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TITLE: WP8 EVALUATION
SUBTITLE: FIRST QUALITY REPORT

ASSET Project • Grant Agreement N°612236

ASSET

Action plan on SiS related issues in Epidemics And Total Pandemics

7th RTD framework programme

Theme: [SiS.2013.1.2-1 Sis.2013.1.2-1]

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D8.1 Quality Report

Task: **T8.1 Project Monitoring and ongoing evaluation**

Leader: ZADIG – Other contributors: All

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Vn	Status	Date	Organisation / Person responsible	Reason for Change
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite a quite problematic start when the Project's scientific coordinator left the project and was to be replaced, the project did not lose enthusiasm—the new leadership of ISS started off on the right foot in June 2014 with a Kick-off Meeting.

The first two months of activity saw an intense exchange of contacts in order to make all project tasks well understood by the responsible researchers, and one month later the communication instruments became a reality, fostering authentic daily participation.

The Internal evaluation was based on 3 questionnaires: a general quality plan questionnaire, a self assessment form, and Form 3 as a continuous monitoring tool. The evaluation also profited from the community of practice CoP accession statistics and the deliverables time table.

All eleven deliverables made available on the Cop were enriched by the contribution of several colleagues as well as the revision of QO and PI.

The final quality of those products is to be considered very high and fully adherent to the expectations of the DOW.

Some problems did become evident during this first year's activity:

- The true start of the project was June 2014, but even so the proposed DOW amendment did not arrive from the Commission, leaving researchers with an inappropriate time gap.
- Participation in the CoP increased with time, but some teams still prefer to use ordinary e-mail for communication, meaning the CoP events session was poorly utilized.
- Enrollment of High level stakeholders was restricted by the short preparatory time, but it also became clear that the allocated travel and lodging resources were insufficient to enroll already very busy top stakeholders.
- Several deliverables were submitted to QO and PI as a completed draft, making it difficult to organize an in-depth revision but rather one limited to few amendments.
- Available competences as provided in the DOW proved to be insufficient to complete certain tasks at the highest possible level.

Possible solutions to these problems are presented in the last paragraph.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 WP8 Objective

WP8 aims to carry out an in-depth independent evaluation of the methodology and implementation progress of ASSET and its potential impact on citizens and civil society, throughout the duration of the project, in relation to its objectives and expected impacts. WP8 objectives are to provide 1) continuous monitoring and ongoing evaluation of the project; and 2) post-evaluation of project WPs and critical activities.

1.2 T8.1 Project Monitoring and ongoing evaluation

Leader: Zadig: Start: m4 End: m48

Contributors: LYON, Prolepsis, EIWH, DBT, FFI, IPRI, ISS, NCIPD, TIEMS, Data Mining, UMFCF, HU, ZADIG, AK

T8.1 will ensure the periodic oversight of the project's implementation and will assess the development results. It aims to establish the extent to which work schedules, contractual deliverables, other required actions and targeted outputs are progressing according to plan, as well as ensuring that they are of high quality and are achieving the expected impacts so that timely action can be taken to correct deficiencies if detected.

1.3 The complexity of ASSET

With 10 work packages and 59 deliverables for 14 partners coming from 11 countries, ASSET has a complex relationship framework; in fact most deliverables are correctly related to one another and most work packages involve nearly all project participants. Moreover, there are clear conditional relationships between work packages; production of many of the 59 deliverables depends on the completion of other deliverables.

Therefore, before setting any sort of quality assessment tool, it is necessary to refer to the logic model that displays the project network's interrelationships.

It looks clear that workpackage interactions are complex and also that many workpackages are consistently related to previous ones.

1.4 The Early History of ASSET

The ASSET project was planned to start on January 1, 2014, and run for 4 years.

Unfortunately, the project leading Institution, the CSSC (Center for Science, Society and Citizenship), left the project that very month.

This led to a restructuring and renegotiation of the entire project, and those operations were successfully managed under the new leadership of IstitutoSuperiore di Sanità, located in Rome, Italy.

The process took some 5 months so that the project became truly operational only on June 1, 2014.



2. METHODS

2.1 Quality concepts

- The internal quality activity does not only function as a mere administrative examination of the ongoing work but also recognizes the need of careful monitoring of the ongoing activities as well as the matching of results with expected deliverables.
- The Internal Evaluation acts as an horizontal tool:
 - To improve project activity quality,
 - To make visible to the ASSET research workforce the quality of their own work
 - To make visible the interaction between researcher activities
 - To share the notion that this evaluation task is not an external exploration of our work, nor is it another fastidious paper job loaded on an already heavy job
 - To facilitate the ASSET management between the Project Management Office (PMO), the Project Coordinator, and the Project Scientific Coordinator, as well as the External Advisory Board, the Project Executive Board (PEB), and the Project Management Board (PMB)

2.2 Quality Methods

A concise quality plan setting project standards and procedures was published on the CoP in October 2014.

The quality assessment activity was based on a set of indicators directly involving the working groups. Time and access statistics were used as quantitative hard indicators and 3 quality questionnaires collected qualitative informations from WP and Task leaders.

Annex 1, 2, 3 provides those instruments.

a. Questionnaires:

i. Form 1: Quality Assurance Plan

ASSET participants were asked to fill out a Quality Assurance Plan questionnaire designed to capture from each ASSET researcher his/her knowledge and understanding of the project's assigned tasks and the planned activities to achieve task objectives.

ii. Form 2: Self Assessment questionnaires

A one-page form was provided to each researcher as an individual checklist to monitor the progress of his/her own activity.

iii. Form 3 : Work progress and achievements

This form is intended as the periodical monitoring instrument for the entire project's length: it includes elements of activity progress and intermediate achievements.



3. RESULTS

3.1. Hard indicators

3.1.1 Time

In June 2015 (month 18), 11 deliverables were completed and sent to the Commission. In fact those 11 deliverables completed their approval process (by the Quality Officer, then by the Principal Investigator, followed by the Project Manager), with a mean delay of 5 months (range 3-9). This corresponded well with the original project start date of June 2014, six months after the planned date.

All deliverables were submitted to the QO and the PI and all underwent some revision.

The entire approval process, from first submission to transmission to the commission took a mean of 3 months (range 1-8).

Eight more deliverables are expected by month 18 (June 2015) and are in the pipeline.

3.1.2 Participation

The ASSET working groups are connected with a virtual Community of Practice (CoP); this is the space where most project issues are discussed in an open forum. The CoP also hosts project instruments, products, and a calendar of events.

Access to the CoP is monitored with a dedicated tool.

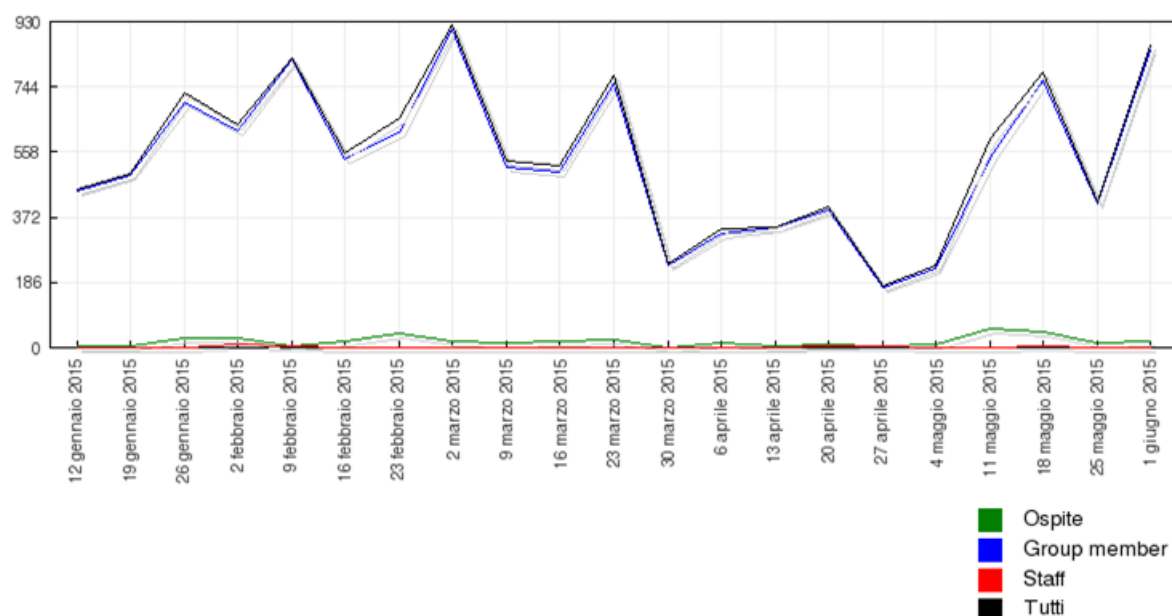
Statistics of access are considered proxy of Project participation.

The CoP began on January 12, 2015.

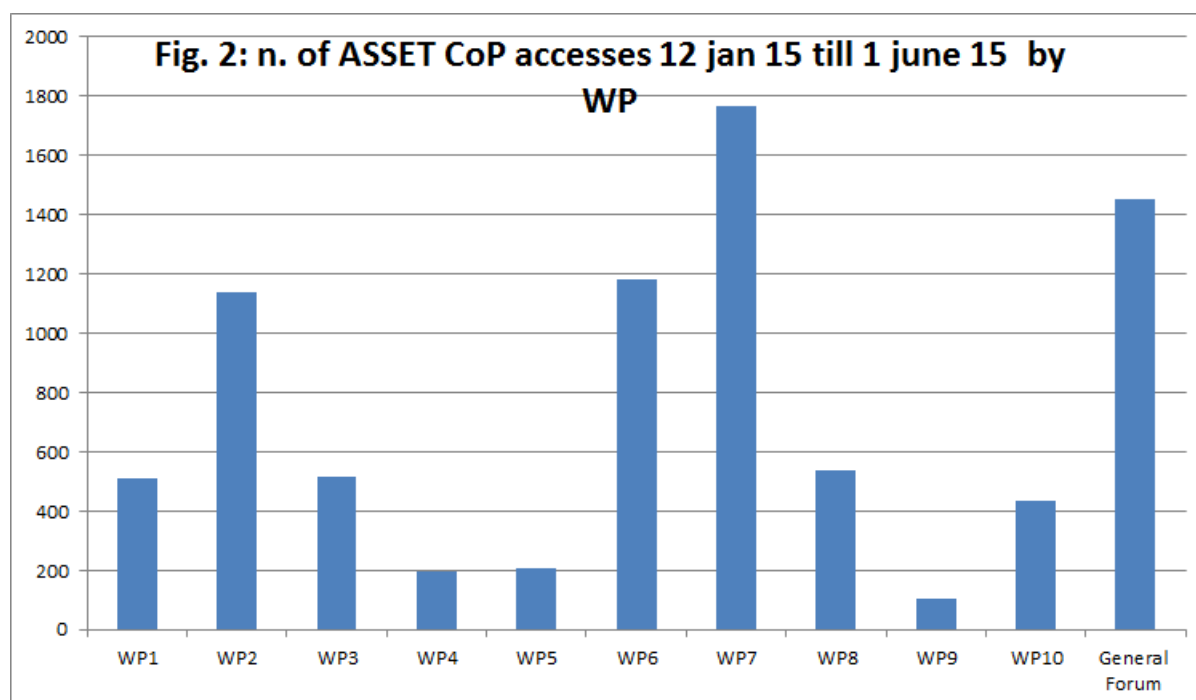
By June 1, 2015, there had been 11486 visits to the CoP, a mean of 574 visits per week.

Most of the visits were from Project members, but there were also 359 guest visits.

The following graph (fig. 1) provides the number of accesses over time.

**FIG 1: N. of accesses to the ASSET CoP over time**

Numbers of accesses are available by each of the 10 Work packages and by the general project forum. The WP7 (Communication) lead the the access statistics with 1767 accesses, followed by the General Forum (1452), then WP6 (Policy watch) with 1179 and WP2 (Study and Analysis) with 1140 accesses: fig 2 shows the ASSET CoP accesses by WP for the first 5 months of 2015. Other 3427 accesses were for other CoP pages such as resources, calendar, glossary, and profiles.





The CoP Events sector started to be utilized only in the last 3 months; in fact this sector is still hosting a modest number of pertinent events and some recall was launched by the CoP management.

The CoP is not the only internal communication tool of ASSET. In fact many contacts still go through ordinary email. Moreover the CoP system sends to all registered individuals a daily digest in the chosen language with the contribution received in the previous 24 h so that all ASSET participants receive information with the content of their contribution. If full information is required to access the deposited files, then the user can click on the email's message and enter the CoP. This is to say that CoP access only covers a portion of internal ASSET contacts.

3.2 Quality indicators

3.2.1 Quality Assurance Plan

This was the first request of information by the ASSET researchers, and it has been built according to the Concise Quality plan provided in December 2014.

In fact this questionnaire was in effect the first job of ASSET activities and took some time to make it well understood by all participants.

Questionnaires were received in a period of 60 days from all participants except IPRI.

For some WPs the leader preferred to summarize the WP task questionnaires and compile a global WP questionnaire, while for other WPs single task questionnaires were received.

Several questions were raised regarding receiving the questionnaire, so that active interaction with the quality officer took place.

The Logical Framework Analysis table included in the questionnaire was completely ignored. In fact interaction with the QO and the PI lead to the inclusion of this component in the subsequent form 3, the continuous monitoring instrument.

From the content analysis of this first questionnaire some observations were made:

1. The ASSET researcher, after an initial running phase, understood well his/her tasks and the interaction between tasks.
2. The activity plans were coherent with the DOW but expressed a variety of details, some extremely concise, others more thorough.
3. The need for a constant contact activity between the different groups was evident; at the time of the first survey, the CoP was not used by all participants, meaning it was insufficient to serve as a continuous contact tool.

3.2.2 Self assessment

The self assessment tool by definition was not intended to be transmitted to the QO. However, some researchers made this instrument visible to the QO and the PI, a sign of its use.



3.2.3 Forms N.3

A total of 20 Form 3 regarding the first year of activities were received until the end of April 2015. Considering the late start of the project, those forms were *de facto* related to the second semester of 2014, the first semester of activity.

The following table provides the distribution of the received form 3 by WP:

WP form 3	n. Forms
WP1	4
WP2	2
WP 3	1
WP 6	1
WP 7	11
WP 8	1
Total	20

The following is a synthetic description of the WP main results as described in FORM 3 : for WP 1,2,3,6 and 7. WP 8 results are described in this report and WP 4, 5 and 9 are still in the initial phase, while the WP10 is in management and will produce its own report.

WP1

Main results

1.. Common approach developed among partners. The Kick-off Meeting, the Community of Practice, and the work on the Glossary have all facilitated active communication and teamwork among partners during the first year of project life. Partners have become well acquainted with each other and with the expert knowledge each brings to the project.

2. Reference common language. The Glossary is a comprehensive reference document, covering and explaining terms that span all the topics relevant to ASSET. It has been developed using the varied expert knowledge of partners.

3.. A platform for work and communication. The Community of Practice has become an invaluable tool that allows everyone to follow up and participate in project activities and to easily gain an overlook of



what is currently happening. In addition, the platform has become a place of discussion of various topics related to pandemics and epidemics, facilitating exchange of perspectives and knowledge.

4. Careful and comprehensive overlooking of all tasks, provided by the Scientific Coordination task.

5. For the MMLAP virtual cluster, a database on EU-funded MMLAP projects has been completed and is available on the CoP, and contacts with the MMLAP project leaders are ongoing.

Deviations

Late start of the project

Next steps

The ongoing work on Scientific Coordination continues. Work on the virtual MMLAP cluster has already begun.

WP2

Main Results

In D2.3, we have coined the term Crisis Participatory Governance to include citizens and civil society in risk communication and organized response to a crisis (i.e., epidemic and pandemic threats) so as to pioneer citizen engagement in policy making and implementation.

We have recommended responsible research and innovations about how to empower marginalized groups in society (i.e., women, ultra-poor, illiterate, physically and psychologically challenged, those with lower social capital, and some ethnic groups) in participatory governance, and why they would participate when they have higher priorities, for example hand-to-mouth existence. Another recommended research area is how to improve the willingness and capacity of state actors in participatory governance since it is a matter of culture, tradition, religion, legacy, and existing practices.

An ethical ASSET strategy has been prepared not only as an ongoing tool for all the ASSET activities, but more as a working tool for all stakeholders confronted with pandemic-epidemic emergencies.

References to formal EU documents offer protection against deviation from the EU-approved ethical policy.

WP 3

Main Results



A structured process of information acquisition from the partners can facilitate the process of developing the Strategic Plan. The structure guides consideration of how problems identified in WP2 can be remedied by the actions planned for ASSET, such as Citizens' Meetings, Social media mobilization, best practice platform and stakeholder portal, local initiatives, high-Level Policy Forum, Pandemic Preparedness and Response Bulletin, Web Portal, Summer School, etc..

Deviations

Due to the late start of ASSET, we expect to complete T3.1 and T3.1 by m21 instead of m18. We do not expect this to impact other WPs.

Next steps

Finalization of Strategic Plan template and subsequent data collection; collection of data required by template from partners; drafting T3.2 roadmap and coordinating with T3.1.

WP 6

Main Results

The minutes of the first ASSET HLPF meeting were sent to the consortium partners and uploaded to ASSET COP. The minutes form the first draft of the High Level Policy Forum Report 1 and will be updated with progress, findings, and results of the T6.1 activity until the report is to be delivered at month 18.

ASSET member Bjørn Guldvog agreed to discuss the ASSET HLPF at the Riga meeting for top level health personnel in Europe on April 7th, which resulted in 21 people interested in hearing more about ASSET HLPF. They have been contacted with a request for membership in ASSET HLPF. It is hoped that this could intensify the recruiting process of members to ASSET HLPF.

There should be a joint meeting between ASSET HLPF representatives and representatives of the Committee in due time before the next Committee meeting in October, in order to facilitate personal introductions and the discussion of the benefits of possible future cooperation.

Deviations

None, but ASSET HLPF member recruitment goes slowly, and requires some considerations on how the process could become more successful. The number of ASSET – HLPF members is still not acceptable, and this will be the main focus at the next ASSET HLPF, which is planned for the end of 2015 in accordance with ASSET DOW. We will consider having the next ASSET HLPF meeting around the same time as the Health Security Committee meeting, but this will be decided when we have had the meeting with representatives of the Committee.

Next steps



Minutes from the first ASSET HLPF Meeting will be updated and will form the D6.1 High Level Policy Forum Report 1.

The follow-up of the conclusions and recommendations after the first ASSET HLPF meeting, as well as the further recruitment of ASSET HLPF members, will be the focus of the coming months leading up to the next ASSET HLPF meeting at the end of 2015.

WP 7

Main Results

The communication strategy is a relevant tool for stakeholders.

The project brand is completed and all asset documents circulating have an asset style.

The web portal is active.

The media office is starting out:

At the International Journalism Festival in Perugia we met top international health journalists and other stakeholders involved in infectious outbreaks, notably the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. We interviewed 3 of them (Boseley, Cooper and O'Hara) for the ASSET website and established personal and social network connections with several others.

At Digital Pharma Europe 2015, in Rome, we were able to get in touch with multichannel marketing strategies adopted by industries for commercial communication. This can be useful to understand how we can better use new technologies (from social networks to serious games) to communicate and involve different groups of people.

At the conference we linked with experts in the field of digital communication as well as pharma managers working on e-learning and any kind of brand communication in the field:

DIGITAL MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION.

At a round table of the World Federation of Science Journalists in Paris we established a good relationship with Colleen Manitt, project manager (cmanitt@wfsj.org), and Damien Chalaud (dchalaud@wfsj.org), executive director of the association. They are now working on new projects related to infectious outbreaks (notably bird flu in Africa). We laid the groundwork for cooperation in the field and scheduled a Skype meeting to arrange it.

At the meeting we got in touch with other relevant professionals working on infectious diseases.

ASSET WEB PORTAL is operational; a wide pattern of services is provided to introduce visitors easily to ASSET logic and products.

Prolepsis is working on the science communication tool, and meetings with the ISS team producing the ASSET bulletin were held to avoid duplications and overlapping.

The summer school organization is progressing fast; the announcement to enroll students is on the ASSET website.

The GP award team is discussing modalities and criteria, and some decisions have been made.



The liaison with the Comelius programme is progressing.

The gender Platform is in progress; the team has produced the framework and the logic of the project.

Lastly, the Newsletter from Byopole is ongoing; the literature search has begun and the newsletter logic frame is available. The draft of the first issue has been produced.

Comparison between planned quality indicators and obtained results at month 18

WP	Indicator	Sources of Verification	Actual result
WP1	<p>glossary items added to the initial list to get the final version (ST: percentage increase 50% compared to the initial number)</p> <p>average monthly number of messages posted on the web-based asset platform (ST: at least 100)</p> <p>annual relative percentage increase of accesses registered to the ASSET site (ST: at least 15%)</p>	<p>Initial and final version of the glossary</p> <p>Asset model statistics</p> <p>Site statistics</p>	<p>From initial 300 glossary items to a final 400 (33% increase), perf. 66%</p> <p>2.296 messages /month Perf. Over 100%</p> <p>Year not yet completed</p>
WP2	Issues brought up by the 6 reports and within the TDW effectively exploitable for the strategic plan preparation (ST: at least 50%)	18 -36 months' scientific coordinator report	36 month not yet arrived
WP3	WP3 Strategic Plan objectives endorsed by the High Level Policy Forum (ST: at least 70%)	HLPF reports	First HLPF report obtained
WP6	Increase of degree of ASSET participating countries in the HLPF (ST: at least for 60% of participating countries)	D6.1, D6.2, D6.3 deliverable report	D6.1 report obtained , only 5 countries participating
WP7	<p>-Annual increase in total accesses to the Asset web portal (ST: at least by 15%)</p> <p>-Annual increase of web portal updates (ST: at least 15%)</p>	<p>Site statistics</p> <p>Site statistics</p>	Despite the fact that the Asset website is not yet complete, statistics from the first 6 months show a rising trend of users
WP8	Project Quality Reports made available in due time for the ASSET CoP (ST: at least 80%)	Project quality report D8.1	D8.1 report obtained on time



4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The ASSET project started! Despite a quite problematic start when the Project scientific coordinator left the project and had to be replaced, the project did not lose enthusiasm; the new leadership of ISS started off on the right foot in June 2014 with the Kick-off Meeting.

The first two months of activity saw an intense exchange of contacts to make all project tasks well understood by the responsible researchers, and one month later the communication instruments became a reality, fostering genuine daily participation.

All eleven deliverables made available on the Cop were enriched by the contribution of several colleagues as well as the revision of QO and PI.

The final quality of those products is considered very high and fully adherent to the expectations of the DOW.

- As aforementioned, some problems became evident during this first year of activity. The true start of the project was June 2014, but even so the proposed DOW amendment did not arrive from the Commission, leaving researchers with an inappropriate time gap.
- Participation in the CoP increased with time, but some teams still prefer to use ordinary e-mail for communication, meaning the CoP events session was poorly utilized.
- Enrollment of High level stakeholders was restricted by the short preparatory time, but it also became clear that the allocated travel and lodging resources were insufficient to enroll already very busy top stakeholders.
- Several deliverables were submitted to QO and PI as a completed draft, making it difficult to organize an in-depth revision but rather one limited to few amendments.
- Available competences as provided in the DOW proved to be insufficient to complete certain tasks at the highest possible level.

Recommendations

- Increase CoP utilization, making it the exclusive communication instrument between ASSET participants.
- Each team should consider contributing to ASSET's external visible products as the ASSET WEB, the BULletin, the newsletter, and the different forums.
- Enrich the CoP Events sector.
- Consider exchanging very preliminary deliverable report drafts with partners, the CoP, the QO, and the PI, so as to allow a sort of "mid-term" review of each product.



- Consider a financial rearrangement of resources dedicated to external participant events, such as the HLPF and the summer school; it is not easy to enroll appropriate participants in those events without also offering travel and lodging expenses.
- Intensive dissemination of ASSET products and events has been started by the dedicated media office team, but this activity should also be an horizontal duty of all ASSET participants.



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