



A toolset for hyper-realistic and XR-based human-human and human-machine interactions, PRESENCE

Grant Agreement nº 101135025

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D7.1 Project Management Handbook

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¹ Dr. Sofia from fortiss GmbH has kindly accepted that this editor uses the contents of CODECO's project D1 [public] deliverable, in section 7 *Gender Neutral Guidelines*. The Cognitive Decentralised Edge Cloud Orchestration, CODECO is an Advanced Computing and Big Data project funded by the EU HE-GA nº 101092696



CHANGE HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	PARTNERS	DESCRIPTION/COMMENTS
V.0-4	February	i2CAT	ToC, governing diagram, initial contents
V0.5	07/03/24	i2CAT	First draft for Coordination internal Review
V1.0	08/03/24	I2CAT	Addition of section 7
V1.1	11/03/24	i2CAT	First consolidate version for project' internal Review
V1.2	22/03/24	I2CAT	Revision on the formulation of gender neutral, diverse user requirements in general and specific user requirements. Addition of definitions and abbreviations. Slight changes in the phrasing, typo corrections Second and final consolidated version Submitted to the EC

Executive Summary

This Project Management Handbook and contains the Management Guidelines which are set to provide Consortium's partners with key information regarding work organization and procedures and thus contribute to the production of high-quality project results. The objective is to provide the project partners with a handbook through which they can find the management structure, procedures, tasks, responsibilities and guidelines on non-technical aspects of project execution.

The document presents the project management structure and responsibilities, reporting and communication procedures and communication mechanisms. The main points included this document are: Description of the project structure and of the documents of reference; Collaborative tools, internal communication; Meetings, decision-making and conflict resolution procedures; Project reporting procedures including financial reporting; Deliverables Q&A; Obligations in dissemination: acknowledgement and output reporting; and Guidelines on Gender Neutral issues.

The content of this deliverable does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed in the deliverable lies entirely with the author(s).



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1. Introduction

PRESENCE is a research project coordinated by i2CAT that comprehends a consortium of seventeen EU and associated country partners:

FUNDACIO PRIVADA I2CAT, INTERNET I INNOVACIO DIGITAL A CATALUNYA (i2CAT),

ACTRONIKA (ACTRO),

UNIVERSITAET HAMBURG (UHAM),

ETHNIKO KENTRO EREVNAS KAI TECHNOLOGIKIS ANAPTYXIS (CERTH),

RAYTRIX GMBH (Raytrix),

SENSEGLOVE B.V. (SG),

GO TOUCH VR (INTER),

DIDIMO, S.A. (DIDIMO),

VECTION ITALY SRL (Vection),

UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA (UB),

UNITY TECHNOLOGIES APS (UNITY),

SOUND HOLDING B.V. (SOUND),

INTERUNIVERSITAIR MICRO-ELECTRONICA CENTRUM (IMEC),

JOANNEUM RESEARCH FORSCHUNGSGESELLSCHAFT MBH (JRS),

SYNCVR MEDICAL NL B.V (SVR),

ZAUBAR UG (HAFTUNGSBESCHRAENKT) (ZAUBAR), and

ARTANIM FOUNDATION (ARTANIM).

Project full title: A toolset for hyper-realistic and XR-based human-human and human-machine interactions

Project acronym: PRESENCE

Funding Agency: European Commission (EC)

Contract number: HE Grant Agreement nº 101135025

Instrument of funding: RIA, Research and Innovation Action

Start date: 01/01/2024

End date: 31/12/2026

Overall budget: 8.521.645,00 €

EU Funding: 7.655.707,50 €

Number of partners: 17



1.1. Purpose, scope and structure

This deliverable D7.1 is the Project Management Handbook and contains the Management Guidelines which are set to provide Consortium's partners with **key information regarding work organization and procedures** and thus **contribute to the production of high-quality project results.** The objective is to provide the project partners with a handbook through which they can find the management structure, procedures, tasks, responsibilities and guidelines on non-technical aspects of project execution.

The established procedures, are based on the general principles and policies defined in underlying basic regulations (Horizon Europe Framework Programme General Rules for participation [Ref. 1], contracts and agreements [Ref. 2], [Ref. 3] [Ref. 4] and are aimed to assure quality implementation of PRESENCE. Where necessary or convenient, specific references are given.

This document presents the project management structure and responsibilities, reporting and communication procedures and communication mechanisms. The main points included this document are:

- Description of the project structure and of the documents of reference;
- Collaborative tools, internal communication;
- Meetings, decision-making and conflict resolution procedures;
- Project reporting procedures including financial reporting;
- Deliverables Q&A;
- Obligations in dissemination: acknowledgement and output reporting s;
- Guidelines on Gender Neutral issues;

D7.1 is a living document that will be updated internally when needed.

1.2. Precedence and Reference documents

The general principles for the project execution have been defined in the Grant Agreement (EC-GA), the Description of the Action (DoA) and in the Consortium Agreement (CA) provisions.

The Project Management handbook shall not replace any of the established agreements within the consortium or with the EC, or any of the EC guidelines for project implementation and documentation. Where there are any apparent or real inconsistencies between these documents the following order of precedence will be applied:

- 1. Grant Agreement with European Commission (EC) and its annexes [Ref. 1]
- 2. Annotated Grant Agreement EU Funded Programmes 2021-2027 (v1.0 draft)²
- 3. Consortium Agreement [Ref. 2]
- 4. Project Management handbook

If doubts persist, they have to be resolved by decisions of the established project authorities: Technical Committee (TC) and if deemed necessary the General Assembly (GA).

² <u>https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/aga_en.pdf</u>



1.2.1. Grant Agreement

The **Grant Agreement (EC-GA) defines the contractual obligations set by European Commission (EC)**. It defines the rights and obligations together with the terms and conditions that are applicable to the grant awarded and the beneficiaries and associated partners who will be implementing the action. It is signed by the EC and the beneficiaries of the action. It has seven parts:

- Preamble
- Terms and Conditions (including Data Sheet)
- Annex 1 Description of the action (DoA)
- Annex 2 Estimated budget for the action & Additional information on the estimated budget
- Annex 3 Accession Forms
- Annex 4 Model for the financial statements³
- Annex 5 Specific rules

Any modification of the Grant Agreement dispositions, and its annexes must be approved by the General Assembly and by the EC. It must be requested as an amendment to the document. If approved, the latest version of the document will be uploaded to the Participant Portal and to the internal document repository of the project (Repository folder).

1.2.2. Contract amendments

Contract amendments are coordinated by the Financial Manager (FM). Any change affecting the contract leads to a major review of the Grant Agreement and its Annexes and requires a high level of interaction with the EC Project Officer (EC-PO) and the project partners.

Events that require or trigger contract amendments are:

- Beneficiaries **joining or leaving the consortium** (it includes changes at legal and financial level of the current beneficiaries).
- Relevant modifications of the **budget** and / or its distribution (beneficiaries are allowed to slightly transfer budget between different activities and between themselves in so far as the work is carried out as foreseen in the DoA).
- Relevant changes in the detailed work plan.
- Other

The amendment request consists of:

- updated structured information on the Grant Management System screens
- amendment request letter: the letter with the request and reasons for the amendment
- amendment core (including new version of EC-GA Annexes 1 and 2, if needed): the legal document with the list of amendment clauses
- supporting documents: documents uploaded by the consortium, consolidated Grant Agreement, etc

³ CFS, Certificate on Financial Statement, Audit certificate



Relocation or resignation of key personnel does not lead to an amendment of the contract if it does not require the change of budgets, objectives, the work plan or the inclusion / exclusion of a beneficiary. The FM has to notify such changes to the EC-PO.

1.3. Financial, legal and administrative data confidential treatment

The FM is well aware that the project partners value its privacy.

Therefore, it is understood that, all the sensible information shared at the occasion of queries (mainly relate salaries, personal data and/or internal circumstances of facts in the involved institution) shared by any project partner with the Financial Manager, will received duly confidential treatment and stored (in case of documentation exchange) in accordance with privacy rules as for instance private electronic folders only available to the Financial Manager) of PRESENCE.

1.3.1. Consortium Agreement

The Consortium Agreement (CA) is an **internal agreement between the consortium members (Beneficiaries and Associated Partner)**. The purpose of the CA is to specify the organization of the consortium, the distribution of the work, the management of the Project and the rules for distributing the EU funds. It also covers additional rules on rights and obligations related to background and results; settlement of internal disputes; and liability, indemnification and confidentiality arrangements between the beneficiaries.

Any further change of the CA must be agreed by all partners.

1.3.2. Additional documentation

In order to facilitate the management of the project additional information covering financial management, administrative management, dissemination guidelines etc. will be regularly uploaded in the management section (WP7 folder) of the project repository.

2. Project structure and reference documents

2.1. Management structure's overview

This section describes the management structure and the different bodies and roles that ensure a proper implementation of the action. The underlying objective is to facilitate the day-to-day activity, define the responsibilities that allow a monitoring of the action in order to prevent conflicts.

To simplify partners' load of work but at the same time keep track of on-going progress, the project structure was kept intentionally simple, avoiding standing committees, thematic sub-teams or working groups.

Following this line, the main responsibilities stand on two main entities: on one hand the **Technical Committee (TC)**, responsible for exchanging and deciding on technical development and progress of work with a high frequency of contact (monthly virtual meetings), and the **General Assembly (GA)** on a less frequent basis (at least once per year, ideally twice as scheduled), responsible for strategic project management issues.



Due to the sensitivity and high interdependency of the work carried out in the different WPs, the Project Management (WP7) plays an important role as coordinator and facilitator of communication, moderator of debates and controller of Objectives and Work Plan. The **Coordinator (PC)** of PRESENCE is backed by an experienced **Technical Manager (TM)** and a **Financial Manager (FM)** that support in the overall consortium management.

Normal roles and governing bodies of the project are presented in the following Figure 1:



Figure 1: Project Management Structure

At a glance, the **General Assembly (GA)**, chaired by the Project Coordinator is the **highest authority** with respect to the Project, and is mainly responsible for the overall review of the project progress, its resources and for decisions that affect its overall strategy and development and that may lead to contract amendments or modifications of plans that have impact on all the consortium, such as changes in the implementation plan, project scope and/or resource allocation between WPs and evolution of the partnership composition. Each partner is represented and has a single vote.

The Management Team is composed by the Project Coordinator (PC), the Technical Manager (TM) and the and the Financial Manager (FM). The latter is a member of the Project Management Office from i2CAT and will assist in the coordination of the financial, legal, organizational and administrative tasks, facilitating the management and monitoring of the project progress.

Last by not least, the **Technical Committee (TC)** is the **executive decision-making body**; chaired by the Technical manager and composed by the PC, the TM, the FM, the WP Leaders (WPLs) and the Integration Manager (IM). It steers and monitors the execution of the project and is responsible for implementing the decisions of the GA. The TC supervises and drives the execution of the implementation plan. Is responsible for assuring fulfilment of project milestones, and reviews, and approves the work of the individual WPs. Among all the WP we have to highlight the role of WP6 Leader, who ensures that the knowledge gained in this project will be exploited and disseminated for the maximum benefit of the participants. A description of the current members covering the aforementioned functions and boards is presented in the following tables. Any update to be included during the project execution will be provided as updated to this document in the document repository of the project.



General Assembly (GA)	Responsible of the final decisions on the overall policies of the consortium
Chaired by	The Project Coordinator (PC) - i2CAT
Participants	One authorised representative of each Partner.
Meeting frequency	At least once a year, ideally twice a year
	 ⇒ Content, Finances and intellectual property rights: changes to the annexes 1 and 2 of the GA, changes of the consortium plan.
Tasks	⇒ Evolution of the consortium: Entry of a new Party, withdrawal of party, identification of a breach by a Party.
	\Rightarrow Appointments to the TC
Project Management Team	Facilitates the management and monitoring of the project progress Responsible for coordination of the overall project strategy
Chaired by	The Project Coordinator (PC)
Participants	Project Coordinator (PC), Technical Manager (TM) and Financial Manager (FM)
Meeting frequency	As needed, at least quarterly
Tasks	 ⇒ Prepare the meetings, propose decisions and prepare the agenda of the GA ⇒ Management and monitoring of the project progress. Is responsible for setting the overall project strategy ⇒ Monitor the effective and efficient implementation of the Project ⇒ Evaluate the progress against the planned milestones ⇒ Support in preparing the meetings with the funding authorities and in preparing deliverables. ⇒ Attempt to resolve inter-partner issues ⇒ Ensure cross activity integration ⇒ Oversee the gender issues ⇒ Monitor ethics and GDPR issues ⇒ Track the achievements of technical milestones, monitor technical risks
Technical Committee (TC)	Responsible for the technical coordination and alignment across technical WPs (WP1-6) and use case executions
Chaired by	The Technical Manager (TM)
Participants	PC, TM, FM, WPLs and IM
Meeting frequency	Monthly
Tasks	 ⇒ Smooth running of the project activities ⇒ Quality validation of the technical outcome ⇒ Decide corrective technical measures ⇒ Early detection of potential conflicts

Table 2: PRESENCE Governing Bodies



	\Rightarrow Prepare the content and timing of joint publications
	\Rightarrow Provide strategic advice and validation of projects approach from the point of view of industrial and regulator representatives.
	\Rightarrow Identify exploitable outcomes
	\Rightarrow Monitor the developments in the market.
	\Rightarrow Ensure that all the innovation activities within the project reach their target and maximize its impact while ensuring the IPR rules.

	Table 2. FRESENCE managenal roles			
Project Coordinator (PC, i2CAT)	Intermediary between the EC and the consortium, it will control and coordinate the project and the project reporting			
	\Rightarrow Monitor compliance by the partners with their obligations.			
	⇒ Collecting, reviewing to verify consistency and submitting reports, other deliverables (including financial statements and related certifications) and specific requested documents to the Funding			
	\Rightarrow Transmitting documents and information connected with the Project to any other Parties concerned			
Responsibilities	$\Rightarrow~$ Coordinate the communication and ease the flow of information among partners and all requested reports within the deadlines agreed upon with the EC			
	$\Rightarrow~$ Act as the intermediary for all communications between the beneficiaries and the Commission			
	\Rightarrow Jointly with the TM, coordination of the technical work and the technical issues of EC reviews			
	\Rightarrow Submit the deliverables and reports to the Commission			
	\Rightarrow Coordinate jointly with the TM the content and timing of joint publications			
Financial Manager (FM, i2CAT)	Support the PC, the TM, the TC and the GA in the administrative, legal, organizational and financial duties			
	\Rightarrow Assist the Project Coordinator in the project management tasks.			
	\Rightarrow Manage the delivery and the follow-up of administrative and financial documents			
Responsibilities	\Rightarrow Administer the financial contribution of the Funding Authority and fulfilling the financial tasks described in Section 7 of the CA			
	\Rightarrow Permanent contact point for the Coordinator and all the Partners regarding the formalities of the participation in the project and requests and maintaining a high level of communication within the Consortium.			
	\Rightarrow Provides support and assistance to the different project bodies.			
Technical Manager (TM, UHAM)	Supervise the technical progress of the project			
Responsibilities	⇒ Provide technical vision and direction, coordination across technical WPs (WP1-WP6); supporting the PC in supervising the progress of the project, monitoring and assessing technical progress and KPIs, managing technical risks			
	$\Rightarrow~$ Maintain the technical focus of the project as a whole and to coordinate the innovation actions.			
	$\Rightarrow~$ Jointly with the PC, coordinate the technical report and issues of EC reviews			

Table 2: PRESENCE Managerial roles



	\Rightarrow Mediate in all technical conflicts among tasks, monitoring the alignment of the project work with the project technical objectives.
	\Rightarrow Co-organise and monitor the internal review of EC deliverables
	\Rightarrow Coordinate the dissemination of the technical information
	\Rightarrow Monitor and coordinate the innovation actions all along the project, in cooperation with the PC and the WP6 Leader
Integration Manager (IM, Vection)	Responsible for monitoring the technologies integrations and its results, monitoring of the use cases jointly with the WP5 Leader
	\Rightarrow Monitoring the research results and identifying the exploitable assets generated by the project,
Responsibilities	⇒ Co-leading with the WP6 Leader to the generation of foreground and side ground, analysing the market and proposing how to implement and deploy the project achievements in the real world.
	$\Rightarrow~$ Ensuring alignment of impact creation activities with stated impact KPIs for effective achievement of the project objectives
Work Package Leaders (WPLs⁴)	Responsible for planning and supervising the progress of work within their Work Package, coordinating the inputs of the involved partners
	\Rightarrow Supervising quality and timeliness of deliverables
	\Rightarrow Coordinating the KPI surveillance and production of reports at WP level
Responsibilities	$\Rightarrow~$ Observing compliance with the ethics provisions as well as events or results affecting IPR issues
	\Rightarrow Detecting deviations, prepare measures and report them to the TC
Task Leaders	Responsible for concrete tasks, planning and monitoring the progress of work within its task, as well as the contributions of the involved partners
	\Rightarrow Organising and steering the task development
Responsibilities	\Rightarrow Contributing to the reporting duties at task level
	\Rightarrow Supporting the WPL in the coordination of the different teams inside the WP
	\Rightarrow Participating in the coordination of the WP meetings

2.1.1. Additional boards

Additional boards for the implementation of the project may be created and called by GA or TC to clarify topics of their competence that require some external view.

2.2. Conflicts

The good will to avoid conflicts and to act in good faith is essential for a project like PRESENCE. Major disruption by conflicts of interest can be avoided through coordination of actions at all levels and in all areas of the project. By doing so, consensus can be reached at early stages.

When partners identify **conflicts which cannot be resolved through bi-lateral communication**, **then they should bring the issues to the attention of the PC** (and the TM when the issue relates to the project activities implementation) **immediately**.

⁴ i2CAT (WP2 and WP7), ACTRO (WP3), UHAM (WP4), UNITY (WP5) and Sound (WP6)



Any critical decision that has to be taken, will be discussed by the highest authorities of the project: the TC and the GA.

2.3. Events that must be immediately reported

Partners must immediately inform the PC, who will inform the EU-PO and the Consortium of any events which are likely to significantly affect or delay the implementation of the action or the EU's financial interests. These events are defined in the EC-GA as follow:

- Change of the Principal Investigator (PI)
- Changes in its legal, financial, technical, organizational or ownership situation or those of its linked third parties and
- Changes in the name, address, legal form, organization type of its linked third parties;
- Any circumstance affecting the decision to award the grant or compliance with the requirements under the agreement.

In addition, each beneficiary must keep the information stored in the Participant Portal up to date, in particular, its name, address, legal representatives, legal form and organization type.

3. Reporting

Reporting is a continuous activity and a contractual obligation. Each partner must provide the requested information in due time. All relevant documents and written communications will be in English, being the only exception the dissemination materials (press releases or technical publications) which can be translated to other languages under the responsibility of each partner.

Each partner is responsible for the quality of their contribution. The editor of the documents is responsible for the overall quality of the work, including the appropriate issue of the document and communication management procedures: coordinating, requesting and collecting contributions, as well as integrating them in the different releases. The Coordinator is responsible for submitting the official documents to the EC.

The administrative execution period is fractioned into **2 main reporting periods (RP)** according to EC standards:

RP1: from PM01 to PM18 (January 2024 – June 2025)

RP2: from PM19 to PM36 (July 2025 – December 2026)

Within the execution period (P1 / P2) the reporting, deliverable and planning cycles consist of (details are provided in the following sections):

- Resource reporting (interim reports): intermediary report of the project partners to the Financial Manager on the effort dedicated and cost charged (actual and/or expected) by each partner to the work packages of PRESENCE⁵.
- **Periodic reports** to the EC have to be generated for every reporting period and are due 60 days after the end of the corresponding reporting period. The reports contain cost claims.

⁵ Procedures and related standard document templates for collection and management of financial reports are currently being created and will be put into effect by PM06.



- Certificate on Financial Statement shall be submitted for claims of final payments when the amount of the cumulate *Community financial contribution* claimed by a *beneficiary* under the form of reimbursement of costs is equal to or superior to 430.000 EUR.
- Cost reimbursement and payments: The received payments (pre-financing at the beginning of the project implementation and reimbursement of justified cost after project evaluations) are distributed to the beneficiaries by the Coordinator.
- Project deliverables are due according to the detailed work plan defined in the DoA and are delivered for submission at this date. The FM takes care of their issue to the EC and (eventually) to the project reviewers according to contractual obligations established in the contract and to particular agreements with the Project Officer⁶. Deliverable generation process is described in section 4.
- The final report to the EC has to be generated after the last reporting period and is also due not later than 60 days after Period 2. This report shall comprise a final publishable summary report covering results, conclusions, impact and wider societal implications of the project.
- Project reviews are meetings between part of the consortium led by the Coordinator and the EC (usually assisted by External Project Reviewers) and form part of the yearly EC project review procedure to be finished normally at the latest 90 days after the reporting period. In the case of the final review the meeting normally takes place before the final reports are finished, i.e. at the latest 60 days after the end of the project⁷, in order to provide input and support to the generation of the final reports.

3.1. Intermediary internal financial reports

Purpose:

To guarantee that the budget assigned to each partner would be well-matched to PRESENCE's needs, the FM will request partners to submit position statements and use of Person-month (PM)s until months 08, 15, 24 and 30 including estimates for future periods. This process will facilitate the identification of potentially unused budget needing to be reassigned and to support beneficiaries not familiar with Horizon Europe financial rules.

Those reports are to be used to **control progress** versus planning and provide input for the **periodic management reports** to the EC.

For the justification of personnel costs and the support of the project audit, partners are advised to maintain monthly **time sheets**.

Time Recording:

Records of the **time dedicated to PRESENCE** during each calendar month of the execution period by all staff of every partner (signed paper copies archived by partners for their auditing process). It is important to document any effort dedicated, no matter if by **temporary** (project specific) or **permanent staff** (involved in several projects or activities, which may be EC funded).

In Horizon Europe <u>Time sheets are not deliverable items</u> and **they do not have to be submitted to the Financial Manager or the EC** (excepting audit processes where you need to show reliability of your time

⁶ The GA foresees the submission of periodic reports 60 days after the correspondent reporting period. The Project Officer, however, may require earlier submission for pre review or for giving early feedback in the interest of the consortium.

⁷ As states the Project Officer, this period may be extended to 90 days after the end of the project upon request.



recording process). Each partner is in principle free to use its own model. For orientation, an EC template is available for downloading [Ref. 7] in the Participant Portal.

Use of resources reports:

Intermediary Financial Reports need to be generated and **submitted to the FM**, for periods of 6/9 months using the **spreadsheet** available in the Project Repository. Although these reports may be preliminary **estimates** and must not be exactly based on closed account statements, they should be **as accurate as possible** in order to facilitate general resource control.

The reports are to be submitted to the FM by e-mail within 15 days after the corresponding reporting period. The Financial Manager checks the information against the work plan and creates a deviation report (.xls sheets). This report is sent to the TC two weeks after reception of the Partners' reports. The TC checks the report and report identified problems and risks to the PC and TM when applicable.

The Intermediary Financial internal report deadlines are:

By M09 (Septembert'24): P1 position statements until August'25 + estimates to March'25

By M16 (April'24): P1 position statements until March'25 + estimates to June'25

By M25 (Jan'26): P1 position statements until Dec'25 + estimates to June'26

By M31 (Jul'26): P1 position statements until Jun'26 + estimates to the end of the project (dec'26)

3.2. Periodic reports to the EC

Purpose:

To provide the EC periodically with **progress, technical, management and financial control information**; **justify efforts and investments** and outlined **planning for the next implementation period**.

Components and responsibilities:

- Periodic activity (written) report: To be compiled by TM, input from the WPLs and partners
- Publishable executive summary on the activity, Milestones and Risk Status: PC and TM
- **Periodic Financial report** (includes financial statements from each beneficiary and the required audit certificates): compiled by the FM, input of all partners
- Impact Report : PC, TM, WP6 Leader, SMEs / industrial partners
- Indicators on Publication, Results, Standards, Other results, Databases, IPR Dissemination, Communication activities: All beneficiaries, coordinated by the FM and the WP6 leader – these outputs are regularly collected through a dedicated shared file in the Project Repository (see [Ref. 8]

The FM has the overall responsibility of the on-line submission of the periodic reports to the EC.

Procedure and timing:

The completion of reports is aligned with 18 month reporting periods (P1 and P2) and the reports have to be submitted no later than 60 days all electronically. **All partners need to contribute to these reports** and therefore need to **allocate time** to internal project management providing the necessary information on work progress, efforts, justification of costs and resources used.

Workflow:



Progress is monitored continuously by the PC, the TM, the Financial Manager and the WPLs.

Expenses, budget and efforts are monitored and documented continuously by each partner with the support when necessary, of the fm.

Ten days after the closure of the Period at the latest, the Management Team informs all beneficiaries about requirements and obligations for the upcoming report, suggests a report generation work plan and provides templates.

40 days after the closure of the Period all beneficiaries and WPLs provide the requested input to the Management Team (except audit certificates, as indicated in the following sections).

With this the PC and the FM trigger the review process by the TC:

- 1. The draft report is sent to the TC for check and approval (not later than 2 weeks before deadline). The TC delivers its comments (not later than 1 week before deadline).
- 2. The Management Team inform whom it may concern about necessary major changes, generates the final version and submits the reports including all complementary forms and material to the EC (on deadline).



Figure 2: Interim and Periodic Reports

3.2.1. Financial statements (cost statements)

Purpose:

For the fulfilment of the **EC requirements** regarding periodic **project reports**. **Every beneficiary** should be familiar with the fundamental requirements of financial reporting (for the basics refer to Article 6 – Eligible costs in the EC-GA [Ref. 2], FM provides support) of his share of the project as they are critical for the due justification and **reimbursement of the incurred costs for the period**.

Shortcomings or problems in its reports would affect its particular payments according to EC regulations.

Components and responsibilities:



- **Financial cost statement** duly signed by the authorised financial officer and stamped by the institution at ECAS. Once fulfilled (the Costs Statement is produced in the Reporting module of the EC Project Portal). A short guideline for the partners not familiar with this process will be distributed by the FM.
- **UoR (Use of Resources):** partners shall indicate the numbers of PMs per WP when declaring personnel costs.
- Cost Breakdown: Partners may send to the FM a break-down of costs declared in the financial cost statement. This is not a contractual obligation and therefore they are submitted to the FM on voluntary basis. Anyway, it shall help the FM in the justification process and in checking the information for completeness, consistency and correctness to avoid further clarifications to be requested by the EC with additional delay for instance in payments. The main cost categories to be specified are personnel, travel, consumables, audits, equipment, overheads and other. This information is sent to the Financial Manager by e-mail and will be exclusively used for checking and completing the information in the different parts of the management (including financial) reports.
- Justification of major cost items and resources: In the managing report partners provide the FM with an explanation of any major costs⁸ incurred such as important equipment purchases, major travel costs, large consumable items, justifying their necessity for the project. The consolidated justification of major cost items is submitted to the EC.

Procedure and timing:

Partners are required to provide the above information within 40 calendar days after the end of the reporting period in the Participant Portal to the Financial Manager (electronically "sent to the Coo for revision"). The EC project officer would advise on the official deadline to submit the forms signed.

Important reminder (Article 21.3. of the Grant Agreement):

Costs and any intermediary financial information **shall be reported in EUR** (\in). Beneficiaries with accounts in currencies other than EUR shall report in EUR at the average of the daily exchange rates published in the C series of the Official Journal of the European Union (ECB website⁹), calculated over the corresponding reporting period.

3.2.2. Certificates on Financial Statements (audit certificates)

Audit Certificates are formally called **Certificates on Financial Statements (CFS)**

A **Certificate on the Financial Statements is mandatory** for all beneficiaries who request a contribution reaching or exceeding the threshold of 430.000 euros for the entire duration of the action

An obligatory CFS must be issued once for the whole duration of the action. Alternatively, it is possible to prepare several CFS during the action duration (e.g. per reporting period). In both cases, however, the certificate(s) may be submitted only at the end of the project (together with the final

⁸ There is no definition or figure for 'major cost items' given by the EC. Beneficiaries may define them on their own, according to their relative importance compared to the total budget of the beneficiary, or their individual value. Travel costs for project meetings normally should not be a major cost. However, travel overseas for attending a major conference might be. Major costs can be reported by type of cost, or as isolated cost items, if major.

⁹ <u>http://www.ecb.int/stats/eurofxref/</u>



report). The reasonable cost of this certification, when compulsory, is an eligible cost under the activity and are then 100% refundable (except for VAT) by the Commission within its contribution¹⁰.

Each beneficiary is free to choose any qualified external auditor, including its usual external auditor, provided that it meets the cumulative following professional requirements:

- 1. The external auditor must be independent from the beneficiary;
- 2. The external auditor must be qualified to carry out statutory audits of accounting documents in accordance with the 8th Council directive on statutory audits of annual accounts and consolidated accounts¹¹ or similar national regulations (any European Union legislation replacing this Directive).

A beneficiary that is a public body, secondary and higher education establishments and research organisations may opt for a competent public officer to provide certification, provided that the relevant national authorities have established the legal capacity of that competent public officer to audit that public body.

Certification by external auditors according to the contract **does not diminish the liability of beneficiaries according to the contract nor the rights of the Community with respect to carrying out its own controls and audits** and any other right arising from the Grant Agreement.

See also the CFS template of the EC [Ref. 9].

3.2.3. Cost reimbursement and payments

The PC exclusively receives all project related payments from the EC. On reception of any payment the PC, duly and without delay, processes the distribution of the financial contributions to the partners according to his EC-contractual obligations and in agreement with the financial plan of PRESENCE project.

3.3. Project reviews

Purpose:

See for details [Ref. 8]. Annual **periodic project reviews** and **a final project review** is carried out **by the EC** through external reviewers to **assess the work carried out and the results obtained** (includes review of the deliverables) and, if necessary, to provide recommendations and reorientations that may be required.

The review principally assesses:

- the degree of fulfilment of the project work plan and the deliverables for the period
- the continued relevance of the objectives and breakthrough potential with respect to the scientific and industrial state of the art
- the resources employed and other management aspects of the project
- the beneficiaries' contributions and integration within the project
- the management performance
- the project impact

¹⁰ It is understood that, indirect costs can be add to this cost as it is regarded as a other direct cost (service).

¹¹ Directive 2006/43/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2006 on statutory audits of annual accounts and consolidated accounts, amending Council directives 78/660/EEC and repealing Council Directive 84/253/EEC.



Components and responsibilities:

- **Report and deliverables review**: EC reviews through external experts the project progress (periodic reports and eventual additional information) and results (deliverables and dissemination and exploitation activities, KPIs, Results...).
- **Review meeting** usually between EC, the PC, the TM, WP Leaders, the FM and those partners involved in technical presentations or representing partner's interests¹². Periodic review meeting usually take place after the delivery of periodic reports. The final review meeting ideally takes place before the final reports are delivered to maintain the possibility to generate input for them¹³. The PC assisted by the FM coordinates requests and submits eventual additional information and material, calls the necessary beneficiaries and invites consortium members.

Procedure and timing:

The **EC sets the procedure** for the hearing and informs the PC. The reviews will likely occur in September 2025 (remote) and February 2027 and external reviewers are determined by the EC before the first review. They usually remain reviewers throughout the project. The Consortium may reject a reviewer through written declaration and justification¹⁴.

The **outcome of the review** is communicated in writing to the Coordinator after the submission of periodic reports and corresponding deliverables. The outcome may include technical recommendations to be considered in the project's planning for the work.

At the end of each reporting period, the Commission shall evaluate and project reports and deliverables and **disburse the corresponding payments**.

4. Project collaborative tools, internal communication and meetings

4.1. Project repository

As an internal document repository to store and share all the documentation produced by the project (deliverables, agendas, action points, presentations) a **secured Drive's space** hosted by i2CAT was chosen.

The PC, the Management Team and the WPLs are the ultimately responsible for maintaining the order and coherence of the contents. The repository and collaborative workspace also hosts information on the organization of the teams and work packages, its access is granted to all the partners through the administration of the PRESENCE Admin-Financial Manager.

The repository has the following folders:

00 Templates: it contains templates for the deliverables, presentations, call of the meetings and minutes

7 Ol Contractual documents

¹² To be discussed with the EC PO and specified in detail for each review considering of both logistics and particular meeting agendas.

¹³ Although the final Review uses to take place after the execution period of the project, the costs related to its preparation (and eventual travel) may be eligible.

¹⁴ In accordance with Article 25.1.2 of the Grant Agreement the consortium has the right to refuse the participation of a particular expert on grounds of commercial confidentiality or major conflict of interest.



🁕 02 Ethics Issues



💋 04 Meetings:

- F2F meetings and on-line meetings (regular or not): *minutes, agendas, presentations* and *logistic indications* (accommodation, maps and indications), scanned signature sheets regarding the meetings.
- Actions Points excel: it lists all the open and closed action points.
- Calendars: National holidays EU countries, Plenary meetings calendar for the full project duration

05 Reporting folder: this section will be used to gather the information of the periodic Interim reports. It will include the definitive version of the Periodic and Final Reports.

06 Deliverables: contents the <u>definitive</u> versions of each of the deliverables submitted (in both, editable and final PDF formats). Collaborative work to prepare the releases is done in the respective subfolder of each WP.

Work Packages 1-5 folders: each folder includes the working versions of the deliverables and other working documents, as well as up to date information on the on-going work in every WP. A sub-folder details every Deliverable details (due date, name..)

WP6 — Impact and Dissemination folder, among other sub-files, the folder contains posters and the official logos of the project and the partners for:

- Dissemination Material: leaflets, presentations, video clips and other outreach material. The section will also include the press releases generated by the project
- Papers and presentations: to store all scientific outputs
- *Conference Calls*: Summary of each conference call including attendees, discussion items and actions points.

WP7 – Management folder, among other sub-files, the folder contains useful information on guidelines, EU communications and other management files.

4.2. Directory and mailing lists

A complete **project Directory** project participants' main contact data (and role in the project) is available in the main root of the PRESENCE Repository. This file can be edited at any time, any change is noticed to the FM in order to keep updated all the collated sheets and folder as for instance the emailing list

The email communication reflector of the project is hosted by i2CAT (as Coordinator), who maintains the following email lists:

List name	Members	Email address
PRESENCE (all)	General Project's R&D staff	PRESENCE_all@i2cat.net
PRESENCE (TC)	Technical Committee members and proxy staff	PRESENCE_TC@i2cat.net
PRESENCE (WP1)	Mailing list for WP1 issues and communications	PRESENCE_wp2@i2cat.net

Table 3: PRESENCE Mailing Lists



List name	Members	Email address
PRESENCE (WP2)	Mailing list for WP2 issues and communications	PRESENCE_wp2@i2cat.net
PRESENCE (WP3)	Mailing list for WP3 issues and communications	PRESENCE_wp3@i2cat.net
PRESENCE (WP4)	Mailing list for WP4 issues and communications	PRESENCE_wp4@i2cat.net
PRESENCE (WP5)	Mailing list for WP5 issues and communications	PRESENCE_wp5@i2cat.net
PRESENCE (WP6)	Mailing list for WP6 issues and communications	PRESENCE_wp6@i2cat.net
PRESENCE (admin)	Admin, legal, contractual and financial issues	PRESENCE_admin@i2cat.net

All emails sent to the different mailing lists automatically include a prefix text in brackets in the subject (e.g. [PRESENCE_all], [PRESENCE_wp3], etc.) for better scope/topic identification. The purpose of this set of emails is to offer the possibility to reach smaller groups, a more focused way to exchange information between the different boards, groups or WPs that compose the project.

In case a new member joins the project, the user should either include the person in the **Directory file** or send an email with the specific request to the FM who will activate the accession to the repository and internal communication chat.

4.3. Slack channel

Slack is the main tool for direct / fast non-formal communication between partners. Everyone will have the option to start private conversations and channels in the tool in order to accelerate the discussions and make the collaboration progress more effective.

Moreover, everyone will be able to post messages to the "General" channel and the channels created for each specific work package if needed to avoid spam.

4.4. Conference Calls

A dedicated conference bridge (**Zoom** licence hosted by i2CAT) is provided by i2CAT to facilitate remote connections at the plenary virtual meetings and the Project Reviews.

Additional ad-hoc conference calls should be regulated by the following general rules:

- The partners will schedule the date of the conference, using also appropriate support tools. (e.g., doodle).
- An invitation to the project email list with the exact time, agenda and information on how to join the conference call will be circulated, at least one day before the conference call.
- When scheduling a recurring meeting using an emailing list, the meeting caller shall regularly check that the eventual new members of the list area added manually.

4.5. General Assembly gatherings

Regular GA meetings will take place **twice a year¹⁵ chaired by the PC**. The partner's GA representative/s and proxy should in principle be maintained throughout the project, where this is possible. Any change in a partner's representative to the GA should be informed by email to the FM

¹⁵ Extraordinary meetings or phone conferences may be called by the Management Team or by decision of the TC, when necessary



at least 10 days before a meeting of the GA takes place, indicating the reason for substitution, identifying the new representative and explaining whether the substitution will be temporary or permanent.

Seven partners (covering geographical areas of the consortium: Greece, Spain, Portugal, Netherland, Denmark, Germany and Belgium), have agreed in hosting the meetings on a voluntary basis to spread organisational costs.

Plenary meetings' dates and venues for the full project duration already scheduled [Ref. 6].

The exact dates are fixed at least 3 months ahead of time in order to avoid travel calendar conflicts¹⁶. **The agenda is generated by the Management Team in agreement with the TC inputs**. It is distributed to the beneficiaries at least 3 weeks prior to the assembly (ten natural days in case of extraordinary meeting). Every beneficiary organizes and pays for his own travel. Expenses can be charged against the project.

The meetings may consist of 2 parts: a series of "all hands" sessions to present and discuss technical developments and a formal part where strategic and administrative decisions are taken.

As an outcome of GA assemblies, the PC, with the support of the TM and WPLs generates minutes **that reflect all relevant points of discussion, actions and decisions taken**. A draft of these minutes shall be available to the members of the GA not later than 10 calendar days after the assembly and comments and feedback shall be given to the Management Team not later than one week after that. After this date, non-response is taken to be agreement.

The final version of the minutes is fixed on the Project Repository not later than 2-3 weeks after the assembly.

4.5.1. Hosting a face-to-face meeting

When any beneficiary hosts a project meeting, the following points must be taken into consideration:

- It is advisable that the location can be easily reachable to avoid extra costs. The hosting partner shall provide logistic information on how to reach the venue of the meeting. The hosting partner shall also prepare meeting rooms equipped with audio-visual devices necessary for the presentations and network connectivity.
- The costs for hosting the meeting will be covered by the hosting partner and the travel costs will be covered by each participant.

It is also recommended (general practice although not obligatory) to provide water, as well as to organize coffee breaks and lunch buffets appropriate to the duration of the meeting. The hosting partner generally also organizes a social event. The expenses relating outside of the venue and the meeting duration (breakfast, dinner) are to be covered by each individual who in turn claims them to its institution as Travel cost.

¹⁶ As indicated in the Consortium Agreement, the chairperson shall give notice in writing of a meeting to each member as soon as possible and no later than 21 calendar days preceding the meeting, or 10 calendar days before an extraordinary meeting.



4.6. Technical Committee meetings

Regular TC meetings take place **on monthly basis**¹⁷ **chaired by the TM**; extraordinary meetings may be called by the PC, the TM, the IM, or any WPL, when necessary. The TM, supported by the FM fixed the dates for the full project duration.

To guarantee agility and a good operative level, the TC meetings will occur remotely (duration of approximately 1,5 - 2 hours each). The objective is to discuss and decide the most urgent day-to-day issues avoiding delays or congestions within the e-mail communication channel of the TC. In case of face-to-face meetings, travel costs have also to be treated as eligible.

As an outcome of TC meetings involving relevant decisions, the TM (and/or the PC) generates minutes that reflect all relevant points of discussion, actions and decisions taken.

4.7. Voting rules.

In the event that is needed to vote a decision, each body has to take into consideration the quorum and their specific rules:

- Both, the GA and the TC may deliberate and decide only if at least 2/3 of the members are present or represented.
- Decisions shall be taken by a majority of 2/3 and in the TC shall seek a consensus among its Members.
- Each Member of a Consortium Body present or represented in the meeting shall have one vote.
- A partner that can show that its own work, time for performance, costs, liabilities, IPR or other legitimate interests would be severely affected by a decision of a Consortium Body may exercise a **veto** with respect to the corresponding decision or relevant part of the decision.

4.8. Eventual cross-dissemination and concertation meetings

The TC Members will pay strong attention to eventual cross-dissemination and concertation meetings to foster communication with related projects within the same specific EC work programme, organised by the EC. Any related and eligible cost occurred needs to be charged on the budget of each concerned partner.

5. Deliverables

This section describes the procedure to complete the deliverables that ought to be submitted during the project. Deliverables must be submitted in due time (end of the month indicated in the DoA). Although in PRESENCE deliverables are either labelled as *Report (R)*, as *Data Management Plan (DMP)* or *Other*, a written document must be submitted.

The Dissemination level is *PU* (public) or *SEN* (restricted to the EC and members of the Consortium). In the case of *public* deliverables, once submitted to the EC, the definitive content will be published in the CORDIS portal. If there are no substantiated objections, public deliverables will be uploaded to the project webpage and the Zenodo community of the project [Ref. 10].

¹⁷ Extraordinary meetings or phone conferences may be called by the Management Team, when necessary



5.1. Deliverable Quality Assurance

A quality assurance process will be implemented for assuring a correct final output.

For doing so, the consortium has allocated the following responsibilities within the consortium:

- Main **editor:** will be responsible for providing both the ToC and the main content for the deliverable and monitor the contributions from the rest of the contributors. They will also be in charge of making the necessary changes suggested by the reviewers.
- **Contributors:** will participate in the deliverable and will amend their content, if necessary, based on the guidelines from the main editor and the reviewers.
- **Reviewers**: up to two partners that will do the first review.

And the final assignment table of Deliverables is to be ready by Month 04 latest (April 2024). To date, all the deliverables for year 1 have already been assigned [Ref. 11].

The internal workflow for deliverables is the following one:

Table 4: Deliverables generation work-flow

Action	Days to deadline	Responsible	Receiver
TOC, section assignment to contributors	90	Lead (editor)	Contributors involved+WPL involved+TM
First draft of the deliverable + initial feedback from editor	60	Lead (editor)	Partners involved+WPL involved+TM
Second consolidated draft of the deliverable	45	Lead (editor)	Partners involved+WPL involved+TM
Final draft (ready to be send to reviewers)	30	Lead (editor)	Partners involved+WPL involved+TM
Reviewers feedback	15	Reviewers.	Editor
Revised inputs	10	All authors	Editor
Final consolidated draft	4	Editor	Financial Manager ¹⁸
Submission in the EU Portal	0-4	PC	PC

5.2. Editorial and Quality criteria

The editor / contributor must consider the following criterions:

- **Completeness**. The deliverable must address all aspects related to the purpose and scope for which the related research activity is carried out.
- **Depth**. Each deliverable should have a coherent depth of information with respect to the deliverable scope, purpose and type of research activity described in the DoA.
- **Accuracy**. The information provided in the deliverables should be supported accurate and reliable information. All background information should be linked to appropriate references. *Results* information should be clearly described and technically supported.
- **Coherence**. Each deliverable must be produced using a common project template to have a uniform appearance and structure.

¹⁸ Formatting is to be re-checked by the Financial Manager before the submission of the document



In addition, the **reviewer** will have to make sure that every deliverable is of the greatest quality, paying close attention to the deliverable's, structure, and content specifically, and has to verify the following formal checkpoints:

- That the deliverable includes an executive summary and proper conclusions if necessary.
- The contribution of each partner involved is correctly reported.
- The impact of the deliverable and any progress beyond the state-of-the-art is clearly identified, and any expected output (paper, patents, standard...) is included.
- Clear language is used, appropriate abbreviations and references are included and listed, a logical order has to be followed and the document follows the style template¹⁷ [Ref. 12].

5.2.1. Legibleness guidelines

To ensure the maximum clarity and readability of each deliverable, consortium members are encouraged to follow the writing instructions bellow:

- Cross-references: Include cross-references in the document when linking to other sections of the text, figures, or tables.
- Use of bullets: It is highly recommended for structuring content or creating lists.
- **Use of Acronyms:** use acronyms when referring to long names after the initial mention of it. The meaning of the acronym should be added in the *Abbreviations and definitions* section.
- **Avoid repeating content:** Keep the document concise, simple, and easy to read by minimizing repetitive information.
- **Check format:** Make sure that the header and footer, titles and subtitles and titles of figures and tables follow the same format throughout the document for those not specified in the template.

5.3. Sensitive deliverables

Sensitive refers to information that is considered private to the PROJECT Consortium. The partners shall maintain the confidentiality of any data, documents, or other materials that are designated as sensitive following the confidentiality guidelines included in the CA. The following **disclaimer** needs to be present in the **cover page** of every deliverable that is confidential:

This document contains sensitive information, which is proprietary to the PRESENCE Consortium. Neither this document nor the information contained herein shall be used, copied, duplicated, reproduced, modified, or communicated by any means to any third party, in whole or in parts, except with prior written consent of the PRESENCE Consortium. In such case, an acknowledgement of the authors of the document and all applicable portions of the copyright notice must be clearly referenced. In the event of infringement, the consortium reserves the right to take any legal action it deems appropriate.

6. Project dissemination

Dissemination of the results, whenever is possible and suitable, is one of the projects objectives [Ref. 5]. Dissemination must not collide with the IPR of the partners or with results that ought to be protected.



In this section we describe the mandatory rules for disseminating the results of the project. Dissemination strategy will be further complemented by deliverables D6.1, D6.2 and D6.3 (*Dissemination, communication and exploitation strategy v1, v2 and v3*, M06, M18 and M36) and D7.2, D7.4 and D7.6 (*Ethical Framework and Data Management Plan,* M06, M18 and M36).

6.1. Acknowledgements

All the publications, conference proceedings, presentations on workshops, seminars, press releases, equipment, communications, patents, standard or public events must consider the below obligations towards the EC (see articles 17.2 and 17.3 of the EC-GA).

17.2

Unless otherwise agreed with the granting authority, communication activities of the beneficiaries related to the action (including media relations, conferences, seminars, information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.), dissemination activities and any infrastructure, equipment, vehicles, supplies or major result funded by the grant must acknowledge EU support and display the European flag (emblem) and funding statement (translated into local languages, where appropriate):



The emblem must remain distinct and separate and cannot be modified by adding other visual marks, brands or text.

Apart from the emblem, no other visual identity or logo may be used to highlight the EU support. When displayed in association with other logos (e.g. of beneficiaries or sponsors), the emblem must be displayed at least as prominently and visibly as the other logos.

For the purposes of their obligations under this Article, the beneficiaries may use the emblem without first obtaining approval from the granting authority. This does not, however, give them the right to exclusive use. Moreover, they may not appropriate the emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means.

17.3

Any communication or dissemination activity related to the action must use factually accurate information.

Note that the obligation relates no only documents but also **infrastructure**, **equipment**, **vehicles**, **supplies** or major **results**. Suggested text:

"This project (work) has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101135025. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them".



6.2. Output reporting.

It is a contractual obligation for the members of the consortium to inform of any foreseen publication with at least 45 days in advance. Objections must be done within 30 days after the reception of the notice.

Important recommendation:

The authors of a publication are most likely well aware of any potential conflict of interest or arising from the possible disclosure of knowledge and critical information owned by others. It is therefore highly recommendable and in the interest of all involved to proactively clarify any issue with the Partner/s involved.

In addition, publications, conferences, book chapters, assistance to workshops, conferences, seminars and any other event linked with the dissemination have to be reported to through a dedicated <u>excel file</u>¹⁹ that reproduces the requested contents of the *Continuous Reporting Module* in the Participant Portal:

		mination activities carried out in the context ination activities mentioned in the proposal and n		N C E				
Partner	Contact person	Dissemination Activity name	What? Type of disser		Who? Target au	dience Reached		Why? Desc
•			-	•	•	•	•	
•			-	•	•	· · ·	•	
•			-	•	· ·	· · ·	•	
•				•	•	· · ·	•	
•			•	•	•	· · ·	•	
•			•	•	•	•	•	
•			-	•	•	· · ·	•	
· •			•	-		· · ·	•	
()			· · ·	•	•	· · ·	•	
•			•	•	•	•	•	

the action and the media and	its results. It requires strategic and target the public and possibly engaging in a two-	cess that starts at the outset of the action and contin ed measures for communicating about (i) the action way exchange. List the communication activitie lies mentioned in the proposal and new ones.	and (ii) its results to a multitude	of audiences, including	\$	esence
Contact person	Communication Activity name	Description (max. 200 characters)	Who? Target audience Reached	How? channel	Outcome	Status of the activity
			· ·	•		
			· ·	· · ·		
			· ·	· · ·		
			· ·	•		
			•	•		
			· ·	•		
			· ·	· · ·		
			· ·	· ·		
				-		

5 2 5	22ESENCE		Datasets						
Partner	Contact person	Type o (reposi		Description of Dataset	PID reference (mandatory field)	Does the data underpin a publication?	URL to repository	Is this dataset available in open access?	If the result is needed to validate the conclusions of a publication, indicate the provisions to make your output available, either in digital or physical form
•		DOI	•			•		•	· ·
•		DOI	•			•		•	· ·
•		DOI	•			•		•	· ·
•		DOI	•			•		•	· ·
•		DOI	•			•		•	· ·
•		DOI	•			•		•	•

¹⁹ Notice to the attention of the EU officers and external reviewers: this URL links direct to a file in the project Repository and thus with access limited to the project consortium members. The documentation is available under demand, contact <u>pmo@i2cat.net</u>



Figure 4: Dissemination, Communication and Results spreadsheet (screenshots)

Press releases, press campaigns, media appearance must be communicated as soon as possible to the Task 6.1 Leader to be included on the website and disseminated through the media tools.

6.3. Review of press releases

Press releases are an important component of project dissemination.

Task 6.1 Leader will provide a model for press releases on the project repository. A press release may be initiated by any project partner in agreement with the overall dissemination plan. All press releases should preferably be reviewed by the TC to check against the workplan, the overall message and coordinate with other project dissemination activities.

6.4. Project website and Social Networks

The official project web site²⁰ and Social Networks accounts set up and managed by the Leader of Task 6.1. The PC is granted with admin credentials and regularly contribute to the contents.

It shall be the most up-to-date and complete reference for any project related public information. That means that partners need to contribute latest material as soon as possible, should refer to it on their public communications and should provide the content administrators with news and latest facts such as complete information (date, place, media, source or reference, purpose, contents etc.) on publications, press releases, public communication and presentations and similar.



Figure 3: PRESENCE project Social Networks' QR code

The Task 6.1' Leader will facilitate the information submission with easyto-use mechanisms such as, for example, simple standardized forms on the Project Portal.

7. Gender Neutral Guidelines²¹

This section provides guidelines to assist the integration of gender (and diversity) dimensions during the project implementation, in research activities.

These guidelines are based on the EC gender equality strategy²² and aim at assisting the development of the work by rethinking standards, and questioning norms, behaviour, and attitudes, to best suit the needs of the target groups, thus strengthening the impact proposed by PRESENCE.

²⁰ <u>www.PRESENCE-XR.eu</u> and <u>www.PresenceXR.eu</u> , both URL redirect to the project website

²¹ The contents are originally authored by Dr. Rute Sofia from *fortiss GmbH*. Following our request, she kindly accepted we uses the contents of CODECO project D1 [public] deliverable, in section 7 *Gender Neutral Guidelines*. The Cognitive Decentralised Edge Cloud Orchestration, CODECO is an Advanced Computing and Big Data project funded by the EU HE-GA nº 101092696

²² https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/items/682425/en



7.1. Terms of Reference for Gender-neutrality

PRESENCE adopts several terms of reference derived from the European Union Gender Equality Glossary and Thesaurus²³, listed in Table 5:

Term	Definition
Gender neutral language	Language that is not gender-specific, and which considers people in general without references to sex, gender, and gender bias.
Gender-sensitive language	Gender equality in written and spoken language, attained when men, women, and non-binary genders are equality made visible and referenced to with equal value, dignity, integrity, respect.
Gender	Social attributes and opportunities associated with being female and male and to the relationships between women and men, girls, and boys, as well as to the relations between women and those between men.
Gender Bias	Prejudiced actions or thoughts based on the gender-based perception that women are not equal to men in rights and dignity.
Sex	Biological and physiological characteristics that define humans as female or male.
Gender stereotype	Generalised ideas, images, concepts about people within a society. A gender stereotype is a preconceived idea where women and men are assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their gender.

Table 5: Gender-neutrality terms of reference

7.2. Gender Approach in the Project Implementation

In PRESENCE, there are four categories of activities that are expected to benefit from a gendersensitive research and implementation approach: the **project management and coordination**; the **project communication** and **dissemination**; the **Human-Centred design (HCD)** activities; the **development of technologies** and their integration. Measures to assist gender-neutrality across the different activities, and verification measures to ensure an adequate quality level are provided in Table 6.

Activity	Gender methodology	Verification measure
Project Management and Coordination (WP7)	 Monitor and analyse the involvement of female researchers in the project, including the EEA. Ensure that men and women of the different stakeholders can benefit equally from the PRESENCE results. 	 Provide a gender analysis section on each PPR. Monitor deliverables and establish gender-neutral guidelines for deliverable and code writing.
Project Communication and Dissemination (WP6)	 Increase the visibility and representation of women, when communicating and disseminating results. Ensure balance and diversity on events organized by PRESENCE, in terms of Committees, evaluators, and participants. 	• Provide a section on deliverables of WP6, analysing the gender involvement and gender bias dimension, as well as perceived usefulness of PRESENCE by different sexes in the different deliverables

Table 6: Gender-neutrality proposed methodology and verification measures

²³ <u>https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus</u>



Activity	Gender methodology	Verification measure
	 Adopt mechanisms to advertise and promote events and activities, encouraging the participation of underrepresented groups. 	
Human-Centre Design activities (WP1)	 Propose specific targets to involve women. Ensure that participants sample is heterogeneous enough to best capture the needs and interests of each target group. Propose options for action to avoid gender bias, including required adaptations in the technology, and environment that is directed to underrepresented groups. 	 Description of the actions taken such as a sub-programme targeting underrepresented groups in WP1 deliverables In T1.1 analyse and develop a methodology that takes into consideration the development of gender-neutral algorithmic and AI solutions, to prevent AI Discrimination Formulate gender neutral, diverse user requirements in general and specific user requirements to eliminate gender bias where needed. Where relevant, provide insights in gender differences in the evaluation of presence throughout the project. Address gender bias as a specific issue within T1.5 System Ethics, Trust and Privacy, including specific actions to mitigate at the level of technology, environment or user
Technologies and Integration (WP2, WP3, WP4, WP5)	 Define use-cases based on a design strategy that pays attention to sex, gender, and biases. Understand and explore how the tools to be developed can help the PRESENCE stakeholders in understanding gender biases and eventually in modifying behaviour. Design and implement the PRESENCE solutions in a way that it can be accessed by different groups and as many people as feasible, independently of background. Consider impact assessment measures (for the activities developed) that can assess the gender dimension, interest, and impact. 	 Adopt gender-neutral coding rules in the Deliverables (refer to section 7.3). Provide user feedback assessment on the left indications at each of the three iterations.

7.3. Gender-neutral Communication and Dissemination

The EC provides guidelines for gender-neutral language [Ref. 13], based on principles of gender neutrality and non-discrimination. PRESENCE's partners adopt such rules in the writing of any outcome, to ensure that, as far as possible, non-sexist and gender-inclusive language is adopted in the implementation of the project.



The guidelines proposed in this section are considered a starting point, which can be revised and modified during the project, based on the partners and stakeholders feedback, for instance. These guidelines are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7: Gender-neutral guidelines	for the project implementation
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Aspect	Gender-neutral PRESENCE approach
Generic use of masculine nouns that define a part to represent the whole,	 Man ⇒ Humanity Manpower ⇒ staff Manmade ⇒ synthetic, artificial
Masculine pronouns, e.g., his	 Use plural forms. Omit the pronoun (the work is dependent on his stay – the work is dependent on the length of the stay) Use the passive voice. If none works, adopt "he or she".
Ensure all genders are represented	 Ensure all genders (including non-binary) are represented in all surveys, forms, feedback, or consent from stakeholders. Ensure different genders take roles that are traditionally envisioned to a specific gender, e.g., consider an equal balance from different genders in panels, TPCs. Develop dissemination material (videos, photos, images) taking into consideration diversity (of gender and others). Explain, in the organization of events, how the different gender representation will be captured.
Avoid gender stereotypes	 Avoid language including gendered pronouns, nouns. Avoid gendered stereotypes as descriptive terms. Avoid gendering inanimate objects. Avoid using different adjectives for women and men. Avoid social stereotypes (e.g., in a use-case, considering a specific female traditional roles vs a male traditional role).
Avoid omission	 Avoid the use of man as a neutral term. Do not use gender-biased nouns to refer to groups of people. Consider the choice of voice-overs, photos/images, and the gender of individuals given in examples when creating communication and dissemination material. Ensure a balanced gender (and diversity) representation in speaking, representation, and participation roles.
Avoid subordination	 Avoid language that reinforce a traditional role of a gender, e.g., men's traditional dominance over women. Always use the same naming conventions for men and women Avoid objectification

7.4. Addressing Gender Aspect in Research

This final section depicts a checklist for the development of research activities within the PRESENCE project that takes into consideration gender-neutrality, derived from the Toolkit Gender in EU-funded research [Ref. 14] published by the EC, Directorate-General for and Innovation.



Research idea phase:

• If the research involves humans as research objects, has the gender dimension been analysed?

Methodology:

- Does the methodology ensure that gender aspects will be considered in data collected, and such aspects will be adequately documented?
- Does the respective deliverable/paper/etc explicitly and comprehensively explain how gender issues will be handled?
- Does the research consider different outcome and different impact in terms of gender?

Research development:

- Does this phase consider surveys, focus groups, etc., designed to unravel potentially relevant sex and/or gender differences in the data?
- Are the groups involved in the research adequately gender-balanced?
- Is the data collected and analysed adequately set to integrate balance in terms of gender?

Dissemination and communication:

- Does the research analysis present statistics, output, focusing on relevant gender differences that came up during the research development?
- Do the stakeholders consider specific entities that focus on gender aspects?
- Does this phase contemplate the organization of specific events/sub-programmes addressing underrepresented groups?

8. Abbreviations and definitions

8.1. Abbreviations

СА	Consortium Agreement
CFS	Certificate on Financial Statements
DoA	Description of the Action (Annex I to the contract)
EC	European Commission
ECAS	European Commission main Authentication Service; actually called SEDIA (Single Electronic Data Interchange Area), usually known as EU Participant Portal
EEA	External Ethics Advisor
EU	European Union



FM	Financial Manager; for the purposes of PRESENCE, the person designated by the Director of the PMO of i2CAT to assist in the coordination of the financial, legal, organizational and administrative tasks of the project	
GA	General Assembly	
(EC)-GA	Grant Agreement	
PC	Project Coordinator	
РМ	Person Month	
(EC)-PO	Project Officer (EC's supervisor of the contract)	
RP	Reporting Period	
RTD	Research and Technological Development	
тс	Technical Committee (Managers and WPL group)	
TL	Task Leader	
ТМ	Technical Manager	
WP	Work Package	
WPL(s)	Work Package Leader(s)	

8.2. Definitions

Beneficiaries	The organisations signatories of the EC-GA receiving EU funding in the form of a grant.
Consortium Agreement	Means the agreement concluded amongst PRESENCE <i>partners</i> for the implementation of the action. Such an agreement shall not affect the beneficiaries' obligations to the Community and/or to one another arising from the contract.
Consortium	The PRESENCE Consortium, conformed by the organisations listed in Section 1 of the present document. For decision taking on <i>consortium</i> level serves the General Assembly of the Consortium.
Continuous Reporting Module	At the beginning of each project, the continuous reporting module is activated through the Participant Portal for the beneficiaries to submit deliverables, to report on progress in achieving milestones, to answer to the questionnaire on different issues as soon as their own data are available.
CORDIS portal	Community Research and Development Information Service, the European Commission's primary source of results from the projects funded by the EU's framework programmes for research and innovation.



Deliverable	Represents a verifiable output of the project that is sent to the EC providing information to ensure monitoring of the project; they are often written reports but can also take another form (prototype, etc.), even in those cases a written document is required.
Effort	The number of labour units required to carry out an activity. In the EU R&D Programs it is usually expressed as person-month (usually 1/12 FTE)
Eligible costs	These are costs accepted by the Commission as being reimbursable (up to the limits established in the Grant Agreement)
Grant Agreement	The grant contract concluded between the EU and the beneficiaries. It establishes the rights and obligations that govern the grant. It consists of a core text and annexes (for instance, fixing the project content and the project budget). The contract itself is signed by the coordinator and the European Commission; the rest of beneficiaries access to the grant by signing the accession form
(EU) Participant Portal	Former name for the Funding and Tender Opportunities portal: EU website where EU bodies and beneficiaries manage EU funding. Unique entry point for all EU funds/funding programmes that are part of eGrants and eProcurement
Partner	Consortium member having signed the Accession to the Grant Agreement and/or participating as Associated Partner and signing the Consortium Agreement (its funding comes from National Agencies)
Project Workplan	The sum of all activities carried out in the framework of the <i>consortium</i> and their time schedule, according to EU-GA.
Work package	Major sub-divisions of the project with a verifiable end-point which should follow the logical phases of the implementation of the project
Work plan	Schedule of tasks, deliverables, efforts, dates and responsibilities corresponding to the work to be carried out for the PRESENCE project, as specified in Annex I (Description of de Action, DoA) to Grant Agreement nº 101135025



9. References

Notice²⁴

- Ref. 1 Horizon Europe Framework Programme General Rules for participation
- Ref. 2 Grant Agreement nº 101135025 (incl. DoA Description of the Action, Parts A and B)
- Ref. 3 Annex 5 of the Grant Agreement nº 101135025
- Ref. 4 PRESENCE project's Consortium Agreement
- Ref. 5 How to Communicate your EU-Funded Project: <u>https://rea.ec.europa.eu/communicating-about-your-eu-funded-project_en</u>
- Ref. 6 Plenary Meetings calendar for the three years of the project 2024-2026
- Ref. 7 EU-GRANTS template Declaration of days worked on a project
- Ref. 8 Indicators on Dissemination, Communicatins and Project results file
- Ref. 9 EC template for Certificate on Financial Statements
- Ref. 10 Zenodo community of the project <u>https://zenodo.org/communities/presence-101135025</u>
- Ref. 11 PRESENCE Deliverables list table Follow up file in the Project repository
- Ref. 12 PRESENCE deliverables template (subfolder 00)
- Ref. 13 European Institute for Gender Equality. Gender Sensitive Language. Available at: <u>https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-sensitive-communication/first-steps-towards-more-inclusive-language</u>
- Ref. 14 European Commission Directorate-General for Research and Innovation. European Toolkit Gender in EU Research. October 2011. Available at: <u>https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c17a4eba-49ab-40f1-bb7b-bb6faaf8dec8</u>

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²⁴ Notice to the attention of the EU officers and external reviewers: most of the below URL links direct to the project Repository and thus with access limited to the project consortium members. The documentation is available under demand, contact pmo@i2cat.net