



D8.4 – D&C Mid-term report

31/10/2025

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DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Project WIDEX– KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER FOR WIDENED EU EXCELLENCE IN ADVANCED GREEN TECHNOLOGIES, SUSTAINABILITY AND RESEARCH MANAGEMENT

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Description of the related task and the deliverable. Extract from DoA	<p>Task 8.1 Dissemination and Communication Activities (Lead: ISMC; Contributors: ALL; M1-M18)</p> <p>A detailed DC&E Plan will be produced at the beginning of the project (D8.1), based on the preliminary indications given in Section 2.2. This task will include the preparation of the project website (MS2), as well as the social media accounts (i.e., LinkedIn) and any initial accounts considered necessary during the project (e.g., YouTube). This deliverable will state the mandatory contribution of all partners in DEC activities, a summary of planned workshops, events, and activities (incl. Industrial clustering, synergies with S3 regions, Industrial Cluster preparation, Virtual Centre (MS6) and Stakeholder Community Platform Creation and development (MS11), exploitation, business case and replicability). It will include an initial list of stakeholders, to allow the launch of stakeholder engagement activities from M4. Moreover, a stakeholder workshop likely linked with an international event will be held in M15 by MS5. While developing this plan, WIDEX will put special attention into presenting reputation, attractiveness, networking channels and capability to complete successfully for national, EU and internationally competitive research funding. ISMC will carry out on-site and on-line clustering activities with relevant HE projects to position TUKE within relevant collaboration opportunities through two cross-fertilisation workshops at M10 (MS4) and M30 (MS12). An update about the project D&C activities will be presented in M36 (D9.3). WIDEX will also link with synergistic projects to boost collaboration to drive knowledge exchange, identify risks and limitations of the actions and ensure long-term impact and optimise replicability.</p>		
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Glossary	
Acronym	Meaning
WP	Work Package
DEC	Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication
D&C	Dissemination and Communication
D.	Deliverable
T.	Task
HE	Horizon Europe
EU	European Union
EISMEA	European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency
GA	Grant Agreement
S3	Smart Specialisation Strategies
S3P	Smart Specialisation Strategies Platform
RIS3	Research and Innovation Smart Specialisation Strategy
KPI	Key Point Indicator
KER	Key Exploitable Result
RM	Raw Material
CRM	Critical Raw Material
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
LE	Large Enterprise
KOM	Kick-Off Meeting
PNG	Portable Network Graphic
EPS	Encapsulated PostScript

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document, **Deliverable D8.4 – Dissemination and Communication Mid-term Report**, presents the progress achieved under **Work Package 8 (WP8)** of the WIDEX project during the first reporting period (M1–M18). It provides a comprehensive overview of the dissemination, communication, clustering, and exploitation activities conducted to ensure the project's visibility, stakeholder engagement, and alignment with European strategic priorities in the fields of **Critical Raw Materials (CRMs)** and **green technologies**.

The deliverable follows up on the **Dissemination and Communication Plan (D8.1)** and serves as an intermediate assessment of how the WIDEX communication and clustering strategy has been implemented so far. It summarises the actions taken, their measurable outcomes, and the preparatory work that sets the basis for the second project period (M19–M36).

During this period, the consortium established WIDEX's **visual identity**, digital presence, and communication channels. The **project website**, **LinkedIn page**, and **YouTube channel** were launched and regularly updated, supported by tailored dissemination materials such as flyers, infographics, and an introductory video. These actions ensured a coherent and recognisable communication strategy across all partners.

Under **Task 8.2**, significant progress was made in connecting WIDEX with the European clustering ecosystem. Contacts were established with key platforms, including **ESCP-S3**, **ECCP**, **ECA**, and the **Union of Slovak Clusters**, while the benchmarking analysis for **Deliverable D8.2** is being finalised.

Task 8.3 focused on preparing the **Košice Industrial Cluster for Raw Material Resources and Green Technologies**, defining its concept, objectives, and governance. More than **50 SMEs** were engaged, and over **20 letters of support** were collected, confirming strong regional and European interest.

In parallel, **Task 8.4** advanced the project's **Preliminary Business Plan and Exploitation Strategy (D8.3)**, establishing a framework for the identification of **Key Exploitable Results (KERs)** and their future application.

Overall, WP8 has successfully built the foundations for effective communication, clustering, and exploitation. The project has gained strong visibility, created valuable European connections, and set the basis for the operational phase and sustainability of the Košice Industrial Cluster in the second reporting period.

1.INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose & Scope

D8.1 Dissemination & Communication Plan (M3), is part of WP8 & WP9 'DC&E and Establishment of an Industrial Cluster'. Its purpose was to detail the methods to ensure maximum communication and dissemination of the WIDEX project results.

To facilitate the successful implementation of the plan and effectively present the project results to potential users, D&C plan outlined the communication and dissemination objectives, target audiences, channels, messages, activities, and the roles and responsibilities of the partnership throughout the project's duration. It established the visual identity of the project, set up information and communication touchpoints, and provided ideas for content. Additionally, D&C plan included the exploitation and replicability objectives and strategy, as well as the framework for the Business Plan preparation.

All actions carried out during the project are being monitored. All activities undertaken during the period M1 - M18 are included in this deliverable – D&C Mid-term report (D8.4).

1.2. Partner contributions

The D&C plan serves as the project's guidance document for all activities from M1 to M36 and has been developed by ISMC with contributions from all project partners. A summary of partner contributions to this strategy within WP8/9 is outlined in the list below:

- Task 8.1: Dissemination & Communication Activities (Lead: ISMC, Contributors: ALL; M1-M18). ISMC will:
 - Lead and coordinate the preparation of the D&C Plan (D8.1) and the D&C Mid-term report (D8.4) where all activity done during this period is presented.
 - Prepare, launch and manage the project website and social media accounts (i.e., LinkedIn) or any others considered necessary during the project.
 - Identify and link with synergistic projects and organize clustering activities (through two cross-fertilisation workshops) with relevant HE projects.
- Task 8.2: EU Industrial Clustering and synergies with S3 regions (Lead: ISMC, Contributors: ALL; M1-M18). ISMC will:

- Actively promote European Industrial Clustering activities/actions with relevant regional-based clusters and carry out a strategic analysis & benchmarking from a regional perspective, which will be presented through D8.2.
- Manage the interaction and mutual reinforcement with the S3 regions.
- Task 8.3: Industrial Cluster preparation (Lead: ISMC, Contributors: ICAMCYL, MNLT, TUKE; M1-M18)
 - Led by ISMC, the contributors to this task will establish the forming conditions of the cluster and its main purpose.
- Task 8.4: Business case, exploitation, and potential replication across de EU (Lead: MNLT; Contributors: ISMC, AVENIA; M1-M18)
 - MNLT has led the preparation of the Business case and Exploitation Plan, which has been presented through D8.3.

1.3. Relation to other actions

The project implementation has been divided into nine Work Packages (WPs) which have been designed to interact throughout the project life cycle to achieve the project's intended objectives (Figure 1).

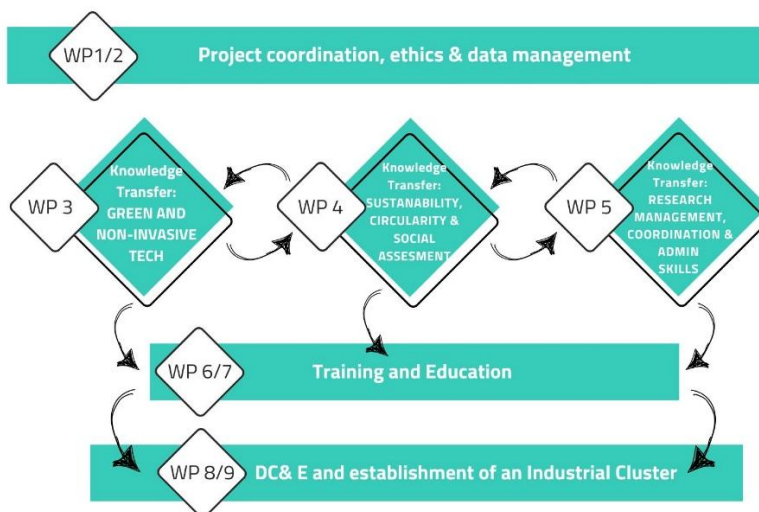


Figure 1: WIDEX's WPs structure tasks and interrelationships.

The D&C Plan implementation is directly related to the work carried out mainly through the execution of the training activities (WP6 & WP7). Specifically:

- T6.3/7.3: Complementary external training & Participation at International Conferences
- T6.4/7.4: European reference and unique virtual centre in green and non-invasive techniques
- T6.5/7.5: Promotion of TUKE's leadership and hosting role of the European green and non-invasive techniques centre.

2.COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

Dissemination and communication activities are different in their functions and target audiences; however, both aim to broaden and maximize the impact of WIDEX by informing about the project, its results, and potential research outputs, while also engaging stakeholders and the public throughout the project's duration.

Communication actions aim to extend outreach and increase visibility by continuously informing partners, stakeholders, and the public about ongoing activities and results of the WIDEX project. This is achieved through tools such as the website, press releases, social media posts, newsletters, materials, and events.

Dissemination activities focus on delivering results to the scientific community, relevant policymakers, and governmental entities. On a scientific level, these activities prioritize publication in international peer-reviewed high-impact journals and open access research data as well as attendance to specialised events.

Under this communication and dissemination strategy, WIDEX is working on the creation, implementation, and subsequent impact analysis of communication and dissemination actions.

3.DESCRPTION OF DISSEMINATION & COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

3.1. Task 8.1 Dissemination and Communication Activities

During the first reporting period, Task 8.1 focused on defining and deploying the overall Dissemination, Communication, and Exploitation (DC&E) framework of the WIDEX project. The objective was to ensure an early and strong visibility of the project's identity, objectives, and expected outcomes, and to engage with key stakeholders across Europe.

3.1.1. Dissemination & Communication Plan

The WIDEX Dissemination and Communication Plan (D8.1), launched in August 2024, outlines the approach, objectives, and targets for the communication and dissemination activities, including exploitation and replicability, to be implemented in the HORIZON-CSA funded "WIDEX - Knowledge Transfer for Widened EU Excellence in Advanced Green Technologies, Sustainability and Research Management" project, hereinafter referred to as WIDEX. This international project aims to secure sustainable access to essential minerals and elements crucial for Europe's strategic economic sectors by driving sustainable exploitation of resources in the Košice region (Slovakia) thus reducing reliance on third countries and promoting green, non-invasive recovery technologies.

The main purpose of this deliverable was to define the scope of communication, dissemination, and exploitation actions required to meet the project's objectives. It was structured as follows: initially, an introduction covers the purpose, partners' contributions, and the relation to other activities. Following this, the main objectives and strategy related to public communication and dissemination in WIDEX were described, along with the management framework. The plan also presented the project's branding and its components. Subsequent chapters addressed the communication channels and tools, followed by the dissemination channels and contents. Finally, the plan outlined the monitoring and KPIs to analyse all relevant data

3.1.2. Project branding

One of the initial steps in establishing the WIDEX brand was designing the project's visual identity, encompassing an official logo, colour palette, typefaces, and templates for various support materials. A WIDEX brand book was created quickly after the project launch by ISMC and shared with the consortium to launch the project DEC Activities with a consistent imaging.

The brand book captures the essence of the project and translates it into the design, ensuring consistent and proper usage of the brand. It guides the consortium on how to communicate the project effectively, helping stakeholders and participants recognise and trust its goals. The brand book reflects the project's personality and support information dissemination. It provides the consortium with instructions on best practices for each component, including the correct usage of logo variations, logo size and placement, colour palette, typefaces, text, image and photography guidelines, and editable templates management.

3.1.2.1. Visual Identity

One of the initial communication actions was to develop the project's visual identity. To ensure brand recognition, consistency, and a strong project identity, multiple logo versions were designed and presented to the consortium during the KOM, where a vote was held to determine the final design.

The chosen logo (Figure 2) is included in all the project documentation and communication materials.

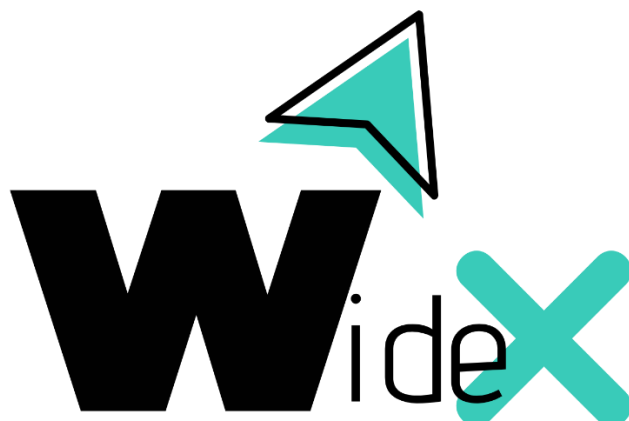


Figure 2: WIDEX logo

The logo mark was designed to convey the core values and aspirations of TUKE. It prominently features a strong and impactful W, which serves as a visual representation of the university's commitment to fortifying its position as a leading research entity, thereby striving for excellence in all its endeavours. The upward-pointing arrow positioned atop the W symbolizes the anticipated European outreach and influence resulting from the dynamic and forward-looking activities of the project. Moreover, the presence of the X in the logo signifies the comprehensive and interconnected approach of the project, emphasizing cross-sectoral training and fostering meaningful interactions with stakeholders and entities involved.

To ensure that the logo can be adapted to different occasions and backgrounds, a colour variation was developed (Figure 3).

PRIMARY LOGO**COLOUR VARIATION**

Figure 3: WIDEX logo variation

When using the logo, the following rules must be observed:

- The logo cannot be modified and must be used on all promotional materials (paper or electronic) related to or produced during the project.
- The WIDEX logo should be used in PNG format with a transparent background or in EPS format (vector option, high definition for printed documents and promotional items).
- All versions of the logo are available for download on the collaborative project workspace.
- When used alongside other logos, the WIDEX logo size must be proportional to the other logos.
- To ensure optimal visibility and readability, the logo must be surrounded by an appropriate amount of blank space, as illustrated below.

3.1.2.2. Colour palette

Colour can be intrinsically linked to a brand's identity. To illustrate the knowledge transfer, sustainability, technology and innovation aspects of the project, the colours black and aquamarine were used representing prestige, confidence and knowledge. The pantone for these colours is presented in figure 4.

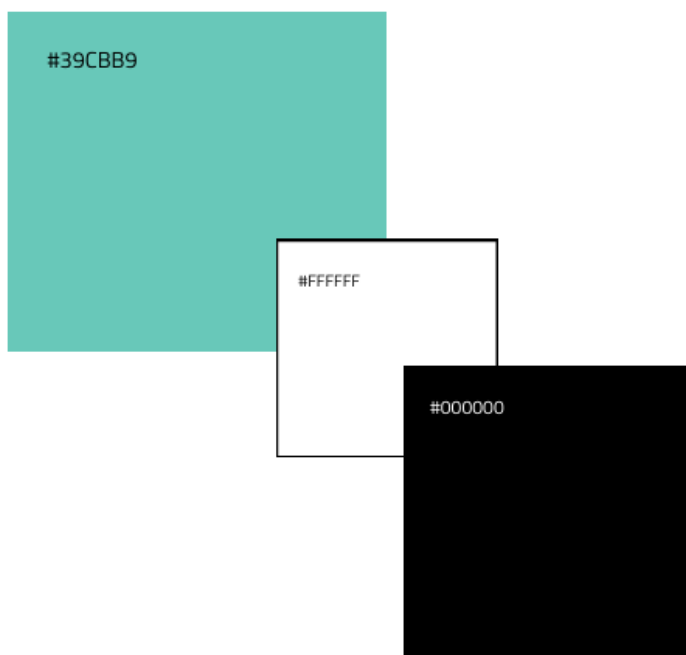


Figure 4: WIDEX colour palette

3.1.2.3. Typefaces

The typeface selected has been **TITILLIUM WEB** based on its readability and its simple yet modern appearance. Titillium is a sans-serif font family, free for commercial use, and created by Accademia di Belle Arti di Urbino. It is a versatile font known for its dynamic characteristics. It features thin, tall lines with slightly rounded edges, giving it a modern and clean appearance (Figure 5). The font must be used consistently and cannot be replaced in any document or presentation.

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKk
 LlMmNnOoPpQqUuRrSsTtUu
 VvWwXxYyZz
 1234567890
 !@#\$%^&*()_+<>?/\

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

black **bold** regular light *italics*

Figure 5: Titillium web typeface styles

3.1.2.4. Information of EU funding – Obligation and right to use the EU emblem

Unless the Agency requests or agrees otherwise, any dissemination material must acknowledge that the project received funding from the European Union. This includes displaying the European Union flag and the phrase “Funded by the European Union” as shown in figure 6.



Figure 6: EU funding emblem

All communication or dissemination activities related to the action must provide factually accurate information. Additionally, they must include the following disclaimer (translated into local languages where appropriate):

“Funded by the European Union. The views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or EISMEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.”

3.1.2.5. Templates

Templates were meticulously designed and disseminated to all consortium members to uphold uniformity in visual identity throughout the entirety of the project. The purpose of these templates was to standardise the formatting and design for all project-related materials, both in internal and external communications. This included but is not limited to presentations in PowerPoint format, deliverables, agendas and meeting minutes, as well as any document prepared for events or activities that will take place while the project's implementation (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Templates examples

3.1.3. Communication channels & tools

In WIDEX, various tools and channels are being utilized for communication processes (Table 1). These are employed based on the target audience and the specific action to be executed, ultimately to measure the results.

Table 1: Communication channels, purpose and target audience

Channels	Purpose	Target audience
Website	Wide-scale dissemination of project objectives and public results, increased awareness on the crucial role of raw materials and the widening countries in the accomplishment of the increased independence from 3 rd countries.	All
Social media	LinkedIn: Increase awareness and public engagement	All
Newsletters	Increase awareness of the project activities and results through direct e-mail to interested parties.	All (subscribed individuals)
Press Releases	Increase the general public's awareness of the project through mass media publications.	All
Promotional Videos	Wide-scale dissemination of the project goals, activities and results.	All
WIDEX Events	Cross-fertilization workshops; Clustering with European projects.	Sister project consortiums
	Stakeholders workshop – Linking with international sectorial events.	Stakeholders
	Final Event – Presentation of the project results.	Stakeholders

3.1.3.1. Website

The launch of the WIDEX website, developed by ISMC in M3, marks a significant milestone for the project: www.widexproject.eu. The project website was built using WordPress, which is a free and open-source content management system.

The website is designed to be responsive and future-proof, considering the following essential requirements for EU-funded projects:

- Modern design: The website reflects the project's discipline and industry, presenting information in an appealing manner (Figure 8).
- Transparency and accessibility: The website provides high-quality information accessible to various stakeholders.
- High responsiveness: To reach a broad audience, the website is accessible on various devices, including smartphones, tablets, and smart TVs, ensuring maximum impact and a meaningful user experience.

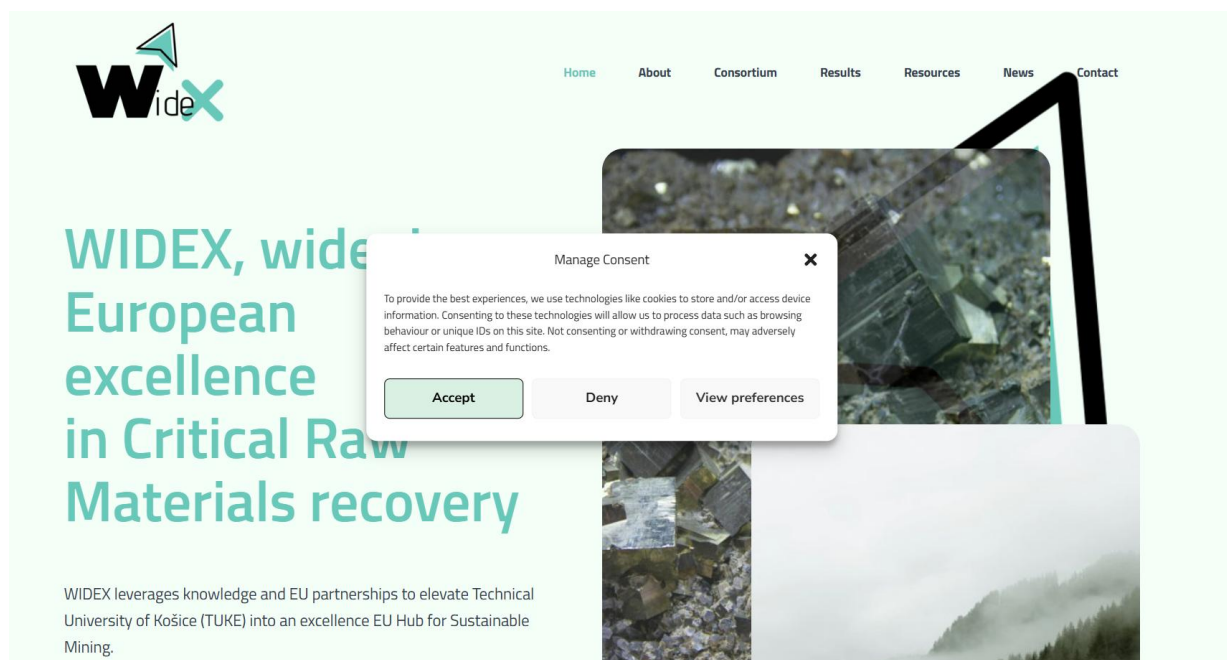


Figure 8: WIDEX Homepage

To assess the effectiveness of this channel, we will utilise Google Analytics to collect and analyse comprehensive data at the conclusion of our project. This free service will furnish detailed statistics on various aspects of our website, such as the number of visitors, their browsing behaviour including which pages they are viewing, the duration of time spent on each page, and other relevant insights to help us understand the impact of our efforts.

3.1.3.2. Social Media

WIDEX aims to establish a strong presence on social media to effectively reach target audiences and the general public, ensuring active interaction. To maximize usability and leverage the existing social media networks of WIDEX partners, the focus was on platforms that partners regularly and successfully use for communication and interaction with customers and stakeholders. The primary social network for the project is LinkedIn (Figure 9), supported by a YouTube account.

LinkedIn offers significant potential for connecting with companies, stakeholders, and new projects, making it the best tool for networking. WIDEX will position its brand with the following objectives:

- Engage with audiences
- Create synergies with other projects, stakeholders, and companies
- Share project results and generate future initiatives

We disseminate news published on the website, create calls to action for various events organized by WIDEX, announce events attended by project partners, and share content generated by the project. [WIDEX EU Project](#)

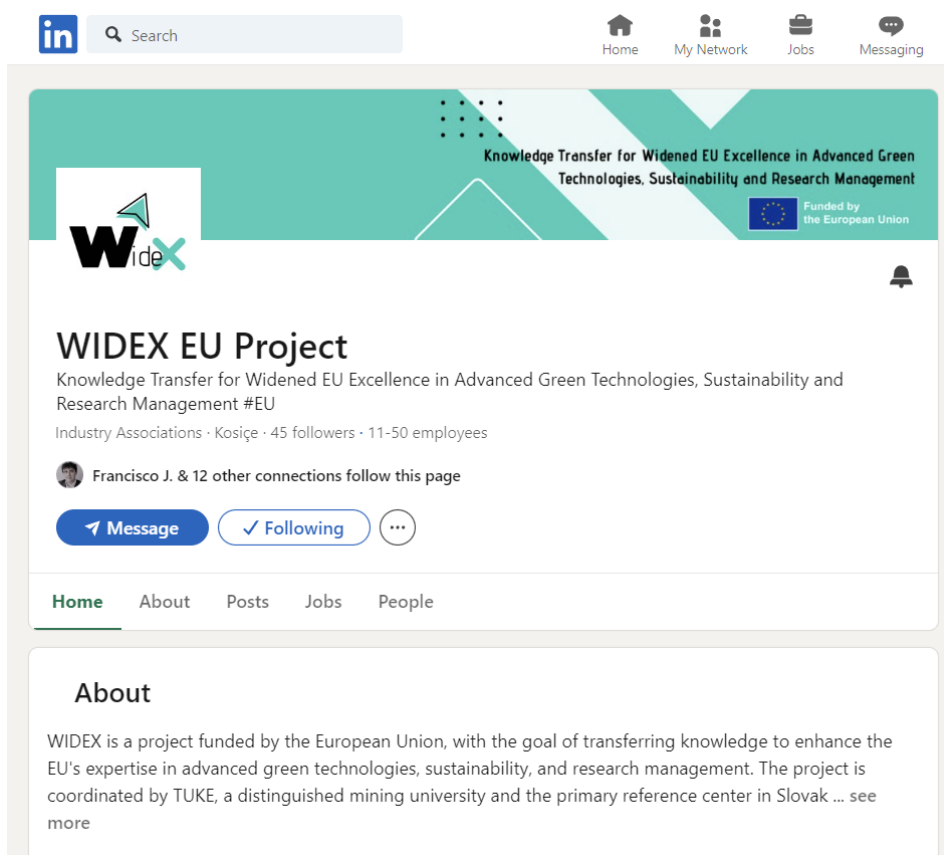


Figure 9: LinkedIn Page

The following table 2 presents a broad classification of the types of content that we are sharing through social media.

Table 2: Types of contents for social media

Type of content	Description	Content
INFORMATIVE	Content referring to the WIDEX project	Website, newsletters, flyers, infographics, partners' roles, other
DIVULGATIVE	Content referring to the project activities	Events organised by WIDEX partners, participation /attendance to external events,
EDUCATIONAL	Content referring to knowledge related to WIDEX	Scientific developments, EU news, partners expertise

Partners are invited and should follow the project accounts and share the published content, to multiply its impact.

3.1.3.3. YouTube

A YouTube channel supports DEC Activities and serves as a support for the promotional videos and other videographic materials related to the project (Figure 10). This allows us to amplify our reach and create a wider community. @WIDEXEUProject

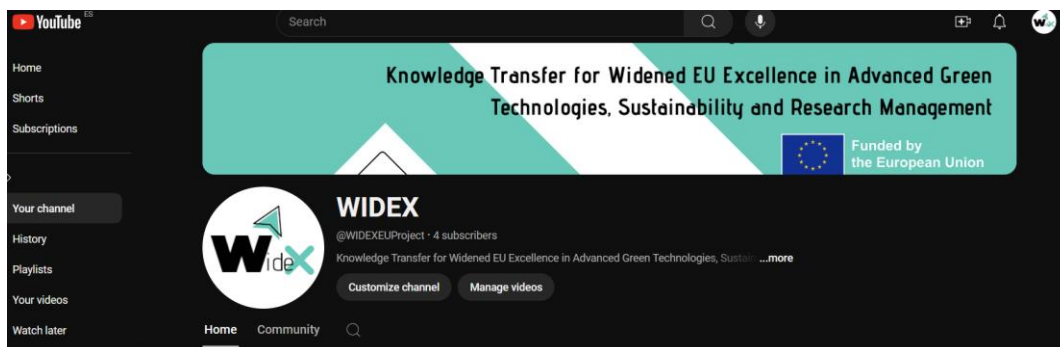


Figure 10: YouTube Channel

3.1.4. Communication Materials

3.1.4.1. Printed materials

Effective print materials can promote WIDEX by increasing brand recognition, reaching a wider audience, capturing attention, and providing visual information. However, a digital format would be preferable to align with the sustainability principles of the project. If printing is necessary, recycled paper will be chosen whenever possible.

Flyer

A flyer was designed for distribution at workshops and events (Figure 11). It contains the project's main messages, goals and information about the consortium partners.



Figure 11: Flyer draft design

Infography

An infography was created for easy understanding of the project goals, activities and overall structure (Figure 12). It is used to grab the attention of the viewers and used as a call for involvement in WIDEX activities.

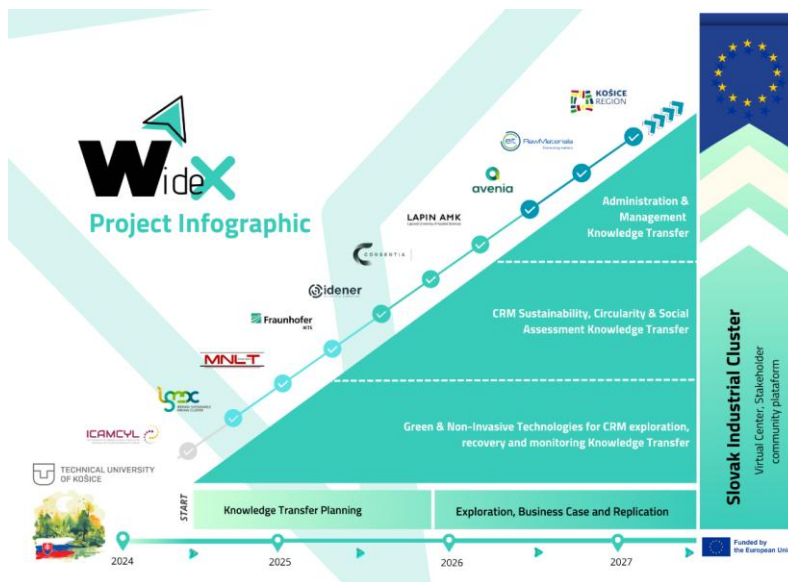


Figure 12. WIDEX infography

Poster

A standard poster is created for the presentation of the project during events to deliver general information about the project in an impactful, attractive, and consistent way.



Figure 13. WIDEX poster

Roll-up

A simple yet attractive roll-up is designed for printing if needed, to give visibility to the project during on-site events (Figure 14).



Figure 14: Roll-up draft design

3.1.4.2. Digital materials

WIDEX standard presentation

A standard presentation was created to facilitate an homogenized visual identity for the presentation of the project and project's outcomes during events or meetings. The standardisation of a presentation for the project optimise the dedication of the consortium partners and ensure an impactful delivery of the information.

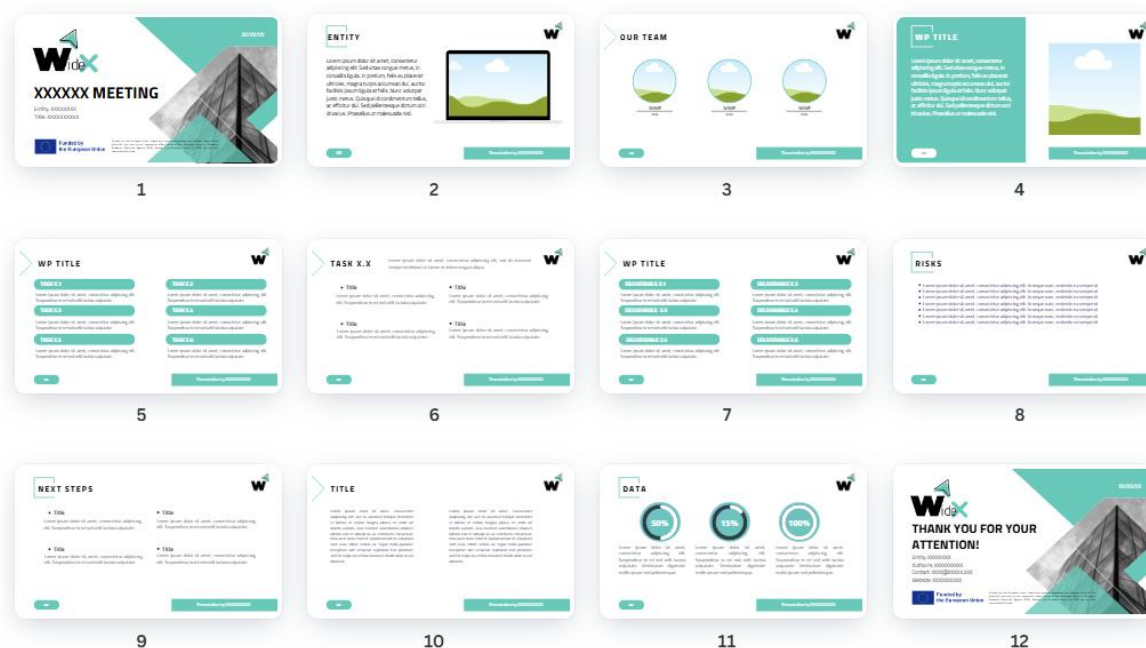


Figure 15: Power point presentation template

Videos

ISMC will produce two animated/realistic videos. The [first video](#) -an introduction to the project with general information about the project goals, activities and partners- was published in March 2025 through the YouTube channel of the project <https://www.youtube.com/@WIDEXEUProject> (Figure 16). A second video will be published close to the project end, to present the results of the project activities and give further visibility to TUKE and the Slovak Industrial Cluster in Europe.



WIDEX Introductory Video ⋮
49 visualizaciones • hace 7 meses

Figure 16: WIDEX Introductory Video

Press Releases

WIDEX press releases (6 in total), led by ISMC, serve as a communication interface with media of all kinds at any place and, therefore the output language will be English. Each partner is responsible for their dissemination and, if necessary, translation into the local language. It is essential to establish and maintain relationships with journalists and media outlets to achieve their publication in traditional and sectorial media. This increases awareness of the project's objectives, activities, and results, and provide a visibility platform for TUKE and the other partners.

3.1.5. Events and stakeholder engagement

3.1.5.1. Online Clustering cross-fertilisation workshop

The first WIDEX Online Clustering Cross-Fertilisation Workshop was held on 31 March 2025 with the objective of fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among European projects in the field of Critical Raw Materials (CRMs) (Figure 17). The event opened with a keynote on “Green solutions & networks for European Raw Materials” to set the strategic context.

The first session showcased innovative project approaches to sustainable raw materials exploitation, with presentations from DEEPBEAT, WIDEX, and SEMACRET, followed by an open discussion on synergies and technical challenges. The second session focused on European hubs for raw materials, introducing initiatives such as IRMHUB, PERMANET, and REMHUB, highlighting their role in networking, resource efficiency, and innovation transfer.

Throughout the workshop, emphasis was placed on cross-fertilisation between projects, exploring joint opportunities for clustering, capacity building, and policy contribution. The discussions demonstrated the added value of collaboration in strengthening European excellence in CRM recovery, while aligning with Horizon Europe’s widening objectives. The milestone was successfully achieved by creating a platform for dialogue, sharing good practices, and laying the groundwork for future joint actions.

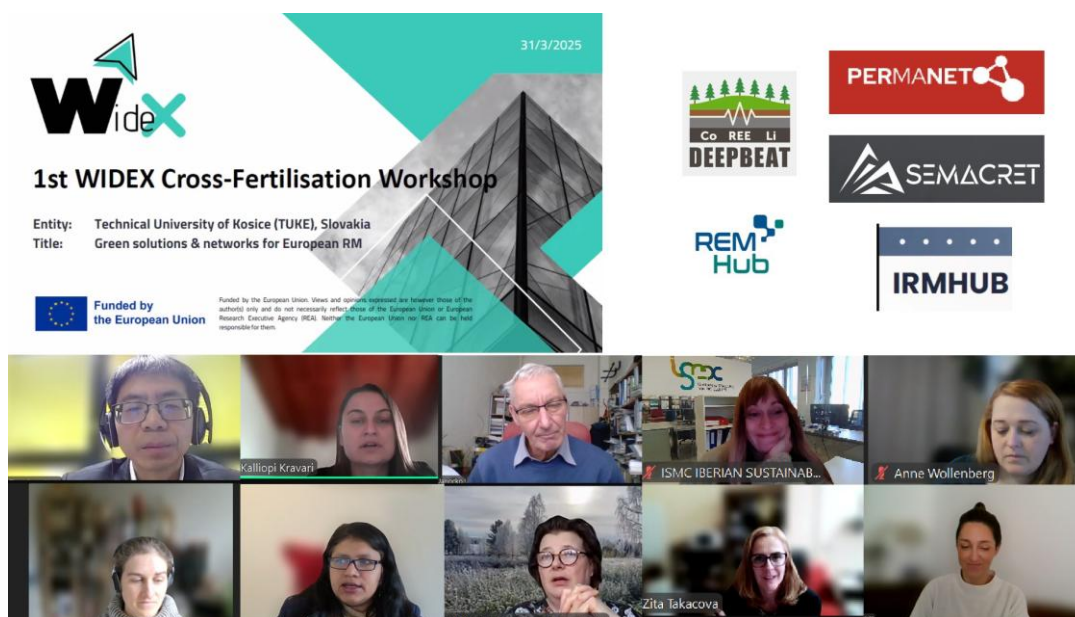


Figure 17: First WIDEX Online Clustering Cross-Fertilisation Workshop

3.1.5.2. Stakeholder workshop

The WIDEX Stakeholder Workshop was initially planned for Month 15 (August 2025). Due to the summer period and difficulties in securing stakeholder availability, it was rescheduled to Month 17 and successfully held online on 30 October 2025. The workshop gathered 20 participants, representing research institutions, industry clusters, and European projects active in the raw materials and sustainability sectors.

The programme included presentations on the WIDEX project and its training activities as a pillar for cluster development, followed by an overview of the European clustering ecosystem. The event featured a keynote contribution from TUKE (project coordinator), insights from Fraunhofer on training initiatives, and ISMC, a young and rapidly growing cluster with over 90 members, which presented its experience in promoting collaboration, innovation, and sustainable mining practices across Europe.

TalTech presented the IRM HUB project, introducing its concept, ongoing activities, and the creation of a Meta Hub aimed at enhancing collaboration, knowledge exchange and synergies with WIDEX and other European initiatives. Košice IT Valley provided a best practice example highlighting both the opportunities and challenges of cluster creation in Slovakia, particularly in securing funding and engaging institutions and companies. Its presentation emphasised the strategic value of clusters as drivers of innovation, collaboration, and regional development, as well as the diversity of activities that can be carried out within their framework.

Interactive brainstorming sessions and discussions provided valuable insights into the challenges, barriers and opportunities for collaboration among clusters and research actors, reinforcing WIDEX's

objective of fostering sustainable networks and knowledge transfer in the raw materials field. Despite the two-month delay, the milestone was fully achieved with high engagement and valuable stakeholder feedback contributing to future clustering and capacity-building actions.

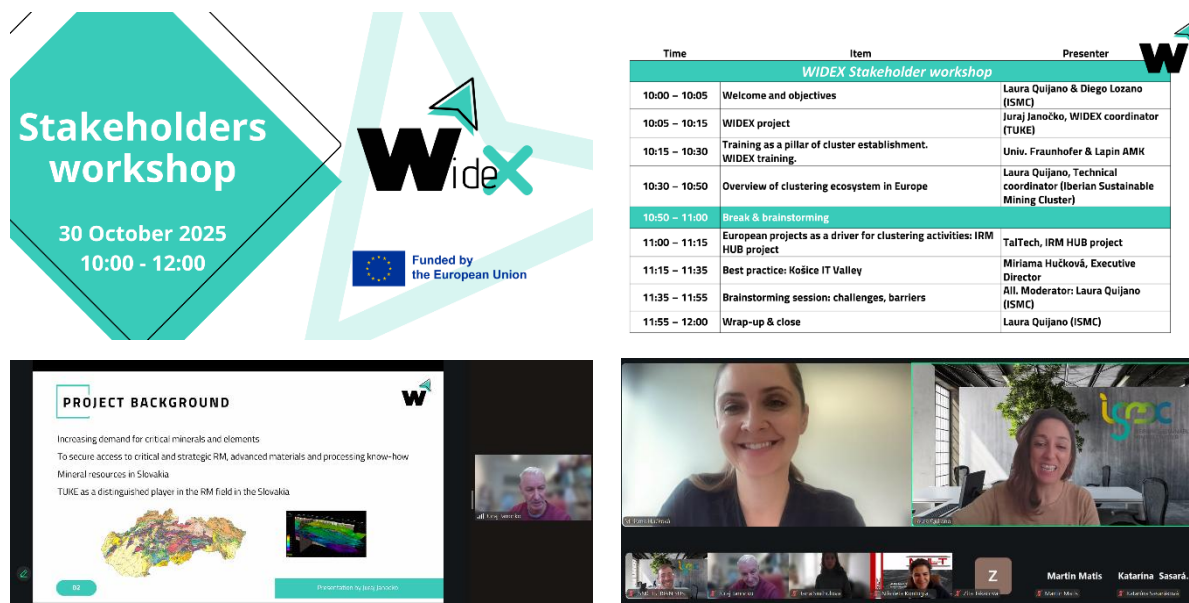


Figure 18. WIDEX Stakeholder workshop

3.1.6. Current progress of Task 8.1

Deliverable/Milestone	Due Date	Release Date	Current Status	Observations
D8.1 - D&C Plan	31/08/2024	29/08/2024	Finished	
D8.4 - D&C Mid-term report	31/10/2025	31/10/2025	Finished	
MS2 - Project website and promotional video	31/08/2024	31/08/2024	Finished	
Ms4 - Online Clustering cross-fertilisation workshop	31/03/2025	31/03/2025	Finished	
MS5 - Stakeholder workshop	31/08/2025	30/10/2025	Finished	

3.2. Task 8.2 EU Industrial Clustering and synergies with S3 regions

During the first period, the consortium has advanced the activities foreseen under Task 8.2, with a focus on building relationships with relevant European cluster networks and developing the benchmarking analysis that will be presented in Deliverable D8.2 – Report on Benchmarking and Possible Industrial Clustering Activities (M18). These efforts aim to position WIDEX within the broader European clustering landscape and to lay the basis for long-term collaboration between the Košice Industrial Cluster for Raw Material Resources and Green Technologies and other European initiatives.

Throughout this period, ISMC, supported by TUKE and other partners, has engaged in continuous outreach to identify and connect with relevant European cluster organisations, platforms, and partnerships. Contacts have been established with the European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for Smart Specialisation Investments (ESCP-S3), the European Cluster Observatory, the European Clusters Alliance, the Union of Slovak Clusters, the European Cluster Collaboration Platform, and the S3P Industrial Modernisation Platform. The project has also exchanged with the Interregional Partnerships for Smart Specialisation Platforms (S3P) and participated in conversations with complementary European projects such as CAFEIN and IRMHUB, as well as with several Slovak regional clusters.

These interactions have provided a clearer understanding of the current European clustering ecosystem, the main strategic priorities, and potential entry points for WIDEX. Through these exchanges, the consortium has collected valuable information on cluster governance models, partnership structures, and internationalisation mechanisms, which will directly inform the analysis presented in D8.2 which will be structured to include:

- A benchmarking analysis of selected European clusters operating in the fields of raw materials, circular economy, and green technologies.
- A review of their forming conditions, partnership composition, governance structures, and regional/national reach.
- A comparative section examining potential cooperation links between these entities and the emerging Košice Industrial Cluster for Raw Material Resources and Green Technologies.

The preliminary findings indicate that several European clusters share complementary objectives with WIDEX, particularly regarding sustainable extraction, digitalisation of mining processes, and regional innovation. These insights will support the design of the WIDEX cluster model and ensure that its objectives are consistent with European cluster policies and Smart Specialisation priorities.

Although most of the work has been concentrated on networking, data collection, and desk research, these preparatory actions have been essential to establish visibility for WIDEX within the European cluster ecosystem. The International Clustering Workshop (MS13) is scheduled for the next months and will serve as an opportunity to present the benchmarking outcomes, validate the analysis with external stakeholders, and further strengthen cooperation links.

In summary, WIDEX has successfully established first-level contacts with key European networks, gathered preliminary data for benchmarking, and outlined the analytical framework for assessing potential collaborations. These efforts ensure that WIDEX is well positioned to contribute to the broader European clustering landscape and to leverage synergies that will support the creation and future sustainability of the Košice Industrial Cluster for Raw Material Resources and Green Technologies.

3.2.1. Current progress of Task 8.2

Deliverable/Milestone	Due Date	Release Date	Current Status	Observations
D8.2 - Benchmarking and possible industrial clustering activities	30/11/2025		In progress	

3.3. Task 8.3 Industrial Cluster preparation

The Horizon Europe project WIDEX aims to secure sustainable access to essential minerals and elements critical for Europe’s strategic sectors. A core pillar of this mission is the creation of a Cluster for Raw Material Resources and Green Technologies in the Košice region (Slovakia), building on the region’s geological potential, industrial base, and academic excellence at the Technical University of Košice (TUKE).

The cluster will act as a hub for innovation, sustainability, and knowledge transfer, driving the uptake of green, non-invasive mining technologies, while strengthening Europe’s resilience in critical raw materials supply.

3.3.1. Why create a Regional Cluster for Raw Material Resources and Green Technologies?

Clusters are collaborative platforms that bring together enterprises, research institutions, public authorities, and civil society to enhance competitiveness, foster innovation, and create synergies in strategic sectors. In the context of mining and raw materials, clusters provide a coordinated response

to Europe's dependency on critical raw materials, accelerate the uptake of green and non-invasive technologies, and ensure the long-term sustainability of resource management.

The creation of a mining cluster in Košice will be structured around four pillars of work:

1. Innovation and Green Technologies – fostering R&D in sustainable extraction, processing, and recycling methods, with strong links to Horizon Europe and EU strategic agendas.
2. Skills and Knowledge Transfer – training the next generation of engineers, researchers, and professionals in sustainable mining practices and advanced research management.
3. Industrial Competitiveness and Regional Development – positioning the Košice region as a hub for green mining technologies, supporting SMEs and large industries, and integrating them into European value chains.
4. Policy Dialogue and Stakeholder Engagement – acting as a platform for dialogue between academia, industry, policymakers, and civil society, aligned with EU critical raw materials strategy.

The objective of establishing the cluster is to consolidate the region's strengths, bridge gaps between research and industry, and create a sustainable ecosystem that drives innovation and competitiveness in Europe's Raw Material Resources and Green Technologies.

3.3.2. Importance of the Raw Material Resources and Green Technologies in the Košice Region

The Košice region is one of Slovakia's most resource-rich areas, holding significant geological reserves of minerals essential for Europe's green and digital transitions. The region's importance is amplified by:

- Strategic geographical location at the crossroads of Central and Eastern Europe, allowing integration into wider European value chains.
- Human capital and expertise, with TUKE and local institutes providing advanced knowledge in mining engineering, materials science, and environmental technologies.
- Industrial relevance, as Košice hosts major companies in metallurgy, steelmaking, and manufacturing, creating demand for secure and sustainable raw material supplies.
- Policy alignment, since Slovakia has identified mining and advanced materials as smart specialisation priorities, positioning Košice as a driver of regional innovation.

For Europe, Košice can serve as a demonstration region for green mining and resource recovery, showing how local geological wealth can be harnessed with sustainable technologies and strong stakeholder cooperation.

3.3.3. Who will be involved?

Raw Material Resources and Green Technologies clusters are multi-actor ecosystems, where collaboration across disciplines and sectors generates innovation and resilience. The Košice Raw Material Resources and Green Technologies Cluster will integrate the following types of organisations:

- Universities and Research Centres
 - Technical University of Košice (TUKE)
 - Slovak Academy of Sciences – Institute of Geotechnics, Institute of Materials Research
 - European partner universities specialised in mining and green technologies
- Industrial Stakeholders
 - Mining and extraction companies active in Slovakia and neighbouring regions
 - Metallurgical and steel industries in Košice and Central Europe
 - SMEs developing green mining technologies, robotics, and digital solutions
- Policy and Governance Actors
 - Košice Self-Governing Region
 - Slovak Ministry of Economy / Ministry of Environment
 - Regional development agencies and innovation support offices
- Cluster and Network Partners
 - European mining clusters (e.g. IberiaMine Cluster, Swedish mining cluster initiatives)
 - EIT RawMaterials community and European Technology Platforms
- Civil Society and NGOs
 - Environmental organisations focused on sustainability and social licence to operate
 - Local community associations ensuring inclusive dialogue

This broad ecosystem ensures the cluster becomes a trusted hub where industry, academia, government, and society co-create solutions for sustainable mining and critical raw material supply.

3.3.4. Expected Outcomes

Creation of the Košice Raw Material Resources and Green Technologies Cluster will allow:

- Establishment of the Košice Raw Material Resources and Green Technologies Cluster and positioning as a regional, national and European contributor for the Slovak other hub platforms in the same raw material sector and related ones.
- Deployment of green, non-invasive raw material technologies.

- Strengthening EU resilience in critical raw materials supply.
- Improvement skills and capacity building through education and training.
- Create a Virtual Centre of Excellence to ensure long-term collaboration.

3.3.5. Current progress of Task 8.3

Deliverable/Milestone	Due Date	Release Date	Current Status	Observations
MS8 - New cluster creation	30/11/2025		In progress	

3.4. Task 8.4 Business case, exploitation, and potential replication across the EU

Deliverable D8.3 entitled "Preliminary Business Plan and Exploitation Strategy" has been prepared, aiming to establish a preliminary framework for exploiting the results of the WIDEX project. The deliverable outlines how project outcomes can be translated into business opportunities, policy input, and replication pathways, and will be progressively refined until its final version in month 34.

The exploitation framework was structured around three models: commercial (licensing), research (re-use of knowledge for further R&D), and technological (development of innovative products and services). These models follow a phased plan that includes a consortium-wide exploitation strategy, a business plan integrating demonstrations and market analysis, individual partner strategies, and measures to ensure sustainability and long-term impact.

KERs were identified, such as scientific knowledge, training and networking activities, the Virtual Centre, collaborative R&D opportunities, strategies for valorising mine waste as secondary raw materials, and EU-level stakeholder networks. In parallel, a stakeholder analysis was initiated, categorising groups into key players (industry, research, investors), context setters (policymakers, regulators), and advocates (NGOs, sustainability actors).

Intellectual property management was addressed through a two-phase analysis: internal review of partner background IP and external screening of existing market IP, while an IPR management strategy was defined in line with the consortium agreement and FAIR principles, ensuring secure access, ownership, and protection of results. Finally, the deliverable included a preliminary market and strategic positioning analysis. The green technology sector was assessed as rapidly expanding, and WIDEX's advantage was highlighted in its focus on green, non-invasive recovery technologies for CRMs, particularly in regions with high geological potential. A SWOT analysis and a Business Model Canvas template were introduced as tools for refining positioning in future updates. The preliminary SWOT analysis is presented in figure 19.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with EU strategy for sustainability and resource independence, focusing on green and non-invasive CRM exploitation and recovery • Strong Consortium, featuring diverse partners with strong backgrounds in innovation • Innovative Technologies for the recovery of CRMs, offering environmental benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial investment required for the development of CRM recovery technologies • Unforeseen issues that could hinder technology development
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising demand for Green Technologies in Europe, which require high amounts of CRMs • Replication in other regions, enabling widespread adoption and long-term impact • Opportunity to establish collaborations and integrate new technologies to the WIDEX Hub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerability to regulatory landscape changes that may favour certain technologies • Changes in the macro-economic environment that could shift investment priorities

Figure 19. Preliminary SWOT analysis for the WIDEX project.

In the frame of the Final Business Plan Development and exploitation strategy (D9.2) and considering that key exploitable results (KERs) identification is the cornerstone of an exploitation strategy, MNLT has developed a KERs identification questionnaire, which aims to understand and update the Exploitation Expectations of each partner.

To streamline partner input, the questionnaire was developed in Google Forms and distributed via the link below: <https://forms.gle/Ttce8JTpxWyzBCyp6>.

Amongst the questions included in the questionnaire were the following:

- What is the current level of maturity, in terms of TRL?
- What is the expected TRL at the end of the WIDEX Project?
- Please indicate the KERs that you expect.
- Please indicate your Exploitation expectations. (These can be the establishment of a Trademark, Patent or new Policy, the creation of a New Business or the entry to a New Market Segment, etc.).

The questionnaire was distributed to all partners in late August, and responses are currently being collected towards the refinement of WIDEX KERs.

3.4.1. Current progress of Task 8.4

Deliverable/Milestone	Due Date	Release Date	Current Status	Observations
D8.3 - Preliminary Business Plan and Exploitation Strategy	30/11/2024	30/11/2024	Finished	

4. DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION PROGRESS

Dissemination and communication activities are continuously monitored using a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators. The purpose of this monitoring is to check how far the communication objectives have been achieved and to understand how the actions taken contribute to the expected results. This process helps WIDEX to identify what works well and what challenges remain, allowing the communication strategy to be adjusted and improved over time.

A set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) has been defined to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of all dissemination and communication activities. These indicators include:

Table 3. Dissemination and Communication KPIs Progress

Channel	Description	Target KPIs & month	Achieved M17
Website	Interactive, dynamic, highly accessible	Live [M3], 1,000 hits [M36]	Live [M3], 450 hits
Videos	Promotional videos	2 [M3, M36]	1 [M6]
Printed material	Written material, infographics, self-test		Flyer, infographic, poster & roll-up
Social media	LinkedIn	<20000 impressions [M36]	11.613 impressions
Press Releases	2 publications/year	6	2
Newsletters	2 publications/year	6	0
Clustering Activities	Cross-fertilization workshops with relevant HE/EU projects	2 [M10, M30]	1 [M10]
Stakeholder workshop	To present the project findings to industrial players, investors and public authorities, as well as provide the required forum for networking activities and opportunities to engage stakeholders for further collaboration,	1 [M15]	1 [M17]

	business opportunities and/or replication across the EU. Linked with international event (e.g., EIT RM Summit, RM Week).		
External event attendance	Scientific conferences/seminars (e.g., IMPC, MEI conferences Sustainable Minerals '24, Flotation '24)	3	1
	Policy - Related to multilevel public authorities, mining permissions and European/international organisations/institutions in the mining field.	5	0
	CRM Professional events (e.g., EIT RM Summit, RM Week)	2	1
Other publications	WIDEX Public Deliverables	13 ¹	7

¹ The GA mentions 15 public deliverables. However, of the 16 total deliverables of the project, only 13 are Public.