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Stimulating and Connecting the FINEST Experimentation Practices and Spaces

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Deliverable 7.2

Exploitation, Replicability and Sustainability (ER&S) Plan v1

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Executive Summary

The **FINEX project** – *Stimulating and Connecting the FINEST Experimentation Practices and Spaces* – is designed to strengthen Europe's innovation ecosystems by connecting cleantech experimentation spaces, piloting best practices, and accelerating innovators across regions.

Deliverable 7.2, the Exploitation, Replicability & Sustainability (ER&S) Plan, sets out a preliminary, strategic framework to maximise the impact, longevity, and wider adoption of FINEX outcomes. It provides a systematic approach to ensure results are effectively used during the project and remain accessible, valuable, and impactful well beyond its conclusion. Structured to support its integration into the wider European innovation landscape - particularly in less-connected and developing innovation ecosystems - the plan prioritises both prospective exploitation and long-term replication and scaling of project results.

This deliverable builds on inputs from all work packages and focuses on three complementary objectives:

1. **Exploitation** – capturing, analysing, and structuring project results into concrete assets (guides, catalogues, matchmaking tools, regional action plans, helpdesk services, policy roadmaps). The plan defines potential users (start-ups, scaleups, incubators, regional authorities, EU policymakers, and innovation hubs) and highlights the pathways through which these outputs can be adopted and scaled.
2. **Replicability** – demonstrating how the FINEX methods and tools (such as the Cleantech Best Practices Guide, experimentation space catalogues, and matchmaking frameworks) can be reused in diverse regional and cross-regional contexts. By aligning with EU and national innovation strategies, the project provides adaptable blueprints that regions, clusters, and future EU initiatives can directly implement.
3. **Sustainability** – outlining the mechanisms for maintaining project outcomes beyond its lifecycle. Key partners (including Paris HEC, EIT Digital, RTU, and others) have committed to ensuring continuity of selected assets (annual updates of guides, maintenance of the matchmaking tool, integration of the Helpdesk into partner platforms). The plan also includes a **policy roadmap** offering recommendations for governments, regulators, and ecosystem actors to sustain cleantech experimentation and cross-border collaboration.

The ER&S Plan takes into account the project's overall ambition to support **policy and regulation alignment** with the **European Green Deal, the Circular Economy Action Plan, the Fit for 55 package, and the New European Innovation Agenda**. This positions FINEX as a strategic contributor to EU priorities in climate neutrality, sustainability, and innovation-led competitiveness.

Specifically, the plan sets out **KPIs and impact measures**, including stakeholder uptake, number of innovators engaged, cross-border collaborations established, policy recommendations adopted, and replication of tools in external contexts. These metrics will help monitor success and provide a

transparent basis for evaluating the project's long-term value. As the initial version of the project's ER&S plan, this document provides the foundation for refinement and adaptation throughout the remainder of the project. The final, fully developed version will be delivered by project month 20, incorporating the latest insights, lessons learned, and evolving strategic priorities derived from FINEX's work plan. This living document will:

- **identify** the project's possible exploitable assets and package them for uptake;
- **manage** knowledge and Intellectual Property (IP), including confidentiality and access rights, and address possible copyrights or other proprietary rights arising from project results;
- **study** the replicability of FINEX activities, methods, and toolkits across EU regions - especially in less-connected and developing innovation ecosystems not directly involved in the project;
- **explore** potential exploitation pathways to maximise impact during the project;
- **plan** for post-project exploitation and sustainability, with targeted uptake promotion among ecosystem stakeholders and user groups;
- **align** exploitation and replication with EU priorities to reinforce policy relevance;

This deliverable is directly linked to the activities carried out under **WP7 and Task 7.2: Exploitation, Replicability and Sustainability**. Given its crucial role in the project, it provides input across all other WPs to ensure that the project's results are effectively adopted, replicated, and sustained by stakeholders in pilot territories, start-up ecosystems, and beyond—both during the project's implementation and after its completion.

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Table 1 Definitions

Abbreviation	Definition
BSR	Baltic Sea Region
BSR-5	Refers to the Innovation Ecosystems of five (5) EU member states of the Baltic Sea Region (BSR), which are actively targeted and directly represented by the project partners. Namely: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Poland.
ER&S	Exploitation, Replicability and Sustainability Plan
Deep tech	"Deep tech is technology that is based on cutting-edge scientific advances and discoveries and is characterised by the need to stay at the technological forefront by constant interaction with new ideas and results from the lab. Deep tech is distinct from 'high tech' which tends to refer only to Research & Development intensity." - EISME standard definition
EC	European Commission
KER	Key Exploitable Result
EU	European Union
GA	Grant Agreement
KER	Key exploitable result of the project
IE	Innovation Ecosystem[1]
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
M	Month
S&IL	Innovation ecosystems categorised as 'Strong innovators' or 'Innovation leaders'
PC	Project Coordinator
R&D	Research and Development
WP	Work Package
**other*	*specific partner-related abbreviations (institutions, organizations, universities)*

[1] https://eismea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/european-innovation-ecosystems_en#european-innovation-ecosystems

1. Introduction

The FINEX project (*Stimulating and Connecting the FINEST Experimentation Practices and Spaces*) is funded under the Horizon Europe programme to strengthen European cleantech ecosystems by creating, connecting, and scaling experimentation spaces. Through cross-border collaboration, FINEX aims to accelerate the adoption of sustainable and digital solutions, empower regional innovation actors, and provide policymakers with evidence-based recommendations to support experimentation-led growth.

Within this framework, Deliverable 7.2 - the **Exploitation, Replicability and Sustainability (ER&S) Plan** – plays a central role in ensuring that the results achieved by FINEX are not only delivered but also transformed into lasting impact. It presents preliminary insights about possible exploitation pathways for **key exploitable results (KERs)** across all work packages, particularly the outputs of experimentation resources mapping, the HelpDesk, pilots, policy roadmaps, and capacity-building activities, and translates them into actionable strategies for diverse stakeholder groups.

The purpose of this deliverable is threefold:

- **Exploitation**: to identify the project's key results and define how they will be used by stakeholders, from innovators and SMEs to policymakers and innovation hubs.
- **Replicability**: to demonstrate how FINEX tools, methods, and practices can be adapted and applied in other regions and sectors, ensuring maximum reach and transferability.
- **Sustainability**: to establish the mechanisms, commitments, and governance models that will allow project results to continue delivering value after the project's conclusion.

It is important to note that this is a living document including preliminary version of the ER&S plan of FINEX. A more mature version of this strategy will be created later in the project lifetime (M20), including more concrete pathways to exploitation, refined mechanisms for each partner's operational ER&S strategy and an improved set of impact indicators.

This introduction outlines the scope of Deliverable 7.2 and positions it within the broader FINEX objectives. The following sections present in detail the strategies, policy alignment, and measurable indicators that will guide the exploitation, replication, and sustainability of the project's outcomes.

1.1 Scope and objectives

The purpose of WP7 is to turn FINEX results into policy and practice. It (i) maps commonalities and synergies with EU sister projects (T7.1), (ii) monitors implementation and analyses evidence (T7.2), and (iii) packages outcomes into clear exploitation, replicability, and sustainability pathways (T7.3). Led by HEC Paris with RTU responsible for the ER&S packaging, WP7 provides the evidence base and the instruments that ensure long-term uptake of FINEX results.
This includes the following WP7 outputs:

- D7.1 Policy Roadmap and Recommendations - an evidence-based roadmap that translates monitoring data, regulatory mapping, and policy-lab insights into actionable guidance for EU, national and regional authorities.
- D7.2 Exploitation, Replicability and Sustainability (ER&S) Plan - the present deliverable that consolidates the list of key exploitable results, defines possible uptake pathways, and sets out sustainability commitments.

Supporting monitoring and synergy-mapping assets the sister-projects & contacts inventory and implementation monitoring outputs/KPI tracking, which feed both the ER&S Plan and the Policy Roadmap. The **scope** of Deliverable 7.2 - Exploitation, Replicability and Sustainability (ER&S) Plan - is to provide a comprehensive framework that guarantees the long-term value and usability of the results generated by the FINEX project. The deliverable covers all key project outputs, ranging from practical tools (e.g. matchmaking framework, Experimentation Resources Catalogue, Cleantech Best Practices Guide, Helpdesk) to strategic assets (e.g. policy roadmaps, regional action plans, capacity-building guides). It sets out how these outputs will be:

- **exploited** by target groups defined in the Table 2 below for each WP;
- **replicated** in other regional, national, or European contexts; and
- **sustained** through long-term ownership, integration into partner strategies, and alignment with EU policy priorities.

The **objectives** of this deliverable are:

1. **To identify and structure the project's key exploitable results** - mapping outputs across work packages and clarifying their value for specific user groups, including startups, SMEs, incubators, accelerators, regional innovation hubs, policymakers, and EU-level initiatives.
2. **To define initial pathways for exploitation and replicability** – with a preliminary indication about how the knowledge, tools, and models developed within FINEX can be adapted, transferred, and scaled in different innovation ecosystems, ensuring relevance across diverse regional and sectoral contexts.
3. **To define Intellectual Property Management rules and processes** - establishing clear principles for ownership, protection, and access to project results, ensuring that knowledge generated within FINEX is appropriately safeguarded, shared, and transferred in line with consortium agreements and EU regulations.
4. **To establish sustainability mechanisms and commitments** - ensuring that the most impactful results of the project remain accessible, updated, and integrated into long-term partner activities and broader EU initiatives beyond the funded period.

By fulfilling these objectives, Deliverable 7.2 ensures that the FINEX project will not only achieve its immediate goals but also contribute to **lasting systemic impact** by strengthening cleantech experimentation ecosystems.

1.2 Relation to WPs, tasks, and other deliverables

Deliverable 7.2 is closely interconnected with activities across the FINEX project and builds on the results of several work packages and tasks. Its purpose is to consolidate outcomes into a strategic framework that ensures long-term impact.

Within WP7, Deliverable 7.2 (ER&S Plan) is directly connected to all WP 7 tasks. In particular, **Task 7.1** (HEC Paris) identifies synergies with EU sister projects and provides external benchmarks and contacts that support replication. **Task 7.2** (HEC Paris) monitors project implementation and analyses results, offering the evidence base for policy recommendations and exploitation strategies. **Task 7.3** (RTU) is responsible for turning these insights into the concrete ER&S framework and overview documented in D7.2.

Relation to WP6. WP6 (led by KIOS CoE) generates experimentation cases and pilots, which are key inputs for D7.2. **Task 6.1** (matchmaking with experimentation spaces) and **Task 6.3** (deployment of pilots) provide practical examples of results that can be exploited and replicated. **Task 6.2** (Action Plan formulation) ensures that lessons from piloting are structured, feeding directly into the sustainability pathways described in D7.2.

Relation to WP5. WP5 (EIT Digital) contributes exploitable outputs such as the **Helpdesk (T5.3, D5.1)**, matchmaking formats (T5.2), and outreach models (T5.1). These become part of the assets highlighted in D7.2. The plan integrates these tools into its sustainability roadmap, ensuring their maintenance and scalability after the project ends.

Relation to WP4. WP4 (Cleantech-EU lead) provides capacity-building resources, best practices, and experimentation support tools (T4.1–T4.3). The Experimentation Spaces Catalogue, best practice guides, and reinforced support capabilities are referenced in D7.2 as replicable models for other regions. WP4 also supplies feedback loops (from innovators and stakeholders) that strengthen the ER&S framework.

Relation to WP3. WP3 (SUNRISE STP lead) defines the cleantech priority areas for the project (M1–M11). These priority areas are the thematic foundation for exploitation strategies in D7.2, ensuring that replication and sustainability efforts focus on the most relevant innovation fields.

Relation to WP2. WP2 (Aalto lead) develops the Gender Action Plan (T2.1, D2.2). D7.2 embeds inclusiveness and gender equality principles from WP2 into its exploitation and sustainability strategies, ensuring that replication pathways remain equitable and aligned with EU diversity priorities.

Relation to WP1. WP1 (TalTech lead) ensures management, communication, dissemination, and compliance. Its deliverables, such as the **Risk Management Plan (D1.6)**, **Data Management and Ethics Plan (D1.7)**, and **CED Plan (D1.8)**, provide the framework for how D7.2 is shared, promoted, and safeguarded. WP1 channels are also used to disseminate the ER&S Plan to stakeholders at EU and regional levels.

Relation to other deliverables. D7.2 consolidates outputs from multiple WPs and deliverables, including D4.1 (Support resources mapping), D5.1 (Helpdesk for innovators), and experimentation pilots from WP6. It also aligns with WP1 deliverables (CED Plan, DMP & Ethics Plan) to ensure visibility and compliance. In summary, Deliverable 7.2 is not a standalone document but a synthesis deliverable that integrates inputs and results from all WPs. It ensures that the diverse outputs of FINEX are translated into clear exploitation pathways, replication models, and sustainability mechanisms that will endure beyond the project lifecycle. The RE&S Plan will be updated in M20 (D7.3 Exploitation, Replicability and Sustainability (ER&S) Plan (v.2)).

2. General Approach to ER&S planning.

The planning of the dissemination and exploitation of results is an integral component (and an obligation) of all Horizon Europe (HE) projects. The HE programme guidelines provides three important definitions guiding this document (EC, 2025):

- ***Dissemination****: the public disclosure of the results by appropriate means (other than resulting from protecting or exploiting the results), including by scientific publications in any medium.*
- ***Exploitation:*** *the use of results in further research and innovation activities other than those covered by the action concerned, including among other things, commercial exploitation such as developing, creating, manufacturing and marketing a product or process, creating and providing a service, or in standardisation activities.*
- ***Results:*** *Results' means any tangible or intangible effect of the action, such as data, know-how or information, whatever its form or nature, whether or not it can be protected, as well as any rights attached to it, including intellectual property rights.*

Following from the definitions above, the general approach to the integration of a preliminary plan of ER&S is based on (**i) the identification of target groups (WHO benefits), (ii) definition of key exploitable results (KERs) (WHAT is exploited) and (ii) validation of specific exploitation pathways (HOW and WHEN the results are valorised)**.

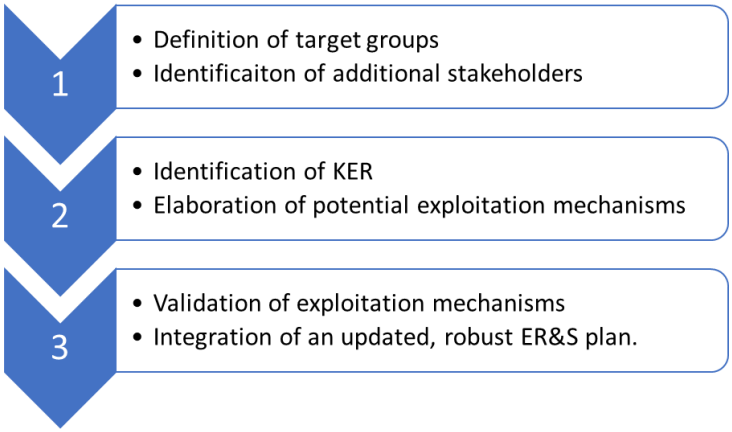

Figure 1 Step-wise approach to the elaboration of the FINEX ER&S plan.

This document focuses on the first two steps introduced above, whereas the last step will be included in an updated ER&S plan (M20). Below a general description of the different steps is included.

2.1 Target groups and key stakeholders.

This deliverable is intended for the key stakeholders of the FINEX ecosystem. It explains how the project's exploitable results can be used in practice, who will benefit from them, and how they contribute to strengthening cleantech innovation across Europe. The table below summarises the main target groups and the specific ways in which they will apply or benefit from the deliverable.

Table 2 Audience: target groups and stakeholders.

Target group	Relevance of the Deliverable
Startups and SMEs	Use FINEX assets (Helpdesk, Catalogue, Self-Assessment Tool) to access experimentation opportunities, benchmark capacities, and connect with testbeds and support services.
Ecosystem actors, Incubators, Accelerators, and Cluster Organisations	Apply the Catalogue, Action Plan, and Toolkit to streamline support services, coach innovators, and structure matchmaking and pilot deployment.
Testbed Managers and Regional Innovation Hubs	Implement the Action Plan and Matchmaking Tool to design and monitor pilots, and use the Catalogue to attract innovators to their facilities.
Investors and Venture Support Organisations	Rely on the Self-Assessment Tool and scouting model to evaluate startup readiness, identify promising ventures, and support due diligence.
Universities and Training Providers	Integrate the Toolkit, Catalogue, and Self-Assessment Tool into curricula to train the next generation of entrepreneurs with practical resources.
Policy Makers (EU, National, Regional)	Use the Policy Roadmap and related outputs to shape supportive frameworks, remove barriers, and align local regulations with EU priorities.
EU Initiatives and Networks	Benchmark resources, replicate tools, and integrate FINEX assets into wider European programmes supporting cleantech innovation.

2.2. Methodology to identify KERs

Each Key Exploitable Result (KER) in FINEX has been developed through a structured process that combines partner inputs, shared templates, validation rounds, and testing in real project activities. This ensures that all outputs are credible, user-tested, and replicable beyond the project.

- **Work Package context**: Each KER is clearly linked to the Work Package and task under which it was developed, clarifying ownership and responsibility.
- **Templates and tools**: Dedicated templates (Excel, Word, PPT) were used for data collection and structuring, such as the *Experimentation Spaces Catalogue.xlsx*, *Support Resources*

Mapping questionnaire (D4.1), and *Assessment tool.url*. These ensured consistency and comparability across partner inputs.

- **Partner contributions**: All seven FINEX partners contributed data and content from their regions and ecosystems, coordinated by the WP lead (e.g. Cleantech-EU for WP4, KIOS CoE for WP6, HEC Paris for WP7).
- **Validation rounds**: Drafts were reviewed and corrected through partner consultations, email feedback loops, and coordination calls. Lead partners (e.g. TalTech, Cleantech-EU, HEC Paris) ensured completeness and accuracy before consolidation.
- **Testing and refinement**: Several KERs were piloted and tested during live project events such as matchmaking workshops, the Interregional Matchmaking Event (7 Oct), and MEAB advisory sessions. Feedback from startups, SMEs, and ecosystem actors informed iterative improvements.
- **Finalisation**: The validated content was consolidated into user-friendly formats (Excel, PDF, PPT, online templates) to ensure usability, scalability, and easy replication in other regions or projects.

This stepwise methodology guarantees that the FINEX results are not only project outputs but also tested, validated, and ready-to-use tools for innovators, ecosystem actors, and policymakers.

2.3 Validation of specific exploitation pathways and final ER&S plan.

This final step of the ER&S planning process will include a process of refinement of KER exploitation pathways, interactive dialogue among partners, a dedicated session with the Horizon Results Booster[2], and additional market and end-user analysis. This additional step will become operational between M13-M20 of the project's lifetime.

The next section includes more detailed explanations are provided for each deliverable, result, and work package, showing how the KER identification methodology was applied in practice.

[2] https://www.horizonresultsbooster.eu/

3. Key Exploitable Results

The FINEX beneficiaries have identified a series of key exploitable results that reflect the diversity of the project outcomes. These can be grouped in four broad types or categories:

1. Enabling tools, methods, and services for innovators.
2. Learning and training resources.
3. Knowledge and research findings.
4. Policy and decision-making resources.

Below the specific KERs are provided, including a description, the delivery methodology, target group, value added, and beneficiaries involved. In practice, more than one of the KER types can be allocated to the same result – depending on the main and secondary orientation or end use of its individual components e.g. the same asset could be developed as a tool (type 1) and as a scientific publication (type 3).

KER 1: FINEX Helpdesk for Innovators (WP5)

Description of KER

The Helpdesk serves as a single-entry point for innovators seeking support, matchmaking, and information on experimentation opportunities. It consolidates outreach, eligibility screening, and referral services into one recognisable function. For exploitation, the Helpdesk will be sustained beyond the project by embedding it into EIT Digital's venture support operations, ensuring continuity of service. Replication is possible across other regions where partners can adopt the format and workflows as a ready-to-use engagement tool.The Helpdesk is supported by a set of concrete resources developed within WP5. These materials provide the operational backbone for intake, outreach, and referral, and are made available as templates and digital tools:

- Homepage: https://finestcentre.eu/project/finex/
- The Helpdesk: https://www.eitdigital.eu/finex-helpdesk

KER type: 1. Enabling tools, methods, and services for innovators

Motivation and Objectives

The Helpdesk was created to tackle the fragmentation innovators often face when navigating support ecosystems. Its main objective is to provide a clear, recognisable Single-Entry Point where startups and SMEs can access FINEX resources, eligibility screening, and matchmaking opportunities without duplication or confusion. By consolidating outreach, referrals, and guidance into one service, the Helpdesk ensures innovators spend less time searching for opportunities and more time engaging in experimentation. Beyond serving as an entry channel, it aims to build trust, increase transparency, and position FINEX as a long-term gateway to cleantech innovation support across Europe.

Methodology and Delivery

The Helpdesk is built under WP5 (EIT Digital) through a structured multi-step process. First, WP4 provided input via the Support Resources Mapping questionnaire and the Experimentation Spaces Catalogue (Excel, PDF), ensuring a clear overview of existing capabilities. Co-design is carried out in matchmaking workshops (Sept–Oct) using templates (Matchmaking presentation_Template.pptx, Assessment tool.url, FINEX_6.1_Invitation_WP6.docx). The initial workflows (eligibility screening, referrals, outreach functions) are piloted at the Interregional Matchmaking Event (7 Oct). Feedback from startups and SMEs was collected through surveys and partner discussions, and refinements were made iteratively. The system embeds into EIT Digital's existing CRM and event platforms for scalability, with oversight provided through WP1 progress reporting and MEAB consultations.

Utilization by Stakeholders

In practice, startups and SMEs use the Helpdesk as their primary access point to explore opportunities, receive eligibility screening, and connect with relevant experimentation spaces. Ecosystem partners such as incubators, accelerators, and cluster organisations apply it as a channel to attract and direct innovators into structured support pathways. Policy actors and EU initiatives utilise the Helpdesk as a demonstrator of single-entry service models that can be replicated in other regions to foster easier access and stronger collaboration.

Target Group

The Helpdesk is designed for startups and SMEs seeking a single entry point to discover funding pathways, testing opportunities, and support services within the FINEX ecosystem. It also targets incubators, accelerators, and regional innovation hubs, which can use the Helpdesk to streamline referrals and improve coordination across their support activities. Cluster managers and ecosystem builders benefit from adopting the Helpdesk as a replicable engagement model, while EU-level initiatives and policymakers may draw on it as a reference for designing simplified access mechanisms that reduce fragmentation across European innovation ecosystems.

Value Added to the Innovation Ecosystem & Target Group

This is one of the flagship results of FINEX. It simplifies access, makes support visible, and ensures continuity through integration into EIT Digital's venture services. Replication is possible by any region adopting the Helpdesk template.

Project beneficiaries involved: EIT Digital, TalTech, but with the contributions from all seven FINEX partners: TalTech, EIT Digital, HEC Paris, Cleantech Europe, KIOS CoE, RTU, and STP.

KER2: Experimentation and Support Tools & Best Practices (WP4)

Description of KER

This output consolidates methodologies, resources, and lessons into a structured toolkit of experimentation support practices. By packaging them as guidelines, training resources, and

catalogues, the toolkit enables ecosystem actors and policy labs to strengthen their capacity to host pilots and accelerate innovation. Exploitation will occur through integration into Cleantech-EU and TalTech training and advisory services, while replication is supported through its open-access format, allowing adoption by other EU ecosystems.

KER type: 2. Learning and training resources.

Motivation and Objectives: Across Europe, many innovation ecosystems still lack structured and field-tested approaches for supporting experimentation. This creates uncertainty for startups, SMEs, and intermediaries, who often struggle to access reliable processes, proven methodologies, and consistent guidance when launching pilots. The toolkit directly addresses this gap by consolidating methodologies, case studies, and best practices from multiple regions into a single, practical resource. Its objective is to provide ecosystem actors-including hubs, incubators, accelerators, policy labs, and regional authorities with a tested and replicable framework that improves the way experimentation services are organised, delivered, and scaled. By doing so, it empowers stakeholders to reduce inefficiencies, accelerate pilot deployment, and align local practices with European-level standards for innovation support.

Methodology and Delivery: This toolkit was created under WP4 (Cleantech-EU) by systematically collecting practices from partners through surveys, email consultations, and the Support Resources Mapping questionnaire (D4.1). Input was structured into shared templates (Excel and Word formats) and validated by partners through review rounds coordinated by Cleantech-EU and TalTech. Case studies were gathered during FINEX matchmaking events and reinforced by insights from pilots in WP6. The material was organised into guidelines, examples, and advisory notes using shared formats in PDF and PPTX to ensure consistency. Partner validation (via email feedback loops and catalogue updates) guaranteed accuracy and replicability.

Target Group

The toolkit is aimed at regional hubs, incubators, and accelerators that want to strengthen their local experimentation services by applying structured methodologies. It also addresses universities and training providers, which can integrate the tools and case studies into entrepreneurship and innovation courses, thereby ensuring that academic training is aligned with practical support models. Policy labs and regional authorities can adopt the best practices as guidance for designing effective innovation policies, while cluster organisations and ecosystem builders may use the toolkit to coordinate experimentation activities across different stakeholders.

Utilization by Stakeholders: The toolkit is primarily utilised by regional hubs, incubators, and accelerators as a ready-to-use reference for structuring their experimentation programmes and support services. Policy labs and regional authorities apply it as evidence-based input when designing innovation policies and public programmes. Universities and training providers use the toolkit's case studies and guidelines to enrich entrepreneurship curricula, while cluster organisations and ecosystem builders employ it to coordinate activities across multiple stakeholders in their regions.

Value Addition to the Innovation Ecosystem: The toolkit adds value by converting the project's experiences into concrete, standardised, and transferable resources. It reduces duplication of effort by offering guidelines, templates, and best practices that stakeholders can adopt with minimal adaptation. This accelerates the establishment of experimentation services, ensures consistency across regions, and supports the scaling of cleantech innovation through widely applicable methods.

Beneficiaries involved: Cleantech Europe, TalTech, but the output is the result of contributions from all seven FINEX partners: TalTech, EIT Digital, HEC Paris, Cleantech Europe, KIOS CoE, RTU, and STP.

KER3: FINEX Experimentation Resources Catalogue (WP4)

Description of KER: The catalogue maps and describes available cleantech experimentation spaces, linking them with innovators and regional ecosystems. This is a tangible asset for matchmaking and piloting. Exploitation is ensured through regular updates by HEC Paris and Cleantech-EU, while replication is straightforward as the catalogue template can be reused by other projects or regions to map their own resources.

KER type: 1. Enabling tools, methods, and services for innovators.

Motivation and Objectives:

The Catalogue addresses the lack of visibility and coordination across European cleantech experimentation resources. Innovators often struggle to identify not only testbeds but also living labs, incubators, pilot plants, research infrastructures, and advisory services that are relevant for their needs. The objective of the Catalogue is to provide a single, structured reference point that maps these diverse resources, links them with regional ecosystems, and facilitates matchmaking between innovators and support providers. By consolidating this information, the Catalogue reduces fragmentation, improves transparency, and accelerates innovators' access to facilities and services across Europe.

Methodology and Delivery:

The Catalogue compiles information on experimentation spaces across Europe, covering capabilities and service offers. The Catalogue was compiled under WP4 (led by Cleantech-EU and HEC Paris) using the *Experimentation Spaces Catalogue* template circulated to all partners. Each partner was responsible for filling in facility information (services, capabilities, access conditions), and corrections were made following Carina's coordination emails. Data was validated through iterative partner feedback and cross-checks with publicly available facility information. Final entries were consolidated into an Excel-based catalogue, then exported into *PDF* for wider dissemination. Accuracy and completeness were checked during matchmaking sessions, where innovators and testbed providers verified the listings.

Target Group

The catalogue is designed for startups and scaleups seeking to identify and connect with suitable experimentation facilities and testbeds for validating their technologies. It also targets support organisations such as incubators, accelerators, and cluster organisations, which can use the catalogue as a reference to guide innovators towards the most relevant resources. In addition, regional and national authorities are an important audience, as the catalogue provides them with an overview of the innovation infrastructure in their ecosystems. At the European level, the catalogue also benefits EU initiatives and networks by enabling benchmarking of resources across regions and identifying infrastructure gaps or overlaps.

Utilization by Stakeholders

The Catalogue is used by startups and scaleups to identify testbeds, pilot plants, living labs, and advisory services that match their development needs. Incubators, accelerators, and cluster organisations use it as a practical tool to direct innovators towards the most relevant resources in their ecosystems. Regional and national policymakers rely on the Catalogue for ecosystem mapping and gap analysis, supporting better planning and investment in innovation infrastructures. At the EU level, networks and initiatives employ the Catalogue for benchmarking resources across regions and fostering cross-border collaboration.

Value Addition to the Innovation Ecosystem

The Catalogue reduces information asymmetry by providing a transparent, structured overview of experimentation spaces and related services across Europe. It accelerates innovators' access not only to testbeds but also to living labs, incubators, pilot facilities, and advisory resources, ensuring a broader utility. By consolidating dispersed information into one format, it improves connectivity between innovators and support providers, strengthens regional ecosystems, and enables replication in other contexts through its adaptable template.

Beneficiaries involved: The Catalogue is compiled with contributions from all seven FINEX partners: TalTech, EIT Digital, HEC Paris, Cleantech Europe, KIOS CoE, RTU, and STP. Each partner is responsible for mapping and submitting information about the experimentation resources available in their regional ecosystems, including testbeds, living labs, incubators, pilot plants, and advisory services. Cleantech Europe and HEC Paris coordinate the consolidation of entries, while TalTech supports the validation of data through ecosystem checks. KIOS CoE, RTU, EIT Digital, and STP contribute by ensuring that the facilities and services from their regions are accurately represented. This joint effort ensures that the Catalogue reflects the diversity of the consortium's ecosystems and guarantees its replicability in other contexts.

KER4: Self-Assessment Tool for Cleantech and Deeptech Ecosystems (WP4)

Description of KER

This tool empowers (ecosystem-level) organisations supporting deeptech and cleantech startups and SMEs to benchmark their capacities, resources, and competences for service delivery and continued growth. To maximise exploitation, it will be made user-friendly (Excel and/or web-based) and accompanied by guidance materials. Partners will integrate it into support services, enabling innovators to track progress systematically. Replication will be pursued by making the tool openly available for adaptation by incubators, accelerators, and regional hubs across Europe.

KER types: (1) Enabling tools, methods, and services for innovators and (3) Knowledge and research findings.

Motivation and Objectives

Startups and SMEs need to clearly understand their strengths, weaknesses, and growth needs to access support services effectively and progress towards market readiness. In turn, ecosystem organisations and other intermediary agents can also benefit from knowing their relative level of maturity in terms of available and future infrastructure, capabilities and additional resources to support innovators. The Self-Assessment Tool addresses this dual need by providing ecosystem and entrepreneurship and innovation support organisations (ESO/ISO) a structured tool for benchmarking critical resources and competences to successfully support deeptech ventures. This tool can also provide them with a diagnose of the level of current and future experimentation and testing facilities that may be required to fulfil their mission, helping them to identify gaps, track their development, and to plan their introduction to ultimately improve their incubation, acceleration and investment activities.

Methodology and Delivery

The Self-Assessment Tool is designed under WP4. Based on the outcome of a detailed survey questionnaire filled by ecosystem partners, HEC Paris is in charge of co-developing a modular and online template (Assessment tool.url) based on best practices of strong ecosystems, and additional indicators (e.g. obtained from expert discussions and feedback interviews). A draft version of the tool can be tested with ecosystem organisations and startups during matchmaking events, where test users provide input on clarity and usability. Adjustments are made based on survey responses, additional expert feedback and discussions during Helpdesk intake. The tool is finalised as a digital self-assessment form and shared as a template that incubators and accelerators can adapt for coaching. Further integration with the Helpdesk referral system may also be explored. It is used directly by any ecosystem-level organisation supporting startups and by incubators in their coaching programmes. The underlying questionnaire and the data collected (questionnaire responses) from diverse cleantech/deeptech ecosystems serves as empirical material for a scientific publication in an academic journal.

Target Group

The Self-Assessment Tool is targeted at ecosystem organisations that want to benchmark their capacity, readiness, and resource gaps before engaging in experimentation or scaling activities. It also serves incubators and accelerators, which can integrate the tool into their coaching and advisory

programmes to track the progress of innovators. Investors and venture support organisations are another important audience, as they can use the results of the self-assessment to support due diligence processes and evaluate the potential of their support to cleantech/deeptech startups. In addition, universities and training providers may apply the tool in entrepreneurship education, helping students and early-stage entrepreneurs evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their business ideas.

Utilization by Stakeholders

Investors, venture managers and mentors working with startups and SMEs in cleantech/deeeptech ecosystems can use the Self-Assessment Tool as a structured entry point to evaluate the required infrastructure, internal capacities, identify weaknesses, and prioritise areas for development before applying it to pilots, programmes or providing funding. Incubators and accelerators integrate the tool into their coaching programmes to provide tailored support and to track the progress of the innovators they mentor. Investors and venture support organisations use assessment results as part of their due diligence to better understand the maturity and growth potential of startups. In addition, universities and training providers apply the tool within entrepreneurship courses, enabling students and early-stage entrepreneurs to self-diagnose strengths and weaknesses of the business models of their ESO/ISO/ Ecosystem organisations.

Value Addition to the Innovation Ecosystem

The Self-Assessment Tool translates abstract evaluation criteria into a practical and easy-to-use format that supports both innovators and ecosystem actors, particularly entrepreneurship support organisations, innovation support organisations and ecosystem-support platforms. It reduces uncertainty for each of the ecosystem actors by clarifying their readiness levels and it’s possible to be benchmarked against other, while also improving the efficiency of incubators, accelerators, and investors who rely on transparent benchmarking data. By linking directly to the Helpdesk referral system, it ensures that innovators are quickly matched with the most relevant support opportunities, thereby accelerating their journey from ideation to market readiness.

Beneficiaries involved: HEC Paris with the input from all FINEX partners -TalTech, EIT Digital, HEC Paris, Cleantech Europe, KIOS CoE, RTU, and STP.

KER5: FINEX Action Plan & Scouting Model (WP6)

Description of KER

The Action Plan, Matchmaking Tool, and Cross-Border Scouting & Outreach Model together form the operational backbone of WP6. They provide both a strategic framework and a practical methodology for structuring pilots, building international pipelines of cleantech startups, and supporting cross-regional experimentation. While the Action Plan and Matchmaking Tool codify how pilots are designed, launched, and monitored, the Scouting Model packages the outreach processes, templates, and workflows needed to identify and attract innovators across borders. Exploitation is ensured as partners

embed these tools into their ongoing ecosystems, while replication is supported by making the methodologies openly transferable for adoption by other regions and EU initiatives.

KER type: 1. Enabling tools, methods, and services for innovators

Motivation and Objectives

Pilots frequently face challenges when they are not supported by a clear and consistent process. The Action Plan and Matchmaking Tool address this gap by providing a structured framework that guides stakeholders through every stage — from identifying suitable startups and matching them with facilities to deploying and monitoring pilots. This ensures that experimentation activities are systematic, transparent, and scalable across regions.

Methodology and Delivery

The Action Plan was co-developed under WP6 (KIOS CoE and TalTech). A shared *Action Plan template* was prepared and circulated to partners for inputs. Information on startup needs and experimentation opportunities was gathered during matchmaking workshops (*Matchmaking event dates.xlsx, Matchmaking presentation_Template.pptx*). The methodology combined intake surveys, partner interviews, and structured matchmaking protocols tested in live sessions. Feedback was incorporated from pilot deployment activities under T6.3. The tool was refined iteratively, ensuring usability for both regional partners and testbed managers. Final workflows were integrated into matchmaking events, linking directly with the Helpdesk and WP5 outreach activities.

Target Group

The Action Plan and Matchmaking Tool are intended for testbed managers and regional partners who need a structured approach to design, launch, and monitor experimentation pilots. Cluster organisations and accelerators can apply the tool to organise matchmaking sessions and connect innovators with facilities, while EU and interregional initiatives may replicate the action plan as a framework for structuring cross-border pilot programmes. The tool is also relevant for innovation intermediaries such as advisory services and innovation agencies, which can use it to standardise matchmaking procedures and improve the efficiency of connecting startups with support actors.

Utilization by Stakeholders

Regional partners and testbed operators use the Action Plan and Tool as a structured guide to design and implement pilots, ensuring that each pilot includes clear objectives, planned activities, and measurable KPIs for assessment. This allows testbed managers to monitor pilot performance systematically and to report outcomes in a transparent way. Cluster organisations and accelerators employ the framework to facilitate structured matchmaking sessions and to connect innovators with the most suitable facilities. Innovation agencies and advisory services apply the Action Plan to standardise

their pilot management procedures, improving coordination across stakeholders and ensuring comparability of results. At the EU and interregional level, initiatives use the Action Plan as a transferable model for structuring pilot programmes, replicating its methodology - including KPIs to strengthen monitoring, learning, and scalability of experimentation across different regions.

Value Addition to the Innovation Ecosystem

This asset strengthens FINEX's legacy by delivering a validated methodology that reduces uncertainty in pilot deployment. By codifying best practices into an adaptable framework, it ensures greater efficiency, minimises coordination risks, and enables replication by other regions and initiatives seeking to scale cleantech experimentation.

Beneficiaries involved: KIOS CoE, Taltech with the contributions from all seven FINEX partners: TalTech, EIT Digital, HEC Paris, Cleantech Europe, KIOS CoE, RTU, and STP.

KER6: Policy Roadmap and Recommendations (WP7)

Key exploitable result:

The policy roadmap developed under WP7 synthesises monitoring data, regulatory mapping, and policy lab results. It represents a key exploitable output at the policy level, enabling regional, national, and EU actors to design supportive regulatory environments for cleantech experimentation. Exploitation will occur through ongoing policy dialogues led by HEC Paris and RTU, while replication is ensured by publishing the roadmap as an open resource for use by other projects and institutions.

KER type: 4. Policy and decision-making resources.

Motivation and Objectives

Cleantech innovators face persistent regulatory barriers that slow down experimentation, scaling, and cross-border market entry. The Policy Roadmap provides actionable recommendations to policymakers on how to reduce these barriers and create enabling conditions for innovation. The recommendations focus on clarifying regulatory requirements for testing and piloting, improving access to experimentation spaces across regions, streamlining procedures for cross-border collaboration, and integrating gender equality and inclusiveness into innovation policies.

Target Group

The Policy Roadmap is targeted at EU policymakers and regulators, who can use it to shape supportive frameworks for cleantech experimentation at the European level. National and regional governments are also a primary audience, as the roadmap provides them with concrete recommendations for aligning local regulations and support structures with EU priorities. Innovation agencies and funding bodies can apply the roadmap's guidance when designing programmes that better support cleantech innovators. Finally, industry associations, NGOs, and advocacy groups represent another important audience, as

they can use the roadmap to advocate for reducing barriers and strengthening incentives for innovation and experimentation.

Methodology and Delivery

The Policy Roadmap is being developed under WP7 (HEC Paris, RTU) by combining multiple evidence sources. Data is gathered from *project implementation monitoring (T7.2)*, synergies with sister projects (*FINEX sister projects & contacts.xlsx*), and outcomes of policy lab sessions. Inputs were collected during partner meetings (e.g., HEC WP7 meeting in August, Internal Progress Report Meeting in September) and synthesised into draft recommendations. Stakeholder consultations (including MEAB sessions) provides qualitative validation. Drafts were refined iteratively with partner review rounds and documented in *T7.3 FINEX_Template.xlsx* before integration into D7.2. The final roadmap is being produced as a consolidated document aligning regulatory mapping, monitoring data, and consultation outputs.

Utilization by Stakeholders

The Policy Roadmap is used by EU and national policymakers, regulators, and innovation agencies as a practical reference for adapting regulatory frameworks, removing barriers to experimentation, and aligning local actions with EU priorities. It also supports regional governments, industry associations, and advocacy groups in shaping policies and programmes that foster cleantech innovation.

Value Addition to the Innovation Ecosystem

This flagship result ensures that FINEX's lessons inform policymaking by providing concrete recommendations on removing regulatory barriers, improving access to experimentation spaces, and aligning regional policies with EU priorities.

Beneficiaries involved: The roadmap is coordinated by HEC Paris (as WP7 lead) and RTU, but its development draws on inputs from all seven FINEX partners -TalTech, EIT Digital, HEC Paris, Cleantech Europe, KIOS CoE, RTU, and STP. Each partner contributes evidence, case material, and regional insights, ensuring that the recommendations are relevant, inclusive, and grounded in diverse ecosystem experiences.

4. Exploitation, Replicability and Sustainability Strategy

The exploitation strategy ensures that results generated in FINEX are translated into usable assets that create lasting impact on cleantech ecosystems. The ER&S Plan provides a consolidated framework for commercialization, replication, and policy uptake, aligning with EU strategies such as the Green Deal, the Circular Economy Action Plan, Fit for 55, and the New European Innovation Agenda.

The joint exploitation strategy is enacted through the following Key Exploitable Results (KERs), each linked to tasks and deliverables promised in the GA, and accompanied by sustainability commitments and replication pathways.

4.1 Joint Exploitation Strategy

The FINEX consortium has produced several outcomes that represent significant and innovative contributions with clear potential for exploitation, replication, and long-term sustainability. These have been aggregated at the consortium level into a set of **Key Exploitable Results (KERs)**. Each KER is linked to specific WPs and tasks, is packaged in a transferable format, and is supported by a sustainability pathway to ensure uptake beyond the project.

In general, it is possible to already foresee two broad mechanisms for the exploitation of project results: commercial, non-commercial, and hybrid. Examples of possible exploitation mechanisms are include below:

Table 3 Overview of possible types of exploitation mechanisms in HE projects

Commercial	Non-commercial	Hybrid
Product or Service creation Direct marketing and sales Pay per use Licencing (paid)	Further research (e.g. new grant) Training and education (free) Open source and/or open science use or transfer In-kind provisions	Fremium model (partly free, partly paid) Transfer of ownership (e.g. dedicated IP arrangements)

The table below outlines how each FINEX asset will be exploited. It presents the assets as columns and the main exploitation methods as rows, indicating for KER the likeliness of success of each exploitation method/ pathway.

Table 4 Asset exploitation methods

Exploitation Method / pathways	**Helpdesk (KER1)**	**Tools & Best Practices (KER2)**	**Catalogue (KER3)**	**Self-Assessment tool (KER4)**	**FINEX Action Plan & Scouting Model (KER5)**	**Policy Roadmap (KER6)**
Integration into partner services or activities	**Applicable**: *yes* **Likeliness**: *medium* **Mechanism**: *in kind provisions*.	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: high **Mechanism**: Open source & training	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: high **Mechanism**: Open-source transfer	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: medium **Mechanism**: Freemium (free tool, paid coaching)	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: high **Mechanism**: In-kind provisions (integrated into matchmaking)	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: high **Mechanism**: Policy integration via open access
Creation of training materials	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: medium **Mechanism**: Training/education	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: high**Mechanism**: Training modules, open education	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: medium **Mechanism**: Case-based training material	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: medium **Mechanism**: Training & education	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: high **Mechanism**: Training modules for regional hubs	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: high **Mechanism**: Policy training modules for regulators
Policy influence & advocacy	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: medium **Mechanism**: Evidence base for advocacy, open access	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: high **Mechanism**: Policy guidelines, open transfer	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: medium **Mechanism**: Evidence for advocacy (open data)	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: low **Mechanism**: Indirect (used in advocacy reports)	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: medium **Mechanism**: Policy evidence for EU innovation	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: very high **Mechanism**: Direct advocacy tool for EU/national regulators

Open access & replicability	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: high **Mechanism**: Freemium model / open access portal	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: very high **Mechanism**: Open-source transfer, in-kind	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: high **Mechanism**: Open data access, replicable Excel/PDF	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: high **Mechanism**: Freemium	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: high **Mechanism**: Open methodology shared with partners	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: very high **Mechanism**: Open PDF, open science transfer
Commercial uptake by ecosystem actors	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: high **Mechanism**: Product or service creation (venture support), Licensing	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: medium - high **Mechanism**: advisory/training packages, Licensing	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: medium **Mechanism**: Freemium, Product or service creation	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: medium **Mechanism**: Freemium	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: high **Mechanism**: Product or service creation (startup scouting), Pay-per-use	**Applicable**: yes **Likeliness**: medium **Mechanism**: Product or service creation (policy advisory services)

The specific mechanisms included in the table above will be validated the mature version of the ER&S plan (e.g. following a dedicated session with the Booster services by M16 and additional market research). It is possible that some of the specific mechanisms for exploitation may change, depending on the findings of the session and additional market information. In all cases, a cross-cutting exploitation mechanisms to be adopted by the consortium will be the use of the Horizon Results Platform. The latter will be a general mechanism for the identification of additional potential parties interested in exploring the project results.

4.2 Individual Exploitation Plans of Project Partners

TalTech

Motivation, Objectives and Grant Impact

As project coordinator and leader of WP1, TalTech's objective was to ensure smooth implementation, risk management, and dissemination, while also reinforcing support capabilities under WP4 and contributing to WP6. The project strengthened TalTech's profile as a trusted coordinator in European innovation projects and provided new tools to manage experimentation activities at a systemic level.

Exploitation Strategy

TalTech will integrate the **FINEX Action Plan** and **Matchmaking Tool** into its piloting programmes, making them part of its service portfolio for startups in Estonia and the Baltic region. The **Best Practices Toolkit** will be incorporated into TalTech's entrepreneurship education, ensuring that students and ecosystem actors have access to real-world methods. TalTech also intends to use the **policy roadmap** insights to inform national discussions on research commercialisation, positioning itself as a knowledge broker between universities, industry, and regulators.

Summing up, the main mechanisms for exploitation could be based on the integration of the asset into the activities of Taltech, including the use of own/in-kind resources for future delivery. This is a key assumption that will be validated in the updated version of this plan M20).

Aalto University

Motivation, Objectives and Grant Impact

Aalto University led WP2 on inclusiveness and gender equality, with the objective of embedding gender-sensitive practices into innovation ecosystems and ensuring that diversity considerations become a structural part of experimentation and policy design. Through FINEX, Aalto strengthened its role as a European leader in equality-driven innovation, generating new approaches and evidence that support both entrepreneurship and policymaking.

Exploitation Strategy

Aalto contributes directly to the exploitation of several KERs. For **KER2 (Experimentation Spaces Catalogue)** and **KER3 (Best Practices Toolkit)**, Aalto ensures that inclusiveness criteria are integrated, enabling regions and partners to adopt gender-sensitive approaches when mapping facilities or applying methodologies. In **KER7 (Policy Roadmap)**, Aalto's expertise supports the integration of inclusiveness and gender equality into regulatory recommendations, aligning policy frameworks with EU diversity goals.

Alongside these contributions, Aalto will sustain the **Gender Action Plan** as an internal and transferable resource. The plan will be updated and applied in Aalto's innovation programmes and promoted through partnerships with Finnish incubators and accelerators, embedding inclusivity into startup support services. It will also be shared in policy advisory contexts, such as with the Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and EU-level gender equality bodies. Furthermore, Aalto will adapt the plan into **training modules for mentors and ecosystem managers**, ensuring long-term impact by strengthening inclusivity skills across innovation chains

HEC Paris

Motivation, Objectives and Grant Impact

HEC Paris led WP7 and contributed to WP4. The motivation was to advance regulatory experimentation and to connect academic insights with practical policy and investment frameworks. FINEX gave HEC Paris a platform to test policy lab approaches and to position itself as a leading advisor on innovation governance. In addition, it has offer the possibility to create new tools that assess the level of maturity of cleantech innovation ecosystems.

Exploitation Strategy

HEC Paris will use the **Policy Roadmap** as a foundation for its ongoing policy dialogues with EU institutions, particularly in the fields of cleantech and digital regulation. It will package the **Experimentation Spaces Catalogue** and the **Best Practices Toolkit** into case-based teaching material for executive programmes in entrepreneurship and public policy. HEC also intends to exploit project results by developing a **new executive course module on regulatory sandboxes**, using FINEX outputs as applied content. The **Self-Assessment Tool** will be adapted into HEC's incubation and acceleration programmes (e.g. CDL, Incubateur HEC, Challenge+), and the underlying questionnaire may be used to generate a comprehensive database about the maturity of cleantech and deeptech ecosystems across Europe. An exploration into a regular publication or an index can be explored by HEC Paris (e.g. a EU monitor of experimentation and testing for Cleantech/Deeptech).

At the research level, HEC Paris will build two academic publications around the maturity of cleantech ecosystems in WP4 (e.g. in Social Forecasting and Social Change Journal) and about regulatory insights generated in WP7 (e.g. in Research Policy Journal), further disseminating FINEX contributions in international forums.

Summing up, the main mechanisms for exploitation could be based on the integration of the asset into the activities of HEC (e.g. self-assessment tool into HEC's incubation), creation of a new service (e.g. executive education course) and the generation of open access scientific publications.

EIT Digital

Motivation, Objectives and Grant Impact

EIT Digital led WP5, with responsibility for attracting innovators, developing the Helpdesk, and creating matchmaking opportunities. For EIT Digital, FINEX was a chance to strengthen its pan-European innovation platform and test new service formats.

Exploitation Strategy

EIT Digital will fully embed the **FINEX Helpdesk** into its venture support services and ensure it continues as a visible gateway for innovators. The **Scouting and Outreach Model** will be rolled out

across EIT Digital Nodes, connecting regional ecosystems and sustaining cross-border pipelines. The **Self-Assessment Tool** will be adapted into EIT Digital's coaching and accelerator processes, making it easier to benchmark startups before investment. By mainstreaming these outputs into its existing infrastructure, EIT Digital guarantees long-term sustainability and maximises the economic value of FINEX results.

Riga Technical University (RTU)

Motivation, Objectives and Grant Impact

RTU led Task 7.3 on exploitation, replicability and sustainability, and acted as a bridge between policy, academic research, and business ecosystems. The project strengthened RTU's role in Latvia as a policy shaper and innovation driver.

Exploitation Strategy

RTU will continue to develop the **ER&S framework** into a transferable model for other EU projects, ensuring that exploitation is not treated as an afterthought but as a structured process. At national level, RTU will integrate FINEX results into **Latvian cleantech policy roadmaps** and share the ER&S framework with the Ministry of Education and Science as a reference for future EU collaborations. The university also plans to expand its advisory services, using the ER&S methodology to help regional authorities and clusters build sustainable exploitation pathways.

KIOS Research and Innovation Center of Excellence (UCY)

Motivation, Objectives and Grant Impact

KIOS CoE led WP6, focusing on experimentation and pilots. Its goal was to reinforce Cyprus' position as a regional hub for applied research and testbed deployment. The project provided KIOS with the opportunity to expand its network and validate its approach to cross-border pilots.

Exploitation Strategy

KIOS will continue to apply the **Action Plan** methodology for piloting, integrating it into its testbed management practices. The pilots conducted during FINEX will be showcased as **case studies** to attract further collaborations with industry. The matchmaking tools will be retained for future use in regional pilot calls. By embedding FINEX outputs into its operational infrastructure, KIOS ensures that experimentation activities in Cyprus remain internationally connected and scalable.

Cleantech-EU

Motivation, Objectives and Grant Impact

Cleantech-EU led WP4 on capacity building and contributed to policy and outreach tasks. Its motivation was to build stronger cross-regional connections and to provide ecosystems with tested tools for

experimentation. FINEX reinforced Cleantech-EU's position as a facilitator of knowledge exchange across the EU.

Exploitation Strategy

Cleantech-EU will exploit the **Best Practices Toolkit** and the **Experimentation Spaces Catalogue** by integrating them into its advisory services for regional hubs. It will also use the **cross-regional outreach model** to strengthen its role as a connector of ecosystems. At the European level, Cleantech-EU intends to feed the Policy Roadmap into **advocacy activities**, ensuring that cleantech experimentation needs are reflected in EU policy debates.

Sunrise STP (Science and Technology Park)

Motivation, Objectives and Grant Impact

STP led WP3, focusing on priority areas for cleantech development. The motivation was to identify high-potential fields and remove barriers for innovation adoption. Through FINEX, STP deepened its role as a facilitator of regional innovation strategies.

Exploitation Strategy

STP will exploit the **Cleantech Priority Areas Report** by aligning it with regional smart specialisation strategies and promoting it to policymakers and cluster managers. It will also replicate the **priority-setting methodology** in future projects, offering it as a service to other regions. By embedding these practices into its strategy, STP ensures that regional policies remain aligned with market needs.

GATE CoE (Big Data for Smart Society Center of Excellence, Bulgaria)

Motivation, Objectives and Grant Impact

As a support partner, GATE CoE contributed to outreach, matchmaking, and policy dialogue. Its motivation was to strengthen Bulgaria's integration into European innovation ecosystems.

Exploitation Strategy. GATE will exploit FINEX results by using the **Scouting Model** and **Helpdesk formats** in its national innovation hub activities. It will also use the **Policy Roadmap** to advocate for improved digital and cleantech regulation in Bulgaria. By aligning local actions with European strategies, GATE ensures continuity and impact of FINEX results in its region.

5. Sustainability Goals, IPR and confidentiality.

Sustainability in FINEX is built around three main goals: ensuring the continuity of services such as the Helpdesk, keeping knowledge assets like catalogues and guides up to date, and embedding policy recommendations into EU and national agendas.

The activities to achieve this include partner commitments to annual updates of resources (RTU, Cleantech-EU, HEC Paris), integration of services into institutional operations (EIT Digital, KIOS CoE, HEC Paris, GATE CoE), and structured dissemination through WP1 channels. Resources are allocated by partners as part of their ongoing operations, with in-kind contributions ensuring continuity beyond EU funding.

Indicators for sustainability include: number of innovators supported through the Helpdesk post-project; frequency of updates to catalogues and guides; number of policy recommendations referenced in official EU/national documents; number of scientific and/or policy publications published, and replication of FINEX outputs in other EU-funded projects or regional strategies.

Potential risks include reduced partner capacity to maintain services, limited stakeholder uptake, or changes in EU policy priorities. Corrective actions include diversifying ownership of tools across multiple partners to avoid reliance on a single institution, embedding outputs into formal networks such as EIT Digital Nodes, and ensuring flexibility of models so they remain aligned with evolving EU policy agendas.

5.1 Intellectual Property (IP) Identification and Management

The FINEX consortium has taken deliberate steps to identify and manage Intellectual Property (IP) throughout the project in order to secure both the effective use of project results and their long-term sustainability. At the outset, each partner documented the background IP brought into the project, such as existing methodologies, platforms, or knowledge resources. During implementation, new results generated by tasks and deliverables are treated as foreground IP, including digital tools, policy roadmaps, matchmaking frameworks, capacity-building guides, and assessment instruments. These results are captured in internal reports and partner-level ER&S tables to ensure that all relevant IP is formally recorded.

Ownership of IP follows the provisions of the Grant Agreement and the Consortium Agreement. Results are owned by the partner or partners that generate them, while jointly developed outputs are covered by joint ownership arrangements to secure clarity over exploitation rights. This approach ensures that the ownership of assets such as the Helpdesk, experimentation tools, or catalogues is transparent and legally protected.

Exploitation of project IP is pursued in line with the definition of Key Exploitable Results. Assets with commercial, policy, or societal value, including the Cleantech Best Practices Guide, the FINEX

Helpdesk, the Experimentation Spaces Catalogue, and the Action Plan, are explicitly integrated into the ER&S framework. Partners commit to embedding these assets in their institutional strategies and to exploring opportunities for licensing, wider adoption by external stakeholders, and alignment with EU and national initiatives.

Replication of IP is ensured through the design of most outputs as open, transferable resources. Guides, catalogues, templates, and methodologies are intentionally prepared in formats that allow adaptation across different regions and contexts. Where results include restricted or proprietary components, they are shared under controlled access arrangements, ensuring that dissemination and confidentiality obligations are both respected.

Table 4 Indicative list of protection instruments

Subject Matter	Open Access	Copyright	Confidential information	Notes
Helpdesk workflows and templates	X	X		Replicable by other regions; copyright ensures attribution
Experimentation Resources & Catalouge	X	X		Published openly; designed for reuse and adaptation
Experimentation & Support Toolkit	X	X		Open-access guidelines and best practices
Self-assessment tool		X	X	Shared template: confidentiality applies to startup data
Action plan & Matchmaking tool	X	X		Freely reusable; copyright covers formats
Policy roadmap & Recommendations	X			Open dissemination; intended for policymaking
Scientific and Technical Articles		X		Published under full open-access or publisher copyright (with green open access published at institutional repositories)
Partner-specific know-how contributed			X	Remains protected as confidential background IP

5.2 Confidentiality

The protection of confidential information within the consortium is governed by the rules laid out in the Consortium Agreement and aligned with Horizon Europe standards. Information identified as confidential is not disclosed beyond the consortium without the explicit consent of the owning partner, and all partners remain committed to safeguarding sensitive data relating to business strategies, technical know-how, or competitive positioning.

At the same time, the consortium upholds Horizon Europe's principle of open access to research results and FAIR data management. This means that dissemination activities and publications are carefully designed to distinguish between results that can be made openly available and results that require confidentiality protection. By doing so, FINEX ensures that the project achieves broad impact through open dissemination while respecting the rights of partners over their proprietary contributions.

Confidentiality arrangements extend to access rights between partners. During the project, partners are granted the necessary rights to use each other's results where required for task execution and deliverable preparation. Beyond the project, specific agreements will govern the use of confidential results to guarantee both the continuity of exploitation and the protection of partner interests.

6. Conclusions and next steps.

The ER&S Plan presented in Deliverable 7.2 presents the diverse outputs of the FINEX consortium into a **coherent, forward-looking strategy**. By clearly mapping the value of each partner's results, this preliminary plan establishes the foundations for the knowledge, tools, and practices developed within the project are not only used during its lifetime but also embedded in wider ecosystems.

- **Exploitation**: Results such as the Cleantech Best Practices Guide, matchmaking tools, regional action plans, and the FINEX Helpdesk provide direct value for innovators, policymakers, and ecosystem actors. These outputs are already being deployed and will continue to be used in training, policymaking, and innovation support.
- **Replicability**: Many outputs, including event formats, outreach models, and ecosystem assessment tools, have been designed to be easily transferable across regions. Their flexible structures enable adaptation to different local contexts, ensuring broad uptake within and beyond the consortium.
- **Sustainability**: Partners have committed to maintaining and updating selected results beyond the project lifecycle (e.g., annual updates of guides by RTU, continued maintenance of the Matchmaking Tool by KIOS, long-term embedding of outreach models by EIT Digital and GATE CoE). This guarantees that the project's benefits will continue to grow after the funded period ends.

The ER&S Plan thus acts as the **strategic preliminary blueprint for long-term impact**, aimi9ng at ensuring that FINEX contributes to European priorities including the Green Deal, Circular Economy Action Plan, Fit for 55 package, and the New European Innovation Agenda. By aligning partner outputs with policy frameworks, practical exploitation routes, and sustainability mechanisms, FINEX's ambition is to be established as a **lasting enabler of cleantech innovation ecosystems** across Europe.

Table 5 ER&S summary

Pillars	Key Actions	Lead Partners / Examples	Sustainability Commitments
Exploitation	Turn project outputs into usable assets (guides, tools, roadmaps, helpdesk). Target users: innovators, policymakers, incubators, hubs.	RTU (*Cleantech Best Practices Guide*), EIT Digital (*FINEX Helpdesk*), GATE CoE (*Startup Scouting Model*), Self Assessment Tool (HEC Paris)	Assets integrated into training, policy processes, and platforms. Maintained within partner institutions.

Replicability	Ensure models and methods are transferable (event formats, catalogues, outreach templates, assessment tools).	KIOS (*Matchmaking Needs Assessment Tool*), Cleantech-EU (*Global Best Practice Reports*), Aalto (*Ecosystem engagement models*).	Flexible structures allow adaptation across regions. To be reused in Horizon Europe and EIT initiatives.
Sustainability	Define ownership and update mechanisms. Embed outputs in institutional strategies and EU agendas.	HEC Paris (*Self-assessment tool*), EIT Digital (integration into venture support).	Tools updated post-project; Helpdesk and matchmaking tools maintained; results integrated in EU/national innovation programmes.

Building on this initial ER&S Plan, the FINEX consortium recommends a set of actions to **secure long-term impact and maximise the value of project results**. These next steps ensure that the outputs are not only exploited during the project but also embedded in European innovation ecosystems beyond its duration.

Below a series of key recommendations are provided as a preliminary action plan for the operationalisation of the ER&S plan:

1. **Systematic Monitoring of KPIs**
    - Regularly track adoption metrics (e.g., number of innovators using the Helpdesk, matchmaking events leading to pilots, uptake of policy recommendations).
    - Use the MEAB (Multi-stakeholder Ecosystem Advisory Board) as a platform for feedback and adjustment.
2. **Scaling Partnerships**
    - Leverage existing networks (EIT Digital Nodes, GATE CoE partners, Sunrise STP regional networks) to expand adoption of FINEX outputs.
    - Actively engage new regions and innovation ecosystems in testing and adapting FINEX tools.
3. **Embedding in EU and National Programmes**
    - Promote alignment with Horizon Europe, EIT initiatives, and the New European Innovation Agenda to ensure integration of tools into future EU projects.

- Position the FINEX Helpdesk and Matchmaking Tool as prototypes for Single Entry Point services under NEIA.

4. **Continuous Update and Maintenance**
    - Partners such as RTU, KIOS, HEC Paris, and EIT Digital to maintain and update guides, assessment tools, and digital platforms annually.
    - Ensure FAIR data handling and open access compliance to support transparency and scientific reuse.
5. **Policy Uptake and Dissemination**
    - Actively disseminate the policy roadmap to EU and national policymakers.
    - Engage regional authorities to integrate FINEX recommendations into local innovation and sustainability strategies.

In terms of immediate next steps, this initial ER&S plan needs to be updated by M20 with a more mature and comprehensive account of specific and actionable exploitation mechanisms. In order to do that, the WP7 team (in coordination with the COO and relevant partners) will:

1. Further refine the existing document to identify gaps, potential bottlenecks (e.g. comparing it vs. best in practice ER&S plans).
2. Use the services of the Horizon Booster team to further refine the initial plan and to identify actionable recommendations for exploitation pathways, key performance indicators (e.g. abput the project's sustainability), specific IPR and confidentiality measures, timelines to implementation and backup or alternative models of exploitation (e.g. in case of failure with the proposed pathway). This session should happen around M16 at the latest.
3. Additional individual and group discussions with each partner to derive into a final version of each individual exploitation strategy.
4. Integration of a final document with the updated ER&S plan.

References

European Commission. (2025). *Horizon Europe programme general guide. Publications Office of the European Union.* *https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/programme-guide_horizon_en.pdf*

European Commission. (2025). *Horizon Results Platform* https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/horizon-results-platform