ACTNXT

Advanced **C**haracterization of
Technical components for
New Power-to-**X** **T**echnologies

RMP - Risk Management Plan
Deliverable D1.3

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Executive Summary

This Risk Management Plan (RMP) establishes the framework for identifying, assessing, and managing risks throughout the ACTNXT project. The plan outlines procedures for risk identification, analysis, response planning, and monitoring to ensure the successful development of all ACTNXT activities, as outlined in the Grant Agreement 101188263.

This Risk Management Plan is a living document and will be updated regularly throughout the project lifecycle to reflect the changing risk profiles and their related mitigation strategies.

1. Introduction

Purpose of the Risk Management Plan
This Risk Management Plan (RMP) provides a structured approach to identify, assess, and manage risks that could affect the ACTNXT project's objectives. The objectives of the RMP are to:

- Establish a consistent methodology for risk management
- Define roles and responsibilities for risk management activities
- Document identified risks and mitigation strategies
- Provide a framework for ongoing risk monitoring and control

This document ensures that all Project Partners are aligned in their approach to risk management by clearly describing the methodology to be used throughout the project. Therefore, the plan provides a process for recognising risks at all stages of the project lifecycle, from start to finish. The plan further delineates the allocation of responsibilities across project participants, explicitly identifying roles such as the Project Coordinator, Project Manager, and Work Package (WP) Leaders in the decision-making process related to risk identification and mitigation.
The goal of this plan is to maintain a comprehensive and up-to-date record of identified risks in a risk register that is accessible to all Project Partners. For each risk, the register details the description, potential impact on project objectives, WP responsibles, and mitigation strategies. Updates to the risk register and progress on risk mitigation are reviewed periodically, ensuring that project management has a dynamic and responsive approach. Finally, risk management is integrated into the broader project monitoring, ensuring there is an ongoing process of risk check-ups and monitoring.

Project Overview
ACTNXT aims to upgrade instrumentation at neutron- and synchrotron sources across Europe to enable knowledge development within Power-to-X (PtX) technologies. The project will develop specialised instrumentation for:

- Operando measurements of processes and flow inside PtX components
- Materials behaviour under hydrogen exposure
- Reliable and high-throughput investigation of novel materials
- Operando measurements of hazardous chemical reactions

The project will support Europe's climate neutrality goals by enhancing research infrastructure capabilities to advance PtX technologies, which are essential for replacing fossil fuels in applications that are difficult to electrify.

Relation to Other Project Documents
The Risk Management Plan complements other project management documents, namely the Data Management D1.2 and the SC meetings minutes D1.1 (all delivered at M6). In particular, D1.3 should be considered alongside the Data Management Plan D1.2, which describes the protocols and responsibilities relating to research data, ensuring compliance with FAIR principles and the relevant legal requirements. Both documents are designed to support solid project management, with risk management often linked to data protection, security, and quality assurance processes.
Additionally, the Risk Management Plan aligns with outcomes and actions recorded in Steering Committee (SC) meeting minutes, documented periodically (starting from M4). Decisions made in those meetings could lead to new or modified risk management actions, which are subsequently incorporated into the risk register and, where necessary, reflected in updates to this plan.

2. Risk Management Methodology

2.1 Risk Management Process

The ACTNXT project adopts a structured and iterative risk management process, built upon internationally recognised standards, to ensure the effective identification and management of risks that may affect the project's objectives. This process is designed to be proactive and transparent, involving all Project Partners and relevant stakeholders on a continuous basis throughout the project lifecycle.

The ACTNXT risk management process follows five key steps:

1. **Risk Identification**: Systematic identification of potential risks
2. **Risk Analysis**: Assessment of probability and impact
3. **Risk Response Planning**: Development of mitigation strategies
4. **Risk Implementation**: Implementing risk responses
5. **Risk Monitoring**: Ongoing tracking and updating of risks

The first step, the risk identification, involves looking at the internal and external project environment to find any potential risks that might be a bottleneck to reach project goals. This activity draws on project experience, available data, and expert judgement from Consortium Partners. Risks are identified through dedicated risk analysis, periodic reviews, and ongoing project monitoring. Following identification, **the second step** is the risk analysis, which is an assessment of each risk in terms of its likelihood of occurrence and the potential impact it could have on key project deliverables, resources, and timelines. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods are employed, as appropriate, to provide an evidence-based understanding of risk exposure. **In the third step**, the risk response planning, the Project Partners create tailored strategies to address the identified risks. For each risk, appropriate actions are proposed and documented. These might include eliminating the source of risk, reducing the likelihood or severity, transferring the risk to a third party, or accepting it if the potential impact is within tolerable limits. **Next**, in the implementation phase, the Project Partners are responsible for double-checking the planned responses, allocating resources, and ensuring that all mitigation and contingency actions are well executed. **The fifth** and final step, the risk monitoring, is the continuous tracking and reassessment of all risks and associated actions. New risks can emerge, and existing risks may evolve during the course of the project, necessitating regular updates to the risk register. The risk management process is closely integrated with the project's reporting and monitoring framework to guarantee timely decision-making. Periodic risk reviews are performed during project meetings, and ad hoc updates are made if major changes to the plan arise.

2.2 Risk Categories

Risks in ACTNXT are categorized as follows:

Technical Risks
These risks are associated with the core scientific and technological objectives of the project. For example, there may be failures to achieve targeted performance of instrumentation or prototypes. Unanticipated technical challenges can cause delays in the achievement of development milestones, while issues with the integration of different technological components may arise. To mitigate these

risks, close monitoring of technical progress, regular technical reviews, and maintaining flexibility to adapt the scientific approach are essential. These will be shown in Table 4, Section 4 of the deliverable.

Management Risks
This category covers potential issues in project coordination, reporting and administrative processes. Management risks may be delays in deliverable submission and reporting, inefficient communication among Consortium Partners, or insufficient monitoring of project progress. Additionally, changes in leadership or key personnel within the management team and WP Leaders can have adverse effects. Implementation of good project management practices, clear reporting instructions, and regular consortium meetings can help to mitigate these risks.

Resource Risks
Resource risks include the availability and adequacy of essential resources required for the project's activities. These risks may be insufficient allocation of staff or expertise, delays in recruitment or training of personnel, and inadequate budget or funding. Furthermore, delays in procurement or lack of key resources may jeopardize the work plan. Long-term resource planning and early identification of gapsare effective mitigation measures.

External Risks
External risks arise from factors outside of the direct control of the Project Consortium, which may impact project execution and outcomes. Such risks can come from changes in regulations or policies, new competing technologies or market shifts, or delays due to dependencies on external suppliers or data providers. Additionally, events such as pandemics or natural disasters might be considered too. Continuous monitoring of the external environment, and maintaining flexibility to adapt the work plan, if needed, are key.

2.3 Risk Identification

Risk Identification Methods
In ACTNXT, there are a few risk identification methods which will be used to identify risks early in the project. These include both structured and open-ended approaches, to ensure that all significant risks are captured early and throughout the project lifecycle.

Brainstorming sessions during Project meetings
Knowledge sharing sessions are held regularly during the bi-yearly Consortium meetings and the quarterly Steering Committee meetings, where Project Partners and WP leaders are encouraged to propose potential risks. This open forum allows everyone to share insights from both technical and project management points of view. Brainstorming is often the most effective during project kick-off, and at the beginning of each reporting period.

Interviews with technical specialists
Ad-hoc direct discussions can be organised with specialists, both from consortium partners and, when relevant, external experts. These interviews focus on project-specific technical challenges, such as operando measurements or hydrogen compatibility issues. This method helps to identify risks that may not be immediately visible to project managers.

Review of similar Projects and their challenges
Analysing the risk registers and final reports of prior EU projects in the field of energy instrumentation and PtX R&D gives a pragmatic overview of what risks typically occur. Insights are particularly drawn from lessons learned and mitigation actions that have or have not worked.

Risk Register Reviews
Project coordination team and WP leaders review the risk register at each Consortium Meeting and during each technical report (at M24 and M48). At each Consortium Meeting all WP leaders are asked to present updates based on a template where they will fill in the deliverables for the next period as well as relevant risks. This ensures that routine risks, such as delays in procurement or gaps in dissemination activities, are not overlooked.

Technical Documentation Review
Technical documentation for planned instrumentation developments is assessed in detail. This allows for early detection of feasibility, compatibility, or regulatory risks, especially in WPs related to hardware prototyping and beamline integration.

2.4 Risk Assessment

To evaluate and prioritise risks within ACTNXT, each identified risk is assessed based on the probability of occurrence and the potential impact on project objectives. This approach ensures that the most significant risks are identified, tracked, and managed throughout the project lifecycle. This step within the risk management methodology is carried out by a coordination team, with relevant inputs from each WP Leader (ref. Table 2 and 3).

Probability Scale
The probability scale refers to the likelihood that a particular risk will materialise during the course of the project. Although quantitative thresholds can be imposed, the standard approach is to define levels ranging from very low (rare occurrence) to very high (almost certain occurrence). Each risk is assessed and assigned a probability level, from 1 being very low to 5 being the highest.

Impact Scale
The impact scale measures the potential consequences of a risk if it materialises. For ACTNXT, the following qualitative impact levels are established:

Level 1 is “Very Low,” indicating a minimal effect on project objectives.
Level 2 is “Low,” which gives a minor effect on project objectives.
Level 3 is classified as “Medium,” a moderate effect that could affect the project objectives in a mild way.
Level 4 is “High,” indicating a significant effect on project objectives.
Level 5 is “Very High,” which gives a critical impact that threatens the overall success of the project.

Each identified risk is evaluated according to these criteria to determine its potential severity.

Risk Matrix
The risk matrix is a tool used to visualise and categorise risks by mapping their probability and impact scores. Risks are plotted within the matrix according to their assessed probability and impact levels, allowing the project team to distinguish between low, moderate, and high risks and to prioritise risk mitigation activities accordingly (Table 1).

Table 1: Risk Matrix

Impact / Probability	1 (Very low)	2 (Low)	3 (Medium)	4 (High)	5 (Very high)
5 (Very high)	5	10	15	20	25
4 (High)	4	8	12	16	20
3 (Medium)	3	6	9	12	15
2 (Low)	2	4	6	8	10
1 (Very low)	1	2	3	4	5

Where 1- 7 = Low risk (green), 8-14 = Moderate risk (yellow), 15-25 = High risk (red)

2.5 Risk Analysis

Based on the risk matrix, for each risk a **risk score** is calculated as: Risk Score = Probability × Impact. This straightforward calculation facilitates transparent discussion and prioritisation. All scoring and justifications are documented in the risk register, which will be shown below in Section 4 (the risk register is shown in Table 3).

Risk Prioritisation
Once scored, risks are categorised into three groups, based on their priority:

- **High Priority (15–25):**
  These risks require immediate attention and a concrete response plan. The project management team will allocate resources and regularly track these risks as well their mitigation plan, reporting their updates at each consortium meeting.
- **Medium Priority (8–14):**
  These risks are carefully monitored, with response plans developed as needed. Actions are documented, and risks are reviewed periodically to determine if mitigation needs adjustment or upgraded to a higher category.
- **Low Priority (1–7):**
  Low-priority risks are monitored on a routine basis, typically during quarterly project reviews. If new developments increase their probability or impact, they are reassessed and reprioritised accordingly.

This clear and structured approach ensures effective allocation of attention and resources and allows ACTNXT management to proactively address threats to project success.

2.6 Risk Response Strategy & Planning

Once the risks are identified, assessed and analysed with the aforementioned methodology, there is the need to know how to best react in case a risk does incur.
ACTNXT applies a clear and thought-through approach to risk response, which includes a strategy on how to react to risks and a plan to follow.

Response Strategy Selection:
The selection of a response strategy for each risk in ACTNXT will match the risk's calculated score and its assigned priority, as established during the risk assessment process. When considering different response options, the potential benefit of reducing the risk is always weighed against the required resources and effort. Therefore, strategies demanding substantial time or cost can only be justified

for risks classified as high priority. All planned actions need to align with the consortium's available human, technical, and financial resources. This is necessary to avoid unnecessary overcommitment or the allocation of unrealistic workloads. At the same time, all proposed solutions are assessed for technical feasibility. Only measures that are practically achievable with the project's existing knowledge and capacity will be implemented, while unproven or overly complex risk responses are subject to careful evaluation before any commitment is made.

Risk Response Strategies
In case a risk materialises, there are different strategies to cope with this:

1) Avoid
This response strategy is about avoiding the identified risk entirely by removing its root cause. Avoidance may require changing the project scope, objectives, or approach to prevent the risk from materialising. For example, a specific technical process could be replaced with a more reliable alternative, or a planned activity presenting an unacceptable risk might be excluded from the project.

2) Transfer
Transferring risk shifts the potential impact to a third party. This strategy does not eliminate the risk itself but reallocates the responsibility for its management and consequences. Examples include outsourcing complex activities to specialized subcontractors. This strategy is the least likely to be used in ACTNXT, as the other strategies are to be preferred.

3) Mitigate
This strategy seeks to reduce either the probability of a risk event occurring or the impact of the risk should it materialise, to a level deemed acceptable. Mitigation actions may involve technical measures (such as additional quality assurance processes), organizational adjustments (such as training to increase competency), or scheduling time buffers. The goal is to proactively minimise exposure to the risk within the boundaries of the project.

4) Accept
In certain situations, especially when the risk's potential impact is low or there are no feasible cost-effective measures for avoidance, transfer, or mitigation, the consortium may decide to accept the risk. Acceptance means acknowledging the possibility of occurrence without implementing specific countermeasures beyond risk monitoring. The risk should still be monitored to make sure it does not escalate.

5) Contingency
For certain significant risks, a contingency plan may be developed in advance. Contingency plans specify predefined actions to be taken if the risk materialises. This approach ensures that an immediate, pre-planned response can be implemented, reducing the risk's negative effects on project objectives. Examples of contingency actions include alternative resource allocation, adoption of backup technical solutions, or activation of alternative suppliers.

For significant risks, a combination of strategies may be implemented, and contingency solutions are prepared as a last option. In all cases, the chosen response strategy is documented and regularly reviewed as part of the ongoing risk management process.

Response Planning
Each risk response is formally documented in a risk register (for ACTNXT, please refer to Table 4 and 5). For transparency and effective follow-up, the response plan for each risk will clearly state the selected strategy, whether the team intends to avoid, transfer, mitigate, or accept the risk. The plan

will also describe the specific actions to be taken, such as adjusting schedules, seeking alternative suppliers, performing additional tests, or bringing in external experts as required. Responsibility for each action is assigned to designated Project Partners to ensure clear ownership of all risk responses.

The response plan specifies the expected timeline, indicating both the start and completion date for each mitigation or response action, and this schedule is always aligned with the relevant project milestones. Any necessary budget allocations, personnel assignments, equipment, or external support needed to implement the response are identified in advance. Moreover, success criteria are defined in measurable terms, providing concrete indicators or milestones that demonstrate when a risk has been adequately managed or can be considered closed. In cases where the primary mitigation plan might prove insufficient, a contingency plan is also included, with alternative actions to follow in case the mitigation plan was not enough.

By formally documenting each response, ACTNXT ensures that risk management is not only reported but also practical, allowing for continued progress even in the presence of uncertainty.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

To manage risks appropriately within ACTNXT it is important to assign clear and defined roles and responsibilities across the consortium. By establishing a clear framework, the RMP ensures that all aspects of the risk management process are well addressed, from early identification to ongoing monitoring and reporting of risks.

The following tables 2 and 3 outline the key roles involved in the risk management processes, together with their main responsibilities regarding risk identification, assessment, mitigation, and reporting. This allocation of duties facilitates proactive risk handling, transparency, and accountability, ensuring that risks are managed at appropriate levels. Besides the Project Coordinator, WP leaders, Partners and the Steering Committee, there is also a Risk Manager, specifically elected to handle risks. The Risk Manager is selected by the project's Steering Committee during the first SC meeting at M6. The Risk Manager is chosen from among the key personnel of the project coordinator (DTI) due to their central role and oversight responsibilities. However, the Steering Committee may also nominate a qualified individual from another partner organization, if specific expertise or capacity is required.

Table 2: Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Project Coordinator	Overall responsibility for risk management
Risk Manager	Day-to-day management of risk processes
WP Leaders	Identification and management of WP-specific risks
Steering Committee	Approval of RMP, appointment of the Risk Manager, technical risk assessment on a need basis
Consortium Partners	Risk identification and implementation of mitigation measures

The second table adds details on the specific risk management activities, identifying the parties responsible and the frequency of each activity. Regular and periodic execution of these activities ensures that risk management is a continuous process throughout the project lifecycle.

Table 3: Risk activities & frequency

Activity	Responsibility	Frequency
Risk Identification	All Consortium Partners	Every 6 months
Risk Assessment	Risk Manager, WP Leaders	At each Consortium meeting (every 6 months)
Risk Response Planning	Risk Manager, WP Leaders	Every 6 months
Risk Monitoring	All Consortium Partners	On a need basis i.e. monitor technical risks while testing
Risk Register Updates	Risk Manager	At each Consortium Meeting (every 6 months)
Risk Reporting	Project Coordinator	At each Consortium Meeting and Reporting Period (every 6 months and at M24 and M48)

4. Risk Register

Following the risk management methodology, from risk assessment to defining the roles and responsibilities within the ACTNXT consortium, we now present the project's risk register. This register provides an overview of all identified project risks, together with their assessed probability and impact, overall risk score, assigned priority, and the planned mitigation measures. The risk register is a living document and will be updated regularly as the project progresses and if new risks are identified, or the existing ones evolve.

Current Project Risks

The following table presents the key risks identified for the ACTNXT project, based on the information provided in the Grant Agreement, which reflects the status at M6 of the project.

Table 4: ACTNXT Risk Register

Risk No.	Description	WP No.	Proba-bility (1-5)	Impact (1-5)	Risk Score	Proposed mitigation measures
1	Poor project management (i.e. reporting problems)	WP1	2	4	8	Regular review meetings between WP Leaders; Standardized reporting templates; Clear deadlines from Coordination team
2	Shortcoming of ressources	WPs 1,2,3,4, 5,6,7	3	4	12	Reallocation of resources with focus on overall project budget and goals; Immediate reporting of resource shortages to project management; Periodic resource reviews
3	Cost of instrumentation exceeds budget	WPs 2,3,4,5	3	5	15	Detailed examination and validation of purchase requirements; Negotiation of pricing by purchasing specialists; Phased procurement approach
4	Unavailability of neutron and synchrotron instruments for validation experiments	WPs 2,3,4,5	3	5	15	Detailed planning of beamtime access needs established at outset of the project, via i.e. long-term Proposals (several days of beamtime on different instruments at a selection of Ris); Alternative facilities identified
5	Desired hydrogen pressure and temperature not feasible for RI measurements	WP3	3	4	12	Mapping of requirements; Discussions with leading experts on possibilities; Development of alternative measurement approaches

6	Use case for a particular technique not found	WP4	2	4	8	Use case developed together with instrument responsibles and multiple RTOs; Early engagement among involved parties
7	Sample preparation and pre-characterization not possible	WP4	3	4	12	Develop multiple use cases on one instrument from multiple RTOs; Establish collaboration with specialized sample producers
8	Glovebox materials are incompatible with neutron radiation environments	WP5	3	4	12	Use material knowledge at RIs through testing of materials; Consult with radiation safety experts; Develop specialized materials or shielding
9	AI tool does not produce stable results for all instrument types	WP6	3	3	9	Exploration of different ML libraries; Development of large simulation datasets for training of more challenging instrument types; Prioritization of most critical instrument types
10	Insufficient reach of dissemination and communication efforts	WP7	2	3	6	Utilise connections into relevant clusters and networks; Develop targeted communication strategy; Engage with industry associations and platforms

To supplement the risk register, a Risk Monitoring Plan has been made for ACTNXT (Table 5 below). For each identified risk, the table outlines a proposed monitoring method, with its frequency and the related key risk indicators that will be tracked. In addition, clear trigger points for action are defined, specifying the thresholds or events that require immediate response. The monitoring period for each risk is also indicated, ensuring a continuous overview throughout the project lifecycle.

Table 5: ACTNXT Risk Monitoring Plan

Risk N	Monitoring Method	Frequency	Key Risk Indicators	Trigger Points for Action	Monitoring Period
1	Project management review	Monthly	Delayed reports, missed deadlines	>2 delayed deliverables	M1-M48
2	Resource utilisation reports	Quarterly	Resource consumption vs. plan	>15% deviation from plan	M12-M48
3	Budget tracking	Twice a year and on a need basis	Actual vs. planned expenditure	> 20% deviation from budgeted costs	M1-M48
4	Beamtime allocation tracking	Twice a year	Secured vs. required beamtime	<80% of required beamtime secured 3 months in advance	M24-M48
5	Technical feasibility assessment	At design milestones	Technical parameters achieved	Pressure/temperature <80% of target	M24-M48
6	Use case development progress	On a need basis	Number of viable use cases	<2 viable use cases per technique	M8-M48

7	Sample preparation success rate	On a need basis	Successfully prepared samples	No saples identified for one of the technical WPs, 6 months before commissioning	M12-M48
8	Material compatibility testing	At design milestones	Test results	Failed compatibility tests	M24-M48
9	AI performance metrics	On a need basis	Accuracy, stability	High variability, leading to failed statistical tests	M12-M48
10	Communication KPI tracking	Quarterly	Engagement metrics	<80% of target audience reached	M1-M48

5. Risk Monitoring and Control

Risk monitoring and control is an ongoing process throughout the lifetime of ACTNXT. The purpose is to ensure early detection of new risks, to track changes in the already identified risks, and to verify that mitigation actions are both timely and effective. The aim is to maintain a preventative and transparent approach to risk management, so that project challenges can be addressed before they develop into significant issues.

Risk Review Meetings
Regular risk review meetings are at the core of the monitoring process. The Project Management Team will discuss and review the risk register every 6 months, with special attention to high-priority risks and the progress of mitigation actions. In these meetings, new risks may be raised and existing entries reassessed. In addition, risk management is a fixed agenda point at each bi-annual consortium meeting, where all partners have the opportunity to provide input, raise new concerns, and review project-related risks that could affect their activities. This way, risk management becomes a shared responsibility across the whole consortium, promoting openness and collective ownership.

Risk Status Reporting
Risk status will be formally communicated through established project reporting on the EU Portal. Each progress report prepared by the Project Management Team will include a summary of current risks status, recent changes, and any new or emerging risks. In the progress reports to the European Commission, a section is allocated to risk management, detailing how significant risks have been addressed and what mitigation steps are ongoing or planned. Furthermore, at each project review, in M24 and M48, relevant risks are revisited to ensure alignment between risk management and project deliverables. This continuous reporting ensures that both the consortium and external stakeholders have an up-to-date and accurate view of the project's risk management.

Risk Register Updates
The risk register (ref. Table 4) is maintained as a living document. It will be updated whenever a new risk is identified, when the status of an existing risk changes, or upon completion of any mitigation or response actions. Updates are also made at least every 6 months, in connection with the regular meetings and reporting cycles. Through this continuous updating, the risk register is a reliable and updated documentation for decision-making and proactive project steering. Revisions to the risk register are communicated to all relevant partners, ensuring transparency and accountability within the consortium.

6. Conclusion

In summary, this Risk Management Plan provides the ACTNXT consortium with a practical framework for the identification, assessment, and assessment of risks throughout the project's lifetime. By establishing clear procedures, responsibilities, and documentation practices, the plan ensures that all Project Partners have a risk methodology to follow, and that effective risk management is ensured.With the implementation of the RMP, ACTNXT maintains a continuous process for monitoring and controlling risks, enabling the consortium to detect issues early, react quickly, and adapt to changes as the project progresses. The risk register, as a living document, remains central to this process. It ensures that every partner has access to up-to-date information on potential challenges and reacts to them accordingly. With regular review meetings, continuous reporting, and a clear strategy to manage risks, the ACTNXT consortium has the right tools to manage risks and turn them into opportunities.

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