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MENTBEST

Protecting
mental health
in times of change.

MENTBEST

Protecting mental health in times of change

D9.1 Project Handbook

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MENTBEST Consortium

Full Name	Short Name	Beneficiary Number	Role
EUROPEAN ALLIANCE AGAINST DEPRESSION	EAAD	1	Coordinator
INSTITUTO DE SAUDE PUBLICA DA UNIVERSIDADE DO PORTO	ISPUP	2	Beneficiary
UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE MADRID	UAM	3	Beneficiary
NATIONAL SUICIDE RESEARCH FOUNDATION	NSRF	4	Beneficiary
REGION HOVEDSTADEN	PCC	5	Beneficiary
DET NATIONALE FORSKNINGSCENTER FOR ARBEJDSMILJØ	NFA	6	Beneficiary
EESTI-ROOTSI VAIMSE TERVISE JA SUITSIDOLOOGIA INSTITUUT	ERSI	7	Beneficiary
STIFTUNG DEUTSCHE DEPRESSIONSHILFE UND SUIZIDPRAEVENTION	GDF	8	Beneficiary
QENDRES SE SHENDETIT DHE MIREQENIES KOMUNITARE	CCHW	9	Beneficiary
KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT LEUVEN	KUL	10	Beneficiary
MONSENSO A/S	MSS	11	Beneficiary
PINTAIL LTD	PT	12	Beneficiary
KENTRO EREVNON NOTIOANATOLIKIS EVROPIS ASTIKI MI KERDOSKOPIKI ETAIREIA	SEERC	13	Beneficiary
FUNDACIO INSTITUT HOSPITAL DEL MAR D INVESTIGACIONS MEDIQUES	IMIM	14	Beneficiary

Version Control

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0.1	Initial draft for Project Coordinator review	15/05/2023
1.1	Submission to HaDEA	26/05/2023

D9.1 – Project Handbook

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1. Executive Summary

Deliverable 9.1 – Project Handbook is the first deliverable for Work Package 9 – Project Management (WP9). The purpose of the Project Handbook (the Handbook) is to provide templates and details for meetings, deliverables, reports, time-recording and other key matters that collectively enable the effective project management of MENTBEST.

The Handbook is drafted to complement the legal basis of the MENTBEST Consortium Agreement and Grant Agreement.

The Handbook was drafted by WP9, reviewed by beneficiary Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM) as the lead for communications in WP8. The drafting drew on existing knowledge and experience of the Project Coordinator, European Alliance Against Depression (EAAD) and beneficiary Pintail (PT) and was refined following the Kick-Off Meeting to include key advice provided by the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA) Project Advisor.

2. Introduction and Background

The overarching aim of MENTBEST is to support vulnerable groups (*migrants/refugees, older people, younger people, long-term unemployed, and those with mental disorders*) in the general population especially at risk of being disadvantaged by dramatic societal change, of experiencing stressors, and of suffering (further) negative impacts on their wellbeing, including mental health.

MENTBEST will first characterise the scale of change-related mental health challenges in Europe and then working with patients, healthcare and other stakeholders, identify interventions and tools that best build resilience and maintain mental health.

By expanding existing MENTBEST partner expertise in community-based interventions to reduce depression and suicidal behaviour (EAAD 4-Level-Intervention) and including the identified interventions and tools, MENTBEST will create and then deliver and validate in five model regions across five countries (Spain, Ireland, Estonia, Greece, Albania), a comprehensive community-based intervention, known as COMBINA.

An innovative addition will be the randomised controlled trial (RCT) of app-based self-monitoring and self-management technologies for mental health, which use AI and n=1 longitudinal statistics to create individualised predictive models and provide users preventive and self-management support.

MENTBEST is an ambitious project, led by the EAAD with a multi-disciplinary consortium of a further 13 partners, collectively covering 10 countries.

WP9 as the project management work package, is responsible for the overall scientific and administrative coordination of the project. The main objectives being:

- To coordinate all project activities and ensure that partners work together effectively.
- To facilitate scientific and research development, and success of the project through monitoring of progress, management of resources, open communication and coordination of activities.
- To integrate the multidisciplinary perspectives and facilitate effective collaboration.
- To ensure the project meets its contractual commitments as per the Grant Agreement.
- To predict, mitigate and overcome research-related risk.
- To maximise the impact and broader value of the project, both during and beyond

In this regard, D9.1 is a key resource to set the project management structure for the 5-year project and provides beneficiaries with a single source document for key administrative matters.

In terms of the tasks allocated to WP9 in the Grant Agreement, the establishment of the Handbook sets most tasks in train, noting they mostly have an ongoing nature throughout the life of the project. The exception is the Data Management Plan which is not addressed in the Handbook. The links between the Handbook and the WP9 tasks are articulated in the table below.

Task	Link to Handbook
9.1 – Scientific Coordination	The coordination of the project is enabled by the project management structures and systems put in place via the Handbook.
9.3 – Meetings	The governance structure is set out in the Handbook.
9.4 – Communication & Knowledge Sharing	The internal communication channels, including document storage, mailing lists are set out in the Handbook.
9.5 – Quality Assurance	Core to the deliverable submission process is a quality assurance review, as outlined in the Handbook.
9.6 – Reporting	All reporting (internal, continuous, and formal/periodic) processes and responsibilities are outlined in the Handbook.
9.7 – Risk Management	The identification of upfront and process to identify future risks are addressed in the Handbook.

The Handbook will be a living document that is stored in the MENTBEST Teams Channel, it will be reviewed and updated as required throughout the life of the project.

3. Approach

The approach taken to developing the Handbook is outlined below.

3.1 Alignment to Grant Agreement and Consortium Agreement

The Handbook was drafted in line with the MENTBEST Grant Agreement and Consortium Agreement, taking into consideration aspects of project management and reporting, that consortium members tend to often raise as questions.

Further, given MENTBEST is funded under the Horizon Europe programme, which has some changes in requirements when compared to Horizon 2020, care was taken to ensure the most up to date requirements were included in the Handbook.

3.2 Partner Input and Access

To ensure ease of readability and that the content of the Handbook was appropriate, a draft was shared with UAM (lead for WP8 – Communications) for comment. During the Kick-Off Meeting in Madrid, WP9 presented the key content of the Handbook as part of its presentation and any questions raised were noted to ensure such topics were covered in the Handbook.

The goal is for the Handbook to be used by partners and thus it includes links to all required and regularly used templates (e.g., deliverable reports, minutes, agenda, presentations) and useful

information (e.g., contact lists) and reference to Articles in the Grant Agreement, are included, all of which are located in the MENTBEST Teams Channel.

3.3 Advice from HaDEA

The HaDEA Project Advisor was present at the Kick-Off Meeting and presented an overview of HaDEA which included key project management aspects and expectations. Note was taken of this presentation to ensure a) alignment with content in the Handbook and b) whether any additional matters needed to be included.

4. Results

The results delivered following the approach outlined above are outlined below.

4.1 Alignment to Grant Agreement and Consortium Agreement

The Handbook follows the key topic areas in the Grant Agreement, including finances, reporting and responsibilities of partners (e.g., use of EU Emblem and statement). References to certain Articles where more detail is required (e.g., eligible and ineligible costs) were included.

4.2 Partner Input and Access

On reviewing the Handbook, UAM provided some valuable comments in relation to key communication matters (internal and external) that could be added to the Handbook, these were then added.

During the Kick-Off meeting a question about Steering Committee members was raised, as this was not detailed in the Grant Agreement, this has been outlined in more detail in the Handbook.

With the finalisation of the project logo, final versions of templates for PowerPoint presentations, agenda, minutes, and the deliverable template were included in the Handbook.

4.3 Advice from HaDEA

During the Kick-Off Meeting our Project Advisor provided some more background and advice on the monitoring meetings scheduled for MENTBEST, this was included in the Handbook.

5. Impact and Conclusion

The Project Handbook is provided in Appendix 6.1 and is available to the MENTBEST consortium via the MENTBEST Teams Channel. As stated above, this will be a living document that is updated as required throughout the project.

The ability of the Project Coordinator and WP9 to effectively coordinate all project activities and ensure that partners work together effectively is enabled by the production of this Project Handbook.

6. Appendices

6.1 MENTBEST Project Handbook

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Project Handbook

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Version Control

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1.0	Initial draft	04.05.2023
1.1	Amended following partner consultation, submitted to HaDEA	26.05.2023

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1. Purpose

The purpose of the MENTBEST Project Handbook (the Handbook) is to provide MENTBEST Consortium members with a 'one-stop-shop' to all matters related to their responsibilities as a beneficiary and operations of the project.

The Handbook is based on the MENTBEST Grant Agreement, which includes Articles and Annexes as stipulated by the European Commission in the context of the Horizon Europe programme.

This Handbook should be read in conjunction with the MENTBEST Grant Agreement, if you require support, please contact Work Package 9 – Project Management:

- Pintail Ainslie O'Connor ainslie.oconnor@pintailservices.com
- EAAD Katharina Schnitzspahn katharina.schnitzspahn@eaad.net

2. Grant Agreement

The MENTBEST Grant Agreement is the contract between the European Commission and each beneficiary. The Grant Agreement sets out what we will do, when and how, it consists of three parts:

- Annex 1 - Part A: Work Package Tables
- Annex 1 - Part B: Narrative
- Annex 2 – Budget

The Grant Agreement can be amended via a formal process with the EU, see section 7.1 below.

Note: If we want to change plans, we must ask before we do so!

2.1 Project Number

MENTBEST is funded under the Horizon Europe call: HORIZON-HLTH-2022-STAYHLTH-01-two-stage.

The MENTBEST Project number is: 101080651.

2.2 Project Dates

MENTBEST commenced 01 April 2023 and has a duration of 60 months, concluding on 31 March 2028.

2.3 Consortium

The MENTBEST Consortium consists of the following partners, EAAD is the Project Coordinator:

Full Name	Short Name	Beneficiary Number	Role
EUROPEAN ALLIANCE AGAINST DEPRESSION	**EAAD**	**1**	**Coordinator**
INSTITUTO DE SAUDE PUBLICA DA UNIVERSIDADE DO PORTO	ISPUP	2	Beneficiary
UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE MADRID	UAM	3	Beneficiary

Full Name	Short Name	Beneficiary Number	Role
NATIONAL SUICIDE RESEARCH FOUNDATION	NSRF	4	Beneficiary
REGION HOVEDSTADEN	PCC	5	Beneficiary
DET NATIONALE FORSKNINGSCENTER FOR ARBEJDSMILJØ	NFA	6	Beneficiary
EESTI-ROOTSI VAIMSE TERVISE JA SUITSIDOLOOGIA INSTITUUT	ERSI	7	Beneficiary
STIFTUNG DEUTSCHE DEPRESSIONSHILFE UND SUIZIDPRAEVENTION	GDF	8	Beneficiary
QENDRES SE SHENDETIT DHE MIREQENIES KOMUNITARE	CCHW	9	Beneficiary
KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT LEUVEN	KUL	10	Beneficiary
MONSENSO A/S	MSS	11	Beneficiary
PINTAIL LTD	PT	12	Beneficiary
KENTRO EREVNON NOTIOANATOLIKIS EVROPIS ASTIKI MI KERDOSKOPIKI ETAIREIA	SEERC	13	Beneficiary
FUNDACIO INSTITUT HOSPITAL DEL MAR D INVESTIGACIONS MEDIQUES	IMIM	14	Beneficiary

2.4 Beneficiary Obligations

Each beneficiary must:

- Implement the 'action' as outlined in the Grant Agreement
- Keep their organisational information up to date in the EU Portal Participant Register
- Inform the Commission and other beneficiaries immediately if there is to be a delay in implementing the action
- Submit all reporting (including financial reporting) in a timely manner
- Include the EU emblem and statement on project related communications (see 4.8 below).

2.5 Grant Amount

The total estimated eligible cost of the project is 6,975,977.50€ and is paid at a rate of 100% by the Commission (of all eligible costs).

This means partners are not required to make their own financial contribution to the project costs.

The overhead rate (indirect costs) paid in this project is 25% of the total costs (minus sub-contracting costs).

The Cost Categories in this project include personnel, sub-contracting, purchase costs (*travel, equipment, and other goods, works and services*) and overheads. For further information about finances, see section 6 below.

	PERSONNEL	SUBCONTRACTING	TRAVEL	EQUIPMENT	OTHER GOODS ET	OVERHEADS	TOTAL COSTS
EAAD	€ 451,335.00	€ 41,000.00	€ 10,000.00	€ -	€ 4,000.00	€ 116,333.75	€ 622,668.75
ISPUP	€ 179,822.00	€ -	€ 5,000.00	€ -	€ 90,000.00	€ 68,705.50	€ 343,527.50
UAM	€ 185,625.00	€ -	€ 5,000.00	€ -	€ 37,500.00	€ 57,031.25	€ 285,156.25
NSRF	€ 309,369.00	€ -	€ 8,000.00	€ -	€ 184,000.00	€ 125,342.25	€ 626,711.25
PCC / RH	€ 387,161.00	€ -	€ 5,000.00	€ -	€ 59,000.00	€ 112,790.25	€ 563,951.25
NFA	€ 83,592.00	€ -	€ 5,000.00	€ -	€ -	€ 22,148.00	€ 110,740.00
ERSI	€ 184,672.00	€ -	€ 8,000.00	€ -	€ 184,000.00	€ 94,168.00	€ 470,840.00
GDF	€ 327,301.00	€ -	€ 5,000.00	€ -	€ 59,000.00	€ 97,825.25	€ 489,126.25
CCHW	€ 151,418.00	€ -	€ 8,000.00	€ -	€ 207,000.00	€ 91,604.50	€ 458,022.50
LUCAS	€ 271,000.00	€ -	€ 5,000.00	€ -	€ -	€ 69,000.00	€ 345,000.00
MSS	€ 547,549.00	€ -	€ 5,000.00	€ -	€ 57,200.00	€ 152,437.25	€ 762,186.25
PT	€ 398,293.00	€ -	€ 5,000.00	€ -	€ 4,000.00	€ 101,823.25	€ 509,116.25
SEERC	€ 239,336.00	€ 25,000.00	€ 10,000.00	€ -	€ 184,000.00	€ 108,334.00	€ 566,670.00
IMIM	€ 410,809.00	€ -	€ 8,000.00	€ -	€ 239,000.00	€ 164,452.25	€ 822,261.25
TOTALS	**€ 4,127,282.00**	**€ 66,000.00**	**€ 92,000.00**	**€ -**	**€ 1,308,700.00**	**€ 1,381,995.50**	**€ 6,975,977.50**

2.6 Work Packages

The action to be delivered by MENTBEST is allocated across 10 work packages, the lead partner, total effort (person months) and begin and end month are outlined below. This overview is also available in Teams.

No.	Name	Lead	Effort	Start Month	End Month
WP1	Mental Health Epidemiology and Interventions	SEERC	29.5	1	18
WP2	COMBI Development	ISPUP	56.6	1	59
WP3	COMBI Delivery	IMIM	165	1	45
WP4	COMBI Evaluation	LUCAS	16.5	12	60
WP5	MENTINA Development	GDF	68.5	1	44
WP6	MENTINA Delivery and Evaluation	PCC	90.5	6	60
WP7	Participatory Action Approach	CCHW	19	1	60
WP8	Knowledge translation and Dissemination	UAM	52.5	1	60
WP9	Project Management	EAAD	97.25	1	60
WP10	Ethics Requirements	EAAD	0	1	60

2.7 Resource Allocation

To deliver the action, the resources (person months) are allocated by work package and beneficiary as follows, this overview is also available in Teams.

Work Package		EAAD	ISPUP	UAM	NSRF	PCC	NFA	ERSI	GDF	CCHW	LUCAS	MSS	PT	SEERC	IMIM	TOTAL
WP1	Mental Health Epidemiology and Interventions	2	1	0.5	8	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	**29.5**
WP2	COMBI Development	18	29	0.5	1.5	0	0	1.5	2	1.5	0	0	1.5	1	0	**56.5**
WP3	COMBI Delivery	1.5	0.5	0	29.5	0	0	29.5	0	29.5	2	1.5	0	29.5	41.5	**165**
WP4	COMBI Evaluation	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	0.5	0	0	0.5	**16.5**
WP5	MENTINA Development	1	0	0	0	3.5	0	0	19	0	0	44	0	0	1	**68.5**
WP6	MENTINA Delivery and Evaluation	0	0	0	0	37	0	0	25	0	0	8.5	0	0	20	**90.5**
WP7	Participatory Action Approach	2	0	0	1.5	1.5	0	1.5	1.5	6	1	1	0	1.5	1.5	**19**
WP8	Knowledge translation and Dissemination	10	1	29	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1.5	0	1	1	**52.5**
WP9	Project Management	34	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	5.5	1.25	50	0.5	1	**97.25**
WP10	Ethics Requirements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
	TOTAL	**69**	**32**	**30.5**	**42**	**44**	**9.5**	**34.5**	**50**	**38.5**	**25.5**	**58.25**	**51.5**	**43.5**	**66.5**	**595.25**

2.8 Deliverables and Milestones

A full list of deliverables and milestones committed to in the Grant Agreement are listed in the Teams Channel, this list includes all due dates.

Pintail will monitor progress and timeframes toward deliverables, sharing in good time a deliverable MENBEST branded report template with guiding text.

Quality assurance of deliverable reports is as follows:

- DRAFT deliverable reports are due to Pintail for quality assurance one month before submission to the Commission
- Pintail share the draft report with a partner not involved in the work but knowledgeable in the topic for a content review (quality assurance)
- Final formatting and proofing by Pintail (two weeks prior to submission)
- Final approval by Project Coordinator (one week prior to submission)
- Pintail submit to the Commission

An overview of deliverables and the nominated quality assurance reviewer are listed in the Teams channel.

2.9 Risk Management

Initial risks were identified in the proposal, and these are reflected in the Grant Agreement. All beneficiaries must highlight any new risks as soon as they become apparent.

A risk review will be included on the agenda for each General Assembly meeting.

> **Note**: If something isn't going to plan, make sure to reach out to the project management team as soon as possible!

The Consortium Agreement (CA) is a requirement of the Commission and is based on the DESCA for Horizon Europe Template. This describes how we work together, manage Intellectual Property, resolve conflicts and such matters.

The CA has been signed by all partners and is available in the Teams channel.

4. Project Governance and Communication

This section will be updated throughout the project, including when the Communication and Dissemination Plan (Deliverable 8.1, due month 8) is finalised.

4.1 Steering Committee

The MENTBEST Steering Committee will meet every six months, on a cycle that finds it meeting three months prior to each General Assembly. The purpose being that the project leaders can have key discussions every three months.

The terms of reference of the Steering Committee are related to strategic matters (scientific and administrative) that need to be discussed to ensure the successful delivery and maximum benefit of this project. This includes emerging risks, challenges but also opportunities.

The Steering Committee is chaired by the Project Coordinator and membership includes the Principal Investigator for each beneficiary.

Pintail are responsible for organising the Steering Committee and taking the minutes.

4.2 Advisory Board

The Advisory Board will consist of 2-3 external advisors (in addition to the Independent Ethics Advisor appointed in WP19) that will be asked to advice the project on key matters. At the point of writing this Handbook, Advisors identified by partners were being considered by the Project Coordinator and will be recruited in due course.

4.3 Project Meetings

Monthly Teleconference: The whole consortium is invited to a monthly teleconference that will be held via Zoom; Pintail will organise this. This meeting is to occur from 11:00 – 12:30 (CET) on the second Wednesday of each month.

It will be chaired by the Project Coordinator and the agenda will include time to discuss any key issues and to hear a short update from each work package. The template slides for the WP update and a short reminder will be provided by Pintail to the WP leaders a week before each monthly meeting.

WP Meetings: WP Leaders are expected to meet at least monthly (online) with their work package, these meetings are to be organised by the WP leader.

General Assembly: this meeting will be held on a 6-monthly basis and will be hosted by partners on a rotating basis.

Minutes of all Monthly Teleconference and General Assembly meetings will be completed by Pintail, WP Meeting minutes need to be completed by each work package. All minutes are to be saved in the Teams Channel.

4.4 Communication with the Commission (HaDEA)

Contact between the project and the Commission is through the Project Coordinator, via our Project Advisor (PA) and Legal Officer (LO). The Project Advisor allocated to MENTBEST is Monica Ensini.

The Commission usually mandates a **single contact point**, to ensure the burden of communication on the PA is reasonable (they manage many projects).

Please do not contact the PA directly with questions or issues – allow us (Pintail /EAAD) to try to deal with these first, and/or to pass on the question to the PA.

4.5 Internal Communication Channels

A contact list of consortium members is available in the Teams Channel.

Two email distribution lists have been set up by Pintail, to be added or removed from these lists please contact ainslie.oconnor@pintailservices.com

- MENTBEST Consortium: mentbest@pintailservices.com
- MENTBEST Admin: mentbest-admin@pintailservices.com

For ease of identification of MENTBEST emails, partners are asked to include 'MENTBEST' at the beginning of emails about MENTBEST to partners.

An email dedicated to communications has also been set up by WP8 (UAM): dissemination.mentbest@uam.es, this is to be used for MENTBEST partners to contact WP8 but is also the externally facing email for contacting the project (see section 4.7 below).

4.6 Document Storage

All project documentation is to be centrally stored in the MENTBEST Teams Channel, for access please contact the Project Coordinator (EAAD) at katharina.schnitzspahn@eaad.net

4.7 External Communication Channels

The external email address to be used for MENTBEST communication and dissemination is dissemination.mentbest@uam.es

The main dissemination channels and tools will include: MENTBEST website, social media and a project blog. These will be expanded upon in the Communication and Dissemination Plan due in month 8, which will outline how and when all dissemination and communication activities will take place, including in relation to the Open Science Framework.

A key process in this regard will also be the check that information being communicated and disseminated is appropriate for public sharing and not sharing information confidential to the project or partners.

MENTBEST is establishing a Publication Committee and related Publication Policy. This section will also be updated when this commences.

4.8 Promotion of EU Flag and Statement

It is a requirement of the Grant Agreement that all communications about the project include the following statement and the EU emblem. It is also a requirement that any communication or dissemination activity uses factually accurate information and that HaDEA be informed beforehand about any activity that is expected to have a major media impact.

The statement below and emblems can be found online and in the Teams Channel.

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4.9 Templates

Standard branded templates provided in the Teams Channel include EU Deliverable Reports, agenda, meeting minutes, PowerPoint presentations and for public documents about the project.

5. Grant Reporting

5.1 Internal Reports

Pintail will seek an update on actual expenditure and resources used (days) every six months as a form of internal reporting to ensure the project is on track. This will NOT be shared with the Commission.

5.2 Deliverable Reports

Deliverable reports are a key mechanism through which the project evidences the outputs of the work to the Commission. See section 2.8 for information. The template is available in the Teams Channel. These reports are submitted to the Commission by Pintail via the portal and must be submitted in a timely manner.

Please note the release nature of the deliverable report, those with ‘public’ will be published by the Commission once they have been accepted.

5.3 Continuous Reporting

This is a requirement in this project, this is done by Pintail on behalf of the Project Coordinator.

This reporting is done within the EU Portal and keeps high level data on the project’s progress up to date: milestones, deliverables, risks, publishable summary (project summary, publications etc.), responses to critical risks, publications, communication activities and any Horizon Europe specific updates such as SME participation and gender.

5.4 Periodic Reporting (Reporting periods) and Final Report

There are four reporting periods in MENTBEST. The periodic reports include a technical and financial part. The purpose of these technical reports is to provide an overview of progress of the action as per the Grant Agreement and must be prepared using the template available in the Portal Periodic Reporting tool.

The financial part of the periodic report includes: - the financial statements (individual and consolidated; for all beneficiaries/affiliated entities) - the explanation on the use of resources (or detailed cost reporting table, if required) - the certificates on the financial statements (see section 6.6 below).

The reporting periods are as below, Pintail will remind partners and provide templates ahead of reports being due.

REPORTING					PAYMENT	
Period	**Start**	**Finish**	**Type**	**Deadline**	**Type**	**Deadline to Pay**
					Pre-financing	30 days from entry into force/10 days before starting date – whichever is the latest
1	M1	M18	Periodic Report	60 days after end of reporting period	Interim Payment	90 days from receiving periodic report
2	M19	M36	Periodic Report	60 days after end of reporting period	Interim Payment	90 days from receiving periodic report
3	M37	M54	Periodic Report	60 days after end of reporting period	Interim Payment	90 days from receiving periodic report
4	M55	M60	Periodic Report	60 days after end of reporting period	Final Payment	90 days from receiving periodic report

6. Finances

6.1 Pre-Financing

MENTBEST received 40% of the total estimated costs as a pre-financing payment, provided to each beneficiary pro rata to their total costs (see table above). Note that the Mutual Insurance Mechanism (MIM, see below) is deducted at a rate of 5% of total costs from the 40%. This means the pre-financing amount effectively totals 35% of the total estimated costs.

The pre-financing payment is provided by the Commission to the Project Coordinator (EAAD) who then transfers it to each beneficiary.

6.2 Mutual Insurance Mechanism and Interim Ceiling Cap

MENTBEST is subject to the Mutual Insurance Mechanism (MIM) which holds 5% of the total estimated project cost until the end of the project.

In addition, there is an interim ceiling cap of 90% in MENTBEST, meaning this is the limit of funds that the Commission will transfer via pre-financing and interim payments combined before the end of the project.

Note: the MIM is not included in the interim ceiling cap – this effectively means that 15% of the total project costs is the MINIMUM amount the Commission will hold back until the final report is approved at the end of the project.

6.3 Budget Flexibility (between beneficiaries and categories)

It is possible to shift budget allocations between cost categories and between partners. Small budget variations are to be expected, moving funding from one cost category to another is usually, within reason, acceptable. Major changes may need to be explained. Moving funding from one beneficiary to another is possible, if mutually agreed.

Note: If a budget shift = task shift, an amendment is required.

6.4 Interim and Final Payments

These payments are made (see table with schedule in section 5.4 above) to the Project Coordinator for distribution to the beneficiaries. It is important to note:

- The Commission will never pay more than the maximum grant amount, but it may pay less (e.g., costs are less than budgeted)
- 5% guarantee fund (MIM) held back until the final payment (*€348,798.88*)
- **Interim payment** is linked to the periodic reviews and submission of cost statements at M18, M36, M54
- Interim payments are capped at 90% of the maximum grant amount
- **Final payment** is linked to the fourth (and final) reporting period M60

6.5 Certificate on Financial Statements (CFS)

In MENTBEST any beneficiary with a requested EU contribution (total cost) of more than 430,000€ must provide a Certificate of Financial Statement (CFS) at the point of final payment with their final financial report. If the beneficiary does not expend more than 430,000€ (even if they had this allocation) then no CFS is required.

The cost of obtaining a CFS from a tax advisor can be claimed as a 'purchase cost'.

In MENTBEST, it is likely that a CFS will be required by: EAAD, NSRF, PCC, ERSI, GDF, CCHW, MSS, PT, SEERC, IMIM.

6.6 Eligible Costs

Full details regarding eligible costs are outlined in Article 6.

For a cost to be eligible, it must be expended:

- By the beneficiary
- Within the timeframe of the project (*some exceptions for expenditure in line with providing the final report*)

- For the purpose of the project
- Align to a cost category of the project (personnel, sub-contracting, purchase costs (*travel, equipment, and other goods, works and services*) and overheads)
- Be identifiable and verifiable (e.g. via an invoice of timesheet) and subject to normal accounting practices.

Project costs can be classified as 'Direct costs' or 'Indirect costs'.

6.6.1 Direct Costs

Direct Costs can be directly linked to implementation of the 'action' as described in the MENTBEST Grant Agreement. These are costs that would never have been incurred if the project was not implemented. For all costs,

There are three types of direct costs in MENTBEST: personnel, purchase costs and sub-contracting.

Personnel (Article 6.2) – there are three types of personnel costs:

- **A.1:** cost of a person employed (or equivalent) working full or part time on the project with an employment contract – here the full employment costs of that person can be claimed (e.g. salary, tax, health insurance). See Section 6.9 for more details on employment cost calculations.
- **A.2:** Costs for natural persons working under a direct contract other than an employment contract, here the cost must be based on the rate of payment to do the work and the person must have similar conditions to that of the employee.
- **A.3:** Costs for seconded persons by a third party against payment here the cost must be based on the rate of payment to do the work and the person must have similar conditions to that of the employee.

If you are unsure about the allocation of personnel costs, please refer to Article 6.2 for further details or ask Pintail.

Purchase Costs (Article 6.2) – there are three types of purchase costs:

Travel and subsistence

- Must be based on the actual costs (travel, accommodation, subsistence) and in line with the usual travel policy or procedures of the beneficiary.

Equipment

- There are no equipment costs in the MENTBEST estimated total costs.
- Should a beneficiary need to purchase equipment, please contact Pintail to discuss.

Other goods and services

- Costs of all other goods and services must be based on the actual amount expended.

Sub-Contracting Article (6.2)

For a sub-contract to be an eligible cost, ensure a contract is in place in advance, and that payment follows an invoice that details:

- Service rendered, Time spent, Cost per day, Person paid
- Demonstration that all relevant procurement rules were followed

Note: Partners cannot subcontract to one another, and all subcontracts should be mentioned in the Grant Agreement.

Further subcontracts can be entered in to, but there is a risk that they may be rejected when financial claims submitted at periodic reporting. Subcontracts can be added by amendment, with PO agreement.

6.6.2 Indirect Costs

Indirect Costs cannot be directly, or only linked to the 'action' as described in the MENTBEST Grant Agreement. Although these costs do not exist directly because of the project, the project may contribute to them, for example this could include organisational costs like building maintenance or insurance, often referred to as "overheads".

6.7 Ineligible Costs

All costs that do not been the 'eligible cost' criteria, a fuller list is provided in Article 6.3.

If a beneficiary declares costs that are ineligible, the Commission will reject them as costs and not provide the associated funding.

6.8 Timesheets

The days a person works on the project must be recorded (note this used to be hours but has changed in Horizon Europe). Hours can be rounded up or down to the nearest half day when reporting. There are two ways this can occur:

- Use **time records** (e.g., timesheets) on paper or in computer form to record all hours worked on the action. Timesheets must meet the requirements of Article 20 of the Grant Agreement (e.g., monthly signature by supervisor). Template is available from Pintail by request.
- **In Horizon Europe**: If you opt not to use timesheets for employees spending **100**% of their time on the grant, complete the **monthly declaration form**. Template is available from Pintail by request.

6.9 Calculating Personnel Costs

In Horizon Europe, the DAYS a person is working on the project must be recorded. The Commission states that a full-time workload is 215 days a year, this accounts for weekends and leave. A person working on this project cannot exceed 215 working days in the year, nor can they work more than 215 working days across EU grants (e.g. in this and other projects).

To calculate the daily rate of a person:

- Annual personnel costs of the person divided by 215 days

To calculate the cost of the person:

- Daily rate multiplied by the number of days (rounded up to down to half days as needed) worked

Parental leave can be claimed as a project cost, for more information refer to Article 6.2

6.10 Under – and Overspending

If a beneficiary spends less than budgeted, they will receive less than the amount budgeted.

Beneficiaries who spend less than their pre-financing will have to return the outstanding balance to EAAD.

If a beneficiary spends more than budgeted, they will receive the budgeted amount.

If there is some 'underspend' available after the project, it gets shared between all over-spenders, in proportion to their share of the total overspend. This process is outlined in the Consortium Agreement.

7. Amendments, Audits and Reviews

7.1 Amendment

An amendment to the Grant Agreement requires approval by the granting authority (HaDEA), this is an administrative process led by the Project Coordinator.

Amendments are needed to add or remove a beneficiary/affiliated entity/associated partner, in the event of a beneficiary change due to a partial take over, if there is a change of coordinator or coordinator bank account for payment or if changes to the description of the action (e.g., tasks, deliverables) is required. An amendment is also required in the event of an extension to the project, noting this is only approved in exceptional cases.

Advice of HaDEA is the following:

- Group together multiple changes into one amendment
- Request for amendment must include the reasons why and the appropriate supporting document
- Commission/Agency may request additional information
- An amendment enters into force on the day of the signature of the receiving part
- An amendment takes effect on the date agreed by the parties or, in the absence of such an agreement, on the date on which the amendment enters into force.

7.2 Scheduled Reviews

Three reviews are scheduled for MENTBEST, at M18, M36 and M54, these align to the reporting periods and are listed at 'remote'. Pintail will work with the Project Coordinator and notify beneficiaries of their role ahead of such reviews.

7.3 Record Keeping

In MENTBEST, all records must be kept for up to five (5) years post the end of the project. It is essential that all costs can be accounted for, e.g., via an invoice, contract, timesheet, payment order or similar. See Article 20 for further details.

7.4 Financial Audits

In MENTBEST, an audit by the Commission could occur up to two (2) years post the end of the project. The Commission may audit any partner, or the entire project, note that this is not a routine occurrence, it is partly random or could be triggered by unusual/suspicious activity. Following an audit, the Commission may take back some or all funding. An audit is a rigorous (one week+) process, on-site.

Following the rules minimises the chances of audit and facilitates a good result.

Key items for audit are personnel (and employment contracts, timesheets, tax records, etc.), subcontracts and (to a lesser extent) consumables and travel.

7.5 Additional Review Meetings

In MENTBEST, a review by the Commission could occur up to two (2) years post the end of the project. ***If requested*** by the EU Project Officer, a review would be a one-day event, with presentations on the project and on each WP (*a rehearsal day would precede for us to prepare together*)

- One/two project Monitors plus the Project Officer
- Reviewers read DoA, all deliverables and reports
- Occurs at a venue agreed by all (e.g. Brussels)
- Outcomes: Continue, Modify or Terminate