



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

OPEN CALL FOR EXPERIMENTS 1

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS



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1 INTRODUCTION TO WASABI

1.1 Project Summary

WASABI aims to provide SMEs with the tools and knowledge to improve workers’ capacities and performance, providing advanced user interfaces for continuous augmented hybrid decision-making. Such interfaces assist employees in interacting with complex software, effectively reducing its skill floor. Consequently, humans will find using the software easier, becoming more open to applying it effectively. One of the key technologies in WASABI’s solution portfolio is the **digital intelligent assistant (DIA) – a human-like, task-oriented artificial intelligence (AI) with a conversational interface**. WASABI will demonstrate a federated, white-label shop based on PrestaShop – i.e., an acknowledged open-source shop framework – to accelerate the uptake of intelligent digital assistance.

An assistant supports or entirely takes over time-consuming, stressful, or otherwise undesirable activities for the client. A digital assistant (DA) does the same through software for its user(s). WASABI focuses on DAs, that are also conversational agents. A conversational agent is an application that accepts user input in the form of voice or text and provides responses in natural language. Assistants on mobile devices and Smartspeakers with screens allow rich media responses. Besides, conversational designers can build dialogs so that the assistant has one or more personas to interact with various user groups of age, gender, and social, educational, and cultural backgrounds. Figure 1 illustrates the working principle of a digital assistant for the industry.

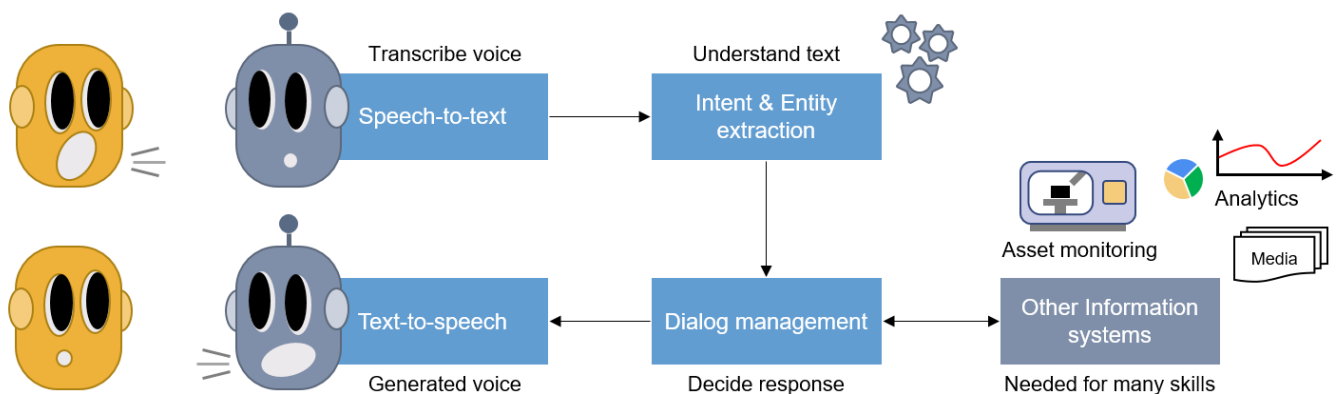


Figure 1. Working principle of a digital assistant for the industry [BIBA – Bremer Institut fuer Produktion und Logistik GmbH (2020)]

WASABI will run **two open calls for experiments that will provide financial support to at least 20 funded experiments lead by SMEs**. These open calls are designed to **support AI-based digital assistance experiments involving SMEs from manufacturing**. Each call will focus on attracting **applicants from all manufacturing sectors** and aims to develop modules for the WASABI web shop, and to expand the WASABI solutions portfolio.

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

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

1.2 Overview of the three existing WASABI Use Cases

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

Business Case 1: Augmented waste management and valorisation

This case focuses on waste management in manufacturing to valorise waste. If a production process cannot avoid waste for technical reasons, this waste may be reusable by other organizations, provided its characteristics meet the requirements. Advanced user interfaces will help workers describe production waste to identify if it qualifies for reuse by a third party. Workers will describe waste through a mobile conversational interface and rich-media records, such as images and videos of waste and relevant machinery. If users require specific expert-level waste descriptions, e.g., a laboratory analysis, they will receive suggestions on contacting local experts. This case focuses on increasing sustainability by significantly simplifying waste valorisation.

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

This case focuses on manufacturing workforce management after a regional crisis that forces many people to search for jobs. Such a crisis may cause people to flee or migrate to or within Europe. People searching for jobs will likely possess very different job experiences, education, ethnic, social, and demographic backgrounds, and languages, making it challenging to integrate them at work. Manufacturing organizations suffering from workforce shortages can use human-centred AI-based digital assistance solutions to onboard interested people faster into their workforce. Key characteristics of these solutions are multilingual conversational interfaces, customizable personas, frustration-mitigation mechanisms, and adaptable assistance based on learning progress. This case aims to increase societal resilience after a crisis and increase agility by rapidly increasing and upskilling an organization's workforce. A second effect is that employers could integrate new workers faster and free the time of the existing employees, resulting in productivity gains.

Business case 3: Assisted quality assurance for sustainable products

This case focuses on the augmentation of product quality testing to increase product and worker safety, carbon footprint, and workers' cognitive skills and reduce the burden of repetitive, boring, error-prone, and knowledge-intensive activities. A digital assistant will support workers in product testing by interactively executing a validation protocol that assures the highest safety and sustainability standards while at the same time reducing validation time and energy consumption. To this end, the assistant will integrate trustworthy machine learning models to learn the main product stress characteristics from past testing data and generate synthetic high-throughput product quality testing datasets. During the testing definition phase, the assistant will help the operator select the dataset that best suits the specific testing conditions, European directives, and international safety, performance, and sustainability standards. During the testing phase, operators will talk to the assistant to receive helpful information about testing intermediate results. The assistant will collect user feedback used for training data labelling. Thanks to such a continuous and informative feedback loop and adaptive validation protocol, the assistant and the operator will collaborate to increase the sustainability of the product quality testing process.

1.3 I4MS initiative

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

2 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 Objectives of the call for experiments

WASABI's Open Call (OC) aims to fund up to **10 application** experiments focused on the development and use of **AI-based assistance for their processes or products**. The proposers' consortiums will **develop** their **WASABI solution** as well as **participate** in the **WASABI's ecosystem**. This solution should include the development of a WASABI module that will be integrated in a WASABI-based digital assistant providing to the WASABI network new application areas. Through the OCs WASABI will enlarge the already existent portfolio of AI-based assistance solutions (notably assistant skills).

The open call will provide an important opportunity to address advanced functionalities on the implementation of digital assistance solutions, such as:

- Human machine interface for complex processes
- Agile onboarding of new employees in complex manufacturing systems
- Conversation AI facilitating data access in different thematic areas
- Conversation guided maintenance operations

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

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

2.2 Descriptive information

Table 1. WASABI 1st Open Call summary fiche

WASABI 1 ST OPEN CALL FOR EXPERIMENTS	
Open Call Identifier:	WASABI-OC1
Project full name:	White-label shop for digital intelligent assistance and human-AI collaboration in manufacturing
Acronym:	WASABI
Open Call Deadline:	20 th of September, 17:00 CEST

Expected duration of participation:	12 Months
Total Budget of the Open Call:	1.250.000,00 €
Financial support per proposal:	125.000,00 € Although the experiment will base its success and payment on the correct delivery of the fixed objectives (deliverables), it is expected the proposal to present an indicative expenditure budget.
Submission language:	English
Submission site:	https://wasabi.ems-innovalia.org/user/registration
Contact email:	wasabi_opencall@innovalia.org

2.4 Type of experiment

The WASABI OC1 is looking for experiments that would like to enhance and improve manufacturing processes or products using AI-based voice assistance.

These experiments will use voice assistance to improve different performance areas within their processes or products. To achieve maximum impact, WASABI uses OpenVoiceOS¹ (OVOS), an open-source assistant framework, as its basis. Potential areas of use of WASABI-based voice assistance: guidance of workers to improve their performance and quality of work, increase the quality and pace of human-machine interactions...

Applicants are required to:

- Develop an OVOS skill addressing a problem in manufacturing.
- Evaluate the skill in an experiment with their end-user SME.
- Use the Docker Compose project for OVOS provided by the WASABI Consortium.
- Optionally use the COALA App APK to install a user interface.

We provide below some information on Docker Compose project for OVOS and COALA App APK.

Docker Compose project for OVOS

- This Docker Compose project consists of several files and folders required to replicate a minimalistic, pre-configured WASABI assistant. It contains fundamental OVOS skills only, but configuration information to easily add custom OVOS skills developed by the experiments.
- The project's readme file contains deployment instructions and commands for Linux.
- The deployment assumes a Docker version of at least 26.0.0.

COALA App APK

- The COALA App APK file installs the COALA App on an Android tablet or Smartphone with at least Android 10. Each file represents one version of the COALA App. The WASABI consortium will provide APK files to the experiments on request.

¹ OVOS is the follow-up project of Mycroft, the largest open-source voice assistant. [Link to OVOS documentation](#). [Link to OVOS GitHub repository](#).

- The COALA App is a user interface that interacts with a WASABI assistant. It contains a login function and a chat box to interact with an OVOS assistant. Messages from the app are relayed through a Hivemind² service. User management is realized with a Keycloak service. WASABI's Docker Compose project for OVOS contains a minimalistic setup that includes OVOS, Hivemind, Keycloak, and other services.
- The COALA App is open-source software with a GPLv3 license. Experiments may modify the code in line with the license terms. The COALA logo is a registered trademark.

2.4.1 WASABI Support

For the implementation of the selected experiments support will be available from the WASABI consortium. The support will be given by the partners of the consortium and should enable the selected experiments to achieve their set goals. The support provided can be seen as a mentoring where successful applicants will receive guidelines, feedback to their proposed workplan and advice in case of issues with the WASABI stack. The support is not aimed to perform the work of the applicants or to fully or partially implement the solution. However, in some cases (see individual project member support below) a partner of the WASABI consortium may assist in the actual implementation. The WASABI consortium will resolve reported bugs, as far as they are related to the provided Docker Compose project for OVOS or the COALA App.

It is important that applicants detail the technical architecture and possible roadblocks clearly in the proposal (experiment's work plan). Furthermore, if need for support is already foreseen at the time of the proposal this need should be clearly stated in the proposal. Applicants should state their experience and knowledge with the relevant technologies of the WASABI stack (e.g. Docker...) in the proposal.

At the beginning of the experiment implementation, the WASABI support team and their respective contact data will be made available. The WASABI team will provide the selected experiments with access to the Docker Compose project for OVOS and COALA App APK. In order to facilitate collaboration, two workshops will be carried out during the experiment's execution. The first workshop will give the applicants a deeper insight in the WASABI stack and the relevant documentation. A second will provide insights into the EU regulatory framework relating to Artificial Intelligence.

The participation in those workshops (remote) is compulsory for each successful applicant.

Additionally, experiments receive the documentation of the WASABI stack which covers all relevant aspects to deploy it during the experiment. The used open-source components like Docker and OVOS are well documented, links to those will be provided as well.

The WASABI support does not include general support in how to setup computing infrastructure, networking, or IT security issues. The consortium is not responsible to ensure proper operation of your existing infrastructure nor has any responsibility to avoid impacts of the experiment on your infrastructure and operations. Therefore, at least one person needs to be nominated from applicant's side who has both skills and position to handle IT issues during the experiment. This can be an external IT support provider in case the applicant's IT department is outsourced; these costs will be borne by the applicant.

² Hivemind is an open source service that complements an OVOS assistant. [Link to Hivemind documentation.](#) [Link to Hivemind GitHub repository.](#)

In terms of general support to the experiments, below you find a list of what the consortium can provide:

- Providing technical documentation and tutorials on the developed assistants. If useful for the experiments, we can conduct workshops and/or webinars about specific topics.
- Provide the experiments with architecture suggestions and best practice examples for implementation. This includes feedback to architectures, design choices and requirements proposed by the applicants.
- Support in the configuration of the stack if the documentation is not sufficient to resolve issues.
- For experiments where edge deployment is deemed necessary, we offer support on how to implement edge deployment services. This includes reviewing requirements, provide best-practice examples for hardware choice and supporting in architecture definition for the interfaces to existing legacy machinery/sensors/software. Please note that the implementation of the connector itself must be done by the applicants.
- Technical assistance for the deployment of WASABI's Docker Compose project for OVOS. This support concerns troubleshooting the WASABI's Docker compose project and the stack deployment.
- Assistance in integrating the custom OVOS skill (this support is limited to 3 experiments): This includes support in understanding how to develop custom skills, providing examples, requirements and troubleshooting in cases where the documentation is not sufficient.

Furthermore, the partners of the WASABI project may offer individual support in their field of expertise. If this is needed, it should be described within the application, including a detailed technical description of the support expected as well as of an estimation of the time dedication.

- **TTTech:** TTTech may provide their own hardware and software solution called Nerve [Nerve - TTTech Industrial \(tttech-industrial.com\)](https://www.tttech-industrial.com) for deployment of the WASABI stack and connection to existing machinery. This includes support in setting up TTTech's components.
- **BIBA:** Individual technical support via MS Teams with OVOS stack deployment and customization (includes bug fixing related to deployment)
- **UNIMORE:** Understanding the requirements of the winning proposals for any possible adjustments in the conversation data of the DA for the supported business cases. Assisting the deployment of the COALA stack with Rasa component and the Android app. Providing tailored installation documentations and technical guidelines.
- **ATLANTIS:** Supporting experiments by participating in organised workshops and sharing related documentation. In cases that the applicants can be categorized as manufacturers, additional technical support can be offered to further customize, expand, and enrich the WISE (*WASABI's Intelligent quality Support Enhancement*) and the DocuBoT components for up to three applicants for both Open Calls.
- **SYXIS:** For the rEUse component where Syxis is involved, they offer one-on-one calls to answer questions, explain concepts and demonstrate functionalities and can conduct webinars presenting both the front-end and back-end functionalities of the component, including ways it has been utilized in core WASABI. Additionally, Syxis can aid with the creation of circular entities and links as well as configuration of the component for them (permissions, accounts, access etc) and write detailed guides and documentation

on how rEUse is used and can be communicated with, including a guide for back-end calls to the REST endpoints and an example postman suite.

2.4.2 Definition of Key Concepts

- COALA App APK: An APK file to install the COALA Android application to interact with WASABI's OVOS infrastructure. The minimum required Android version is 10.
- OVOS: An open-source voice assistant framework focusing on privacy and customizability.³ (openvoiceos.org)
- Docker Compose project for OVOS: A git project with folders and files to deploy a basic OVOS-based stack. The containers are pre-configured to allow quick customization. A readme file guides the user step-by-step through the deployment.

3 OPEN CALL REQUIREMENTS

3.1. Who can apply?

The call is open to applications from SMEs that will collaborate with a Digital Innovation Hub (DIH)/European Digital Innovation Hub (EDIH).

INDIVIDUAL PROPOSAL

A proposal presented by a single organisation; namely an SME.

From a legal standpoint, the eligible beneficiaries are defined hereby:

SMEs: “The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.”

- Extract of Article 2 of the annex to Recommendation 2003/361/EC as published in the Official Journal of the European Union L 124, p. 36 of 20 May 2003.

DIHs/EDIHs must be registered in the European Commission's catalogue: <https://european-digital-innovation-hubs.ec.europa.eu/>

³ <https://github.com/OpenVoiceOS>

Role of the Applicants

To ensure the long-term usability of the project results, WASABI needs at least one proposer/consortium partner to be:

- A technology provider who integrates the WASABI technology into the product. In this case, applicants need to demonstrate the usefulness of the technology in a specific end user. This could be, for example, an ICT solution provider.
- A manufacturer on its own. They must have any production machinery where humans currently interact with the machinery traditionally (e.g., keyboard and buttons). Applicants aim to, for instance, improve manufacturing output, improve the quality of the workplace, and increase safety.

A combination of both is possible and welcomed.

3.2 Eligibility Criteria

In order to be considered eligible, applicants must comply with the following:

- Based in an EU 27 Member State or in an associated country to Horizon Europe.
- The Proposal must be submitted in English. Proposals submitted in any other language will be excluded.
- The Proposal must be submitted within the stipulated deadline.
- The Applicants must fully comply with GDPR and the AI Act, which will be declared through a self-assessment to identify risks.
- SMEs must have sufficient human and financial resources to carry out the experiments.
- Status of the organisation presenting the Proposal falls under the categories presented in section 3.1.
- Proposals shall allocate at least 80% of the overall funding of the experiment to SMEs or Mid-Caps.

3.3 Technical requirements

As the Open Call aims to attract innovative consortia led by SMEs who want to integrate and further develop the technologies developed within the WASABI project, applicants must fulfil specific technical requirements.

Proposals must consider the following points in the technical section of their Proposal:

1. **Innovative Application of Conversational AI:** Applicants should incorporate open-source conversational AI technologies into their Proposal. Proposals should demonstrate how these tools could contribute to an anthropomorphic, task-oriented AI with a conversational interface. Integrating large language models is possible provided the model is open, such as Llama or Mistral.
2. **Open Data Exchange Formats:** All proposed experiments should prioritize using open data exchange formats. This approach will allow for increased transparency, interoperability, and collaboration between different aspects of the WASABI project and DIHs.
3. **Quality Documentation:** The successful project will include detailed, high-quality documentation of the project results' design, development, and implementation. This documentation should be sufficient for future replication and scalability.

4. **Compliance with Trustworthy AI / AI Law:** Proposals should explain how they plan to ensure their AI tools are developed and used responsibly, adhering to the principles of Trustworthy AI, as outlined by the European Union's guidelines.
5. **Compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR):** All applications must outline how they will ensure compliance with the GDPR.

These requirements are critical elements of your Proposal and will serve as key criteria in the evaluation process. We encourage applicants to address each point carefully and thoroughly. By creating projects aligning with WASABI's mission and values, we can improve the capabilities and performance of workers across the EU through accessible and efficient software interactions.

3.4 Experiment tasks

The experiments will have to participate in a series of mandatory activities:

Meetings (remote):

- Kick-off meeting of the winning experiments from the Open Call;
- Participation in the Individual Monitoring Meeting with the WASABI monitoring team (every two months following kick-off);
- Participation in the experiment's final monitoring event;
- If officially required and communicated by the Contracting Authority, participate in workshops, webinars, or training sessions organised by the WASABI consortium or by any of the supporting actions promoted by the EC (ad-hoc).

Dissemination:

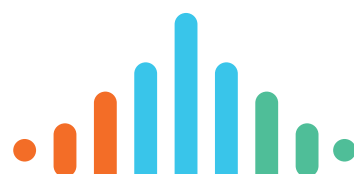
- Provide information about the experiment on WASABI's project website;
- Create one public demonstration video for the WASABI website.

Deliverables:

- Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) plan;
- Preparation and delivery of the experiment handbook;
- Preparation and delivery of the experiment specific deliverables as presented in the proposal;
- Demonstration;
- Final report and cost statement.

3.5 Experiment deliverables and monitoring

An **experiment handbook** (maximum 25 pages) will be used to monitor the progress of each WASABI open-call experiment. This will contribute to identifying possible best practices within the SMEs participating in the project and beyond. The handbook is the central information source for all tasks regarding each experiment, defining the entire process carried out throughout the experiment and the outcomes and results of the activities performed. As such, the handbook's objective is to define, structure, coordinate, and collect information regarding each experiment in a standardised manner and assess their impact. WASABI will provide a template for the handbook



covering, for instance, the motivation, problem statement, solution, GDPR compliance, gender balance, explainable AI, and lessons learned. Finally, the experiment leaders will document the software’s purpose, dependencies, deployment, and maintenance. High-quality documentation ensures that the experiment results are understandable and exploitable. This will also be how the consortium will monitor the experiment’s KPIs.

Demonstration. An experiment must demonstrate its solution at WASABI’s online monitoring meetings. The early version may use videos instead of a live demonstration but should already include natural language interactions.

The **cost statement** (CS) is the document to report the costs during the experiment’s implementation. No detailed documents are to be provided to WASABI to justify the experiment’s costs. Nevertheless, recipients of the financial support shall keep all their documents and records to allow the Commission, the European Anti-fraud Office, and the Court of Auditors to exercise their powers of control on documents, information, even stored on electronic media, or the final recipient’s premises, in line with Horizon Europe rules.

3.6 Experiment timeline

The timeline of the experiments will be the following:

TASKS AND MEETINGS	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12
MEETINGS												
Kick-off meeting												
Individual Monitoring Meeting												
Final monitoring event												
DELIVERABLES												
IPR plan												
Experiment handbook												
Demonstration												
Final report and cost statement												

4 BUDGET AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

4.1 Budget considerations

The total budget for the Open Call 1 is €1.250.000,00 to be distributed among the selected experiments. Each experiment will be granted 125.000€. Payments will be done on a Lump sum basis.

Nevertheless, a tentative overall budget of each experiment should be included in the proposal and take on account the following:

- 60% of direct eligible costs for SMEs will be funded
- 100% of direct eligible costs for non-profit legal entities will be funded

4.2 Structure of the budget

WASABI 1st Open Call will follow the Lump Sum cost reporting system. Lump sum funding provides considerable simplification potential, as it removes all obligations on cost reporting and the need for timesheets, simplifying a lot the administrative burden on beneficiaries.

Proposers have to include the presentation of the budget requested in the proposal. The costs are exclusively destined to the execution of the experiment and the development of the deliverables.

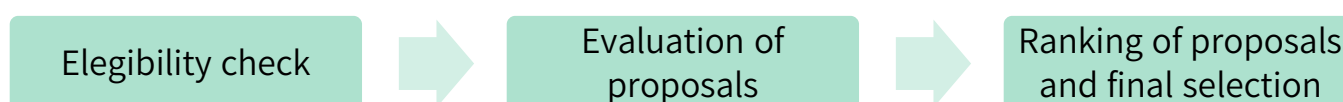
4.3 Payments

The payment for the experiments will be linked to the accomplishment and approval by WASABI consortium of the defined KPIs and deliverables. The payment of the requested funding will be made in two rounds:

- **A pre-financing payment** will be done at the signature of the sub-grant agreement. This payment will correspond to 35% of the total requested amount.
- **A final payment** will be done upon the successful review and approval of the Experiment Handbook and the approval of the deliverables and activities linked to WASABI through the contract. This payment will correspond to 65% of the total requested amount.

5 EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

The proposals received will go through the following evaluation process:

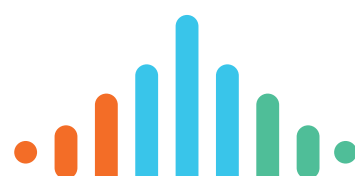


The steps are briefly described in the sub-sections below.

5.1 Eligibility check

All Proposals received go through the automatic eligibility check. The eligibility check ensures that the criteria presented in section 0 are met. Criteria are the following:

- Based in an EU 27 Member State or in associated country to Horizon Europe.
- The Proposal must be submitted in English. Proposals submitted in any other language will be excluded.
- The Proposal must be submitted within the stipulated deadline.
- The Applicants must fully comply with GDPR and the AI Act, which will be declared through a self-assessment to identify risks.
- SMEs must have sufficient human and financial resources to carry out the experiments
- Status of the organisation presenting the Proposal falls under the categories presented in section 3.1.
- Proposals shall allocate at least 85% of the overall funding of the experiment to SMEs or Mid-Caps.



5.2 Evaluation

The evaluation criteria and the scoring scale used are very well aligned with Horizon Europe Programme but augmented to favour the application and integration of DIA technologies in the manufacturing sector. The ranking of selected experiments will be created assessing:

Table 2. Evaluation criteria

EVALUATION CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION
1. Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Quality and soundness of main concept and objectives. ✓ Demonstrate alignment with WASABI objectives. ✓ Address the sectors and technologies of WASABI open call. ✓ Innovation capacity of the application experiment. ✓ Implementation and adequate usage of Digital Intelligent Assistant technologies. ✓ New products or services to be developed. ✓ Open data exchange and experience with Docker. ✓ Presence of a system integrator. ✓ Quality and consistency of the dataset used. ✓ Collaboration with the WASABI team.
2. Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Level of digitalisation in the area of manufacturing, which is being addressed. ✓ Level of relevance of the domain of embedded and Digital Intelligent Assistant systems for the proposed experiment. ✓ Potential impact of the application experiment. ✓ Replicability of the experiment in other SMEs. ✓ Quality of the communication and dissemination plan. ✓ Quality of the exploitation model.
3. Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Overall quality of the work plan. ✓ Sufficient deliverables to monitor results. ✓ Balanced budget and eligible costs. ✓ Quality and relevant experience of the proposer SME. ✓ Demonstrate the appropriateness of the consortium members (SME and DIH).

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

Score	Description
0. Fail	The Proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.
1. Poor	The criterion is addressed inadequately, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
2. Fair	While the Proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses.

3. Good	The Proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary
4. Very good	The Proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible.
5. Excellent	The Proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question.

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

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

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

All proposers (successful and unsuccessful) will be contacted with the results of their evaluation.

5.3 Ranking of proposals and final selection

Funding will be awarded according to the ranking and the available funds. The priority order for proposals with the same score is handled as follows:

- These proposals will be prioritised according to the scores awarded for the criterion “Impact” (#2).
- If these scores are also equal, priority will be based on scores for “Excellence” (#1).
- If these scores are also equal, priority will be based on scores for the criterion “Implementation” with a final reference to the use of resources (#3).

6 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Copyright owners of the created contents and software are the experiment partners. Experiments must provide a detailed IPR plan by month six.

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

7 SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

7.1 Submission process

Electronic submission.

The proposals will be submitted digitally, by the SME, in a single-stage through the Evaluation Management System (EMS) platform presented in detail in section 7.2.

Proposal format and structure:

The central component of proposal submission is uploading a PDF document (whose size must not exceed 20 MB) compliant with the instructions on the proposal structure given below.

The main section of the Proposal must **not exceed ten pages** in length (with text no smaller than 11-point Arial font). **Proposals will be truncated to this page count, and the independent expert evaluators will only be provided with the truncated version.**

The structure of the Proposal (and indicative length per section) should be as follows:

1. Technical excellence (3 pages)
2. Impact (3 pages)
3. Implementation (4 pages)

In addition to the 10-page proposal description, a cover page and two pages of administrative data for statistical analysis, including, when available, the Participant Identification Code (PIC) issued by the European Commission. Therefore, the total length of the proposal will be of 13 pages including a cover page, 10-page proposal description and 2 pages of administrative data.

7.2 Submission process: EMS platform

Applicants should submit their Proposal on the EMS platform: <https://wasabi.ems-innovalia.org> (Figure 1). The supporting documentation, including the proposal template, as well as the EMS guide for proposal registration can be downloaded from the online platform. Applicants are kindly asked to read and follow the instructions carefully.

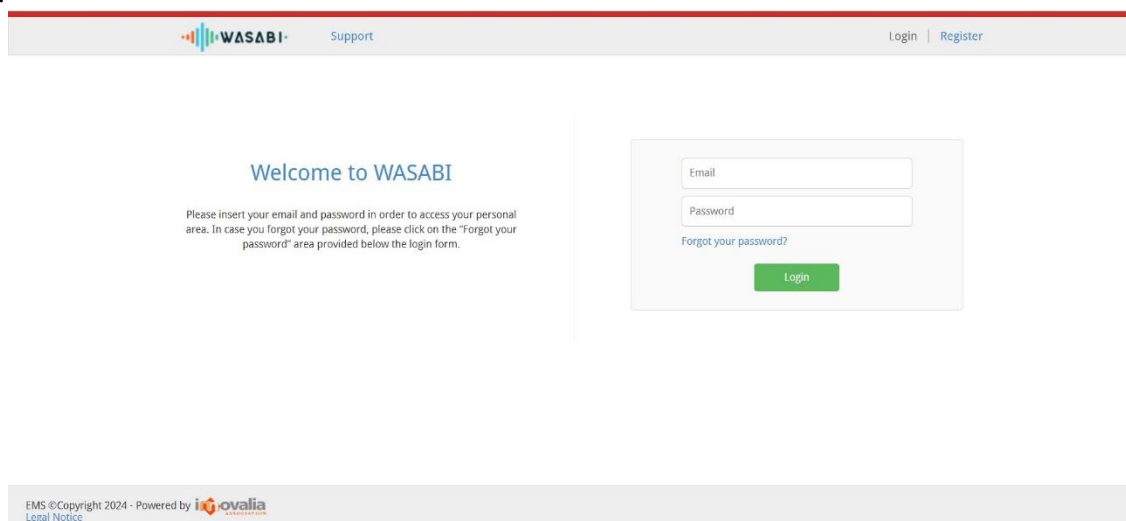


Figure 1. EMS platform overview

When creating the application, proposers have to insert information such as title, acronym and select the topic and keywords of the Call best matching their proposal.

Once the general details of the proposal are saved, the proposer is granted access to fill in the rest of the online proposal sections, such as the abstract (Figure 2).

My area > My proposals > PROPOSAL 1 > Technical proposal

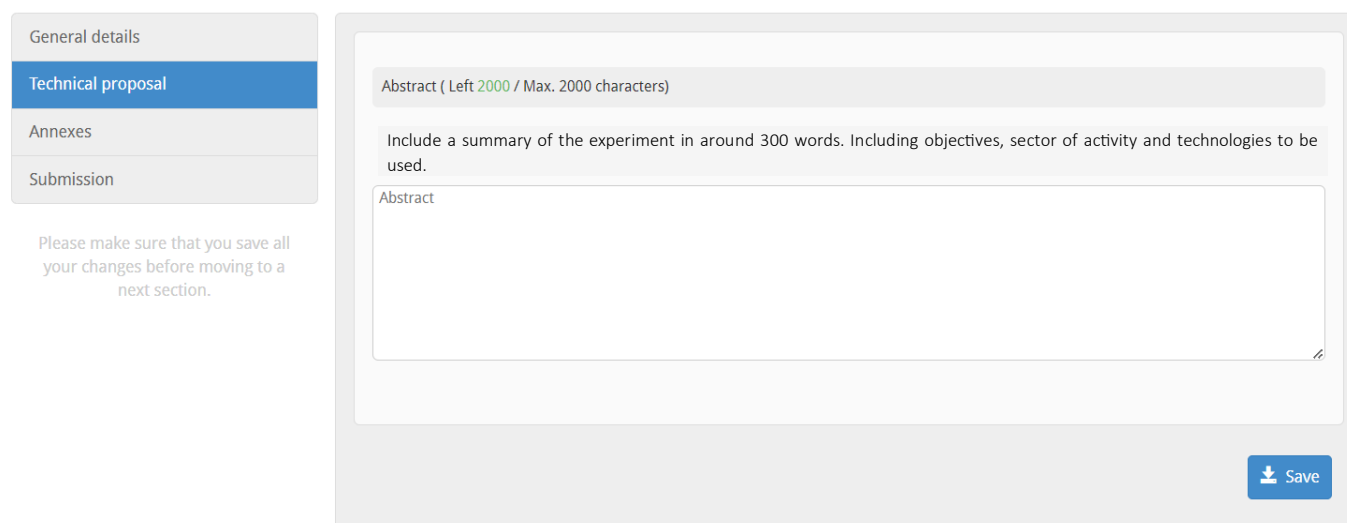


Figure 2. Insert abstract

Next, the proposer can upload their technical proposal (Figure 3) in the “Annexes” section.

My area > My proposals > PROPOSAL 1 > Annexes

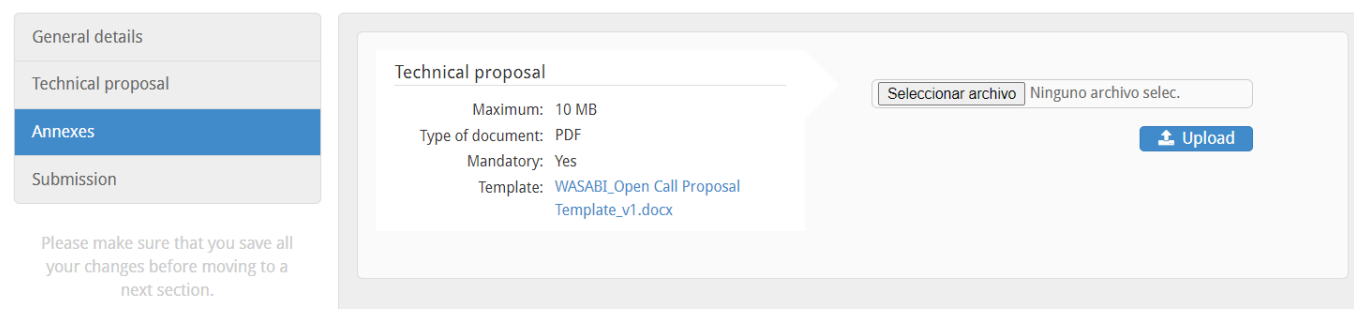


Figure 3. Upload technical proposal.

Once all sections are filled in, the proposer can submit the proposal (Figure 4) and receive a PDF version of it afterwards.

My area > My proposals > PROPOSAL 1 > Submission

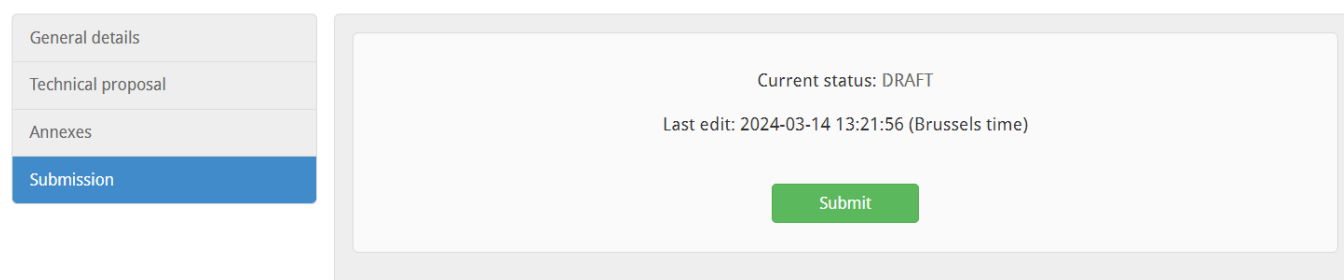


Figure 4. Submit proposal

Proposers will have the chance to submit new versions of their proposal as many times as they wish before the call closure. Only the last version submitted before the deadline will be considered in the evaluation.

Proposals must be received by the closing time and date of the Call. Late proposals, including force majeure circumstances or proposals submitted in any other way than through the online submission tool, will not be evaluated.

7.3 Acknowledgement of receipt

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

8 SUPPORT FOR APPLICANTS

8.1 Call Helpdesk

Applicants may contact the WASABI helpdesk should they wish to receive further information on the Call for Proposal content and conditions through the EMS platform.

For technical assistance with the submission process on EMS, contact: wasabi_opencall@innovalia.org
 For further information on the call, please refer to: wasabi_opencall@innovalia.org

8.2 Useful Documents

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

The proposal template can also be found on the EMS submission site.

9 PROJECT PARTNERS

