WHITE-LABEL SHOP FOR DIGITAL INTELLIGENT ASSISTANCE AND HUMAN-AI COLLABORATION IN MANUFACTURING

OPEN CALL FOR EXPERIMENTS 2

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

Table of Contents

1 INTRODUCTION TO WASABI

1.1 Project summary

WASABI aims to provide SMEs with the tools and knowledge to improve workers' capacities and performance, providing advanced user interfaces for continuous augmented hybrid decision-making. Such interfaces assist employees in interacting with complex software, effectively reducing its skill floor. Consequently, humans will find using the software easier, becoming more open to applying it effectively.

One of the key technologies in WASABI's solution portfolio is the **Digital Intelligent Assistant (DIA) – a human-like, task-oriented artificial intelligence (AI) with a conversational interface**.

An assistant supports or entirely takes over time-consuming, stressful, or otherwise undesirable activities for the client. A Digital Assistant (DA) does the same through software for its user(s). WASABI focuses on DAs, that are also conversational agents. A conversational agent is an application that accepts user input in the form of voice or text and provides responses in natural language. Assistants on mobile devices and Smartspeakers with screens allow rich media responses. Besides, conversational designers can build dialogs so that the assistant has one or more personas to interact with various user groups of age, gender, and social, educational, and cultural backgrounds.

Figure 1 illustrates the working principle of a digital assistant for the industry.
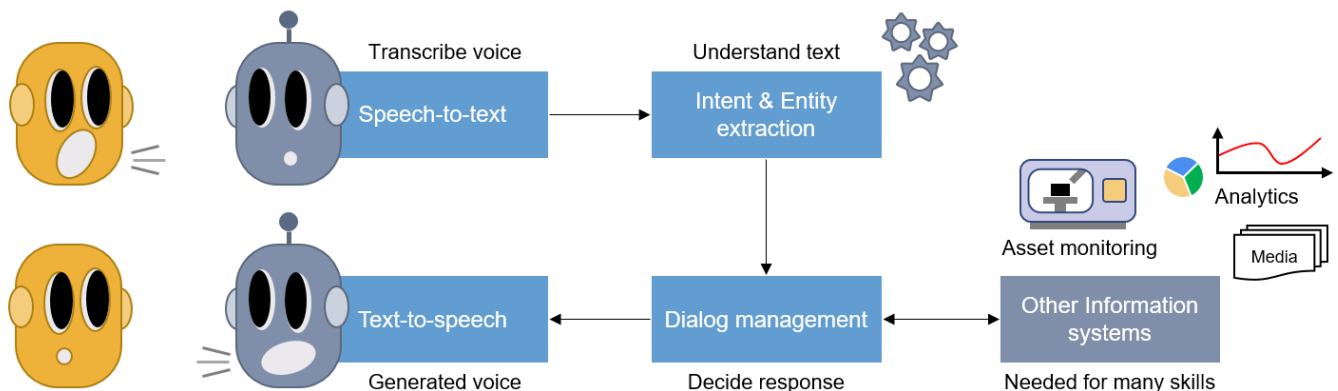

Figure 1. Working principle of a digital assistant for the industry [BIBA – Bremer Institut fuer Produktion und Logistik GmbH (2020)]

In addition, WASABI consortium develops a federated, white-label shop (the WASABI White Label Shop) based on PrestaShop – i.e., an acknowledged open-source shop framework – to accelerate the uptake of intelligent digital assistance. In particular, the platform allows users to create customized shop instances tailored to various applications, offering flexibility, diverse business models, and decentralized data control. The WWLS serves as a foundational tool for WASABI deployment, enabling owners to quickly build and deploy tailored solutions.

WASABI is opening its second **Open Call (OC) for experiments that will provide financial support to at least 10 funded experiments led by SMEs**. This open call is designed to **support AI-based digital assistance experiments involving SMEs from manufacturing**. The call focuses on attracting **applicants from all manufacturing sectors** and aims to develop modules/components for the WASABI web shop, and to expand the WASABI solutions portfolio.

The open call will strive to improve the **sustainability of processes and products, make industrial processes more agile, and make manufacturing jobs more attractive for workers** through better human-machine interfaces and more intuitive interaction with digital tools.

The present Guide for Applicants details the WASABI open call and how to apply.

1.2   Overview of the three existing WASABI Use Cases

This section presents three WASABI business cases to help applicants identify potential experiments using digital intelligent assistants. Find more information on the [WASABI website](#).

Business Case 1: Augmented waste management and valorisation

This case focuses on waste management in manufacturing, aiming to valorise waste. When a production process cannot avoid generating waste for technical reasons, this waste may be reusable by other organizations, provided its characteristics meet the requirements. Advanced user interfaces assist workers in describing production waste to determine whether it qualifies for reuse by third parties. Workers provide descriptions of waste via a mobile conversational interface, supplemented with rich-media records, such as images and videos of waste and relevant machinery. If users require specific expert-level waste descriptions, e.g., a laboratory analysis, users are guided to contact local experts. This case seeks to enhance sustainability by significantly simplifying the waste valorisation process.

Business Case 2: Assisted workforce management after regional and global crises

This case focuses on managing the manufacturing workforce following a regional crisis that forces many people to search for employments. Such crises may lead individuals to flee or migrate to, or within, Europe. These individuals are likely to possess diverse job experiences, education, ethnic, social, and demographic backgrounds as well as different languages, which can pose challenges to workplace integration. Manufacturing organizations suffering facing workforce shortages can leverage human-centred AI-based digital assistance solutions to onboard new recruits more efficiently. Key characteristics of these solutions include multilingual conversational interfaces, customizable personas, frustration-mitigation mechanisms, and adaptable assistance based on learning progress. This case aims to enhance societal resilience after a crisis while increasing organisational agility by rapidly expanding and upskilling the workforce. Additionally, employers can integrate new workers faster and free the time of the existing employees, resulting in productivity gains.

Business case 3: Assisted quality assurance for sustainable products

This case focuses on augmenting product quality testing to improve product and worker safety, carbon footprint, enhance workers' cognitive skills and reduce the burden of repetitive, monotonous, error-prone, and knowledge-intensive activities. A digital assistant supports workers in product testing by interactively executing a validation protocol that ensures the highest safety and sustainability standards while simultaneously reducing validation time and energy consumption. To this end, the assistant integrates trustworthy machine learning models to learn key product stress characteristics from past testing data, generating synthetic, high-throughput product quality testing datasets. During the testing definition phase, the assistant l helps the operator select the dataset that best suits the specific testing conditions, European directives, and international safety, performance, and sustainability standards. In the testing phase, operators interact with the assistant to receive valuable information on intermediate results. The assistant also collects user feedback, which will be used for training data labelling. Through this continuous feedback loop and adaptive validation protocol, the assistant and the operator collaborate to increase the sustainability and efficiency of the product quality testing process.

1.3   I4MS initiative

The WASABI project is aligned with the goals and objectives of the I4MS initiative, a Horizon Europe programme that supports manufacturing SMEs with their digital transformation. I4MS is also one of the European Commission's key initiatives regarding the continued development of the pan-EU network of Digital Innovation Hubs.

2 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 Objectives of the call for experiments

WASABI's 2nd Open Call aims to fund consortia made **of 2 or 3 entities with an SME from the manufacturing sector acting as the coordinator.** This means that the SME will take the lead in managing the project, coordinate the implementation of the proposed activities, be responsible for communication with the WASABI consortium, and ensure compliance with the obligations outlined in Chapter 5.

The objective of the experiment is two-fold:

- first, the experiment should develop and use a **Digital Intelligent Assistant (DIA)** - AI-based assistant (OVOS skill) - **for their processes or products.**
- second, the experiment should **deploy and test a PrestaShop-based shop** – WASABI marketplace - to distribute the DIA developed.

The open call aligns with the European Union's goal of achieving greater sustainability and resilience for European manufacturers and contributing to goals such as the Green Deal and building capacity against future crises.

Furthermore, adding experiments to the WASABI ecosystem will directly increase the number of AI-based assistance applications in SMEs and encourage their broader adoption. The open call also aims to increase innovation capacity and make digital assistance technologies and related services available to different manufacturing companies.

2.2 Descriptive information

Table 1. WASABI 2nd Open Call summary fiche

ITEM	DETAILS
Open Call Identifier:	WASABI-OC2
Project Full Name:	White-label shop for digital intelligent assistance and human-AI collaboration in manufacturing
Acronym:	WASABI
Open Call Deadline:	October 9, 2025, 17:00 CEST
Expected duration of the experiment:	12 Months
Total Funding of the Open Call:	€ 1.522.250,00
Maximum financial support per experiment	€ 125.000,00
Who Can Apply	Consortia composed of **2 or 3 entities** are eligible to apply, with the conditions described in section 3.1.
Maximum financial support per third party:	The maximum amount of financial support that can be granted to each entity within a consortium is of **€60.000.**
Funding Rate	• For-profit entities have a 60% funding rate. • Non-profit entities have a 100% funding rate.

Indicative Expenditure Budget:	Proposals should present an indicative expenditure budget in their proposal.
Submission Language:	English
Submission Site:	https://wasabi.ems-innovalia.org/user/registration
Contact Email:	wasabi_opencall@innovalia.org

2.3 Experiment goals

The WASABI OC2 is seeking experiments that aim to improve critical processes or products in the manufacturing sector by integrating conversation-based digital assistance.

Each selected experiment must:

1. Develop a digital assistant to address a specific challenge in manufacturing:

    o Develop an OVOS skill for the targeted challenge.

    o Evaluate the skill in an experiment with the end-user SME.

    o Use the "Docker Compose project for OVOS" provided by the WASABI Consortium.

2. Create a WASABI shop to distribute the developed OVOS skill.

    o Create a marketplace and related shop making it operationally.

    o Set up the core functional module for the seller profile.

    o Upload the developed OVOS skill to the shop for distribution or sale.

    o Evaluate the shop and its core modules by filling out the evaluation forms provided by WASABI.

Key concept definitions relevant to the implementation of the experiment are provided in Chapter 2.4. Additional technical context and guidance to support applicants in understanding the tools, technologies, and frameworks made available through the WASABI project can be found in Chapter 2.5.

2.4 Definition of key concepts

This chapter presents a series of definitions related to the WASABI digital assistant and shop. It includes a description of the digital assistant and the shop components distinguishing between **core components**, which are mandatory, and **optional components**, which applicants may choose to include to add functionalities or support based on their specific needs and strategies.

2.4.1 Digital assistant

2.4.1.1 Core components

o **OVOS:** An open-source voice assistant framework focusing on privacy and customizability[1]. More details can be found at openvoiceos.org.

o **Docker Compose project for OVOS:** A git-based project containing pre-configured folders and files for deploying a minimalistic OVOS-based stack. It includes essential OVOS skills and is customizable with additional skills developed by the experiments. The project is equipped with a readme file providing deployment instructions for Linux systems, and it requires Docker version 26.0.0 or higher.

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[1] https://github.com/OpenVoiceOS

The Docker Compose project for OVOS is in BIBA's self-hosted GitLab code repository. Access is restricted, and only invited parties can pull the code. The project contains the configuration for the containers illustrated in Figure 2.
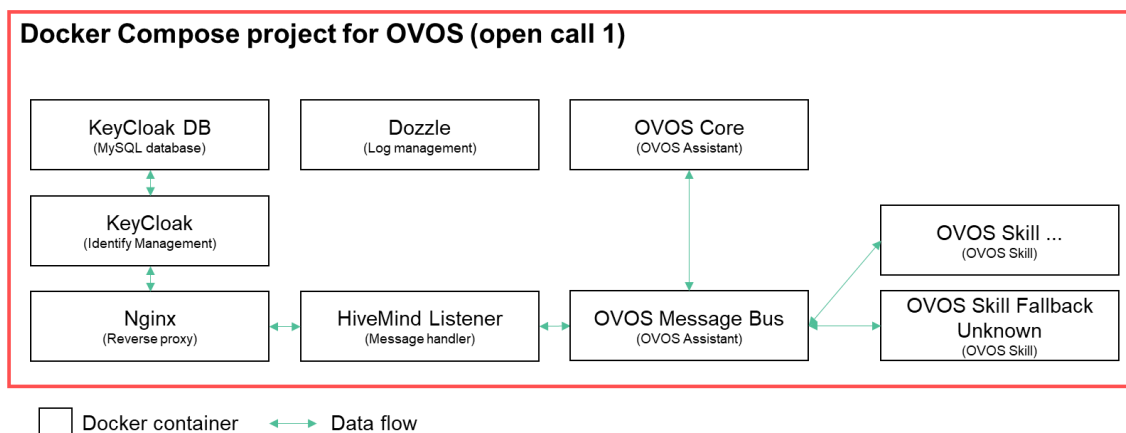

Figure 2: Container architecture of the Docker Compose project for OVOS

The containers rely on public Docker images (e.g., maintained by the OVOS project). A few public OVOS skills are deployed to provide minimum functionality.

The OVOS-related images change frequently, and older image versions are not always publicly accessible. Experiments must maintain copies of the images themselves to ensure they can demonstrate their experiment results.

2.4.1.2   *Optional components*

o   **COALA App APK:** An APK file used to install the COALA App on Android application, enabling interaction with WASABI's OVOS infrastructure. The app is compatible with Android version 10 and higher. Each version of the COALA App is provided as a separate APK file, available to experiments upon request. The COALA App features a login function and chat interface for communication with an OVOS assistant, with messages relayed via the Hivemind service. User management is handled through Keycloak. The app is open-source (GPLv3 license), allowing modifications in accordance with the license terms. The COALA logo is a registered trademark.

o   **rEUse platform:** A platform for the traceability and management of circular entities. The platform itself can be deployed on the cloud or locally in a containerized form (docker) in case where there are important limitations with external connectivity. Provides REST APIs to interact programmatically in addition to the web interface available to end-users. Authentication is managed through either a local authentication component or -optionally- partial integration with key cloak for specific scenarios (requires extensive customization). Can support multiple users and provides attachment functionality to individual entries and fields. In the context of WASABI, it has been utilized to enable traceability functions for the end-users of the Waste Management skill.

o   **WISE**: An analytics component developed by ATLANTIS to support the DIA for Quality Assurance for WASABI. WISE stands for *WASABI's Intelligent quality Support Enhancement.* Based on analytic algorithms, data acquisition and pre-processing, WISE monitors the status of critical industrial equipment to provide useful insights into the related processes upon request. Fully integrated into the DIA backend, it enhances the assistant's responses with intelligent, data-driven context. Its individual functionalities can be adjusted after proper customisation and depending on the data available.

o   **DocuBoT**: An AI component based on pre-trained Large Language Model (LLM) that was integrated into the backed of Quality Assurance DIA. DocuBoT can act as a standalone personalized digital assistant that answers

complex questions in natural language, extracting information from available documents. The component integrates information from multiple sources to deliver concise, multilingual responses for professionals involved in quality assurance processes.

o **RASA:** A conversational AI software for building text and voice-based assistants. More details can be found at rasa.com.

o **PREVENTION**: An analytics component developed by ICCS to support the DIA for Quality Assurance for WASABI. PREVENTION stands for PREscriptiVE aNalyTIcs for quality OptimizatioN. It processes time-series sensorial and event data to provide reliable and meaningful insights regarding quality issues. It operates within the Analytics-as-a-Service paradigm, offering functionalities for descriptive, predictive, and prescriptive analytics.

2.4.2 WASABI shop

2.4.2.1 Core components

o **WASABI White Label Shop (WWLS):** The WASABI White Label Shop (WWLS) is an online distribution platform for digital assistance solutions. Built with open-source software (PrestaShop), it features an integrated shared dataspace for shop instances. The shop offers end-users a replicable tool to create the custom shop instances tailored to various application.

2.4.2.2 Optional components

o **Federation module:** The WASABI Federation Module is an IDS Compliant component developed to facilitate federated querying of digital intelligent assistant skills, while allowing for secure and sovereign data exchange between participants of the WASABI Marketplace (Skill Owners, shop owners and skill buyers). To achieve these functionalities, participants should download and deploy the necessary software, following specific guidelines, and using the components to integrate with a corresponding WASABI marketplace instance. Based on the current architecture, the Federation Module could be considered as an optional component.

o **NFT Royalty module:** The NFT Royalty Module is an extension for PrestaShop 8 that equips a standard marketplace with Web3 capabilities. Once installed it adds an Admin Dashboard for deploying and funding a royalty distribution smart contract, securely stores the marketplace's admin wallet keys, and injects a "Skill Module" tab into the product workflow so administrators can mint each approved skill as an ERC-721 NFT. During checkout the module records every purchase of a previously minted Skill as an on-chain donation event and it includes both an aggregate royalty payout interface for the marketplace Administrator and an Author Dashboard where creators connect their MetaMask wallet to monitor or re-allocate their royalty shares, all without touching PrestaShop core code.

Because none of PrestaShop's essential commerce functions (catalogue, cart, payment or order fulfilment) depend on this Web3 layer, the NFT Royalty Module is classified as an **optional** component. A merchant who does not require NFT minting or royalty automation can disable or uninstall it with no impact on the normal operation of the store, whereas those seeking blockchain functionality can add it without modifying core behavior.

2.5 WASABI Support

To ensure the successful execution of the experiments, the WASABI consortium provides targeted technical support aligned with the key activities each experiment is expected to carry out.

The support is intended to assist the experiment teams in overcoming technical challenges and ensuring the successful execution of their projects. However, the WASABI consortium will not carry out the work of the experiments, nor generally support in how to setup computing infrastructure, networking, or fix IT security issues.

Therefore, at least one person needs to be nominated from applicant's side who has skills and position to handle IT issues during the experiment.

Support will be delivered through a variety of methods, including:

- **Webinar and workshop sessions** introducing key components and offering practical deployment guidance;

- **Helpdesk support** offering remote support via email, ticketing systems, or dedicated channels;

- **1:1 technical mentoring**, delivered via Microsoft Teams to assist with component deployment and integration;

- **Documentation and manuals** detailing installation, usage instructions, and best practices for component;

- **Video tutorial** explaining core functionalities of the component and offering practical use-case examples.

The table below summarizes the available support for each WASABI component:

COMPONENT	TYPE OF SUPPORT	DELIVERY METHOD(S)
OVOS skill	Support with customization of OVOS skills.	Documentation and manual; Video tutorial; 1:1 technical mentoring.
Docker Compose project	Support with the deployment of the Docker Compose project for OVOS.	Webinar; Documentation and manual; 1:1 technical mentoring.
COALA App APK	Provision of downloadable APK file and description of features.	Documentation and manual.
rEUse platform	Support with deployment, integration and usage of the reUse component.	Documentation and manual; Webinar; Helpdesk support
WISE component	Support with development, integration and customisation of WISE component.	Workshop; Document and manual; Helpdesk support.
DocuBoT component	Support with development, integration and customisation of DocuBoT component.	Workshop; Document and manual; Helpdesk support.
RASA component	Support with development of rule-based conversational platform RASA.	Video tutorial; Documentation and manual; 1:1 technical support.
PREVENTION component	Support with deployment, integration and customization of the PREVENTION component.	Workshop.
Marketplace Module	Support with the deployment of the marketplace module.	Workshop; Helpdesk support.
Federation Module	Support with the deployment and integration of the federation module.	Workshop; Document and manual; Helpdesk support.
NFT Royalty Module	Support with the deployment, integration and customization of the NFT royalty module.	Workshop.

3 OPEN CALL REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Who can apply?

The Open Call is open to **SMEs from the manufacturing sector interested in integrating and exploring AI-based digital assistant solutions to support, optimize, or enhance their existing processes or products**.[2]

Participation of a Digital Innovation Hub (DIH) or a European Digital Innovation Hub (EDIH) is mandatory for all proposals.[3]

We are specifically looking for innovative actors ready to:

- Develop and test a Digital Intelligence Assistant (DIA) tailored to a real-world use case in the manufacturing sector;
- Distribute the DIA via the WASABI marketplace, enabling its adoption by other SMEs.

Consortia composition structure

To participate in the Open Call, the consortia must include at least one SME from the manufacturing sector and one DIH. Optionally, a third partner may be involved, particularly if the manufacturing SME lacks in-house IT expertise or where additional IT expertise is required to complement the manufacturing SME's capabilities.

Therefore, the following configurations are eligible to apply for the financial support:

- **CASE A: Manufacturing SME + DIH**

  In this configuration, the manufacturing SME acts as both:

  - the developer of the DIA solution and its integration into the WASABI marketplace and;
  - the end-user of the DIA to improve their own process or product.

  This setup is suited for manufacturing SMEs with sufficient in-house IT capabilities to independently carry out the technical development.

- **CASE B: Manufacturing SME + DIH + IT solution provider[4]**

  In this configuration:

  - the manufacturing SME serves as the end-user of the DIA to improve their own process or product.
  - the IT solution provider serves as the developer of the DIA solution and its integration into the WASABI marketplace.

  This structure is strongly recommended when the manufacturing SME does not have internal IT expertise, ensuring the necessary technical quality and integration capabilities.

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[2] From a legal standpoint, eligible SMEs are defined as follows: "*The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.*"[2]

[3] DIHs/EDIHs must be registered in the European Commission's catalogue: https://european-digital-innovation-hubs.ec.europa.eu/. The role of the DIH must be clearly defined in the proposal.

[4] IT solution providers are eligible to be part of the consortium, provided they also meet the definition of a Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME).

The proposal must be submitted by the manufacturing SME. The role and responsibilities of the DIH/EDIH, or any other consortium member (IT solution provider), must be clearly outlined in the submitted proposal. The manufacturing SME must ensure the experiment can be successfully completed even without the IT solution provider.

Given the technical complexity of developing AI-based digital assistants and integrating them into the WASABI ecosystem, eligible applicants must demonstrate the capabilities and experience required to develop, implement, and commercialize such solutions.

3.2 Eligibility criteria

To be considered eligible, **consortia members** must meet the following requirements:

- Legal entities applying for financial support to third parties must be established in one of the following countries:
  - the Member States of the European Union (EU-27);
  - the Horizon Europe Associated Countries, as listed in the official Horizon Europe document "*List of Participating Countries in Horizon Europe*" *(version 2.4 – 15.01.2023).*[5]

- Submit the proposal in English. Proposals submitted in any other language will be excluded.

- Submit the proposal within the stipulated deadline. Proposals submitted later will be excluded.

- The Applicants must fully comply with GDPR and the AI Act, which will be declared through a self-assessment to identify risks.

- Status of the organisation presenting the Proposal falls under the categories presented in section 3.1.

4 EXPECTATION FOR APPLICANTS

Proposals must include:

- **A detailed description of the technical architecture**, including a clear illustration. Please indicate the components you want to use from WASABI (see Chapter 2.4) and the components you want to build during the experiment.

- **A description of the expected challenge(s) and solution(s)** provided to address them. In particular, applicants should explain how DIA based on conversational Artificial Intelligent will guide the end user through complex workflows.

- **A demonstration of the consortium's technical expertise and hands-on experience**, showing the ability to independently develop the DIA and to deploy, configure, and manage a WASABI White Label Shop (WWLS) instance based on PrestaShop. The expected expertise and practical experience include familiarity with APIs, container-based deployment (e.g., Docker), and smart contract technologies (e.g., ERC-721). Proposals lacking concrete evidence of such capabilities will fail to address the "Implementation" evaluation criteria.

- **A detailed work plan outlining how the proposed solution will be designed, developed, deployed, tested, and made operational**.

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[5] *Entities established in associated countries are eligible for funding only if the Horizon Europe association agreement with their respective country of establishment is applicable at the time of signature of the WASABI Grant Agreement (i.e., February 2023).*

- **A description of how the project will comply with the principles of trustworthy AI and relevant EU legislation**, including the AI Act, **and** how the project **will ensure GDPR compliance**.

Additionally, as the Open Call aims to attract innovative consortia who want to integrate and further develop the technologies developed within the WASABI project, applicants must fulfil specific technical requirements in the Proposal Template.

1. **Innovative Application of Conversational AI**: Applicants should incorporate open-source conversational AI technologies into their Proposal. Proposals should demonstrate how these tools could contribute to an anthropomorphic, task-oriented AI with a conversational interface. Integrating large language models is possible provided the model is open, such as Llama or Mistral.

2. **Open Data Exchange Formats**: All proposed experiments should prioritize using open data exchange formats. This approach will allow for increased transparency, interoperability, and collaboration between different aspects of the WASABI project and DIHs.

These requirements are critical elements of your Proposal and will serve as key criteria in the evaluation process. We encourage applicants to address each point carefully and thoroughly.

5 OBLIGATIONS OF SELECTED EXPERIMENT WINNERS

5.1 Experiment activities

Experiments selected though the Open Call must carry out some mandatory activities. These include meetings, dissemination activities, and submission of deliverables.

1. **Meetings (remote participation required)**

MEETING TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Kick-off Meeting	This marks the official start of the WASABI journey. All selected experiments will meet to receive an overview of the project, understand the expectations set forth in the Open Call, and review the activities outlined in the Open Call This session also provides the opportunity for each selected experiment to briefly present their case to the wider WASABI community.
Monitoring Meetings (x5)	Every two months following the kick-off, each selected experiment will attend a dedicated session with the WASABI monitoring team. These meetings are designed to: • Review the progress of the experiment; • Identify and address challenges or potential bottlenecks; • Discuss upcoming steps; • Demonstrate how AI-based voice assistance is being applied.
Final Monitoring Event	At the end of the experiment, all selected experiments will participate in a final wrap-up event. This session will serve as an opportunity to: • Present final results and key achievements; • Share insights and lessons learned; • Demonstrate how AI-based voice assistance is being applied.

Workshops/Webinars/Trainings Workshops, webinars, and training sessions may be organised by the WASABI consortium or supporting initiatives of the European Commission. Participation is mandatory if officially requested by the Contracting Authority.

2. Dissemination activities

DISSEMINATION ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
Experiment information	Provide information about the experiment on WASABI's project website.

3. Deliverables to submit

DELIVERABLE	DESCRIPTION
IPR plan	A plan that outlines how IP generated during the experiment will be managed, protected, and exploited by experiment winners.
Experiment Handbook (EH)	A comprehensive document used to monitor progress and assess impact. It includes the experiment's full scope, process, results, and lessons learned. The EH also documents software details, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and an exploitation plan for the shop.[6]
Demonstration	A live or recorded demonstration of the solution applied in the experiment, showing natural language interactions. Demonstrations must be provided during monitoring meetings and the final event.
Cost Statement (CS)	A financial summary of costs incurred during the experiment. While no detailed justification is required upon submission, participants must retain records for potential audits, in accordance with Horizon Europe regulations.

5.2 Experiment timeline

The experiments will have a duration of 12 months. The timeline of the experiments will be the following:

Table 2. Experiment timeline

TASKS AND MEETINGS	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12
MEETINGS												
Kick-off meeting	■											
Individual Monitoring Meeting			■			■			■		■	
Final monitoring event												■
DELIVERABLES												
IPR plan		■										
Experiment Handbook		■				■						

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[6] The exploitation plan should assess the operational cost of running the shop instance created to promote the developed Digital Assistant and outline a strategy to generate revenue that can cover those costs and ensure the sustainability of the shop.

Demonstration										
Cost statement										

6 BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The total funding for the **2nd Open Call** is **€ 1.522.250,00.** Funding will be allocated to the selected experiments until the budget is fully allocated. Therefore, OC2 aims to support at least **10 consortia**, subject to the final budget distribution.

6.1 Structure of the budget and funding rate

The WASABI 2nd Open Call will adopt the **Lump Sum** cost reporting system. This system significantly simplifies financial management by reducing the need for cost reporting, thereby reducing the administrative burden on beneficiaries.

Applicants must present the budget per consortium member of the experiment in the proposal. **All proposed costs must be exclusively dedicated to the execution of the experiment**.

Proposals shall allocate **at least 85% of the overall funding of the experiment to SMEs**.

The **maximum funding per experiment is 125.000€,** with a maximum of 60.000€ per **third party**, as outlined in Table 1.

6.2 Payments

The payment of the requested funding will be made in tranches as follows:

- **The first payment** will be done with the approval of the first two deliverables at M2. This payment will correspond to 25% of the total requested amount.

- **The second payment** will be done after the individual monitoring meeting in M7 upon approval of progress. This payment will correspond to 50% of the total requested amount.

- **The third payment** will be done after completion of the experiment and final approval of all deliverables linked to WASABI through the contract at M12. This payment will correspond to 25% of the total requested amount.

7 EXPERIMENT DESIGN, SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION

The proposals received will go through the following evaluation process:

Figure 3. Open Call participation procedure

The steps are briefly described in the sub-sections below.

7.1 Step 1: Experiment design

Applicants have to prepare a description of the experiment and a technical description with details concerning the implementation of the project and the exploitation of results.

The proposal template has 3 sections that applicants must fill in:

1. Technical Excellence
2. Impact
3. Implementation

These sections together <u>must not exceed ten pages in length</u> (<u>with text no smaller than 11-point Arial font</u>). Proposals will be truncated to this page count, and the independent expert evaluators will only be provided with the truncated version.

In addition to the 10-page proposal description, the proposal must have a cover page. Therefore, the total length of the proposal will be of 11 pages.

The proposal is submitted in a single stage through the Evaluation Management System (EMS) online platform: https://wasabi.ems-innovalia.org. The template can be downloaded from the EMS platform or from the WASABI web page. Applicants are required to:

- Carefully read and follow the instructions provided in the proposal template.
- Upload the proposal as a PDF document, ensuring it complies with the proposal structured.
- Ensure that the PDF size does not exceed 20 MB.

Table 3. Structure of the proposal (and indicative length per section)

SECTION	SUB-SECTIONS	
1. **Technical Excellence** **(4 pages)**	1.1.	Objectives of the experiment
	1.2.	Experiment overview
	1.3.	Objectives of the experiment
	1.4.	Scientific and Technological Excellence
2. **Impact** **(2 pages)**	2.1.	Expected impact on the SME
	2.2.	Dissemination and exploitation plan
3. **Implementation** **(4 pages)**	3.1.	Work Plan
	3.2.	Budget of the experiment
	3.3.	Participant presentation

7.2 Step 2: Submission of the proposal

The proposals are submitted digitally, by the *Applicant*, in a single-stage through the Evaluation Management System (EMS) platform. Proposals prepared according to the instructions provided, shall be submitted electronically through the EMS platform.

To begin the submission process, *Applicants* should visit the WASABI EMS website: https://wasabi.ems-innovalia.org. On the homepage, Applicants should click on **"Register" (¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.**4). Then, *Applicants* should select the option **"New proposal"** as shown in Figure Y.
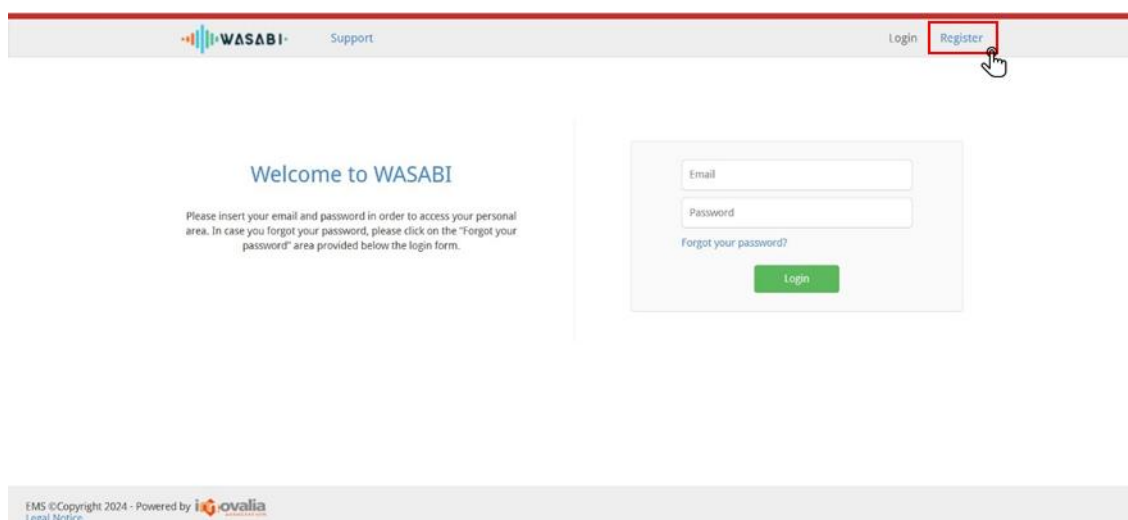
Figure 4. EMS platform overview

Upon creating the application, *Applicants* first provide general information about the proposal, such as title of the proposal and experiment acronym, in the **"General details"** section. Furthermore, *Applicants* have to select the topic and keywords of the Call that best match their proposal.

Once the general details are saved, *Applicants* will have access to fill out the rest of the sections of the proposal online. In the **"Technical Proposal"** section, Candidates are required to provide an abstract of their proposal (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Insert abstract

Next, *Applicants* can upload their technical proposal in the **"Annexes"** section (Figure 6).

My area > My proposals > PROPOSAL 1 > Annexes

Figure 6. Upload technical proposal.

Once all sections are filled in, *Applicants* can submit the proposal and receive a PDF version of it afterwards (Figure 6).

Figure 7. Submit proposal

Applicants may submit updated or new versions of their proposal as many times as needed before the call closure. Only the last version submitted before the deadline will be considered for evaluation. Late submissions, including those affected by force majeure, will not be evaluated. Similarly, proposals submitted through any means other than the online submission tool (EMS) will be rejected.

After the close of the Call, an Acknowledgment of receipt will be emailed to applicants by WASABI. Sending an acknowledgment of receipt does not imply that your Proposal has been accepted as eligible for evaluation.

7.3 Step 3: Evaluation and selection

The proposals received will go through the following evaluation process detailed below.

7.3.1 Eligibility check

All proposals received go through the automatic eligibility check. The eligibility check ensures that the criteria presented in section 3.2 are met.

7.3.2 Evaluation

The evaluation criteria and the scoring scale used are very well aligned with Horizon Europe Programme but augmented to favour the application and integration of DIA technologies in the manufacturing sector. The following table presents the detailed description for each evaluation criteria.

Table 4. Evaluation criteria

EVALUATION CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION
1. Excellence	✓ Quality and soundness of main concept and objectives. ✓ Demonstrate alignment with WASABI objectives. ✓ Address the sectors and technologies of the WASABI open call.

	✓ Innovation capacity of the experiment.
	✓ Implementation and adequate usage of DIA technologies.
	✓ New products or services to be developed.
	✓ Open data exchange and experience with Docker.
	✓ Quality of the Service-Oriented Architecture design.
	✓ Presence of a system integrator.
	✓ Collaboration with the WASABI team.
2. Impact	✓ Potential impact of the application experiment (including KPIs).
	✓ Replicability of the experiment in other SMEs.
	✓ Quality of the communication and dissemination plan.
	✓ Quality of the exploitation model.
3. Implementation	✓ Overall quality of the work plan.
	✓ Adequate budget and eligible costs to carry out the experiment.
	✓ Quality and relevant experience of the consortium members.
	✓ Demonstrate the capacity and expertise of the consortium members.
	✓ Demonstrate the appropriateness of the consortium members

Each proposal will be evaluated by two evaluators against the criteria outlined above. Each evaluator will record their opinion on each Proposal using the evaluation form. They will then communicate to reach a consensus on each Proposal's quality. The result of that agreement (comments and scores) will be reflected in the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR). Only proposals with scores above thresholds for each criterion, as indicated below, will be retained for funding.

Once the evaluation is completed, all the proposals will be ranked and a shortlist of a maximum of 10 proposals, will finally be proposed to receive funding. The rest of the approved proposals will be included in a reserve list.

The evaluation will be carried out by experts who are independent of the applicants. These experts will be individuals with experience and knowledge in digital technologies and implementing digital strategies.

Once the evaluation process is completed for all proposals, Applicants, whether successful or unsuccessful, will receive a notice on the outcome of the evaluation and their ESR.

The following table details the evaluation scores for each criterion ranging from 0 to 5:

Table 5. Interpretation of scores

SCORE	DESCRIPTION
0. Fail	The Proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.
1. Poor	The criterion is addressed inadequately, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
2. Fair	While the Proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses.
3. Good	The Proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary
4. Very good	The Proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible.
5. Excellent	The Proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question.

7.3.3 Evaluators

Each proposal will be evaluated by two experts, being one internal expert and one expert external from the consortium partners. The evaluators will sign a declaration of confidentiality and a non-conflict declaration.

7.3.4 Ranking of proposals and final selection

The result of the evaluation will be a ranking of the proposals based on the scores they have received.

In the event that two proposals receive the same score, the order of priority will be determined as follows:

- **Impact**: Proposals will be prioritized based on the scores awarded for the "Impact" criterion (#2).
- **Technical Excellence**: If the scores for "Impact" are also equal, priority will then be determined by the scores for the "Excellence" criterion (#1).
- **Implementation**: If the scores for both "Impact" and "Excellence" are equal, priority will be determined based on the "Implementation" criterion (#3), with particular attention to the efficient use of resources.

CRITERION	THRESHOLD	PRIORITY
Technical excellence	3	2
Impact	4	1
Implementation	3	3

8 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

As indicated in Chapter 5.2, experiments must provide a detailed IPR plan.

The developed OVOS skills should use a permissive open-source license like Apache 2.0 unless the experiment demonstrates an immediate and concrete commercial interest. Related backend services can use any license including a proprietary.

9 SUPPORT FOR APPLICANTS

In addition to the present Guide for Applicants, the following tools are available to support *Applicants*:

9.1 Call Helpdesk

Applicants may contact the WASABI helpdesk should they wish to receive further information on the content and conditions of the Call for Proposal. In particular for technical assistance with the submission process on EMS and further information on the call, please refer to: wasabi_opencall@innovalia.org

9.2 Useful Documents

A Frequently Asked Questions document is available on the website. The document will be periodically updated to reflect the questions received.

9.3 Official WASABI website

A dedicated webpage is available on the official WASABI website to check all the related information and to download all the documents useful for the application. The webpage is linked with the EMS platform to facilitate the connection between the tool and the uploading of the application.

10 PROJECT PARTNERS