

D5.7

Impact Assessment & Exploitation report 2

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Abstract

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<i>Dissemination level</i>		
<i>PU</i>	Public, fully open. e.g., website	✓
<i>CL</i>	Classified information as referred to in Commission Decision 2001/844/EC	
<i>CO</i>	Confidential to NGI Sargasso project and Commission Services	

*** Deliverable types:**

R: document, report (excluding periodic and final reports).

DEM: demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs.

DEC: websites, patent filings, press and media actions, videos, etc.

OTHER: software, technical diagrams, etc.



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ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AI Act	European Union Artificial Intelligence Act
CSA	Coordination and Support Action (Horizon Europe)
DLT	Distributed Ledger Technology
DoA	Description of Action (Grant Agreement Annex 1)
DPA	Data Processing Agreement
E2E	End-to-End
EC	European Commission
EIC	European Innovation Council
EOSC	European Open Science Cloud
EU	European Union
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Parties (Cascade Funding)
GA	Grant Agreement
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HE	Horizon Europe
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IP	Intellectual Property
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
ISA	Interoperability & Standardisation Across Borders (NGI Challenge)
KER	Key Exploitable Result
LMS	Learning Management System
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGI	Next Generation Internet
NGC	Next-Gen Cybersecurity and Generative AI (NGI Challenge)
OCI / OC	Open Call



OSS	Open-Source Software
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
QA	Quality Assurance
R&I	Research and Innovation
RIA	Research and Innovation Action (Horizon Europe)
SDI	Sustainable Digital Infrastructure Across Continents (NGI Challenge)
SDO	Standardisation Development Organisation
SRL	Service Readiness Level
SSH	Social Sciences and Humanities
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
USA	United States of America
WP	Work Package



Executive summary

This deliverable provides the final assessment of impact generation, knowledge exploitation and sustainability planning achieved by NGI Sargasso during the second half of the project (M19–M36). It consolidates evidence from the open-call portfolio, the structured exploitation templates, the OnCampus programme, the transatlantic MoU network and the after-programme survey of funded experiments. Together, these elements demonstrate that NGI Sargasso has delivered a mature, diverse and high-quality pipeline of human-centric, open and decentralised digital technologies aligned with the Next Generation Internet vision.

At programme level, NGI Sargasso expanded its visibility, strengthened EU–US–Canada cooperation and created an active, distributed community of innovators and institutions. More than 50 experiments were funded across five Open Calls, with strong representation in security, interoperability, decentralisation and digital governance. The consortium achieved major outreach milestones, including the signing of **15 MoUs** with transatlantic innovation and standardisation actors, participation in international events and regular dissemination of success stories across the NGI ecosystem.

At KER level, the exploitation strategy evolved to reflect practical experience and long-term viability. The original KER structure was refined into four distinct, ownership-aligned assets:

- **KER-1a – Cascade Funding Management Pack**, a licensable methodology for running open calls and evaluation workflows;
- **KER-1b – OnCampus Programme**, a fee-based training and acceleration service;
- **KER-2 – Structured Experiments Result & IP Registry**, a query-able, standards-aligned knowledge asset enabling technology transfer; and
- **KER-3 – Transatlantic Community & Brokerage Core**, a low-data, governance-centred collaboration environment resilient to policy change.

This restructuring improves financial sustainability, operational clarity and policy robustness—particularly relevant in light of the recent shift in US academic and digital-policy orientations.

Experiment-level evidence confirms strong early-stage impact. Projects progressed in TRL/SRL levels, produced primarily open-source software outputs, and demonstrated meaningful exploitation signals such as pilot deployments, repository releases and venture exploration. Survey data show high adoption of open-source tools, variable but improving licensing maturity, and emerging but uneven engagement with standardisation bodies. A subset of experiments expanded their cooperation with US/CA partners beyond project requirements, validating the brokerage logic of KER-3.

Moreover, the deliverable presents long-term sustainability plans for each KER, including revenue models, cost structures, action plans, KPIs, decision gates and risk mitigation. Two KERs (1a and 1b) demonstrate clear commercial viability, while KER-2 and KER-3 adopt lightweight continuity models with well-defined stewardship roles. Taken together, the exploitation framework ensures that NGI Sargasso's assets can continue generating impact beyond M36, contributing practical methods, structured knowledge and a resilient transatlantic community to the wider NGI landscape.



The analysis in this report is complemented by the final Policy Brief (D5.6), which consolidates survey, interview and workshop evidence on transatlantic collaboration. D5.6 confirms that NGI Sargasso accelerated the technical and business maturity of beneficiary projects and expanded their international networks, while also exposing structural barriers such as funding asymmetries, regulatory divergence and operational constraints in multi-call, trilateral schemes. These policy-level lessons are reflected in the sustainability and risk considerations presented in Chapters 5 and 6.



1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to present an updated, evidence-based view of how the project's activities, results and Key Exploitable Results (KERs) are being translated into measurable impact and sustainable uptake during the second half of the project (M19-M36) and beyond it. In particular, it:

- **Assesses progress** since the mid-term review (M18) with regard to the exploitation roadmap, sustainability actions and impact KPIs defined in Report 1 (D5.4).
- **Validates and refines** the strategic approach laid out in the Impact Master Plan (D5.1) so that it continues to reflect the fast-moving NGI landscape and transatlantic collaboration context.
- **Provides actionable recommendations** that will enable consortium partners and funded experiments to maximise the long-term value of NGI Sargasso beyond the formal project end (M36).

Recent geopolitical and policy developments have also reshaped the context in which NGI Sargasso operates. The current U.S. administration has introduced new science-and-technology priorities, reshoring incentives, and stricter academic-cooperation and data-exchange frameworks. In parallel, Canada became an eligible country for EC funding only after the start of NGI Sargasso, creating both additional collaboration opportunities and some practical asymmetries across the programme's lifetime. Together with the broader reassessment of EU–U.S. digital and research relations, these shifts directly affect how transatlantic collaboration can be pursued under the NGI agenda. Accordingly, this report revisits the cooperation assumptions of D5.1 and D5.4, highlighting adaptive measures taken by the consortium to safeguard continuity, broaden engagement with Canadian and non-federal U.S. actors, and align NGI Sargasso's exploitation roadmap with the evolving policy environment.

This introduction therefore acts as the navigation aid for readers, explaining what is covered, why it matters at this stage of the project, and how the rest of the report is organised.

1.2 Scope and structure

The report covers the full breadth of Task 5.4 - Exploitation of Knowledge & Sustainability of Work Package 5 – “Community Building, Exploitation & Dissemination”. Its scope is three-fold as presented in Table 1:



TABLE 1. DELIVERABLE D5.7 3-FOLD SCOPE

Section	Content	Key questions addressed
Progress & performance (M19-M36)	Quantitative KPIs and qualitative evidence collected from open-call experiments, brokerage platform, training & community events	<i>What has been achieved since Report 1?</i>
Updated exploitation strategy	Restructuring of the three KERs and revised exploitation strategy.	<i>How have the original goals evolved?</i>
Forward plan (M36 & beyond)	Priority actions, sustainability mechanisms and risk mitigation. The updated analysis also integrates external policy developments influencing transatlantic research collaboration, detailed further in Section 6.4 ("Policy insights").	<i>What still needs to be done to secure impact after project closure?</i>

Supplementary annexes provide detailed information on exploitation and impact topics discussed in the present report.

1.3 Relation to earlier deliverables

To clarify how this deliverable fits within the overall impact and exploitation logic of NGI Sargasso, Table 2 summarises the roles of earlier WP5 deliverables and explains how the present report builds on them. Together, they form a coherent sequence from initial strategy (D5.1), through mid-term assessment (D5.4), to the consolidated evidence and sustainability planning presented here.

TABLE 2. DELIVERABLE D5.7 RELATIVE TO PREVIOUS DELIVERABLES

Earlier deliverable	Role in the impact logic	How this report builds on it
D5.1 – "Impact Master Plan" (M6)	Defined the <i>strategic</i> communication, dissemination and exploitation framework, target-audience taxonomy and agile stakeholder-engagement cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses D5.1 as the strategic reference for the impact logic (three-tier monitoring, target-audience taxonomy, initial KER framing). • Describes how the original framework was applied or adapted in practice during M1–M36 (e.g. which elements were implemented as planned and which were simplified or dropped). • Aligns the final KER portfolio and long-term sustainability plans with the



Earlier deliverable	Role in the impact logic	How this report builds on it
		strategic intentions of D5.1, highlighting key lessons for future NGI actions.
D5.4 – “Impact Assessment & Exploitation Report 1” (M18)	Provided the <i>first operational</i> exploitation roadmap, initial KER definitions and mid-term KPI snapshot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews progress against the exploitation roadmap and actions defined in D5.4 for the period M19–M36. • Reports final KPI status at M36 against the mid-term snapshot and targets outlined in D5.4, explaining major deviations qualitatively where data are available. • Updates the KER portfolio (splitting the original KER-1, reshaping KER-2) and converts the mid-term roadmap into concrete three-year sustainability plans for each KER.

In contrast to D5.1 and D5.4, this report explicitly *considers new contextual factors*—most notably the 2024–2025 shifts in U.S. academic and innovation policy—to ensure the exploitation strategy remains relevant and realistic.



2 Methodology & monitoring framework

2.1 Overview

The methodology underpinning this report follows the *evidence-based, iterative and adaptive* approach defined in NGI Sargasso's Impact Master Plan (D5.1) and refined through Report 1 (D5.4).

The impact monitoring framework combines **quantitative Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** and **qualitative evidence** collected from the consortium, funded third-party experiments, and transatlantic community-building actions. The overall aim is to monitor whether NGI Sargasso's activities are (i) achieving the intended impact pathways and (ii) ensuring the long-term sustainability of its Key Exploitable Results (KERs). Building on Table 1 of D5.4, the framework distinguishes three impact tiers (Table 3):

TABLE 3. IMPACT MONITORING FRAMEWORK

Tier	Impact Evidence	Data Sources
Tier 1 – Quantitative (core)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of experiments funded • # of individuals trained • # of policy/standardisation inputs • # of new EU-US/CA MoUs • # of open-source contributions 	Monitoring sheets, event logs
Tier 2 – Qualitative (narrative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of human-centric design • Success stories (TRL/SRL growth, venture creation) • Lessons learned on transatlantic cooperation 	Structured templates for reporting
Tier 3 – Sustainability / systemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KER replication potential • Post-project funding opportunities* • Institutional commitments for continuation 	Exploitation workshops

* post-project funding opportunities are captured qualitatively through evidence of follow-on calls, instruments and programmes where KERs or experiments can plug in.

Each KPI is associated with a baseline (from D5.4), a target value, and a current status as of M36. Deviations are analysed in Chapter 3 ("Progress & Performance").

The monitoring framework operates at three complementary levels:

1. **Project level** – assessing overall programme performance (visibility, community reach, policy contribution, sustainability).
2. **KER level** – evaluating the exploitation readiness and adoption progress of each exploitable result.
3. **Experiment level** – tracking the impact of Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) projects through standardised templates and coaching sessions.



2.2 Evidence-gathering process

Impact evidence has been gathered in the second half of the project (M19-M36) through a multi-source process combining **internal project monitoring**, **beneficiary self-reporting**, and **external observation** as presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4. NGI-SARGASSO DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

Source	Frequency	Description / Tool	Responsible Partner
FSTP Experiment Monitoring Sheets	Quarterly	Structured Excel/Forms templates covering scientific, business, and societal KPIs	SPLORO (lead), ESF
KER Status Updates	Semi-annual	Measures progress on exploitation readiness (TRL/SRL, stakeholder uptake, IPR status, business cases)	SPLORO, MWCB
Community & Communication Analytics	Continuous	Web analytics, social-media metrics, event participation, newsletter subscriptions	AUSTRALO
Stakeholder Sprint Review	Every 6 months	Short internal workshop to review engagement indicators and adjust targets	AUSTRALO + SPLORO

For programme-level policy and collaboration insights, this report draws on the multi-source evidence base consolidated in D5.6 Policy Brief, which combines post-programme surveys, US/CA counterpart feedback, expert workshops and internal debriefings on open-call operations, coaching and OnCampus design.

Information relevant to impact monitoring is currently distributed across partners — collected through their respective tools and activity logs — but shared regularly within the consortium to ensure alignment and cross-validation of evidence between experiments, KERs and community-building actions.

2.3 Monitoring and limitations

Monitoring is coordinated by **SPLORO (Task 5.4 lead)** under WP5 supervision and data management adheres to the project's Data Management Plan and FAIR principles.

The impact monitoring cycle follows the overall project timeline and mirrors its key implementation stages. During the first phase (M01–M18), corresponding to the preparation of Deliverables D5.1 and D5.4, the consortium focused on the design of the framework and



establishment of the initial baseline, including the first exploitation roadmap and definition of core KPIs. The second phase (M19–M30) concentrated on implementation and refinement, marked by internal reviews and the introduction of updated sustainability measures based on lessons learned from ongoing activities and open-call experiments. The third phase (M31–M36) represents the consolidation and closure period, dedicated to compiling the final evidence of impact, validating progress against KPIs, and completing the sustainability handover through this deliverable (D5.7).

The framework recognises inherent **limitations** such as:

- heterogeneity of third-party experiments,
- varying data-reporting quality,
- and evolving cooperation conditions due to external policy changes:

To mitigate these, the consortium applies Agile sprint reviews, standardised templates, and triangulation between quantitative KPIs and qualitative narratives. This ensures that impact evidence remains credible, comparable, and adaptable to changing contexts.



3 Exploitation progress (M19 - M36) & impact

3.1 Project level

During the second reporting period, NGI Sargasso demonstrated strong programme-level performance across visibility, community building, policy engagement and sustainability preparation. The project continued to position itself as a central node in EU–US–Canada Next Generation Internet collaboration, delivering on its outreach, engagement and strategic objectives as defined in the Grant Agreement.

Visibility & Dissemination Footprint

NGI Sargasso maintained a consistent and professional communication presence through its website, social media channels and participation in major events. The website (ngisargasso.eu) was continuously updated with open call information, portfolio showcases, beneficiary stories, webinars, and the launch of the “InnoConnect” hub. The consortium ensured visibility at international fora, including two editions of Mobile World Congress, NGI community events, EC-organised workshops and multiple online seminars.

*According to D5.5, the project reached (until 10/12/2025) large international audiences (through its participation in Mobile World Congress / 4YFN with around 90,000–110,000 participants per edition), participated in **35 international events**, published **>200 awareness items**, grew a social media base of **2190+ followers**, and attracted **680 newsletter subscribers**.*

Success stories and experiment highlights were regularly disseminated through ESF’s “College of Experts” newsletter and other NGI channels, strengthening recognition within the broader NGI ecosystem.

Community Reach & Engagement

The project expanded its cross-regional community by building and sustaining engagement between European innovators, Canadian organisations and U.S.-based stakeholders. The OnCampus programme served as a continuous anchor, providing a structured entry point for innovators and mentors, while regular webinars and matchmaking sessions promoted interaction across regions.

During M19–M36, this was reinforced by D5.5 community-building activities, including:

- establishment of 15 MoUs with standardisation, open-source, research and innovation organisations across EU–US–CA (the full partner list and description of commitments are reported in **Annex 2**);
- launch and population of the **InnoConnect Hub**;



- proactive engagement with NGI multipliers and open-source communities;
- beneficiary showcases at **MWC 2024 and 2025**, NGI Forum and other ecosystem events.

The transatlantic brokerage environment grew steadily, with a functioning profile system, reviewer-network expansion and automated onboarding now in place.

Policy Contribution & Strategic Dialogue

The project contributed substantively to EU–US–Canada policy reflection through D5.3 (mid-term) and D5.6 (final) Policy Briefs. D5.6 consolidates beneficiary and counterpart feedback and identifies three structural issues that condition transatlantic NGI collaboration: (i) funding asymmetry, with cascade funding available only to EU entities; (ii) regulatory divergence, especially around GDPR and emerging EU rules (e.g. Cyber Resilience Act); and (iii) operational constraints linked to tight multi-call schedules and fragmented funding information. At the same time, the brief confirms that NGI Sargasso’s trilateral model created genuine networking opportunities, catalysed collaborations that would not otherwise have happened, and validated the value of strong coaching, a responsive helpdesk and clear KPIs. These findings directly inform the risk and sustainability analysis in Chapters 5–6 and provide programme-level recommendations for future NGI-style schemes.

Sustainability Position & Programme Maturity

At project level, NGI Sargasso concludes with a mature set of assets and realistic continuation pathways. Following the KER restructuring detailed in Chapter 4, two KERs achieved commercial maturity (clear service lines, revenue logic and decision gates), while the two non-commercial KERs (registry and community) reached low-effort operational stability with committed hosting partners.

The strong outreach base documented in D5.5—including the MoU network, InnoConnect Hub participants and partnerships with NGI multipliers—provides the continuity foundation for the community KER and the adoption potential for the commercial KER.

The project avoided dependency on any single funding stream or regulatory environment—an important factor given evolving U.S. policy—and ensured that each KER can continue independently of Horizon Europe support.

Programme-level KPIs were monitored and reported in detail in D1.4 Monitoring Report 2.

That report confirms that all mandatory indicators evolved in line with, or above, the targets set in the Description of Action: the number of experiments funded significantly exceeded the minimum target; individual training and coaching activity reached well beyond the baseline; policy/standardisation inputs and the number of EU–US/CA MoUs met or surpassed expectations; and open-source contributions were widespread across the portfolio. These findings are complemented by the final Policy Brief (D5.6), which synthesises the monitoring evidence and stakeholder feedback into 21 concrete recommendations and best practices for future NGI-style programmes.



Taken together, D1.4, D5.6 and the present deliverable show that NGI Sargasso delivered a highly visible, well-connected and policy-aware programme with strong exploitation foundations. Community reach expanded internationally, policy engagement produced actionable insights, and sustainability planning resulted in a balanced, future-proof asset portfolio that can persist beyond M36.

3.2 KER level

Table 5 summarises the exploitation activity carried out during M19–M36, mapping the actions originally defined in D5.4 to the progress achieved by the consortium. It provides a concise, KER-level view of what was planned, what was delivered, and how these actions contributed to the updated KER portfolio and the sustainability pathways outlined in Chapters 4 and 5.

TABLE 5. REPORT ON THE EXPLOITATION ACTIVITIES

Key exploitable topics	Actions defined in D5.4	Reported
KER# 1: Exploitation of the Project methodology		
Continued development of the methodology allowing it to be used by different organizations to address decentralized and open-source challenges (partner: SPLORO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Outsource” the methodology to other initiatives (so far NGI Sargasso is the one providing longer training); • Sell the methodology to other NGI projects/teams (decentralised, other topics). • OnCampus programme (MoOc); videos of webinars; payment for certificate; IP rights of teachers. • Publish the evaluation process on an open-source platform. • Create OnCampus: online repository (open platform so everybody can contribute)/database of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ E-lessons; topics ◦ Inspirational talks ◦ Workshops ◦ Experts, coaches, and mentors. 	<p>All core actions were completed.</p> <p>Sploro presented the methodology to other NGI initiatives, including a recorded presentation publicly available on the NGI Sargasso YouTube channel. The evaluation process was documented, internally reviewed and prepared for publication on Zenodo. OnCampus content (webinars, talks, mentor sessions) was produced and disseminated. While the broader online repository remains limited to YouTube-style distribution (not public) rather than a full open platform, the key exploitation intent—making the material reusable—has been achieved. Overall, methodology consolidation and external visibility are fully delivered.</p>
Establish contracts with public administration and companies interested in outsourcing the management of entrepreneurship programmes using the Sploro platform (partner: SPLORO)		<p>Sploro engaged with multiple NGI initiatives, showcased the methodology and responded to external interest. Although this did not result in new contracts during M19–M36, the outreach and methodology sharing were completed as planned. Action completed.</p>
Commercialisation and ecosystem services to accelerate the adoption of the technologies developed in the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote pilot projects and matchmaking with corporates. 	<p>MWBC and Australo delivered continuous dissemination, including success-story promotion, portfolio visibility, and online webinars.</p>



Key exploitable topics	Actions defined in D5.4	Reported
project and strengthen portfolio of researchers, entrepreneurs, and technical partners (NGI Sargasso portfolio) (partner: MWBC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share experiments success stories/portfolio to explore adoption (evidence on how technology works). • Assess innovators on the exploitation of their projects and technologies (exploitation workshop). • Promote regular online webinars where our beneficiaries share their technologies and open the floors for international discussion. • Use the booklet to collect the technologies used. • Improve the brokerage platform to allow people register even if project is finished and their name is “automatically” published on the page. 	Exploitation workshops were embedded into OnCampus mentoring. The technology booklet was finalised. Brokerage automation (Zapier + shared Excel) is in progress but operational and ready to be completed post-project. All other activities are fully completed .
Seek and connect key partners for further technology development & exploitation (new financial instruments such as EIT Digital, InvestEU Fund and/or private investors) (partner: ESF)		Although ESF monitored opportunities, no suitable instruments aligned with Sargasso's third-party portfolio during M19–M36. Activity reported but not pursued further , with no negative impact on exploitation.
KER# 2: Exploitation of the results of third-party experiments		
Support the experiments to develop exploitation plans (business & tech-transfer models) (All)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add these topics to the OnCampus. • Improve guidelines and create coaching method documents. • Create/promote a “Train the trainers” toolkit/workshop. • Create a “Portfolio support” (experiments pay consortium partners for future support). • Track public funding opportunities in the USA and Canada 	All actions were completed. OnCampus included structured exploitation, business-model and tech-transfer sessions. Coaching guidelines and exploitation methods were drafted and incorporated into the final deliverables. A “Train the Trainers” approach was implemented through online materials and website content. Portfolio support was introduced via visibility and partner-expert listings. KER-level objective delivered.
Offer technology transfer services to support research organisations in the commercialisation of their results, through the identification of suitable funding programmes, technology transfer tools		Delivered through: a. Search for grants available during the OCs to enable organisations in the USA and Canada, which we do not fund, to apply for funding in their own countries and cover the cost of participating as counterparts.



Key exploitable topics	Actions defined in D5.4	Reported
towards the creation of spin-offs by the beneficiaries (partner: SPLORO)		b. A dedicated “How to Tackle EU Funds” session and spin-off mentoring embedded in BMC and 1-1 sessions. Completed.
Co-patenting and, at least, pre-agreement between parties on IPR Trainings on this matter will be freely available for experiments in WP4 as part of the programme, leading to a greater commercialization potential of the solutions developed by third parties after the project completion (All)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote IP training and co-patenting for third parties. 	IPR guidance was provided to all beneficiaries. Training sessions and office hours covered licensing, ownership, co-patenting and exploitation planning. Completed.
Co-publications on the scientific subject targeted by the fellowship experience (All)		Instead of formal academic publications—considered unsuitable for most experiment outputs—the consortium disseminated detailed analysis of Open Call submissions through EC-organised NGI events and EU–Canada showcases. This fulfils the dissemination objective in a more appropriate format. Completed (alternative route aligned with impact logic).

KER# 3: Community of transatlantic institutions and EU researchers

Develop and promote links between innovation and academic research, expanding its "college of experts" on cutting-edge ICT issues in the EU and internationally (partner: ESF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use results from OC#2 - Canada about standardisation and link the results to their profiles as an example. Promote online networking events (pay ticket fee); pay to pitch and present. Build a supporting partners database (universities; public entities). Improve the brokerage platform for networking. Set up a hub to connect major open-source initiatives in EU-USA-Canada through MoUs for collaboration. 	ESF expanded its College of Experts with Sargasso reviewers. NGI Sargasso teams were promoted at Mobile World Congress. The consolidated NGI Sargasso organisation & supporting-partners contact database (universities, public entities and related actors) was shared with the European Commission via D3.8 Beneficiaries Dataset. The collaboration hub (innconnect) was published, and 15 MoUs were established (see Section 6; Annex). Brokerage improvements are ongoing but functional. Delivered with minor pending technical refinement.
Validate and engage with Internet innovators in the European market, expanding its networks and partners, and enhancing its OnCampus programme to generate research partnerships and		Covered through continuous OnCampus mentoring, webinars, success-story promotion and participation in external events. Completed.



Key exploitable topics	Actions defined in D5.4	Reported
investment opportunities. (partner: MWBC)		
Strengthen position in the European and international market, boosting cooperation with USA and Canada and expanding network of partners in both regions (longer-term collaboration between the EU and North American entities for co-research and co-development), facilitating the uptake and validation of emerging technologies that drive the Digital Economy (partner: AUSTRALO)		Success stories were published. The MoU network (15 organisations) constitutes a major long-term collaboration mechanism. Open-source collaboration hub launched. The “how to publish an article” coaching was deemed not appropriate and excluded from D5.7. Objectives otherwise fully met.

The D5.4 exploitation roadmap has been implemented with a **high completion rate** across all three KERs. Most KER-level activities are **completed**, and the few ongoing items (mainly technical optimisations of the brokerage platform) do not affect overall exploitation readiness. However, a restructuring of the KER portfolio was necessary to ensure clearer ownership, financial sustainability and policy resilience. This restructuring is presented in Chapter 4.

3.3 Experiment level

Across the five Open Calls, NGI Sargasso received **406 eligible proposals** (52, 102, 73, 75 and 104 per call respectively) and funded **53 Innovators**, corresponding to a selection rate of roughly **9–16 % per call**. All applications and funded projects were mapped onto a common **challenge taxonomy** (the distribution of funded projects per challenge can be observed in Table 6), giving a consistent view of portfolio composition over time.

TABLE 6. CHALLENGE DISTRIBUTION PER OPEN-CALL

Code	Challenge name	OC1	OC2	OC3	OC4	OC5	Total
SDI	Sustainable Digital Infrastructure Across Continents	1	1	1	5	3	11
HCA	Harmonized Cross-Atlantic Digital Governance	1	5	3	6	3	18
IPD	Inclusive Public Digital Spaces for Global Community Engagement	0	2	2	5	2	11
EDS	Enhanced Data Security and Privacy in Transcontinental Perspective	3	5	7	7	5	27



Code	Challenge name	OC1	OC2	OC3	OC4	OC5	Total
ISA	Interoperability and Standardisation Across Borders	3	7	2	8	4	24
GID	Global Implementation of Decentralised Technologies	4	5	0	9	0	18
ETC	Encouraging Transatlantic Citizen Participation	0	0	0	0	0	0
QRS	Quantum-Resistant Security Systems	0	1	1	0	0	2
EIB	Ethical Implementation of Blockchain and Decentralised Technologies	0	0	0	0	0	0
NGC	Next-Gen Cybersecurity and Generative AI	0	1	4	2	4	11
RIH	Redefining intelligence in a hyperconnected world	0	0	2	1	3	6
NGS	Next Generation Space Based Internet	0	0	0	2	3	5
IAR	Internet Archiving	0	0	0	0	3	3
OCN	Open Challenge for Next Generation Internet	0	0	5	5	5	15
Total challenges covered in funded projects		12	27	27	50	35	151
Total funded projects		8	9	11	12	13	53

A standardised impact & exploitation template—introduced in D5.4 and maintained throughout the project—was completed by every funded experiment. This template captured project objectives, challenge alignment, TRL progression, key outputs (software, datasets, hardware designs), licensing and IPR choices, standardisation relevance and the intended post-project exploitation route. Coaches revisited the templates during OnCampus mentoring and 1-to-1 clinics, stress-testing business models, exploring tech-transfer options and validating next-step funding pathways.

Beyond the internal monitoring instruments, D5.5 documents how experiment-level results were showcased and amplified. Several beneficiaries were featured at Mobile World Congress (two editions), profiled on the NGI Sargasso website and in the Innovators catalogue, highlighted in newsletters and presented at NGI community events and EC workshops. These dissemination activities increased the external visibility of the portfolio, opened contact channels with potential partners and investors, and strengthened the exploitation opportunities identified in the impact & exploitation templates.

Qualitative Impact evidence



Human-Centric Design

NGI Sargasso required each experiment to demonstrate how its work affects people, communities and digital rights. Human-centricity was assessed through clarity of target users, accessibility, privacy safeguards, user testing and alignment with NGI values.

Illustrative examples include:

- Fairness-oriented AI interview analysis tools reducing bias in recruitment.
- Digital document systems for migrants and mobile workers supporting user-controlled identity management.
- Decentralised, privacy-preserving messaging platforms ensuring autonomy and secure communication.
- Civic-tech solutions fostering participation, accessibility and democratic engagement.
- Wellbeing-related tools embedding ethical data-handling principles.

The impact templates confirm that human-centrism is embedded across the portfolio.

Success Stories — TRL Growth and Venture Signals

The majority of experiments report tangible progression:

- Advancement from concept to **working prototypes** or **validated pilots** (TRL 4–6).
- A subset reaching **TRL 7–9**, indicating near-market maturity.
- Open-source libraries, datasets and modules published for reuse.
- Early-stage venture signals (incorporation, accelerator applications, pilot agreements).
- Pilots in decentralised identity, governance and generative-AI safety.
- Developer resources (frameworks, dashboards) adopted beyond the original team.

These maturity signals are recorded in both the survey and KER-2 registry metadata.

Lessons Learned on Transatlantic Cooperation

Experiments provided practical insights into EU–US–Canada collaboration, informing policy work in D5.3 and D5.6:

- Solutions on identity, archiving, decentralisation and governance show natural transatlantic applicability.
- Recurrent friction in **data sovereignty, privacy frameworks and regulatory divergence**.
- Validation of **metadata-only**, low-data architectures—later the foundation of KER-3.



- Operational constraints around time zones, infrastructure and administrative protocols.
- MoU-driven collaboration proves more sustainable than ad-hoc contacts.
- Projects working on digital sovereignty and standardisation fed directly into policy insights.

These lessons strengthened the policy-resilience design of KER-3.

These experiment-level observations are consistent with the broader findings reported in D5.6: NGI Sargasso's trilateral requirement brought different innovation cultures into direct contact and expanded visibility in North American ecosystems, but beneficiaries and counterparts also reported funding asymmetries, regulatory uncertainty and time-zone/coordination issues as recurrent challenges.

Survey-Based Insights on Exploitation Aspects

To complement the structured information collected through the templates, the consortium conducted an **after-programme survey** across all Open Call cohorts.

The post-programme survey confirms a strong orientation towards **openness** across the NGI Sargasso portfolio. Almost all respondents report using open-source tools and repositories during development, and many explicitly position their outputs as open-source software or data assets. This reinforces the observation that the experiments are largely built on, and contribute back to, open ecosystems rather than closed, proprietary stacks.

At the same time, **intellectual property and licensing strategies remain heterogeneous**. Some projects have clearly documented OSI-compliant licences for their outputs, while others rely on traditional IPR categories such as proprietary software, datasets or service know-how. A notable share of respondents did not specify a licence or left IPR fields undefined, suggesting that exploitation models and ownership configurations remain fluid for part of the portfolio. This indicates a continued need for targeted mentoring on open-source licensing, compatibility and IPR management.

Engagement with **formal standardisation** is present but limited to a subset of projects. A small number of teams reported interactions with standardisation bodies or alignment efforts with existing protocols, but most experiments do not yet operate within a standards-driven framework. Given the portfolio's emphasis on interoperability, trust and decentralised architectures, this represents both a gap and an opportunity: with further support, more experiments could align their outputs with relevant standards, increasing their adoption potential and long-term impact. Survey results are summarised in D1.4.

The programme-survey analysis reported in D1.4 confirms that funded experiments pursue a diverse mix of **exploitation routes**. All pathways considered in the survey were selected by at least some projects, with SaaS/PaaS and Service Offerings among the most common, followed closely by Educational Exploitation. Commercial signals are also visible: a significant number of projects indicate Hybrid (Open Source + Commercial) models, Direct Sales, and, in a smaller but important subset, the creation of spin-offs or new ventures and a few joint ventures. Taken



together, these data points validate that NGI Sargasso has generated a portfolio with both commercial potential and public-interest / educational impact, consistent with the exploitation logic and KER structure described in Chapters 4 and 5.

Overall, the experiment-level progress demonstrates a coherent and meaningful translation of FSTP support into early-stage impact. All 53 funded projects participated in structured mentoring, produced documented outputs aligned with NGI priorities and generated tangible maturity signals across TRL, openness, governance and collaboration dimensions. Survey evidence confirms that NGI Sargasso fostered a portfolio that is human-centric, open, technically credible and increasingly transatlantic. These outcomes validate the cascade-funding model and provide a strong foundation for the long-term exploitation pathways outlined in Chapters 4 and 5.

Taken together, project-, KER- and experiment-level evidence confirms full alignment with D5.4 and a clear trajectory toward sustainability, supporting the restructuring presented in Chapter 4.



4 Restructured KER portfolio & strategies

4.1 Enhancement of the KER portfolio

The NGI Sargasso project identified three Key Exploitable Results (KERs), first outlined in the *Impact Master Plan (D5.1)* and further elaborated in *Impact Assessment & Exploitation Report 1 (D5.4)*. Together, these three KERs were identified to constitute the core impact architecture of NGI Sargasso, linking operational processes, exploitable outputs, and long-term ecosystem sustainability.

- **KER 1 – NGI Sargasso Methodology:** The methodological and operational framework developed for managing transatlantic open calls, mentoring, and community-building activities. This includes the Sargasso playbook, evaluation workflows, OnCampus model, and stakeholder engagement tools that can be replicated by future NGI or Horizon projects.
- **KER 2 – Results of Third-Party Experiments:** The collective set of innovations, demonstrators, and validated use cases produced by the funded third-party experiments. These results represent the technological and market-facing assets emerging from Sargasso's cascade funding mechanism and mentoring support.
- **KER 3 – Transatlantic Community of Innovators and Institutions:** The sustained network of European, U.S., and Canadian actors—startups, researchers, and organisations—brought together through the project's activities. This KER embodies the relational capital, shared knowledge, and trust established between transatlantic partners, providing the foundation for future joint initiatives.

In D5.4, KER-1 grouped both the NGI Sargasso methodology (procedures, SOPs, platform configuration) and the OnCampus programme (mentoring/cohorts, training content). For **financial sustainability** and clearer market fit, we have **split KER-1 into two distinct KERs**: KER-1a. – **Cascade Funding Management Pack**, positioned as a reusable playbook and compliance kit for cascade-funding programmes, and KER-1b - **OnCampus Programme**, positioned as a fee-based acceleration and mentoring service with defined cohort economics. This enhancement reflects how OnCampus is operationalised in the Grant Agreement (WP4), separates ownership and revenue models, reduces risk by isolating cost centres, and improves procurement alignment (methodology/licensing vs. programme delivery).

In parallel, the former **KER-2 “Results of Third-Party Experiments”** has evolved into the **Structured Experiments Result & IP Registry**, reflecting a shift from passive aggregation of project outcomes to an **active, query-able and standardised asset** designed to enhance visibility, reduce due-diligence friction, and accelerate technology transfer. By transforming a static results list into a living registry with clean licence and patent metadata, NGI Sargasso strengthens the downstream exploitation potential of its funded experiments and supports early-stage investor engagement.



This restructuring is further justified by the **evolving US research and technology-policy landscape**, which has tightened conditions for cross-border data handling and institutional cooperation. By separating the KERs into clear methodological, service-based and low-data assets, the project ensures that each component remains resilient under the new policy constraints and can operate independently of fluctuating transatlantic regulatory environments (see Section 6.4 for analysis).

Together with the **Transatlantic Community**, retained as KER-3, this update yields a **four-KER portfolio** optimised for post-project uptake, financial sustainability, and measurable ecosystem impact. Table 7 presents the revised “Before → After” comparison table including the newly introduced KER.

TABLE 7. UPDATED KER PORTFOLIO (BEFORE-AFTER)

Aspect	As defined in D5.4 (Report 1)	As refined in D5.7 (current update)
KER-1	<i>NGI Sargasso Methodology</i> — unified methodological and operational framework encompassing cascade-funding processes, evaluation, and community support.	KER-1a – Cascade Funding Management Pack → repositioned as a commercial service providing a reusable compliance and management playbook (SOPs, workflows, templates) for cascade-funding programmes.
(new)	—	KER-1b – OnCampus Programme → stand-alone, fee-based acceleration service for innovators and researchers, offering cohort-based mentoring, training, and demo-day delivery.
KER-2	<i>Results of Third-Party Experiments</i> — portfolio of technical and business outputs from funded projects, presented mainly as descriptive summaries.	KER-2 – Structured Experiments Result & IP Registry → upgraded into a queryable registry (Zenodo + catalog) with standardised metadata (TRL/SRL, licence, IP stage) and exportable due-diligence packs.
KER-3	<i>Transatlantic Community of Innovators and Institutions</i> — stakeholder network linking EU, US and Canada actors around NGI topics.	KER-3 – Transatlantic Community of Innovators and Institutions → maintained as an open, living ecosystem asset , supporting collaboration, standardisation and future joint proposals.

Each KER is owned, operated, and financially managed **as a distinct asset**. No KER shares budgets, revenues, or cost centres with any other KER. Any cross-KER collaboration occurs only via defined interfaces (data, referrals, or service vouchers) governed by arm’s-length internal agreements. This ring-fencing prevents cost/revenue cross-subsidisation and preserves transparent sustainability plans per KER.



In the following sections, each KER is summarised in an individual “KER card,” following the European Commission’s recommended structure for exploitation reporting. The format provides a concise yet comprehensive overview of each KER’s **core value**, **ownership**, **target users**, **exploitation pathway**, and **readiness level** (TRL or SRL). This approach ensures consistency and comparability across KERs while enabling the consortium to track their respective maturity and post-project viability. Furthermore, key elements of each exploitation pathway are presented for each KER.

4.2 KER-1a: Cascade Funding Management Pack

The Cascade Funding Management Pack (Table 8) represents the project’s operational backbone—now refined into a commercially deployable service that allows other initiatives to replicate Sargasso’s cascade-funding management model. It transforms the consortium’s internal workflows, templates, and governance logic into a reusable, licensable framework for running compliant, high-quality open calls across Europe and beyond.

TABLE 8. KER-1A CARD

Field	Content
Title	Cascade Funding Management Pack
Type	Process / Service (Commercial)
Description	End-to-end cascade-funding management kit : operating model, SOPs, evaluation workflows, and monitoring routines, validated on EU-US contexts. Delivered as a configured service package (playbook + tooling setup + training).
Value Proposition	De-risked launch of cascade-funding programmes in weeks, not months: compliant workflows and proven artefacts, reduce set-up time, errors, and coordination costs while improving applicant quality and reporting fidelity.
Primary Owner(s) & commitment	SPLORO SPLORO confirms continuation of the Management Pack as a commercial offer post-project, with internal capacity assigned for delivery and QA. This secures continuity without dependency on new funding.
Main Target Groups	Funding bodies, HE coordinators, digital innovation hubs, RTOs running open calls
Exploitation Pathway	Commercial service : configuration & deployment package (playbook licence, process setup, partner training), plus optional retained support (reporting, coaching, QA)



Field	Content
Readiness Level	SRL 8 (methodology proven at scale in a real project; ready for replication)
IPR & Access Mode	Licensed service assets (restricted-use licence for buyer); client receives tailored documentation and configured templates; redistribution not allowed without consent.

Exploitation elements

Core

- Primary buyers: HE coordinators, national agencies, Digital Europe projects, EDIHs/Clusters that run open calls.
- Positioning: “Cascade Funding Management Kit” — *reduce set-up time, risk and non-compliance; increase application quality and reporting fidelity.*
- Go-to-market: direct sales to coordinators; inclusion in proposal budgets; framework contracts; partner referrals via NGI community.

Delivery models

1. Assess & Plan (2–4 weeks): baseline audit, risk/compliance map, tailored process design.
2. Configure (4–8 weeks): playbook, reviewer/evaluator workflow, templates, KPI schema, reporting pack.
3. Co-Manage (optional): limited-scope advisory during 1st open call (checkpoints, QA, lessons learned).

Revenue logic

- Pricing drivers: #open-call waves, expected applicants/reviewers, languages, reporting complexity, integrations (portal/CRM), QA depth.
- Revenue components:
 - *One-off implementation fee* (Assess & Plan + Configure).
 - *Optional co-management retainer* per call wave.
- Unit economics: labour-based COGS (method lead + ops analyst + QA); target gross margin: >50%; higher on repeat customers (asset reuse).
- Capacity plan: 3–6 implementations/year with one senior lead; scale via playbook reuse and template libraries.



Replication Potential

The Management Pack has *high replication potential* as it is fully modular, compliant with Horizon Europe cascade-funding rules, and easily adapted to different domains (AI, cyber, energy, health, culture, regional innovation). Its Playbook, templates and QA routines allow rapid deployment in other NGI, DEP or national funding schemes with minimal reconfiguration.

4.3 KER-1b: OnCampus Programme

The OnCampus Programme (Table 9) evolves from an internal mentoring mechanism into a structured, cohort-based acceleration model for innovators and researchers. Delivered as a professional service, it equips teams with exploitation skills, investor readiness, and validated business cases—bridging the gap between early-stage experiments and sustainable ventures or pilots.

TABLE 9. KER-1B CARD

Field	Content
Title	OnCampus Programme
Type	Service / Programme Model (Commercial)
Description	Cohort-based mentoring and acceleration programme moving teams from idea validation to exploitation readiness. Includes curriculum, mentor pool, tooling, demo days, and KPI tracking. Delivered turnkey or in partnership.
Value Proposition	Repeatable outcomes per cohort* : higher exploitation readiness, clearer business cases, and better investor/funder fit—without the buyer building an in-house accelerator. Predictable timelines, repeatable formats, measurable outputs.
Primary Owner(s) & Commitment	MWCB MWCB commits to continuation, maintaining the curriculum, mentor pool and facilitation capacity.
Main Target Groups	Universities, accelerators, innovation agencies, clusters, regional programmes
Exploitation Pathway	Commercial delivery : paid cohorts (turnkey); options for sponsorship bundles; modular add-ons (IP clinic, investor day, standards track).
Readiness Level	SRL 9 (model is repeatable; materials and delivery playbook are production-ready)



Field	Content
IPR & Access Mode	Proprietary content & brand licensed for delivery; white-label options via contract; participant materials shared under project-specific terms.

* Beneficiary feedback collected for D5.6 confirms that the OnCampus programme is a high-value asset: projects report that the combination of tailored coaching, marketing support, inspirational talks and visibility opportunities substantially improved their market readiness and networking reach. The model of keeping the same coach across cohorts, co-defining KPIs and fostering peer learning is explicitly identified as a good practice to be replicated in future NGI-style programmes. This qualitative evidence underpins the exploitation and sustainability assumptions for KER-1b.

Exploitation elements

Core

- Primary buyers/hosts: universities, regional agencies, accelerators, large R&D projects needing structured exploitation support.
- Positioning: “Outsource the exploitation accelerator” — predictable cohort outcomes without building internal capability.

Delivery options

1. Turnkey Cohort (up to 10 teams, 8–10 weeks): full delivery incl. mentors, LMS, demo day.
2. Embedded Tracks (add-on): IP clinic, standards/SDO track, investor day, policy brief workshop.

SLAs / outcomes: % teams with validated problem–solution fit, exploitation one-pager + KPI grid, #intros to adopters/investors, demo-day completion.

Revenue logic

- Pricing drivers: cohort size/duration, mentor seniority mix, add-ons, travel/onsite days.
- Revenue components:
 - Cohort fee paid by host (base package).
 - Sponsorship bundles (industry partners; visibility + challenge slots).
 - Optional participant fee (if host allows).
 - Add-on modules (IP, investor, standards).



- Unit economics: COGS = mentor honoraria + PM + content ops + LMS; breakeven at ~8–10 teams/cohort (depending on mentor mix); target gross margin: 35–50%; upsides via sponsorship/add-ons.
- Capacity plan: 2–3 paid cohorts/year with a stable mentor bench; replicate with regional partners.

Replication Potential

Medium-to-high. The cohort model, curriculum, mentoring structure and scoring rubrics can be replicated across universities, digital innovation hubs, clusters, startup ecosystems and future NGI programmes. The modular curriculum allows adaptation to sector-specific versions (cybersecurity, identity, decentralised tech, data governance).

4.4 KER-2: Structured Experiments Result & IP Registry

The Structured Experiments Result & IP Registry (Table 10) converts the project's collection of third-party outcomes into a living, searchable knowledge asset. It will be hosted on Zenodo and mirrored through a filterable catalog, it standardises metadata on technologies, licences, and IP rights, making due-diligence faster and enabling investors, adopters, and policymakers to identify trustworthy NGI solutions efficiently.

TABLE 10. KER-2 CARD

Field	Content
Title	NGI Sargasso Structured Experiments & IP Registry
Type	Platform / Registry (Open)
Description	A curated, query-able registry of Sargasso experiments and related IP (software, data, patents). To be Implemented as a Zenodo community with a mirrored filterable catalog (Excel/CSV and/or lightweight web table) supporting fast due-diligence and discovery.
Value Proposition	Reduce due-diligence friction for investors and adopters via clean licence & patent metadata , standard tags (SPDX, TRL/SRL), DOIs, and links to repos/demos. This shortens term-sheet/pilot cycles and increases continuation and adoption of Sargasso results.
Primary Owner(s) & Commitment	ESF (Registry Editor/Host + Data Steward); ESF will maintain the registry in low-effort mode. If demand declines, it can be frozen as a static archive without loss of functionality. Entries owned by the respective beneficiaries.



Field	Content
Main Target Groups	Investors/CVCs, corporate scouts, public adopters, TTOs, standards bodies, policy actors
Core Features	Mandatory metadata (title, abstract, TRL/SRL, tech tags, OSS/data licence, IP status), repo/DOI links, adoption signals, standards links; exportable “Due-Diligence Pack” (PDF/ZIP) per entry; periodic refresh prompts (T+6/12/24 months).
Exploitation Route	Open access baseline (Zenodo + web catalog) to maximise visibility and reuse.
Readiness Level	SRL 3 — process and schema designed.
IPR & Access Mode	Open metadata (CC-BY or CC0 for the record); underlying assets retain owner IPR (OSS/proprietary/dual-licence as declared). Patent fields reference public registers (e.g., Espacenet/USPTO).

Exploitation elements

Tactics

- Investor & adopter funnels: share thematic shortlists (e.g., “Identity & Trust – SRL≥6, OSS permissive licence”).
- Standards alignment: highlight entries linked to specific SDO WGs; prepare mini-briefs for those groups.
- Policy references: produce annual “what’s ready” brief using the registry as source—raises visibility and credibility.
- Partner discovery: embed the web table in NGI/Sargasso pages; encourage cross-project reuse.

Operating model & workflow

1. Intake (owners): Beneficiaries complete a one-page submission (Form → Zenodo draft).
2. Curation (editorial board): Quick QA (licence validity, broken links, sanity check on TRL/SRL); assign tags; mint DOI via Zenodo.
3. Sync (catalog maintainer): Export Zenodo CSV; refresh Excel/CSV and web table monthly.
4. Evidence pack (auto-export): One-click “Due-Diligence Pack” (PDF/ZIP): abstract, team, licence, IP status, repo links, pilot notes—what an investor/adopter needs for first pass.
5. Update cycle: Owners prompted at T+6/12/24 months to refresh “adoption signals” & IP stage; stale entries flagged.



A proposal on the asset architecture, table schema, operating model and other aspects can be read in Annex - 1.

Replication Potential

High as a methodological asset, low-to-medium as a live service. The metadata schema and documentation model can be reused by any NGI project needing structured IP/result reporting. The registry can also serve as a reference template for future cascade-funding RIAs.

4.5 KER-3: Transatlantic Community of Innovators and Institutions

The Transatlantic Community (Table 11) extends NGI Sargasso's reach beyond the project lifetime by preserving and expanding the trusted network of EU, US, and Canadian innovators it has built. Anchored by the Private Brokerage Core and the InnoConnect Hub, it offers a secure, GDPR-compliant environment for partner discovery, policy dialogue and cross-Atlantic collaboration. In this way, the relationships, expertise and shared values fostered during the project can continue to generate joint actions, pilots and proposals after M36.

TABLE 11. KER-3 CARD

Field	Content
Title	Transatlantic Community of Innovators and Institutions
Type	Network / Ecosystem Asset
Description	Active EU–US–CA network enabling matchmaking , co-creation and policy dialogue across NGI themes. Channels include the Private Brokerage Core , the InnoConnect Hub , events, working groups and shared resources.
Value Proposition	One-stop access to a vetted transatlantic network, shortening the path to collaborators, reviewers, testbeds and policy conversations while increasing credibility for joint proposals and NGI-aligned initiatives.
Primary Owner(s) & Commitment	AUSTRALO AUSTRALO commits to maintaining the directory, MoU relations and moderation workflow at low cost, leveraging the network built during NGI Sargasso.
Main Target Groups	NGI projects, universities and RTOs, SMEs and start-ups, digital-rights NGOs, open-source foundations, industry alliances and public-sector innovators.
Exploitation Pathway	Continued community operations via brokerage, InnoConnect Hub, events, working groups and newsletters; usage as enabling



Field	Content
	infrastructure for future NGI and EU-US/CA digital cooperation projects.
Readiness Level	SRL 8 (established, functioning network with active MoUs, populated hub and live brokerage layer).
IPR & Access Mode	Open community under NDA/ToU framework. Brokerage profiles are private-by-default; public outputs (briefs, notes) are released under open-knowledge terms.

Exploitation elements

The core exploitation asset within this KER is the **Private Brokerage Core**, complemented by the InnoConnect Hub, thematic working groups and lightweight policy outputs.

The Private Brokerage Core is the secure, members-only layer of the community that allows verified organisations to find partners, experts and evaluators for upcoming Horizon or transatlantic projects while protecting data privacy. It runs on the existing NGI Sargasso brokerage platform; the community and data can be migrated or frozen if the provider changes, ensuring continuity of technology and workflows already validated within the project.

- Private Partner Database: Accessible only to logged-in, verified organisations that sign an online NDA/Terms of Use. Profiles are hidden by default; owners may choose to publish limited public information via the InnoConnect Hub.
- Self-Service Matchmaking: Members search by expertise, domain or geography and request introductions through a message relay moderated by AUSTRALO.
- Moderated First Contact: AUSTRALO screens initial messages for relevance and GDPR compliance; all introductions are logged for traceability.
- Data-Protection Approach: Consent is captured at registration; only professional metadata are stored; there is no public exposure of profiles and no unsolicited messaging.

Value to members and partners

- Bid acceleration: A pre-verified contact pool shortens consortium-building and reviewer-sourcing cycles.
- Reputation & continuity: A “living network” of NGI-aligned actors demonstrates sustainability to evaluators and policy makers.
- Zero spam risk: Hidden-by-default profiles and consent-based introductions guarantee a low-noise, GDPR-compliant environment.



- Cross-Atlantic trust: A common NDA/ToU framework harmonises expectations between EU and North American entities.

Community engagement

Beyond the Private Brokerage Core, KER-3 sustains community engagement through:

- Free baseline services: Public-facing InnoConnect Hub entries, a quarterly newsletter and event listings to preserve visibility and inclusiveness.
- Working groups: A small number of topic-specific groups (e.g. Trustworthy Data Spaces, Identity & Credentials, Edge AI & Security) producing short, practical outputs (white papers, briefs) feeding into NGI discussions, MoU partners and relevant SDOs.
- Policy & standards engagement: Translation of working-group outputs into short policy notes and targeted briefings to EC/NGI units and standards-relevant organisations (e.g. via MoU partners).
- Communications & credibility: An annual “State of the Transatlantic NGI” snapshot, combining registry and community inputs, to attract institutional partners and signal momentum.

Replication Potential

Medium. The community governance model and moderated brokerage workflow can be replicated in other EU–third-country cooperation frameworks (e.g. EU–Japan, EU–Africa, EU–Latin America) where trusted networking and low-data architectures are required. The hidden-by-default GDPR design, combined with MoU-based cooperation and mediated introductions, constitutes a reusable template for safe cross-border networking. The NGI Sargasso implementation can thus serve as a reference pattern for future transnational NGI or digital-cooperation actions.



5 Long-term sustainability plan

5.1 Introduction

Ensuring the long-term sustainability of NGI Sargasso's Key Exploitable Results (KERs) is essential to convert project-funded outcomes into lasting impact. While the project itself concludes at Month 36, the results it has produced—methods, services, registries, and networks—retain value well beyond the grant period. This chapter therefore outlines how each KER will **continue to operate, evolve, and generate impact after project funding ends**, identifying the resources, governance, and actions required to secure that continuity.

The sustainability of NGI Sargasso's KER portfolio does not depend on a single follow-up project but on the ability to plug into a *family of funding instruments* that are structurally aligned with its scope: cascade-funding RIAs, Digital Europe deployment projects, start-up funding schemes, and further NGI/open-source actions. Given that Horizon Europe (running to 2027) and the Digital Europe Programme (2025–2027 work programme) continue to invest heavily in AI, cybersecurity, data spaces, advanced digital skills and experimentation infrastructures, NGI Sargasso's assets remain well positioned to be reused as “building blocks” in future consortia.

Because the KERs differ in nature—some being commercial services and others open or community assets—the sustainability strategies also differ in scope:

- For **commercial KERs** (e.g. the Sargasso Methodology and the OnCampus Programme), the focus is on **financial sustainability**: establishing a viable business model with defined costs, revenues, margins, and decision gates to ensure self-financing and potential growth.
- For **non-commercial KERs** (e.g. the Structured Experiments Registry and the Transatlantic Community), the emphasis is on **operational sustainability**: maintaining minimal resource requirements, securing institutional hosting or sponsorships, and ensuring continued stakeholder engagement without creating financial liabilities.

This approach ensures that each KER transitions from the project phase into a fit-for-purpose operational mode—either as a market-ready service or as an enduring open-innovation asset supporting the NGI ecosystem.

Layout of Each Sustainability Plan

Each KER sustainability plan follows a common structure to ensure comparability and completeness:

1. **Three-Year Action Plan**: Timeline of key milestones and deliverables across the first 36 months after project end, broken into actionable phases (launch → validation → growth).



2. Indicative post-project funding opportunities: programmatic directions, not guaranteed calls; concrete topics will depend on future work programmes and annual call texts

3. Commercial KER:

- Cost & Revenue Model: Breakdown of cost categories, pricing components, and target margins; identifies breakeven point and scalability potential.
- Financial Outlook: Projection of revenue, costs, margins, and profitability; assumptions explained; presented as a 3-year table (for commercial KERs only).

Non-Commercial KER:

- Stewardship model: roles (owner/editor/DPO), baseline operating costs, refresh workload, boundaries (no fee-for-service).
- Operational cost outlook: annual baseline costs (tools/hosting/FTE), in-kind commitments, light sponsorships (if allowed); no revenue targets.

4. a. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): 3-year targets for uptake, financial performance, or operational activity, depending on the KER type.

b. Decision Gates: Go/No-Go checkpoints with quantitative criteria to validate progress and mitigate risk.

c. Risk & Mitigation Plan: Identification of market, operational, and policy risks with concrete mitigation actions.

5.2 KER-1a: Cascade Funding Management Pack

Action Plan

The following action plan (Table 12) outlines the concrete steps required to transform the Cascade Funding Management Pack into a mature, self-sustaining service over the first three years after the project's conclusion. It translates the long-term sustainability strategy into a phased roadmap—from launch and productisation, through market validation, to large-scale deployment and standardisation—defining for each phase the key objectives, priority actions, and measurable deliverables that will demonstrate progress toward financial and operational independence.



TABLE 12. KER-1A ACTION PLAN

Phase / Period	Key Actions	Main Deliverables & Indicators
Phase 1 – Launch & Packaging (T+0 → T+6 months) <u>Objective:</u> Convert project methodology into a licensable, repeatable service and secure the first client.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise Playbook v1.0 (governance, SOPs, reviewer workflow, KPI schema). Prepare legal pack (SoW, licence, DPA, acceptance criteria). Define rate card & options (core + add-ons). Produce 2 case briefs and demo webinar. Build delivery toolkit and CRM pipeline (~50 prospects). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playbook v1.0, Legal Pack v1, Rate Card, Demo Webinar, Toolkit v1. CRM pipeline populated.
Phase 2 – Market Entry & Validation (T+6 → T+18 months) <u>Objective:</u> Prove margins and repeatability on multiple clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver >2 implementations (HE CSA, national, DEP). Run reviewer onboarding & ops training. Collect audit evidence and feedback. Publish Playbook v1.1. Submit to framework contracts. Train 2 certified implementers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 client completion reports. Playbook v1.1. Certification rubric v1. 1 framework bid.
Phase 3 – Scale & Standardisation (T+18 → T+36 months) <u>Objective:</u> Scale delivery capacity and secure framework inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver >5 implementations / year. Launch Annual Update Pack (policy refresh). Develop Automation v1 (templated evaluator pack). Publish Handbook v2.0 (public synopsis). Obtain framework award. Expand certified implementers ≥ 4. Set up partner referral programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handbook v2.0. Update Packs #1–2. Automation v1. Framework award. ≥ 4 certifications.

Post-project funding opportunities

- Horizon Europe RIAs/CSAs with cascade funding components, especially in NGI / digital / AI / cybersecurity domains (e.g. future “NGI International Collaboration”-type RIAs that organise open calls with FSTP):

Cascade funding remains a mainstream instrument under Horizon Europe, with hundreds of millions earmarked for projects that redistribute FSTP. KER-1a can be proposed as the ready-to-use governance and evaluation pack for new cascade-



funding projects: call design, evaluation workflows, reviewer management, KPI schema, and compliance routines. It reduces set-up risk for new coordinators and can be written into WPs as an external service or as a “methodology” package led by existing partners.

2. *Digital Europe projects that deploy testing/experimentation facilities, data spaces or cybersecurity pilots using vouchers or sub-grants:*

Digital Europe increasingly uses voucher/sub-grant logic to support SMEs and public actors in AI, data spaces and cyber. KER-1a can be positioned as a standardised open-call and evaluation framework for these voucher schemes, ensuring consistent selection, monitoring and reporting across multiple pilots.

Revenue, Cost and Financial Outlook

Revenue Model

The revenue model of KER-1a (Cascade Funding Management Pack) is service-based, combining two complementary income streams:

- *RL-1: Pack Deployments* – the core implementation package delivered to funding agencies, coordination projects, or innovation programmes. Each deployment includes configuration of governance workflows, evaluation templates, and KPI tracking routines.
- *RL-2: Advisory & QA* – complementary quality-assurance and compliance advisory delivered as a short retainer or add-on during the first open-call cycle of a client.

Pricing is modular and transparent: Pack deployments are set at €25 000 per unit, while Advisory & QA support is offered at €5 000 per unit.

Cost Model

The cost structure mirrors the lean service delivery model adopted by SPLORO for this KER:

- *CL-1: Operations (Delivery, QA, Maintenance)* represent the direct labour and light maintenance required to execute each Pack. These costs increase proportionally with the number of deployments (FTE cost/semester = €25.000).
- *CL-2: Marketing & Sales* are calculated as a small percentage of revenue, rising gradually from 10 % in the pilot phase to 13 % once market visibility expands and more outreach activity is required.
- G&A Overhead (15 %) covers accounting, CRM, hosting, and management expenses applied consistently to the sum of operational and marketing costs.

This structure keeps fixed costs minimal and allows the service to scale flexibly with market demand.



Cost-benefit rationale for adopters

From the client's perspective, the Cascade Funding Management Pack is designed to be roughly cost-neutral versus building the entire cascade-funding machinery in-house. A typical Horizon Europe RIA/CSA with an open-call scheme can easily expend 9–10 PMs of internal effort (IT, legal, project management) to design, document and operate open calls, evaluation procedures and reporting routines. Using the Pack, this can be reduced to around 4 PMs of internal effort (mainly a PM and a technical contact), as the service provider supplies the platform configuration, SOPs, templates and documentation. Assuming an internal cost of ~€5 000 per PM, this corresponds to an avoided cost of roughly €25–30k, which is consistent with the indicative €25k pricing per deployment used in the financial model. In other words, the Pack aims to replace sunk internal effort with a predictable external service, while also reducing delivery risk and time-to-launch.

Financial Outlook

The resulting forecast (Figure 1) demonstrates a steady, credible growth path and strong profitability once the offer matures. By the second year, the service reaches operational maturity, generating positive cash flow with gross margins above 60 %. At the end of 2028, the model yields a cumulative EBITDA of €194 000 (margin 69% at Y3), with no external funding required. The cost structure remains lean, and capacity can expand without significant additional fixed investment, making KER-1a a financially self-sustaining, scalable professional service.

The Management Pack's modular structure—comprising preconfigured governance templates, evaluation workflows, KPI dashboards, and compliance routines—ensures that 80–90 % of the service can be reused from one client to another, drastically shortening configuration time and reducing delivery costs per deployment. Scalability is achieved through a lightweight delivery model based on certified implementers and a shared digital toolkit, allowing multiple deployments to run in parallel without increasing fixed staff or infrastructure. Efficiency gains come from automation of recurring tasks (evaluation pack generation, KPI reporting) and the reuse of tested assets, yielding progressively higher margins as the client base expands. Together, these factors make the Management Pack a **repeatable, cost-effective, and exportable solution** for managing cascade-funding schemes beyond NGI Sargasso, adaptable to any future EU or national open-call programme.



	2026		2027		2028	
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
	Phase1	Phase2		Phase3		
RL-1: Pack Deployments EUR/Sem.	0	1	1	2	2	4
25.000	0	25.000	25.000	50.000	50.000	100.000
RL-2: Advisory & QA EUR/Sem.	0	1	1	1	2	3
5.000	0	5.000	5.000	5.000	10.000	15.000
Total Semester Revenue	0	30.000	30.000	55.000	60.000	115.000
Total Annual Revenue	30.000		85.000		175.000	
CL-1: Ops (Delivery, QA, Maintenance) FTE/Sem.	0,10	0,25	0,25	0,35	0,35	0,60
25.000	2.500	6.250	6.250	8.750	8.750	15.000
Gross FTE cost (EUR/Sem.)	10%	10%	12%	12%	13%	13%
CL-2: Marketing & Sales (of Revenue) EUR/Sem.	0	3.000	3.600	6.600	7.800	14.950
G&A Overhead (of CL-1 & CL-2) EUR/Sem.	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
375	1.388	1.478	2.303	2.483	4.493	
Total Semester Cost	2.875	10.638	11.328	17.653	19.033	34.443
Total Annual Cost	13.513		28.980		53.475	
Yearly EBITDA	16.488		56.020		121.525	

FIGURE 1. KER-1A 3-YR FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

KPIs + Gates + Risks

KPIs

- *Deployments*: # Pack deployments delivered in the period
- *Time-to-configure*: Weeks from contract start to acceptance
- *Client satisfaction*: Post-delivery score (1–5)

Decision gates

- Gate 1: T+6 months (readiness to scale pilots)
 - Go if: Playbook v1.0, legal pack and rate card are completed; at least one full demo/webinar has been delivered; CRM shows at least 3–5 qualified prospects with one in advanced discussion (e.g. draft SoW shared).
 - If not: Narrow the initial scope and reprice (simpler “pilot pack”); harden the QA checklist and demo script; run targeted outreach to 10–15 additional prospects and schedule at least one dedicated demo/webinar to convert them.
- G2 — T+18 months (commercial viability)
 - Go if: three deployments in total delivered by now; time-to-configure ≤ 6 weeks on the last two projects; client satisfaction ≥ 4.2/5 average.
 - If not: add associate capacity for delivery; tighten change-control to protect timelines; repackage the offer (fixed deliverables, capped iterations).
- G3 — T+30 months (scale decision)



- Go if: run-rate of six deployments per year is achievable based on the last two semesters; time-to-configure ≤ 6 weeks consistently; client satisfaction $\geq 4.2/5$.
 - If not: hold steady at current volume, no hiring; improve playbook automation; focus on repeat buyers before pursuing new segments.
- G4 — T+36 months (strategic review)
 - Go if: the last 12 months show at least six deployments, time-to-configure ≤ 6 weeks median, and client satisfaction $\geq 4.2/5$.
 - If not: cap delivery at four–five deployments per year, protect margins, and defer expansion to new geographies/verticals until the thresholds are met.

Risks

Post-project, the Management Pack operates as a lean, service-based offer. The main threats cluster around capacity (delivery time), quality (client experience), and demand (conversions) - Table 13. We monitor them directly through the three core KPIs—deployments, time-to-configure, client satisfaction—and trigger predefined mitigations the moment thresholds are breached. This keeps the risk loop short: detect → act → stabilise, without adding process overhead. All risks are assessed of low/medium possibility and impact.

TABLE 13. KER-1A RISK MATRIX

Risk	Trigger	Mitigation
R1: Delivery bottleneck	> 8 weeks (any S3–S6)	Add associate hours; pre-build evaluator packs; enforce scope locks.
R2: Quality slippage	< 4.0/5 on any delivery	Senior QA review; corrective-action log; lessons-learned into playbook.
R3: Demand shortfall	Miss semester target	Pull forward next two prospects; fast-track contracting with a smaller initial scope.

5.3 KER-1b: OnCampus Programme

Action Plan

The following action plan (Table 14) sets out how the OnCampus Programme will evolve into a mature, self-sustaining cohort-based service over the first three years after project close. It translates the sustainability strategy into a phased roadmap—from launch and packaging, through market validation, to scaled multi-cohort delivery—specifying objectives, priority actions, and measurable outputs.



TABLE 14. KER-1B ACTION PLAN

Phase / Period	Key Actions	Main Deliverables & Indicators
Phase 1 – Launch & Packaging (T+0 → T+6 months) <u>Objective:</u> Stand up a licensable, turnkey cohort and secure first host.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise curriculum v1 (modules, assignments, rubrics). Assemble mentor bench and onboarding pack. Define cohort formats (5–10 teams, 8–10 weeks; online/hybrid). Prepare legal pack (SoW, SLAs, participation terms). Rate card (base cohort + add-ons: IP clinic, investor day, standards track). Landing page + 2 case briefs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum v1; Mentor pack v1; Legal pack v1; Rate card. ≥1 host secured; cohort calendar drafted.
Phase 2 – Market Entry & Validation (T+6 → T+18 months) <u>Objective:</u> Demonstrate repeatability and outcomes across multiple hosts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver 2-3 pilot cohorts (university, regional agency, HE project). Run demo day per cohort; produce exploitation/evidence packs. Collect participant/host feedback; refine curriculum v1.1. Formalise mentor contracts; maintain LMS and dashboards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 cohort completion reports with metrics (attendance, completion, satisfaction). Curriculum v1.1; mentor roster ≥20; host testimonials.
Phase 3 – Scale & Standardisation (T+18 → T+36 months) <u>Objective:</u> Multi-cohort capacity, partner models, and standard outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver 2-4 cohorts/year. Publish OnCampus Handbook (public synopsis) and outcomes framework. Establish partner programme (regional operators). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handbook; outcomes framework; ≥2 partner MoUs; ≥2 cohorts/year run-rate.

Post-project funding opportunities

1. *Future NGI / cascade funding projects under Horizon Europe (NGI, data, cybersecurity, digital trusts), where a structured entrepreneurship & exploitation track is required as a WP:*

OnCampus can be embedded as the capacity-building / acceleration component of new NGI-style RIAs: mentoring, exploitation training, business model clinics and funding-readiness support for FSTP teams. It reuses the existing curriculum, cohort design and mentor pool, reducing ramp-up time for new projects.

2. *Digital Europe “Advanced Digital Skills” & entrepreneurship/deep tech skills actions:*

DIGITAL 2025–2027 allocates funding for advanced digital skills and specialised training in AI, cybersecurity and data. OnCampus can be adapted into short programmes for



founders and technical teams, focusing on exploitation of NGI-aligned technologies and transatlantic collaboration.

3. *EIC Accelerator and other start-up instruments (for alumni), plus cascade funding calls listed on NGI / cascadefunding.eu.:*

While KER-1b itself is not an applicant, its alumni are. The programme can be marketed as the “pre-accelerator / deal-flow partner” that prepares teams for EIC Accelerator and other public/VC instruments, and as a support service for organisations that manage such calls.

Revenue, Cost and Financial Outlook

Revenue Model

The OnCampus Programme generates income through a cohort-based service fee complemented by a small number of paid add-on modules:

- *Cohort fees (RL-1)* Each cohort (8–10 weeks, ~10 teams) is charged €35,000. The forecast assumes maximum two cohorts per semester.
- *Add-ons (RL-2):* Hosts can purchase optional modules (e.g. IP clinics, investor day, standards track) at €5,000 per module.

Cost model

The cost structure reflects a highly standardised but still high-touch programme:

- *CL-1 – Ops (Delivery, QA, Maintenance):* Central programme management, QA and content upkeep are modelled as 0.25 FTE per cohort per semester.
- *CL-2 – Mentors, facilitation, LMS:* Mentor honoraria, facilitation time and LMS licences are captured as a per-cohort cost of €5,000.
- *CL-3 – Marketing & Sales:* Outreach to hosts and communication activities are budgeted as a percentage of revenue, starting at 10 % in the pilot phase and increasing to 12 % from per semester to reach maximum cohort capacity.
- *CL-4 - G&A overhead:* A flat 15 % surcharge is applied on the sum of operational, mentor/facilitation and marketing costs, covering administration, accounting, legal and general company overheads.

This mix keeps fixed costs modest and lets total cost scale primarily with the number of cohorts delivered.

Financial Outlook

Over the first three post-project years, the OnCampus Programme shows a stable growth path with robust profitability (Figure 2). Annual revenues increase from €75,000 in 2026 to €150,000



in 2027 and €160,000 in 2028. This growth is driven primarily by volume (moving from two to four cohorts per year) and a modest uptake of add-on modules rather than by aggressive price increases. On the cost side, the model assumes a lean but realistic delivery structure that keeps fixed costs relatively low and ensures that most additional expenditure is directly tied to delivered cohorts.

Under these assumptions the programme generates positive cash flow from year one. EBITDA stands at €40,500 in 2026, €77,550 in 2027 and €86,170 in 2028, corresponding to an EBITDA margin in the order of 50–55 % across the three-year period. The slight dip in margin in 2027 reflects the step-up in operational capacity required to support a higher cohort run-rate; margins recover as this capacity is utilised more fully in 2028. Cumulatively, the model produces approximately €204,000 EBITDA over three years, with no dependence on additional public funding. Because the cost base is dominated by variable items (cohort-linked mentor and facilitation costs) rather than fixed salaries or infrastructure, the programme can be scaled up or down without exposing MWCB to significant financial risk. This confirms that **KER-1b can operate as a financially self-sustaining, low-risk service line**, capable of supporting 4 cohorts per year while preserving quality and flexibility for host institutions.

	2026		2027		2028	
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
	Phase1	Phase2		Phase3		
RL-1: Cohort Fees (EUR/Sem.)	1	1	2	2	2	2
35.000	35.000	35.000	70.000	70.000	70.000	70.000
RL-2: Add-ons EUR/Sem.	0	1	1	1	2	2
5.000	0	5.000	5.000	5.000	10.000	10.000
Total Semester Revenue	35.000	40.000	75.000	75.000	80.000	80.000
Total Annual Revenue	75.000		150.000		160.000	
CL-1: Ops (Delivery, QA, Maintenance) FTE/Sem.	0,25	0,25	0,50	0,50	0,50	0,50
25.000	6.250	6.250	12.500	12.500	12.500	12.500
CL-2: Mentors, Facilitation, LMS (5k EUR/Cohort/Sem.)	5.000	5.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000
CL-2: Marketing & Sales	10%	10%	12%	12%	12%	12%
(of Revenue) EUR/Sem.	3.500	4.000	9.000	9.000	9.600	9.600
G&A Overhead	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
(of CL-1+CL-2+CL-3) EUR/Sem.	2.213	2.288	4.725	4.725	4.815	4.815
Total Semester Cost	16.963	17.538	36.225	36.225	36.915	36.915
Total Annual Cost	34.500		72.450		73.830	
Yearly EBITDA	40.500		77.550		86.170	

FIGURE 2. KER-1B 3-YR FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

KPIs + Gates + Risks

KPIs

- *Cohorts delivered*: Number of OnCampus cohorts completed in the period (semester / year).



- *On-time completion*: Whether each cohort finishes within the planned 8–10 week schedule (no major slippage).
- *Participant/host satisfaction*: Average post-cohort satisfaction score (1–5), combining participants and host institution.

Decision gates

- Gate 1 — T+6 months (readiness to scale pilots)
 - Go if: At least one cohort has been delivered, the cohort was completed within the planned 8–10 weeks, and participant/host satisfaction is $\geq 4.2/5$.
 - If not: Tighten scope and timetable, run mentor dry-runs, and prioritise the next fastest-closing host with a slightly smaller pilot (e.g. fewer teams or shorter duration) to prove the refined format.
- Gate 2 — T+18 months (commercial viability)
 - Go if: Two cohorts in total have been delivered by this point, the last two cohorts finished on time, and the average satisfaction score across cohorts is $\geq 4.3/5$.
 - If not: Increase the mentor/facilitator pool, enforce clearer expectations with hosts (change-control on extra sessions), simplify the base format (e.g. fewer live sessions, more asynchronous content) and focus on one or two “ideal” host profiles before expanding further.
- Gate 3 — T+36 months (strategic review)
 - Go if: Over the last 12 months, at least four cohorts have been delivered, on-time completion has been maintained, and average satisfaction over the year is $\geq 4.4/5$.
 - If not: Cap delivery at three cohorts per year, preserve margins and quality, and postpone any partner expansion until the above thresholds are met for at least one full year.

Risks

The main risks (Table 15) are concentrated around capacity (can the team and mentors deliver on time?), quality (does the learning experience meet expectations?), and demand (can enough hosts be secured each year?). All three risks are assessed as low-to-medium likelihood and medium impact, given the modular design of the programme and the ability to adjust cohort volume, mentor capacity and host mix on a semester basis. These risks are monitored directly through the three core KPIs—cohorts delivered, on-time completion and satisfaction—and predefined mitigations are triggered as soon as thresholds are breached. This keeps the management loop short: detect → act → stabilise, without creating heavy administrative overhead.

TABLE 15. KER-1B RISK MATRIX

Risk	Trigger	Mitigation
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R1: Delivery bottleneck (capacity)	A cohort overruns the planned 8–10 week schedule or requires significant last-minute rescheduling.	Add back-up facilitators; expand the mentor pool; pre-record content for time-critical modules; enforce scope locks with hosts (limit ad-hoc extra sessions).
R2: Quality slippage (experience)	Participant or host satisfaction drops below 4.0/5 on any cohort.	Conduct a senior programme review; log corrective actions; coach or replace under-performing mentors; adjust curriculum pacing (e.g. redistribute heavy weeks, increase office hours where needed).
R3: Demand shortfall (hosts)	The number of cohorts completed in a semester falls below the target in the financial plan.	Pull forward two warm host leads; offer a smaller pilot cohort to lower commitment barriers; align recruitment with academic/fiscal calendars; increase targeted outreach using existing success stories.

5.4 KER-2: Structured Experiments Result & IP Registry

Action Plan

The following action plan (Table 16) describes how the Structured Experiments Results & IP Registry will be stabilised, curated and embedded in the wider NGI ecosystem over the first three post-project years. The emphasis is on keeping a minimal but reliable curation effort and clear ownership, so that the registry remains usable and trustworthy without requiring new grant funding or complex governance.

TABLE 16. KER-2 ACTION PLAN

Phase / Period	Key Actions	Main Deliverables & Indicators
Phase 1 – Stabilise & Freeze v1 (T+0 → T+6 months) <u>Objective:</u> consolidate and publish a clean, queryable registry snapshot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise field schema (experiment ID, team, tech area, TRL, IP status, licence, links). Clean and complete metadata for all NGI Sargasso experiments. Publish registry to Zenodo community and mirrored filterable table (website / static catalogue). Document data model and curation rules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registry v1.0 published (DOI). ≥90 % of Sargasso experiments with complete core fields (owner, licence, contact, URL). Public documentation page.



Phase / Period	Key Actions	Main Deliverables & Indicators
Phase 2 – Light Curation & Integration (T+6 → T+24 months) <u>Objective:</u> keep the registry current and make it discoverable/usable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Twice-yearly review of entries (broken links, updated IP status, outcomes). ○ Add any late or follow-up results from experiments that mature post-project. ○ Promote registry in NGI/related calls and events as a reference asset. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Registry v1.1, v1.2 with change logs. ○ ≥2 update cycles completed. ○ At least 3 external references (calls, slides, or docs) pointing to the registry.
Phase 3 – Embed or Archive (T+24 → T+36 months) <u>Objective:</u> secure long-term home, or gracefully freeze as a stable archive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agree long-term hosting/ownership (registry host institution). ○ Decide on whether to accept new entries (e.g. from future projects using same schema). ○ Produce a short “how to reuse” note (schema, examples, licence). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ownership/hosting agreement confirmed. ○ Final registry snapshot + documentation. ○ Decision note: ongoing light curation vs. read-only archive.

Post-project funding opportunities

1. *Horizon Europe NGI and open-source-oriented RIAs/CSAs that need reusable tooling for documenting, tracking and showcasing project outputs (software, data, protocols, IP):*

KER-2 can be proposed as a cross-project asset in new consortia: a standardised schema and implementation for registering experiment results (licence, TRL/SRL, IP status, standardisation relevance). It reduces fragmentation and gives NGI actions a common “catalogue” of exploitable results.

2. *DIGITAL EUROPE projects on data spaces, cybersecurity and AI open-source tooling that require catalogues and registries of components:*

Many DIGITAL topics refer to catalogues/registries of services, datasets or tools. KER-2 can be extended or forked to serve as the metadata backbone for such registries, especially when aligned with NGI open-source practices.

3. *NGI / NGI Zero-type open calls for open-source commons, where Sargasso alumni or similar projects want to further mature their assets:*

While KER-2 itself is a registry rather than an applicant, its schema and practice can inform or integrate with future NGI commons funds, making it easier to track OSS contributions and licences across multiple programmes.

Operational Model & Cost Baseline



KER-2 is non-commercial: no fees, no subscriptions, no paid access. Sustainability depends on a small, predictable effort by a designated Registry Host.

Roles:

- Registry Host: owns the registry, Zenodo community and mirror catalogue; responsible for light curation and updates.
- Editor/Curator: performs the two update cycles per year.
- Technical support (optional): handles website/catalogue tweaks (a few hours per year).

Effort & cost (order of magnitude):

- Curation & updates: ~0.02PM/year.
- Hosting & tools: Zenodo (no fee) + simple web/CMS or static table → €0–€500/year.
- Comms (mention in newsletters/events): absorbed into existing dissemination activities.

Total cash cost is therefore in the low four figures per year, with no need for dedicated external funding. If a future project wants to use or extend the registry, additional funded curation can be contracted directly to the Registry Host as a separate activity, without changing the baseline.

KPIs, Gates and Risks

KPIs

- *Coverage*: share of NGI Sargasso experiments with complete core metadata (owner, licence, link, short description).
- *Usage / external references*: simple count of external references (citations in deliverables/calls, event slides, or documented accesses/downloads).

Decision Gates

- Gate 1 — T+6 months (Registry v1 readiness)
 - Go if: a public v1.0 snapshot is published, ≥90 % of experiments have complete core metadata, and basic documentation is online.
 - If not: extend the consolidation period; prioritise filling missing owner/licence fields; drop non-essential optional fields for this first release.
- Gate 2 — T+24 months (Value vs. effort check)
 - Go if: at least two update cycles have been completed, ≥70 % of entries have been reviewed in the last 12 months, and there is evidence of external use (at least two references or documented accesses).
 - If not: stop accepting new content; perform one final clean-up and move to read-only archival mode.
- Gate 3 — T+36 months (Long-term decision)



- Go if: a willing host confirms they can absorb the low ongoing effort, and freshness and usage remain at reasonable levels.
- If not: freeze the registry as a stable archive (no further updates), keep DOIs and documentation available, and clearly mark the snapshot date.

Risks

Because KER-2 is non-commercial with very low running costs, the main risk is relevance: the registry becoming stale, incomplete or unclear in ownership (Table 17). The risk approach is therefore lightweight and focused on keeping the asset either usefully alive or clearly archived, not half-maintained.

TABLE 17. KER-2 RISK MATRIX

Risk	Trigger	Mitigation
R1: Registry decay (stale or incomplete entries)	Coverage drops or stays below the target; many entries not reviewed for >12 months.	Schedule the two annual curation passes; prioritise fixing broken links and incomplete licences; if effort cannot be justified, freeze as read-only archive instead of pretending it is “live”.
R2: Ownership / responsibility drift	No clear Registry Host or editor after project closure; updates happen ad hoc.	Name a single host institution and editor in the deliverable and on the registry page; include maintenance in that institution's internal work plan.
R3: Low adoption / limited use	No documented external references or obvious usage after two years.	Promote once per year via NGI/related channels; include registry links in future project calls and presentations; if still low, formally close as a static evidence base and avoid investing further effort.

5.5 KER-3: Transatlantic Community of Innovators and Institutions

Action Plan

The action plan (Table 18) focuses on stabilising the existing network (year 1), deepening engagement and content (year 2), and consolidating/replicating the model (year 3).

TABLE 18. KER-3 ACTION PLAN

Phase / Period	Key Actions	Main Deliverables & Indicators
Phase 1 – Stabilise & Handover (T+0 → T+6 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Formalise AUSTRALO's stewardship role. ○ Validate and update InnoConnect Hub entries and MoU partner list. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Handover note & governance memo. ○ Cleaned InnoConnect Hub directory.



Phase / Period	Key Actions	Main Deliverables & Indicators
<u>Objective:</u> Secure continuity of the community and brokerage core after NGI Sargasso closure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm minimal secretariat allocation (Community + Events/Comms + Data liaison). Publish a short “post-project onboarding note” to existing members (what continues, how to use it). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed MoU list and contact points. Secretariat resource identified.
Phase 2 – Deepen Engagement (T+6 → T+18 months) <u>Objective:</u> Demonstrate ongoing value for members with minimal overhead.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run 2–3 online networking / info sessions (e.g. consortium-building clinics, NGI cross-project calls). Launch 1–2 lightweight working groups (e.g. Identity & Credentials, Edge AI & Security) and agree on simple outputs (2–3 page briefs). Maintain quarterly newsletter with curated funding calls, partner calls and success stories. Log introductions and matches made via the Private Brokerage Core. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2–3 online events delivered. 1–2 WG briefs published and shared with NGI ecosystem. 4 newsletters issued. Basic stats on introductions/matches per year.
Phase 3 – Consolidate & Replicate (T+18 → T+36 months) <u>Objective:</u> Decide whether to maintain, scale or replicate the model in new contexts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess usage and engagement (active organisations, introductions, WG activity). Explore alignment with new NGI or digital-cooperation projects (EU–US/CA, EU–Japan, EU–Africa, etc.). Publish an annual “State of the Transatlantic NGI” snapshot using registry + community inputs. Decide whether to (i) maintain current scope, (ii) integrate into a broader NGI facility, or (iii) freeze as a static reference directory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usage & engagement summary. 1–2 “State of the Transatlantic NGI” snapshots. Decision note on future hosting/model.

Post-project funding opportunities

1. *Future NGI International Collaboration actions (EU–US/CA and possibly other regions) under Horizon Europe, particularly those that require a pre-existing network and brokerage layer:*

KER-3 can be positioned as ready infrastructure for consortium building, expert sourcing and cross-border networking. New RIAs can integrate it as a shared asset for partner search, reviewer recruitment and stakeholder engagement, avoiding the need to rebuild a network from scratch.

2. *DIGITAL or Horizon Europe projects with international cooperation components in AI, cybersecurity and data spaces:*



Projects that need to connect EU actors with North American or other third-country stakeholders can use KER-3's brokerage and MoU backbone to organise mission-based matchmaking, working groups and policy dialogues under a low-data, NDA-based framework.

3. *Future CSAs / coordination projects on NGI community building and policy dialogue:*

KER-3 offers an immediately usable community and process model (governance, MoUs, moderated brokerage). New CSAs can adopt it as their engagement backbone and finance its light secretariat as part of their coordination effort, instead of creating a parallel structure.

Operating Model and Sustainability

The KER-3 operating model is deliberately lean:

- Governance: AUSTRALO acts as community lead under a simple DPA/ToU framework.
- Secretariat: Approximately 0.2 FTE/year (0.1 FTE Community Manager, 0.05 FTE Events/Comms and 0.05 FTE Data liaison), ideally provided as in-kind contributions or bundled with other NGI activities, rather than as a standalone budget line.
- Platform: The Private Brokerage Core runs on an existing tenancy, avoiding additional infrastructure investment; the InnoConnect Hub and newsletters are managed via a lightweight CMS and mailing tools.
- Access Policy: Membership is free for verified organisations under NDA/ToU; profiles in the brokerage layer are private-by-default, with optional public visibility via the InnoConnect Hub.

Sustainability is therefore defined not by revenue but by the ability to keep the service running at low cost and low risk. The community-building achievements documented in D5.5 (15 MoUs, populated InnoConnect Hub, NGI multipliers, beneficiaries showcased at major events) provide sufficient critical mass to justify this modest investment. Optional sponsorships or in-kind support (e.g. co-branded events with NGI projects, foundations or industry alliances) can be explored if activity grows, without altering the free-to-member principle.

Geopolitically, KER-3 remains robust under changing US policy conditions: it stores minimal professional metadata, relies on MoUs and NDA/ToU rather than heavy data flows, and can, if necessary, operate in an EU/Canada-only mode while preserving the same technical and governance stack.

KPIs, Gates and Risks

KPIs

Given the non-commercial nature of KER-3, KPIs focus on activity and relevance, not finances. A small, essential set is sufficient:



- *Active organisations*: Number of organisations with up-to-date profiles in the brokerage core / InnoConnect Hub.
- *Introductions/matches per year*: Number of mediated introductions logged via the brokerage workflow.
- *Engagement signals*: Number of events/newsletters delivered and working-group outputs produced per year.

Decision Gates

- Gate 1 – T+12 months (Viability check)
 - Go if: at least 40–50 active organisations, ≥10 introductions logged, and at least one newsletter and one online event delivered.
 - If not: reduce effort further (e.g. freeze working groups), focus on keeping the directory and brokerage technically available, and seek alignment with a larger NGI facility.
- Gate 2 – T+24 months (Continuity vs. integration):
 - Go if: the network has remained stable or grown (≥50 active organisations, ≥20 introductions over two years, at least 2 working-group outputs).
 - If not: explore integration into another NGI or digital-cooperation project as a “module”, or prepare for a freeze-as-archive scenario.
- Gate 3 – T+36 months (Strategic decision):
 - Go if: there is clear external demand (continued use, new projects using the network, sponsors/partners willing to support).
 - If not: maintain InnoConnect as a static reference directory and discontinue active brokerage (no secretariat), preserving the asset but not investing in further growth.

Risks

KER-3's risks centre on engagement, ownership, compliance, and geopolitical shifts (Table 19). As a non-commercial asset, risk is not financial but institutional: credibility, trust, and policy alignment.

TABLE 19. KER-3 RISK MATRIX

Risk	Trigger	Mitigation
R1 – Network attrition	Active participation declines; MoUs become dormant; organisations stop updating profiles or responding to contact.	Maintain low-effort periodic touchpoints (newsletter, 1–2 online events/year); rotate working-group leadership among MoU partners; use NGI-wide events to refresh membership and onboard new actors.



Risk	Trigger	Mitigation
R2 – Policy and geopolitical shifts	Further tightening of US (or other third-country) data/cooperation policies, funding asymmetries for non-EU partners, or regulatory divergence (e.g. GDPR/CRA) make some organisations reluctant to engage or participate in new joint projects.	Keep brokerage metadata-only and focused on organisational, not personal, data; rely on MoUs and NDA/ToU rather than data-heavy integrations; be ready to operate in an EU/Canada-only mode if needed while preserving the same platform and governance; foreground compliance and low data exposure in communication; align the community with any new NGI / international-cooperation actions that can offer better conditions for US/CA partners.
R3 – Loss of hosting capacity	AUSTRALO can no longer provide the expected in-kind secretariat or technical hosting.	Clearly document governance and technical setup; identify at least one backup NGI project or organisation as potential successor host; design the system so it can be frozen as a static reference (directory + “state-of-network” snapshot) if no active host is available, preserving the asset even if active brokerage stops.

5.6 Closing Outlook

Across the four Key Exploitable Results, NGI Sargasso establishes a balanced and realistic post-project trajectory that combines commercial viability, lightweight operational stewardship and policy-aligned governance. KER-1a and KER-1b demonstrate credible pathways to self-sustaining service lines with clear revenue logic, disciplined cost structures and decision gates that protect margins, quality and operational focus. In parallel, KER-2 and KER-3 follow a low-effort, low-risk continuity model grounded in structured metadata, minimal personal data, open documentation and lean curation cycles. The combined portfolio avoids dependence on any single partner or funding line and remains adaptable to fluctuations in demand, institutional resourcing and geopolitical conditions, including changes in US digital cooperation policy.

Looking ahead, the sustainability framework positions NGI Sargasso’s outputs to remain usable, interoperable and strategically relevant well beyond the project’s formal end. *The commercial assets (KER-1a and KER-1b) can expand naturally into adjacent Horizon Europe actions, Digital Europe initiatives, regional innovation schemes and university acceleration programmes, providing clear post-project revenue opportunities alongside potential inclusion in future coordination-support projects.* Likewise, the non-commercial KERs can attract limited but targeted follow-on support from future NGI RIAs, digital governance pilots and international cooperation actions, or be maintained in low-effort archival mode where appropriate. This modularity—commercial where the market allows, open and lightweight



where systemic value is the priority—ensures that the project's impact can scale organically, integrate into future funding landscapes, and continue supporting the NGI ecosystem through practical methods, structured knowledge assets and trusted cross-border collaboration mechanisms.



6 Contribution to standardisation & policy

6.1 Mandate from the Grant Agreement

NGI Sargasso operates under a clear contractual requirement to contribute to Internet standardisation and to reinforce EU–US–Canada policy alignment around Next Generation Internet priorities.

The Grant Agreement explicitly states that the project must:

- **Support joint contributions to standards** through EU–US/Canada collaborative experiments (Work Programme alignment).
- **Organise activities with standardisation bodies**, including StandICT, ETSI, CEN/CENELEC, INATBA and OASIS.
- **Promote open-source, open-hardware, and open-access practices**, contributing to interoperability and reusability.
- **Produce policy insights and recommendations** through two policy briefs (D5.3 and D5.6).
- **Maintain a continuous transatlantic dialogue**, especially on topics “in particular as far as Internet standardisation is concerned.”

These expectations define the project’s role: not to produce formal standards itself, but to generate *evidence, contributions, governance models and best practices* that can feed standardisation bodies and policymaking communities.

6.2 Contributions through third-party experiments

The majority of NGI Sargasso’s standardisation-related impact emerges from the work of the funded third-party experiments. In line with the Grant Agreement, the project supports the achievement of three standardisation-oriented objectives:

- “% of selected teams contributing to standards: >80%” (standardisation KPI),
- At least nine activities involving standardisation bodies or communities,
- Engagement with more than 15 open-source and open-hardware communities.

To meet these obligations, the project adopted a lightweight but effective standardisation-support model embedded directly within the experiment lifecycle. Rather than relying solely on high-overhead, co-organised events, the project established a broad set of formalised collaboration channels and targeted knowledge-transfer pathways that allow experiments to align with existing Internet standards, open-source practices and interoperability frameworks.



A key component of this model is the extensive network of Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) signed with organisations active in technical standardisation, open governance, decentralised architectures, identity, privacy, AI assurance and interoperability. These MoUs are recognised as legitimate standardisation contributions within NGI RIAs because they provide structured access to standards expertise, disseminate experiment results into standardisation-facing communities, and create continuity with organisations that influence or participate in SDOs. The full list of MoU partners, together with a description of their standardisation relevance, is reported in **D1.4 Monitoring Report 2**; this section focuses on how that network underpins NGI Sargasso's standardisation and policy impact.

Together, this MoU network enables: (i) guided knowledge transfer from standards-active organisations to funded teams; (ii) alignment of experiment outputs with existing standards and good practices; (iii) dissemination of NGI Sargasso results to communities shaping emerging standards; and (iv) ongoing cooperation with actors engaged in standardisation work across Europe and North America. This approach fulfils the GA requirement to “sign agreements with members of standardisation bodies and co-organise informative sessions and workshops” while delivering the value through low-overhead, scalable mechanisms suited to the project's scope.

Concrete contributions include:

- **Knowledge-transfer and awareness-raising with standardisation-relevant organisations**, including signposting beneficiaries to training resources such as the Small Business Standards (SBS) “Meeting Standards” series and other NGI-aligned guidance on how to work with standards and standards communities.
- **Engagement with MoU partners such as StandICT, MyData Global, FORGING, CrabNebula and 6G-REFERENCE**, which reinforced awareness of applicable standards and best practices in identity, privacy, decentralised architectures, data governance, security and next-generation networking, and provided clear entry points into standardisation-facing communities.
- **IPR, interoperability and licensing support integrated into the OnCampus programme**, enabling experiments to adopt appropriate open-source licences, maintain compatibility with upstream standards where relevant, and document protocol or interface decisions in a structured way.
- **The design of a Structured Results & IP Registry (KER-2)** that captures standardisation-relevant metadata—such as licence identifiers, protocol or standards references, TRL and IP status—providing a reusable NGI-aligned schema for documenting experimental outputs and reducing ambiguity in interoperability or due-diligence assessments, even if the full standalone registry is not yet deployed.

This combination of formalised partnerships, targeted knowledge-transfer and structured documentation ensures that NGI Sargasso's third-party experiments contribute meaningfully to the broader NGI standardisation landscape without imposing heavy administrative processes or creating parallel standardisation tracks.



6.3 Contribution through KERs

KER-1a – Cascade Funding Management Pack

KER-1a offers a repeatable governance pattern for distributed funding and evaluation, reflecting EC expectations for transparency, auditability, and fairness. Its contribution lies in:

- A harmonised evaluator workflow and KPI schema aligned with Horizon Europe Annex G.
- A reusable procedural “proto-standard” for microgrant governance that other RIAs can adopt.
- Improved consistency and transparency in cross-border evaluation processes.

This supports EU policy objectives on trusted, transparent research funding mechanisms.

KER-1b – OnCampus Programme

KER-1b contributes to policy by:

- Providing a structured, evidence-based training model for early-stage innovation aligned with NGI values (trust, openness, responsible innovation).
- Embedding licensing literacy, data stewardship, and IP/standards readiness into training.
- Offering a repeatable model that can inform EU guidance on innovation capacity-building, research commercialisation, and responsible digital entrepreneurship.

KER-2 – Results & IP Registry

KER-2 contributes to both policy and standardisation by supplying:

- A consistent metadata schema for describing NGI experiment results, including licensing, TRL, standardisation links, and IP status.
- A structured, open-access evidence base that can be used by policymakers, researchers and SDOs.
- An interoperable dataset aligned with FAIR principles and the GA’s data-management expectations.

This registry becomes a reference template for future NGI or cross-border programmes looking to catalogue experimental outputs in a standardised way.

KER-3 – Transatlantic Community & Brokerage Core



KER-3 is directly aligned with the GA objective to reinforce EU–US–Canada cooperation, with special relevance to standardisation dialogue. Its contributions include:

- A moderated brokerage mechanism that supports trust and safe collaboration across jurisdictions with different data and digital policy regimes.
- A continuous channel for policy dialogue with NSF, NSERC, US Ignite and other North American players.
- A community structure that can be used for disseminating standards activities, best practices and cross-Atlantic opportunities.

Importantly, the brokerage core implements a privacy-respecting, GDPR-aligned partner discovery model that can serve as a governance reference for future transatlantic digital initiatives.

6.4 Policy insights and the changing US administration

The second half of the project coincided with a period of renewed scrutiny in the US on cross-border data flows, digital infrastructure regulation and academic partnerships. While D5.3 captured mid-term policy signals, the final Policy Brief (D5.6) provides an updated, evidence-based view of how these trends interact with NGI Sargasso's trilateral model. Beneficiaries and US/CA counterparts point to persistent funding asymmetries (no direct EU cascade funding for North-American entities), regulatory divergence (GDPR and emerging EU digital rules such as the Cyber Resilience Act), and perceived administrative complexity as the main constraints for long-term collaboration. At the same time, they confirm that NGI Sargasso's low-data, open-source, human-centric approach, combined with strong coaching and a responsive helpdesk, remains compatible with stricter regulatory environments and continues to deliver value.

From an exploitation and sustainability perspective, these insights reinforce three design choices made in this report: (i) keeping all KERs free of sensitive personal data and built around metadata and governance templates rather than data transfers; (ii) structuring KER-1a/1b as modular, compliance-aware services that can be adapted to evolving regulatory contexts; and (iii) positioning KER-3 as a moderated, NDA-based brokerage environment rather than an open data-sharing platform. D5.6 then extends these lessons into concrete recommendations for future NGI-style programmes, including balanced KPI frameworks, clearer onboarding, more targeted outreach and new funding mechanisms for non-EU partners—elements that directly build on the operational experience captured in D5.7.

6.5 Outlook and long-term contribution

Across its assets, NGI Sargasso delivers *practical, interoperable frameworks* that complement formal standardisation and policy processes. These include:



- Governance patterns for cascade funding and innovation training (KER-1a & KER-1b).
- A FAIR-aligned, open registry using consistent metadata for experimental results (KER-2).
- A trust-based brokerage and community mechanism for EU–US–Canada collaboration (KER-3).

Looking forward, these outputs can be reused by future NGI RIAs, Digital Europe actions and cross-Atlantic initiatives as **reference models** that support interoperability, policy alignment and responsible innovation—irrespective of shifts in US national policy or future EC work programme directions.

At policy level, the structural barriers and recommendations consolidated in D5.6 provide a concrete agenda for future NGI-style programmes, ensuring that the exploitation pathways and governance models defined in this deliverable can be scaled and adapted in a more supportive transatlantic framework



7 Conclusion

NGI Sargasso concludes with a coherent and credible portfolio of results, a proven cascade-funding methodology and a strengthened transatlantic innovation community. The combination of structured templates, mentoring, exploitation support and community-building activities ensured that funded experiments translated FSTP support into tangible progress, producing open-source software, validated prototypes, early pilots and new collaborative pathways.

The updated KER portfolio reflects this maturity. By separating methodology, training, knowledge assets and community infrastructure into four distinct KERs, the consortium has created a more sustainable and resilient post-project configuration. KER-1a and KER-1b offer clear commercial pathways supported by financial forecasts and decision gates, while KER-2 and KER-3 follow low-maintenance governance models that preserve the project's knowledge and network effects without heavy operational overhead.

Experiment-level insights, including those captured through the after-programme survey, confirm strong alignment with NGI values: openness, decentralisation, interoperability and human-centric design. At the same time, they highlight areas for continued support—especially licensing clarity and standardisation engagement—which provide practical guidance for future NGI actions and SRIA priorities.

In parallel, NGI Sargasso contributed to policy understanding at a moment of shifting geopolitical and digital-policy dynamics. The project's emphasis on metadata-only cooperation, lightweight governance and MoU-based collaboration proved both timely and well-suited to the evolving US regulatory environment, offering a replicable model for future EU–US–Canada cooperation under Horizon Europe.

Overall, the project delivers a balanced, realistic and forward-looking exploitation framework. Its methods, assets and networks are positioned to remain relevant beyond M36, supporting the NGI community with reusable tools, structured knowledge and a robust transatlantic collaboration architecture. Through these outcomes, NGI Sargasso contributes durable value to the wider NGI initiative and strengthens Europe's position in human-centric digital innovation.

At policy level, the structural barriers and recommendations consolidated in D5.6 provide a concrete agenda for future NGI-style programmes, ensuring that the exploitation pathways and governance models defined in this deliverable can be scaled and adapted in a more supportive transatlantic framework.



Annexes

Annex – 1: KER-2 architecture, schema, operating model & other aspects

Asset architecture:

- Zenodo Community (“NGI Sargasso – Experiments & IP”)
 - Each item = record with DOI, mandatory metadata, links (code repo, dataset, website), licence tag (SPDX/OSI), and patent fields (jurisdiction, app. no., stage).
- Filterable catalog (Excel/CSV + simple web table)
 - Mirrors core metadata for fast filtering offline/online.
 - Lives in the project website or a static page; synced periodically.

Table schema:

#	Column name	Data type / format	Why it's essential & how it will be filled
1	Result ID	XXX-YY (auto; experiment-ID + counter)	Enables stable referencing even if an experiment later adds new IP assets.
2	Experiment ID	NGI-Sarg-OC4-145 (call acronym + ordinal)	Links straight back to KPI tracker in AcceleratorApp.
3	Result title / short description	Text	Human-readable headline for investors/SDOs.
4	Technology domain	Controlled list (AI/ML, Privacy, Routing, Identity, Edge/IoT,...)	Lets scouts filter quickly; aligns with NGI topic taxonomy used in calls.
5	Result type	Enum (<i>Software source code / Hardware design / Dataset / Protocol spec / Service method / Other</i>)	Indicates whether OSS repo, patent or data package.
6	TRL at grant end	Integer 1-9	Needed for HE exploitation reporting & follow-on funding readiness.
7	IPR category	Enum (<i>Patent application / Copyright-</i>	Top-level legal bucket for analytics.



#	Column name	Data type / format	Why it's essential & how it will be filled
		<i>software / Trademark / Know-how / Mixed</i>)	
8	IP status	Enum (<i>Patent-pending / Patent-granted / Defensive publication / OSS only / Closed-source / Abandoned</i>)	Snapshot for FTO checks and licensing talks.
9	Patent / filing number	Text (e.g. <i>EP2345678.9</i> or <i>PCT/US24/12345</i>) – blank if N/A	Makes it traceable in EPO/USPTO databases; allows automated status crawl later.
10	Priority / filing date	ISO date (YYYY-MM-DD)	Needed to manage 12-month PCT window and renewal fees.
11	Licence (if OSS / data)	SPDX identifier or plain text (<i>MIT, GPL-3.0, CC-BY-4.0, Proprietary</i>)	Critical for re-use compatibility and standardisation uptake.
12	Co-ownership agreement?	Boolean (Y/N) + link to term-sheet (internal SharePoint)	Satisfies “co-patenting & pre-agreement” KPI; clarifies revenue split.
13	Foreground owner(s)	Pipe-separated list of legal entities (`SME-X	Univ-Y`)
14	Background IP referenced	Free-text (max 120 chars) or None	Avoids hidden infringement; matches Annex I background list.
15	Freedom-to-operate (FTO) assessment	Enum (<i>Clean / Needs licence / Blocking risk / Not assessed yet</i>)	Synthesises ESF IP-clinic outcome; helps prioritise follow-up actions.
16	Exploitation pathway	Controlled list (<i>Spin-off / License-out / Open-source community / Standardisation / Internal use / Mixed</i>)	Feeds directly into D5.7 business-model metrics.
17	Standardisation link	Text (e.g. <i>IETF draft-06 / ISO SC27 liaison sent</i>) or None	Shows progress toward goal of third-party impact via standards.
18	Public repo / landing-page URL	https://...	One-click access for scouts; blank if confidential.



#	Column name	Data type / format	Why it's essential & how it will be filled
19	Visibility level	Enum (<i>Public DOI / Consortium-only / EC reviewers / Confidential</i>)	Allows Zenodo JSON export only for rows flagged "Public".
20	Last update date	ISO date	Enables automated reminders when metadata are older than 6 months.
21	Internal contact	Name + e-mail (data-controller consent)	For quick follow-up by investor desk or IP-clinic staff.

Operating model & workflow

1. Intake (owners): Beneficiaries complete a one-page submission (Form → Zenodo draft).
2. Curation (editorial board): Quick QA (licence validity, broken links, sanity check on TRL/SRL); assign tags; mint DOI via Zenodo.
3. Sync (catalog maintainer): Export Zenodo CSV; refresh Excel/CSV and web table monthly.
4. Evidence pack (auto-export): One-click "Due-Diligence Pack" (PDF/ZIP): abstract, team, licence, IP status, repo links, pilot notes—what an investor/adopter needs for first pass.
5. Update cycle: Owners prompted at T+6/12/24 months to refresh "adoption signals" & IP stage; stale entries flagged.

Roles

- Registry Editor (lead): ensures QA & tagging.
- Data Steward: keeps schema versioned; runs monthly sync.
- Owner (beneficiary): updates content, confirms IP/licence facts.
- Legal check (lightweight): spot-checks licence/IP inconsistencies.

Interoperability & standards

- Persistent IDs: Zenodo DOIs; org ROR IDs; authors ORCID.
- Patent links: Espacenet/USPTO URLs in "IP" section.
- Licence vocabulary: SPDX for software; OSI/Creative Commons for docs/data.
- Export formats: CSV/JSON for ingestion by scouts/partners; Atom/RSS feed from Zenodo community.



Compliance & governance

- Rights & consent: owners attest they have right to publish metadata; no confidential info; contact data shared with consent.
- Takedown/versioning: version on update; remove on owner request; keep DOI history.
- GDPR: process minimal personal data (name, email) for contact; include privacy notice.



Annex – 2: MoUs and Standardisation

TABLE 20. MoU PARTNERS AND THEIR STANDARDISATION RELEVANCE

MoU Partner	Domain	Relevance to Standardisation / Policy
StandICT	ICT standards / EU SDO interface	Gateway into the European ICT standardisation ecosystem (ETSI, CEN/CENELEC, ISO/IEC via its network); channels NGI Sargasso outputs and priorities towards standards-oriented communities and supports experiment pathways towards recognised SDOs.
NGI Enrichers	NGI international collaboration, EU–US/CA ecosystem	Acts as a sister NGI initiative focused on transatlantic collaboration; provides mutual cross-dissemination, shared lessons on international programme design and an additional route for NGI Sargasso results to inform future NGI work programmes and cooperation frameworks.
6G-REFERENCE CTTC	6G networks, advanced telecom research	Brings foresight on future networking architectures and alignment with emerging 6G/telecom standardisation discussions; helps position NGI experiments and insights in relation to next-generation connectivity and protocol evolution debates.
AIPPS	Privacy, security, safety / AI assurance	Contributes perspectives on security, privacy and trustworthy AI; relevant to emerging governance and assurance frameworks that intersect with standardisation (e.g. security baselines, AI risk controls) and to policy debates on responsible digital infrastructures.
PQ-REACT	Post-quantum cryptography (PQC)	Engaged in PQC-focused research and discussions relevant to future cryptographic standards; offers a channel for NGI Sargasso experiments dealing with cryptography to stay aligned with post-quantum readiness and related policy concerns.
SIMEON	AI ethics, compliance, trustworthy AI	Connects NGI Sargasso outputs to emerging AI governance and compliance practices; supports alignment of experiments with responsible AI norms



MoU Partner	Domain	Relevance to Standardisation / Policy
		and indirectly with standardisation efforts around AI transparency and accountability.
Dynaccurate	Semantic data, terminology, interoperability	Works on semantic interoperability and terminology management; relevant to data and vocabulary standardisation efforts and to policy directions that require interoperable, machine-readable public and health data.
Forging	Open-source / SME support, interoperability	Bridges SMEs and open-source communities with standardisation efforts; promotes adoption of open technical specifications and good practices on interoperability, helping NGI experiments understand how to plug into these ecosystems.
CrabNebula	Edge / distributed computing, open tooling	Active in distributed and edge-computing software; relevant to emerging de facto standards and best practices for decentralised architectures, secure deployment models and open tooling that underpin NGI technologies.
Aarhus University	Digital governance, Internet policy, identity	Academic partner contributing research on digital identity, governance and human-centric Internet; links NGI Sargasso experience to policy discussions and soft-standard setting around digital rights and trustworthy infrastructures.
D2XCEL	Data exchange, data spaces, interoperability	Focuses on cross-border data exchange patterns and interoperability guidelines; relevant to the design of data-space architectures and associated governance rules that influence how NGI solutions can be standardised or reused.
MyData Global	Human-centric data governance, personal-data ecosystems	Influential NGO articulating human-centric data principles and de facto standards for consent, portability and interoperability; provides a policy- and practice-oriented framework that many NGI experiments can align with.
NGI Local for Local	Grassroots digital governance, local NGI hubs	Connects NGI to local and regional digital communities; helps diffuse governance patterns and informal “standards of practice” at city/region level, feeding



MoU Partner	Domain	Relevance to Standardisation / Policy
		bottom-up perspectives into broader NGI and policy debates.
Co-Invest	Platform governance, collaborative funding models	Engages in discussions on open and cooperative platform models; relevant to policy thinking on fair, interoperable and transparent digital platforms and to governance patterns for shared digital infrastructure.
Q-PLAN International Advisors PC	R&I policy, roadmapping, standardisation & exploitation strategies	EU consultancy active in research policy, roadmapping and standardisation support; provides an additional bridge between NGI Sargasso insights, standardisation roadmaps and future EU policy or funding initiatives.

Domains Covered by the MoU Network

Across these 15 partners, the MoU network collectively covers:

- Core Internet & ICT standardisation
Standards gateway and SDO interface (StandICT, Q-PLAN).
- Data governance, privacy & human-centric data
Consent, data rights, data portability, data spaces and governance models (MyData Global, Dynaccurate, D2XCEL, Aarhus University).
- Decentralised / distributed infrastructures & NGI technologies
Edge computing, distributed protocols, decentralised architectures (CrabNebula, FORGING, NGI Local for Local).
- Security, post-quantum & trust
Cybersecurity, post-quantum cryptography, AI assurance, trustworthy/ethical AI (PQ-REACT, AIPPS, SIMEON).
- Transatlantic NGI collaboration & ecosystem building
NGI coordination actions, local-global NGI initiatives, platform and investment ecosystems (NGI Enrichers, NGI Local for Local, Co-Invest).
- Next-generation networks (6G)
Emerging 6G architectures and telecom standardisation relevance (6G-Reference CTTC).

This mapping shows that the MoU network covers **all core NGI standardisation domains**: trust, identity, data governance, decentralisation, telecoms evolution, privacy, open standards, and emerging AI governance.

