the document.
- **Accuracy:** Information provided in the deliverable, must be evidence-based. This means that all factual information used in the deliverables should be supported by relevant and up-to-date references.
- **Relevance:** Information used in the deliverable should be focused on the key issues and be written in a way that takes into consideration its target audience.
- **Adherence to project standards/templates:** It is important that deliverables are prepared with uniform appearance and structure, hence the template for HPC SPECTRA deliverables must be used.

6.1.2 Internal Review Process for Deliverables

The intention of the deliverable review process is to ensure that each deliverable meets the list of quality criteria described above. As a total of 12 deliverables were committed in the project and HPC SPECTRA is composed of 6 partners, each partner has agreed to review 2 deliverables each (allocated based on the expertise of the partners) to ensure a balanced workload distribution. This does not exclude other partners not appointed as reviewers to provide their comments to deliverables in general. The list

of deliverables and their corresponding appointed authors and reviewers is available in the project’s document repository on Teams. Table 4 below summarises the internal deliverable review process deadlines established to ensure timely submission of deliverables:

Table 4. Internal deadlines for the deliverable review process.

Action	Deadline (before due date)
PMT sends reminder to responsible author and designated reviewers	6 weeks
Responsible author sends draft deliverable to internal reviewers	3 weeks
Internal reviewer sends comments to author	2 weeks
Authors send consolidated deliverable back to reviewer	1 week
Reviewer accepts the deliverable and informs PMT	2 days
PMT conducts final checks and submits the deliverable on the portal	0-1 day

6.2 Quality Assessment and Key Performance Indicators

The Grant Agreement of the project includes a list of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that provides indications of the project’s progress as well as the quality of the outcome and impact. The KPIs will be continuously monitored by the PMT and discussed at CC meetings every 3 months to ensure that the project are on course to achieve the expected KPIs, or otherwise take appropriate measures should there be risks that the KPIs cannot be met. The quality of the EuroHPC Training Portal, and each edition of the International HPC Summer School – two main outcomes from the project – will also be assessed within deliverables (D2.2, D4.1 and D4.2) of the project.