

Digital Innovation Gateway or Kosovo (DIG-4K)

Digital Europe Programme

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D1.1 Project Handbook

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Summary

The project handbook provides guidelines for the overall coordination, administration, and financial management of EDIH DIG-4K. It ensures smooth and timely implementation of the project's work plan, outlines procedures for reporting on management, operational, and financial activities, and defines communication pathways with partners, the European Commission, external stakeholders, and EDIH users. It also establishes protocols for EDIH operations and monitoring of its activities.

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1. Introduction

Digital Innovation Gateway for Kosovo (DIG-4K) is an initiative aimed at accelerating Kosovo's digital transformation and positioning the country as a regional hub for digital innovation, skills development, and entrepreneurship. Led by the Innovation and Training Park (ITP) Prizren, the project is implemented through a consortium of seven other partners spanning the private sector, public institutions, and academia. These include ALT SH.P.K., Cactus Education, Quantix L.L.C, Edutask, University of Prizren (UUHP), University of Business and Technology (UBT), Makerspace Innovation Center (MICP), and one associated partner: Kosovo Research and Education Network (KREN), each contributing expertise in areas such as advisory services, digital skills, technology access, investment readiness, and ecosystem development. DIG-4K is co-financed by the European Commission through the Digital Europe Programme and the Government of Kosovo, Ministry of Economy. The project is designed to enhance digital capacities across various sectors, providing essential support primarily to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and public sector organizations (PSOs). By implementing targeted work packages and strategic activities, DIG-4K promotes the adoption of advanced digital technologies in key fields such as e-commerce, fintech, healthcare, education, and agriculture, while also encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation-driven services.

This Project Handbook serves as a reference point, outlining the primary guidelines, practices, and methods for partners to follow in coordinating, managing, executing, and monitoring project activities in line with the KPIs of the Grant Agreement, while also detailing the management structure and key roles and responsibilities as defined therein.

1.1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this deliverable is:

- to provide guidelines on the overall coordination, administrative and financial management of the consortium and of the EDIH.
- to ensure the smooth and timely execution of the project's work plan.
- to outline the procedures for reporting on administrative and management, operational and financial activities.
- to define communication pathways and consult with the project partners, European Commission, external stakeholders, and EDIH users.

- to establish protocols for the operation of the EDIH and monitoring of its activities.

This document outlines the procedures for monitoring activity progress, assessing completion levels, and evaluating expected outcomes, together with the related deliverables. These include a Data Management Plan (D1.2), which has already been finalized and maintained separately; a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (D1.3), to be developed as a standalone document at a later stage; Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation Plan (D7.1) which has also been finalized, and KPI Reports, which are updated every six months to track ongoing performance.

The project handbook will be reviewed annually and updated as needed. Each yearly update will capture project progress, lessons learned, and any adjustments required to improve efficiency or address emerging challenges. Revisions may include changes to management processes, coordination mechanisms, monitoring and reporting requirements, or other operational guidelines, ensuring that the handbook remains fully aligned with the evolving needs and objectives of the project.

2. Implementation plan

The overall work plan of **DIG-4K** is structured in **seven work packages (WPs)**, as illustrated in the PERT diagram showing how the different WPs are interrelated.

WP1 – Project Management and Coordination led by ITP, covers all activities related to the management, coordination, and administration of both the project and the EDIH, ensuring efficient implementation and quality assurance, and acting as the liaison with the European Commission.

WP2 – Digital Transformation Centre – Advisory Services led by ALT, focuses on providing tailored advisory support, guiding MSMEs and PSOs in defining and implementing their digital transformation roadmaps.

WP3 – Digital Skills Academy lead by Cactus Education, focuses on training and upskilling to address the digital skills gap by developing and delivering a comprehensive program tailored to the needs of MSMEs and the PSOs in Kosovo.

WP4 – Tech Access and Testing Lab led by Quantix, provides facilities and expertise that allow stakeholders to experiment, test, and validate digital technologies before full-scale investment.

WP5 – Funding and Investment Support led by Edutask, aims to equip businesses and public organizations with the necessary knowledge and tools to identify suitable funding opportunities, develop compelling grant proposals, and enhance their readiness for investment.

WP6 – Ecosystem Development and Networking led by ITP, fosters regional and international collaboration, enhancing connectivity within the broader EDIH and innovation networks.

Finally, **WP7 – Upscaling, Exploitation, Communication, and Dissemination** led by ITP, ensures that project results are communicated effectively, successful solutions are scaled, and long-term impact and sustainability are achieved.

Each WP is designed to operate independently but also to reinforce others through information sharing and coordinated workflows, ensuring that DIG-4K delivers an integrated and impactful set of services to its target groups.

While all work packages have their respective leaders, MICP, UUHP, UBT, and KREN will provide complementary support through training, innovation resources, academic expertise, and digital infrastructure to ensure effective implementation.

The proposed work plan is implemented in accordance with the timeline presented in the **Gantt chart** below which includes the schedule for individual tasks, milestones, and deliverables.

ACTIVITY	YEAR 1				YEAR 2				YEAR 3				YEAR 4			
	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4
Work Package 1: Project management and coordination																
T1.1. Project Management: administrative and financial management of the EDIH																
T1.2. Technical management of DIH requests																
T1.3. Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Framework and Quality Control																
Work Package 2: Digital Transformation Center - Advisory Services																
T2.1. One-on-one digital transformation advisory services for companies																
T2.2. Advisory services for public and educational entities																
T2.3. Continuous improvement																

Work Package 3: Digital Skills Academy																	
T3.1. Development of Digital Skills Platform Curriculum																	
T3.2. Delivery of Training Programs and Workshops (Hybrid)																	
T3.3. Certification and Recognition of Skills																	
T3.4. Training Trainers on how to create Digital Content on KREN MOODLE / LMS																	
Work Package 4: Tech Access and Testing Lab																	
T4.1. Establish Infrastructure for AI Tech Access and Testing Labs																	
T4.2. Offering access to emerging technologies for testing																	
T4.3. Technical support and consultancy																	
T4.4. Create shared ecosystem for research and education community																	
T4.5. Test and print with 3D Laboratories																	
Work Package 5: Funding and Investment Support																	
T5.1. Grant Consulting Services and Support																	
T5.2. Development of a Funding and Investment Guide																	
T5.3. Workshops on Grant Writing and Investment Readiness																	
T5.4. Matchmaking Events with Investors																	
Work Package 6: Ecosystem Development and Networking																	
T6.1. Strategic International Partnerships and European DIH Collaboration																	
T6.2. Organization of International Networking Events																	
T6.3. Participation in International Projects and Initiatives																	

T6.4. Development of a Smart Cities Network																	
Work Package 7: Upscaling, Exploitation, Communication, and Dissemination																	
T7.1. Technological trends. Relevance to the local ecosystem																	
T7.2. Strategic Communication and Dissemination Planning																	
T7.3. Digital Engagement and Content Creation																	
T7.4. Stakeholder Engagement and Public Relations																	
T7.5. Technology Showcases and Demonstrations																	
T7.6. Collaboration with Digital Transformation Accelerator (DTA). This task addresses the liaison and co-operation activities with Digital Transformation Accelerator (DTA). The EDIH will: -provide to the DTA the necessary data/information on the overall Key Performance Indicators on an annual basis or on request by the DTA; -participate actively in the relevant support activities of the DTA, such as matchmaking, training and capacity building events; -participate actively in the "Train the trainer" programme organised by the DTA, to acquire the needed knowledge on how to use the digital capacities supported by Digital Europe programme, with the objective to help the EDIH stakeholders to make use of them. This task only covers the specific activities for collaboration with DTA. The periodic reporting will include a description of the activities performed in collaboration with the DTA.																	

2.1. Management structure overview

The overall aim of the project management plan presented here is to ensure the timely and successful delivery of the project objectives. This is achieved through the provision of guidelines for the execution of the project, including details on the management structure and financial management, quality control procedures and defined team roles and responsibilities.

The management structure was composed keeping in mind both the effective management of the project consortium activities as well as the successful communication with the EU and national stakeholders and beneficiaries, serving its dual role for the management and operation of DIG-4K.

Details of all individuals engaged in DIG-4K who are part of the Management Organization and Governance Structure can be found in Appendix 1, which provides a table listing their names, roles, and contact details.

Figure 1: DIG-4K Management Structure



The key elements of the management structure are the:

- Steering Committee
- Technical Committee
- Technical Office

The roles and the responsibilities of the above-mentioned key elements will be elaborated in the following section.

2.2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.2.1. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee (SC), chaired by ITP as coordinator, is the highest decision-making body of DIG-4K, overseeing overall progress, resolving strategic issues, and ensuring proper resource allocation. Composed of one representative from each partner (with voting rights), the SC is responsible for taking decisions on the strategic roadmap of DIG-4K, major decisions related to the implementation of the Work Plan, and the reallocation of budget. It also approves changes to the Consortium Agreement and arbitrates conflicts that cannot be resolved at lower management levels.

Steering Committee decision-making procedure: Except for funding, all decisions are taken with simple majority votes. On parity vote, ITP as the coordinator decides. All decisions concerning funding are taken with a 2/3 majority votes.

Technical Committee decision-making procedure: Decisions will be made by majority vote. On parity vote, ITP as the coordinator decides. Same rules apply to any case of conflict resolution.

2.2.2. Technical Committee

The Technical Committee (TC) is the formal decision-making and executive body of the consortium, responsible for ensuring technical alignment, coordinating the work packages, and overseeing the effective delivery of services. Reporting to and accountable to the SC, the TC serves as the management and supervisory body for the execution of the Work Plan. Its responsibilities include monitoring the efficient implementation of activities, executing SC decisions, seeking consensus among partners, and collecting information for monitoring purposes. In addition, TC manages requests for services received by DIG-4K and addresses operational challenges to maintain progress. The TC meets physically every three months and online monthly to track ongoing work and ensure timely coordination.

2.2.3. Technical Office

The Technical Office (TO) is responsible for the operational running of DIG-4K and provides high-level review, advice, and oversight of the Work Plan. Acting through ITP as the legal entity intermediary between the consortium and the European Commission, the

TO ensures compliance with the obligations of the Grant Agreement (GA) and guarantees that digitalization services are delivered by the most suitable partner in line with the GA and available budget.

The primary responsibilities of the TO include leading and supervising the overall progress of DIG-4K, fulfilling GA obligations, monitoring compliance with decisions guided by the Steering Committee (SC) and Technical Committee (TC), and acting as a liaison between the EC, consortium partners, and external stakeholders. TO members maintain direct and prompt connections with all partners via TC members and Work Package leaders.

In its operational role, the TO manages day-to-day technical and administrative duties, including internal communication, information sharing, and stakeholder management. This encompasses maintaining the internal communications platform, establishing group channels and folder structures, and keeping updated evidence of contacts, mailing lists, and related information.

Additionally, the TO ensures consistent information exchange with other EDIHs through Digital Europe's digital tools, including those provided via the DTA.

- 2.2.3.1. *Executive Director (ITP): Provides strategic oversight and direction, dedicating 10% of their time to DIG-4K. Guides project strategy, engages high-level stakeholders, and ensures resources are allocated to maximize project impact, collaborating closely with the Team Leader.*
- 2.2.3.2. *Team Leader: Responsible for overall project strategy, operations, finance, M&E, and donor compliance. Ensures clear management systems, supports program beneficiaries, manages key stakeholder relationships, and cultivates new partnerships to enhance and grow the project.*
- 2.2.3.3. *Digital Innovations Coordinator: Responsible for spearheading coordination initiatives, fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders, facilitating knowledge exchange, coordinating consortium members, and supporting the successful implementation of the Work Plan.*
- 2.2.3.4. *Project Assistant: Supports day-to-day project implementation, including administrative tasks, MEAL processes, logistics, documentation, and reporting. Assists with data collection, stakeholder engagement, and the development of communication materials.*
- 2.2.3.5. *Finance and Compliance Office: Manages financial records, reporting, and audits, ensuring adherence to regulations. Safeguards program resources and maintains financial integrity and compliance.*
- 2.2.3.6. *Finance and Compliance Manager (ITP): Provides oversight of financial management and compliance, dedicating 10% of time to DIG-4K. Works with the Finance Officer to implement controls, manage budgets, conduct audits, ensure reporting, and advise on compliance matters to uphold organizational standards.*

2.3. Project meetings

This section provides an overview of the type of meetings that will take place throughout the duration of the DIG-4K project, highlighting their frequency, purpose, and contribution to project progress and collaboration. Meetings can take place face-to-face, online, or in hybrid format, depending on needs. DIG-4K also makes use of its internal communications platform (through MS Teams) to facilitate daily information flows, including dedicated group channels, shared folders, FAQs, templates and forms, stakeholder contact management etc.

Body	Meeting Frequency	Decision-making procedure
Steering Committee (SC)	Meets twice a year Online conference calls as needed	All decisions by simple majority; in case of tie, ITP as coordinator decides. Funding decisions require 2/3 majority.
Technical Committee (TC)	In-person every 3 months; online monthly	Decisions by majority vote; in case of tie, ITP as coordinator decides. Same rules apply in case of conflict resolution.
Technical Office (TO)	Operates continuously	Oversees day-to-day technical and administrative activities; ITP acts as legal intermediary with the EC.
Partner Progress Meetings	Bi-weekly online meetings	Review of activities, identification of challenges, and joint problem-solving; decisions escalated to SC or TC as needed.

Table 1: DIG-4K project meetings

2.4. Deliverables

Deliverables to be submitted are presented in Table 2, indicating the lead beneficiary, work package and the due date, according to the Grant Agreement. All documents will adhere to the designated template format.

Deliv. No	Deliverable name	Work package No.	Lead Beneficiary	Due Date
D1.1	Project Handbook	WP1	ITP	M18
D1.2	Data Management Plan (to be updated regularly)	WP1	ITP	M18
D1.3	Monitoring and Evaluation Plan	WP1	ITP	M18
D1.4	KPI Report #1	WP1	ITP	M6
D1.5	KPI Report #2	WP1	ITP	M12
D1.6	KPI Report #3	WP1	ITP	M18
D1.7	KPI Report #4	WP1	ITP	M24
D1.8	KPI Report #5	WP1	ITP	M30
D1.9	KPI Report #6	WP1	ITP	M36
D1.10	KPI Report #7	WP1	ITP	M42
D1.11	KPI Report #8	WP1	ITP	M48
D2.1	Digitalization Strategy and Roadmap Template	WP2	ALT SH.P.K.	M12
D2.2	Digital advisory services. Continuous and Improvement Report	WP2	ALT SH.P.K.	M18
D3.1	Assessment of Training Needs and Requirements	WP3	CactusEdu	M18
D3.2	Digital Skills Curriculum for MSMEs, education and public sector	WP3	CactusEdu	M18
D3.3	Training Program and Workshop Implementation Annual Reports.	WP3	CactusEdu	M48
D3.4	Certification and Skills Recognition System Documentation	WP3	CactusEdu	M36

D3.5	Digital Content Creation on MOODLE Training Material	WP3	CactusEdu	M36
D4.1	Report on Establishment and Operational Readiness of AI Tech Access and Testing Labs	WP4	QUANTIX L.L.C.	M18
D4.2	Catalog of AI Technologies Available for Testing	WP4	QUANTIX L.L.C.	M36
D4.3	Compilation of Technical Support and Consultancy Services Provided	WP4	QUANTIX L.L.C.	M48
D5.1	Report of the activities carried out to support fundraising: individual and collaborative applications	WP5	Edutask	M18
D5.2	Funding and Investment Guide	WP5	Edutask	M18
D5.3	Grant Writing Workshops	WP5	Edutask	M48
D5.4	Matchmaking Events Report	WP5	Edutask	M48
D6.1	International Partnership Framework and EDIH Collaboration Document	WP6	ITP	M48
D6.2	Report on International Networking Events	WP6	ITP	M48
D6.3	Summary of Participation in International Projects	WP6	ITP	M48
D6.4	Smart Cities Network Development Report	WP6	ITP	M48
D7.1	Dissemination and exploitation plan	WP7	ITP	M6
D7.2	Annual Communication Activity Reports	WP7	ITP	M18
D7.3	Technological trends. Relevance for the local ecosystem. Strategy Report	WP7	ITP	M36

Table 2: List of DIG-4K deliverables

2.5. Communication channels

The project's communication strategy ensures transparent, timely, and effective dissemination of information to all stakeholders, in line with the D7.1 Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation Plan. The approach combines internal collaboration, public engagement, and targeted outreach to maximize impact and stakeholder involvement.

Microsoft Teams serves as the primary internal platform for document sharing and

collaboration. Partners can upload reports, deliverables, and other resources, ensuring secure, centralized access. The Project Manager oversees information flow, facilitating effective internal communication and knowledge exchange.

Social Media and Public Outreach: The project actively engages audiences through **Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn**, sharing updates, achievements, and public calls. These channels enhance project visibility, foster community engagement, and enable direct interaction with stakeholders and the wider public.

Project Landing Page: The website functions as the central public hub, providing accessible information on news, events, and multimedia content. It ensures transparency and supports outreach to potential collaborators, policymakers, and citizens interested in the project's results.

EDIH Network: Targeted engagement with the European Digital Innovation Hubs network facilitates knowledge sharing, regional collaboration, and effective dissemination within digital innovation ecosystems.

EU Reporting Platforms: Communication and dissemination activities, including outreach campaigns and engagement metrics, are continuously reported on SYGMA and DTA platform. This enables data-driven optimization of communication strategies and ensures compliance with reporting requirements.

Public Calls and Engagement Initiatives: The project organizes targeted calls, workshops, and interactive events to involve stakeholders, gather feedback, and promote uptake of results. Information on these activities is distributed via social media, the project website, and relevant networks.

By strategically leveraging these channels, the project ensures that internal partners, external collaborators, and the public are informed, engaged, and empowered to actively contribute to the project's success.

Complementary Tools

Additional outreach is supported through newsletters, press releases, videos, and infographics, which help to present project results in an engaging and accessible way. Networking with other projects and Academia–Business–CSO (A2B) meetings further strengthen links with key stakeholders.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Effectiveness of communication activities is tracked against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as website visits, social media engagement, newsletter reach, media coverage, and event participation. Annual reporting ensures accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement of the communication strategy.

By strategically leveraging these channels and tools, the project ensures that internal partners, external collaborators, and the public are informed, engaged, and empowered to actively contribute to the project's success.

3. Financial Management

3.1. Financial Management overview

The financial management of the DIG-4K project is overseen by the Project Coordinator, who is responsible for planning, monitoring, and managing the budget throughout the project's duration.

As the funding and controlling body, the European Union (together with the Government of Kosovo) ensures compliance with all applicable financial regulations and guidelines. The Project Coordinator ensures that funds are allocated efficiently and in line with the approved budget. Regular financial reports are submitted to both the EU and the Ministry of Economy of Kosovo, ensuring transparency and accountability.

To regulate financial flows within the consortium, the coordinator has signed bilateral consortium agreements with each partner. These agreements define roles, responsibilities, and obligations, and include provisions that support effective collaboration and smooth project implementation.

Financial matters that cannot be resolved at the operational level will be escalated to the Project's governance bodies. The Steering Committee, supported by the Technical Committee when relevant, will review and decide on critical financial issues such as significant deviations, reallocation of resources, or disputes over cost eligibility. This ensures that financial decision-making remains transparent and is aligned with the overall strategic management of the project.

3.2 Budget Allocation Overview

The total project budget is set out in the Grant Agreement and includes a detailed breakdown for each partner. It covers:

- Person-month allocations per partner,
- Budget allocation per Work Package (WP),
- Other direct costs associated with project activities.

3.2.1 Distribution of direct costs:

- Personnel Costs: 86.13%
- Travel and Subsistence: 3.10%
- Equipment: 1.65%
- Other Goods, Works, and Services: 2.58%
- Indirect Costs: 6.54%

3.2.2 Budget by service category:

- Innovation Ecosystem & Networking
- Skills and Training
- Test Before Invest
- Support to Find Investment

In addition to EU funding, the DIG-4K project is co-financed by the Government of Kosovo, which provides 50% of the project's budget. Partners must ensure that their financial reports reflect both sources of funding in a transparent and accurate manner. Where required, reporting should clearly distinguish between EU contributions and national co-financing. All funds must be used exclusively for project activities, in line with the approved budget and Grant Agreement provisions.

Continuous monitoring of expenses against the planned budget enables early identification of deviations. Each partner submits monthly financial reports with detailed accounts of costs incurred. The coordinator verifies these reports, maintains consolidated records, and ensures transparency and traceability. This provides the basis for interim and final reports to the funding bodies. A template of the report is available in Appendix 2.

If critical deviations occur, the coordinator brings them to the attention of the project's management bodies for reassessment and corrective action, including cost adjustments or reallocation.

3.2.3 Budget Changes and Flexibility

The project is funded through an action grant, primarily based on actual costs, but it may also include other forms of financing (unit costs, flat-rate contributions, lump sums, or costs not linked to expenditure). The maximum grant amount and detailed budget are defined in the Grant Agreement (Annex 2).

Certain budget transfers are allowed without formal amendment, provided they do not alter the project's objectives or activities. However, formal approval (via amendment or simplified procedure) is required for:

- Adjustments to volunteer budget categories (if applicable),
- Changes involving lump sums, contributions, or financing not linked to costs,
- Modifications to budget categories with higher funding rates or specific ceilings,
- Addition of subcontracting costs not initially planned in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

This structured approach ensures flexibility in daily project management while safeguarding compliance with the Grant Agreement.

3.3 Project Reviews & Audits

The granting authority may carry out reviews of project implementation and financial compliance at any time. Reviews are formally notified to the coordinator or partners and may involve external experts. Partners may raise justified objections in cases of conflict of interest or confidentiality concerns.

Audits may be conducted by the coordinator, funding bodies, or external auditors. Partners are required to cooperate fully, provide requested information, and grant access to documentation or facilities. Draft audit reports will be shared, and partners will have 30 days to provide comments.

In line with consortium agreements and the Grant Agreement, all beneficiaries are required to retain original financial documentation (such as invoices, contracts, timesheets, payroll records, and procurement evidence) for a minimum period of five years after the project's closure. This obligation applies regardless of whether the costs were incurred under EU

contributions or national co-financing. Proper record-keeping ensures compliance with audit requirements and safeguards the consortium against potential financial corrections.

3.4 Financial Reporting

The coordinator and all partners are responsible for continuous monitoring and reporting of financial and technical progress. Reporting includes updates on deliverables, milestones, outputs, outcomes, risks, and indicators, and using templates and tools provided in the Project Portal.

Beneficiaries also submit periodic reports to request payments. Each report contains:

- **Technical Part:** implementation progress and results,
- **Financial Part:** detailed eligible costs and contributions by budget category.

The final report must also declare any revenue generated by the action.

All costs must be reported in euros, with conversions from other currencies made in accordance with standard procedures. By submitting financial reports, beneficiaries confirm that all data is accurate, complete, and supported by adequate documentation.

Financial mismanagement, delayed reporting, or underperformance in meeting financial obligations may trigger remedial actions by the coordinator, in line with the consortium's governance framework. Such actions may include temporary suspension of payments, reduction or reallocation of the partner's budget, or, in severe cases, termination of the partnership agreement. These measures are intended to ensure that financial accountability is maintained and that overall project objectives remain on track.

3.4.1 Payment Flow

Payments are made in euros to the coordinator's designated bank account, according to the schedule set out in the Data Sheet of the Grant Agreement. The payment structure includes:

- **Pre-financing:** an initial advance to provide liquidity at the start of the project,
- **Interim payments:** reimbursements for eligible costs incurred during the project,
- **Final payment:** settlement of the remaining balance, based on accepted costs at project closure.

The granting authority may offset payments against amounts owed by a beneficiary. Any

recoveries for overpayments, rejected costs, or reductions to the grant are the responsibility of the coordinator; however, each beneficiary remains liable for amounts related to its own activities and affiliated entities.

If payments are delayed, beneficiaries are entitled to late-payment interest as defined in the Grant Agreement. Non-compliance with reporting or financial obligations may result in suspension of payments, reduction of the grant, or even termination, in line with the procedures set out in the Grant Agreement.

3.4.2 Reporting and payment schedule:

Reporting					Payments	
Reporting periods			Type	Deadline	Type	Deadline (time to pay)
RP No	Month from	Month to				
					Initial prefinancing	30 days from entry into force/10 days before starting date/ financial guarantee (if required) – whichever is the latest
					Interim payment	90 days from receiving periodic report
					Interim payment	90 days from receiving periodic report
					Final payment	90 days from receiving periodic report

Table 3: Reporting and payment schedule

3.5 Annual Updates

The financial management framework described in this handbook will be reviewed annually and updated as needed. Each yearly update will reflect project progress, lessons learned, and any changes required to improve efficiency or address challenges. Updates will also include adjustments to financial monitoring practices, reporting requirements, or budget allocations, ensuring that financial management remains fully aligned with the evolving needs of the project.

4. Data Management Plan

All personal data will be processed in accordance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (EU 2016/679, GDPR) as well as Law No. 06/L-082 on the Protection of Personal Data (2019) in Kosovo. Deliverable 1.2 Data Management Plan sets out the main elements of the project's data management policy, including the procedures for collecting and handling personal data. Additionally, it defines the responsibilities of Data Controllers, establishes a joint controllers' framework for data sharing among partners, and specifies the purposes, legal basis, and nature of processing, the categories of personal data involved, and the retention periods applied.

5. Risk Management Plan

The DIG-4K project represents a strategic initiative to accelerate the digital transformation of Kosovo by offering SMEs and PSOs access to high-quality services, knowledge, and tools. Given the dynamic and complex nature of the digital ecosystem, it is essential to adopt a proactive approach to risk management. This ensures that potential threats to the successful execution of DIG-4K are systematically identified, assessed, mitigated, and monitored throughout the project lifecycle.

By addressing risks early and effectively, the consortium aims to safeguard project objectives, optimize resource use, and deliver measurable outcomes that strengthen Kosovo's digital competitiveness. Through collaboration, continuous monitoring, and adaptability, DIG-4K partners are committed to anticipating challenges, minimizing disruptions, and ensuring resilience in the face of uncertainties.

5.1. Categories of Risks

The risk management framework for DIG-4K includes the identification of risks across project management, stakeholder engagement, service delivery, and external operating conditions. Each risk has been assessed based on its likelihood of occurrence and potential impact on project objectives. Mitigation and contingency measures have been developed to minimize negative effects and ensure timely recovery when risk events materialize.

Risk number	Description	Work Package No(s)	Impact	Likelihood	Proposed Mitigation Measures
1	Loss of key personnel. Projects like EDIH depend on the knowledge and competence among certain personnel - such as WP leaders, experts and project managers.	WP1, WP2, WP3, WP4, WP5, WP6, WP7	High	Low	Continuous project documentation and efficient communication within the consortium is the key to ensure that all partners are aware of the project's activities and that key personnel can be replaced if needed.
2	Deliverables not being not on time. If activities are delayed, there may not be enough time to deliver all WPs activities.	WP1, WP2, WP3, WP4, WP5, WP6, WP7	High	Low	Close monitoring of the project processes by the project coordinator and project managers.
3	Partner leaves the consortium.	WP1, WP2, WP3, WP4, WP5, WP6, WP7	High	Low	The project coordinator will ensure appropriate documentation and control of the work in progress so that the remaining partners can complete the work. Moreover, all crucial parts of the project will involve more than one responsible partner. This way, the effect of having a partner leaving the consortium is minimized.
4	Cases such as COVID-19 pandemic impacts the implementation of activities.	WP1, WP2, WP3, WP4, WP5, WP6, WP7	Low	Low	In collaboration with grant officers, the project coordinator will decide if the project activities will be postponed or be fully conducted online.
5	Low target group engagement. Target groups (MSMEs and the public sector) can be difficult to engage. If the EDIH activities do not appeal to the intended target groups the project will ultimately fail.	WP2, WP3, WP4, WP5, WP6	High	Medium	The likelihood is set to medium - not because the activities are wrong, but because we know from experience that engagement is difficult and requires strategic communication. The project consortium consists of organizations from a wide spectrum of actors that have established communication channels to the target groups. The project will also have a strong focus on engagement and communication to funnel participants to the different offerings of the consortia.
6	Mismatch in user demands and the characteristics of the digital transformation services provided by DIG-4K.	WP2, WP3, WP4, WP5, WP6	Medium	Low	The monitoring mechanisms of the indicators allow us to know the evolution of the real demand for the services. In the event that deviations occur, the service portfolio would be reoriented. This process would be carried out after the approval of the Project Officer.
7	Difficulties engaging fund providers (institutional and external funds such as EU)	WP5	Medium	Low	Described in detail under section 1.4 Financial obstacles. In the event that difficulties arise related to co-financing through national funds, the partners have extensive knowledge about the main EU financing programs or the support schemes of the international donor community. The possibility of charging a fee for the provision of services would also be explored.
8	Common project management challenges - including communication, resource allocation, accountability, scope creep, and time management (meeting deadlines).	WP1, WP2, WP3, WP4, WP5, WP6, WP7	High	Low	The project coordinator and all consortium partners have significant experience and a high level of competence in project managing these types of large collaboration projects with multiple partners. This includes managing regional, national and European projects funded by the EU. This competence level minimizes this risk.

Table 4: DIG-4K Risk Description, WP Relevancy, and Mitigation Actions

This structured approach to risk management ensures that DIG-4K remains resilient, adaptive, and capable of delivering on its commitments, even in the face of unforeseen challenges. Risks are monitored continuously, with indicators tracked to allow for early detection. Control measures,

contingency plans, and recovery mechanisms are integrated into the work plan and reviewed at regular consortium meetings. Furthermore, continuous reporting is also planned through the Sygma platform to ensure that information is given on time and relevant measures are taken.

6. Quality assurance and monitoring and evaluation strategy

Quality management within DIG-4K is designed to ensure that the project meets the objectives set in the approved proposal and complies with the requirements of the European Commission (EC). This section establishes the overarching principles for quality assurance and monitoring, while a more detailed methodology, indicators, and reporting structure will be presented in the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan (D1.3).

To guarantee effective implementation, the following measures will be applied:

6.1. Quality Assurance

A clear management structure is in place, with the Project Management Board, Technical and Steering Committee, and Technical Office ensuring oversight and daily coordination. Deliverables and milestones will undergo internal review and validation before submission to the EC.

6.2. Monitoring and Control

- Bi-weekly coordination meetings will review progress and risks.
- MS Teams Planner will be used to track tasks, timelines, and resources.
- Regular risk assessments will be carried out, with mitigation measures and contingency plans as needed, as foreseen at table 4 above.

7. Evaluation

Evaluation will be based on quantitative and qualitative indicators, aligned with the Digital Europe Programme framework. A structured approach will be applied, covering output, execution, and impact indicators.

The detailed list of indicators, data collection tools, and timelines will be provided in the dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

Overall responsibility for the quality of services and compliance lies with the Project Coordinator, supported by all Work Package Leaders.

List of Appendices:

Annex 1: DIG-4K Key Personnel Contact List

Name	Position	E-mail
Muhamed Rexhepi	Executive Director, ITP	muhamed.rexhepi@itp-prizren.com
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Liridona Ahma	Digital Innovations Coordinator, DIG-4K	liridona.ahma@itp-prizren.com
Sedef Balik	Project Assistant, DIG-4K	sedef.balik@itp-prizren.com
Dea Mormorina	Finance & Compliance Officer, DIG-4K	dea.mormorina@itp-prizren.com

Annex 2: Monthly Reporting Template

Monthly Report (Month, Year)

Title of Action (Contract):	
Work Package No.	
Partner Name	
Date of Report	

Project Progress during the reporting period	
Key activities during the reporting period	• Planning • Milestones Reached • Activities Completed • Key deliverables
Problems / Issues encountered in the implementation of the project activities	
Key actions to be taken during next month. / Upcoming Activities	
Major achievements / Success stories	
Visibility events and publications	

Actual Expenditure for the reporting period

Work Package 1					
Personnel	Travel	Equipment	Other	Indirect Costs	Total

Work Package 2					
Personnel	Travel	Equipment	Other	Indirect Costs	Total

Work Package 3					
Personnel	Travel	Equipment	Other	Indirect Costs	Total

Work Package 4					
Personnel	Travel	Equipment	Other	Indirect Costs	Total

Work Package 5					
Personnel	Travel	Equipment	Other	Indirect Costs	Total

Work Package 6					
Personnel	Travel	Equipment	Other	Indirect Costs	Total

Work Package 7					
Personnel	Travel	Equipment	Other	Indirect Costs	Total

Overall Monthly Expenditure Work Package 1 to 7					
Personnel	Travel	Equipment	Other	Indirect Costs	Total