D1.2 Administrative, Financial, Ethical, Gender, and Legal Coordination

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this deliverable is to specify the relationships among the Partners, concerning the organization of the work related to the principles of ethics, and gender equality, and to set a clear ser of legal administrative rules and standards to achieve the project objectives. This document highlights the project's administrative guidelines and the partners' rights and obligations concerning inter alia liability, access rights, and dispute resolution.

This document first reports on the administrative and financial coordination, followed by ethical, gender, and legal coordination.

This deliverable aims to define the relationships among the project partners, focusing on the organization of work in accordance with ethical principles and gender equality. It also establishes a clear set of legal and administrative rules and standards to ensure the achievement of the project objectives.

This document provides an overview of the project's administrative framework, outlining the partners' rights and responsibilities, particularly in areas such as liability, access rights, and dispute resolution.

The content is structured to first address administrative and financial coordination, followed by sections on ethical, gender, and legal coordination.

2. Administrative and Financial Coordination

This section lays out the main administrative and financial concerns of the project. This includes communication strategies, reporting procedures, and the coordination of financial reporting.

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the administrative and financial coordination mechanisms essential for the project's success. It highlights the foundational principles and processes that ensure effective communication, systematic reporting, and financial oversight among partners. The subsections cover specific topics, including the general principles underpinning collaboration, procedures for notifying the Project Coordinator, reporting requirements, financial cooperation strategies, and mechanisms for resolving disputes. Together, these elements promote a cohesive approach to project administration and financial management, fostering transparency, accountability, and efficiency.

General Principles

The general principles set the foundation for the project's administrative and financial operations. They establish the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of all partners to ensure the smooth and efficient execution of the project.

- Each partner undertakes to take part in the efficient implementation of the Project, and to cooperate, perform and fulfill, promptly and on time, all of its obligations under the approved Consortium Agreement.
- Each Party undertakes to promptly notify, by the project’s governance structure, any significant information, facts, problems or delays that could potentially impact the Project.

- Each Party shall promptly provide all information reasonably requested by the General Assembly or the coordinator to enable the effective execution of their tasks.
- Each Party shall take reasonable measures to ensure the accuracy of any information or materials it provides to the other parties.

The Parties further acknowledge their obligation to provide the necessary data to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of the project's progress, as measured against relevant impact indicators and program objectives, in following the directives of the DUT Partnership.

To avoid doubt, each partner is responsible for collecting, reviewing to verify consistency, and submitting reports and other deliverables (including any financial statements and certifications) to their respective Funding Authority.

Where necessary, the partners shall cooperate to enable one another to fulfill legal obligations arising under applicable data protection laws (the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons about the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data and relevant national data protection law applicable to said partner) within the scope of the performance and administration of the project.

The Consortium Body shall endeavor to settle their disputes amicably. Any dispute, controversy, or claim arising under, out of, or relating to this contract and any subsequent amendments of this contract, including, without limitation, its formation, validity, binding effect, interpretation, performance, breach, or termination, as well as non-contractual claims, shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Brussels.

Convening meetings:

The chairperson of a management body shall convene meetings of that body. Meetings may be held in person or by teleconference, videoconference or other telecommunication means.

Table 1. Convening Meetings

	Ordinary meetings	Extraordinary meetings
General Assembly	1 a year	At any time upon request of the Management Board or 1/3 of the members of the General Assembly
Management Board	Quarterly (every 3 months)	At any time upon request of any Member of the Management Board
Executive Board	At least 3 meetings/work package (plan, organize, and assist)	At any time upon request of any Member of the Executive Board
Expert Validation Board	Validation results meetings	If invited to other meetings.

Notice of a meeting: The Coordinator shall give written notice of a meeting to each member as soon as possible and no later than 2 weeks preceding an extraordinary meeting.

Sending the agenda: The chairperson shall prepare and send each member an agenda 14 or 7 calendar before an extraordinary meeting.

Adding agenda items: Any agenda item requiring a decision by the members must be identified as such on the agenda.

Minutes of meetings: The chairperson of a management body shall produce the minutes of each meeting, which shall be the formal record of all decisions made. They shall send the draft minutes to all members within ten calendar days of the meeting.

The minutes shall be considered accepted if, within seven calendar days from receipt, a member has yet to send an objection to the chairperson concerning the accuracy of the draft of the minutes.

The chairperson shall send the accepted minutes to all the Parties and to the coordinator, who shall retain copies.

Decisions will only be binding once the relevant part of the minutes has been accepted.

Decisions without a meeting: Any member may add an item to the original agenda during a meeting or by written notice to all other members no later than 7 calendar days preceding the meeting and 2 days preceding an extraordinary meeting.

Any decision may also be taken without a meeting if:

a) the Coordinator circulates to all Members of the General Assembly a suggested decision with a deadline for responses of at least 10 calendar days after receipt by a Party and
b) 51% of all parties voted in favor of the resolution.

The Coordinator shall inform all the members of the outcome of the vote.

Parties may submit a veto up to 15 calendar days after receiving this information.

The decision will be binding after the Coordinator notifies all members. The Coordinator will keep records of the votes and make them available to the Parties on request.

Project Documentation

Document interchange format

All the text documents exchanged within the project must observe the following rules:

- Format *.docx/doc (Word or equivalent) or *.pdf.
- Track of changes activated (in case of Word file).
- All the text documents exchanged within the project must observe the following rules:
- Format *.docx/doc (Word or equivalent) or *.pdf.

- Track of changes activated (in case of Word file). (See D1.3 Innovation Quality, Risk Mitigation, and Data Management Plan)

Project Periodic Report

Each partner is responsible for fulfilling the reporting requirements of their national institutions and ensuring compliance with local standards and regulations. At the same time, the project coordinator must comply with the reporting guidelines and obligations set by the DUT and combine the contributions of all partners into a comprehensive overview in line with the expectations of the DUT.

Financial Cooperation

The respective national or regional funding agenc(y)(ies), will pay the financial contribution under the approved project proposal and plan. To this end, the partners are responsible separately for engaging in a contractual relationship with their national or regional Funding Agency. The financial provisions do not include Cooperation Partners.

Neither the coordinator nor the other partners shall be liable or responsible for such cost justification.

Each Party is responsible for sending the coordinator all the necessary information so that the coordinator can submit the yearly short progress reports, a mid-term report, and a final report on the progress to the DUT 2022. For the Financial report, the following information needs to be filled:

	Personal spending	Direct costs				Indirect costs	Total spending
WP		Travel	Equipments	Material	subcontracting		
WP1							
WP2							
WP3							
WP4							
WP5							
WP6							
WP7							

In summary, the administrative and financial coordination mechanisms outlined in this section aim to foster accountability, transparency, and efficiency. By adhering to these principles and procedures, the project ensures its alignment with both internal goals and external compliance standards.

3. Ethical Coordination

This section presents the ethical guidelines and management strategies adopted for the FORTHCOMING project, ensuring compliance with the moral framework outlined in the project proposal. The approach focuses on integrating Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) principles, promoting gender equality, and adhering to European and national regulations. These strategies aim to ensure that all activities are conducted with integrity, transparency, and respect for the rights and dignity of participants, fostering a co-creation environment aligned with the project's objectives.

Ethical Principles and Values

The project team is committed to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct. Key principles include:

- Integrity: Ensuring honesty and transparency in all project activities.
    - Data collection and analysis will be conducted transparently, ensuring reproducibility and accuracy in reporting across the six Urban Living Labs.
    - All project findings and strategies will be shared openly with all consortium members.
    - Regular updates are provided to local stakeholders to maintain honesty and accountability throughout the project lifecycle.
- Accountability: Taking responsibility for all actions and their impacts.
    - Responsibility for project outcomes is assigned across Work Package leaders, with clear deliverables and timelines to be monitored throughout the project.
    - Stakeholder feedback from Urban Living Labs, particularly through focus groups and surveys, is integrated into the decision-making process, ensuring transparency in adaptation and implementation.
    - Mechanisms to evaluate deliverables' quality are employed to ensure that project impacts are assessed.
- Respect for Participants: Safeguarding the rights and dignity of all participants involved in the project.
    - Participants in Urban Living Labs are co-creators, empowered to shape strategies through workshops, interviews, and interactive planning sessions.
    - Special measures, such as targeted outreach and accessible formats for engagement, are implemented to ensure inclusivity for individuals with disabilities, elderly populations, and migrants.
    - Adherence to strict privacy and data protection regulations safeguards all personal and sensitive information collected during the project.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Compliance with ethical standards is a cornerstone of the FORTHCOMING project. All activities and processes are designed to adhere to:

- **European Union Regulations:** Including compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, Regulation (EU) 2016/679).
- **National Laws:** Respecting data protection and ethical standards specific to each participating country.
- **Partners' Alignment:** Ensuring alignment with partner organizations' ethical frameworks and policies when necessary. Each partner is required to provide a warning if they see an ethical incompatibility.
- **Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) Principles:** Ensuring inclusivity, sustainability, and transparency in research practices.
- **Project-Specific Commitments:** Upholding the guidelines outlined in the FORTHCOMING project proposal to safeguard participant rights, ensure data security, and promote gender equality.

General Assembly as an Ethics Committee

General Assembly will provide ethical oversight for the FORTHCOMING project. Ethical considerations will be integrated into the overall project structure and regularly assessed as part of the progress reports. At its meetings, the General Assembly will:

- Review the ethical implications of ongoing and upcoming activities within each WP, ensuring compliance with national and EU standards.
- Monitor adherence to ethical principles such as integrity, accountability, and respect for participants as defined in the project's values framework.
- Assess participant engagement methods, including informed consent processes and the inclusion of vulnerable groups, to uphold inclusivity and fairness.
- Validate data collection and privacy measures to ensure alignment with GDPR and other relevant regulations.
- Address any ethical concerns raised by partners, stakeholders, or participants, ensuring timely resolutions.

By embedding ethical oversight into its review of WPs, the General Assembly ensures that ethics are a core consideration across all aspects of the FORTHCOMING projec

Addressing Ethical Issues and Conflicts

To address potential ethical dilemmas and conflicts in the FORTHCOMING project, the following procedures, aligned with the provisions of the Consortium Agreement, will be followed:

i. Conflict Resolution through the General Assembly:

The General Assembly, as the ultimate decision-making body, will oversee the resolution of ethical conflicts and disputes. According to Section 6.3.1 of the Consortium Agreement, the General Assembly is empowered to act on its own initiative to take decisions and resolve disputes collaboratively.

If disputes cannot be resolved during initial discussions, the General Assembly will refer to the decision-making process detailed in Section 6.2.3, requiring a two-thirds majority for decisions.

ii. Review of Work Packages for Ethical Compliance:

Ethical compliance is embedded in the ongoing review of Work Package (WP) activities. As specified in Section 6.3.2, the Management Board is responsible for monitoring the implementation of WPs and reporting issues to the General Assembly for resolution.

iii. Evaluation and Monitoring:

Feedback and reported issues will be discussed during the General Assembly's regular meetings, which are held annually as per Section 6.2.2. Extraordinary meetings may also be convened upon request, ensuring timely responses to ethical concerns.

Monitoring and compliance with ethical standards will be assessed using documented criteria and action plans as outlined in Section 6.3.2.

iv. Decision-Making Process:

Decisions regarding ethical issues and conflicts will be guided by the voting rules in Section 6.2.3, where each member has one vote, and resolutions require a quorum of two-thirds of the members.

Section 6.2.4 allows for veto rights when decisions adversely affect a party's legitimate interests, ensuring fair consideration of all perspectives.

v. Continuous Oversight and Documentation:

As per Section 6.2.5, all actions and resolutions will be documented in the minutes of General Assembly meetings, which are shared with all members and retained by the Coordinator.

Regular updates on the implementation of resolutions will be included in project deliverables.

Data Privacy and Security (GDPR)

The project complies with all relevant data protection laws, including the GDPR (Regulation (EU) 2016/679), And comprehensively addresses data privacy and security throughout the project lifecycle. Specific measures include:

- **Data Anonymization:** Personal data is anonymized during collection, processing, and storage to protect participant privacy.
- **Secure Data Storage:** All data is stored in secure systems with restricted access, Using encryption where necessary.
- **Regular Audits:** Periodic audits ensure strict compliance with data protection policies.
- **Incident Reporting Protocols:** Protocols are established to detect, report, and promptly address any data privacy breaches.

Data privacy in the Data Collection Process:

To address privacy concerns during the data collection process, the following steps are implemented:

- **Participant Consent:** Informed consent is gathered from all participants, ensuring they are fully aware of how their data will be collected, stored, and used.
- **Urban Living Labs Setup:** Privacy measures, including clear protocols for data handling, storage, and sharing, are integrated into the design and operation of urban living labs.
- **Minimization of Data Collection:** Only data essential for achieving project objectives is collected, following the principle of data minimization.

By incorporating these measures, the project ensures that data privacy and security remain integral throughout the research process, particularly during data collection in urban living labs.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Management and Participant Right

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Management

The FORTHCOMING project ensures the protection and management of intellectual property rights (IPR) through the framework established in the Consortium Agreement. This agreement outlines vital aspects of IPR handling, including:

- **Ownership and Access**: Intellectual property created within the project remains the property of the originating partner, with provisions for fair access to pre-existing and newly developed IPs when necessary.
- **Exploitation and Licensing:** Clear guidelines are provided for exploiting, licensing, and sharing intellectual property among consortium members.
- **Dispute Resolution:** Mechanisms are in place to address disputes related to intellectual property promptly and effectively.

To further support IPR management, the following measures are implemented:

- **IPR Policies:** The Consortium Agreement protects All intellectual property rights, ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards.
- **Regular Monitoring:** Continuous monitoring ensures the proper usage and protection of intellectual property throughout the project lifecycle.

Participant Rights

The project safeguards the rights of all participants involved, ensuring ethical engagement and transparent communication through:

- **Informed Consent:** Participants are fully informed about their role in the project, how their data will be used, and any associated risks or benefits before providing consent.
- **Right to Withdraw:** Participants can withdraw from the project without any repercussions.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** A robust system is established to enable participants to provide feedback or raise concerns securely and confidentially.

Outcomes of Ethical Coordination

Implementing ethical coordination strategies will have significant positive results:

- **Enhanced Transparency and Integrity:** Adherence to ethical principles ensured transparency and integrity in all project activities, fostering stakeholder trust.
- **Increased Accountability:** Defined roles and responsibilities, along with regular training, enhanced the accountability of all team members.
- **Effective Conflict Resolution:** Establishing an Ethics Committee and regular review meetings facilitated the timely and effective resolution of ethical issues and conflicts.
- **Data Security and Participant Privacy:** Robust data protection measures safeguarded participant privacy and ensured compliance with relevant data protection laws.
- **Participant Engagement and Satisfaction:** The rights of participants were protected through informed consent and feedback mechanisms, leading to higher engagement and satisfaction.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Regular monitoring, audits, and incident reporting contributed to continuous improvement in ethical practices, ensuring the project remained aligned with ethical standards.

Ethics management is integral to the success of the project. By adhering to these ethical guidelines and management strategies, the project aims to achieve its objectives responsibly and ethically, ensuring respect for all stakeholders involved.

4. Gender Coordination

This section outlines the strategies and measures implemented within the project to ensure gender equality and sensitivity. Promoting gender equality is not only a fundamental ethical principle but also a crucial factor for the project's success and sustainability. This section details the targets, training programs, monitoring mechanisms, and performance indicators established to foster a gender-inclusive environment throughout the project's lifecycle.

Promoting Gender Equality

The FORTHCOMING project strongly emphasizes promoting gender equality within the team and its activities. This commitment extends beyond internal project operations, including data collection processes, stakeholder engagement, and overall project implementation. The following strategies have been developed to ensure gender equality is effectively integrated throughout the project:

Gender Equality in Project Operations

- **Gender Balance Targets:** Specific targets have been set to ensure balanced representation and participation of women and men within the project team. These targets aim to create an inclusive environment that values diverse perspectives.
- **Leadership Opportunities:** Equal opportunities are provided for leadership roles, ensuring gender diversity in decision-making processes.

Gender Equality in Data Collection

To address gender considerations in data collection, the project implements the following measures:

- **Inclusive Sampling:** Efforts are made to ensure a representative sample that includes participants of all genders, with attention to specific groups such as women, non-binary individuals, and vulnerable populations.
- **Gender-Sensitive Survey Design:** Surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions are designed to avoid gender biases and ensure that questions are inclusive and respectful.
- **Data Disaggregation:** All collected data is disaggregated by gender to effectively analyze differences and address gender-specific challenges.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Informed consent processes explicitly address privacy and safety concerns, especially for participants facing gender-based risks.

Gender Equality in Stakeholder Engagement and Outputs

- **Stakeholder Involvement:** Stakeholder engagement processes are designed to involve a balanced representation of genders in decision-making and co-creation activities.

- **Policy Recommendations:** The project ensures that all recommendations and guidelines are reviewed for gender inclusivity, providing actionable steps to address gender disparities.

By integrating these strategies, the FORTHCOMING project adheres to ethical standards and contributes to creating sustainable, equitable, and inclusive urban development practices.

Ensuring Gender-Sensitive Approaches

To ensure that gender-sensitive approaches are integrated into all aspects of the project, regular monitoring and analysis of gender impacts are conducted:

- **Regular Monitoring and Analysis:** Gender impacts are monitored, evaluated, and reported every six months. This process includes reviewing project activities and their effects on gender dynamics, ensuring that all actions promote gender equality.

Monitoring Gender-Related Impacts

Specific key performance indicators (KPIs) related to gender are developed and monitored throughout the project to assess and ensure gender-sensitive outcomes:

- **Development of Gender-Specific KPIs:** Gender-specific KPIs are identified and established at the beginning of the project. These indicators help track progress and assess the effectiveness of gender equality initiatives.
    - **Participation in Events:** Ensuring all genders are equally represented in project-related events and activities.
    - **Decision-Making Roles:** Monitoring the distribution of decision-making roles to ensure gender-balanced leadership.
    - **Access to Opportunities:** Ensuring equal access to training, resources, and career advancement opportunities.
    - **Feedback and Satisfaction:** Regularly collecting feedback from all genders to gauge satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.

Outcomes of Gender Coordination

The implementation of the gender coordination strategies will have significant positive outcomes:

- **Enhanced Gender Balance:** Achieving gender balance targets within the project team led to a more diverse and inclusive work environment. This balance improved team dynamics and collaboration.
- **Effective Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regular monitoring and analysis of gender impacts ensured that project activities consistently promoted gender equality. This proactive approach helped identify and address gender-related issues promptly.

- **Improved Gender-Specific Performance:** The development and monitoring of gender-specific KPIs provided clear metrics for assessing progress. This focus on measurable outcomes facilitated continuous improvement in gender equality initiatives.
- **Sustainable Gender Practices:** The strategies implemented set a benchmark for sustainable gender practices. The project's holistic approach to gender coordination can be a model for future initiatives, ensuring long-term commitment to gender equality.

By implementing these strategies, the project aims to promote gender equality and ensure that all activities are gender-sensitive. Ongoing assessment, targeted training, and systematic evaluation are critical in cultivating an inclusive environment that prioritizes gender equality. These processes facilitate the integration of best practices and ensure accountability, ultimately enhancing organizational effectiveness and fostering a culture of equity. This holistic approach ensures that the project not only meets its gender equality goals but also sets a standard for future initiatives.

5. Legal Coordination

This section outlines the legal coordination mechanisms implemented within the project, which are grounded in the principles and structures defined in the Consortium Agreement. By implementing these mechanisms, the project ensures compliance with relevant laws and regulations while fostering transparency, accountability, and trust among all stakeholders. This section also outlines the frameworks, compliance strategies, and processes specified in the Consortium Agreement, emphasizing their application throughout the project.

Legal Framework and Compliance

The legal framework for the FORTHCOMING project aligns with the Consortium Agreement, which defines compliance measures and responsibilities for all parties. Key measures include:

- **Regulatory Compliance:** The project operates under all relevant local, national, and international laws, with strict adherence to the **GDPR (Regulation (EU) 2016/679)** and other applicable regulations. This obligation is reinforced in Section 9.7.2 of the Consortium Agreement.
- **Legal Documentation:** All contracts, agreements, and consent forms are drafted, reviewed, and maintained as per the Agreement's requirements (Section 11.1). These documents ensure that project activities are legally sound and transparent.

Establishment of Legal Guidelines and Managing Legal Risks

The Consortium Agreement serves as the foundation for defining legal guidelines:

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** The Agreement clearly assigns legal responsibilities to consortium members. Section 6.3.2 mandates that the Management Board ensures all members adhere to legal obligations.
- **Legal Advisory Team:** While the Agreement does not establish a dedicated legal advisory team, the Coordinator, as specified in Section 6.4, provides support on legal matters and monitors compliance with national and EU regulations.

Regular risk assessments and mitigation strategies are implemented to manage potential legal risks effectively:

- **Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategies:** Section 6.3.2.5 outlines that the Management Board regularly collects information on risks, including legal risks, and proposes mitigation measures to the General Assembly for approval.

Protecting Intellectual Property and Data Privacy

Legal measures to protect intellectual property (IP) and data privacy align with the Consortium Agreement's provisions:

- **Data Protection Policies:** Section 9.4 establishes guidelines for data protection, ensuring compliance with GDPR. All consortium members are trained in these requirements.
- **Regular Controls and Updates:** Section 8.1 outlines ownership of results, ensuring that intellectual property generated within the project is safeguarded.

Outcomes of Legal Coordination

The implementation of the legal coordination strategies will have significant positive outcomes:

- **Enhanced Compliance and Integrity:** Adherence to regulatory compliance legal documentation ensured all project activities were legally sound and transparent, fostering integrity and trust among stakeholders.
- **Clear Roles and Responsibilities:** Establishing clear legal guidelines and defining roles and responsibilities improved accountability and ensured all project members understood their legal obligations.
- **Effective Risk Management:** Regular risk assessments and mitigation strategies helped identify potential legal risks early and implement appropriate measures to minimize them, reducing the project's overall risk exposure.
- **Protection of Intellectual Property and Data Privacy:** Implementing comprehensive data protection policies and conducting regular audits ensured that intellectual property and personal data were safeguarded effectively, maintaining compliance with data protection laws.

- **Efficient Dispute Resolution:** The availability of amicable settlement options and formal dispute resolution mechanisms ensured that any legal disputes were resolved fairly and transparently, maintaining a cooperative working environment.
- **Continuous Monitoring and Improvement:** Regular audits and detailed compliance reports facilitated continuous monitoring and improvement of legal practices, ensuring the project remained aligned with relevant laws and regulations throughout its lifecycle.

By implementing these legal coordination strategies, the project ensures that all activities comply with applicable laws and regulations. Continuous monitoring, legal advisory support, and transparent dispute resolution mechanisms help maintain the project's integrity and foster a transparent and accountable working environment. This comprehensive approach safeguards the project's legal standing and sets a standard for ethical and responsible project management.