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D6.3 IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This deliverable assesses the implementation and impact of the MAGICIAN Open Call mechanism, with particular focus on the five Application Solutions funded under OC1. The analysis combines evidence collected throughout implementation with a structured Impact and Tool Assessment covering the beneficiaries' experience, technical progress, human capital, exploitation, market development, networking and visibility.

Results show that MAGICIAN has primarily acted as a technology-maturation and de-risking mechanism for the participating SMEs. All five beneficiaries intend to continue developing or exploiting their results after the funded period, while four identified opportunities in new industrial sectors and three reported concrete plans for geographical market expansion. Although immediate employment creation was limited, all five expect additional recruitment linked to future development and commercialisation.

The assessment also confirms broader ecosystem effects: all beneficiaries reported or planned dissemination and demonstration activities and established or strengthened relationships with technical partners, industrial actors and potential customers. Key lessons concern the value of early technical and financial guidance, clearly defined integration and validation requirements, continuous monitoring and stronger post-project support for industrialisation and market uptake.

Overall, the results indicate that combining cascade funding with technical monitoring, industrial expertise and innovation-management support provides an effective pathway for helping SMEs progress advanced manufacturing solutions towards further validation, exploitation and commercialisation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
D	Deliverable
EC	European Commission
WP	Work package
AS	Application Solution
AUC	Application Use Case
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Parties
IP	Intellectual Property
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
KoM	Kick-off Meeting
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
OC	Open Call
OC1	First Open Call
OC2	Second Open Call
SAUCA	Specific Application Use Case Agreement
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
UVP	Unique Value Proposition

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1 METHODOLOGY

To assess the impact of the MAGICIAN Open Call mechanism on the selected third parties, an impact monitoring exercise was conducted with the companies participating in the **Application Solutions (ASs)** funded under the MAGICIAN Open Calls. The assessment aimed to analyse both the impact generated by the participation in MAGICIAN on the beneficiary companies and their experience throughout the cascade-funding process, from application and contracting to project implementation, exploitation and post-project continuation. Notice that this deliverable focuses primarily on assessing the operational implementation, market maturation, and socio-economic impact of the third-party projects funded under Open Call 1 (OC1). For full technical specifications, architectural frameworks, and detailed project descriptions of the 5 selected Application Solutions (ARRAS, HARMONY, PolarQI-NET, AMMSAS, and NEODES), please refer to Deliverable D6.2: Final report on OCs, Section 3.2.

Different dimensions were considered to ensure comprehensive monitoring of the effects of the MAGICIAN support. The methodology therefore combines information collected during the Open Call and implementation process with a structured Impact and Tool Assessment conducted with the selected third parties towards the end of their Application Solution. The approach allows the assessment to capture not only the technical and market perspectives of the funded solutions, but also the effectiveness of the support mechanisms and tools put in place by the MAGICIAN consortium.

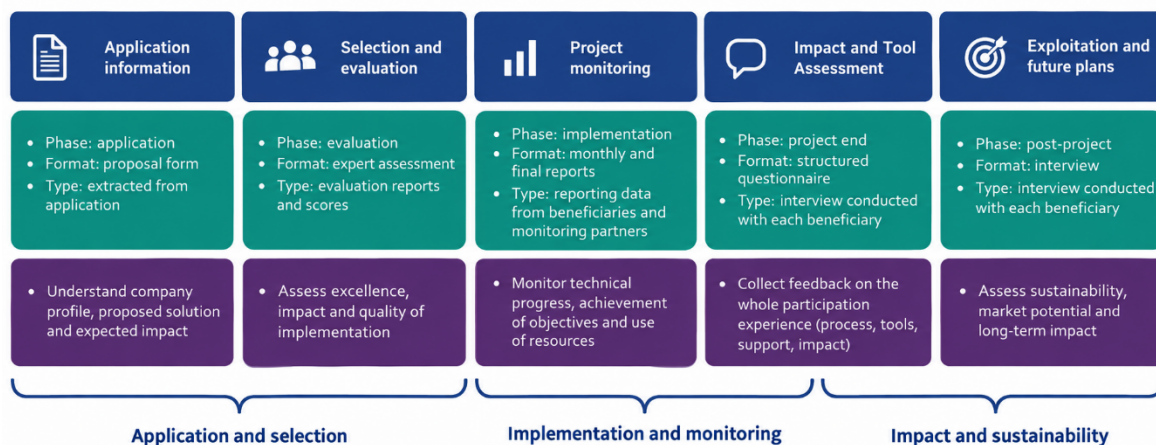


Figure 1 - OCs Methodology

The first level of assessment builds on information collected throughout the Open Call and project implementation process. During the selection phase, applicants provided information on their company profile, proposed innovation, technical objectives, expected impact, business potential, implementation capacity and planned resources. The Open Call evaluation subsequently assessed the proposals against the three main criteria of Excellence, Impact and Quality of Implementation, providing an initial picture of the technical maturity, innovation potential, expected impact and implementation

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capacity of the selected solutions. The Impact criterion also considered the capacity of the proposed solutions to enhance the companies' innovation capacity, integrate new knowledge, support exploitation and dissemination and generate relevant industrial, environmental and social impacts.

Following selection, the progress of each funded Application Solution was monitored throughout implementation with the involvement of the assigned MAGICIAN Monitoring Partner. Regular monitoring and intermediate and final reporting provided additional evidence on technical progress, achievement of objectives and KPIs, use of resources, risks and the evolution of the solutions during the implementation period.

Monitoring during OCs implementation:

Each selected Application Solution (AS)/ Application Use Case (AUC) is assigned a dedicated MAGICIAN Monitoring Partner, ensuring continuous technical supervision and a direct connection between the selected third party and the wider MAGICIAN consortium throughout implementation. The Monitoring Partner acts as the main technical interface for the AS/AUC, supporting the selected third party in implementing the agreed work plan while ensuring that activities remain aligned with the objectives, technical requirements and integration framework of MAGICIAN.

Monitoring is conceived as a continuous process rather than being limited to formal reporting periods. The Monitoring Partner organises monthly monitoring meetings with the selected third party to review the status of ongoing activities, progress towards milestones and deliverables, achievement of the agreed technical KPIs, emerging risks and any deviations from the approved work plan. These meetings provide an early-warning mechanism through which technical or implementation difficulties can be identified before they affect the overall execution of the AS/AUC. Where deviations or delays are detected, the Monitoring Partner discusses with the selected third party the necessary corrective or mitigation measures and follows their implementation during subsequent monitoring cycles.

A particularly important function of the Monitoring Partner concerns the technical integration of the AS/AUC with MAGICIAN. Since the selected solutions are expected to build upon, adapt or interoperate with MAGICIAN technologies, the Monitoring Partner facilitates the connection with the relevant consortium partners and follows the MAGICIAN Results and Background required by the third party for implementation. The Monitoring Partner is specifically responsible for monitoring which MAGICIAN results are used as Background IP by the selected third party; these elements are subsequently documented in the interim and final reporting and incorporated into the project's rights-management framework. This role is therefore also relevant for ensuring traceability of technical contributions and supporting the appropriate management of access rights, ownership and potential jointly generated results.

The Monitoring Partner also plays a key role at the formal reporting and payment checkpoints. Selected third parties are required to report on the implementation of the agreed work plan and provide evidence of the milestones, deliverables and results achieved. The Monitoring Partner reviews the corresponding Status/Technical Reports

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and supporting deliverables, assesses whether the reported technical progress is consistent with the approved AS/AUC work plan and, where appropriate, formally validates the progress achieved. This technical validation forms part of the process leading to the authorisation of the intermediate and final payments: the Agreement foresees a written payment request from the Monitoring Partner accompanied by the validated technical report and deliverables before the Coordinator proceeds with the corresponding payment decision.

The formal reports complement the continuous monitoring process by providing a structured assessment of the AS/AUC's achievements. They cover the work performed, results obtained and their comparison against requirements and the state of the art, cooperation among the involved parties, major achievements, exploitation and business strategy, and the use of resources. Financial reporting is reviewed alongside technical progress so that the consortium can verify that expenditure remains consistent with the activities actually implemented and the approved budget.

The second and central level of the impact monitoring methodology consists of the MAGICIAN Impact and Tool Assessment, designed to collect structured feedback directly from the selected third parties at the end of their implementation experience. For Open Call 1 (OC1), five individual assessments were conducted with the five selected Application Solutions, and their responses were subsequently consolidated and analysed to identify common results, differences between beneficiaries, good practices and recurring areas for improvement.

The assessment follows the complete participation pathway of the beneficiary companies and covers the following dimensions:

- Proposal preparation, including how companies became aware of MAGICIAN, use and clarity of the application material and support services, interaction with MAGICIAN partners during proposal preparation, and usefulness of the evaluation feedback.
- Contract signature and financial support, assessing the clarity of the contractual framework and stakeholder roles, adequacy of the financial support, payment procedures and understanding of cost-declaration requirements.
- Project implementation and management, including the role and added value of the Monitoring Partner, monthly monitoring, adequacy of the project duration, reporting mechanisms and overall management experience.
- Resources and human capital, considering the composition of the teams involved, gender balance, employment generated during implementation and potential future recruitment associated with exploitation of the developed solutions.
- Security, cybersecurity and privacy, assessing how these aspects were addressed by the individual solutions and whether additional MAGICIAN support was required or could be beneficial for future industrial deployment.
- Innovation management and business support, including participation in the

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innovation-management activities, their perceived usefulness, investor readiness and the need for additional tailored commercialisation support.

- Networking and ecosystem effects, analysing whether participation in MAGICIAN generated new contacts and collaborations with research organisations, industrial actors, customers, investors or other relevant stakeholders.
- Sustainability and exploitation, covering continuation of R&D activities, industrialisation plans, IPR arrangements, follow-up collaboration and investment perspectives.
- Product and market impact, including the generation of new products or services, potential revenues, entry into new industrial sectors and planned geographic market expansion.
- Communication and dissemination, considering the presentation, publication and dissemination of the technical results generated by the Application Solutions; and
- Overall participation experience, through a common satisfaction scale ranging from -2 (Very negative experience) to +2 (Very positive experience), complemented by open feedback on the main positive aspects, aspects to be optimised and support considered missing.

The five OC1 assessments therefore constitute a common qualitative and, where possible, quantitative evidence base for the impact analysis presented in the following sections. Rather than assessing each Application Solution separately, the responses are analysed cross-sectionally across the five selected third parties, allowing recurring trends to be identified while preserving relevant differences between individual beneficiaries. Quantitative indicators are used where responses permit aggregation—for example satisfaction levels, employment effects, planned recruitment, new market entry and follow-up R&D intentions—while qualitative responses are used to interpret the mechanisms through which MAGICIAN generated value and to identify lessons for the implementation of future Open Calls (Figure 2).



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Figure 2 - OCs 6 dimensions pathways.

ASs of OC1 were also interviewed about their experiences during the proposal phase, as part of MAGICIAN's impact monitoring activities, in order to understand the application process for MAGICIAN's cascade funding programme from the SME's point of view, or their criteria to choose project partners.

The first dimension analysed concerns the accessibility and effectiveness of the MAGICIAN Open Call application process. Overall, the results show a very positive perception of the OC1 application mechanism among the five selected third parties. All five beneficiaries considered the proposal material clear or easy to use, and none identified major difficulties with the application documentation itself. **HARMONY**, for example, explicitly considered the material clear and easy to use and reported no major improvements needed to the proposal step, while **POLARQI-NET** similarly considered the material clear and usable.

The channels through which the beneficiaries became aware of MAGICIAN were diverse, showing the relevance of both dedicated cascade-funding monitoring and broader digital communication channels. **ARRAS** and **HARMONY** identified the opportunity through their regular monitoring of Horizon Europe cascade-funding opportunities and EU innovation networks, while **AMMSAS** and **NEODES** referred respectively to social networks and LinkedIn.

The additional support instruments offered during the application phase were used to different degrees. **AMMSAS** participated in the webinar, **POLARQI-NET** participated in MAGICIAN information and support sessions, and **HARMONY** reported that, although it did not attend the live webinars, the recordings were useful for preparing the proposal. **ARRAS** mainly relied on the published documentation and direct e-mail clarifications, while **NEODES** did not participate in the support sessions. This indicates that the application package was sufficiently self-standing for the selected applicants, while recorded and live support instruments provided complementary value where used.

1.1.1 GENDER BALANCE

Although the MAGICIAN Open Call selection process focused primarily on the excellence, impact and quality of implementation of the proposed Application Solutions, gender balance was also considered as part of the impact-monitoring exercise. Each of the five selected OC1 beneficiaries was therefore asked to report the composition of the team involved in implementing its Application Solution, including the number of women participating in the team.

The results show that 38 people were reported as members of the five OC1 Application Solution teams, including 8 women. Women therefore represented approximately 21.1% of the reported teams. The participation of women was observed across all five Application Solutions, although the proportion varied between projects. **ARRAS** reported

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the highest proportion of female participation, with two women among six team members (33.3%).

Gender composition of selected application teams

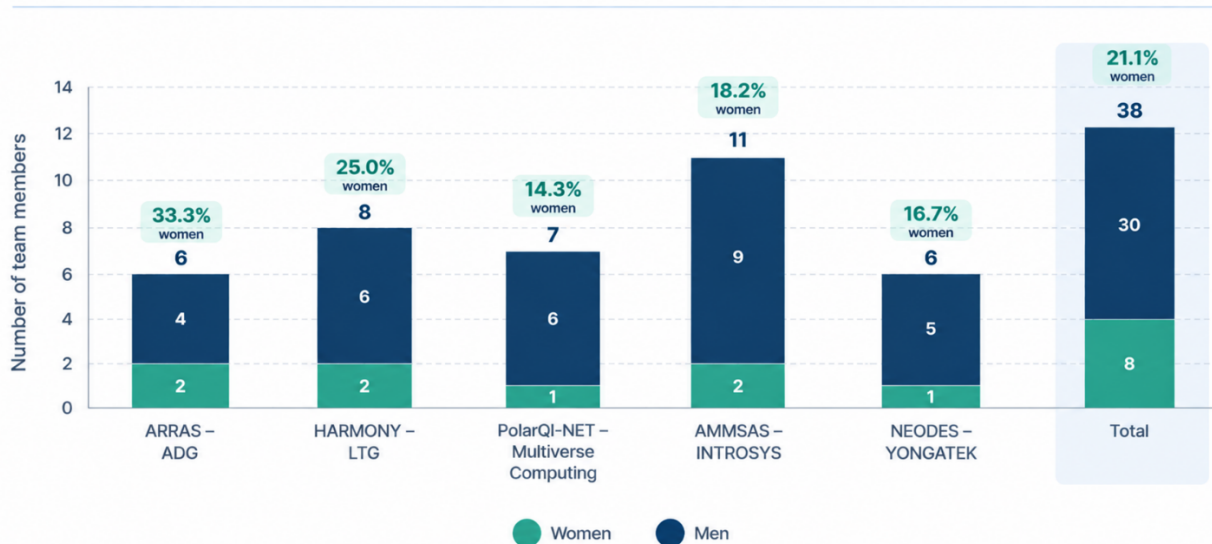


Figure 3 - OC1 gender composition

The aggregated result is therefore slightly above one fifth of the reported implementation workforce (21.1%), providing a useful baseline for MAGICIAN's contribution to gender-balanced participation at beneficiary level. It should nevertheless be interpreted carefully: the indicator measures women participating in the Application Solution teams, rather than women-led companies or women-coordinated projects. The five assessments do not provide sufficient evidence to calculate the proportion of female project coordinators, and no positive-discrimination mechanism was reported as being applied during selection.

1.1.2 INVOLVEMENT OF NEW RESOURCES WITHIN THE ASS' IMPLEMENTATION TEAMS

The impact on immediate employment creation during project implementation was relatively limited. Of the five beneficiaries, only one (20%) reported engaging new human resources specifically for the implementation of its Application Solution, while four (80%) did not report new recruitment. ARRAS engaged two interns specifically to support the project, contributing to prototyping, documentation, data preparation and testing. In contrast, HARMONY, PolarQI-NET, AMMSAS and NEODES reported no new employees recruited specifically for their AS activities. PolarQI-NET, AMMSAS and NEODES also explicitly reported no freelance or short-term personnel. This result suggests that the principal short-term employment effect of OC1 was not the creation of a large number of new permanent positions, but rather the mobilisation and strengthening of existing

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SME teams around new robotics, AI and industrial-automation activities. In the case of ARRAS, the project also created opportunities for early-career resources through the involvement of two newly engaged interns.

The picture becomes considerably more positive when considering the expected medium-term employment effect. All five beneficiaries (100%) indicated that they plan or expect to recruit additional human resources over the next three years in connection with the products or solutions developed through MAGICIAN. PolarQI-NET, AMMSAS and NEODES all confirmed future recruitment intentions, with NEODES explicitly linking these plans to commercialisation progress, customer pilots and follow-up deployment opportunities.

Employment effects: limited immediate impact, stronger medium-term expectations

Share of beneficiaries reporting new recruitment related to their Application Solution

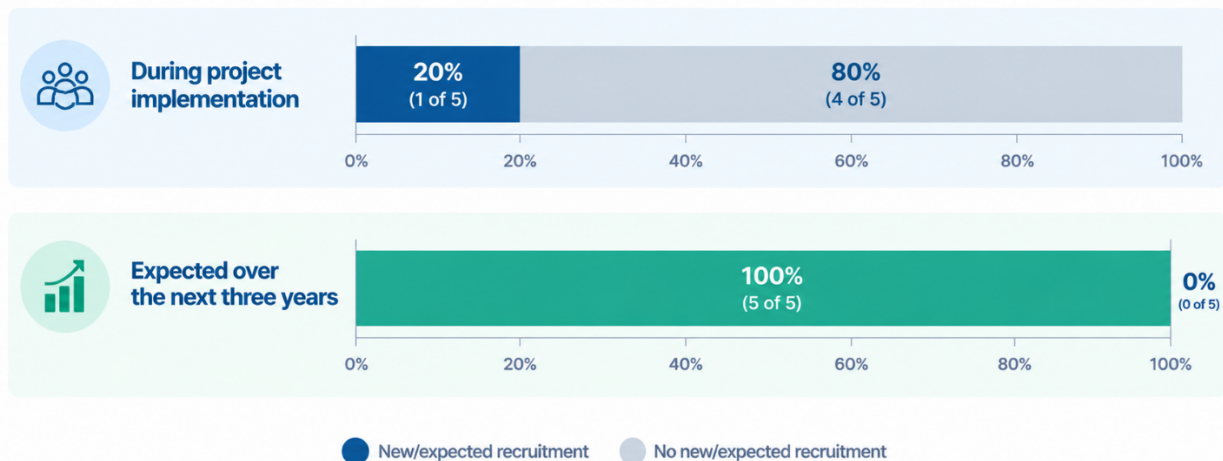


Figure 4 - ASs Recruitment expectation

1.2 IMPLEMENTATION PHASE – IMPACT ON EXPLOITATION/COMMERCIALISATION

1.2.1 INDUSTRIALISATION AND COMMERCIALISATION PATHWAY

The MAGICIAN Open Call pathway was designed to support innovative SMEs and start-ups in developing, integrating and validating advanced solutions for autonomous defect detection, inspection and rework, combining technologies such as AI, machine vision, sensing, robotics and human-robot interaction. Rather than providing financial support alone, the selected companies could benefit from the technical expertise, industrial platforms, datasets, integration support and monitoring capabilities available within the MAGICIAN ecosystem. This enabled companies at different stages of technological and market maturity to further develop their solutions and validate their applicability in industrially relevant environments.

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For companies whose solutions still required further technical maturation, MAGICIAN primarily provided a pathway towards integration, validation and increased technology readiness. More mature solutions could use the project to strengthen their industrial demonstration, establish new technical and commercial contacts and prepare the transition towards productisation and market deployment. The five OC1 assessments confirm that the beneficiaries generally intend to continue developing the results after the end of the funded period, although their proximity to commercialisation differs considerably.

The ultimate objective of this pathway is to ensure that the technical advances achieved through the Application Solutions can be sustained beyond the cascade-funding period and progressively translated into exploitable products and services. In this respect, the OC1 impact interviews show a positive outlook: all five beneficiaries (100%) foresee continued development or exploitation of their MAGICIAN results after the project, through internal R&D, further industrial validation, integration activities, follow-up collaborative projects and/or commercialisation. For example, NEODES plans to continue through internal R&D, industrial pilots and discussions with potential customers and partners, while PolarQI-NET plans further field validation and industrial integration before taking a commercialisation decision.

The evidence instead reveals different levels of market readiness across the five OC1 solutions. HARMONY presents the most explicit near-term commercialisation pathway, with the solution expected to be offered as a licensed product with adaptation and support services from Year 1, followed by pilots and first licensing/service agreements in Year 2 and scale-up in Year 3. ARRAS similarly plans to offer pilot engineering, feasibility-testing and robot-integration services within one year, followed by a productised end-effector solution within three years.

At the other end of the pathway, some solutions require additional industrial validation before commercial launch. PolarQI-NET explicitly conditions commercialisation on the completion of operational validation, while AMMSAS foresees industrialisation after a further innovation project and considers revenue generation within three years dependent on the TRL subsequently achieved. NEODES is currently looking for potential customers and assessing their requirements before launching a product tailored to market needs. These differences indicate that MAGICIAN has generated a pipeline of exploitable solutions at different stages between validated R&D results and market-ready products, rather than five solutions reaching commercialisation simultaneously.

No direct commercial income had yet been generated by the five OC1 Application Solutions during their implementation, but all beneficiaries identified a pathway towards continued exploitation and industrialisation. Two of the five (40%) already foresee a concrete product or service offer in the short term, while three (60%) remain at an intermediate stage where additional validation, customer pilots or technological

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maturation is required before full commercial uptake. The impact of MAGICIAN should therefore be understood not only in terms of immediate sales, but particularly in its capacity to move innovative SME solutions closer to industrial deployment and establish the technical, collaborative and market conditions necessary for subsequent commercialisation.

Follow-up R&D represents the most consistent exploitation pathway. All five beneficiaries (100%) foresee further internal and/or collaborative R&D activities linked to their Application Solution. These activities include continued development of AI and computer-vision models, robotics integration, field validation, model compression, product adaptation and preparation of follow-up national or European collaborative projects. PolarQI-NET, for example, intends to continue R&D with Altinay and PIPPLE on pilot-platform integration and field validation while simultaneously pursuing internal work on model compression and multimodal sensing. AMMSAS similarly reported plans for follow-up R&D and subsequent industrialisation.

A second particularly strong result concerns industrialisation. All five interviews indicate an intention to progress the developed solutions towards further industrial validation, productisation or industrial deployment. The maturity and timing differ among beneficiaries: some envisage relatively direct product or service exploitation, whereas others first require additional pilots, validation or a subsequent innovation project. This indicates that MAGICIAN has not merely generated research outputs but has established a portfolio of solutions with identifiable post-project pathways towards industrial application.

Investor attraction is a less uniform exploitation route. Unlike R&D and industrialisation, investment is not considered necessary or immediate by every beneficiary. Some companies are actively looking for investors or intend to engage them after further technical and commercial validation, while others prefer continued R&D, industrial partnerships or public funding. This suggests that, for the OC1 portfolio, industrial validation and customer development are generally considered more immediate priorities than external equity investment.

1.2.2 NEW MARKET SECTORS

Concerning the business impact of the MAGICIAN Application Solutions, the beneficiaries were asked whether the project had enabled them to address or explore new market sectors compared with their activity before the MAGICIAN implementation. The responses indicate a strong potential for market diversification: four of the five interviewed beneficiaries (80%) identified new sectors in which the technologies developed or further matured through MAGICIAN could be applied, while one beneficiary reported that it had not yet entered a new sector but was considering doing so in the future.

The new market opportunities identified are closely related to the technological

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capabilities developed within the Application Solutions. ARRAS, initially focused on automotive body-in-white rework, identified opportunities in rail, aerospace components, white goods, metal fabrication, foundry/casting, shipbuilding and other robotic rework applications. HARMONY identified new opportunities across automotive and general manufacturing, industrial automation and system integration, robotic quality control, industrial maintenance, machinery, white goods and electronics. PolarQI-NET also identified broader opportunities in industrial surface inspection and manufacturing quality control, particularly for metallic surfaces. NEODES similarly plans to exploit its technology beyond the initial application towards broader industrial quality-control markets.

AMMSAS represents a slightly different case: the company reported that it had not yet addressed a new market sector, but identified future potential to apply its solution to other areas requiring surface-quality inspection, such as packaging, railway and bicycle production

1.2.3 EXPANSION TO NEW GEOGRAPHICAL MARKETS

The beneficiaries were also asked whether they planned to expand to new countries in terms of selling, compared with the geographical markets targeted before implementing their MAGICIAN Application Solution. The results indicate a positive, although somewhat more cautious, outlook. Three of the five beneficiaries (60%) explicitly reported plans to expand towards new countries, while the remaining two indicated that international expansion was still open or under consideration rather than being part of a confirmed market strategy.

ARRAS identified an initial three-year target of approximately six to seven countries, including Türkiye, Germany, Italy, Spain, France, Poland/Czech Republic and the United States, with EU automotive and robotics clusters representing the most realistic first export opportunities. HARMONY expects to expand from its predominantly domestic market towards two to three new European countries, initially focusing on Romania, Belgium and other Western European manufacturing markets. NEODES likewise plans to target two to three additional countries over the next three years, particularly Germany, Italy and France.

The remaining beneficiaries show a less definite but still positive international perspective. PolarQI-NET is open to geographical expansion but indicated that its initial target markets remain unchanged, while identifying Spain, Germany, France, Italy and other EU countries, as well as South Korea and Japan, as potential markets. AMMSAS similarly reported that expansion may take place, with Spain identified as its main priority.

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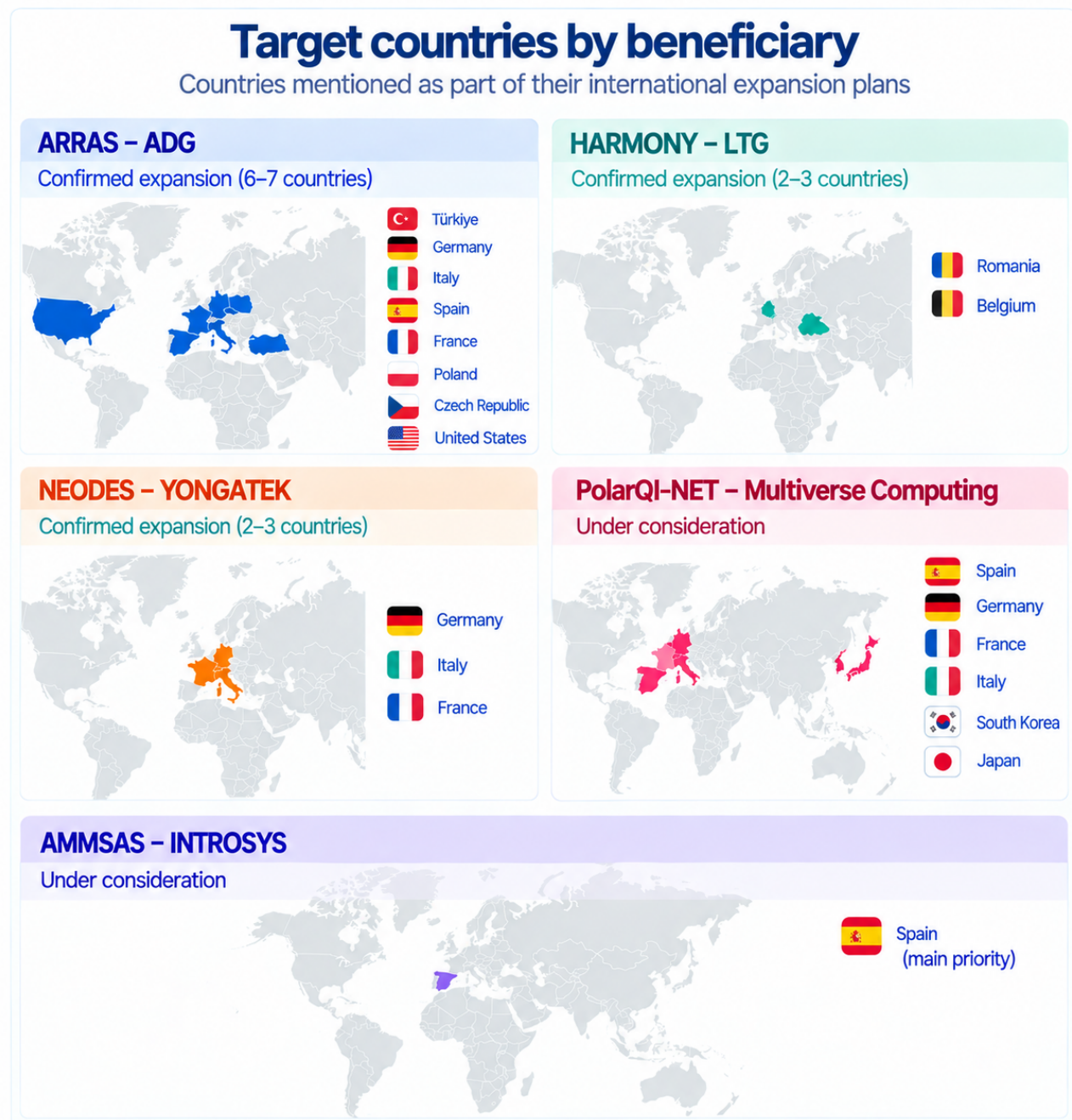


Figure 5 - ASs Market Expansion Plan

1.3 IMPLEMENTATION PHASE – IMPACT ON VISIBILITY

Considering the networking, communication and visibility activities implemented within MAGICIAN, the selected beneficiaries were asked whether they had presented, or planned to present, their Application Solution at conferences, trade fairs, internal company events, investor events or other dissemination activities. The responses indicate a high level of engagement with visibility activities: all five OC1 beneficiaries

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reported that their solutions had already been presented or that further presentations were planned, confirming that participation in MAGICIAN generated opportunities to showcase the developed technologies beyond the immediate project implementation.

The nature and maturity of these activities varied across the five Application Solutions. ARRAS reported presentations through MAGICIAN meetings, internal project reviews, visits to Altınay and TOFAŞ, as well as the final integrated demonstration at Altınay. The beneficiary also prepared a promotional video and an academic poster and planned further presentations at university, industrial and robotics/manufacturing events.

HARMONY project showed its solution 1st International Eskişehir AI Summit, including an exhibition stand and presentation, while participation in Advanced Engineering 2026 in Ghent supported networking and technology scouting. Further participation was planned at Xecs Matchmaking, SMART PO Proposers' Day and EF ECS, alongside continued B2B demonstrations.

AMMSAS reported the use of company communication channels, while PolarQI-NET prepared MAGICIAN project updates and general-meeting presentations, with further external conference or trade-fair presentations still under consideration. NEODES similarly planned to present the project through internal company workshops, MAGICIAN-related meetings and industrial demonstration meetings with customers or partners.

The interviews also show that visibility was not limited to formal dissemination events. Several beneficiaries identified customer demonstrations, industrial site visits, B2B meetings, internal workshops and digital communication as important channels for showcasing the solutions. HARMONY, for example, combined physical exhibitions and industrial events with a public demonstration video and LinkedIn communication, with the latter generating 5,060 impressions and 180 interactions.

An important aspect of this networking impact is that several relationships have the potential to extend beyond the lifetime of the Application Solution. Beneficiaries identified follow-up technical collaborations and joint R&D proposals, while some also reported new links with potential customers or industrial partners. HARMONY, for instance, reported that participation in MAGICIAN generated contacts with large companies in Türkiye and contributed to a new collaboration for preparing future project proposals.

2 LESSONS LEARNT

Considering the evidence gathered through the MAGICIAN Open Call 1 impact-monitoring exercise, the cascade-funding mechanism contributed to several technological, economic, societal and scientific/innovation ecosystem impact pathways. The five selected Application Solutions provide evidence that the funding and the wider MAGICIAN support framework enabled SMEs to further develop their technologies,

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strengthen their industrial capabilities, establish new collaborations and prepare their solutions for continued exploitation beyond the funded implementation period.

Technological and economic impact pathways

MAGICIAN contributed to generating innovation-based growth by providing SMEs with financial resources, technical expertise, access to industrial platforms and opportunities for validation. The five beneficiary interviews indicate that the cascade funding enabled companies to dedicate resources to the further development and integration of innovative robotics, AI, sensing and defect-detection technologies. In several cases, the projects resulted in demonstrators and validated technical assets that would constitute the basis for further industrial development. ARRAS, for example, combined AI vision, force-aware control and robotic integration into an integrated demonstrator validated on a Doosan H2515, while PolarQI-NET continued work on multimodal defect detection, model compression and ROS2 integration.

The interviews also provide evidence of an effect on company capabilities and human capital. Across the five OC1 Application Solutions, 38 team members were reported, including 8 women, while one beneficiary specifically recruited two interns for the implementation. More importantly, all five beneficiaries indicated that they expect to recruit additional resources in the following three years in relation to the further development and commercialisation of their solutions. This suggests that the employment effect of MAGICIAN is expected to materialise progressively as the technologies move from project development towards industrialisation and market uptake.

The economic impact pathway is further supported by the beneficiaries' plans for continued exploitation and commercialisation. All five companies reported plans to continue their activities after the end of the funded period, through internal R&D, industrial validation, productisation, licensing, customer pilots or follow-up collaborative projects.

The cascade-funding support therefore appears to have acted as a technology maturation and de-risking mechanism, allowing SMEs to progress towards industrial deployment and creating the conditions for subsequent investment and commercialisation.

Societal and human-centred impact pathways

The Application Solutions addressed applications ranging from defect inspection and surface finishing to augmented-reality-supported human-robot interaction and quality-control systems. The intended benefits include improved product quality, reduced manual intervention in demanding or repetitive tasks and safer interaction between workers and robotic systems.

The impact interviews indicate that the funded solutions are also opening opportunities for wider sectoral adoption, thereby increasing the potential societal and industrial reach of the results. Four of the five beneficiaries explicitly identified new sectors in which their solutions could be applied, while the fifth identified alternative sectors for future

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development. The interviews further indicate a positive contribution to responsible and secure industrial deployment. Security was integrated into the technical development to different degrees, including the use of ISO/IEC 27001 and TISAX processes, static security testing, service isolation and controlled communication architectures.

Scientific and innovation-ecosystem impact pathways

MAGICIAN strengthened human capital and knowledge exchange within and beyond the funded companies. The selected SMEs worked in close interaction with MAGICIAN technical, monitoring and industrial partners, gaining access to expertise, facilities, datasets and industrial validation environments. All five beneficiaries reported creating or strengthening contacts through MAGICIAN, with collaborations covering technical R&D, system integration, industrial validation, data exchange and preparation of future proposals.

This ecosystem effect extends beyond the immediate project results. Several beneficiaries identified follow-up R&D projects with MAGICIAN partners, while others intend to use the MAGICIAN experience and demonstrators to participate in future European or national funding opportunities. The same pathway can be observed in dissemination and visibility activities. All five beneficiaries reported presenting or planning to present their solutions through company, MAGICIAN, industrial or conference channels, while some also prepared publications, videos and other dissemination material. This helped transform the Application Solutions into visible industrial references that can support future customer, partner and investor engagement.

2.1 OPERATIONAL LESSONS FOR FUTURE CASCADE-FUNDING SCHEMES

1. The application and selection process was broadly perceived as accessible and effective. The five beneficiaries found the proposal material clear or easy to use and considered the evaluation feedback useful. The main improvements identified relate not to the fundamental application structure but to providing more practical guidance on KPI definition, validation evidence and financial requirements from the beginning of the project.
2. The monitoring and technical-support model proved valuable, particularly where beneficiaries could access relevant industrial environments, technical expertise and demonstration platforms. At the same time, the interviews suggest that early agreement on technical interfaces, validation protocols and pilot timing could reduce implementation risks and improve the efficiency of the final integration phase.
3. Financial and administrative onboarding should be strengthened. Although the overall financial support was generally considered appropriate, some beneficiaries reported that Horizon Europe cost-reporting requirements required additional clarification. A practical financial onboarding session at project start, combined

D6.3 IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

with templates and examples, could reduce the number of corrections required during implementation (already targeted and put in practice as lessons learnt of OC2)

4. The value of continuing support beyond technical project completion. The main remaining barriers identified by beneficiaries concern industrial validation, certification, customer discovery, cybersecurity, product costing, investment readiness and access to industrial partners. A more structured post-project pathway combining matchmaking, commercialisation support and investor/customer engagement could therefore help convert technically successful Application Solutions into market-ready products and services more rapidly.