



Quality Assurance Strategy for Internal and External Evaluation

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1. Introduction

The SMECC2E Cross-Regional Intra-Africa Mobility Project will implement a comprehensive Quality Assurance (QA) and Monitoring Framework to ensure that the project is executed efficiently, transparently, and in accordance with the objectives of the mobility programme. The project team will establish robust planning, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms to guarantee the high quality and timely implementation of all mobility activities.

The QA strategy combines internal monitoring mechanisms within the consortium and external evaluation processes involving independent reviewers, industry stakeholders, and funding agencies.

2. Internal Quality Assurance Framework

Internal quality assurance will ensure that the project consortium maintains high standards in academic delivery, mobility implementation, financial management, and institutional collaboration.

2.1 Project Planning and Implementation Control

To ensure efficient project execution, the SMECC2E consortium will adopt structured project management tools and processes including:

- Development of a Project Implementation Plan (PIP) outlining milestones, deliverables, timelines, and responsible partners.
- Use of Work Breakdown Structures (WBS) to divide the project into manageable phases.
- Application of Gantt charts to track project timelines and monitor progress.
- Scheduling quarterly review meetings to assess performance and adjust implementation strategies where necessary.
- Establishment of contingency plans to address potential delays in mobility, academic activities, or institutional processes.

These measures will enable effective coordination across participating Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and ensure timely completion of activities.

2.2 Academic Quality Assurance

To maintain high academic standards across partner institutions, the project will implement the following mechanisms:

Academic Harmonization

- Adoption of the African Credit Transfer System (ACTS) to ensure mutual recognition of study periods.
- Organization of academic harmonization workshops to align curricula, grading systems, and learning outcomes across partner universities.
- Development of joint or harmonized outcome-based courses relevant to sustainable transport and energy systems.

Academic Supervision

- Assignment of academic mentors or supervisors at both home and host institutions to support mobility participants.
- Continuous monitoring of student academic performance and course completion rates.

Evaluation of Academic Offer

To ensure the quality of academic programmes offered during mobility:

- Comparative analysis of academic programmes across partner HEIs.
- Evaluation of course content, teaching methods, and learning outcomes by the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC).
- Pre- and post-mobility academic performance assessments for scholarship holders.
- Requirement for research projects, case studies, or academic reports as part of student evaluation.

2.3 Transparent Selection and Preparation of Participants

The SMECC2E project will implement a transparent and inclusive participant selection process.

Key measures include:

- Development of clear and fair eligibility and selection criteria.
- Establishment of an independent selection panel to review applications and conduct interviews.

- Ensuring gender balance and inclusivity, including representation of disadvantaged groups.
- Provision of pre-mobility training programmes covering:
 - academic expectations
 - cultural adaptation
 - mobility logistics and compliance requirements.

These measures ensure merit-based selection and preparedness of mobility participants.

2.4 Monitoring and Evaluation System

The project will implement a comprehensive monitoring framework supported by digital tools and performance indicators.

Monitoring Tools

- Online mobility tracking platform for recording student mobility data, academic progress, and feedback.
- Use of project management software such as Jira, Trello, Asana, or Microsoft Project for tracking tasks and deliverables.
- Regular reporting from partner institutions.

Reporting Structure

Partner HEIs will submit quarterly progress reports covering:

- mobility implementation status
- academic progress of participants
- challenges encountered and mitigation measures
- financial utilization reports.

These reports will be reviewed by the project coordination team and the Quality Assurance Committee.

2.5 Financial Management and Control Mechanisms

To ensure financial transparency and accountability, the project will adopt the following measures:

- Strict budget monitoring and expenditure tracking.
- Submission of regular financial reports to funding agencies.
- Implementation of internal financial audits by the project finance committee.
- Use of performance-based funding mechanisms where applicable, linking disbursement to the achievement of project milestones.

3. External Evaluation Framework

External evaluation will provide independent oversight of the project's implementation and ensure compliance with international standards.

3.1 External Peer Review

External evaluation will involve:

- Independent academic peer reviews of curricula, research outputs, and academic outcomes.
- Assessment of teaching methodologies and learning outcomes across partner institutions.

These reviews will ensure consistency in academic standards within the consortium.

3.2 Industry and Stakeholder Assessment

Industry partners and collaborating organizations will evaluate the relevance and quality of traineeships.

Evaluation activities include:

- Performance appraisal of trainees by host organizations.
- Assessment of traineeship relevance to industry skills requirements.
- Review of structured Traineeship Learning Agreements (TLA) outlining competencies and learning outcomes.

3.3 Mid-Term and Final Project Evaluation

Independent evaluations will be conducted at key stages of the project lifecycle:

Mid-Term Evaluation

The mid-term evaluation will assess:

- implementation progress
- mobility achievements
- financial performance
- challenges and corrective actions.

Final Evaluation

The final evaluation will focus on:

- achievement of project targets
- academic outcomes
- institutional capacity development
- sustainability of the mobility programme.

Evaluation methods will include:

- surveys
- impact assessments
- stakeholder interviews
- peer review reports.

4. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Project progress will be monitored through **quantitative and qualitative indicators**, including:

Mobility Indicators

- 35 Master's student mobilities
- 10 PhD student mobilities
- 30% credit-seeking mobility participation
- 14 staff mobility exchanges
- 15 traineeship placements

Inclusivity and Diversity Indicators

- At least 30% female participation
- Representation from 10+ African countries

Institutional Capacity Indicators

- 6 new or improved internationalization structures
- 3 harmonized outcome-based courses developed
- 10 industry collaboration MoUs
- 10 joint research publications

Academic and Employment Outcomes

- 100% credit recognition for mobility participants
- 50% employment rate within 12 months after graduation

Outreach and Dissemination

- 20 outreach events
- Minimum 200 website or social media engagements per month

Qualitative Indicators

- 80% participant satisfaction rating
- At least 30 documented success stories
- Evidence of improved institutional collaboration and joint research.

5. Monitoring Scholarship Holders During Mobility

The project will closely monitor scholarship recipients throughout their mobility period.

Monitoring mechanisms include:

- Mid-term and final academic progress reports.
- Dual mentorship system involving home and host institution supervisors.
- Monitoring of academic transcripts and course completion.
- Linking scholarship payments to academic performance and compliance.
- Regular financial audits to ensure appropriate fund utilization.

6. Post-Mobility Tracking and Impact Assessment

The SMECC2E project will evaluate the long-term impact of mobility through structured alumni tracking.

Key mechanisms include:

- Development of an Alumni Management System (AMS).
- Collection of data on employment, further studies, and research collaborations.
- Conducting one-year and three-year post-mobility surveys.
- Tracking indicators such as:
 - employment outcomes
 - research collaborations
 - professional achievements.

This system will help measure the long-term academic, professional, and socio-economic impact of the project.

7. Continuous Improvement and Feedback Mechanisms

To ensure continuous quality improvement:

- Exit surveys and post-mobility debriefing sessions will be conducted.
- Feedback from students, staff, industry partners, and institutions will be collected.
- Lessons learned will inform future mobility cycles and programme improvements.