

**XS-ABILITY**

Accessing hard-to-reach areas with Advanced and Breakthrough  
Innovation for reLIable In-situ characterization of a facility

## Deliverable 1.1

### Project management handbook with templates & guide

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	5
LIST OF FIGURES .....	5
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS .....	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	7
Executive Factsheet .....	7
Executive summary .....	7
KEY WORDS .....	8
1. INTRODUCTION .....	9
1.1. What is this project handbook meant for? .....	9
1.2. What is this project handbook not meant for? .....	9
1.3. Who is concerned by this project handbook? .....	10
1.4. How is this project handbook updated? .....	10
2. PROJECT OVERVIEW .....	11
2.1. Synopsis of the project .....	11
2.2. Participating institutions .....	12
2.3. Work Plan .....	13
2.4. Program Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) .....	14
2.5. Project deliverables .....	15
2.6. Project milestones .....	17
3. CONSORTIUM PROCEDURES .....	18
3.1. Management .....	18

3.2.	Schedule management .....	19
3.3.	Decision and management structure .....	20
3.4.	Project Management Tool (Project Netboard – PNB) .....	26
3.5.	Issue management.....	26
4.	AMENDMENTS TO THE GRANT AGREEMENT .....	28
4.1.	Who can request an amendment to the GA?.....	28
4.2.	When can an amendment be requested? .....	28
4.3.	When is an amendment necessary?.....	28
4.4.	When is an amendment NOT necessary? .....	29
5.	BUDGET .....	30
5.1.	Project Budget .....	30
5.2.	Payment handling .....	31
5.3.	Budget and cost management.....	33
6.	RISK MANAGEMENT.....	35
7.	PROJECT WEBSITE .....	36
7.1.	Overview of the project website .....	36
7.2.	Web portal administration and access .....	36
8.	COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES .....	37
8.1.	Promoting the action and its results.....	37
8.2.	Visibility of the EU contribution.....	37
8.3.	Dissemination .....	38
8.4.	External communication and dissemination .....	39
9.	PROJECT COMMUNICATION .....	41

9.1.	E-mails and Mailing lists.....	41
9.2.	Conference calls.....	42
9.3.	Meetings .....	42
9.4.	Digital communication tools.....	42
10.	DATA AND PUBLICATIONS .....	44
10.1.	Data Management Plan .....	44
10.2.	Publications.....	44
11.	QUALITY PLAN.....	46
11.1.	Internal Project Reporting .....	46
11.2.	Deliverables.....	47
11.3.	EC project Progress Reporting .....	48
11.4.	EC periodic Financial reporting.....	49
	Reporting – Financial Statements (FS).....	49
	Preparation .....	51
11.5.	EC final reporting .....	52
12.	CONCLUSIONS.....	53

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 : List of expected deliverables.....	15
Table 2: List of MS for the XS-ABILITY project. ....	17
Table 3: List of internal meetings.....	23
Table 4: List of XS-ABILITY project General Assembly members.....	23
Table 5: List of XS-ABILITY project Executive Board members .....	24
Table 6: timeline for the preparation of the PR. ....	48

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: GANTT of the XS-ABILITY project (initial version).....	14
Figure 2 : PERT of the XS-ABILITY project .....	15
Figure 3: Schematic of the management structure for the XS-ABILITY project .....	20
Figure 4 : Validation process for the deliverables. ....	47

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
AB	Advisory Board
AP	Associated Partner
CA	Consortium Agreement
DoA	Description of the Action
EB	Executive Board
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GA	Grant Agreement
PC	Project Coordinator
PGA	Project General Assembly
PM	Project Manager
PR	Progress Report
TK	Task
WP	Work Package
WPL	Work Package Leader

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Executive Factsheet

Who should read this deliverable? Who are the stakeholders concerned by this deliverables?	Why should they read this deliverable? What will they learn from this deliverable?	Which part of the content is most relevant for them?
All Partners	To understand better how the project is going to unfold and the role of each governing body	Consortium procedure

### Executive summary

The project Handbook describes the management and quality control procedures of the project. These procedures have been established to facilitate cooperation within the Consortium and assure the quality of the work carried out and adherence to the requirements of the Grant Agreement. This document serves as a handbook, providing a set of practical guidelines to the participants of the project.

The guidelines summarise the working procedures and rules for the Consortium partners, defining document templates, the deliverable review process, means of communication and control throughout the project, periodic reporting and reviews, and dissemination and exploitation. The recommendations it contains, if used consistently, will reduce the project administrative burden and ease the cooperative work of the partners, and it is therefore crucial for the overall success of the project.

This document complements the contractual documents that the partners should know and have access to, namely the Grant Agreement (GA) and its annexes, the Consortium Agreement (CA), and the various EC guidelines.

The terms and provisions of the Grant Agreement, and its annexes, and the Consortium Agreement will prevail in the event of any inconsistency with recommendations and guidelines defined in the present document.

Non-compliance with the terms and provisions of the Grant Agreement can lead to actions against Defaulting Parties up to and including audit, recovery of EU financial contribution and exclusion from the Consortium.

## KEY WORDS

Project Management Guidelines; Management of project; Coordination; Organisation ; Guidelines



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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The XS-ABILITY Handbook is the main planning document; it describes how major aspects of the project are managed, monitored, and controlled. It is intended to provide guidance and direction for specific management, planning, and control activities such as schedule, cost, risk, communication, quality.

The focus of this document is to describe the approaches being taken in the project to manage the various work packages, share and store documents, communicate among consortium members, control the quality of project deliverables, identify and mitigate risks associated with the project.

More precisely, the handbook clearly defines roles, responsibilities, processes and activities; increases probability that projects will complete on-time, within budget, and with high degree of quality; ensures understanding of what was agreed upon; helps project teams identify and plan for how project activities will be managed (budget, quality, schedule, etc.).

### 1.1. What is this project handbook meant for?

- ➔ Support all participants in the XS-ABILITY project in achieving an efficient scientific and technical contribution to the project while complying with the administrative, legal and financial framework of EU funding and good management practice.
- ➔ Collect and make available a management tool Project Netboard (PNB), project documentation templates, and guidelines.

### 1.2. What is this project handbook not meant for?

This Project Handbook does not provide any supplementary legal constraints to the Grant Agreement (GA), the Consortium Agreement (CA) and their annexes.

### **1.3. Who is concerned by this project handbook?**

All actors in the XS-ABILITY project shall read and understand the contents of this Project Handbook and namely:

- The productive staff members (scientists and technicians) of each participating institution involved in the XS-ABILITY project;
- The administrative and financial staff members of each participating institution.

### **1.4. How is this project handbook updated?**

This Project Handbook shall be updated whenever:

- The Consortium Agreement is modified;
- The Description of Action (DoA) is modified;
- The minimal set of tools, models, protocols and guidelines prove to be inadequate.

**Changes to the Project Handbook shall be notified to all participants in the minutes of the meeting of the General Assembly having made the relevant decision and the new version of the Project Handbook shall be amended within 2 months following the decision.**

## 2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

### 2.1. Synopsis of the project

<b>Project full title:</b>	Accessing hard-to-reach areas with Advanced and Breakthrough Innovation for reLIable In-situ characterization of a faciliTY
<b>Grant Agreement Reference Number:</b>	101166392
<b>Starting Date:</b>	01/10/2024
<b>Ending Date:</b>	36 months
<b>Maximum Grant Amount:</b>	1 962 507.85€
<b>Budget:</b>	3 563 595€
<b>Abstract of the XS-ABILITY project</b>	
<p>The XS-ABILITY project aims to develop advanced robotic solutions by embedding various types of sensors to address remaining challenges in D&amp;D as remote and mobile investigation of hard-to-access areas and difficult-to-measure radionuclides characterization, in innovative, safe and cost-effective ways. The project innovations are related to nuclear instrumentation (accurate and compact sensors), their integration onto robotic platforms as well as Data-driven (through IA algorithms) robot fleet management by considering accuracy, compactness, automation, and cost-efficient aspects. To achieve this goal, the consortium will develop all the necessary subcomponents. The demonstration will be achieved by integrating all the XS-ABILITY developments and testing (mainly in indoor environment) throughout use cases scenarios on real D&amp;D facilities to assess in-situ performances and to acquire data in real experimental conditions.</p> <p>The consortium behind XS-ABILITY is a unique combination of cross-functional experts from nuclear instrumentation, robotic and artificial intelligence (AI) fields. It consists of 8 partners from 7 countries, including 4 RTO (CEA, IFE, VTT, SCK), 2 SME (CAEN, FLY), 1 industrial company (SIGM) and 1 association (DEV) representative of the whole value chain. Workshops with stakeholders will be organized in order to guide the XS-ABILITY consortium during the project's</p>	

main steps. The innovative solutions provided by the project will be exploited in Dismantling and Decommissioning, Nuclear Power Plan Monitoring & Maintenance market, sensor and CBRN-E defense market. The enhanced knowledge generated will be disseminated to all these stakeholders according to the D&E&C measures defined. Furthermore, on the basis of the project demonstrations, guidelines covering multi-robot systems behavior in indoor environment, data collection protocols as well as best practice harmonization will be developed showing how to effectively deploy in real D&D scenarios.

### Objectives of XS-ABILITY

XS-ABILITY aims to:

- Develop specific nuclear instrumentation solutions and sensors to be embedded on wheeled and legged UGV, and UAV.
- Integrate various sensors into robots (UGV and UAV) to establish reliable and comprehensive perception capabilities, ensuring high mobility and data accuracy in real-world dismantling site conditions.
- Achieve robust autonomous navigation for robots in intricate and dynamic environments.
- Develop algorithms that promote effective coordination and collaboration among multiple robots. Including ensuring seamless communication, information sharing and cooperative task completion
- Develop AI-based algorithms and methodologies for accurate 3D scene reconstruction that ease the situational analysis for humans and AI.
- Integrate and demonstrate the potential of developed technologies in real D&D facility.

## 2.2. Participating institutions

The organization of the XS-ABILITY project will be structured, according to the expertise in collaborative projects, number of participants and the complexity of the work plan.

Aims of this structure are:

- To ensure the achievement of the project objectives and milestones,
- And the deliverables to be provided on time,
- The decision-making process and communication to be taken in place.

Beneficiary	PIC	Full Name	Country
CEA	999992401	COMMISSARIAT A L'ENERGIE ATOMIQUE ET AUX ENERGIES ALTERNATIVES	FR
VTT	932760440	TEKNOLOGIAN TUTKIMUSKESKUS VTT OY	FI
CAEN	973290338	COSTRUZIONI APPARECCHIATURE ELETTRONICHE NUCLEARI CAEN SPA	IT
SCK CEN	999986775	STUDIECENTRUM VOOR KERNENERGIE / CENTRE D'ETUDE DE L'ENERGIE NUCLEAIRE	BE
SIGMA	902256074	SIGMA INGEGNERIA SRL	IT
DEVELOPIA	887539137	FUNDACION DEVELOPIA	ES
Associated Partner	PIC	Full Name	Country
IFE	999455603	INSTITUTT FOR ENERGITEKNIKK	NO
FLY	941017565	FLYABILITY SA	CH

The management structure will be executed according to the CA, signed and approved after the GA and the kick off meeting, establishing the responsibilities and rights of the partners.

### 2.3. Work Plan

The XS-ABILITY workplan (Generalized Activity Normalization Time Table - GANTT) is reported here below.

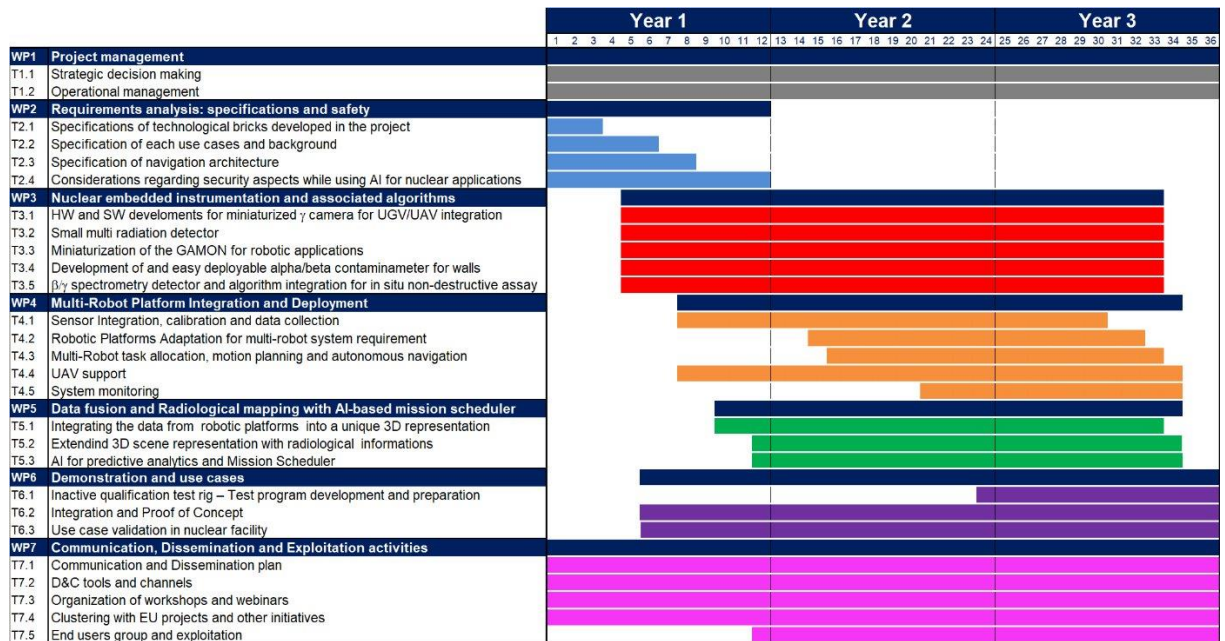


Figure 1: GANTT of the XS-ABILITY project (initial version)

## 2.4. Program Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT)

To meet the goals and the requested impacts, the XS-ABILITY project consists of seven work packages: five concern technical developments, two are dedicated to the management and dissemination/exploitation/communication activities. These work packages cover a project time of 36 months.

A schematic representation of the interactions among the work packages and their main tasks is given here, by the PERT (Project Evaluation and Review Technique) diagram. This diagram of the work plan of the project will be used as a reference for the consortium for the internal review of the strategy at milestones, but also for the assessment of the impacts.

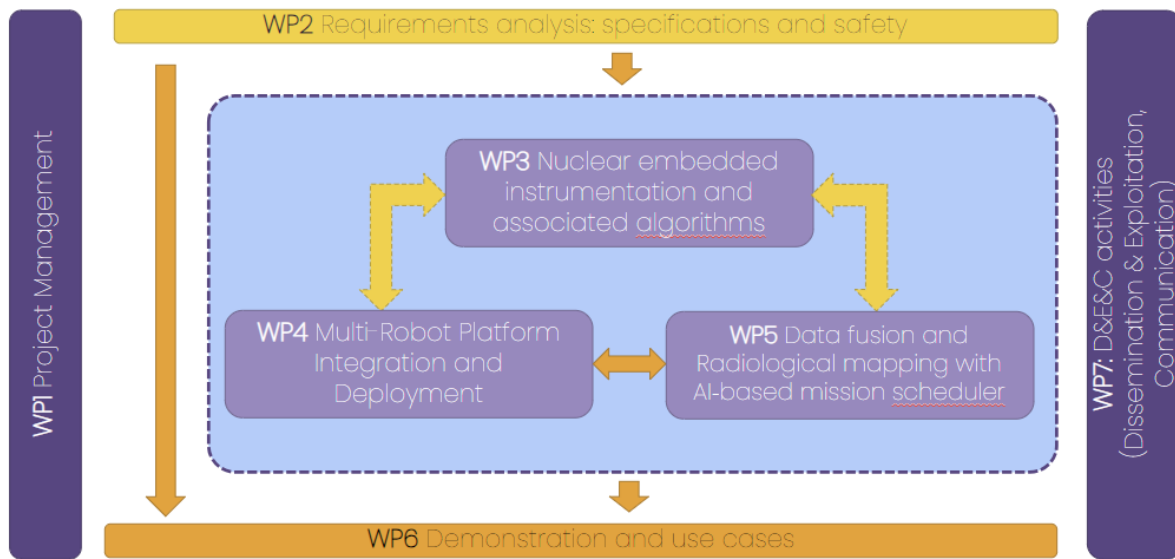


Figure 2 : PERT of the XS-ABILITY project

## 2.5. Project deliverables

**24** deliverables are foreseen in the work plan, as summarized in the table below:

Table 1 : List of expected deliverables.

No	Deliverable Name	Lead Beneficiary	Type	Diss. Level	Due Date
D1.1	Project management handbook with templates & guide	CEA	R	PU	3
D1.2	Data Management Plan	CEA	DMP	PU	3
D2.1	Specifications of technological bricks	CAEN	R	PU	3
D2.2	Use cases and demonstration specifications	CEA	R	PU	6
D2.3	Specifications of navigation architecture	CEA	R	SEN	8
D2.4	Report on safety aspects	IFE	R	SEN	12
D3.1	Report on the design of all radiological sensors and their integration	CEA	R	SEN	10

D3.2	Intermediate term report on ongoing radiological sensor development and results of the first performance testing	CEA	R	SEN	22
D3.3	Radiologic devices prototype ready for deployment	CAEN	OTH	PU	31
D3.4	Report on detector final design, performance tests and characterization of all radiological sensors	CEA	R	SEN	33
D4.1	3D CAD models of the hardware components. ROS-based multi-sensor system integration software package for robotic platforms.	IFE	OTH	PU	32
D4.2	ROS-based software package for integrating multi-robot platforms (including communication protocols).	SIGM	OTH	PU	32
D4.3	ROS-based software packages for multi-robot task allocation, motion planning, and autonomous navigation.	IFE	OTH	PU	34
D4.4	SDK support for Elios 3 UAV with detailed user manual. ROS-based software packages for UAV's autonomous take-off and landing from UGV.	FLY	OTH	SEN	34
D4.5	Real-time monitoring system for multi-Robot system status with predictive performance analysis and operational dashboard.	VTT	OTH	SEN	34
D4.6	Final report on robotic platform technical developments	IFE	R	SEN	34
D5.1	Software package for 3D scene reconstruction from multi-robot sensor data	VTT	OTH	SEN	33
D5.2	Report on 3D scene reconstruction including radiological information	CEA	R	PU	34
D5.3	Enhanced Elios 3 Capabilities and Autonomous TOL System	FLY	R	PU	34
D6.1	Report on qualification and integration of investigation robots' operational performances with embedded nuclear sensors during final tests.	CEA	R	SEN	36
D6.2	Report on use case validation in nuclear facility	SCK	R	PU	36
D7.1	Dissemination and Communication Plans	DEV	R	PU	2

D7.2	Exploitation plan and IPR management updates for the EC	DEV	R	SEN	34
D7.3	Clustering with EU projects, end-users groups and other initiatives	DEV	R	PU	36

## 2.6. Project milestones

For a correct tracking of progress, the XS-ABILITY project adopts a work plan with **8** Milestones (MS). Table here below resumes the list of MS.

N°	Name	WP	Date
<b>MS1</b>	Use case specifications defined	WP2	6
<b>MS2</b>	Design readiness of the integrable sensors	WP3	8
<b>MS3</b>	Radiological sensors available for deployment.	WP3	30
<b>MS4</b>	Prototypes of the different radiological sensors embedded on their respective robotic platforms	WP3/4	30
<b>MS5</b>	Final tests in simulated active environment	WP3/4/5	30
<b>MS6</b>	Software and hardware adaptations completed for all robotic platforms	WP4	32
<b>MS7</b>	Functional 3D scene reconstruction	WP5	34
<b>MS8</b>	Final demonstration is made in real D&D facility	WP6	35

*Table 2: List of MS for the XS-ABILITY project.*

## 3. CONSORTIUM PROCEDURES

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### 3.1. Management

Day-to-day scientific and management decisions are taken by the PC. Strategic decisions and major technical and operational decisions (any reschedule of deliverables, milestones, tasks, effort...) are taken by the General Assembly, which has the highest decision-making responsibility and policy setting power.

The General Assembly shall not deliberate and decide validly if no more than 1/3 of partners are present or represented by proxy (quorum). Each member shall have one vote. Defaulting parties may not vote. In case of conflict resolution voting, the absolute majority is required. The PC mediates and participates in all important decision.

Any decision may also be taken without a meeting if the PC circulates to all members a written document which is then signed by the defined majority of members. Such document shall include the deadline for responses. Decisions will only be binding once the notification has been sent to all members.

The Associated partners are excluded from voting and vetoing on the following decisions of the General Assembly and therefore are not counted towards any respective quorum:

- Financial changes to the Consortium Plan
- Distribution of EU contribution among the Beneficiaries
- Proposals for Changes to Annex 2 of the Grant Agreement to be agreed by the Granting Authority
- Decisions related to Section 7.1.4 of the Consortium Agreement.

A member who can show that its own work, time for performance, costs, liabilities, intellectual property rights or other legitimate interests would be severely affected by a decision of the General Assembly may exercise a veto with respect to the corresponding decision or relevant part of the decision. When the decision is foreseen on the original agenda, a member may veto such a decision during the meeting only. When a decision has been taken on a new item added

to the agenda before or during the meeting, a member may veto such decision during the meeting and within 15 days after the draft minutes of the meeting are sent. In case of exercise of veto, the members shall make every effort to resolve the matter which occasioned the veto to the general satisfaction of all members. A party may not veto decisions relating to its identification as a defaulting party. The defaulting party may not veto decisions relating to its participation and termination in the consortium or the consequences of them. A party requesting to leave the consortium may not veto decisions relating thereto.

The PC shall produce written minutes of each meeting which shall be the formal record of all decisions taken. He shall send draft minutes to all members within 10 calendar days of the meeting. The minutes shall be considered as accepted if, within 15 calendar days from sending, no member has sent an objection in writing to the PC with respect to the accuracy of the draft of the minutes. The PC shall send the accepted minutes to all the members of the General Assembly. The General Assembly shall be free to act on its own initiative to formulate proposals and take decisions in accordance with the procedures set out.

### **3.2. Schedule management**

Schedule management is the process of ensuring that the project schedule is base lined, maintained, and managed. It is a dynamic process that occurs throughout the project lifecycle: under the rolling wave approach, as more information becomes available, the schedule can be refined to reflect the updated information. Schedule management is accomplished through a stringent change control process, and a comprehensive monitoring and reporting system. Project status is monitored against the baseline on a monthly basis and the Work Plan will be updated as needed. The PC has primary responsibility for controlling the effective use of schedule status information from all partners.

The project overall schedule management is the responsibility of the PC with the help of the PM; the schedule management within each WP is managed by the leader of that WP; the detailed action plan for each task will be managed by the leader of that task; thus, the different schedule management processes is therefore managed by different people depending on the level.

As the monthly monitoring is performed, the PC may identify schedule slippage on critical paths tasks and shall identify ways to get the project back on schedule.

For variances greater than 1 month, the PC may choose to accept identified delays. Variances greater than 3 months are considered unacceptable. The PC will immediately inform the General Assembly if they determine that any MS are at risk of being missed.

If a change occurs, the PC shall incorporate proposed change(s) into an updated work plan. This document contains a revision history log explaining the description of the change(s) and the effects of this(these) change(s) on the progress of the work.

### 3.3. Decision and management structure

The Project Management Structure for the XS-ABILITY project will be integrated by the governing bodies presented in the following figure:

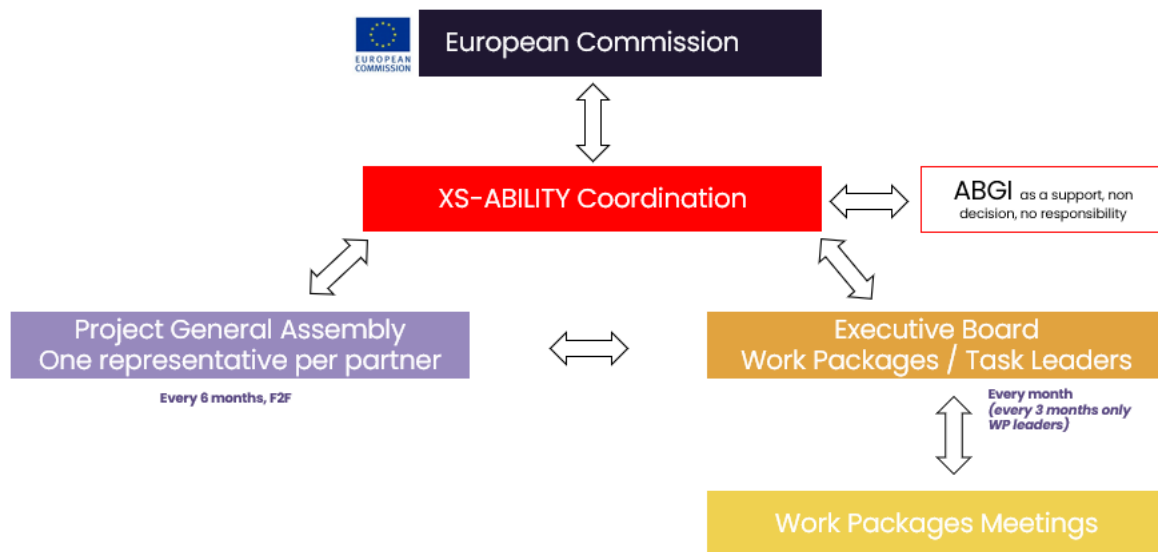


Figure 3: Schematic of the management structure for the XS-ABILITY project

#### a) The Project Officer (PO):

The PO is **Seifallah BEN HADJ HASSINE**.

### b) The Project Coordinator (PC):

Maugan MICHEL, on behalf of CEA will act as XS-ABILITY Project Coordinator, being the responsible person for the overall coordination activities.

The responsibilities of the PC are:

- To follow-up the project activities, collecting, reviewing to verify consistency and submitting reports, verifying timing of milestones and other deliverables, assuring their compliance with the project objectives and work plan, as well as specific requested documents to the EC;
- To manage the administrative and financial tasks required by the EC;
- To compile the cost monitoring requested to the partners in order to have control about the cost expended in during the project (in parallel of the provision of deliverables by the partners). In this framework, it is highly recommended to monitor these expenses on periods no longer than 9 months. Occasionally, the PC could freeze the release of the EC funding corresponding to a particular Partner if it is detected a lack of commitment to accomplish the tasks and it is considered a risk to the continuation of the Project. In those cases, once the due deliverables have been submitted the deposit will be released;
- To manage the risks and contingency plan of the project eventually proposing corrective and mitigating measures and strategies to the GA;
- To prepare, convene and chair the General Assemblies, produce the meeting agenda and minutes as the formal record of all decisions taken. Then, to ensure its implementation;
- To be the interlocutor, along with WP7 between the members of the Advisory Board (AB), the stakeholders and the General Assembly;
- To be the official representative of the project to EC, maintaining a permanent contact to the EC and the PO to provide the necessary information that may be requested and deal with any matter, including management of conflicts;
- To follow-up the communication/dissemination/exploitation activities, according to the linked plans;
- To control the results generated in the Project and analyse the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) measures.

The PC is supported on abovementioned actions by ABGi, Project Manager.

### c) The General Assembly:

The General Assembly is the highest decision-making body of the Consortium, composed of one representative per partner, who may appoint a deputy to attend and vote at any GA meeting.

The GA is chaired by the Project Coordinator. The GA is in charge of overall supervision and major decisions with regard to the project. The GA shall take decisions based on recommendations made to it by the Executive Board (EB).

The GA is, in particular, responsible for strategic decisions such as:

- Proposals for changes to Annexes 1 and 2 of the Grant Agreement to be agreed by the Funding Authority
- Modifications of the Consortium Agreement Attachments
- Evolution of the Consortium (Entry or withdrawal of a party, declaration of a party to be Defaulting, etc.)
- Ensuring the proper implementation of the exploitation and dissemination actions

Each GA member present or represented shall have one vote. At least three-quarters (3/4) of the GA must be present or represented in order to hold a meeting. Decisions are approved by simple majority of the members present or represented. A member who can show that their own work, time for performance, costs, liabilities, intellectual property rights or other legitimate interests would be severely affected by a decision of the GA may exercise a veto.

Electronic votes will be used when the GA has to make a decision outside of regular meetings.

The voting process is as follows:

1. On behalf of the Coordinator, the PM notifies each member of the GA by email. The email outlines:
  - The subject on which a decision is required
  - The request for acknowledgment within 48 hours (working days)
  - The date on which the decision will be considered approved if no duly justified objections are received by the Coordinator
  - The Coordinator's email address to which duly justified objections should be sent
  - If relevant, the location where relevant documents are available for review
2. On behalf of the Coordinator and immediately following the end of the voting period, the PM will publish the results to the project SharePoint.

The General Assembly meets during on-site and web meetings scheduled as reported here below.

M	Meeting	Venue
1	Kick-off	17/11/2024, Online
2	Kick-off (face-to-face, with PO)	11/11/2024, Halden, Norway
6	PGA #1	TBD
12	PGA #2	TBD

18	PGA #3	TBD
24	PGA #4	TBD
30	PGA #5	TBD
36	PGA#6	TBD

*Table 3: List of internal meetings.*

The General Assembly members are as follow:

#	General assembly members	General Assembly deputy members	Institution
1	<b>MICHEL</b> Maugan	<b>AMOYAL</b> Guillaume	CEA
2	<b>SUOMALAINEN</b> Markku	<b>HALBACH</b> Eric	VTT
3	<b>FANCHINI</b> Erica	<b>GIORDANO</b> Ferdinando	CAEN
4	<b>BIELEN</b> An	<b>CAMP</b> Johan	SCK-CEN
5	<b>PACINI</b> Matteo	<b>GIUSTI</b> Simone	Sigma
6	<b>FRANCO</b> Carlos	<b>PETRONE</b> Micol	Developia
7	<b>BENKRID</b> Abdenour	<b>ZAHRA</b> Omar	IFE
8	<b>SAMUEL</b> Paul	<b>GARNIER</b> Arnaud	Flyability

*Table 4: List of XS-ABILITY project General Assembly members*

#### d) Executive Board:

The Executive Board is responsible for the overall strategic and technical management and reports directly to the GA. The EB executes the decisions of the GA and monitors the effective and efficient implementation of the project. The EB is composed of the technical contacts of the partners involved in the WPs and the Project Coordinator chairs the meetings. The Project Coordinator is supported by the PM for operational management.

Each representative may appoint a deputy to attend and vote at any EB meeting. Decisions will be made by consensus whenever possible. In case of major problems, the EB will propose decisions to be made by the General Assembly. The same voting rules and procedure described above for the General Assembly also apply for the Executive Board.

The EB will meet every month and will be convened for meetings via teleconference. The EB is responsible for:

- Assessment of project compliance with the Description of Action and, if necessary, proposals for DoA modification to the General Assembly, including changes to be agreed by the European Commission

- Monitoring the effective and efficient implementation of the Project including the status of deliverables, milestones and risks
- Advice and support of the PC decisions on operational issues
- Decisions on particular managerial issues related to the work plan
- Report on the technical progress
- Proposal to the General Assembly for entry of a new Party, termination of a Defaulting Party's participation, change of the Coordinator, suspension, or termination of the project

	Partner	WP EB Member	WP EB Member	Supporting person
1	CEA	<b>MICHEL</b> Maugan (WP1)	<b>GENDRE</b> Quentin (WP3)	<b>AMOYAL</b> Guillaume
2	VTT	<b>SUOMALAINEN</b> Markku (WP5)		<b>HALBACH</b> Eric
3	CAEN	<b>FANCHINI</b> Erica (WP2)		<b>GIORDANO</b> Ferdinando
4	SCK CEN	<b>BIELÉN</b> An (WP6)		<b>OLYSLAEGERS</b> Geert
5	SIGMA	<b>PACINI</b> Matteo (WP4)	<b>GIUSTI</b> Simone	
6	DEVELOPIA	<b>PETRONE</b> Micol (WP7)	<b>DE ROSA</b> Gaetano (WP7)	
7	IFE	<b>BENKRID</b> Abdenour (WP4)	<b>ZAHRA</b> Omar	
8	FLY	<b>SAMUEL</b> Paul		

*Table 5: List of XS-ABILITY project Executive Board members*

#### e) The External Expert Advisory Board (AB):

An AB will be created comprising experts in the project domains. The AB is in charge to evaluate the project result assessment and to contribute in terms of scientific, regulatory, and market strategy. The Advisory Board shall assist and facilitate the decisions made by the General Assembly. The composition of the Advisory Board may be completed during the Project in case the partners feel that additional expertise is required, and any new member will be approved by the General Assembly.

The AB composition is not established yet.

The AB will be regularly consulted. A Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) will be signed by each AB members before the first meeting for confidentiality reasons. Project details provided to the AB will be diligently reviewed by the PC and the PM to avoid any sensitive data distribution.

#### f) The Project Manager (PM):

The Project Manager is represented by ABGi and is responsible for the following activities:

- To support the PC in the correct implementation of all the required actions to fulfil with the EC rules and expectations;
- Assisting and facilitating the work of the PC for executing the decisions of the General Assembly and the actions demanded by the PO if required;
- Providing support for the use of the management tool (PNB);
- Archiving all project documents.

#### g) The Work Package Leader (WPL):

The WPLs shall work in close collaboration with the PC and the PM for the general project management and are responsible:

- To support the PC through day-to-day management of the Project, ensuring that correct procedures are adopted and followed, that all deadlines, milestones, WP deliverables and reports are met and to coordinate partner interaction within the WP and tasks;
- To provide the deliverables of its corresponding WP (in their specific format) to the PC;
- Assessing the quality of the outputs from their WP including the level of quality of their own deliverables;
- To give support to the PC also in preparing meetings with the EU PO and related data/deliverables;
- To monitor the effective and efficient implementation of the Work Plan, by collecting through the Task Leaders information regularly;
- To ensure the good communication with and among the partners participating in the Work Package through the Task Leaders, supervising the accomplishment of the project work plan in their respective WPs and promoting contacts and as many meetings as necessary between the partners involved.
- To interact with the AB and stakeholders, their suggestions and feedback will be translated to the General Assembly and will explain the issues that should be discussed in the meetings that will hold during the project execution;
- To inform the PC and the PM about the detection of non-compliances with the Work Plan, identifying technical problems and conflicts that may arise among partners in their respective WPs, supporting him in the solutions to be taken;
- To execute the decisions of the General Assembly in the corresponding WP.

- **PC is the only person who can contact the PO and the EC.**
- **The GA sets the rules and engagements towards the EC.**
- **The CA sets the rules and engagements between beneficiaries.**
- **Each beneficiary is in charge to provide its own contribution to the project where requested.**
- **AB does not have voting and decision-making rights.**

### 3.4. Project Management Tool (Project Netboard – PNB)

ABGi helps CEA in project management support tasks. With the aim to monitor project progresses and its correct implementation according to the scheduled DoA and the GA, ABGi provides to the consortium a free-of-use management tool: Project Netboard (PNB).

PNB allows to:

- Ensure the follow-up of activities and the simultaneous management of the relevant costs;
- Compare data from the GA with partners achievements and their spending;
- Allow the completion of monthly time sheets;
- Provide periodical reports and balance sheets;
- Store and share project documentation.

PNB is accessible at the following URL: <http://projectnetboard.absiskey.com>

Username and password have been sent individually to each declared user in **November 2024**.

### 3.5. Issue management

Conflict is not expected to be a significant factor since the roles of each partner have been well defined, so as to avoid any misunderstandings that might occur later in the project.

The resolution of problems and conflicts are handled systematically. Establishing a good working relationship among the project team members is a prerequisite for the quick resolution of problems and issues.

Conflict's resolutions are based on the principle that any dispute should be resolved by consent and as near the source as possible, thus, conflicts on a local sphere are managed by the people involved (e.g. a dispute between the partners engaged in a WP should be addressed by that WP team).

Conflicts which cannot be solved internally are taken through a "principled negotiation" process that is focused on optimizing outcomes and maximizing the benefits of all parties involved.

In case of conflicts arising within the consortium regarding the carrying out of the project or other matters related to the project itself, the following steps are taken:

- The parties will try to resolve the conflict issue amicably between them;
- If a conflict cannot be resolved within the local sphere, it is raised to the PC; for conflict resolution in a technical aspect, the PC is in charge of proposing an alternative. If this is agreed, the issue is solved;
- If this attempt fails the question will be brought to the first scheduled meeting of the General Assembly, or in case of urgency, an ad hoc meeting of the General Assembly will be called for by the PC, upon request of a General Assembly member;
- The question will be discussed within the General Assembly, and the PC will try to solve it by consensus; the General Assembly will decide which procedure will be followed, and the corresponding correction measures that should be taken. The participant that provokes the conflict will declare acceptance of the procedure and the corrective measures;
- If the conflict cannot be resolved, the PC declares the participant "not in line" with the project execution and the consortium will ask for a contract termination for the participant concerned, with the contractually stated consequences. The PO will be immediately notified of the situation and of the measures to be taken in order to solve it. An appropriate review of the work plan will be suggested by the PC, approved by the General Assembly and sent to the commission for acceptance;
- In case it is decided (by the PC or General Assembly) that a conflict resolution will involve a voting procedure among partners, the absolute majority (> 50%) will be required for the decision to go ahead.

## 4. AMENDMENTS TO THE GRANT AGREEMENT

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The GA must be amended if there are any changes to:

- Its terms & conditions (e.g., data or options specific to that agreement);
- Its annexes.

The amended provisions of the GA, when accepted by the EC, become an integral part of the GA.

### 4.1. Who can request an amendment to the GA?

The PC and the consortium members are free to propose amendments.

If the PC proposes the amendment:

- They must check that the consortium has reached agreement through an internal decision-making process, as set out in the CA;
- Sign and submit the amendment on its behalf.

The EC can also propose amendments.

### 4.2. When can an amendment be requested?

Before the end of the project (i.e., the duration of the project is given in Article 4 of the Grant Agreement)

**Exception:** In exceptional cases – e.g., if the bank account changes, or the PC responsible for paying the balance is replaced – once the project is completed.

### 4.3. When is an amendment necessary?

When one of the following changes applies:

- Changes involving Beneficiaries & APs;
- Adding a new Beneficiary or a new APs;
- Deletion of a Beneficiary whose participation has been terminated because:
  - it has not signed the GA;

- it has not provided a declaration on joint & several liability as requested for some other reason;
- Change of Beneficiary due to 'partial takeover';
- Deletion or addition of APs;
- Specific case: if a Beneficiary's participation is terminated at the initiative of other Beneficiaries (Article 32.2);
- Change involving the PC/principal Beneficiary:
  - Change of Coordinating organisation
  - Change in the bank account the PC uses for payments;
  - Change in the 'authorisation to administer' option.
- Changes affecting the project or its implementation:
  - Change to the DoA;
  - Change in the title of the project or its acronym, starting date, duration or reporting periods;
  - Resumption of project activities after a temporary suspension (Article 31).
- Changes involving the financial aspects of the grant:
  - Change to Annex 2 or 2a of the GA;
  - Change in the maximum grant amount, reimbursement rate(s), the estimated eligible costs of the project, the amount of pre-financing or the contribution to the Guarantee Fund;
  - Change concerning specific cost categories ('specific unit costs').

#### **4.4. When is an amendment NOT necessary?**

- For certain budget transfers;
- If the name or address of a Beneficiary, APs or PC changes;
- If a universal takeover results in a change of Beneficiary;
- If there is a change in the name of the bank or the address of the branch where the PC has an account, or in the name of the account holder.

## 5. BUDGET

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### 5.1. Project Budget

The financial contribution of the Funding Authority to the XS-ABILITY project is distributed by the PC according to:

- The Consortium plan;
- The approval of reports by the Funding Authority.

The coordinator must distribute the payments between the beneficiaries without unjustified delay. The following payments will be made to the coordinator:

- One pre-financing payment;
- Interim payments, on the basis of the request for interim payment;
- One payment of the balance, on the basis of the request for payment of the balance.

The aim of the pre-financing is to provide the beneficiaries with a float. It remains the property of the EU until the payment of the balance. The EC will make the pre-financing payment to the coordinator within 30 days from the entry into force of the GA. An amount corresponding to 5% of the maximum grant amount is retained by the EC from the pre-financing payment and transferred into the 'Guarantee Fund'.

Interim payment reimburses the eligible costs incurred for the implementation of the action during the corresponding reporting period. The EC will pay to the coordinator the amount due as interim payment within 90 days from receiving the periodic report.

The payment of the balance reimburses the remaining part of the eligible costs incurred by the beneficiaries for the implementation of the action.

The payment schedule, which contains the transfer of pre-financing and interim payments to Parties, is handled according to the following:

- Funding of costs included in the Consortium plan will be paid to parties after receipt from the Funding Authority without undue delay and in conformity with the provisions of the GA. Costs accepted by the Funding Authority will be paid to the party concerned;

- The coordinator is entitled to withhold any payments due to a party identified by a responsible Consortium body to be in breach of its obligations under this CA or the GA or to a beneficiary which has not yet signed this CA;
- The coordinator is entitled to recover any payments already paid to a defaulting party. The coordinator is equally entitled to withhold payments to a party when this is suggested by or agreed with the Funding Authority.

A party which spends less than its allocated share of the budget as set out in the Consortium plan or - in case of reimbursement via unit costs - implements less units than foreseen in the Consortium plan will be funded in accordance with its actual duly justified eligible costs only.

A party that spends more than its allocated share of the budget as set out in the Consortium plan will be funded only in respect of duly justified eligible costs up to an amount not exceeding that share.

A party leaving the consortium shall refund all payments it has received except the amount of contribution accepted by the Funding Authority or another contributor. Furthermore, a defaulting party shall bear any reasonable and justifiable additional costs occurring to the other Parties in order to perform its and their tasks.

More details can be found in the CA and in the GA.

## **5.2. Payment handling**

The PC is then responsible for distributing the money to the other partners on the project.

The maximum total EU contribution for XS-ABILITY is fixed at 1,962,507.35€.

### **Prefinancing**

This is made at the start of the project, usually within 30 days of the EC signing the GA.

The pre-financing payment made to the PC will be a percentage of the maximum EC financial minus the 5% contribution the guarantee fund (kept by EC).

### **Interim Payments**

These are made after each period financial reports are submitted and accepted by EC. Payment is subject to the approval of the periodic report (PR). Its approval does not imply recognition of

the compliance, authenticity, completeness or correctness of its content. The amount due as interim payment is calculated by the EC in the following steps:

- Step 1 – Application of the reimbursement rates;
- Step 2 – Limit to 90% of the maximum grant amount.

### **Final Payment**

This is made at the end of the project once PO has accepted all deliverables and reports and will include any final payment due to the project. This will include the 'Guarantee Fund' payment.

### **Guarantee Fund**

The Guarantee Fund is a percentage of the budget, in the case of XS-ABILITY the funding authority withholds 5% of each partner's budget at the start of the project in the Guarantee Fund. If the project runs smoothly and there are no issues this 5% is paid out by the funding authority with the final payment.

The PC uses the money in this fund to reimburse the project in the situation where one of the partners is made bankrupt and takes with its money in excess of the costs reported.

### **Distribution of funds to partners**

The funding authority financial contribution is received by the PC on behalf of the consortium, split by the number of Reporting Period. The PC will then distribute the EU financial contribution to each partner without unjustified delay according to the rules set out in the CA and GA.

Subsequent payments will be based on the validation of the deliverables and the cost statements submitted to EC and potentially dependent upon any budget changes proposed and approved by the General Assembly and the XS-ABILITY Project Officer.

- **Pre-financing is released to each beneficiary by the Coordinator within 30 days from the entry into force of the GA.**
- **Interim payments and balance payment are on the basis of eligible, reported and approved by the EC financial statements.**

### 5.3. Budget and cost management

The objective of applying cost management is to ensure that the project is completed within budget. Cost management refers to the process of gathering, tracking and managing the financial resources throughout the project's life cycle. This process relies heavily on accurate estimates and actual data that need to be maintained and updated accordingly. Having quality input data is the key to obtaining reliable cost information for managing resources and making decisions. Cost summaries information at the different levels are rolled up from task level to the project level.

Cost's estimation and budget determination was done in the proposal phase of the project. The project budget reflects the whole estimated eligible costs that XS-ABILITY consortium partners need for executing the project activities and is detailed in the overall project budget in the GA. In order to keep track of the estimated and real budget spent by each partner, the PC requests a financial internal report every 9 month, where real personnel costs, other direct costs and indirect costs during the period are indicated. Each partner is responsible to control their costs (personnel, subcontracting, and other indirect costs) in accordance with their own accounting and management principles and practices.

It is recommended that the PC prepare a status update every 9 months, including tracking and evaluating trends and variances in the costs associated with the project in order to provide timely management reporting which will enable rapid response and mitigation to adverse trends, problem areas, progress shortfalls, potential progress or cost impacts, etc. before they become milestone impacts.

The PC meets with the General Assembly as needed to review planned vs. actual progress, forecasted activity, areas in need of recovery and upcoming critical milestones.

For each reporting period, aggregated figures are prepared and passed by all partners to the PC. The PC then checks whether there are significant deviations between actuals and planned costs; if so, corrective actions are defined and put in place.

The PC ensures that the project costs and available contingency amounts are monitored continuously and that there is adequate funding to cover proposed budget changes. Use or reallocation of contingency funds must be approved by the General Assembly. Cost deviations that will result in increasing the overall project budget have to be approved by the General Assembly once it is demonstrated that adequate funding exists to finance the proposed change.



## 6. RISK MANAGEMENT

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Risk Management is the identification, assessment, and prioritization of risks to minimize, monitor and control the probability and/or impact of unfortunate events also known as threats. Since not all risks can be eliminated, mitigation strategies and contingency plans can be developed to lessen their impact if they occur. Essentially, effective risk management requires an informed understanding of relevant risks, an assessment of their relative priority and a rigorous approach to monitoring and controlling them.

The responsibility of managing project risks relies with the coordinator: identified risks are tackled and alerts are raised in case any of the identified risks increases its priority. All activities related with the risk management are monitored by the PC (supported by the PM), responsible of the risks follow-up, with the collaboration of each WPL for specific issues relevant within every specific WP/TK.

The risk register is maintained by CEA and is constantly updated as the project evolves in the DoA of XS-ABILITY.

## 7. PROJECT WEBSITE

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### 7.1. Overview of the project website

A website has been designed to serve as a key tool for external communication of the project and dissemination activities. It has been set up and is maintained by Developia in cooperation with CEA and the other consortium members.

The website features essential information about the project:

- Summary and objectives,
- Partners,
- Project progress graph chart,
- News,
- Results,
- Events,
- Public documents.

The logo for XS-ABILITY features a stylized blue graphic on the left composed of overlapping circles and arcs, resembling a molecular or network structure. To the right of this graphic, the text "XS-ABILITY" is written in a large, bold, yellow sans-serif font.

### 7.2. Web portal administration and access

The XS-ABILITY website is accessible through: <https://xs-ability.eu/>.

The communication and dissemination of the project is handled by the leader of WP 7 Developia (and is presented in D7.1). For any photos, news, results, communication you would like to publish on the website or for any questions or comments, contact Developia with copy to CEA.

**Any dysfunction of the XS-ABILITY website shall be reported to the website administrator.**

## 8. COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

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Following the GA, the partners have certain obligations concerning communication about the project. These obligations and rules are summarized in the next paragraphs.

### 8.1. Promoting the action and its results

The beneficiaries must promote the action and its results.

Examples of action of promotion:

- A press release for the general public at the start of the action;
- Organizing workshops about the action, targeted at audiences for which the action is of interest;
- Producing a brochure to explain the action's work to large public audience to show how interesting this specific research topic can be.

### 8.2. Visibility of the EU contribution

The beneficiaries must — during the action and afterwards — ensure the visibility of EU funding for any communication activity related to the action by displaying the EU emblem.



**This project has received funding from the European Union under grant agreement No 101166392. Views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.**

### 8.3. Dissemination

Following the GA, the partners have certain obligations concerning dissemination about the project results:

- Unless it goes against their legitimate interests, the beneficiaries must as soon as possible disseminate their results (i.e. make them public).
- No dissemination at all may take place, if:
  - The results need to be protected as a trade secret (i.e. confidential know-how) or
  - Dissemination conflicts with any other obligations under the GA (e.g. personal data protection, security-related obligations, etc.).
- When deciding on dissemination, the beneficiaries must also consider the other beneficiaries' legitimate interests and follow this procedure:
  - a) At least 30 days prior notice of any dissemination activity shall be given to the other parties, including sufficient information concerning the planned dissemination activity and the data envisaged to be disseminated.
  - b) Following notification, any of those Parties may object within 15 days of the notification to the envisaged dissemination activity if it considers that its legitimate interests in relation to its foreground or background could suffer disproportionately great harm.
  - c) In such cases, the dissemination activity may not take place unless appropriate steps are taken to safeguard these legitimate interests.
  - d) If no objection is made within the time limit stated above, the publication is permitted.

**Each beneficiary shall keep informed CEA and ABGi about any activities beforehand in order to monitor and follow-up.**

**Each beneficiary shall contribute actively to promote XS-ABILITY results by sharing communication and dissemination materials (pictures, photos, participation to events, ...)**

**In close cooperation with the PC, Developia is responsible for the communication and dissemination of the XS-ABILITY project.**

## 8.4. External communication and dissemination

During the Project and for a period of 1 year after the end of the Project, the communication and dissemination activities need to follow the steps bellow:

**At least thirty calendar days prior notice of any communication and dissemination activity shall be given to the other Parties concerned, including sufficient information concerning the planned communication activity.**

Following notification, any of those Parties may object within fifteen calendar days of the notification to the envisaged communication activity. Any objection to the planned communication shall be made in accordance with the handbook in writing (by email) to the Coordinator and to the Party or Parties proposing the communication.

Following the end of the above-mentioned period, the Coordinator shall inform the Parties whether any objection has been received. If no objection is made, the communication is permitted.

**Partners planning to submit a communication should reach out to the Coordination team enough in advance so the consortium can be notified in due time.**

An objection is justified if:

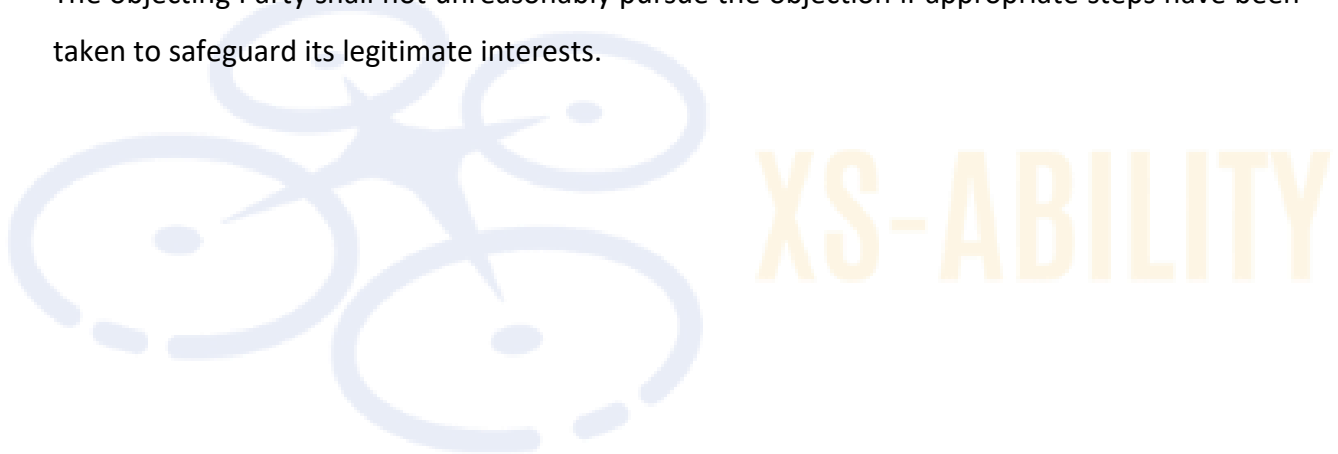
- ➔ the protection of the objecting Party's Results or Background would be adversely affected, or
- ➔ the objecting Party's legitimate interests in relation to its Results or Background would be significantly harmed, or
- ➔ the proposed publication includes Confidential Information of the objecting Party.

The objection must include a precise request for necessary modifications. The Party proposing the communication activity and the Party objecting shall seek in good faith to agree to a solution on a timely basis whereby such objection is resolved. The objecting Party's request for modification may consist of:

- ➔ modifications, specifically if certain pieces of information contained in the proposed communication are likely to adversely affect Background or Results or its legitimate interests are significantly harmed; or
- ➔ a request to postpone a communication if, in its opinion, real and serious reasons require this, especially if the information contained in the proposed dissemination or communication contains Confidential Information. The objecting Party can request a communication delay of not more than 90 calendar days from the time it raises such an objection. After 90 calendar days, the publication is permitted provided that Confidential Information, Background and Results of the objecting Party have been removed from the Publication as reasonably indicated by the objecting Party.

The dissemination activity may not take place unless appropriate steps are taken to safeguard these legitimate interests. The Parties may successively agree in writing (by email) on different time-limits to those set out in this Article, which may include a deadline for determining the appropriate steps to be taken.

The objecting Party shall not unreasonably pursue the objection if appropriate steps have been taken to safeguard its legitimate interests.



## 9. PROJECT COMMUNICATION

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### 9.1. E-mails and Mailing lists

E-mail is the principal means of interpersonal communication in XS-ABILITY. It can be used for information exchanges, executive summaries. It is informal, fairly rapid and well suited for non-critical information. E-mail distribution list is maintained (and regularly updated) by the PM, and available to all the partners, indicating the contact persons for administrative/financial issues as well as contact persons for the development of the activities. Any change concerning people involved and contacts details (i.e. request to add or remove a member) shall be opportunely communicated to the PM and the PC. The updated list of contact is available in the project repository folder in SharePoint.

The following rules should ensure the suitable use of the e-mail communication between project participants:

- Address information only to involved parties in communication: do not systematically copy everyone into communications, or if replying to a specific individual, be cautious not to press the 'reply all' function over 'reply';
- In relevant communication (impacting project coordination), include the PC and the PM;
- The title of each e-mail should include the project name in square brackets followed by the topic of the discussion, e.g. “[XS-ABILITY] Topic”;
- In case the email message has an attachment, please use ZIP files to compress information or share by secure large file transfer tool or directly via SharePoint. However, and **as a general rule, always upload the file in the project repository (Sharepoint)** and inform the relevant people of the location of the file.

The e-mail exchange is the main instrument used by project partners to share information, proposals and ideas, as well as to prepare deliverables and any other project output (papers, talks, reports for the EC, etc.).

Documents must be placed in the SharePoint.

## 9.2. Conference calls

Conference calls are used for meeting partners without spending time and budget on travelling. Videoconferences and teleconferences should be programmed at least two weeks in advance and should follow a set agenda.

Telephone is used when personal interaction, a fast answer or reliable confirmation is needed. Telephone calls can sometimes be appropriate for urgent matters so it is important that up-to-date telephone numbers are made available. It is highly recommended to send an e-mail with the conclusion of a telephone call to limit any ambiguity.

## 9.3. Meetings

Face-to-face project meetings (such as in-person General Assembly meetings) are scheduled tentatively as reported in Section 3.

Extraordinary General Assembly meetings can be convened by the PC and the PM at request of partners or when this is required because of contingencies and conflicts occurring during the project.

One review meeting is settled with the EC for the periodic project assessment, at M18 and M36. In both cases, the participation of at least one representative per partners is mandatory. The WPL participation is highly recommended. A backup contact should rely on the participation of the WPL in case of absence.

## 9.4. Digital communication tools

The XS-ABILITY project website, is one of the main tools for disseminating information about the consortium and the achievements of the project, providing visitors with comprehensive information about its context and objectives.

A visual identity (logo, presentation template, document template, etc.) has been created to improve the project visibility worldwide (external stakeholders, interested parties, EC bodies...).

Deliverable D7.1 will provide more details on these and other available and planned tools.



## 10. DATA AND PUBLICATIONS

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### 10.1. Data Management Plan

XS-ABILITY adheres to FAIR principles and Open Research Data Pilot (ORDP), and all generated data will be made publicly available, provided that such data do not represent any economic risk, or if partners cannot give critical information on project's progress to any concurrent entities, public or private.

A Data Management Plan (DMP) will be created to describe how the project will collect, process, share and protect the data produced by the project partners. The DMP will be consistent with the IPR policy (i.e. IP, confidentiality, publication provisions, ...) and updated as any changes occur in the consortium policies.

Each partner shall communicate to the PC and the PM on data to be stored and shared within the DMP. The General Assembly will be in charge to take the relevant decisions.

For all other data, partners will be required to use an open access repository (such as ZENODO), connected to the tools proposed by the EC (e.g. OPENAIRE) to grant access to the publications and to a bibliographic metadata in a standard format including information requested by the EC. The DMP will be fully described in the D1.2 and its update.

### 10.2. Publications

'Green open access' model will be adopted for peer-reviewed scientific publications, where individual partners will deposit manuscripts in an online repository.

If it is decided that the scientific research will not be protected through IPR, but will rather be published directly, then the project is aware that Open Access must be granted to all scientific publications.

A dedicated repository space has been created on the SharePoint: it will contain project's publications. Publications will be also shared in the project website.

The acknowledgement of EC support for all publications and other dissemination relating to XS-ABILITY project research shall be included in all project external communications.



## 11. QUALITY PLAN

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The quality plan gives a practical guidance to the PC, coordinating bodies and project partners for checking the progress of the project and assuring the quality of its outputs.

Being the main objectives of the plan:

- Planning review procedures in order to monitor its progress and the achievement of its goals;
- Put in place risk management;
- Create clear procedures for delivery high quality results;
- Provide consortium with guidance for project reporting and deliverable production;
- Provide consortium with guidance on communication, exchange of data, publication and dissemination;
- Provide consortium with templates for project outputs.

### 11.1. Internal Project Reporting

WPLs are requested to report to the PC every Executive Board meeting on the technical progress of their own WP. WPLs are requested to provide the following information using the template already uploaded to the project repository, said report includes:

- Work performed during the reporting period of reference and main results achieved;
- Status of each WP task, details on the work carried out by each beneficiary involved;
- Activities planned for the following reporting period - Updated planning for the next period;
- Status of ongoing deliverables with delivery date in the following reporting period;
- Progress towards milestones planned for the following reporting period;
- Status of the risks and updating risk analysis of the respective WP;
- Critical assessment of the technical progress: deviations from the original plan and proposed measures (explanations for tasks not fully implemented, critical objectives not fully achieved and/or not being on schedule, impact on other tasks, available resources and the overall planning).

Based on these technical updates, the PC and General Assembly will follow-up the progresses of the project and anticipate potential deviations from the Grant Agreement. This follow up will also be monitored through the collect of the following information:

- Overall total project expenses consumed vs the planned budget;
- Efforts of the personnel, who have worked in the period in each WP and per beneficiary, vs the planned budget;
- Costs carried out by the beneficiary per each WP vs the planned budget.

The PC / PM is in charge of controlling the project interim reports which are stored in the project repository.

## 11.2. Deliverables

Deliverables are official project documents that shall be submitted to the EC (in the participant portal) to prove the advancement on specific WP/TK.

Partner responsible of the deliverable is in charge to release a draft version of the work by gathering inputs from partners involved in the work. This draft version is then evaluated by the PC / PM for a demanded revision of the document based on their feedbacks (if any). The final version is submitted in the participant portal by the PC / PM.

The validation process described below shall be observed.

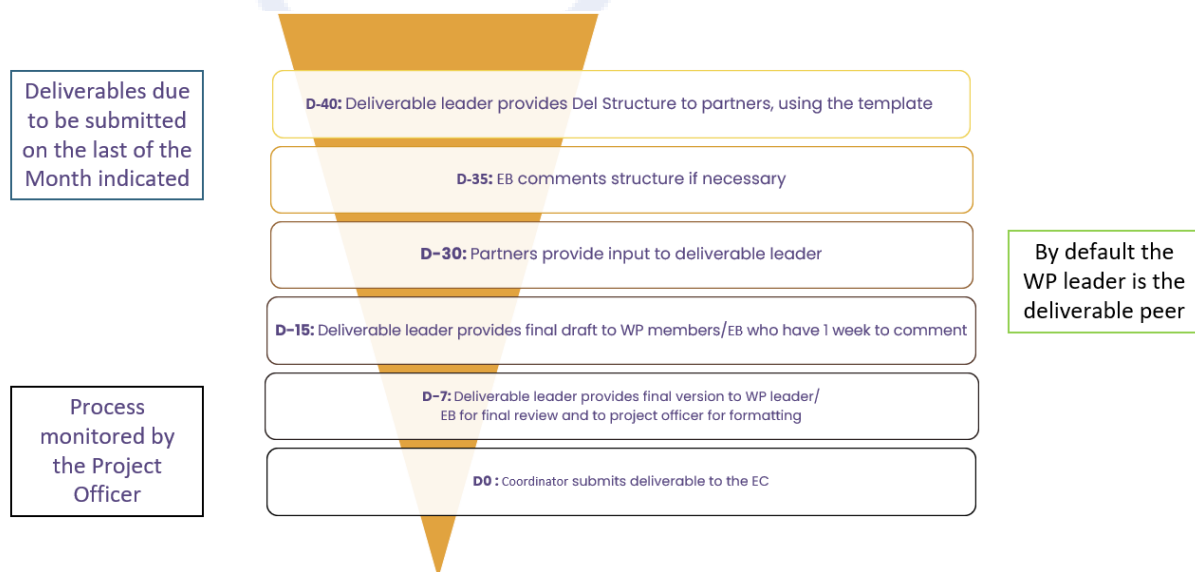


Figure 4 : Validation process for the deliverables.

### 11.3. EC project Progress Reporting

Periodic progress reports (PR) have to be delivered to EC according to the GA. The reporting includes a technical and a financial report and must be drawn up using the forms and templates provided by the EC and available in the participant portal (Sygma ECAS).

The technical report has to be submitted by the PC / PM through the participant portal and will be generated in collaboration with each WPL, using as inputs the internal technical periodic reports for the activities carried out during the concerned period. A summary of scientific results obtained per WP and TK shall be reported by each WPL. Deviations from the DoA shall be reported: delays, changes of research direction etc.

The validation process is the same of the one adopted for the deliverables.

Timeline for the preparation of the PR to the EC (with respect to the deadline of the periodic report) is presented below:

*Table 6: timeline for the preparation of the PR.*

Timing	Action
1M prior the submission deadline (60 days after period end)	The PC / PM sends requests to WPLs
Deadline	WPLs gather input from TK leaders
15 days after the deadline	WPLs send draft report to the PC / PM and receive feedback
1M after the deadline	Final version of the report is submitted in the participant portal

In addition, in the participant portal, several forms should be completed by the PC / PM (based on the information provided by all beneficiaries) about:

- Summary of the work performed from the beginning of the action to the end of the period covered by the report and main results achieved so far;
- Progress beyond the state of the art and expected potential impact;
- Gender information for each beneficiary;

- Status of MS achievements;
- Critical risks status;
- List of scientific publications;
- Overview of the dissemination and communication activities;
- List of patents;
- Overview on the proposed innovation (prototypes, testing activities, clinical trials);
- Open Dataset;
- Ethics aspects;

#### 11.4. EC periodic Financial reporting

The financial report will be digitally built by the PC / PM using the information directly provided by each beneficiary through the portal concerning:

- Declared costs;
- Requested reimbursement;
- Use of resources.

**Rules of eligibility of costs and procedures for computing them are extensively described in the GA. All partners are requested to submit their finance information in the participant portal not later than 45 days after the deadline of the periodic report.**

This financial management plan includes the procedures for financial reporting and accounting.

#### Reporting – Financial Statements (FS)

General Assembly members are requested to report to the PC every 9 months on the use of resources of their own WP. For this purpose, they are requested to report their efforts and costs consumption by using the financial management tool given by ABGi (i.e. PNB). Associated Partners can report only their efforts)

The official financial report (i.e. financial statement - FS) should be completed by each partner and submitted in the participant portal at the end of each reporting period.

The FS should be according to the partners normal accounting rules. However, each partner should check that:

- The project costs are correctly identified within their accounts;
- Only eligible costs are claimed for and can be separated from non-eligible costs;
- All records (timesheets, invoices, receipts etc) are properly stored and are retrievable in the case of an audit.

Actual Costs must be:

- Actually incurred by the beneficiary;
- Incurred during the action;
- Indicated in the estimated budget set out in Annex 2 of the GA;
- Incurred in connection with the action as described in Annex 1 of the GA and necessary for its implementation;
- Identifiable and verifiable - recorded in the beneficiary's accounts in accordance with the accounting standards applicable in the country where the beneficiary is established and with the beneficiary's usual cost practices;
- Reasonable, justified and must comply with the principle of sound financial management;
- Must comply with the applicable national law, labour and social security.

Ineligible costs include:

- Costs related to return on capital;
- Debt and debt service charges;
- Provisions for future losses or debts;
- Interest owed;
- Doubtful debts;
- Currency exchange losses;
- Bank costs charged by the beneficiary's bank for transfers for the commission/agency;
- Excessive or reckless expenditure;
- Deductible VAT;
- Costs incurred during suspension of the actions.

Personnel costs are eligible when they are:

- Related to personnel working for the beneficiary under an employment contract (or equivalent appointing act) and assigned to the action;
- Limited to salaries (including during parental leave), social security contribution, taxes and other costs included in the remuneration, if they arise from national law or the employment contract.

The methods of calculating personnel costs are the “actual personnel costs” and the “unit costs” and the calculation is fully described in the GA.

Timesheets are not required for personnel if 100% of their time is spent working on this project for the full reporting period. However, for any organization to which this applies they will need to submit a declaration to confirm that they have completed 100% of their time on the project. For all other staff it is compulsory for them to complete a timesheet.

## Preparation

The PC / PM is responsible for collecting, checking and compiling the project’s FS. The PC will also inform the PO of any delays or difficulties encountered in the production and compilation of the FS including any delay in receiving information from a partner or a major discrepancy and where necessary propose a contingency plan.

To ensure a timely response the following procedure will be applied for the preparation of the FS:

- 30 calendar days after the end of each period of the XS-ABILITY project the partners should have completed their financial report in PNB;
- The PM will compile all financial reports and check them for compliance;

In the case of a partner not submitting their FS in time, the PC can decide whether or not to include that partners FS in the submission to EC. Excluding a partner’s FS will result in them having to wait until the next reporting period for further funds, but would allow the payments to all other partners to be delivered on-schedule and avoid the delay of payment to majority of the consortium.

**Set up your internal organisation within the accounting service for keeping track and copy of the invoices in case of audit (up to 5 years after the end of the project).**

## 11.5. EC final reporting

In addition to the last periodic report, the PC shall submit a final report within 60 days following the end of the last reporting period.

The final report will be written on the basis of inputs provided by the partners. It will include the following parts:

- The final technical report providing:
  - An overview of the results and their exploitation and dissemination;
  - The conclusions on the action, and
  - The socio-economic impact of the action.
- The final financial report providing:
  - A 'final summary financial statement'.

A 'certificate on the financial statements' (CFS) for each beneficiary if it requests a total contribution of 430,000 € or more, as reimbursement for actual costs and personnel costs declared on the basis of unit costs. This means that costs based on lump sums, flat rates (e.g. indirect costs) or unit costs (other than those for personnel costs calculated according to the beneficiary's usual cost accounting practices) are not counted for the 430,000 € threshold.

**The CFS is a factual report produced by an independent auditor or Public Officer. It should be based on the model in Annex 5 to the GA. Its purpose is to enable the EC to check whether costs declared in the financial statements are eligible.**

**Within 60 days of the end of the last reporting period, the PC must submit a final report including a CFS (dated, stamped and signed by the auditor / Public Officer) for each beneficiary that requested the contribution indicated above.**

## 12. CONCLUSIONS

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This document presents the approach taken by the XS-ABILITY team to manage the project. The Project Handbook must be considered as a guiding document to guarantee that the project will adhere to the original work plan. In addition, the tools used by the team to manage the project, communicate internally and externally about the project and to control the quality and risks associated with the project have been presented.

The Project Handbook and the various instruments used to control the project will be continuously updated and refined as the project moves forward. As this is a living document, changes will be made as the project advances and partners develop more components.

*=== End of the document ===*

