CASSOVIUM

PROJECT ROADMAP FOR EDIH CASSOVIUM

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HISTORY OF CHANGES

Version	Publication Date	Change
1.0	08.02.2023	▪ Initial version

2.0	21.12.2023	*Section 1 Introduction / Composition and Contractual Relations Within the Consortium*:
		▪ adding information about Consortium Agreement for RRF Grant Purposes (page 8),
		▪ adding information about Contract for the Provision of RRF Grant (page 9).
		
		Section 1 *Introduction / Management Structure of the EDCASS Consortium / Project Management Board* (page 11):
		▪ updating the number of PMB members (7 to 8),
		▪ adding newly created position "**Partner Lead TUKE**",
		▪ renumbering the list of PMB members accordingly.
		
		Section 1 *Introduction / Project Reporting Process* (page 12):
		▪ changes in the Table 4: renaming the column "Delivery Month" to "Delivery Month (according to GA)"; adding new column „Estimated Delivery Month" with update delivery dates for some deliverables,
		▪ adding new subsection "**Justification of Delays of Project Deliverables**".
		
		Section *2 Management Plan / Project Implementation Plan*:
		▪ changing formulation: "The implementation plan will be divided into semi-annual periods (semesters)…" to "The implementation plan will be divided into semesters…" (page 16),
		▪ changing the **duration of each semester** (page 16 and consequently on pages 17 and 18):
		    Semester 1 (Planning and Design): M01-M06 to M01-M16
		    Semester 2 (Pilot Operation): M07-M18 to M17-M23
		    Semester 3 (Development and Expansion): M19-M30 to M24-M33
		    Semester 4 (Consolidation and Sustainability): M31-M36 to M34-M36
		
		Section *3 Financial Plan*:
		▪ updating the date of prefinancing payment from RRF (from M01 11/2022 to M10 08/2023) (page 22).
		
		Section *8 Resources and Capacity Plan* (page 37):
		▪ updating the quantification for Partner Lead positions: adding 1 position for TUKE and updating the total number of persons occupied this position (2 to 3).

Version	Publication Date	Change
		Section *9 Timetable for Project Implementation* (page 41): ▪ changing the wording in the sentence "The following table, which includes the changes in the project implementation caused by the significant delay in obtaining national co-funding,…" ▪ updating the Table 22: duration of tasks T2.1, T2.2 and T2.3 prolonged from Q01–Q02 to Q01–Q04 within Year 1, ▪ updating the Image 4.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Project Objectives

The mission of the EDIH CASSOVIUM project is to support the enhancement of European critical digital technologies and their best use in the eco-digital transformation of industrial and public ecosystems in the Eastern Slovakia region. EDIH CASSOVIUM aims to provide tailored services and support to different target groups so that they can successfully undergo digital transformation, thereby increasing the overall digital competitiveness and innovation capacity in the region as well as in Slovakia. EDIH CASSOVIUM is the first systemic solution for such digitisation support.

The main objectives of the project can be defined as follows:

1) **To support and accelerate the digital transformation of** SMEs and PSO in the Eastern Slovakia region.
2) Support the further **development of the regional innovation ecosystem**.
3) **Pilot the scheme for the operation of** the European Digital Innovation Hub (EDIH).

EDID CASSOVIUM has set the following strategic indicators:

1) Provide regional SMEs and public sector organisations with quality services for their digital transformation.
2) Contribute to the economic and innovative development of the region to increase the DESI Index.
3) Actively support the establishment of an effective regional system for the transfer of research results to business and public administration.
4) Motivate the development of a regional system of re/skilling and lifelong learning in the field of digital technologies and their applications.
5) Further support for business acceleration programmes and linking them to digital transformation objectives and EDCASS activities.

Indicators (KPIs)

The project defines the following outputs:

Indicator	Definition	Target Value
Total number of customers	Total number of customers /SMEs /public sector organisations, which have used the EDCASS' services.	**150**
Total number of serviced SMEs		130
Total number of serviced public sector organisation		20
Customers in category A (TBI)	Total number of customers per each service category.	40
Customers in category B (S&T)		60
Customers in category C (S2FI)		10
Customers in category D (IE&N)		40

Indicator	Definition	Target Value
Amount of investments successfully triggered thanks to receiving EDCASS services	Total amount of identified external funding (investments, project grants etc.) which customers receive thanks to the services provided	EUR 1 million
Bilateral EDIH collaborations	Number of collaborations foreseen with other EDIHs/EDIH thematic networks/other EU network and stakeholders outside the region at EU level.	30 collaborations
Collaborations through EDIH thematic networks		6 involvements
Agreements with other European networks		2 collaborations
Collaborations established on national and regional level	Bilateral/Multilateral collaboration established with stakeholders in regional or national innovation ecosystem (including DIHs, national EDIHs, public bodies, professional organisations etc.)	10 collaborations

Table 1 Overview of project indicators (KPIs)

Impact indicators:

Indicator	Target Value
Percentage of customer which digital maturity was increased	**70 %**
Number of start-ups/spin-offs which were provided with at least 1 EDCASS service	**15 start-ups /spin-offs**

Table 2 Overview of impact indicators

Target Groups

EDIH CASSOVIUM will address a wide range of target groups in its activities and support different actors in their digital transformation and innovation activities. We can look at the target groups as follows:

Primary target group:

- **Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs):** One of the key target groups is SMEs, which often lack the resources or expertise to effectively use and integrate digital technologies. EDIH provides them with access to expertise, technology solutions and infrastructure to help them improve their competitiveness and innovation potential.

- **Larger enterprises and corporations**: while they may seem better equipped to handle digital transformation, larger enterprises can also use EDCASS services to improve their innovation processes and technology development.

- **Start-ups and Scale-ups**: Dynamic and innovative enterprises such as start-ups and scale-ups are also important target groups for EDCASS as they can benefit significantly from access to specialised knowledge, networks and technologies.

- **Public sector**: public sector institutions, including municipalities, cities, counties, health and education institutions, are also targeted, as digitisation can significantly improve the efficiency and quality of public services.

Secondary target group:

- **Business sector and public sector institutions:** as part of its communication, EDIH CASSOVIUM will use various tools and channels to disseminate information about the project and its activities and will seek to maximise the impact of these activities on society. EDIH CASSOVIUM activities will also serve as a space to raise awareness on the topics of digital transformation of the economy and society
- **Research and academic institutions**: EDIHs are expected to collaborate with universities, research centres and other academic institutions aimed at promoting research and development.
- **NGOs and NPOs**: EDIH can also support NPOs to implement digital tools to increase their reach and effectiveness.

Composition and Contractual Relations Within the Consortium

The EDIH CASSOVIUM consortium consists of three partners:

- Technical University of Košice (TUKE) as project coordinator,
- Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice (UPJS) as a partner of the project,
- Košice IT Valley (KEITVA) as a project partner,

The consortium's contractual relations between all three partners are governed by the following documents (project agreements):

- **Grant Agreement**: A contract between the EU and the project coordinator, with access clauses from 2 other members, which sets out the rights and obligations and conditions applicable to a grant from the DIGITAL programme. The contract defines the basic conditions for the implementation of the project.
  - Signed: 18.10.2022
  - Effective: from 01.11.2022
  - Valid: until 31.10.2025
  - Central Register of Contracts: https://www.crz.gov.sk/zmluva/7061672/
- **Consortium Agreement**: Agreement signed by all three partners of the consortium who jointly submitted a proposal for a Project to the Grant Authority under the Digital Europe Programme (2021-2027). The purpose of the Agreement is to specify, in the context of the implementation of the EDIH CASSOVIUM Project, the relationship between the parties, in particular with regards to the organisation of the work between them, the management of the Project and the rights and obligations of the partners concerning, inter alia, responsibilities, access rights and dispute resolution.
  - Signed: 11.10.2022
  - Effective: from 01.11.2022
  - Central Register of Contracts: https://www.crz.gov.sk/zmluva/6986817/
- **Consortium Agreement (for the purpose of financing from the Recovery and Resilience Facility – RRF)**: signed by all partners of the consortium in order to regulate their mutual rights and obligations and other contractual terms and conditions related to the implementation of the Project and in accordance with the terms of the Call (call code:

17I03-04-V01) announced by the Ministry of Investment, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic. The Consortium Agreement is concluded in relation to the contract concluded between the Main Partner and the European Union represented by the European Commission (Grant Agreement).

- o Signed: 21.06.2023
- o Effective: from 22.06.2023
- o Central Register of Contracts: https://www.crz.gov.sk/zmluva/8013155/
- **Contract for the Provision of RRF Grant:** the subject of this Contract is to regulate the rights and obligations of the Parties (MIRRI and TUKE), as well as to define the contractual terms and conditions for the provision and use of RRF grant for the implementation (co-funding) of the EDIH CASSOVIUM project.
  - o Signed: 21.07.2023
  - o Effective: from 28.07.2023
  - o Central Register of Contracts: https://www.crz.gov.sk/zmluva/8139922/ (MIRRI)
      https://www.crz.gov.sk/zmluva/8127661/ (TUKE)

Management Structure of the EDCASS Consortium

All project activities will be handled by all three partners, with a **multi-level project management structure.** This will implement three interlinked levels of governance: strategic (General Assembly). advisory (Strategic Advisory Board) and operational (Steering Board and WP), with clearly identified and defined responsibilities, communication flows, interfaces and work processes.
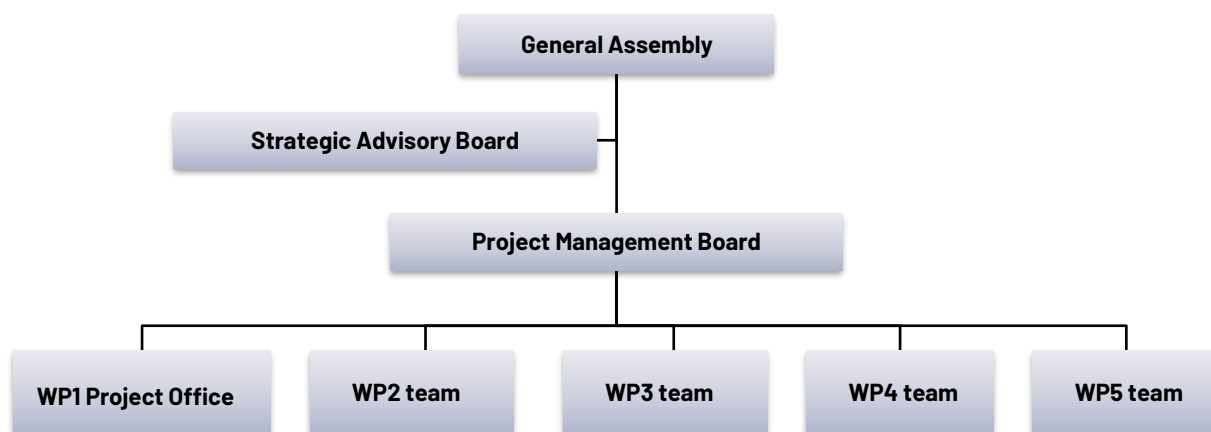

Image 1 Project management structure

General Assembly

The decision-making body of the Consortium, whose competence is regulated by the Consortium Agreement and the Statutes of the Project Management Board. It meets at least once a year and decides on the following:

- Fundamental changes to the project (changes that require the conclusion of amendments to the project contracts).

- The entry of a new partner into the Consortium and the approval of an agreement on the terms of its entry.
- Withdrawal of a Partner from the Consortium and approval of an agreement on the terms of such withdrawal.
- Identification of breaches of partner's obligations and commitments.
- Declaring a partner a *Defaulting Party*.
- Remedies to be taken by the defaulting partner.
- Termination of the defaulting partner's participation in the project and related measures.
- Proposal to change the project coordinator.
- A proposal by the project funding authorities to suspend all or part of the project or to terminate the project and subsequently terminate the Consortium Agreement.
- The composition of the Project *Management Board*.
- Composition of the Strategic *Advisory Board*.
- Statutes and amendments thereto of all Consortium bodies (General Assembly, Project Steering Board and Strategic Advisory Board).

The General Assembly of EDIH CASSOVIUM has 4 members:

- Representative of Coordinating partner – TUKE   Rector of TUKE,
- Representative of Partner – UPJS   Rector of TUKE,
- Representative of Partner KEITVA   Executive Director of KEITVA,
- General Project Manager.

Strategic Advisory Board

Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) as a monitoring and advisory body responsible for providing external feedback on project implementation. It reviews the progress reports of the project and will be composed of representatives of the regional innovation ecosystem (public authorities, other innovation initiatives). The terms of reference of the SAB are regulated by the Consortium Agreement and the Statutes of the Board. The members of the SAB shall be nominated and approved by the General Assembly. It meets at least once a year (due at the time of the annual action plan and project progress report).

Project Management Board

The Project Management Board (PMB) is the executive management body responsible for high-level management and coordination within the project, which meets on a quarterly basis or as required to address the project. Its role is to:

- Tactical and operational management and coordination of the project, in particular for approving deliverables and milestones, key documents, procedures and events, major events.
- Monitoring project implementation, ongoing (proactive) risk management, addressing critical issues and deviations from the project plan, evaluating project progress, assessing project implementation against plan and, if necessary, proposing adjustments to the project plan for approval by the General Assembly.

- Preparation of the meetings of the General Assembly and responsibility for the proper execution and implementation of its decisions.

The Board's terms of reference are regulated by the Consortium Agreement and the Statutes of the Project Management Board. The PMB consists of 8 members:

1) General Manager of the project,
2) Partner Lead TUKE,
3) Partner Lead UPJS,
4) Partner Lead KEITVA,
5) WP2 leader,
6) WP3 leader,
7) WP4 leader,
8) WP5 leader.

Operational Management via WP

Project activities are structured in WPs. Each WP is assigned a WP leader (one of the partners). Each task is supervised by the respective partner and all partners are involved (participate) in all tasks.

The WP leader is responsible for the organisation of work and communication in his WP. Communication within and between WPs will be based on an operational and efficient level, minimising administrative processes and focusing on a target-oriented approach. Teamwork and co-design with effective use of digital technologies will be the main collaboration tools used in the daily project work. The heads of the different WPs meet on a weekly basis to operationally address the day-to-day running of the project.

In order to meet the general objective of the project, a process approach methodology will be implemented to pilot the EDID CASSOVIUM structure consisting of 5 work packages, which will be distributed among the partners as follows:

Partner	Work package	
TUKE	WP1	Project Management
	WP2	EDCASS Institutional Plan, Service Portfolio Development and Sustainability Strategy
UPJS	WP3	EDCASS Pilot Operation - Providing Value-Added Services
	WP4	Capacity Building of Ecosystems, Internationalisation and Cooperation of Corridors
KEITVA	WP5	Dissemination and Communication

Table 3 List of project work packages (Work Packages)

Project Reporting Process

The following two reporting cycles are established for the project:

1) Timetable for **two-period reporting** to the European Commission (M18 and M36),
2) The original proposal intended to have internal reporting cycle set at 12 months (1 year) with a backward cycle for the annual work plan (beginning of the period) and the annual progress report (end of the period). Based on the current best-practice from the actual

project implementation the internal reporting cycle is proposed to use **semester approach** based on the project life cycle. For more information on the semester approach, please consult the section *Project Implementation Plan* (page 16).

A bottom-up approach will be used to collect monitoring information from all working groups (including work progress in terms of outputs, outcomes, results, impacts and workforce) in the preparation of reports. This information will be summarised at WP1 level.

Overview of the mandatory deliverables of the EDIH CASSOVIUM project and their reporting during the project:

	Number and Name of the Output	Delivery Month (according to GA)	Estimated Delivery Month
D1.1	Project Roadmap	**M04**	**M14 (v2.0)**
D1.2	Action Plan for Period 1	**M05**	**M14 (v2.0)**
D1.3	Action Plan for Period 2	M19	M19
D2.1	Handbook for EDIH CASSOVIUM	**M06**	**M16**
D2.2	EDIH CASSOVIUM Integrated Service Portfolio (Initial Version)	**M06**	**M16**
D2.3	EDIH CASSOVIUM Integrated Service Portfolio (Evaluated Version)	M36	M36
D2.4	Sustainability Strategy	M35	M35
D3.1	Overall Report on Services Provided by EDIH CASSOVIUM	M36	M36
D4.1	Report on EDIH CASSOVIUM Contribution to Regional and European Innovation Ecosystem Capacity Building	M36	M36
D5.1	Plan for Dissemination and Exploitation, Including Communication Activities	M02	M02
D5.2	EDIH CASSOVIUM Branding Guide	M03	M03
D5.3	Promotional Materials	**M10**	**M15**
D5.4	Report on Dissemination and Communication Activities	M36	M36

Table 4 List of project outputs

Justification of Delays of Project Deliverables

The project was dealing with the problem of delaying of national co-funding and missing legal authorisation for delivering services within de-minimis framework. The co-funding promised by the RRF and administered by the Ministry of Investment, Regional Development and Informatization SR (MIRRI SR) was delayed up 10 months (07/2023 instead of 10/2022), despite active communication with the MIRRI SR as well as with other Slovak EDIHs.

WP1 deliverables D1.1 and D1.2 had been prepared in the original timeframe but by the time they had been finished (as of versions 1.0), it was clear that project was gaining delay (due to co-funding delay) so they became outdated. Versions 2.0 of both deliverables reflects the current state of the project implementation.

The delivery date for D2.1, D2.2 and D5.3 is postponed fully because of the co-funding delay.

Structure and Description of Work Packages

The project activities are structured into work packages that are interlinked. Their aim is to build the structure and organisation of EDIH CASSOVIUM so that it is able to provide quality services for the support of digitisation and digital transformation in a systematic and long-term manner.
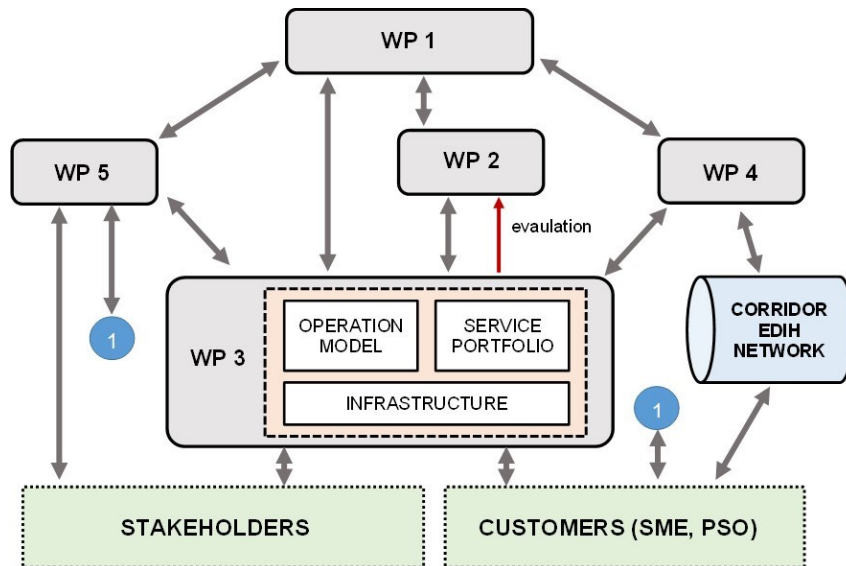

Image 2 Logical structure of work packages

During the pilot phase, all processes, organisational structure, communication and promotion methods will need to be set up. In the process of project preparation, different types of services have been defined, and in the pilot phase it will be necessary to verify whether these services will realistically meet the needs of the end users of EDIH CASSOVIUM.

A dedicated team will be created to provide digitisation services, working in coordination with representatives from all three partners. Continuous planning and coordination of activities will be crucial to achieve the project's objectives. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the pilot EDIH CASSOVIUM set-up will be carried out and consequently adaptation of the necessary changes to achieve the project's measurable indicators.

The links between WP are shown in the figure *Image 2*.

WPs are interconnected and there are clear information paths and interfaces set up. The core of the project is WP3, where all service delivery takes place. WP3 combines the EDCASS operational model with a developed portfolio of services using the available infrastructure of the consortium.

WP2 and WP4 are the main design and enhancement tools of the project, while in WP2 the whole EDCASS structure and portfolio is being developed. The design builds on the current maturity of the project partners and their experience, integrates all this and creates a structure that will be flexible, scalable and reflect all the requirements and features of a fully functional regional EDIH. WP4, on the other hand, opens up EDCASS to other EDIHs, the thematic network and the overall EDIH network. This WP plays a key role in bringing additional capacity to EDCASS and its customers through EDIH corridors.

WP1 and WP5 are "service" packages, they support and create an efficient project environment to perform critical EDCASS functions. WP1 also deals with linking to project authorities. WP5

uses dissemination and communication tools to reach out to potential customers, stakeholders and the community.

Work Package WP1

WP 1 is responsible for the following activities

- **Project Management / Project Office**:
    - aims to ensure effective coordination and cooperation within the consortium
    - WP1 creates an efficient working environment and space for other WPs of the project
    - Overall coordination, administration and financial management
- **Coordination and communication with authorities** - communication regarding project outputs, results and impacts
- **Cooperation with the** Digital Transformation Accelerator (**DTA**): an important part of this is coordination and communication with the DTA and the European Commission (EC).
- **Risk management** involves monitoring progress and putting corrective measures in place where necessary.

Work Package WP2

WP 2 is responsible for the following activities:

- **Organisational and management structure of EDCASS**: proposes institutional design of EDCASS and processes for piloting, design of service portfolio. These activities will require:
    - defining job roles, job descriptions and qualifications
    - design of the organisational structure of EDCASS - determination of hierarchical relationships,
    - RACI matrix - table of competencies and responsibilities,
    - organizational culture design.
- **EDCASS operational model** proposes a functional business model for EDCASS (organisational and management structure, process models and operational strategies).
- **Service portfolio design**: design of the service portfolio and its components (including customer journey approach, service delivery model, product lifecycle and product and resource management). Setup:
    - Customer Journey Map,
    - Description of the service delivery process (process description, life cycle....),
    - Description of the catalogue of services provided: definition of the target group, structure of the catalogue, management of access to the catalogue (external, internal), product sheets, updating of the catalogue.
- **Evaluation of the pilot operation**: The project activities in the initial phase of the WP will be followed up later by monitoring and evaluation (of the EDCASS pilot operation and service provision in WP3) and the updating and further development of the service portfolio.
- **Sustainability strategy**: the WP life cycle will be completed with activities aimed at defining a sustainability strategy that will outline the functioning of EDCASS beyond the

project timeframe.

Work Package WP3

WP 3 is responsible for the following activities:

- **Piloting the EDCASS structure**: piloting the provision of value-added services, covering all EDCASS services provided to customers.
- **Provision of value-added services to customers**: WP3 will launch the EDCASS structure and start providing services (in the four EDIH service categories: A, B, C.D). These activities will be complemented by monitoring and evaluation of the service provision, which will be provided to WP2 to assess and validate the pilot operation.

Work Package WP4

WP 4 is responsible for the following activities:

- **Capacity building of** the regional innovation ecosystem
- **Building EDIH corridors**, cooperation in the EDIH network and other European networks

Networking and ecosystem capacity building, internationalisation and corridor collaboration enrich the project ecosystem in three main dimensions:

1) Enhancing the capabilities and service portfolio of EDCASS through the activities of the EDIH network and specific EDIH corridors and sub-networks, and through bilateral cooperation with partner EDIHs and relevant institutions. The above approach to capacity and service development/building will be based on win-win (W2W) relationships between the participants in these network links.
2) EDCASS will benefit from capacity building of the regional innovation ecosystem (service delivery will be in line with the needs and capabilities of the region).
3) WP4 will provide a seamless service to its customers, linked to the activities of other European networks (such as EEN, Startup Europe and EIT).

Work Package WP5

WP 5 is responsible for the following activities:

- **EDCASS Branding**: building the EDIH CASSOVIUM brand as a leader and key driver of digital transformation in the region.
- **Dissemination and communication plan**: to establish and strengthen the visibility of the EDCASS and EDIH network in the region and disseminate the achievements and benefits of the project implementation.
- **Improving the visibility of EDCASS, promoting success stories and building awareness of digital transformation in the region**: an "evangelizing" forum to raise awareness among the business community, public institutions, policy makers and the public in general on the topics of digital transformation of the economy and society (challenges, trends, opportunities, threats, etc.)
- **Promotion of services and soliciting customer feedback**: focus on marketing and promotion of services to attract customers to EDCASS services.

2 MANAGEMENT PLAN

To ensure planning and control, we will use an agile, sustainable and proactive management approach based on strategic planning, a "plan-do-check-act" model for continuous improvement and adherence to quality standards with a Project Roadmap (D1.1) and periodic Action Plans (D1.2 and D1.3) with appropriate evaluation.

Project Implementation Plan

The project implementation plan will be based on the planned activities of each WP. The objective of the implementation plan is to align the individual activities in terms of timing and inter-working of the WPs. The implementation plan will be divided into semi-annual periods (semesters), during which the results achieved will be reviewed and the planning for the next period will be adjusted:

- Semester 1: **Planning and Design** (M01-M16)
- Semester 2: **Pilot Operation** (M17-M23)
- Semester 3: **Development and Expansion** (M24-M33)
- Semester 4: **Consolidation and Sustainability** (M34-M36)

The schedule for each semester can be broken down as follows:

Semester	1. PLANNING AND DESIGN (M01-M16)
WP1	- Dealing with the legal aspects of the operation of EDCASS (contracting related to the project) - Establishing the structure of EDCASS bodies (decision-making, monitoring, management) - Creating an effective project environment - Coordinating the cooperation of the individual work packages - Coordination and communication with authorities at EU level (DTA) and at SK level (MIRRI) - Preparation of technical and personnel resources for the launch of EDCASS
WP2	- EDCASS operational design, organisation, relationships and responsibilities - EDCASS service portfolio design, service catalogue creation, catalogue update design - Design of processes for the provision of EDCASS services
WP3	Cooperation with WP2
WP4	- Establishment of a database of contacts for cooperation with foreign institutions - Scheduling meetings to develop EDCASS corridors - Planning for building a regional innovation ecosystem - searching for events to showcase EDCASS activities
WP5	- Creating a marketing plan - EDCASS branding preparation - Start of promotional activities (awareness building, education of the target group, building relationships in the region and beyond)

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Semester	2. PILOT OPERATION (M17–M23)
WP1	▪ Coordination of project activities and cooperation within the consortium ▪ Organisation of regular project meetings ▪ Regular monitoring of the implementation of tasks and updating of the project plan ▪ Risk management
WP2	▪ Launch of pilot services (in cooperation with WP3) ▪ Setting up a pilot plan evaluation system
WP3	▪ Coordination with client service providers ▪ Digital transformation services launch ▪ Collecting and analysing feedback from clients
WP4	▪ Actively seeking partnerships and building ecosystems ▪ Connecting with other European networks ▪ Cooperation with partner EDIHs and relevant institutions ▪ Participation in relevant conferences and events
WP5	▪ Dissemination and communication plan ▪ Improving the visibility of EDCASS, building awareness of digital transformation in the region ▪ Creation of a communication plan based on existing events (partnerships, EDCASS presentations at partners' events) ▪ Promoting services and getting feedback from customers.

Semester	3. DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION (M24–M33)
WP1	▪ Coordination of project activities and cooperation within the consortium ▪ Organisation of regular project meetings ▪ Regular monitoring of the implementation of tasks and updating of the project plan ▪ Risk management
WP2	▪ Updating and further development of the service portfolio ▪ Defining a sustainability strategy
WP3	▪ Regular evaluation and adaptation of services
WP4	▪ Joint projects and initiatives ▪ Continuous corridor building and networking
WP5	▪ Launch a targeted advertising campaign ▪ Brand development and building long-term relationships with clients ▪ Active participation in professional events and media ▪ Results tracking: regularly monitor the results of marketing activities and evaluate successes and shortcomings, social media analysis ▪ Monitoring the competition ▪ Campaign optimization, success evaluation

Semester	4. CONSOLIDATION AND SUSTAINABILITY (M31–M36)
WP1	▪ Monitoring of project objectives and KPIs ▪ Evaluation of EDCASS success
WP2	▪ Design of a portfolio of services that reflects the lessons learned from the implementation of the project ▪ development of a sustainability strategy
WP3	▪ termination of the provision of services ▪ processing of data received from clients

Semester	4. CONSOLIDATION AND SUSTAINABILITY (M31–M36)
WP4	▪ Continuous corridor building and networking
WP5	▪ Innovations and updates: update and innovate marketing activities according to new trends and technological changes ▪ Evaluation of promotion successes

Table 5 Project implementation phasing (semesters)

Within the project, the respective tasks (*Tasks*) are defined, which each work package will elaborate into the respective sub-tasks (*Subtasks*). These will be assigned to each period and subsequently reviewed as part of the monitoring activities. It will also be important to keep track of specific milestones and KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) that will be tracked as part of the project monitoring and will ensure that individual activities are rescheduled where appropriate. The plan will be flexibly adjusted to reflect changing conditions and the overall situation.

All WPs are interconnected. The core of the project is service delivery, which is represented by WP3. WP2 should be seen as a work package that provides the design part and ensures improvements in the delivery and selection of appropriate services. WP1, WP4 and WP5 are work packages that create the appropriate environment for the implementation of the EDCASS project.

Management System

The following management tools will be used in the EDCASS project:

- **A tiered approach to the project management structure** - the project management structure will implement interconnected levels of management, with a clear definition of responsibilities, communication flow, interfaces and processes.
- **Work package management** -WP leader is responsible for the organization of work and communication in his/her specific WP. Communication in work teams and between WPs is based on an operational and efficient level, minimizing administrative processes and focusing on a targeted approach. Teamwork and joint planning with effective use of digital technologies will be the main collaboration tools used in the daily project work.
- **Reporting** - the reporting period is set at 12 months (1 year) with a backward cycle of an annual work plan (beginning of the period) and an annual progress report (end of the period). A bottom-up approach will be used to collect monitoring information from all work groups (including work progress in terms of outputs, outcomes, outcomes, impacts and workforce). This information will be summarised in WP1.
- **System support of management processes** - in the initial phase of the project, a suitable IT system will be implemented with the ambition to systematize the information and process flow in a digital way. The system will also serve as a CRM system to monitor and manage the provision of services to customers. The system will make reporting at different levels of the project easy and accessible.
- **Overall coordination, administration and financial management** is carried out by the Project Office (WP1).

Project Meeting Plan

To ensure cooperation between the different partners as well as the WP, a **plan for project meetings** will be set up to ensure the success of the project implementation, the necessary communication between the actors, decision making and planning in case of deviations.

Meeting	Task	Frequency
General Assembly meetings	▪ Final approval of project deliverables and milestones. ▪ Top-level monitoring of project implementation status. ▪ Approval of changes to the project.	min. 1x per year
Project Steering Board meetings	▪ Provide leadership, direction and support in the strategic management of the project. ▪ Approval of deliverables and milestones, key documents, procedures and major events. ▪ Monitoring of project implementation, risk management, problem solving and deviations.	min. 1x per month
Strategic Advisory Board meetings	▪ External monitoring of project progress. ▪ Formulating recommendations.	1x per year
Project Status Meeting (Status Meeting)	▪ Operational management via WP. ▪ Meeting on the status of project activities, systematically tracking the agenda to verify that everyone is completing their tasks on time and on budget, and to keep the team engaged, participating, and informed about the project.	During period 1: 1 x per week During periods 2 to 3: 2 x per week During period 4: 1 x per week
Ad-hoc contingency consultations	▪ An unforeseen situation may necessitate an adjustment of the plan and a rearrangement of the agenda. ▪ Changes during a project are a natural part of any project, but they need to be controlled.	as required

Table 6 Project meeting system

IT Support of Project Implementation

In the initial phase of the project, a suitable IT system will be implemented with the ambition to systematize the information and process flow in a digital way. The system will also serve as a CRM system to monitor and manage the provision of services to customers. The system will make reporting at different levels of the project easy and accessible.

IT tool	Description
Choosing a Microsoft platform to leverage the unified working ecosystem of IT software, that the ecosystem has, and all partners have access to	
Office 365	Basic office applications (Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint, Microsoft Teams)
Microsoft OneDrive	Cloud storage for documents (replacement for the current Google-based cloud) Migration to Microsoft storage as of 1.12.2023.
Microsoft Dynamics	CRM system for managing individual customers and their customer journey
Microsoft Planner	Team planning tool, ability to add, delegate and track tasks
Microsoft Forms	Tool for creating online forms (Creation of DMA forms for internal digitisation and linking with DTA EK TOOL data)
EMDESK	Online project management support system (Project Management Tool) Accessible especially for WP1 and WP leaders.

Table 7 Overview of recommended IT tools

3 FINANCIAL PLAN

There will be separate planning and management of project finances as part of project management. A financial management plan will be developed in WP1 in the inception phase of the project. The plan will outline the principles and processes of financial management of the project.

Responsibilities within the financial management of the project:

- **Project Finance Manager** (PFM) will be responsible for the overall financial planning and management of the project as well as the financial affairs of TUKE in the project. Position allocated TUKE.
- Partners (UPJS and KEITVA) will each have **Partner Financial Manager** (FM) assigned who will be responsible for their financial affairs in the project.

Financial planning will be a critical aspect in the implementation of the project. On the one hand, it will be necessary to meet the project objectives using existing capacities, on the other hand, it will be necessary to ensure that the planned project budget is met in order to cover all costs associated with the activities of EDIH CASSOVIUM. That is to say, it will be necessary to reconcile the available resources, costs and budget and to align these items with the project objectives that need to be achieved within the planned timeframe (the limiting factor for budget execution is the duration of the project).

The financial management of the project will focus on monitoring these aspects:

Task	Responsible
Overall project uptake in relation to reported project activities	PFM (TUKE) Inputs from FM
Tracking overruns of budget lines and overall budget over time	PFM (TUKE) Inputs from FM
Monitoring and control of budget execution by budget line (items are fixed and transfers between different types of items are not possible).	PFM (TUKE) FM (UPJS) FM (KEITVA)
Monitoring and control of the implementation of the budget for each type of service (monitoring the fulfilment of KPIs - structure and number of services provided: uptake of specialist units by partners).	PFM (TUKE) FM (UPJS)

Table 8 Financial management tasks

The overall EDIH CASSOVIUM budget is disaggregated in terms of types of items as well as in terms of individual partners, in addition to cost items. In financial planning, it will be necessary to monitor not only the spending of the line items themselves, but also the spending of the individual partners to ensure that it is in line with the reported project activities.

The following types of cost categories have been budgeted:

Budget Cost Category		% of Total Budget
A.1-Employees	Personnel costs	35%
B-Subcontracting costs	Subcontracting	2%
C.1-Travel and subsistence	Travel and subsistence	3%
C.2-Equipment	Equipment	1%
C.3-Other goods, works and services	Supplies (goods, services)	8%
D.2-Internally invoiced goods and services	Internal invoicing	44%
E-Indirect costs	Indirect expenditure	7%

Table 9 Share of cost categories in the total budget

In terms of individual WPs, the costs are broken down as follows:

WP	% Share of Total Project Budget
WP1	14 %
WP2	9 %
WP3	59 %
WP4	10 %
WP5	8 %

Table 10 Share of the costs of each WP in the total budget

The items with the largest share are personnel costs (costs of setting up processes in EDCASS, piloting service delivery and building ecosystems and collaboration) and the Internal Billing item (costs of departments responsible for service delivery). It is for this reason that financial planning will focus subsequent spending control on these items as a matter of priority. When controlling the execution of the individual WPs, financial management will focus on the execution of the WP3 item as a priority, since the costs under WP3 represent up to 59% of the total project costs.

The project is financed from two different sources, with the timing of individual payments scheduled as follows:

DIGITAL PROGRAMME		
Prefinancing Payment	Interim Payment	Final Paymnet
65%	**25%**	**10%**
M01	M23	after the end of the project
11/2022	approx. 09/2024	approx. 03/2026

RRF PROGRAMME		
Prefinancing Payment	Interim Payment	Final Paymnet
65%	**25%**	**10%**
M10	M21	After the end of the project
08/2023	07/2024	01/2026

Table 11 Timing of payments

In terms of time, financial management will focus on:

Semester 1 Planning and design	Semester 2 Pilot operation	Midterm Reporting (M18)	Semester 3 Development and Expansion	Semester 4 Consolidation and Sustainability	Reporting (M36)
management of the implementation of WP2 (staff costs)		reviewing the uptake, setting the necessary corrections and guidelines			auditing of expenditure and final evaluation of the overall project uptake
management of the implementation of WP5 (publicity costs)					
continuous monitoring of the execution of all WPs (all cost items)					
			control of WP3 spending (service delivery process)		
			control of WP4 spending (ecosystem formation and corridors)		
			continuous monitoring of the execution of all WPs (all cost items)		

Table 12 Phasing of financial management

Communication between the PFM and FM of both partners will be on a regular basis. In the inception phase of the project, a process will be set up to collect financial data from each partner and a system for ongoing monitoring of disbursements in the project. Shared documents will be created for regular financial data collection aimed at monitoring the project. The financial monitoring will be linked to the overall performance monitoring of the project and will focus on the continuous monitoring of the development and status of the full set of planned and actual indicators, which will be key for the operation of EDIH CASSOVIUM. It will be necessary to assess the performance of each indicator, identify deviations, update the plan on an ongoing basis and take measures to ensure that the actual indicators are in line with the updated plan. The key indicators in the monitoring of the project will be:

- set KPIs (number and structure of customers and services provided),
- budget execution,
- the number of services provided,
- the cost of providing the service.

The financial management of the project will mainly focus on budget execution in its monitoring, while other indicators must also be considered in its monitoring.

Financial management documents will be shared between those responsible while maintaining data protection requirements.

4 QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Evaluation of EDCASS Processes

The overall quality plan (as part of the *D1.1 Project Roadmap*) describes the criteria for acceptance of the deliverables of each work package, how compliance with these criteria will be measured, when quality checks will be performed, and by whom. The EDCASS quality assessment will be based on the following standards:

- **Measurable benefits**: clear, measurable, repeatable benchmarks and long-term benefits, set out in plans (three-year project plan and two periodic Action Plans, D1.1 - D1.3)
- **Strategic alignment**: involve all partners in monitoring and evaluation processes in an inclusive governance structure organised on three levels: consultative, strategic and operational.
- **Strategic Support**: it is crucial to maintain engagement at the highest level through the Strategic Advisory Board.
- **Visibility of results**: the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities (D5.1), will ensure effective communication of the project results, making EDCASS visible at local, regional, national and European level.
- **Reference for quality management**: project management is a core competence for the staff involved in the project. Digital tools for project collaboration will be used to increase productivity. Credibility is an essential point for achieving excellence (structure and functional dependency, governance structure, decision-making processes, risk management and improvement strategies).
- **Inclusion according to international standards**: all EDCASS processes will be based on internationally accepted best practices.

The following approaches to monitoring and quality assurance will be used to monitor project activities, the quality and quantity of results, and to prevent potential problems in implementation:

- **Quality assurance at the overall project level**: a feedback approach to the development of periodic action plans and their evaluation against the standards and management plans set out in the Project Roadmap document (D1.1). All work packages (WPs) will be responsible for reporting progress and achievement of targets and relevant indicators. The Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) will review on an annual basis the results and achievements of project implementation and serve as a risk management tool to avoid significant deviations from the project plan.
- **Risk management activities** will be vertically distributed across all levels of project management, with the operational level responsible for monitoring and evaluating progress and the strategic level responsible for deciding on proposed actions to minimise potential risks.

- **Validation of the proposed EDCASS service structure and portfolio**: WP2 will be responsible for the validation of the structure and portfolio, based on data and feedback from WP3 (Pilot run). This evaluation will be used to adjust the structure and/or service portfolio to provide a better service or in a more efficient way.
- **The evaluation of the dissemination and exploitation activities** will be carried out in WP5 in order to align the implementation of WP5 tasks with the Dissemination and Communication Plan (D5.1) and the reality of the project implementation.

Network assessment and monitoring by DTA: EDCASS will report on developments in digital maturity and capture innovations that have been introduced into customers' businesses through tools prepared by DTA.

Evaluation of Provided Services

A comprehensive system of continuous monitoring and evaluation of qualitative and quantitative parameters of service delivery, supported by customer feedback evaluation, will be implemented as part of the EDCASS operation. The system will also take into account the effective collaboration of the whole project team, in particular those members who will be directly responsible for service delivery (WP3). The system is described in the *Project Roadmap* document (D1.1) and will be continuously updated during the pilot operation. All measures of the system are based on the activities and experience that the consortium partners currently have in the provision of services related to the use of digital technologies in the different sectors in their respective areas of expertise and competence.

5 GREEN PLAN

The grant agreement with the European Commission sets out the strategic framework for the project in the field of environmental sustainability, which is hierarchically based on the following strategic documents:

- The European Green Deal,
- National strategy for sustainable development and
- Adaptation strategy for the consequences of climate change in the Košice Region.

EDCASS partners have their own initiatives in these areas:

- Green University Strategy (TUKE and UPJS),
- "Race to zero" campaign (UPJS),
- Cluster Management Excellence Label Gold (KEITVA).

The grant agreement encourages EDIH CASSOVIUM to set its policy on the "green plan" and sustainability. This policy has 2 main areas:

- product and client measures; and
- measures in the area of own operations.

Product and Client Measures

In addition to supporting the digital transformation of SMEs and public institutions, EDCASS' role is to emphasise and support green digital transformation, especially in sectors such as energy, transport and construction.

EDCASS, as part of the pilot operation, declares that it will:

- Provide environmental education and demonstrate best practice in this area (e.g. planning, construction, operation and powering of green buildings, green transport).
- Identify and support circular economy initiatives.
- Stimulate the digitalisation of the economy instead of traditional approaches that are very damaging to the environment.

Education and training activities in the area of open data will be an important part of the services provided to EDCASS customers and partners. EDCASS will actively monitor and identify trends and requirements in the field of environmental protection, which it will then integrate into the respective services and digital maturity assessment models of its clients.

The following measures will be taken in the area of products and clients:

- **Assessment of the contribution of the service provided to the sustainability of the client's ecosystem**
  In the Customer Journey process, a step could be created between defining the service and signing the contract. This step would include an assessment and evaluation of the

contribution of the service to sustainability for the client.

- **ESG self-assessment**
  EDCASS could, as part of spreading awareness on the topic of sustainability, offer the possibility to fill in a self-assessment questionnaire for the ESG area. Completion of such a questionnaire would be voluntary, with no impact on service delivery or need for interaction with EDCASS staff.

- **Sustainability training**
  In order to be able to assess the contribution of the services provided to sustainability, as well as to provide services with sustainability in mind, it is essential that EDCASS staff who will be in contact with clients receive training on green issues and sustainability, content, legislative framework and potential impacts on clients' businesses.

Measures in the Operations

The European Commission recommends in the grant agreement to implement:

- the procurement process and supply chain monitoring,
- policy on business travel with a view to replacing it with an online event,
- processes for measuring carbon emissions,
- Prioritising public and modern environmentally oriented modes of transport over other forms,
- Comprehensive equipment reuses solutions,
- Elimination of single-use plastics wherever possible and practical (education, counselling/training activities).

These recommendations should be considered and taken into account when declaring relevant themes and objectives for the Green Plan and sustainability.

Other Relevant Topics for Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability should focus on the following areas:

- Climate change and biodiversity - how EDIH can support companies to implement digital solutions to adapt to climate change and minimise negative impacts on the environment,
- Pollution - a theme focusing on digital innovations to reduce air, water and soil pollution. EDIH can support projects and solutions that use digital technologies to monitor and minimise pollution.
- Circular economy - the theme includes digital solutions for resource efficiency, waste minimisation and the promotion of a circular economy.

The **climate change and biodiversity** area include the study and implementation of measures for adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts, while promoting biodiversity and ecosystem sustainability in the Eastern Slovakia region. This theme focuses on the development of digital tools and innovations to help manage, monitor and improve environmental performance and biodiversity conservation.

EDIH CASSOVIUM should strive for the following:

- Identifying and implementing digital solutions that help organisations and citizens adapt to the impacts of a changing climate.
- Implementing digital technologies to reduce emissions and improve energy efficiency in various sectors, including industry, transport and energy.

The **pollution** area focuses on the development and implementation of digital solutions that identify, monitor and reduce various forms of air, water and soil pollution in the Eastern Slovakia region. The aim is to provide sustainable and innovative approaches to reducing the negative environmental impacts of industrial, transport and other human activities.

EDIH CASSOVIUM will strive for the following:

- Development and/or implementation of technologies for monitoring and detection of air, water and soil pollution, with emphasis on pesticides, heavy metals and other contaminants.
- Implementation of digital tools to monitor food safety and identify contamination incidents in the food chain.
- Development and implementation of systems to regulate and control the use of potentially hazardous substances and to implement safer alternatives.
- Environmentally friendly forms of transport will be preferred in the provision of EDIH CASSOVIUM services.

The **Circular Economy** strand is a set of digital initiatives and innovative approaches that aim to promote the sustainable use of resources. It focuses on waste minimisation, efficient use of raw materials and the promotion of renewable economic models in the Eastern Slovakia region.

EDIH CASSOVIUM will strive for the following:

- Promoting systems that enable efficient sharing and exchange of materials between industries and businesses.
- Developing intelligent systems to track and manage waste to minimise its environmental impact.
- Implementation of digital technologies for recycling and reusing materials, including tracking the recyclability of products.
- In the provision of EDIH CASSOVIUM services, digital forms of output as well as internal records will be preferred.

6 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PLAN

The European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities (Treaty on European Union, Article 2) and therefore aims to (a) combat social exclusion and discrimination and (b) promote social equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and the protection of the rights of the child (Treaty on European Union, Article 3).

The EDCASS EDIH project will aim to contribute through its activities to a more inclusive and engaged society, promoting equality, social cohesion and active citizenship. Therefore, the document "Roadmap for promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)" has been developed as a blueprint for the fulfilment of these values within the EDCASS project. It aims to create an inclusive environment where differences are respected and celebrated, and where everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed. EDCASS aims to be a place where diversity and difference are seen as valuable resources and where inclusion is a natural part of the culture.

The EDI Plan is a living document that will be regularly updated and adapted to reflect the changing needs of the project, the individual EDCASS partners and society as a whole.

Shared Consortium Values

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) are addressed in the EDCASS strategy and specifically in the EDI Plan. The principle of equality is enshrined in many international treaties and EU declarations. In 2000, two pioneering Council Directives were adopted which prohibit discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, disability and sexual orientation. The EU required all Member States to review and amend their existing legislation to comply with the Directives. The EDCASS commitments cover nine areas of equality legislation and may cover other areas if the partners consider it necessary.

The collection and use of data on equality, diversity and inclusion reflects different approaches at national and local level and perspectives vary according to cultural, social, political and legal contexts across Europe. The foundations protected at national level in different laws, whether at federal or regional level, may differ. Therefore, each partner will comply with the legislation while following the general guidelines set out in this EDI Plan.

Target Audience

The EDI Plan applies to employees, staff, contractors, visitors and clients of each activity within the EDCASS project.

Strategy to Ensure the EDI Principles

Partners will be advised to implement activities to ensure compliance with EDI principles in all their activities within EDCASS. The EDI principles will be integrated into all EDCASS activities, thereby raising awareness among partners and all target groups directly or indirectly involved in the EDCASS project.

EDCAS will:

- Appropriately mention poor representation of women and/or other target groups.
- Refer to EU documents, recommendations, actions addressing gender issues.
- If the UN Sustainable Development Goals are mentioned, also mention No 5 (Gender Equality) and No 10 (Reducing Inequalities); when mentioning the European Green Deal, also mention the gender aspect.
- When mentioning societal impacts, also specify the impacts related to EDI in a specific sector.
- Link to EDI whenever appropriate, not just in special sections/websites/others.
- Mention the current representation of women/other groups (committees, working groups, experts, etc.), specific plans to improve (if necessary) the gender/diversity balance, as well as methods to maintain the current gender/diversity balance where it has been achieved.
- Make visible the measures and strategies planned to increase women's representation and respect for diversity and inclusion.
- Disaggregate by gender and other variables (as appropriate to context) indicators, targets, data already available where possible, and commit to future disaggregation of indicators, targets and data.
- The recruitment and evaluation processes for project staff will promote the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Monitor gender/diversity/inclusion sensitive indicators and KPIs.
- Apply measures to ensure a more balanced representation from an EDI perspective in all planned activities.

The target areas of discrimination that EDCASS will address include all or some of the following: disability, age, gender, ethnic/cultural/migrant background, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, educational background, dependent care, and religious background/belief. Other potential reasons will be addressed if relevant.

Macro areas include for example: formal engagement, visibility, terminology, data collection, data analysis, review of existing documents/texts/templates, mainstream engagement (EU and other supranational organisations), work-life balance, EDI support in technology.

7 COMMUNICATION PLAN

EDIH CASSOVIUM (EDCASS) is a support initiative that aims to help companies respond to digital challenges and become more competitive. EDCASS is set up as an open, one-stop-shop institution that guarantees its customers access to services and technologies that support digital transformation processes in line with the relevant digital concepts and strategies of Industry 4.0/5.0. EDCASS operates primarily in the Eastern Slovakia region (Košice and Prešov regions) but should be recognised throughout Slovakia. EDCASS combines the advantages of a regional presence in Eastern Slovakia with the opportunities available in a pan-European network.

All communication and promotion activities of EDCASS will be based on document *D5.1 Plan for Dissemination and Communication Activities*. Also, a document *D5.2 EDCASS Branding Guide* will be created and will be used as a basis for EDCASS promotional activities. Both documents aim to set out a roadmap for the implementation of the dissemination, exploitation and communication activities of the EDCASS project. In this sense, the documents define the different target groups, strategies, tools and channels to be used.

The main objective of the project's communication plan is to create and increase the visibility of EDCASS (and the EDIH network) in the region, towards potential customers and stakeholders, while communicating its service portfolio, developed opportunities, impact, success stories and achieved results towards the business and innovation community, public institutions, policy makers and the public in general.

The communication and promotion activities will be carried out within the WP5 work package, by a working group consisting of the WP5 leader, the events manager and the communication specialist. This team will work closely with the other WP working groups to ensure an integrated approach to the overall EDCASS communication. **The specific communication plan for EDCASS** will be developed mainly in cooperation between the two WPs - WP4 and WP5. WP4 will be in charge of capacity building of the regional innovation ecosystem and building EDIH corridors, collaborating in the EDIH network and other European networks, while necessarily communicating on behalf of EDCASS in its activities. WP5, on the other hand, is oriented towards marketing, promotion, branding activities. The outputs of WP5 will be used by all other WPs in the project.

The aim of the communication and marketing activities within EDCASS will be:

- Create tools and channels to disseminate information about the project and its activities
- Spread the success and benefits of project implementation
- Create an "evangelizing" forum to raise awareness among the business community, public institutions, policy makers and the public in general on the topics of digital transformation of the economy and society (challenges, trends, opportunities, threats, etc.) - to present EDCASS as a leader and main driver of digital transformation in the region
- marketing and promotion of services - to attract customers for EDCAS services

The EDCASS communication and promotion strategy aims at effectively communicating the objectives, results and impacts of the project to a wide audience, including industry stakeholders, academic institutions, policy makers and the general public. The strategy is designed to maximise the visibility and impact of EDCASS by engaging key stakeholders and using a variety of communication channels and activities

The strategy aims to identify and map stakeholders (to whom to disseminate information) and understand their needs in order to tailor clear and concise messages (what to disseminate) for different target groups. By reaching the identified stakeholders, spreading positive impact and promoting business development, EDCASS can inspire and attract customers to use EDCASS integrated services across the region.

Communication and promotion activities will be internally prepared for a period of 6 months and will be evaluated and adapted on an ongoing basis. Proposed activities include press releases, social media posts, workshops, seminars, networking events, presentations at congresses, etc.

The goal should be:

- **Raise awareness**: raise the profile of EDCASS and its contributions to digital transformation and competitiveness in relevant sectors.
- **Engage stakeholders**: build and maintain strong relationships with all stakeholders, including industry partners, academic institutions, government agencies and the wider community.
- **Promote knowledge sharing**: share knowledge, best practices and research results to facilitate knowledge exchange and promote the adoption of digital technologies.
- **Exploitation:** showcasing the positive results of EDCASS to stakeholders to ensure the lasting impact of digital transformation.

Brand Positioning

As part of the preparation of the communication plan, it will be necessary to plan activities directed at the target group in order to influence their perception of the EDIH CASSOVIUM brand on the market. The successful activities of the communication plan will be EDIH CASSOVIUM:

- perceived as a leader in helping with digital transformation in eastern Slovakia,
- The uniqueness of EDIH CASSOVIUM compared to similar innovative activities will be highlighted,
- correctly define the services provided (sectoral division, technological division).

The area of activities to be addressed by the communication strategy will be:

- **B2B:** Personal visits to potential clients, creating mini local events, networking and connecting
- **Digital Marketing:** strong online presence through website and social media to promote EDCASS services and innovations

- **Partnerships with local businesses and organisations**: Establishing partnerships with local SMEs through events, joint projects and sharing success stories
- **Community involvement**: through events where EDIH CASSOVIUM will present its offer and support innovation
- **PR and Media**: regularly create and distribute press releases and build media relations

Communication Plan Implementation

Dissemination and Communication Plan

Tasks	Subtasks
Definition of communication channels	- Material D5.1.
Creating a communication plan of activities for a two-pronged communication campaign	- raising awareness of EDIH services and their benefits for businesses and public institutions - attracting new clients

Establishing a timetable for communication activities	- Dissemination plan for every 6 months
	  o contribution plan
	  o Communication "campaigns/wording" of the EDCASS project
	  o system of "posting" contributions (approval by project management)
	  o Launch social networks (FB, Instagram, LinkedIn)
	- Regular preparation of a communication plan for social networks
	- (Schedule of posts and "posting")
	- regular search for suitable contributions to the communication plan
	- (evangelizing about digitalization and what is happening in the region)
	- Preparation of dissemination plans for individual events to be implemented in the region, in Slovakia or in other countries

Table 13 Dissemination and Communication Plan

Branding Plan

Tasks	Subtasks
Creation of design manual and logo	- Material D5.2
Creating graphics for different types of print output (whether used internally or externally)	- Prepare an overview of promo materials - Preparation of internal information for team members regarding mandatory publicity - Internal document with mandatory publicity requirements for the whole project team (will include mandatory publicity requirements from the Digital Europe Programme - EC and also from the Recovery and Resilience Plan - MIRRI) - an overview of how to use logos in a project.
"Wording" EDIH CASSOVIUM	- defining the unique benefits of EDIH CASSOVIUM - create a clear and concise "wording" answering the questions - how EDIH can help overcome the specific challenges of the target group
Defining procedures for all partners to follow to ensure proper branding	- email communication - press releases - business cards

Tasks	Subtasks
Ensuring non-printed promotion (planning the scope, arranging delivery by an external company)	- web (preparation of texts, images, content, links, ...) - video - social media (add blogs, infographics, videos) - Digital marketing - Use SEO (search engine optimization) to increase your visibility on the Internet - Active use of social media to disseminate content about EDIH - Active interaction with the target group - PPT presentations (internal, external - in case of EDIH presentations at events
provision of promotional items for the project (preparation of visuals and subsequent ordering and delivery)	- printed matter: leaflets and brochure - Larger graphics: signs for partners (signage), roll-up, billboard - promo stuff: pen, notebook. Cup, bag
press releases about events	- creation of a contact database - regular news, offers and updates on services
Newsletter EDIH Cassovium	
Participation in events in the region, in Slovakia, abroad	
Preparation of own events - Kick off	
e-mail marketing	

Table 14 Branding Plan

Visibility and Awareness Plan

Tasks	Subtasks
Creating a communication plan based on existing events	partnerships, EDCASS presentations at partners' events
Promotion of EDCASS	in the media, PR articles, interviews
Link with DTA promotional activities	
Networking (networking, partnerships)	- database of information on competing EDIHs - Processing of company database for marketing purposes - communication via newsletter - cooperation with industry associations - Participation in presentations, conferences and professional events
Map external activities at regional and national level	gathering information on planned events within the region in which EDCASS could participate
Map international activities	Mapping of communication and marketing activities of other EDIHs (corridors)

Table 15 Visibility and Awareness Plan

Service Promotion Plan

Tasks	Subtasks
Actively seeking partners and building an ecosystem	
Catalogue of services	- defining groups of services suitable for uniform promotion - Identify unique services that will differentiate us from other SK-EDIHs - Identify unique services that will differentiate us from other SK-EDIHs (in cooperation with WP2)

Tasks	Subtasks
Use of advertising offers to promote services	▪ billboards, consortium members' events
Preparation of contact details	▪ communication channels for the promotion of services
Creation of a feedback questionnaire and its dissemination through selected communication channels	▪ creating an email address solely for the purpose of obtaining feedback, which will be published on the edihcassovium.sk website.
Measurement and optimisation	▪ ongoing monitoring and analysis of data from marketing campaigns ▪ regular adjustment of strategy based on feedback and performance metrics

Table 16 Service Promotion Plan

Coordination Among Work Packages

For the purpose of developing the successful and efficient EDCASS communication strategy, there will be an inevitable need for coordination between all WPs to better define the roles between the WPs. Regular working meetings between WP5 and WP3 or WP5 and WP4 should be implemented for a reliable process of information exchange on offering, promoting and delivering services.

8 RESOURCES AND CAPACITY PLAN

In general, a project is defined as a unique, temporary, multi-disciplinary, and organized effort to produce agreed-upon deliverables within specified requirements and constraints. A prerequisite for the successful implementation of a project is the availability of the necessary resources and their effective management and use.

The resources and capacities of the project can be divided as follows:

- Personnel,
- Material/spatial,
- Know-how,
- Financial resources.

Staff Resources

Staff resources consist of staff, team members and experts from all partners involved in the project. The qualifications, experience and skills of these individuals can make a significant difference to the progress and results of the project. These will include:

- the staff of the partners active in the project who are included in the organisational structure of the EDCASS project,
- staff of the partners' workplaces directly responsible for the implementation of the service for the client (experts for individual services).

The staff resources for the project task will be allocated by the individual partners according to the approved project and budget. All persons involved in the implementation of the project in positions financed by the project (project positions) will perform their activities on the basis of a valid employment relationship (employment contract or some form of agreement on work performed outside the employment relationship) and in accordance with the applicable Labour Code. Remuneration and staffing of project positions will be in accordance with the partners' internal rules, the approved budget and the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion.
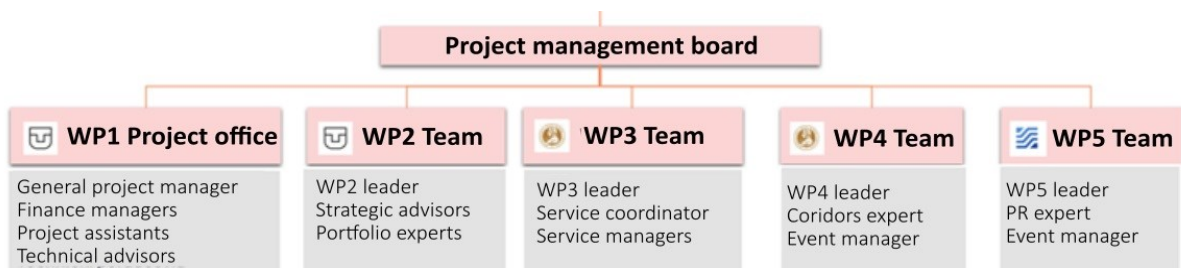

Image 3 Structure of project staff resources

The WP1 Project Office will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the project, coordination and information flow. The four working teams (WP2 - WP5) will consist of a defined WP leader and a working group. The WP leaders will be responsible for the smooth

implementation and coordination of the respective WP and its tasks. The WP WG will consist of experts working on the assigned tasks (with representation from each partner). The tasks will be led by the WP leader.

WP1: Project Management

Position	Responsibility	Project tasks	Quantification
General Project Manager (GPM)	Responsible for the overall project and WP1 implementation, ensuring the operational management of the project and WP1 and maintaining interface among all WPs, and WP1 to other WPs.	T1.1, T1.2, T.3., T.4	1 position TUKE occupied by 1 person
Partner Lead	Ensures coordination and implementation of activities within the partner and strategic communication to other partners.	T1.1, T1.2, T.3., T.4	1 position TUKE, 1 position UPJS, 1 position KEITVA occupied by a total of 3 persons
Project Finance Manager (PFM)	Responsible for the accurate and efficient financial management of the overall project in accordance with project grant agreements, and EU and national legislation.	T1.1, T1.2, T.3., T.4	1 position TUKE occupied by 1 person
Partner Finance Manager (FM)	Responsible for the accurate and efficient financial management of the project with the partner in accordance with the grant agreement, the consortium agreement and EU and national legislation. *For the Project Coordinator, this role will be carried out by the Project Finance Manager.*	T1.1, T1.2, T.3., T.4	1 position UPJS, 1 position KEITVA occupied by a total of 2 persons
Project Assistant	Responsible for administrative tasks and project work, day-to-day implementation of the project, supporting the project team (position represented at each of the partners)	T1.1, T1.2, T.3., T.4	1 position TUKE, 1 position UPJS, 1 position KEITVA occupied jointly by several persons
Technical Advisor	Responsible for professional and technical support in the implementation of digital technologies	T1.1, T1.2, T.3., T.4	1 position TUKE occupied by more than one person

Table 17 Staff structure of WP1

WP2: EDCASS Design

Position	Responsibility	Project tasks	Quantification
WP2 Leader	Responsible for all WP2 implementation, monitoring and evaluation, interface to other WPs.	T2.1-T2.5	1 position TUKE occupied by 1 person
Strategic Advisor	Participation in the design of the organisational structure of EDCASS, the establishment of its strategic bodies, the development of the EDCASS sustainability strategy, advice and expert feedback in the development of the EDCASS operating model.	T2.1, T2.2, T2.5	1 position TUKE, 1 position UPJS, 1 position KEITVA occupied jointly by several persons

Position	Responsibility	Project tasks	Quantification
Portfolio Expert	Participate in the description of the customer journey approach, service delivery model, product and resource lifecycle and management.	T2.3	1 position TUKE, 1 position UPJS, 1 position KEITVA occupied jointly by several persons

Table 18 Staff structure of WP2

WP3: Service Provision

Position	Responsibility	Project tasks	Quantification
WP3 Leader	Responsible for all WP3 implementation, monitoring and evaluation, interface to other WPs.	T3.1–T3.3	1 position TUKE occupied by 1 person
Service Coordinator	Coordination of service delivery, including the establishment of service delivery through the EDIH network	T3.1, T3.2	1 position TUKE occupied by 1 person
Service Manager	Responsible for managing the process of delivering a service to a specific customer according to defined processes and customer journey.	T3.1, T3.2	1 position TUKE, 1 position UPJS, 1 position KEITVA occupied jointly by several persons

Table 19 Staff structure of WP3

WP4: Collaboration and Ecosystem

Position	Responsibility	Project tasks	Quantification
WP4 Leader	Responsible for all WP4 implementation, monitoring and evaluation, interface to other WPs.	T4.1–T4.2	1 position UPJS occupied by 1 person
Corridor Expert	It is responsible for organising events for stakeholders, EDCASS partners and relevant European networks.	T4.2	1 position TUKE occupied by more than one person
Event Manager	Responsible for collaboration and corridor development with other EDIHs, EDIH Thematic Networks and the EDIH Network.	T4.1–T4.2	1 position KEITVA occupied by more than one person

Table 20 Staff structure of WP4

WP5: Dissemination and Communication

Position	Responsibility	Project tasks	Quantification
WP5 Leader	Responsible for all WP5 implementation, monitoring and evaluation, interface to other WPs	T5.1–T.5.3	1 position KEITVA occupied by 1 person
Event Manager	Dissemination, marketing and promotion activities of the EDCASS project and services, organisation of events	T5.1–T.5.3	1 position KEITVA occupied by more than one person
Communication Expert	Participation in the preparation of the Dissemination and Communication Plan, advising on EDCASS branding, communication and promotion activities, dissemination	T5.1–T.5.3	1 position KEITVA occupied by more than one person

Table 21 Staff structure of WP5

Material Resources/Office Premises

The EDIH CASSOVIUM project is implemented by three partners (TUKE, UPJS and KEITVA). The material and spatial resources of the EDCASS project consist of physical objects, equipment, tools, technologies, technical equipment of employees, including software, which are related to the implementation of the project.

The EDCASS project makes use of a wide range of physical and spatial resources that are designed to support digitisation and innovation for businesses and other organisations in the region. These resources provide essential conditions for research, development, education and collaboration.

The project will use the premises of all three partners. These will be:

- **Office space** (dedicated to the project team and administration): rooms and areas for informal meetings that are essential for planning, coordinating and managing project activities.
- **Meeting rooms and workshop spaces** (at each partner): provide space for informal as well as formal meetings within the project, networking necessary for building partnerships and cooperation.
- **Laboratories and test facilities** or **facilities for demonstrations and presentations of technical solutions** - these are university facilities that will be responsible for providing services to the end customer.

Know-how

Know-how as a project resource and includes the following:

- knowledge and skills of team members that are closely linked to human resources
- information resources, including data and information needed for project planning and management. This includes access to relevant information and data analysis tools (data collected and used for implementation and service delivery purposes).
- communication resources in the form of effective communication, which is conditioned by the choice of appropriate communication tools and channels, the team's ability to communicate and a communication plan,

Intangible Resources

Other equally important intangible resources of the project are:

- Time as a key resource for any project. Its efficient use is determined by proper planning. Schedules and time management tools are key factors for achieving goals on time,
- The relationship of the organisation's senior management to the project and the support given to the project by senior management (internal culture at partners, management support),

- Stakeholder support when the project affects or is affected by other parties (stakeholders). Their support and collaboration with the project team can have a significant impact on the success of the project.
- Relationships with potential clients, other EDIH, EC, MIRRI SR and key players and other partners within the innovation ecosystem.

Financial Resources

Financial resources represent the funding necessary to provide the necessary human, material and intangible resources required for the implementation of the project. Important aspects of financial resources are the amount required (project budget) and the source of funding used.

9 TIMETABLE FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The following table, which includes the changes in the project implementation caused by the significant delay in obtaining national co-funding, summarises the project tasks and their implementation over time:

Task number	Name of the task	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
T 1.1	Project Management												
T 1.2	Coordination and Communication with Authorities												
T 2.1	EDCASS Organisational and Management Structure												
T 2.2	EDCASS Operation Model												
T 2.3	Design of Service Portfolio												
T 2.4	Evaluation of Pilot Operation												
T 2.5	Sustainability Strategy												
T 3.1	Piloting the EDCASS Structure												
T 3.2	Provisioning of Value-Added Services to Customers												
T 4.1	Regional Innovation Ecosystem Capacity Building												
T 4.2	EDIH Corridors Building, Collaboration in EDIH Network and Other European Networks												
T 5.1	Planning of Dissemination and Exploitation Activities												
T 5.2	EDCASS Branding												
T 5.3	Enhancing EDCASS Visibility, Promotion of Achievements and Building Digital Transformation Awareness in the Region												
T 5.4	Promotion of Services and Gathering Customers Feedback												

Table 22 Project implementation timetable

Image 4 Timing of project deliverables and milestones