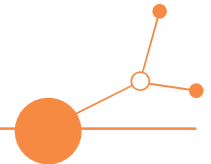


Stakeholders' Workshops Report

D.1.2.4



Version 5

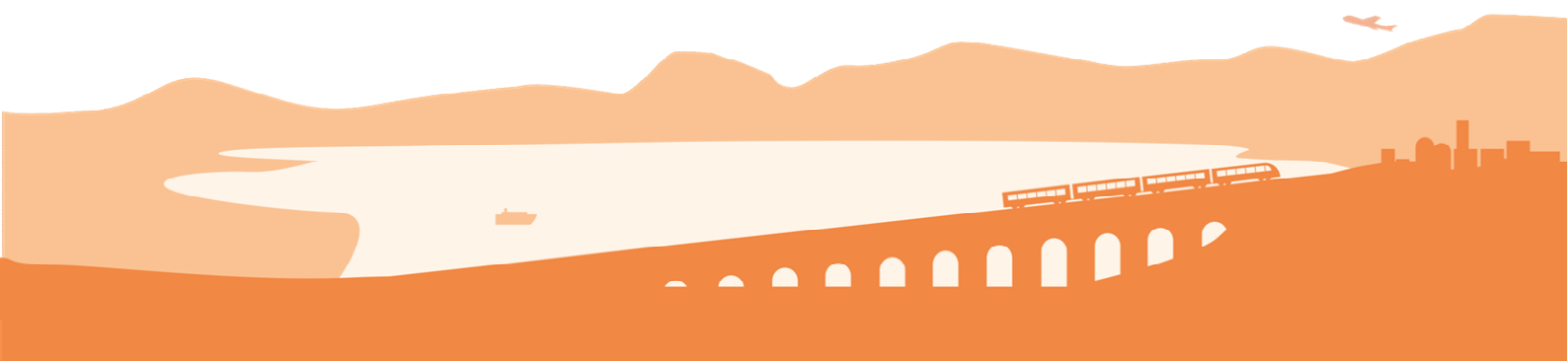
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Stakeholders' Workshops Report

Overall results from workshops

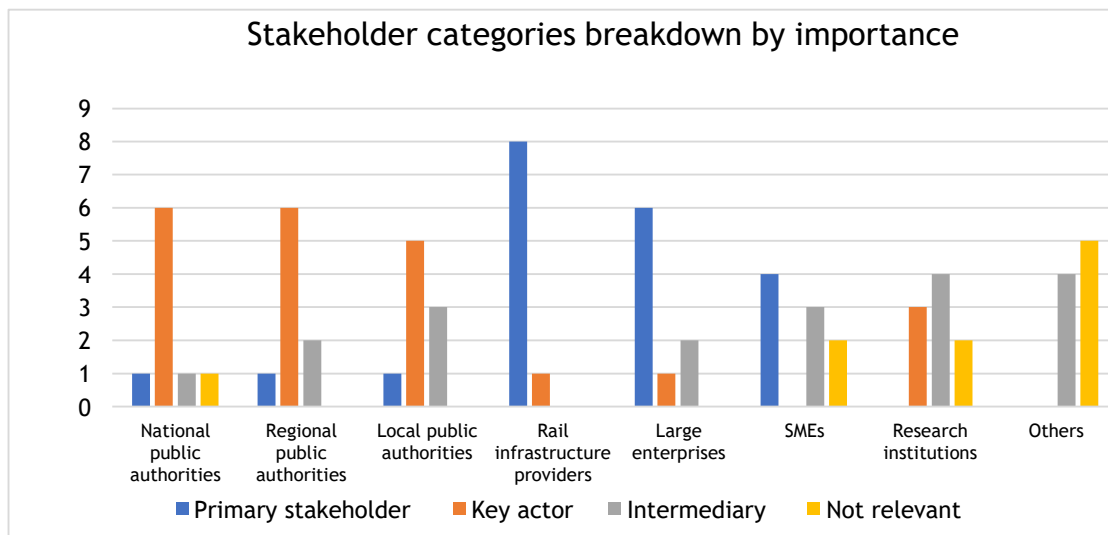
As part of the Rail4Regions project, stakeholder involvement workshops were organised in 8 countries. During the workshops a fruitful discussion took place, where different topics in the field of regional railways were discussed. Representatives of companies and stakeholders related to rail transport were invited to the workshops. The invited stakeholders could be divided into three main categories:

1. **Primary stakeholders:** Stakeholders who are ultimately affected by the new rail transport solution and who have the highest interest in the outcome of a project because they are directly affected by the outcome. They actively contribute to a project (e.g. infrastructure owners (terminal, railway line), companies, transport and spatial planning authorities).
2. **Key actors:** These types of actors help with administrative, financial and legal issues. They have political responsibility (regional and national authorities, ministries); financial resources (public and private funds); skills and expertise (public administrations, universities, private sector) in rail transport and related areas (land use, environment, education, climate change).
3. **Intermediaries:** are those who have an interest in the success of a project and are concerned with the final outcome of the project rather than the process of completing it. Who implements transport policy (infrastructure operators, logistics operators, freight forwarders, public administrations, etc.). Who carries out important transport activities (operators). Who represents the relevant stakeholders (associations, chambers, cooperatives, networks, NGOs). Who informs and reports on transport (authorities, operators, local media).

Breakdown of stakeholders involved in the workshops

The individual partners have divided the categories of stakeholders into the 4 levels of importance (Primary stakeholders, Key actors, Intermediary and not relevant). This breakdown by category is shown in the figure below.

Figure 1 - Breakdown of stakeholder by importance

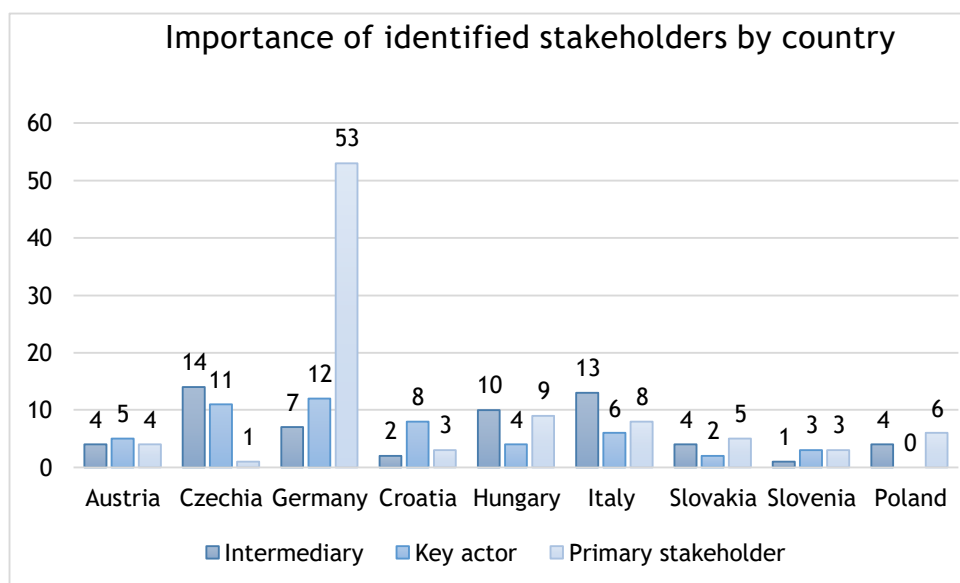


It is worth mentioning that across all partner countries the rail infrastructure providers and large enterprises were regarded as primary stakeholders. This is because a good quality and safe infrastructure is essential for the provision of the transport services for which rail infrastructure providers are responsible. Large enterprises make up the demand for rail transport and for this reason they have in most cases been given the category of primary stakeholder, which is of high importance.

The following organisations were included in the others group: NGO's, Chambers of commerce, Association of Railways Operators of Slovakia, Media, Professional organisations, associations.

A detailed breakdown of stakeholder's importance by country is shown in the figure below.

Figure 2 - Structure of identified stakeholders based on their importance



With up to 72 companies, Germany had the highest number of identified stakeholders that could participate in the workshop.

A total of 192 different stakeholders were identified. The largest group of identified stakeholders based on the importance were the Primary stakeholder group. The second largest group was the Intermediaries, and the smallest group of stakeholders was the Key Actors. The detailed structure of the identified stakeholders for all of the workshops is shown in the figure below.

Figure 3 - Split of stakeholder's importance

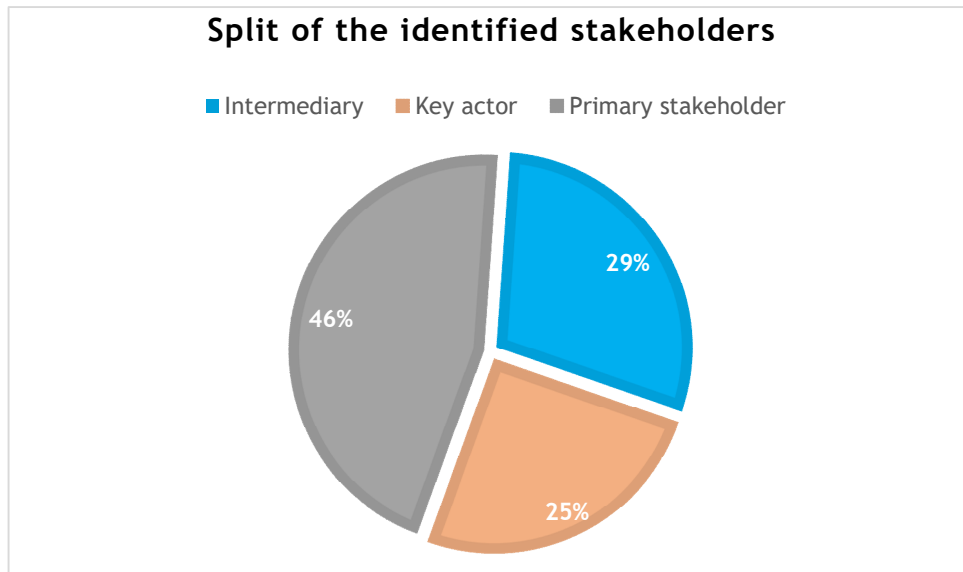
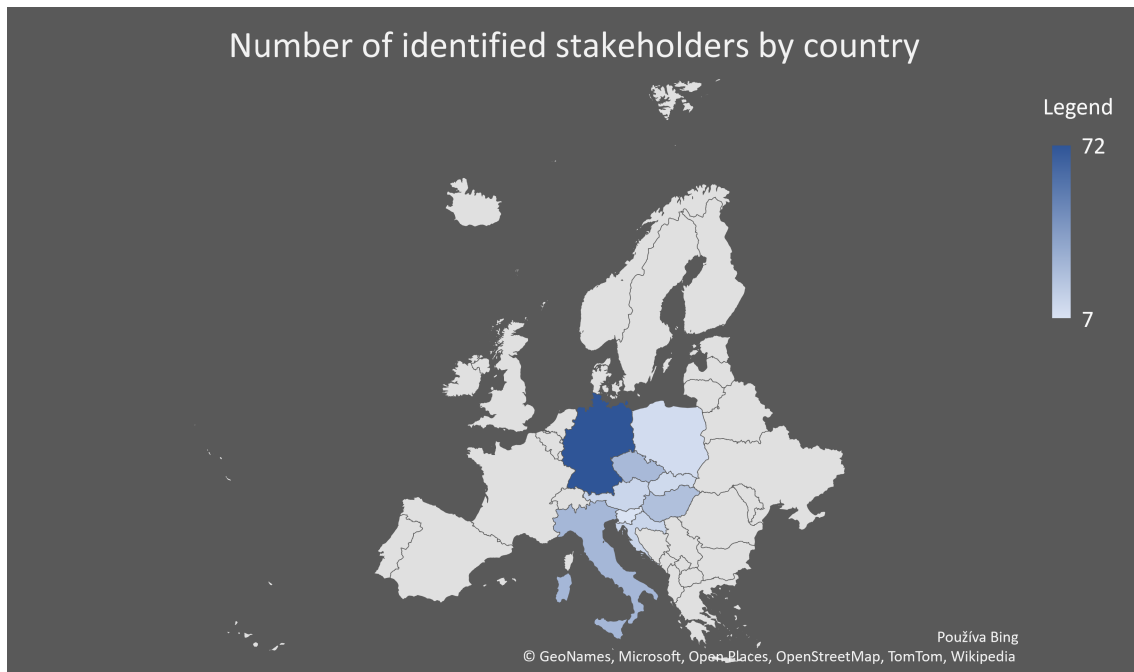
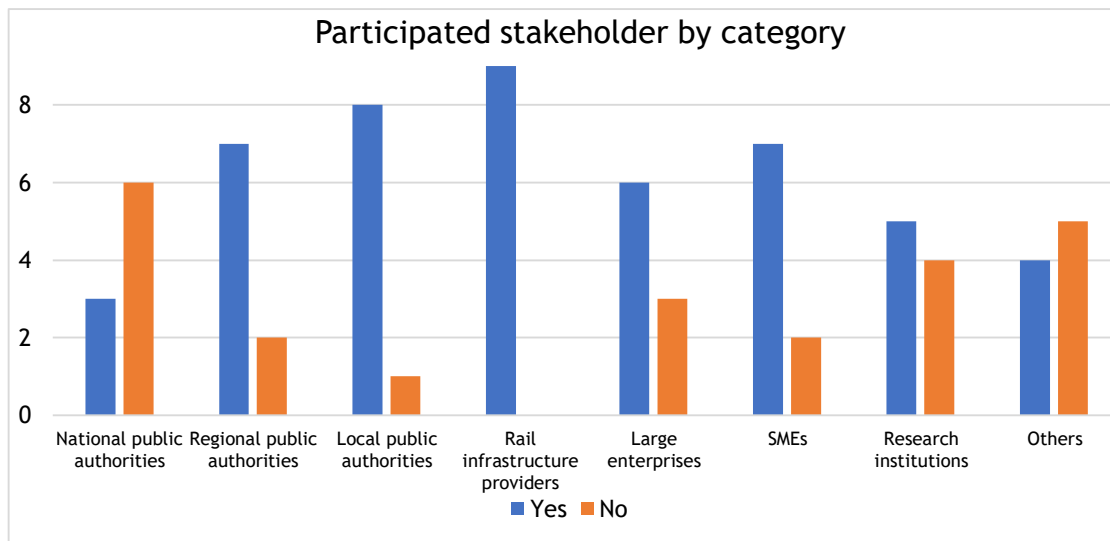


Figure 4 - Map of countries with number of identified stakeholders



It should be noted that not all identified stakeholders participated in the workshops. From the graph below it can be seen that not every group participated in every workshop. For example, National public authority participated in the workshops in 3 countries and did not participate in 6 countries.

Figure 5 - Stakeholder participated in workshops by category



It is quite interesting and positive that the participation rate of those institutions, that were identified as primary stakeholders, was particularly high.

Main objectives of stakeholder's workshop

The main objective of stakeholder workshops is to get information from praxis, which can be beneficial for the Rail4Region project. The partners were given instructions on how to organise the workshop. This manual was prepared by the University of Žilina. The workshop could be organised face-to-face, hybrid or online. The main method for workshops was facilitated discussion and brainstorming. Partners could also use other communication methods.

The (recommended) agenda of the workshop was also set, which was followed by most of the partners. The recommended agenda is following:

- Registration (the list of participants must be signed),
- Invitation speech,
- Short project presentation,
- Moderated discussion or work in groups (assign someone to take notes),
- Conclude workshop,
- Inform participants about future collaboration and communication,
- Thank everyone for participating.

Possible topics for discussion in the manual were defined as follows:

State of the art, its reasons, possibilities for change, barriers, and drivers of development, responsible bodies, financing, further development, future of rail freight, the position of rail freight in the transport market, regional railway tracks, rail freight services on regional tracks,...

These themes were designed to gather as much information as possible from the praxis.

General overview on organised workshops

The map below shows the countries in which the workshop was organised. In total, eight workshops were organised over different time periods, as shown in the timeline in Figure 6.

Figure 6 - Map of countries where the workshop was organised

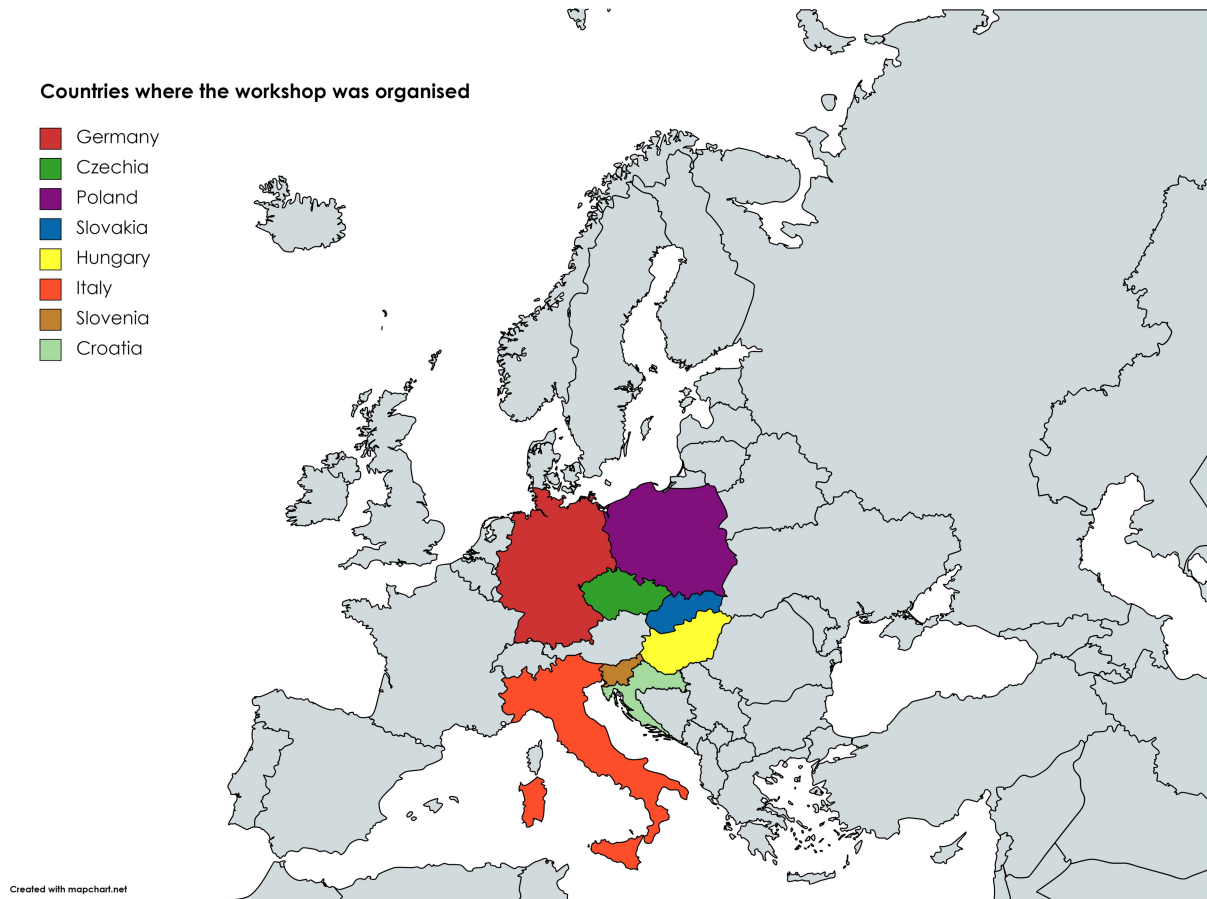
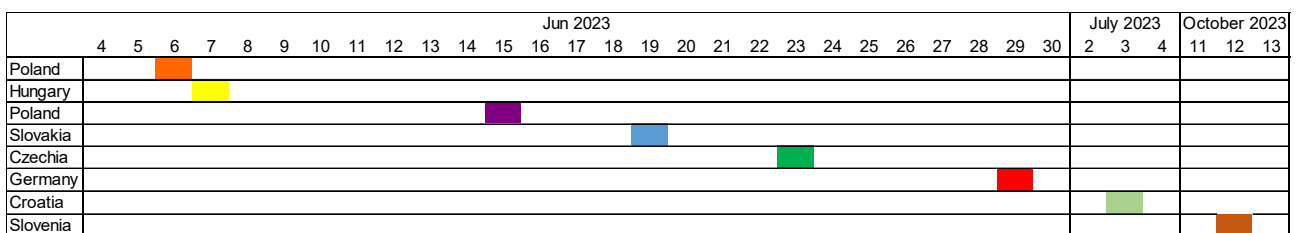


Figure 7 - Timetable of the organised workshops by country



During the workshops, various problems faced by different regions in relation to rail freight were discussed. Austrian project partner had decided to meet with stakeholders bilaterally instead of organising a joint event.

Most significant outcomes

The table below describes the main outcomes of all the workshops: the outcomes highlighted in red in the table appear most frequently in the reports, i.e. 4 or more times. Outcomes in yellow appeared 3 times in the reports. Outcomes in green occurred 2 times or less in all reports.

Table 1 - Most significant outcomes from workshops

<p>No willingness from authorities (ministries) to support railway transport Insufficient support for railway undertakings, regional planning authorities and terminal operators</p>
<p>Low connection between logistic centres and railway lines No sidings and loading places available, Not possible to load/unload goods onto/from wagons despite good technical equipment in some station</p>
<p>Gaps in the law that reduce the competitiveness of rail transport: Insufficient or no action to develop and build small loading points close to the lines, to support single wagon shipments for which regional lines are important, to renew and modernise regional lines and sidings</p>
<p>Lack of competitiveness of rail transport End customer cannot be influenced to switch goods from road to rail (later delivery times compared to road, more expensive transport compared to road, especially for small consignments over short distances).</p>
<p>Low technical conditions Non-electrified lines, poor infrastructure quality, low line capacity, lack of digitalisation, lack of interoperability for cross-border traffic, all these facts reduce the quality and competitiveness of railway transport.</p>
<p>Infrastructure investment misallocation Investments mainly support TEN-T corridors and no capacities for freight railway transport on railway lines</p>
<p>High costs of transportation If rail transport is not supported by the state, the end user will choose the cheaper transport, which is road transport</p>
<p>Lack of staff Problems with organisation of services on regional lines, Review and simplify the training of railway specialists and siding operators</p>

<p>Low / no communication with small - medium enterprises It is very important to know their opinion on transport (also at international and regional level) - it is important to know the opinion and expectations of enterprises on transport options, on the subsequent provision of services according to their wishes.</p>
<p>Barriers to cross-border rail freight transport Language barriers, technological barriers, etc...</p>
<p>High level of rivalry between rail and road reluctance to co-operate, but there is need for comodality to achieve door-to-door mobility</p>
<p>Lack of strategic plans with a clear definition of the objectives to be achieved Without plans it is not possible to ensure progress in rail transport</p>

Potential solutions

These are just some of the problems that reduce the use of regional lines. These problems need to be reduced or eliminated by certain steps and measures. A number of recommendations to address the issues identified were already proposed during the stakeholder meeting.

- Creation of guidance for the future development of the project.
- Focus on long-term measures - it is not possible to improve rail transport in the short term.
- Change the system of investments for the construction of railway sidings and the reconstruction of existing sidings and regional lines, as EU funds are least supportive of the renewal of TEN-T corridors.
- Reduction and simplification of siding regulations, standards, and requirements
- Reviewing and simplifying the training of railway specialists and siding operators
- The administrative authorisation process must be transparent, simplified and accelerated.
- Rail loading should not be prohibited by administrative decision (unfortunately, there are examples of several stations where the county government has banned grain loading in public loading areas due to complaints from the public).
- Legislation should provide those certain types of goods (e.g. waste) can only be transported by rail over a certain distance.
- It is necessary to maintain a high level of attention and ensure that the good intentions of all stakeholders are translated into concrete and sustainable solutions from a technical, strategic and economic-financial point of view.
- Rail freight should be a basic standard requirement for new industrial estates and large manufacturing plants where the activity may require rail transport.
- Urgent need to produce regional discussions about the future of railroad connection.

Lessons learned from stakeholder involvement workshop:

It is very important to thoroughly analyse all the problems listed and find out why they exist. Stakeholders participating in the workshop may bring additional ideas and recommendations to the project that have potential for further development of the project. It is therefore important to communicate and consult with them regularly on the proposed actions in the project.



Recommendations for further communication

This chapter outlines recommendations for further communication activities for relevant stakeholders who have not yet been involved in project activities (workshops). Effective communication is crucial for fostering collaboration, gaining valuable insights, and ensuring the success of the project. To this end, the following recommendations are proposed for further communication activities:

1. Identify and prioritize stakeholders:

To identify key stakeholders who are not already involved in the project activities. These stakeholders may include government agencies, regulatory bodies, industry associations, potential investors, and other representatives. The important task of this step is to prioritize and cluster stakeholders based on their influence, interest, and potential impact on the project.

The selection of the stakeholders who did not participate in the workshop will be done by comparing the proposed stakeholders and the actual participating stakeholders. Subsequently, the stakeholders who did not participate in the first workshop will be approached with different tools in order to achieve the greatest possible interest in participating in the project and in future workshops and activities of the project.

2. Tailor communication strategy:

Communication with stakeholders is and will be organized within the project through information channels (some activities are ongoing). The communication is done through the chosen communication channels, which are the project website and social media, as the project has a LinkedIn account. A regular newsletter for the public and stakeholders is also available on the project website. These channels are used to reach out to the public and various stakeholders (both existing and new). And to keep stakeholder informed about news and progresses within the project. Partners will take special care and focus to improve communication with identified key stakeholders missing in previous phases of the project.

New stakeholders will also be approached and communicated with through scientific conferences in which universities will participate as project partners. Scientific articles related to the project will also contribute to communication and ensure dissemination of project knowledge to stakeholders.

It is also very important to maintain personal contacts with stakeholders with whom the project partners are cooperating or have cooperated with in past projects. To maintain this group in the project is an opportunity to gain their perspectives and contribute insights to the project.

Effective communication with relevant stakeholders is essential for the success of the Rail4Rail project. By implementing these recommendations for further communication activities, the project can strengthen relationships, foster collaboration, and ensure meaningful engagement with stakeholders who have not yet been involved in project activities.