



SOHO – SMART, OPTIMIZED, HIGH-QUALITY, AND ON-DEMAND TOURISM INNOVATIVE EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE AND GREEN DEVELOPMENT

Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education · Project n° 101129336

Deliverable D1.1

Quality Strategy and Evaluation Plan and Interim Evaluation Report

Work Package 1 – Project Management and Coordination

Lead beneficiary: National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest (UNSTPB)

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Contributors	Project coordinator, administrative officer, work-package leaders (UNSTPB, ULL, POLIMI, UTE, USM, UD) and the independent external evaluator

Version	Date	Author	Changes
0.1	March 2024	UNSTPB	Quality Strategy and Evaluation Plan presented at the kick-off meeting (Milan, 26–27 February 2024)
0.5	May 2025	UNSTPB	Quality section of the interim progress report to EACEA (period 24 Nov 2023 – 31 May 2025)
1.0	September 2026	UNSTPB	Consolidated Quality Strategy, Evaluation Plan and interim evaluation; framework for the independent expert report

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1. Purpose and scope

This document is deliverable D1.1 of the SOHO project. It brings together, in one place, (i) the Quality Strategy adopted by the consortium at the start of the project, (ii) the Evaluation Plan that describes how the quality of the project's processes, outputs and results is monitored and assessed, and (iii) the interim evaluation of the project, including the framework for the evaluation carried out by an independent external expert.

The Quality Strategy applies to every work package and to every partner. It is a living document: it was first presented and agreed at the kick-off transnational project meeting in Milan (26–27 February 2024), its application was reviewed in the interim progress report submitted to EACEA for the period 24 November 2023 – 31 May 2025, and it is consolidated here at month 34 of the project. The final version of D1.1 (November 2026) will add the final evaluation report of the independent expert.

1.1 The SOHO project in brief

SOHO – Smart, Optimized, High-quality and On-demand Tourism Innovative Education for Sustainable and Green Development – is an Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education project (ERASMUS-EDU-2023-CBHE, Strand 2, lump-sum grant, project n° 101129336) implemented between 24 November 2023 and 23 November 2026 by nine universities from six countries: UNSTPB (Romania, coordinator), Université Lumière Lyon 2 (France), Politecnico di Milano (Italy), Universiti Sains Malaysia and UTAR Education Foundation (Malaysia), the University of Technology and Education – University of Danang and The University of Danang (Vietnam), and the American International University-Bangladesh and Jahangirnagar University (Bangladesh).

The project develops three competency-based training modules – Sustainable Transportation in Tourism, Smart Renewable Energy and Smart Sustainable Accommodation – delivered through a Moodle learning platform, trains the academic staff of the Asian partners in five intensive training weeks, integrates the courses into the partners' curricula and establishes Knowledge & Competence Centres in Da Nang, Dhaka and Penang / Kuala Lumpur. Six work packages structure the work: WP1 management, WP2 needs analysis, curriculum and LMS, WP3 training materials, WP4 intensive training and assessment, WP5 competence centres and policy recommendations, WP6 impact analysis and dissemination.

2. Quality Strategy

2.1 Quality objectives

The Quality Strategy has five objectives, agreed by all partners at the kick-off meeting:

- **Relevance** – every output answers a documented need of the target groups, starting from the Training Needs Analysis (D2.1) carried out with 254 respondents in the six partner countries.
- **Compliance** – deliverables, milestones and KPIs are produced as described in the Grant Agreement (Annex 1) and within the agreed deadlines, and the EU funding rules and visibility requirements are respected.
- **Consistency** – the three modules follow the same pedagogical framework, the same structure on the learning platform and the same assessment logic, whichever partner develops or delivers them.
- **Transparency** – decisions, responsibilities and progress are documented in agendas, minutes, to-do lists and a shared deliverable tracker accessible to every partner.

- **Continuous improvement** – feedback from partners, trainees, students and the external evaluator is collected systematically and fed back into the following activities.

2.2 Quality principles

The consortium applies the following principles to all its work:

- **Shared ownership:** every deliverable is a consortium product. It is reviewed by all partners before submission, not only by its lead beneficiary.
- **Evidence-based decisions:** the choice of course topics, platform features and training formats is justified by data (needs analysis, feedback questionnaires, platform analytics).
- **Fitness for purpose:** quality is judged against the needs of the users – university teachers, students and the tourism workforce in Vietnam, Bangladesh and Malaysia – and not only against formal criteria.
- **Proportionality:** quality procedures are kept light enough to be applied consistently by nine institutions with different administrative cultures and time zones.
- **Sustainability:** outputs are designed to remain usable after the end of the grant – open-source platform, editable materials, courses embedded in accredited programmes.

2.3 Quality management structure and responsibilities

Body / role	Members	Quality responsibilities
Project Coordinator	UNSTPB – Assoc. Prof. Vladimir Tanasiev	Overall responsibility for quality; approval of deliverables before submission; liaison with EACEA; convening of meetings; risk management.
Administrative and financial officer	UNSTPB – Gabriel Dima, Alina Borcoş	Contractual and financial compliance; reporting calendar; partnership agreements; lump-sum declarations per work package.
Steering Committee	One representative per partner (nine members)	Strategic decisions at each transnational project meeting; approval of changes to the work plan; resolution of conflicts.
Work-package leaders	WP1 UNSTPB · WP2 UNSTPB · WP3 POLIMI · WP4 ULL · WP5 UTE · WP6 USM	Planning and quality of the activities and deliverables of their work package; internal review of partner contributions; reporting to the coordinator.
Deliverable lead beneficiaries	As listed in the Grant Agreement	Drafting to the agreed template; organising the peer review; incorporating comments; delivering the final version on time.
Regional teams	Vietnam (UD, UTE) · Bangladesh (AIUB, JU) · Malaysia (USM, UTAR)	Local relevance of the outputs; collection of feedback from students, staff and stakeholders; operation of the Knowledge & Competence Centres.
Independent external evaluator	Expert appointed by the coordinator, not affiliated to a partner	Interim and final evaluation of processes, outputs and impact; recommendations to the Steering Committee.

2.4 Quality assurance procedures

Deliverable review cycle. Each deliverable follows the same cycle: (1) the lead beneficiary circulates a first draft to all partners at least three weeks before the due date; (2) partners return written comments

within two weeks, using tracked changes or a comment sheet; (3) the lead beneficiary consolidates the comments and issues the final version; (4) the coordinator checks the final version against the Grant Agreement description and the quality checklist (section 4.3) and submits it. Deliverables of type 'demonstrator' (the LMS) or 'event' (training sessions) are validated at a transnational project meeting or through a documented test.

Templates and identity. All documents use the SOHO templates (cover, headers, project identification, EU funding statement and disclaimer). Course materials on the platform follow a common course-space structure created from a template course, so that the three modules are identical in structure across the six Asian universities.

Meetings and decisions. Every transnational project meeting has a published agenda, a signed attendance list and minutes with a to-do list (task, responsible partner, date). Minutes are circulated within two weeks and approved at the next meeting; they constitute deliverables D1.4–D1.9. Online coordination meetings are held between physical meetings and whenever a work package needs it.

Document management. The project Google Drive holds one folder per work package with the current versions of deliverables, templates, meeting documents and dissemination records. File names carry the deliverable number, the partner and the version. The coordinator maintains the deliverable tracker (due date, delivery date, approval date, status).

Risk management. Risks are reviewed at each transnational meeting. The main risks identified and their mitigation are: visa and travel constraints for Asian partners (online participation, early invitation letters); national authorisation procedures for international events in Vietnam (planning meetings six months ahead); uneven academic calendars (training weeks fixed at the 5th meeting to fit all partners); large course materials exceeding the reporting portal limits (course reports with platform access as evidence); delayed partner inputs (fixed deadlines and follow-up during training weeks).

Visibility and data protection. All materials carry the EU co-funding emblem and disclaimer. Personal data collected through questionnaires and enrolment lists is limited to what the platform and the reporting require and is handled by the partner universities under their own GDPR arrangements.

3. Evaluation Plan

3.1 What is evaluated

Evaluation in SOHO takes place at three levels:

- **Process** – is the project managed well? Timeliness of deliverables, quality of coordination and communication, partner engagement, use of resources under the lump-sum model.
- **Outputs** – are the products fit for purpose? Relevance and quality of the needs analysis, the curriculum, the learning platform, the three courses, the training weeks, the competence centres and the dissemination materials.
- **Outcomes and impact** – does the project change something? Competences of the trained staff, number and profile of students following the courses, integration of the courses into accredited programmes, engagement of the tourism industry and public authorities, sustainability after the grant.

3.2 Evaluation tools

Tool	Used for	Who	When
Deliverable quality checklist	Every report and demonstrator before submission	Coordinator, WP leader	At each due date
Transnational meeting evaluation	Organisation, content and usefulness of each TPM	All participants	End of each meeting
Training feedback questionnaire (D4.2 template)	Satisfaction, relevance and learning gain of each intensive training week	Trainees	End of each training week
Assessment of trainees	Competences acquired – written tests and group projects	Trainers	During each training week
Moodle analytics	Enrolment, activity completion, badges and micro-credentials issued	Platform administrator	Continuous; reported per semester
Curriculum-integration reports (T4.3)	Courses embedded in partner programmes; expected student numbers	Asian partners	September 2026
Stakeholder feedback survey (MS16)	Relevance of the competence centres and policy recommendations	Regional teams	2026
Dissemination register	Reach of communication and dissemination activities	All partners	Continuous; consolidated for reporting
KPI tool	Mandatory indicators of the Erasmus+ CBHE programme	Coordinator	Interim and final report
Independent expert evaluation	Overall quality, results and impact; recommendations	External evaluator	Interim (2026) and final (November 2026)

3.3 Key performance indicators

The consortium committed to the following mandatory indicators at submission. The 'status' column gives the situation at 15 September 2026, before the completion of the three training weeks in Asia and of the curriculum-integration reports.

Indicator	Target	Status – September 2026	Means of verification
Third countries creating a regional higher-education area	3	3 – regional teams and competence centres in Vietnam, Bangladesh, Malaysia	Centre launch events, steering committee minutes
Third countries reforming higher-education policies	3	In progress – policy recommendations (D5.1) due November 2026	D5.1 advocacy pack
New courses	12	In progress – three courses developed; integration reports received from UTE, UD and JU; others due	T4.3 integration reports

Indicator	Target	Status – September 2026	Means of verification
Updated courses	6	In progress	T4.3 integration reports
Updated study programmes	3	In progress	T4.3 integration reports
Students and university staff reached	1 036	More than 1 150 – enrolment lists and attendance lists	Moodle enrolment lists, attendance lists
Students following the courses	1 000	More than 1 100 enrolled on the platform	Moodle enrolment lists
Academic staff trained	36	17 trained in Lyon and Milano; further staff in the September 2026 weeks in Da Nang, Dhaka and Penang	Attendance lists, certificates (D4.1)

3.4 Evaluation calendar

Moment	Evaluation activity	Output
M3 – February 2024	Quality Strategy and Evaluation Plan agreed at the kick-off meeting	D1.1 v0.1
M6–M12 – 2024	Peer review of D2.1, D2.2 and D2.3; validation of the LMS at the 3rd meeting (Penang)	Reviewed deliverables; meeting minutes
M18 – May 2025	Interim self-assessment at the 4th meeting (Bucharest); interim progress report to EACEA	Progress report (D1.2)
M21 – August 2025	Peer review of the three training modules (D3.1–D3.3)	Course materials on Moodle; course reports
M31–M34 – June–September 2026	Evaluation of the five training weeks; trainee assessments; feedback questionnaires	D4.1 certificates, D4.2 evaluation report
M34 – September 2026	Interim evaluation (this document); independent expert interim review	D1.1 v1.0
M36 – November 2026	Final evaluation by the independent expert; final conference; final report	D1.1 final, D1.3

4. Interim evaluation – state of play at month 34

4.1 Process evaluation

Coordination has followed the plan agreed at the kick-off meeting: five physical transnational project meetings have been held – Milan (26–27 February 2024), Da Nang (18–19 July 2024), Penang (5–6 December 2024), Bucharest (19–20 May 2025) and Lyon (27–28 November 2025) – complemented by online coordination meetings (11 September 2024, 20 March 2026, 27 July 2026). Each meeting produced an agenda, a signed attendance list, minutes and a to-do list with responsible partners and dates; the minutes were used to monitor the completion of the tasks at the following meeting.

The interim progress report for the period 24 November 2023 – 31 May 2025 was submitted to EACEA on time. Partnership agreements were signed and the pre-financing (70 % of the grant) was distributed to all partners. The lump-sum model has been explained to all partners at the kick-off meeting and each partner provides, at the end of each work package, a declaration of completion of its activities.

Two deviations from the initial timeline are noted. First, the second meeting was moved from May to July 2024 to comply with the authorisation procedure for international events applicable to public universities in Vietnam. Second, the intensive training weeks in Asia (WP4) were scheduled for September 2026, after the due dates of deliverables D4.1–D4.3, to fit the academic calendars of the six Asian partners; the consortium agreed this at the 5th meeting and the related deliverables will be submitted in October 2026, within the project period. Neither deviation affects the achievement of the objectives.

4.2 Output evaluation

WP2 (completed). The Training Needs Analysis (D2.1) was based on two questionnaires answered by 254 respondents – 134 university teachers and 120 students and tourism professionals – in the six countries, rating 28 smart-tourism topics for importance and self-assessed competence. The average gap of about one point on a five-point scale, present in every topic, provided the evidence base for the curriculum (D2.2) and for the choice of the three modules. The Moodle platform (D2.3, moodle.sohoproject.eu) was validated by the partners at the Penang meeting and offers 18 course spaces – three modules for each of the six Asian universities – created from a common template, with badges and micro-credentials.

WP3 (completed). The three courses – Sustainable Transportation in Tourism (ULL), Smart Renewable Energy (POLIMI) and Smart Sustainable Accommodation (UNSTPB) – were developed for two audiences, specialist trainers and the non-technical tourism workforce, peer-reviewed by the partners and uploaded on the platform as lecture presentations, interactive H5P activities, exercises and assessment banks. Because the materials exceed the size limits of the reporting portal, each course is documented by a course report giving its structure, learning outcomes and platform access.

WP4 (in progress). The training weeks in Lyon (15–19 June 2026) and Milano (22–26 June 2026) trained 17 academic staff from six universities, with attendance lists, assessments (written test and group projects in Milano), feedback questionnaires and certificates with a competence profile. The three regional weeks on the Smart Sustainable Accommodation module take place in Da Nang (7–11 September 2026), Dhaka (14–18 September 2026) and Penang (21–25 September 2026). More than 1 100 students are enrolled in the course spaces; curriculum-integration reports (T4.3) have been received from UTE, UD and JU and are due from the other partners.

WP5 (in progress). The HUB – Enhanced Knowledge & Competence Centre for Smart and Sustainable Tourism was launched at The University of Danang in October 2025; the AIUB centre is launched with the September 2026 training week and the Malaysian centre is set up with USM and UTAR. Industry engagement is visible, for instance through the talk show 'Tourism and Smart Hotels' held on 7 September 2026 with Marriott International Vietnam and the Da Nang Tourism Association. Input templates for the advocacy pack (D5.1) have been issued to the six Asian partners.

WP6 (in progress). The project website (sohoproject.eu) has been online since December 2023 and now carries a news section with the partners' coverage. About 90 communication and dissemination activities have been recorded, including national press and television in Bangladesh, Vietnam and Malaysia, university news, conferences and open days; a joint scientific paper was published in 2025 in *Sustainable Cities and Society: Advances*, and a book – *Rhythm in Digital Buildings and Smart Infrastructure* – is in preparation with Springer.

4.3 Quality checklist – deliverables delivered so far

Deliverable	Due	Delivered	Peer-reviewed	Compliant with GA description	Remarks
D1.4 Kick-off meeting report	31 Jan 2024	Yes	Yes	Yes	Agenda, attendance list, minutes
D1.5 2nd meeting report	31 May 2024	Yes	Yes	Yes	Meeting held 18–19 Jul 2024 (date change agreed)
D2.1 Training Needs Analysis	31 May 2024	Yes	Yes	Yes	254 respondents, EN report
D2.2 Training curriculum	31 Oct 2024	Yes	Yes	Yes	Three modules
D2.3 LMS platform	30 Nov 2024	Yes	Validated at TPM3	Yes	moodle.sohoproject.eu
D1.6 3rd meeting report	31 Dec 2024	Yes	Yes	Yes	Penang
D1.2 Progress report	31 May 2025	Yes	Yes	Yes	Submitted to EACEA
D1.7 4th meeting report	31 May 2025	Yes	Yes	Yes	Bucharest
D3.1–D3.3 Training modules	31 Aug 2025	Yes	Yes	Yes	On Moodle; course reports
D1.8 5th meeting report	30 Nov 2025	In finalisation	–	–	Lyon, 27–28 Nov 2025
D6.4 Project website	31 May 2024	Yes	Yes	Yes	sohoproject.eu

4.4 Lessons learned and improvement actions

- Early consultation and shared templates reduce the review time of deliverables; templates are now issued for D4.3, D5.1 and the dissemination registers before the work starts.
- Fixed, written deadlines with follow-up in person (during the training weeks) work better than e-mail reminders for collecting partner inputs.
- Course materials should be accompanied from the outset by a short course report, so that evidence for the reporting portal is available without additional work.
- Dissemination records must be kept continuously in the CBHE format; a consolidated register replaces the earlier Word table.
- The academic calendars of the Asian partners must be checked when planning any event in the last year of the project.

5. Independent external evaluation – interim

5.1 Mandate and independence

In line with the Grant Agreement, the quality of the project is also assessed by one independent expert who is not employed by any of the nine partner universities and has no role in the implementation of the project. The expert is appointed by the coordinator, receives access to the project documents (Grant Agreement, deliverables, minutes, platform, feedback questionnaires, dissemination register) and reports to the Steering Committee. The expert produces an interim evaluation report and a final evaluation report, both annexed to D1.1.

5.2 Scope and evaluation questions

- **Relevance:** are the objectives, the modules and the competence centres still relevant to the needs identified in the Training Needs Analysis and to the national strategies of Vietnam, Bangladesh and Malaysia?
- **Effectiveness:** are the deliverables and milestones achieved with the expected quality? Are the KPIs on track?
- **Efficiency:** is the consortium managed and coordinated efficiently; are resources used as planned under the lump-sum model?
- **Impact:** what changes are already visible for teachers, students, universities and the tourism sector in the partner regions?
- **Sustainability:** which results will remain in use after November 2026, and what conditions are needed for this?

5.3 Method

The evaluation combines desk review of the project documents, the quality checklist and the KPI tool with interviews of the coordinator, the work-package leaders and the regional teams, a review of the learning platform and of samples of the course materials, and an analysis of the feedback questionnaires and assessments from the training weeks. Findings are rated on a four-point scale (excellent / good / satisfactory / needs improvement) for each evaluation question and are accompanied by recommendations.

5.4 Interim evaluation report

The interim evaluation report of the independent expert is presented in Annex A, following the structure in section 5.2. Its recommendations are discussed by the Steering Committee at the final transnational project meeting (Kota Kinabalu, 25–26 November 2026) and the actions taken are recorded in the final version of this deliverable.

Annex A – Interim evaluation report of the independent expert

Field	Content
Evaluator	[Name, title, institution – not affiliated to a SOHO partner]
Period evaluated	24 November 2023 – 15 September 2026
Documents reviewed	Grant Agreement and Annex 1; D1.2 interim progress report; D1.4–D1.7 meeting reports; D2.1–D2.3; D3.1–D3.3 course reports and Moodle course spaces; training week agendas, attendance lists, assessments and feedback questionnaires; dissemination register; KPI tool
Interviews	[Coordinator; WP leaders; regional teams – dates]

Evaluation question	Rating	Findings	Recommendations
Relevance			
Effectiveness			
Efficiency			
Impact			
Sustainability			
Overall assessment			

Signature of the evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Annex B – Deliverable quality checklist

Check	Yes / No / N.A.	Comment
The content corresponds to the description of the deliverable in the Grant Agreement (Annex 1)		
The SOHO template is used (cover, project identification, EU emblem, disclaimer)		
The document is in English, clearly structured, with a table of contents for reports over ten pages		
A draft was circulated to all partners at least three weeks before the due date		
Comments from at least three partners were received and addressed		
Sources, data and figures are referenced and traceable		
Personal data is limited to what is necessary and handled under GDPR		
The dissemination level (PU / SEN) is respected in the distribution of the document		
The final version is stored in the project Drive and recorded in the deliverable tracker		