DIGITBRAIN

D1.1 - Project Management Handbook

WP1 - Project coordination and technical management

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Version:	v.final
Date:	30.07.2020

Project details and Deliverable information

Project details

Project Title	**Digital twins bringing agility and innovation to manufacturing SMEs, by empowering a network of DIHs with an integrated digital platform that enables Manufacturing as a Service (MaaS)**
Project Type	Innovation Action
Project Acronym	DIGITbrain
Grant Agreement No.	952071
Duration	42 months
Project Start Date	01/07/2020

Deliverable information

Status (F: final; D: draft; RD: revised draft):	F (30/07/2020)
Planned delivery date	31/07/2020 (M1)
Actual delivery date	30/07/2020 (M1)
Dissemination level: (PU = Public; PP = Restricted to other program participants; RE = Restricted to a group specified by the consortium; CO = Confidential, only for members of the consortium)	PU
Type: Report, Website, Other, Ethics	Report

Document history and quality check

Document History

Version	Date (DD/MM/YYYY)	Created/Amended by	Changes
01	16/07/2020	Carolina Salas (PNO)	Structure of the document and first contents
02	21/07/2020	Antonio M. Ortiz (PNO)	Content added
03	21/07/2020	Carolina Salas (PNO)	Contributions added
04	22/07/2020	Carolina Salas (PNO)	Integration of contributions received by Daniel Weber (Fraunhofer)
05	28/07/2020	Carolina Salas (PNO)	Adjustment of some typos and format changes in the file, highlighted by some partners. Integration of contributions/suggestions received by some partners.
Final	30/07/2020	Carolina Salas (PNO)	Final check of contributions received and format adjustments.

Quality check review

Reviewer (s)	Main changes / Actions
Carolina Salas (PNO)	General check of document contents and structure.
Daniel Weber (Fraunhofer)	Overall document review.
Antonio M. Ortiz (PNO)	Final review of contents and submission to EC.

Table of Contents

List of abbreviations and definitions

Abbreviation	Definition
CA	Consortium Agreement
DIH	Digital Innovation Hub
DoA	Description of Action
EB	Executive Board
EC	European Commission
ESGB	Experiment Strategic Guidance Board
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Parties
GA	Grant Agreement
H2020	Horizon 2020
KoM	Kick-off Meeting
M	Month
PC	Project Coordinator
PM	Person-Month
PO	Project Officer
PSG	Project Steering Group
SC	Scientific Coordinator
WP	Work Package

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Executive summary

The aim of D1.1 "Project Management Handbook" is to support the DIGITbrain consortium in the day-by-day execution of project activities, providing information about project management as well as specific management procedures and rules.

This document has to be considered as a working tool, which can be improved during the project lifetime, to facilitate the collaboration among the partners and to create a "common language" within the people involved in the DIGITbrain project.

1. Introduction

The project management handbook is aimed at providing clear guidelines to the consortium in the day-by-day project activities and facilitate the work of the project coordinator for the management and monitoring of the DIGITbrain project activities.
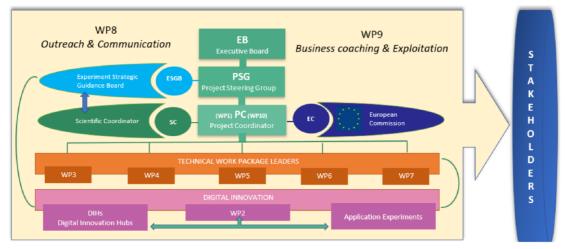
The document provides:

- Definition of roles and responsibilities for governance and management,
- Rules concerning the sharing and archive of documents, including guidelines on the usage of the internal web portal,
- Communication rules regarding mailings, meetings, and conference calls,
- Rules for usage of templates and documents naming.

2. DIGITbrain management bodies

The DIGITbrain management structure is composed by different roles and bodies that will support the project coordinator in the implementation of the management activities to guarantee the proper execution of tasks and use of resources, the follow-up of deadlines and the compliance of EC rules.

As indicated in the figure above, the management structure supporting DIGITbrain project is composed by:

Roles:

- Project Coordinator (PC)
- Scientific Coordinator (SC)
- Exploitation Manager (EM)
- Dissemination Manager (DM)
- Data Protection Officer (DPO)
- Work Packages Leaders (WPLs)

For data protection reasons, being this deliverable public, the names of the persons representing the roles above listed, are available for the consortium members in the DIGITbrain's management platform, with restricted access only for partners. See Section 10 for more details about the platform.

Management bodies:

- Executive Board (EB)
- Project Steering Group (PSG)
- Experiment Strategic Guidance Board (EGSB)
- Coordinating Committee for the FSTP

In the following sections are described, for each body, the main roles and the initial plan for meetings and decision-making procedure.

2.1.   Project Steering Group (PSG)

The Project Steering Group is composed of the PC, SC, EM, and WPLs. It is the supervisory body for the execution of the project and shall report to and be accountable to the EB.

Main tasks

- Monitor the project progress and use of resources through the information collected in the interim monitoring reports,
- Analyse and approve the results reached vs. expected every six months,
- Decide on corrective actions proposed (if any),
- Analyse the risks table,
- Recommend contractual changes and provide proper administration of the project,
- Supporting the coordinator in fulfilling obligations towards the EC and ensuring that all work meets use case demand,
- Monitor the quality check implementation.

Members

For data protection reasons, being this deliverable public, the list of members and contacts of the PSG are available just for the consortium in the internal project management area, with restricted access only for partners.

For each member of the PSG also a deputy will be appointed in case the main contact is not available or not reactive.

Schedule for meetings

The PSG will perform quarterly meetings (as agreed in the Consortium Agreement). If necessary, additional PSG meetings will be scheduled if required by the circumstances of the project.

2.2.   Executive Board (EB)

It is the ultimate decision-making body of the consortium and is composed of at least one representative of each beneficiary holding signature power in their organisations, and/or being authorized to commit his/her organization to the decisions of the EB.

Main tasks

- Support the PC in fulfilling all obligation towards the EC and to ensure that the work meets requirements.
- Fundamental changes of the planned work/deliverables that will also be coordinated with/proposed to the EC.

Members

For data protection reasons, being this deliverable public, the list of members and contacts of the EB are available for the consortium members in the internal project management area, with restricted access only for partners.

For each member of the EB also a deputy will be appointed in case the main contact is not available or not reactive.

Schedule for meetings

Meetings of the EB will be coincident with General Assembly meetings (every 6 months), and additional EB meetings will be organized on demand.

2.3. Experiment Strategic Guidance Board (ESGB)

The ESGB is composed by: PC + SC + START4.0 + Innomine + FCTA + one representative of each DIH and experiment:

- Will make final decisions on the Innovation Experiments implementation alternatives.
- The initially planned effort and costs that were allocated to the related focus areas and specifically that part of the budget that was not finally assigned to a specific implementation partner will be carefully planned and decided by the ESGB.

Members

For data protection reasons, being this deliverable public, the list of members and contacts of the ESGB are available for the consortium members in the internal project management area, with restricted access only for partners.

For each member of the ESGB also a deputy will be appointed in case the main contact is not available or not reactive.

Schedule for meetings

The ESGB will perform quarterly meetings to maintain alignment with experiments quarterly reports. Additional ESGB meetings will be scheduled if required by the circumstances of the project.

2.4. Coordinating Committee for the FSTP

Composed of FCTA, DIHs, and a pool of external experts, the Coordinating Committee for the FSTP will be in charge of selecting the experiment to be granted support in the two Open Calls of the project.

3. Decision-making procedures

As indicated in the Consortium Agreement, which details the rights and obligations of the beneficiaries, the communication between different levels is established as follows:

- WPLs will periodically report the work progress to the next upper level (PC/SC), and on demand in case of deviations.
- PC will coordinate the communication with the EC, as well as initiate PSG meetings (whether periodical or on demand).
- The PSG will interact with the EB.
- WPLs coordinate daily work with the involvement of task leaders.

- DIHs supervise the application experiments and report the ESGB that must maintain the SC informed about the activities and progress of the application experiments.

Decision-making is based on a democratic approach in which each participant has a vote. Decisions will be reached by simple majority. More than 50% of the members must be present for the EB to be quorate and make decisions. In the event of a tied vote, the PC will have the casting vote.

4. Monitoring and reporting

4.1. Interim monitoring reports

Interim monitoring reports are useful for identifying strengths and weaknesses, and for providing the responsible people with sufficient information to make the right decisions at the right time to improve the quality of the results.

Four (4) Interim reports are expected to be prepared during the project: at M6, M18, M24, M36).

Template/reminder will be sent at least 5 weeks before deadline.

Interim reports will be used to collect information about the status of the project and the progress achieved by each single partner in the tasks/WPs of their responsibility, as well as the progress of the project as a whole. These reports shall include information on activities realised, results reached, usage of resources, issues (if any) arose during the period of reference and contingency plans suggested and/or agreed to solve the issues.

The interim reports template will follow a structure similar to the one for the preparation of Periodic Reports. As matter of fact, the progress reports will collect the same information (in similar format) of the Periodic Reports to facilitate the project coordinator, and the Project Steering Group, the monitoring of project progress, and the integration of the information collected every six months to provide consolidated reports to the EC.

The interim reports will be also used to monitor the alignment of the usage of resources of each partner with respect to what planned in the DoA, and to provide information on any eventual adjustment needed.

Interim monitoring reports will be structured as follow:
- Publishable summary 6 months period.
- Explanation of the work carried out per WP for the 6 months period.
- Main WP objectives.
- Work progress and achievements per task.
- Deviation and corrective action per WP.
- Deliverables and milestones tables.
- Update of risks and contingency plan.
- Table of effort (PMs and activities) per partner involved in the period/tasks.
- Direct costs per partner involved.

These reports will be elaborated for internal use in the consortium, not for the submission to the EC.

4.2. Reporting to the European Commission

The project has three formal reporting periods with a duration of 12, 18, and 12 months:

- First reporting period: 1st July 2020 - 30th June 2021.
- Second reporting period: 1st July 2021 - 31st December 2022.
- Third reporting period: 1st January 2023 - 31st December 2023.

The information to be provided must contain both technical and financial reports as indicated in the Grant Agreement.

5. Project reviews

The PC is in regular contact with the Project Officer to report the project progress on the scheduled activities in a transparent and practical manner so the PO can continuously monitor the performance of the project in accordance with the Description of Action. Such contact may occur by email, phone calls, or physical meetings.

Periodic contractual technical reviews will be performed by the EC to assess the work carried out in the project. Initially, one project review per reporting period is expected.

6. Amendments and potential issues

The main aim of the beneficiaries is to carry out the planned tasks and activities within the time scheduled and the foreseen resources as described in the Grant Agreement.

Any deviation (e.g. delays, change in the status of a beneficiary, etc.) must be communicated immediately to the PC. The PC shall resolve queries and advice to the beneficiaries. If further action is needed, the PC will contact the PO to request clarifications and procedures to be followed.

Significant deviations from the work plan described in the DoA may require an amendment and must be communicated in writing to the PC. In order to request an amendment, the involved beneficiary/ies need to first communicate it to the PC, and if confirmed, the beneficiary/ies involved should distribute a written communication to the consortium detailing the reason behind the proposed changes, as well as the direct consequences in terms of budget, activities, work plan, etc.

If the amendment need is confirmed, the PC will follow the rules detailed in the annotated Grant Agreement to comply with the requirements and procedures indicated by the EC, by requesting the amendment process to the PO on behalf of the consortium.

Potential issues derived from the worldwide COVID-19 crisis will receive special attention to early identify any potential delay or deviation from the planned activities in the project.

7. Rules and guidelines for documents preparation

When producing any document, related to DIGITbrain, to be distributed to at least another Partner of the project, each contributor shall apply the following basic rules:

- Produce the document in an electronic file with the same name as the instance identifier (see next sections),
- Use the British English,
- Use a spell checker to reduce typo errors,
- Use the appropriate template: follow the styles in the word document (Headings, Normal, etc),
- Follow the general guidelines (structure of the document) as well as the specific guidelines included in the template if available,
- Final version of the documents must be uploaded by deliverable responsible or by the PC, in word and pdf format, in the specific folder of DIGITbrain's internal management area.

Moreover, to facilitate the control and history of the documents elaborated by the consortium, the naming of the files produced will be homogenized.

7.1. Files name Deliverables

In the case of Deliverables, the versions of the documents, exchanged among partners before the final submission to the European Commission, will be versioned according to the following format:

DIGITbrain_Dn_title_v.XX

Where:

- "Dn" is associated to the deliverable number specified in the DoA.
- "title" is the name of the deliverable.
- "v" is referred to the version of the document, the letter "v" will be kept in the name of the deliverable.
- "XX" is a number for the major revision (made by the responsible), (two digits).

The final versions of the document to be submitted to the European Commission will be simply labelled as version "final", as follow:

Example: "DIGITbrain_D1.1_Project Management Handbook_v.final"

7.2. Files name not deliverables

The Filename shall be the concatenation of the following items separated by underscore ("_"):

- The Project name (DIGITbrain),
- The whole name of the document (e.g. Minutes KoM),
- The word "DRAFT" followed by the letter "v" (meaning "version"),
- The version letter "v" followed by the version number (two digits),
- The "final" version of the file will be identified as "v.final".

Examples: "DIGITbrain_Action list_draft_v.01"; "DIGITbrain_KoM_minutes_v.final".

The "final" version of the documents will be archived in the DIGITbrain Internal Portal under the folder related to the specific activity: i.e. meetings, deliverables, WP, etc.

7.3.   Emails

To easily identify the emails related to the project, partners will add the acronym "DIGITbrain" as first in the subject of any email associated to the project.

Examples: "DIGITbrain: WPx subject"; "DIGITbrain: GA subject".

8. Templates

Templates are made available for partners to strengthen the uniformity of the outputs, including for presentations (PowerPoint), project deliverables and reports.

Such templates can be used for internal and external communications.

Templates are available in the DIGITbrain's management platform with access allowed only to partners.

8.1.   Deliverables templates

To homogenize the structure of the documents prepared during the project, a template for deliverables was defined. This template (in word format) consists in a general document structure that must be used by each deliverable responsible to prepare the document.

The template is composed mainly by the following sections:

- Cover: including the project references and number and title of the deliverable,
- Table of contents,
- Publishable summary: even when the level of dissemination is confidential or restricted,
- Content: body of the document,
- Conclusions,
- Bibliography (if any).
- Annexes (if any).

8.2.   Template for minutes of meetings/calls

A word template has been created for the preparation of the minutes of project meetings. This template allows to include a detailed description of the meeting outputs (when required) and an "action list" table where the activities to be realised in the upcoming days/weeks/months are listed, indicating: WP associated to the action, description of the action, who will do the action, and when it should be completed.

8.3.   Power point presentations template

A specific power point presentation template has been designed to be used in internal meetings and for the project's presentation in dissemination events.

The power point presentation includes the logo of the project, specific format for fonts and titles, and a frame and colours that identify the project.

9. Communication

Properly communicating on a project is a critical project success factor. Communication within DIGITbrain will take mainly the form of:

- Information sharing and storage through the internal management portal
- Emails via mailing list regularly updated and available in the internal management portal
- Phone, Call conferences, Web conference
- Meetings.

9.1.   Communication with the Commission

The Project Coordinator is responsible for an efficient communication between the consortium and the EC. Any communication of the partners with the EC shall pass through the Project Coordinator. This means that the partners shall not directly contact the European Commission officers for questions regarding the DIGITbrain project.

9.2.   Internal communication

To allow an effective communication among people involved in the project, a set of mailing lists have been created (separated per function in the organisation, involvement in the project, etc.). The contacts for the mailing list shall be continuously updated by the PC, after receiving request for update by the project partners.

The most updated version of a detailed list of contacts (in excel format) is available in the internal project website.

9.3.   Administrative data for formal communication

Partners shall provide updated information regarding administrative data such as address to which send paper documentation (i.e. countersigned version of the CA), person of contacts, banking information form (to be confirmed prior any wire transfer from PNO towards the partners), changes in legal structure (change of ownership, change of name, etc.).

9.4.   Meetings/call conferences

The consortium can meet any time when needed taking into consideration the limit of budget allocated for travels and the current COVID-19 conditions.

Call conference are considered an effective way to be in contact and provide updates about progress of activities. The following meetings/conferences are planned:

- Kick-off Meeting: already held.
- Progress meetings (at least one every 6 months).
- Final meeting.
- WPs meetings/call/web conferences: at any time when requested by the WP leader or SC.
- Tasks meetings/call/web conferences: at any time when requested by task leader or WP leader.

- Review meetings: with the participation of the EC PO + external reviewers. As indicated in the GA.

Meetings dates and timing shall be defined, when possible, with at least 3 months in advance.

9.5. External communication

In order to properly communicate the project activities to the general public and raise the interest of the potential stakeholders.

Any communication from the DIGITbrain project must contain the project logo, the EU flag, and the following statement: "DIGITbrain has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952071".

The project has established various communication channels targeting diverse audiences:

9.5.1. Project website

Targeting the general public, and also containing specific sections with dedicated content, the website www.digitbrain.eu will be continuously updated with project general information, brochures, news, deliverables, publications, consortium information, and complementary content to provide visitors a broad idea of the project concept and the progress of the activities.

9.5.2. Social media

Multiple profiles in different social networks have been created to communicate the project activities and disseminate the outcomes of the project to different audiences:

- Twitter: twitter.com/digitbrain_eu
- Facebook: facebook.com/DIGITbrainProject
- LinkedIn: linkedin.com/groups/12439191/

Any content to be shared using social media should be sent to the WP8 leader.

9.5.3. Dissemination material

Brochures, posters, white papers, videos, scientific publications, press material, newsletters, press releases, presentations, etc., will be prepared to promote the DIGITbrain results. These materials will follow quality standards and will be distributed in the regular dissemination activities scheduled in the project and performed by WP8 participants.

All materials will be produced in British English; translations to other European languages may be performed by interested beneficiaries.

Dissemination material will be available to download in the internal management platform of the project, as described in Section 10.

9.5.4. Liaison with related initiatives

DIGITbrain will perform liaison activities with related R&I activities, especially with I4MS initiatives with the aim of finding synergies and common interests to carry out further dissemination activities.

9.5.5. Events

DIGITbrain will organize two code camps per experiment wave with the aim of boosting the implementation of the experiments. Experiment and core technical partners will participate in the DIGITbrain code camps.

Training events will be organised for DIHs and local stakeholders on the DIGITbrain technology.

Finally, one large event will be organized by the end of the project to disseminate the project results.

10. DIGITbrain management platform

A management platform, restricted for partners' internal usage, has been set-up by the PC (PNO) at the beginning of the project to facilitate a proper communication and document sharing among the consortium.

The objective of the Management Platform is to be an efficient tool to internally manage and share documents and information related to the project.

The management platform has two main functions:

- Act as repository of all the useful documents (templates, GA, CA, guidelines, list of contacts, etc.) to support the management of the project.
- Be a management tool to exchange documents per WPs, plan meetings, maintain a calendar of internal events/meetings dates, etc.

Each person, associated to a beneficiary of DIGITbrain, has his own user ID and password to access to the portal.

In addition, Work Packages leaders are able to manage the folder of their own WPs, organising and sharing the documentation with the people involved in the specific WP.

10.1. Main sections and tools

The platform is composed by the following sections and tools.

10.1.1. Sections of contents

- **DOCUMENTS**: this section is the document repository of the DIGITbrain project where each partner is able to upload and download documents. The documents are stored in specific folders to facilitate the document search. Folders could be reorganised according to necessities and the repository has the option of assigning different permission levels to guarantee the right privacy of each documents.

- **PARTNERS**: it includes the list (organisation name, last name, first name and email) of all people linked to the project in the portal.

10.1.2. Tools for management

- **CALENDAR**: each user is able to add new events and delete the ones that he/she creates. Events in the calendar are visible to all users and the event could be edit any time.
- **DOODLE**: this section offers the possibility to collect opinion of all users for meetings, calls, events data, etc. Each user can create new doodles filling a specific online form.
- **MAILING LISTS**: this tool allows the coordinator to create mailing lists with the emails of people associated to the project. It is possible to create lists for each WP, for just administrative people, for the steering committee members, etc. The PC will keep update the mailing lists. See Section 9.2 "Internal communication".

10.2. Security and Backup

The platform is hosted by PNO (SaaS) and reachable through an authentication system that is managed by PNO. Main security characteristics are:

- The platform is totally under secure connection using SSL protocol.
- The application stands on a dedicated machine not accessible from other/applications or domains.
- The machine is hosted by a primary world leading service with high-level physical and ICT security.
- The entire management is under PNO control and its access is restricted by certificates own by PNO administrators.

Backup:

- A backup of the entire system is done daily with a complete snapshot of the Linux virtual machine.
- Application backups (database, files, etc.) are executed with 24 hours frequency.
- Backup are stored on a separate storage disks provided by the hosting service.

11. Conclusions

This Project Management Handbook is aimed at providing clear guidelines to the consortium in the day-by-day project activities, and to facilitate the monitoring of DIGITbrain progress.

These guidelines should be adopted by all project's partners in order to establish and share an operational methodology to reduce the project overhead and increase the efficiency of the work carried out.

It is expected that all members of DIGITbrain consortium are aware of the general aspects addressed in this document to successfully contribute to the project.

12. BIBLIOGRAPHY / REFERENCES

- DIGITbrain Description of Action (DoA).
- Kick-off meeting presentations of WP1 and WP10.
- Consortium Agreement (CA).