Sustainable intensification of food production through resilient farming systems in West & North Africa

Deliverable D7.1
Project management guidelines

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ABSTRACT

This document sets out the details of deliverable 7.1 describing and detailing the Project Management and Governance structure of SustInAfrica. Including details and general information on SustInAfrica's structure, partnerships, resources, and methodologies to plan, monitor, and evaluate project progress. The main objective of the SustInAfrica project management plan is to efficiently carry out management activities of the consortium and to create and effective and inclusive working environment, for all the participants from different organisations.

Contents

List of abbreviations and acronyms

Luke	Natural Resources Institute Finland
ATB	Leibniz Institute for Agricultural Engineering & Bioeconomy
CIHEAM	Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari
ISEG	Lisbon School of Economics & Management
BOKU	University of Natural Resources & Life Sciences Vienna
SHA	Self Help Africa
FC.ID	FCiencias.ID
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UDS	University for Development Studies
DEX	DexAfrica Ltd.
FL	Farmerline Ltd.
UDDG	University of Dédougou
UAM	Abdou Moumouni University
HUSD	Heliopolis University for Sustainable Development
OTI	Olive Tree Institute
GeA	General Assembly
SC	Steering Committee
PMST	Project Management Support Team
EB	The Ethics Board
EEAB	External Expert Advisory Board
WPL	Work Package Leaders

1. Project Governance and Structure

The governance structure of SustInAfrica can be seen in Figure 1. There are two levels of governance, strategic and operational, with feedbacks between both levels. The General Assembly (GeA) is the ultimate decision-making body of the SustInAfrica consortium and directly controls strategic governance. Operation governance by run by the Steering Committee (SC), which delegates day-to-day operational control to the Project Management Support Team (PMST). The Ethics Board (EB) and External Expert Advisory Board (EEAB) have direct input at both strategic and operational levels of SustInAfrica. The composition and roles of the individual governance organs of the are given in detail below.
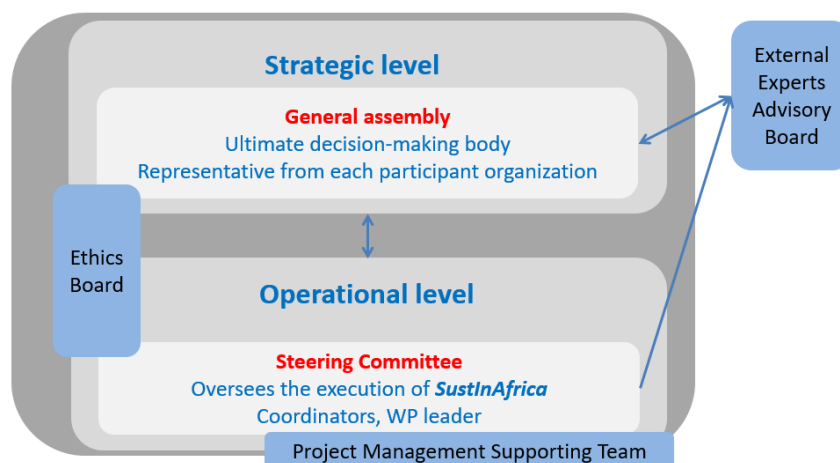

Figure 1: A schematic showing the general governance structure of SustInAfrica

I. The General Assembly (GeA)

The GeA is the ultimate decision-making body of the SustInAfrica consortium. The key roles of the GeA are as follows:

- Overseeing project content, finances and IPR (proposals for changes to the research plan, budget changes, issues on background, decisions on IPR);
- Determining any the evolution of the consortium (e.g. new or leaving members, defaulting parties, project termination, change of Coordinator);
- Appointing members to the SC and AB (see below);
- Resolving disputes unresolvable by the SC and EB.

The GeA will meet at least once per year, either face-to-face and/or via video conferencing. It consists of one nominated member, plus one deputy, per participating organization. The nominated members of the GeA are as follows: **Michael Schirrmann** (ATB), **Bernhard Freyer** (BOKU), **Mladen Todorovic** (CIHEAM), **Godwin Badu-Marfo** (DEX), **Cristina Branquinho** (FC.ID), **Amos Olertey Wussah** (FL), **Hamada Abdelrahman** (HUSD), **Prof. Amelia Branco** (ISEG), **Giles Young** (Luke), **Olfa Boussadia** (OTI), **Raphaële Ng Tock Mine** (SHA), **Larwanou Mahamane** (UAM), **Kwame Frimpong** (UCC), **Desìre Lompo** (UDDG), **Abdul-Halim Abubakari** (UDS).

A quorum is achieved when 2/3 members or their representatives present. Decisions shall be taken by 2/3 of the votes cast. Notice of meeting will be given at least 45 calendar days before the date and the agenda circulated 21 calendar days before the meeting. Minutes of all meetings will be taken and be circulated 10 days after the meeting, objection to the minutes can be made within 15 days of circulation.

II.   The Steering Committee (SC)

The SC is the supervisory body which oversees the execution of SustInAfrica, the SC reports directly to the GeA. Meetings will be arranged at least three times per year, either face-to-face and/or via video conferencing. It will consist of the Coordinator, WP leaders, WP co-leaders, and members appointed by the GeA. The SC has the following roles:

- Organising consortium meetings;
- Preparing proposals and the agenda for GeA meetings;
- Resolving disputes within the consortium (see below);
- Execution and implementing the decisions of the GeA;
- Monitoring the effectiveness and efficiency of project implementation;
- Collecting and analysing information on the projects progress, at least every six months;
- Assessing compliance with the research plan, and if necessary, proposing modifications of the research plan to the GeA.

Notice of meeting will be given at least 14 calendar days before the date and the agenda circulated 21 calendar days before the meeting. Minutes of all meetings will be taken and be circulated 10 days after the meeting, objection to the minutes can be made within 15 days of circulation.

III.   The External Expert Advisory Board (EEAB)

The EEAB consists of external experts from across relevant research fields. the EEAB and will provide input on science, research methods and practice, and assist with and facilitate the decision-making of the GeA. The EEAB is appointed and directed by the SC/GeA. The EEAB consists of **Prof. Sabry M. Shaheen** (University of Wuppertal, Germany), **Dr. Christine Bosch** (GOPA, Cologne/Germany), **Djelika Hinda Pare** (Xpertis Consulting, Quagadougou/Burkina Faso), and **Prof. Dr. Zebene Asfew** (Hawassa University, Hawassa/Ethiopia). EEAB members will be invited to participate in GeA meetings, without voting rights. The EEAB will meet at least once per year, prior to the GeA annual meeting and provide input for that meeting. All members of the EEAB are required to sign a confidentially and non-disclosure agreement relating to their involvement with SustInAfrica. Notice of meeting will be given at least 30 calendar days before the meeting date. Minutes of all meetings will be taken and be circulated 10 days after the meeting, objection to the minutes can be made within 15 days of circulation.

IV.   The Ethics Board (EB)

The EB will oversee decision-making concerning ethical issues that arise during the project. These include research integrity, research policies, and procedures. Its members will consist of experts and lay members from four partner organizations and are appointed by the GeA. The EB will meet when required and at least once per year, prior to the annual meeting of the GeA, and will provide input for that meeting. The EB membership consists: **Dr. Isabella Rae** (SHA), **Dr. Laura Kitti** (Luke), **Prof. Dr. Hamada Abdelrahman** (HUSD), and **Mr. Amos Wussah** (FL). Notice of meeting will be given at least 30 calendar days before the meeting date. Minutes of all meetings will be taken and be circulated 10 days after the meeting, objection to the minutes can be made within 15 days of circulation.

V.   Work Package Leaders (WPL)

The WPL are responsible for the following activities under their delegated work packages (WPs), in order to facilitate and expedite detection of any issues arising, and making it possible to intervene and take necessary actions:

- Ensuring implementation of all tasks;
- Timely delivery of deliverables and achievement of milestones;
- Collection of information for monitoring reports from WP participants;
- Promote interactions between participants, both within and between WPs.

The WPL are all leading experts in their fields and were assigned at the grant application stage and ratified by the GeA. They are directed by the GeA and led by the **Project Coordinator** (**Nils Borchard,** Luke). The WPL are as follows: **WP1: Idalina Sardinha** (ISEG), **WP2: Michael Schirrmann** (ATB), **WP3: Kwame Frimpong** (UCC), **WP4: Hamada Abdelrahman** (HUSD), **WP5: Paul Wagstaff** (SHA), **WP6: Laura Eskelinen** (Luke), **WPs 7 and 8: Giles Young** (Luke).

VI.   Project Management Support Team (PMST)

The PMST, directed by the SC, assists and facilitates the work of the Project Coordinator, by conducting the day-to-day management of the Project. The PMST consists of the **Project Coordinator** (Nils Borchard), and a group of specialists required to support the project: **Project Manager** (Giles Young, Luke); **Administrative Officer** (Sinikka Västilä, Luke) **Financial Officer** (Timo-Pekka Äikäs, Luke); **Legal Officer** (Hanna Lindqvist, Luke): **Communications Officer** (Laura Eskelinen, Luke); **Innovation Manager** (Michael Schirrmann, ATB); and **Information Technology** (Ganeas Dorairaju, Luke**)**.

2.   Project Meetings

Regular project meetings are an integral part of managing and organising the SustInAfrica project. Meetings will be scheduled regularly and all required parties will be invited to attend. Meeting quorum is defined as 2/3rds of the membership in attendance. The key governing bodies of SustInAfrica (GeA, SC, EEAB, EB) will all have regular meetings scheduled (either face-to-face or using video conferencing. There will also be an annual meeting for the entire consortium schedules over three days to discuss progress, present results band plan future activities. This meeting is not limited to SustInAfrica members and other interested parties will also be invited. The first such meeting, kick-off-meeting, was successfully help using remote conferencing in M01. It is envisaged that future meetings will be held face-to-face, although remote conferencing may be used if necessary. The proposed timings of these meetings are laid out in Table 1.

Table 1: Proposed timing of regular SustInAfrica meetings

Body	M01	M02	M03	M04	M05	M06	M07	M08	M09	M10	M11	M12
GPM	x											
GeA		x*	x*									x
SC	x				x					x		
EEAB											x	
EB											x	

* Communication and bilateral meetings to build up and nominate the GeA members by email meeting.

3. Partnerships

SustInAfrica consists of 15 partner organisations across Europe and Northern and Western Africa. The participation partners are: **ATB** (Germany), **BOKU** (Austria), **CIHEAM** (Italy), **DEX** (Ghana), **FD.ID** (Portugal), **FL** (Ghana), **HUSD** (Egypt), **ISEG** (Portugal), **Luke** (Finland), **OTI** (Tunisia), **SHA** (Ireland), **UAM** (Niger), **UCC** (Ghana), **UDDG** (Burkina Faso) and **UDS** (Ghana). Each member has agreed to and signed the consortium agreement which sets out the rights, obligations and responsibilities of all partners. All partners bring important specialist knowledge, skills and experience to the consortium (see project proposal for details, not included). At an apparitional level each partner brings the skills and expertise of their organizations to the project. Each partner has nominated individuals to fulfil key administrative roles within the project. These roles are: **Institution Contact, Financial Officer, Administrative Officer, Legal Officer and Communication Officer**. In addition, **Luke**, as coordinating institution, has nominated an **IT Officer** and a **Project Manager.** As part of deliverable D8.2 (M6), each partner will also nominate a **Data Protection Officer**. The key contact details are available to all partners on the project SharePoint (Finish brand name: Tiimeri).

4. Resources

All partner institutions within SustInAfrica have committed sufficient resources for the successful implementation of the project over five years. The key resource for this project is Human Recourses, a summary of the staff time commitment for each institution, by work package, can be seen in Table 2, a total of 1416 person months over 5-years.

Additional resources are in the form of infrastructure and support from partner institutions. These include access to: Computer faculties and programs (e.g. Office 365), online conferencing tools (e.g. TEAMs), a secure database(s) for document storage and sharing within the project (Tiimeri), IT support, office and laboratory space, telecommunications (e.g. Smart phones), online survey tools (Lyyti, Webropol), online and/or paper copies of key journals and literature, project management tools and support, support with legal, technical, financial matters. A list of the induvial committed to key support roles within SustInAfrica is available on the Tiimeri SharePoint.

Table 2: Summary of SustInAfrica's staff commitment by institution, WP leaders in bold.

Participant	Number of person-months per WP							Total person-months per participant
	WP1	WP2	WP3	WP4	WP5	WP6	WP7	
1 (Luke)	6	34	5	4	6	**29**	33	**117**
2 (ATB)	6	**60**	6	3	8	4	4	**91**
3 (CIHEAM)	4	-	6	17	24	2	2	**56**
4 (ISEG)	**60**	-	16	22	23	5	2	**128**
5 (BOKU)	60	-	48	-	-	-	-	**108**
6 (SHA)	3	-	6	4	**42**	3	2	**60**
7 (FC.ID)	12	6	8	4	8	4	4	**46**
8 (UCC)	2	4	**48**	20	6	2	14	**96**
9 (UDS)	2	2	18	6	2	2	4	**36**
10 (DEX)	3	60	6	12	5	6	2	**94**
11 (FL)	3	40	12	20	10	24	2	**111**
12 (UDDG)	4	6	72	6	2	4	2	**96**
13 (UAM)	10	6	72	18	2	4	2	**114**
14 (CU)	2	3	35	**29**	5	10	2	**96**
15 (HUSD)	2	3	26	6	2	2	2	**43**
16 (IO)	4	6	84	18	4	6	2	**124**
Total person-months per WP	**183**	**230**	**468**	**199**	**149**	**107**	**79**	
						Total person months:		**1,416**

5. Methodologies to plan, monitor and evaluate project progress

The primary tool for panning, monitoring and evaluating the progress of SustInAfrica is the "Tiimeri" SharePoint and project-management tool housed on the Luke servers operated and maintained by the governmental IT service provider called Valtori. All required project partners have access to this "secure" SharePoint once they have been invited by the Project Coordinator or Project Manager. Tiimeri will act as a secure repository for all important project data. Tiimeri also functions as a project management tool. The agreed workplan will be entered into Tiimeri with individual tasks and sub-tasks allocated to the agreed individual or group of individuals within partner organizations. Automated email reminders will be sent prior to any deadline, with copies to the Project Manager. Progress will be reported directly to the SC and ultimately the GeA for assessment. Key project miles stones are represented by deliverables to the EU. Deliverables will be subject to peer review, by at least two internal experts, prior to submission. Reviewers may suggest revisions or even reject the deliverable prior to submission, in which case the revised deliverable will be resubmitted to the expert(s) for approval. All other project outputs will be reviewed by the SC prior to decimation.

Project progress and deliverables will be monitored at regular (fortnightly) meetings between the Project Coordinator and Project Manager. Close attention will be paid to any deviations and potential deviations from the scheduled work plan. Any such deviations will be immediately addressed and corrective action taken.

6. Related Deliverables

Three related deliverables to D7.1 are due to be reported in M06 of the project. These are currently under preparation and are expected to be organised and achieved in a timely manner:
7.2 Quality Assurance (Due M06);
7.3 Risk Management (Due M06);
7.4 Data Management (Due M06).