VIRTUAL VISITS FOR ACEF AND ASIGQ PROCESSES
Guidelines and procedures

1. Basic Guidelines

✓ *Platform*

The platform for *online* sessions should be robust, easy to use and have a waiting room (in principle, Zoom will be used).

Access to the sessions will be made upon prior accreditation, and the credentials will be distributed by the session host (in principle, the GP-Project Coordinator).

Confidentiality and data security issues should be ensured (the A3ES Data Officer will provide the necessary technical support).

✓ *Preparation of participants*

Project coordinators and members of the External Assessment Team (EAT) will receive adequate preparation in the technical and practical aspects involved in the virtual visits.

✓ *Procedure Manual*

Clear and detailed instructions will be adopted on the organization of virtual visits, both for the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and for the members of the EAT.

✓ *Adaptation of the programme*

The programme of the visit will be adapted to the new reality of the virtual environment, also considering the size and specificities of the institution.

✓ *No recording*

There should be no recording of the online sessions held during the virtual visit.

2. Organization of sessions

✓ *Duration*

Sessions should have a limited duration (not exceeding, in principle, 75 minutes), with intervals between sessions (15 to 30 minutes, for breaks and discussion among the members of the EAT) and should not amount to more than half a day of visit.

✓ *Number of participants*

The number of elements in each meeting should be limited (in principle, up to 8 participants, but never more than 10, in addition to the members of the EAT).

✓ *Operation*

The rules for discussion must be clear and defined in advance, in particular:

- Discussions should be carefully prepared (differentiating what will be discussed and what can be clarified by prior request for additional information).
- The EAT member acting as moderator in each session, and their replacement in the event of a connection failure, should be defined in advance.

- The initial part of the sessions, for the presentation of the EAT members and framing of the meeting, should be very brief.
- Participants should always have their cameras on, but the microphones turned off when they are not speaking.

✓ *Additional information*

The EAT may request that the HEI provide additional information. For this purpose, additional tools may be used (e.g. communication by e-mail, sending videos, ...).

Requests for additional information will always be mediated by the Project Coordinator.

If questions remain after a virtual session, an additional session can be scheduled.

✓ *Technical aspects*

The session host on the Zoom platform should provide a waiting room to facilitate the timely entry of participants.

✓ *Privacy and trust*

A3ES and the HEI are committed to guaranteeing, concerning their respective participants, the privacy of their participation in the online sessions.

Both the HEI and the members of the EAT must have confidence in the procedures adopted.

3. **Procedures on the platform for the preparation of sessions**

✓ The timing of the virtual visits is defined by A3ES, in conjunction with the EAT and the HEI.

✓ The EAT Chair, after consulting with the other members, defines a specific programme for the visit, by adapting the standard programme to the characteristics of the HEI and the experience acquired with the use of the communication platform.

✓ The Project Coordinator communicates the program to the HEI at least three weeks in advance.

✓ The HEI, within a maximum period of two weeks, defines the participants in each session, indicating, for each one, their e-mail address, telephone number and a brief curricular note (one paragraph) that indicates the condition in which they participate in the session.

✓ The EAT validates the participants' list and may request from the HEI any corrections for inadequacy to the established standards.

✓ The Project Coordinator creates the sessions on the Zoom platform and, at least three days in advance, sends to each participant, in an individual email, the invitation with the link to access the meeting, the date, time and duration of the session, and information on the practical aspects to be considered for accessing and participating in the session.

4. Procedures for holding the sessions

✓ The sessions will be organized with a waiting room, where the message "Please wait, the meeting host will let you in soon" appears. This page should be kept open until the authorization to enter the meeting room, because the host, in case of any delay or unforeseen event, can send messages that will be shown on the page.

✓ A breakout room will also be created for the EAT meeting.

✓ The procedures for entering the meeting are described in the *Zoom User Manual from the perspective of a participant in a Virtual Visit* (annex), which contains practical guidance on the use of the Zoom platform.

✓ Participants should have their workspace and the ability to enter the meeting autonomously, through an individual device with a properly functioning camera and microphone, and with a stable internet connection.

✓ During the sessions, participants should be assured of the privacy of their participation.

✓ All attendees should keep the camera on at all times and remain on the screen throughout the meeting. They should, however, keep the microphone turned off, except when they wish to intervene.

✓ The recording of meetings by A3ES, the HEI or any of the participants is not allowed.

✓ It is recommended to use headphones during the meeting to reduce background noise and ensure meeting privacy.

✓ It is also recommended that participants pre-install the "*Zoom Client for Meetings*" application available in the Zoom Download Center if they have not participated in Zoom meetings before (if they have already participated in a meeting, the application has been automatically installed).