1 Inclusion of new XiA associated partners Introduction

Xpanding Innovative Alliance (XiA): Advancing Interoperability Skills for the Digital Health Ecosystem

The Xpanding Innovative Alliance (XiA) is a European initiative dedicated to addressing the critical skills gap in advanced digital health interoperability standards among healthcare providers and digital health solution developers. XiA aims to equip professionals with the necessary expertise to implement European Health Data Space (EHDS)-related interoperability solutions, ensuring seamless, standardized health data exchange across Europe.

XiA is structured around five key objectives:

1. Developing an educational framework to enhance technical knowledge in interoperability standards such as HL7 FHIR, IHE profiles, SNOMED CT, and the European Electronic Health Record Exchange Format (EEHRxF).

2. Establishing a cross-sectoral skills model (Interoperability Skill Matrix) to map competencies required for digital transformation in healthcare.

3. Piloting training programs in real-world healthcare environments, focusing on early adopters in hospitals, IT enterprises, and academia.

4. Building a pan-European community of practice, connecting educators, healthcare professionals, and IT experts to drive the adoption of interoperability standards.

5. Ensuring long-term sustainability by developing a self-sustaining alliance of healthcare and IT professionals, supported by open-access educational materials and credentialing mechanisms (micro-learning, micro-certifications).

To expand its impact, XiA invites associated partners to contribute to four key areas:

1. Support the engagement of key educational stakeholders by collaborating with universities, VET providers, healthcare organizations, and IT enterprises.

2. Support the creation and adapt educational content on interoperability standards using existing open-access materials and new resources.

3. Help on the establishment of the XiA Community of Practice to connect educators, healthcare professionals, and IT experts across Europe.

4. Align training with emerging job roles in digital health and IT to enhance employability and career growth.

Entities interested in joining the XiA initiative will undergo a structured selection process, ensuring alignment with project goals. Through this collaborative effort, XiA aims to empower the next generation of healthcare and IT professionals, enhancing the digital

readiness of Europe's healthcare systems and strengthening the EHDS ecosystem for a more connected and efficient future.

1.1 Objectives

The inclusion of new associated partners in XiA aims to strengthen the project's development by integrating organizations with specialized expertise in digital health, interoperability standards, and education. These partners will enhance the quality and impact of XiA's outcomes by addressing the skills gap in digital health interoperability, preparing professionals for the European Health Data Space (EHDS) and the adoption of Key Advanced Interoperability Standards (KAIS). Their involvement will foster collaboration between universities, VET providers, healthcare institutions, IT enterprises, and policymakers, facilitating knowledge exchange and improving interoperability training programs. Additionally, new partners will increase XiA's outreach and impact, ensuring training programs reach diverse regions and sectors, and aligning with real-world needs. Their expertise will contribute to key project tasks, enhance project outcomes, and support long-term sustainability strategies, ensuring XiA's impact extends beyond the funding period. Finally, new partners will bring innovative perspectives to digital health interoperability, driving innovation and adaptability, and creating a stronger foundation for digital health interoperability education across Europe.

1.2 Scope

This document aims to present the concept behind the inclusion of new partners in the XiA project and specify the process required to integrate these new associated partners.

1.3 Associated Partner

An Associated Partner (AP) in XiA Grant Agreement, **is an entity that works for the EU project but cannot declare costs and needs to have its own budget**. It can be linked to one beneficiary or more beneficiaries. It can also be linked to the entire consortium. They are not eligible for funding.

- Associated Partner does specific work but cannot declare costs
- Associated Partner can be linked to the whole consortium or to a particular beneficiary
- The beneficiaries must ensure that relevant MGA obligations are also extended to AP (e.g. through the consortium agreement)
- They do not access the Funding & Tenders Portal

1.4 Benefits to be in line with XiA as Associated Partner

Be a XiA partner presents some benefits that should be useful for a broad range of stakeholders that's compose the eHealth ecosystem.

The associated partners are directly integrated on the project and will develop some tasks in agreement with the WP leaders and beneficiaries. To develop their activities, they have access to the project documentation and outputs before the publication, in addition to support the development of the specific activities. It can beneficiate directly the associated partners because they will be updated within the beneficiaries about the new technologies and developments of the project, also they will have access to the European Commission information as soon it is communicated with the project members.

2 The process

1. The coordination will liaise with interested organisations get onboard as associated partners (**no budget**)

2. The interested organisations will confirm their interest and the commitment letter will sent with the description of the action

3. The Steering Council (SC) will be consulted by a written procedure (10 days to reply) to accept or not the eligible partners to became Associated on XiA.

4. The coordination will initiate the amendment process

5. The coordination will submit the amendment to the EC Project Officer

2.1 Required documents

There is required from the associated partners the following documents:

- PIC number (Participant Identification Code)
- Letter of commitment (available through email: anderson.carmo@iscte-iul.pt)
- Indication of which task your entity would like to collaborate

2.2 Specific responsibilities for Associated Partner(s) accordingly XiA Consortium Agreement

For the avoidance of doubt, the Associated Partners do not sign the Grant Agreement and do not receive funding from the Granting Authority and therefore do not have a right to charge costs or claim contributions from the Granting Authority. Associated Partners must ensure their own funding for the implementation of the Project. However, certain terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement and its Annexes are applicable to the Associated

Partners. The Coordinator will share a copy of the signed Grant Agreement and information on any amendments with the Associated Partners.

The Associated Partners hereby commit to implement the Project tasks attributed to it/them in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

In addition, the Associated Partners hereby commit especially to the following articles of the Grant Agreement and related regulations of Annex 5 (see annexes):

- Proper implementation of the action (Article 11)
- Conflicts of interest (Article 12)
- Confidentiality and security (Article 13)
- Ethics and values (Article 14)
- Visibility (Article 17.2)
- Specific rules for carrying out the action (Article 18)
- Information obligations (Article 19)
- Record-keeping (Article 20)

The Associated Partners support the Beneficiaries regarding their exploitation, dissemination and Open Science obligations and commit to contribute to the technical and continuous reporting during and after the implementation of the Project.

Furthermore, the Associated Partners hereby explicitly agree to cooperate with and grant access to bodies according to Article 25 of the Grant Agreement (the Granting Authority, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO), the European Court of Auditors (ECA)), so that these bodies can carry out checks, reviews, audits and investigations also towards the Associated Partner(s).

Any Associated Partner from a non-EU country undertakes to comply additionally with any other obligation arising from Art. 10.1 of the Grant Agreement.

In case of termination or being declared a Defaulting Party, an Associated Partner shall, within the limits specified in section 5.2 of this Consortium Agreement, bear any reasonable and justifiable costs occurring to the other Parties for performing this Associated Partners tasks and the costs for additional efforts necessary to implement the Project.

Moreover, an Associated Partner is obliged to indemnify the other Parties for any claim of the Granting Authority against them, caused by this Associated Partner´s actions or omissions during Grant Agreement preparation, Project implementation or after Project end. Regarding such claims the Associated Partner´s special liability is limited to 10.000€ Should the Associated Partners be obliged to sign a separate agreement concerning its funding for the Project, it is the responsibility of the Associated Partner to ensure such agreement is not in conflict with this Consortium Agreement.

3 Annex – XiA WPs and Tasks

WP1- Project Management and coordination I (M1-M24) | Lead: CVTT-ISCTE

- Task 1.1 - Administrative, operational and financial management
- Task 1.2 - Project reporting
- Task 1.3 - Consortium meetings
- Task 1.4 - Data Management Plan & Ethics
- Task 1.5 - Quality of education / Assurance of gaining competencies

WP2 - Project Management and coordination II (M25-M48) | Lead: CVTT-ISCTE

- Task 2.1 - Administrative, operational and financial management
- Task 2.2 - Project reporting
- Task 2.3 - Consortium meetings
- Task 2.4 - Data management plan & Ethics
- Task 2.5 - Quality of education
- Task 2.6 - Certification and accreditation schemes
- Task.2.7 - Model to deliver accessible formal and nonformal learning

WP3 - Needs analysis and survey of HCP, Industry (M2-M15) | Lead: ULSSA

- Task 3.1 - Engage stakeholders and identify training resources
- Task 3.2 - Future Skills Reference Model
- Task 3.3 - Knowledge mapping and skills gaps analysis: survey/ assessment: European and National Level
- Task 3.4 - Current situation of Current curriculas in health and technical sector
- Task 3.5 - Framework for individual and organizational diagnosis and recommendations (forecasting future education needs)

WP4 – Learning and curriculum design (M4- M24) | Lead: Laurea

- Task 4.1 - Educational framework for continuous learning
- Task 4.2- Curriculum development
- Task 4.3- Pedagogy and assessment models
- Task 4.4- Pedagogical support to Content Producers

WP5 – Creating or reusing XiA educational content (M12 – M36) |Lead: UiO

- Task 5.1 - Mapping - existing courses and other educational content for XiA
- Task 5.2 – XiA Courses – develop, evolve and reuse content
- Task 5.3 – XiA micro courses - digital courses - transformation for capacity building and workplace learning (multiple needs and dimensions)

WP6 - Implementing and Evaluating XIA Courses (M6 – M48) |Lead: DIT

- Task 6.1 - Course Integration and Preparation
- Task 6.2 - Curriculum Integration and Customization

- Task 6.3 - Course Delivery and Logistics Task 6.4 - Evaluation and Impact Assessment

WP7 – Innovation alliance and interoperability strategy (M12 – M48) |Lead: ECHAlliance

- Task 7.1 - Identify ecosystem players and partners
- Task 7.2 - Set up and Launch of the Community of Practice
- Task 7.3 - Ecosystem enlargement
- Task 7.4 - Strategy development
- Task 7.5 - Strategy validation
- Task 7.6 - Delivering material to EU platform

WP8 - Communication, dissemination and sustainability I (M1 – M24) |Lead: Fyrstain

- Task 8.1 - Dissemination and Communication
- Task 8.2 - Uptake and sustainability
- Task 8.3 - Clustering activities for visibility and impact
- Task 8.4 - Policy recommendations

WP9 – Communication, dissemination and sustainability II (M25 – M48) |Lead: Fyrstain

- Task 9.1 - Dissemination and Communication
- Task 9.2 - Uptake and sustainability
- Task 9.3 - Clustering activities for visibility and impact
- Task 9.4 - Policy recommendations