

Quality Assurance and Data Management Plan for the Baltic Engagement Centre for Combating Information Disorders

Deliverable 1.2 for project with the ID 118471, coordinated by the University of Tartu (UTARTU).

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The Baltic Engagement Centre for Combating Information Disorders (BECID) was created to support the EU in its efforts to tackle disinformation in the three Baltic countries of Estonia (EE), Latvia (LV) and Lithuania (LT).

BECID, the Baltic EDMO hub, brings together **nine beneficiaries** and one associated partner from the three Baltic States:

- four research organisations: University of Tartu, Tallinn University, Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences and Vytautas Magnus University.
- 4 IFCN-certified fact-checkers: Delfi Meedia (EE), Re: Baltica (LV), Delfi (LV), Delfi (LT)
- a non-profit organisation with thirteen founding members cooperating on media literacy activities: Baltic Centre of Media Excellence
- and an associated partner, the Latvian TV channel Vidzeme TV.

The Baltics are of particular importance due to their location on the edge of the EU and a large Russian-speaking minority population (approximately 17%). It is also a region that presents a diverse cross-section of post-soviet countries, an essential factor to consider when developing responses to fake news and disinformation.

Building off numerous previous activities of BECID partners, we will perform continuous fact-checking (textual as well as audiovisual), create analytical reports on Baltic disinformation trends and a standard methodology for analysing them, research information disorders in Baltic social media spaces and the impact of interventions, create systematic reviews of tools and methods used to verify false information and carry out five media literacy campaigns. Particular attention will be paid to vulnerable groups such as Russian speakers, older adults, and youth.

The Quality Assurance and Data Management Plan (QADMP) for BECID will be comprised of three elements: a risk plan identifying risks and how they would be addressed, a data management plan describing how data will be collected, protected, and shared, and an overview of project quality assurances, including management structure, communication, dissemination, and performance indicators.

The DMP will be updated as needed throughout the project, and the updates will also be shared on the hub's BECID website.

Table Of Contents

I – RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN	4
PRE-IDENTIFIED RISKS	4
UNFORESEEN RISKS.....	7
II - DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN.....	10
DATA COLLECTION.....	10
DOCUMENTATION AND METADATA.....	11
ETHICS AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE	11
SELECTION AND PRESERVATION	13
DATA SHARING	14
RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESOURCES	14
III – QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN	16
THE TEAM AND THE CORE IDEA.....	16
IMPORTANCE OF NETWORKS	17
MONITORING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROJECT.....	18
COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION KPIS	20
MANAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE.....	28
DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION.....	30

I – RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

PRE-IDENTIFIED RISKS

1. We are unable to meet deadlines set for task implementation.

LOW likelihood / MEDIUM impact

WP Concerned: All

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

Partner responsibilities have been clearly defined, and the project timeline has been agreed upon. Partners will communicate regularly; the work progress will be closely monitored to detect deviations from the initial timeline and take early corrective actions.

2. There are deviations in quality in management and outputs.

LOW likelihood / HIGH impact

WP Concerned: All

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

Partners have high levels of expertise in the areas they will be responsible for. UTARTU is very experienced in leading international projects. The quality of outputs will be continuously monitored and evaluated in progress reports. We have also secured support from experts in different fields (see letters of support). Further, external quality checks will be ensured via participation in conferences, collection of feedback from event participants and close cooperation with EDMO.

3. There are deviations in financial management.

LOW likelihood / HIGH impact

WP Concerned: All

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

Partners will employ skilled financial managers to ensure proper procedures are followed, and funds are used appropriately. Good financial planning and a monitoring process will minimise budget overruns and deviations.

4. Partners have difficulty meeting the co-financing requirement.

LOW likelihood / HIGH impact

WP Concerned: All

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

Partners already have staff and resources committed to activities similar to those described in this project. They have conducted financial analysis, including on potential co-funders, and planning before committing to the project, and rigorous financial monitoring will be performed throughout the project duration. Based on the national regulation for granting support for

participation in international cooperation programs in research and technology, partners from Latvia will be able to rely on support from the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science.

5. Key personnel are not available.

LOW likelihood / MEDIUM impact

WP Concerned: All

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

The Consortium Agreement will specify the obligations of each partner. All of them will employ multiple staff who can support and step in for one another if needed (see 2.3). The exact schedule for project activities will be agreed upon in advance so key participants can manage their programs.

6. Disagreement between partners over work plans or other parts of the project.

LOW likelihood / MEDIUM impact

WP Concerned: All

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

Each partner's responsibilities and tasks have been defined and will be further elaborated upon in the Consortium Agreement. An effective decision-making procedure has been set. Decisions will be carefully documented in meeting minutes, and effective communication between partners will be ensured.

7. Impossible to hold in-person meetings/events due to COVID-19.

LOW likelihood / MEDIUM impact

WP Concerned: WP1, WP4

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

We will follow all national/local COVID-19 regulations. Whenever needed, we will organise smaller or online meetings. Events will be scheduled during the period when the likelihood of the pandemic is the lowest.

8. Lack of interest among our target groups in our events and outputs.

LOW likelihood / MEDIUM impact

WP Concerned: All

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

We will tailor our dissemination activities to target audiences and monitor related indicators. All events and outputs will be advertised early and through multiple channels.

9. There is a lack of trust from the general public.

LOW likelihood / MEDIUM impact

WP Concerned: WP2, WP3, WP4

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

The consortium will ensure transparency in its activities through active dissemination and communication. Our reports will be publicly available for scrutiny. The involvement of experts in the respective fields covered by the project will further increase the credibility of our results.

10. Consortium does not have enough human resources for all disinformation campaigns because of the sheer scope.

MEDIUM likelihood / MEDIUM impact

WP Concerned: WP2

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

Partners have a good understanding of the region to identify the most relevant areas of disinformation to focus on. Partners will also invite media outlets outside the consortium to participate in our fact-checking activities. As the project progresses, partners' capacity to detect fake news will be improved by sharing best practices and the results of their work.

11. Consortium members become targets of personal harassment and smear campaigns.

MEDIUM likelihood / LOW impact

WP Concerned: WP2, WP3

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

As practitioners in debunking disinformation, staff from partner organisations are well aware of such possibilities, the consortium will promptly react to any efforts to discredit its members, and personal counselling will be provided to the affected staff if needed.

12. The BECID website experiences cyber-attacks.

LOW likelihood / LOW impact

WP Concerned: WP1

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

Using the DIGIRES website, developed by a team of professionals with enhanced security features in mind, as a basis for BECID allows us to focus resources on security further. Any identified potential security risks will be swiftly addressed.

13. Rapid advances in disinformation tools render some of our activities irrelevant.

LOW likelihood / LOW impact

WP Concerned: WP2, WP3

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

Partners will constantly monitor all developments in the field, including through consultations with EDMO and other field experts (e.g. at academic conferences). If required, the necessary changes will be made to the project plan to account for such developments.

UNFORESEEN RISKS

The following was added after the first year of work was reviewed in March 2024.

- 14. Risk of political (in-)sensitivities due to a significant Russian-speaking minority will lead to potential backlash or allegations of partiality.**

LOW likelihood / LOW impact

WP Concerned: WP2, WP3, WP4

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

To ensure transparency throughout the project, clear and open communication regarding project goals and methods will be maintained on our website. Impartiality has been achieved by implementing robust fact-checking procedures with a diverse team of experts. Open and inclusive engagement with all stakeholders will remain a priority. High ethical standards will be adhered to in all project activities, monitored and discussed openly at monthly meetings as well as Management Committee meetings. A diverse and inclusive team environment will be actively promoted. Establishing partnerships with reputable organisations will further enhance project credibility. Initiatives to improve public understanding of the project, such as media literacy programs, are continuously created and promoted.

- 15. Risk of coordination miscommunication due to including numerous beneficiaries, partners, and external experts for success.**

LOW likelihood / LOW impact

WP Concerned: All

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

Effective communication is crucial for successful stakeholder coordination, which is why clear and well-defined communication channels ensure all stakeholders who want to be informed and heard can do so. A collaborative environment where all voices are valued and respected will continue to be promoted. Regular meetings will be held to discuss progress, address concerns, and ensure everyone is on the same page. Setting clear and shared goals for all stakeholders will provide a unified direction for the project. Understanding and respecting the various priorities of stakeholders will be essential for building trust and achieving project objectives. To enhance stakeholder capabilities, resources, support, and training will be provided. A dedicated project manager has been assigned to manage stakeholder relations and address any conflicts or challenges that may arise. Mitigation strategies will be continuously monitored and adapted to address any emerging risks effectively.

- 16. Not all partner organisations have the capacity for in-house project management.**

HIGH likelihood / LOW impact

WP Concerned: All

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

The project management capacity of potential partners was evaluated before entering into collaborations, but since the application of the project, staff has changed. Partners who require additional support will be offered project management training to ensure they have the necessary skills to effectively contribute to the project. Clear and detailed ongoing support and guidance on project management best practices will be provided to partners throughout the project lifecycle and a separate project manager will be hired to be able to carry this out.

17. Low digital literacies of some individuals in partner organisations, leading to problems with data access and timely submission.

LOW likelihood / HIGH impact

WP Concerned: All

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

This can lead to issues with contractual agreements, following the process of tasks they lead and finishing deliverables on time. To address this challenge, training sessions on how to use Sharepoint, Google classroom, Doodle, Zoom, Sygma etc will be provided by the PMT throughout. Dedicated technical support is available to partners who require assistance with accessing and submitting data. Additionally, exploring alternative methods for data submission that cater to individuals with lower digital literacy levels will be considered.

18. The combination of SMEs, universities and big enterprises can lead to differences in the capacities of quick cooperation requests from EDMO WG-s, which can lead to an uneven workload.

LOW likelihood / LOW impact

WP Concerned: WP2, WP3

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

Careful assessment of workload distribution will be conducted when assigning tasks to different partner types (SMEs, Universities, and Large Enterprises) to ensure a fair and balanced workload. When necessary, flexible deadlines for deliverables may be implemented to accommodate potential variations in partner capacity. Clear communication and negotiation with partners regarding workloads and expectations will be maintained throughout the project.

19. Having the same staff in numerous simultaneously running tasks in all four work packages will lead to time management issues, as the tasks were not designed keeping that possibility in mind.

LOW likelihood / LOW impact

WP Concerned: WP2, WP3

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

Staff will be trained on effective task prioritisation techniques to ensure they can manage their time efficiently. Strategic allocation of resources will be implemented to provide staff with the

necessary support to handle multiple tasks. Time management tools and techniques will also be introduced to further improve staff efficiency.

- 20. The work described will result in way more outputs than initially planned due to a larger amount of staff included than initially planned, leading to issues with data management.**

LOW likelihood / LOW impact

WP Concerned: WP2, WP3

Proposed risk-mitigation measures

Scalable data management systems will be implemented to accommodate the potential increase in data volume generated by the project. Data storage practices will be optimised to ensure efficient storage and retrieval of information. Clear data ownership and access protocols will be established for all project data to maintain data security and integrity.

II - DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN

The following was put together in February 2023 and last updated in March 2024.

DATA COLLECTION

What data will you collect or create?

All Work Packages (WPs) are subject to and follow from this data management plan: WP1 (organisation of data management and quality assurance), WP2 (fact-checking and journalistic practice), WP3 (research activities) and WP4 (outreach and media literacy campaigns).

Due to the nature of the action, the BECID project distinguishes between two types of information and data processing, i.e., *processing information available in the public domain* and *creating data through research activities and project management*. The need for this distinction comes from the varied legal norms applicable to each type of information processing as these occur throughout the project.

The project distinguishes between two information processing categories:

1, Public Domain Information: Information freely available online or through other public sources. Processing of this data is exempt from specific legal requirements.

2. Research-generated Data: Data created through research activities (WP3) and project management (WP1). This data may include:

- WP1: Project management data (tasks, milestones, budgets), financial data (expenditures, income), dissemination data (website traffic, social media engagement), stakeholder engagement data (meeting attendance, feedback), and data on the BECID collaboration platform (user numbers, uploaded content, usage patterns).
- WP2: Fact-checks (text, audio, video), analytical reports (disinformation trends), meeting materials (workshop notes), and podcast/video content.
- WP3: Literature review reports, fact-checking tools inventory, fact-checking practices reports, audience response data, and media regulations analysis.
- WP4: Training materials (lesson plans, handouts), campaign materials (social media posts, videos), and hackathon materials (presentations, winning content).

How will the data be collected or created?

As WP2 activities (journalistic practice) are covered by the journalistic exemption (Art 85(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council as implemented in national laws), these will not be further addressed in the data management plan.

Data collection in WP3 and WP4 (research activities and outreach) requires informed and voluntary consent from potential research participants. The necessary and minimal data processing under WP1 (project management), carried out for record-keeping and reporting, is based on the employment and work contracts that individuals have concluded with

respective participating organisations, i.e., the legal basis is established through existing employment contracts or sub-contracting.

Data will be collected through various methods depending on the WP, for example:

- Project management tools and financial systems (WP1)
- Website/social media analytics tools and surveys (WP1)
- Fact-checking activities, research, workshops, and content creation (WP2)
- Literature review, surveys/interviews, and document analysis (WP3)
- Development of training materials, conducting training sessions, hackathons, and co-creation activities (WP4)

The types and formats of data created in the research activities of WP3 and WP4 are varied and not easily shareable in raw form and will, thus, not be made available more widely. However, the possibility above for providing long-term access to anonymised versions of research data was considered and thoroughly discussed for each data collection instance. Unlike materials created for public dissemination throughout the project, translating qualitative research data from its original languages can alter the meaning contained within and would, therefore, not directly benefit third parties.

Data processing for record-keeping and reporting under WP1 will be stored with restricted internal access following the requirements set out in the grant agreement (GA).

DOCUMENTATION AND METADATA

What documentation and metadata will accompany the data?

Respective information sheets and template consent forms accompany the interview and survey data, although for storage during the project term. Collected research data will not be made available to third parties for reasons stated previously.

As per the current plan, collected data will be accompanied by comprehensive metadata specifying:

- Data type and description
- Collection method and date
- Collector(s)
- Data format
- Access procedures

This is subject to change as the Principal Investigator sees fit.

ETHICS AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE

How will you manage any ethical issues?

In summary, the team will consider the following ethical principles throughout data collection and management:

- **Privacy:** Respecting privacy rights of individuals whose data is collected. This includes data anonymization where possible and obtaining informed consent before using personal data.
- **Transparency:** Providing clear information on data collection, usage, and storage procedures.
- **Security:** Implementing appropriate security measures to protect all collected data.

Similar to the general distinction of information and data processing activities taking place in the course of the project, ethical issues are addressed under multiple regimes. Firstly, journalistic practices, inclusive of such practices occurring outside of the BECID project, of participating organisations are guided by well-known and acknowledged codes of professional ethics.

The project's research activities are guided by the organisations' respective codes of conduct to ensure research integrity. Where necessary, guidelines published by "Ethics in Social Sciences and Humanities" (European Commission) will be consulted.

The forms used in the collection of interview and survey data explicitly include requests for consent for reuse upon anonymisation of data (where personal identifiers are initially associated with the data).

STORAGE AND BACKUP

How will the data be stored and backed up during the research?

The central platform for internal information-sharing is a dedicated BECID Sharepoint site, which provides secure storage options for participants and allows the administrative team to organise, monitor and verify materials produced during the project. The use of UTARTU Sharepoint provides institutional and technical support as well as sufficient storage space for the duration of the project. Moreover, the UTARTU Sharepoint allows for technical restriction of access where necessary, e.g., the storage of project-related personal data only required for record-keeping.

Data amounts are expected to be within the storage and backup space available via UTARTU Sharepoint. However, where long-term storage requires a different data storage ecosystem or additional storage space, other institutional cloud storage options are open to the administrative team for implementation and use.

How will you manage access and security?

The primary goal of using data storage with institutional, technical support and backup measures is to maintain project-related data safely and securely to mitigate any potential risks of accidental data loss or destruction.

Data stored in the UTARTU Sharepoint will be subject to various regimes of access restrictions based on the nature of specific data types. Overall, the BECID Sharepoint site is accessible only by invitation, further supplemented by additional assessment and manual implementation of access rights. Various access regimes are required to ensure that Sharepoint can be used as the central platform for internal information-sharing, i.e., access is provided and available where necessary. However, overall data and information processing on the platform is kept to a minimum.

Access requirements are regularly reviewed, and any issues are promptly dealt with either by the data manager or by the data manager with the help of UTARTU technical support.

SELECTION AND PRESERVATION

Which data are of long-term value and should be retained, shared, and preserved?

While the long-term value of research data created in the course of the BECID project was challenging to determine a priori, all created data was subject to such considerations. In other words, the administrative team, the data manager, and the responsible WP leader assessed the quality of data as well as its potential for open or on-request access in each particular instance.

The following data categories are considered valuable for long-term retention, sharing, and preservation:

- WP1: Project management data, financial data (limited period as defined by GA), and dissemination data.
- WP2: Fact-checks, analytical reports (disinformation trends), and potentially workshop materials.
- WP3: Literature review reports, fact-checking practices reports, reports on audience responses and media regulations, and potentially the fact-checking tools inventory.
- WP4: Updated training materials and materials from winning hackathon entries. Co-created media literacy campaign materials may also be considered for long-term preservation.

Other project-related data are retained for periods set out in the GA.

What is the long-term preservation plan for the dataset?

The administrative team and responsible WP leaders considered a choice of repositories suitable for the long-term storage of qualitative research data for cases where such data had become available as a result of the previously described decision process. Options included

the DataCite repository, which allows for generating persistent identifiers (DOIs) and already stores examples of open-access qualitative data, including interview transcripts.

At the close of the project, a long-term preservation plan will be presented for the aforementioned valuable data categories. This plan will address 1) Storage solutions, selecting appropriate repositories for long-term data storage, 2) Data migration, i.e. establishing procedures for migrating data to new formats if necessary to ensure future accessibility and 3) Access management: Defining authorised users and procedures for accessing preserved data over time.

DATA SHARING

How will you share the data?

All research data generated during the BECID project will not be shared with third parties for the reasons stated above. For the literature reviews of T3.1, Zotero libraries will be made available to the public, i.e. researchers, policy makers and media partners. If needed, additional data sharing agreements will be established to govern data usage and ensure responsible data handling practices. The project includes many direct-to-public materials, including reports and analyses, disseminated with previously agreed regularity.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESOURCES

Who will be responsible for data management?

Kristjan Kikerpill (UTARTU) implements general data management procedures for the BECID project. The PI and project manager provide instructions and input. Special instructions, e.g., the management of and requirements emerging from reporting obligations related to project finances or communications, are provided to the data manager by the people directly responsible for said area. Considering the evolving nature of the data management plan, feedback and suggestions from representatives of participating organisations will be thoroughly considered. Where possible and in the absence of data protection conflicts, the aforementioned suggestions are implemented into data management practices and reported in future versions of the data management plan.

At the close of the project, the PMT will provide a table of all data collected and generated within BECID. Two outside researchers will report back on 1) the use of research data, looking for suggestions on further opening up datasets or reusing collected data for more than one purpose, and 2) give feedback on the use of fact-checks as our biggest wealth of data created for further research. Suggestions will be implemented during the project, but also included in the writing of the follow-up funding round to increase sustainability of the use of data collected. Additionally, an outside project reviewer to give feedback on the clarity of all published materials, including fact-checks, being financed by the EU and implementing suggested changes to further stress the work done within the project. This will include feedback on whether instances where the website has not been a primary source for publication is clear to the public.

What resources will you require to deliver your plan?

Resources required for implementing the data management plan in terms of storage are covered by the free resources available to UTARTU staff. This includes the DataCite open-access data repository for researchers from DataCite Estonia Consortium member universities.

III – QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN

The following is an overview of the project's monitoring, quality assurance and evaluation by stakeholders and the funder. The set of Key Performance Indicators might change as the EDMO network and the opportunities that come with it grow. All changes will be made public via the website.

THE TEAM AND THE CORE IDEA

Quality assurance is essential to our team's work in combatting disinformation. We have extensive expertise and sustainable plans to ensure our efforts are effective and impactful.

To achieve this, **we will build on numerous activities that have already been carried out in the field of information disorders, information resilience, tackling disinformation, and media literacy.** Our partners have previously collaborated on projects (i.e., EU-funded DIGIRES: Supporting Collaborative Partnerships for Digital Resilience and Capacity Building in the Times of Disinfodemic/COVID-19, which is being implemented in close collaboration with EDMO (Agreement Number: LC-01682259); project period 2021-2022), and we will re-use existing tools and materials that are already available to the consortium as well as the public.

Collaboration on media literacy activities in the Baltics has previously been coordinated by BECID partner BCME in partnership with the universities, i.e., via IREX in the Baltics network and grants. Teamwork has also happened in connection with the Deutsche Welle Akademie Baltic MIL Steering Committee and with the Open Information Partnership initiative coordinated by the Zinc Network.

Some of the existing tools we have already used:

- SALTO PI Participation Pool is providing MIL materials for educators, funded by the EC and consisting of more than 600 peer-reviewed sources and 150 original content pieces commissioned from experts.
- Disinfo Database: An open-source disinformation database that monitors known sites and is easily searchable.
- CO:RE, an online knowledge repository on kids funded by the EU.
- SmartEU Social Resilience Toolkit, an EU-funded project providing tools and resources to train young people, older people, and intermediaries who work with them.

Reusing existing tools and materials and educating relevant audiences on how to use them is more effective than investing in creating new ones that might go unnoticed.

In addition, we are updating and increasing the functionality of our website structure based on the DIGIRES website. This will enable us to use our resources for networking, strengthening collaboration between partners, exchanging good practices, and reaching out to different target audiences, including the most vulnerable ones, such as Russian speakers and youth.

IMPORTANCE OF NETWORKS

Universities are, of course, held to academic research standards, the same as journalists are held to journalistic standards of work and ethics. In addition to our expertise, our network brings more quality assurance, too.

BECID is part of the **EDMO hubs network**, a community of organisations and individuals committed to promoting media literacy and countering disinformation across Europe. This means we have access to a wealth of expertise, knowledge, and resources, including best practices, tools, and co-working platforms such as Truly Media, guidelines, and training materials, which we can use to enhance our work.

Moreover, EDMO hubs are also part of the **Media and Learning network**, a wider community of stakeholders working together to promote digital and media literacy in education and training. By being a part of the network, we can connect with other professionals and experts in the field, share ideas and experiences, and collaborate on joint initiatives and projects. This allows us to expand our reach, share our knowledge and expertise, and ensure that our work is aligned with the latest developments and trends in the field.

The four fact-checking organisations units within media organisations within BECID are all verified signatories of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) code of principles.¹⁴ The IFCN is a unit of the Poynter Institute dedicated to bringing together fact-checkers worldwide; its code of principles is for organisations that regularly publish nonpartisan reports on the accuracy of statements by public figures, major institutions, and other widely circulated claims of interest to society. The IFCN is a crucial player in the world regarding the quality of fact-checking. Its signatories undergo a thorough verification process each year to ensure that the fact-checks are of the highest quality.

Through our participation in these networks, we can also benefit from regular evaluations, audits, and feedback from external parties, which can help us identify improvement areas and ensure that our work is of the highest quality. This external validation and scrutiny provide an additional layer of quality assurance that reinforces our commitment to transparency, accountability, and excellence in everything we do.

Our network membership is an essential part of our quality assurance framework, providing us with access to a wealth of expertise, knowledge, and resources, connecting us with other professionals and experts in the field, and providing external validation and scrutiny to ensure that our work is of the highest quality.

MONITORING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROJECT

Project monitoring will be performed continuously by the Project Coordinator and Project Manager based on the tasks and deliverables assigned to each partner in the Consortium Agreement (see next chapter for more details on management structure). Monitoring will include **checking project activities against targets** such as the number of participants in project events, the organic spread of materials within professional networks, the practical value of created content to stakeholders, the number of citations of studies and reports, and audience numbers on BECID's Twitter account and other pages (see more on monitoring dissemination below). All of this will **be reflected in BECID project progress reports**.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), including all EDMO-required KPIs, such as the quantity and quality of the flow of fact checks delivered by fact-checking organisations and the progress of the studies/reports in the different work packages (WP), will be used to measure project performance. As for monitoring by the funder, project management will always notify why delays occurred and when they will be solved, with the University in Tartu as the contact for any issues. If needed, deviations will always be discussed with the project manager and internally. The partners will also develop procedures for collecting participant feedback in project activities, which will be used to improve project deliverables.

Within WP2, we will ensure a continuous flow of fact-checks, supported by our research and analysis activities on disinformation campaigns and improving fact-checking processes in the Baltics (WP3). Considering our media partners' many followers and readers, our fact-checking work could reach hundreds of thousands of people in the Baltics.

Our deliverables include:

- At least 750 national language textual Fact-checks, translated into English, will be published in the EDMO network.
- At least 90 podcasts/video shorts on fact-checks, debunks, case studies, and dissemination of disinformation.
- 10 analytical reports on propaganda and disinformation entering the Baltics from Russia and Belarus.
- 10 analytical reports on Baltic disinformation trends.
- 10 analytical reports on Baltic disinformation narratives and trends on relevant social media platforms.

All the above will be disseminated via our communications plan (see below). Within WP4, we will conduct media literacy activities and implement campaigns to reach different key target audiences. Specific attention will be paid to vulnerable groups such as Russian speakers in the Baltics, youth, and older adults. These activities will aim to improve people's resilience to fake news. Our deliverables include:

- Syllabus and materials for a course on teaching media and information literacies
- Updated DIGIRES Training Materials on fact-checking for new fact-checkers and social media activists
- Updated Digimenter materials for intergenerational training on the digital competency of young people and the elderly

- Media literacy campaign materials for Russian-speaking Baltic residents
- Materials from Baltic Youth MIL Hackathon Series

All of the above is, of course, worth nothing without the trust and interest of the public, and great flexibility to adapt to new disinformation trends is needed from all parties in BECID and the broader community trying to strengthen democracies against disinformation. Nevertheless, the success of the deliverables above is an indication of success, which can only be achieved with proper management.

COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION KPIS

At the close of the project, we will assess BECID's Project Communication and Dissemination based on the following KPIs:

For our **project's website** and social media components, we have set specific, measurable goals to enhance our online presence and audience engagement. Our website traffic objective is to consistently achieve at least 10 visits per week, aiming for 100 unique visitors by the end of the year. We are particularly focused on attracting audiences from the Baltics, Scandinavia, and other European countries.

Regarding content, we hope to see our 'research' page attracting at least one visitor weekly and our 'media literacy' page drawing in around 10 visitors each week. Regarding the multilingual aspect of our website, the goal is to ensure that each language version, including the Russian version, receives regular visits. This will be monitored through web analytics that track page views, session duration, and bounce rate.

BECID WEBSITE STATISTICS			
(Avg.)	2023	2024	2025
Visits per week			
Unique visitors per year			
'Research' page weekly visits			
'Media literacy' page weekly visits			
EE page views (PW), session duration (SD), bounce rate (BR)	PW: SD: BR:		
LV page views, session duration, bounce rate	PW: SD: BR:		
LT page views, session duration, bounce rate	PW: SD: BR:		
RU page views, session duration, bounce rate	PW: SD: BR:		
EN page views, session duration, bounce rate	PW: SD: BR:		

On the **social media front**, we aim for each post on our personal and partner accounts to receive at least one comment and five likes, using these metrics as indicators of reach and engagement. Additionally, for our **series of podcasts and videos**, we are tracking views and focusing on the level of user interaction, aiming for at least one comment per post. We will also closely monitor audience retention rates and demographics to better understand and cater to our audience.

BECID SOCIAL MEDIA STATISTICS			
(Avg.)	2023	2024	2025
Number of posts on BECID account (LinkedIn)			
Likes on BECID account posts (LinkedIn)			
Comments on BECID account posts (LinkedIn)			
Audience retention rates (AR) and demographics on BECID account (LinkedIn)			
Number of BECID related posts on partner accounts			
Likes on BECID related posts on partner accounts			
Comments on BECID related posts on partner accounts			
Series of podcasts/videos views (T. 2.3)			
Series of podcasts/videos comments (T. 2.3)			

The total count of fact-check-related articles, podcasts, video series, and in-depth analysis stories is **372**. All the fact-checks are available on the [BECID project's website](#) and on our partners websites. Additionally, we have contributed to the EDMO Fact-Check Repository and publication of monthly [fact-checking briefs](#).

Textual Fact Checks:

- Delfi Lithuania: 129
- Re:Baltica: 55
- Delfi Latvia: 45
- Delfi Estonia: 42

Fact-checks in audio format: over 20 podcast/video series concentrating on fact-checks, debunking exercises, case studies, and the spread of disinformation (**Delfi Lithuania**); 24 bi-weekly podcast episodes to go deeper into current and topical disinformation topics, which ranged from networks to spreaders to disinformation consequences (**Delfi Estonia**).

Fact-checks in audiovisual format: over 40 fact-checking episodes on the 'Delfi Diena' TV program on Delfi TV (**Delfi Lithuania**); **Re:Baltica** contributed disinformation reviews to three video series Atmaskots produced by Delfi.lv ([1,2,3](#)).

Delfi Latvia, in cooperation with the Centre for East European Policy Studies, published three quarterly reports on Russian disinformation trends in [March](#), [July](#) and [November](#). Concurrently, Re:Baltica conducted its own series of reports, releasing one in [February](#), two in July ([1,2](#)), and another in [October](#). In addition to that, Delfi Estonia published ten in-depth disinformation analysis stories in the national newspaper ([1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10](#)).

Delfi Lithuania enhanced its fact-checking initiatives by producing 22 short videos for social media platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram to counter misinformation. These efforts included:

- On TikTok: **17,383** plays, 288 likes, 22 comments, 55 shares, and 54 saves.
- On Instagram: **11,108** plays, 37 likes, 1 comment, and 5 saves, with an account reach of 8,618.
- On Facebook: **25,362** post impressions, a post reach of 25,049, 589 engagements, 116 reactions, and 34 comments.

FACT-CHECKING

BECID FACT-CHECKING STATISTICS			
	2023	2024	2025
Number of fact-checks published in Estonia			
Number of audio/AV format fact-checks published in Estonia			
Number of fact-checks published in Latvia			
Number of audio/AV format fact-checks published in Latvia			
Number of fact-checks published in Lithuania			
Number of audio/AV format fact-checks published in Lithuania			
Number of fact-checks translated to English and Russian across Baltics			

BECID AS LEADING ORGANISATION

In our **Digital Mentorship Advocacy efforts**, we are focusing on raising awareness and involvement in digital mentorship programs across the Baltics. We aim to form digital mentor teams in Estonia and Latvia, with a target of training at least 100 elderly individuals over the course of the year. To measure the effectiveness of these programs, we plan to collect at least 50 feedback forms from participants. This feedback will be crucial in improving and creating educational materials for future use. Additionally, we aim to establish at least 10 mentor-mentee pairings each year across the Baltics.

BECID DIGITAL MENTORSHIP ADVOCASY EFFORTS STATISTICS			
	2023	2024	2025
Trainees (number of seniors reached) in Estonia			
Number of young people reached in Estonia			
Number of teachers/youth workers reached in Estonia			
Collected feedback forms in Estonia			
Trainees (number of seniors reached) in Latvia			
Number of young people reached in Latvia			
Number of teachers/youth workers reached in Latvia			
Collected feedback forms in Latvia			
Mentor-mentee pairings across Baltics			

For our **Quarterly Report Presentations**, we have set clear targets to ensure engagement and effectiveness. We aim for at least 10 attendees at each event and strive to elicit at least one question from the audience during the Q&A sessions. Post-event feedback is also vital, with a goal of scoring at least 4 out of 5 on our feedback scale. This feedback will help us gauge whether the report's content was useful and informative to the listeners.

BECID QUARTERLY REPORT PRESENTATION STATISTICS			
	2023	2024	2025
Attendees at I QR event			
Questions from the audience			
Feedback avg. score			
Attendees at II QR event			
Questions from the audience			
Feedback avg. score			
... (Fill in as needed)			

In leading Baltic Media Literacy Events, our objective is to conduct at least 10 events annually across the Baltics, each with a minimum of 10 participants. Participant feedback is crucial, and we aim to collect at least five feedback forms per event, assessing whether participants gained knowledge, found the event beneficial, and would recommend our events to others. Partner feedback is equally important; we will measure our success by whether partners seek collaboration for future events and accept our partnership offers.

BECID BALTIC MEDIA LITERACY EVENTS STATISTICS			
	2023	2024	2025
Conducted events in Estonia			
Avg. number of participants			
Avg. feedback number of feedback forms collected			
Conducted events in Latvia			
Avg. number of participants			
Avg. feedback number of feedback forms collected			
Conducted events in Lithuania			

Avg. number of participants			
Avg. feedback number of feedback forms collected			
Established partnerships across Baltics			

Lastly, **for our Media Literacy Workshops targeted at Baltic educators**, we plan to hold at least five workshops a year, with each workshop attracting at least 10 participants. It's important for us to see repeat participation, with at least one attendee returning for subsequent workshops. We aim to achieve a feedback score of at least 4 out of 5, indicating the workshops' usefulness and effectiveness from the participants' perspective.

BECID MIL WORKSHOPS FOR BALTIC EDUCATORS STATISTICS			
	2023	2024	2025
Number of workshops			
Avg. number of participants			
Avg. feedback score			

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

We aim to initiate at least one strategic media collaboration annually, partnering with entities such as telecommunications companies, private enterprises, newspapers, magazines, or online publications across the Baltics. Additionally, we plan to produce at least five articles each year, spreading our influence and sharing insights across the region. **Regarding media presence**, our goal is to achieve at least five media appearances annually across the Baltics, thereby increasing our visibility and impact.

In our efforts to establish BECID as a thought leader in media literacy, **we have set a goal for our experts to be regular guests on radio programs across all Baltic countries**. We aim for at least one appearance per quarter in each Baltic state. Regular invitations to these programs will serve as a key indicator of our position as a leading organization in media literacy in the Baltic region.

BECID STRATEGIC MEDIA COLLABORATION STATISTICS			
	2023	2024	2025
Number of media collaborations initiated			
Articles produced			
Media appearances across the Baltics			

Number of radio appearances in Estonia			
Number of radio appearances in Latvia			
Number of radio appearances in Lithuania			

Interaction with Media Literacy Networks is also a crucial component of our strategy. We plan to measure the effectiveness of our cooperation with local media literacy networks by tracking how widely our project materials are distributed through channels like 'Targalt Internetis' and the Ministry of Education and Science. We aim to distribute at least 10 project materials through MIL networks annually per country. A significant measure of success will be how our partners incorporate our materials into their lesson plans or websites. This level of integration and uptake will demonstrate the practical impact and value of our contributions to media literacy efforts in the region.

BECID INTERACTION WITH MIL NETWORKS STATISTICS			
	2023	2024	2025
Number of materials distributed through MIL networks in Estonia			
Number of materials distributed through MIL networks in Latvia			
Number of materials distributed through MIL networks in Lithuania			

BECID VISIBILITY AND PERFORMANCE IN COLLABORATION WITH EDMO HUBS

To assess our contributions within **EDMO Working Groups**, a key element of our evaluation process is to ensure that the materials and recommendations produced by these groups include the representation or contributions of a BECID member. This involvement signifies our active role and influence in shaping these collaborations.

Participation in EDMO-initiated conferences is another critical area where we aim to build our network and initiate collaborative projects. Our objective here is to establish at least one significant new contact per year, a target that reflects our commitment to expanding our influence and collaborations. Additionally, we strive to start at least one set of negotiations for collaborative projects annually, demonstrating the effectiveness of our networking efforts at these events.

Our collaboration on the Truly Media platform is guided by ambitious targets. We aim to contribute 50 pieces of content per year, ensuring that our materials engage at least five users and showcase a diversity of formats and perspectives. This diverse approach to content creation and dissemination is crucial in reflecting the varied nature of our work and the different audiences we aim to reach. Through these targeted efforts, we are committed to enhancing BECID's visibility, impact, and collaborative capabilities within the EDMO network and beyond.

BECID VISIBILITY AND PERFORMANCE IN COLLABORATION WITH EDMO HUBS STATISTICS			
	2023	2024	2025
Number of BECID member contributions in materials/recommendations produced by the EDMO Working Group			
Number of new contacts established			
Number of negotiations for collaborative projects started			
Number of content pieces contributed to the Truly Media platform			

MANAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE

BECID consortium installed a management structure corresponding to the project's multi-partner, mixed methods, and interdisciplinary set-up, as well as its high-level ambitions concerning scholarly output and societal impact. In the first year of the BECID project (Dec 2022-2023), the University of Tartu along with the Management Committee decided that initial management structure, designed to share responsibilities, proved dysfunctional and required adaptation.

The revised management structure is as follows:

- **The Project Management Team, PMT**, which the consortium relies on for specialised expertise and the support structures of the University of Tartu. The BECID consortium has established a management structure that allows for effective coordination and management of the project's scientific and societal goals. Flexibility to change will be maintained as necessary. The BECID Management Committee (MC), led by Project Coordinator (PC) Maia Klaassen, and the Project Management Team (PMT), coordinated by UTARTU by Project Manager Lilian Ariva, is responsible for the daily management of BECID. Research activities are organised into Work Packages and steered by Task Leaders whom the PMT directly supervises. The PMT reports to the MC, providing them access to all reports, minutes, and formal decisions. Consists of:
 - **Principal Investigator (PI)**: Prof. Andra Siibak, responsible for research coordination, performance auditing, and risk analysis.
 - **Project Coordinator (PC)**: Maia Klaassen, ensures smooth coworking conditions between the hub, BECID AB, MC, and other hubs and EDMO EUI.
 - **Project Manager (PM)**: Lilian Ariva, oversees technical project progression, monitors deadlines, risks, quality, and impact.
 - **Financial Manager (FM)**: Regina Lapp, handles financial coordination across partners.
 - **Communication Officers (CO)**: Inger Klesment and Gretel Juhansoo, facilitate effective communication and work as Media Literacy Experts for Work Package 4.
- **Management Committee (MC)**: The MC is the main collective decision-making body of the project, responsible for managing the scientific program and scholarly impact and overseeing legal, contractual, and administrative decisions at the consortium level. The Principal Investigator chairs the MC *and consists of one representative from each partner*. The MC works to seek consensus between parties, approve decisions on major knowledge management issues such as exploitation of BECID results, address any risks or problems encountered, and make decisions concerning revisions of the scientific strategy, consortium composition and management. The MC will make decisions by consensus; if consensus cannot be reached, partners will vote (1 vote per person). The MC meets quarterly to review progress and assess the rate of expenditure, seeking consensus between parties and making decisions concerning revisions of the scientific strategy, consortium composition, and management.
- **Advisory Board (AB)**: Convenes after each annual report for feedback and discussion on future goals and performance indicators. The AB consists of representatives of the

BECID key stakeholders and provides expert opinions on the reports produced by BECID and ensures that the work of BECID aligns with the needs of the stakeholders. Members of the Advisory Board include six professors, three National Authority representatives, and three Third Sector Stakeholders.

- **Task Lead:** Replaced by Lead Organisation for each task, rather than have a specific individual responsible.

The roles and responsibilities of each team member are clearly defined to secure overall management efficiency and allow the consortium to deliver on the project's scientific and impact targets.

The PMT follows the GA and is instructed by the GA in all activities. For any deviations, the MC is called. Anyone in the hub can raise a issue either to the MC or at BECID's Monthly Meeting to the agenda of the MC, PMT or AB. Each organisation has a representative in the MC, who also is responsible for collecting all information on ongoing activities from all tasks their organisation leads. Decisions made in the MC, AB or PMT, as well as the agendas and memos to all of those management structures, are open to everyone to see in the shared sharepoint.

DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION

The aim of disseminating the project's deliverables and BECID hub members' activities is to *achieve impact in different target groups*. Therefore, in monitoring the dissemination of BECID's activities, we shall focus on five specific target audiences.

The first target audience is **the general public**, focusing on vulnerable groups such as Russian speakers, youth, and older people. The aim is to raise awareness about disinformation and fake news and help develop skills to identify disinformation. Tailored channels include fact-checks published in partner outlets, involvement of influencers as spokespersons, popular science articles explaining methodologies and research, and videos posted on social media. The project will also reach out to student unions to target students.

The second target audience is the professional community of **fact-checkers, media outlets, and journalists**. The aim is to share best practices and materials, promote tools for identifying disinformation, and invite collaboration on fact-checking. Tailored channels include professional networks trusted by the group and personal contacts.

The third target audience is **the academic community**, focusing on disinformation, communication science, political science, etc. The aim is to present research and research methods and validate research results externally. Tailored channels include high-impact journals and participation in relevant academic conferences and media literacy events.

The fourth target audience is **policymakers and national authorities**. The aim is to advise on policies regulating online platforms, counteracting disinformation campaigns, monitoring the implementation of the Code of Practice on Disinformation, and improving education policies to enhance media literacy. Tailored channels include virtual and face-to-face meetings, as well as annual reports.

The fifth target audience is **teachers**, aiming to improve their media competencies and invite them to participate in e-seminars. Tailored channels include teacher associations in partner countries and contacts of partner universities.

In addition to tailored channels, the project will use generic dissemination channels. The project will also establish a collaboration platform for the hub and provide active developer support to improve the platform based on user feedback.

The project team will monitor indicators and publish the results in annual reports to measure the effectiveness of dissemination activities. Monitoring of dissemination will focus on, but not be limited to:

- **Participants in BECID socials:** The number of followers, likes, shares, and comments on social media platforms will indicate the level of engagement and interest from the target audiences. These metrics can be tracked using social media analytics tools like Twitter Analytics or Hootsuite.
- **Website traffic:** The number of page visits to the BECID website and the duration of each stay can be monitored using web analytics tools like Google Analytics. The

number of references to the project on search engines can also be monitored using tools like Google Alerts or SEMrush.

- **Fact-checks audience** numbers: As all studies suggest, people are pretty stuck in their media consumption habits. Rather than try and get people to make visiting our website a habit, all FC-s are also published on the respective fact-checkers page. Audience numbers for each FC are monitored and will be published in annual reports.
- **Interviews and media coverage:** The number of interviews given by the project team and the number of media articles or broadcasts featuring the project can be monitored to measure the level of media attention and interest in the project.
- **Attendance at events:** The number of attendees at the project's media literacy events and academic conferences can be tracked to measure the target audience's level of interest and engagement. We also clearly understand giving back to society through dissemination and active participation, so we keep an overview of events and projects our consortium members are a part of.

Overall, by monitoring these metrics, the project team can evaluate the effectiveness of their dissemination plan and adjust their strategies accordingly to reach their target audiences more effectively.

The following annexes include the initial outline of the communication plan for the upcoming years of the project, which serves as the foundation on which all smaller running tasks (which cannot be predicted for apparent reasons) get built.

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Make sure to visit our website at becid.ut.ee.

2023 COMMS

DELIVERABLE	TARGET AUDIENCES	OBJECTIVES	FORMAT/CHANNEL
FACT CHECKS Fact Checks + Podcasts Webinars on disinformation in Baltics Analytical reports on propaganda and disinformation entering Baltics from Russia and Belarus	General public English speaking audiences Political decision-makers Academic communities Media experts	Debunking false information Presenting the results of the reports Presenting the most important results	Becid website, Delfi and Eesti Päevaleht Partners' channels, BECID Twitter account and website (Scientific) seminars, conferences , popular science articles, newsletters , social media, symbiosis-cooperation, partners' channels
ACADEMIC WORK Report on Systematic Review of Academic Literature and automated tools for fact checking	Academic communities Media experts	Presenting the most important results to each target audience	Partners' channels, BECID website blog and Twitter, academic newsletters, conferences, seminars, databases of scientific articles
COURSES Developing teachers' media competencies via providing updated training programs Syllabus and materials for a course on teaching media and information literacies	Teachers Youth workers	Sharing the best practices, mapping of teachers' training needs, small-scale testing of already developed plans	Meetings with the target audience, partners' channels, BECID website and Twitter

2024 COMMS

DELIVERABLE	TARGET AUDIENCES	OBJECTIVES	FORMAT/CHANNEL
Fact Checks + Podcasts	General public	Debunking false information	Becid website, Delfi and Eesti Päevaleht
Webinars on disinformation in Baltics	English speaking audiences	Presenting the results of the reports	Partners' channels, BECID Twitter account and website
Analytical reports on propaganda and disinformation entering Baltics from Russia and Belarus	Political decision-makers Academic communities Media experts	Presenting the most important results	(Scientific) seminars, conferences, popular science articles, newsletters, social media, symbiosis-cooperation, partners' channels
Comparative article on fact-checking and information disorder resilience practices in the Baltic States	Academic communities Media experts Journalists (?)	Presenting the most important results to each target audience	Partners' channels, BECID website blog and Twitter, academic newsletters, conferences, seminars, databases of scientific articles
Article on vulnerable audiences' responses to information disorder intervention activities focusing on fact-checking			
2 reports on Baltic regulative aspects of fact-checking			
Developing teacher's media competencies via providing updated training programs	Teachers Youth workers	Sharing the best practices, mapping teachers' training needs, small-scale testing of already developed plans	Meetings with the target audience, partners' channels, BECID website and Twitter
Training new fact-checkers and young social media activists on how fact-checking works building on the experience from the EU-funded project DIGIRES	Media enthusiasts and social media activists	Sharing the best practices	BECID website blog TikTok (?)
Training the elderly according to the Digimenter model	The elderly		

This project

Mar 2024

2025 COMMS

DELIVERABLE	TARGET AUDIENCES	OBJECTIVES	FORMAT/CHANNEL
FACT CHECKS Fact Checks + Podcasts Webinars on disinformation in Baltics 10 analytical reports on propaganda and disinformation entering Baltics from Russia and Belarus	General public English speaking audiences Political decision-makers Academic communities Media experts	Debunking false information Presenting the results of the reports Presenting the most important results	Becid website, Delfi and Eesti Päevaleht Partners' channels, BECID Twitter account and website (Scientific) seminars, conferences, popular science articles, newsletters, social media, symbiosis-cooperation, partners' channels
Coordinating Russian-speaking Baltic resident trainings. Media literacy campaign materials for Russian-speaking Baltic residents Baltic MIL Hackathon Series	Russian-speaking audiences General public (?)	Providing information to Russian-speaking audiences Organising an event for the general public	Campaigns, events

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