

AldesignTEX

Milestone 1. REPORT FROM THE SHORT-TERM VISITS AND NETWORKING ACTIVITIES

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Call	HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02
Work Package	WP2
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Reviewers	

Abstract	The AldesignTEX project, "Innovative IT Tools For A Circular Textile Economy: Driving Sustainability And Resource Efficiency", emphasizes networking activities to build strong international partnerships. Key initiatives included the Kick-off Meeting in Łódź, Poland, attended by representatives from Stavanger University (UiS), Ghent University (GU), and the Catholic University of Avila (UCAV), as well as short-term visits by TUL staff to partner institutions. These efforts, complemented by regular online consultations, focused on fostering collaboration in applying artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to sustainable textile design and recycling.
Keywords	international partnerships, networking activities, short-term visits

Disclaimer

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1. Introduction

As part of the AldesignTEX project, *"Innovative IT Tools For A Circular Textile Economy: Driving Sustainability And Resource Efficiency"* (acronym AldesignTEX), networking activities have played a pivotal role in fostering strong partnerships among the participating institutions.

The first key event was the **Kick-off Meeting**, held in Łódź, Poland. Representatives from Stavanger University (UiS), Ghent University (GU), and the Catholic University of Avila (UCAV) attended the meeting. The agenda focused on introducing the project's objectives, establishing a collaborative framework, and strengthening the foundation for long-term cooperation.

Another critical aspect of the networking efforts were the **short-term visits**. A team of five individuals from TUL, including three management representatives and two researchers participating in the mentoring program, conducted visits to project partners at Stavanger University, Ghent University, and the Catholic University of Avila. These visits aimed to familiarize TUL employees with the working environments of scientists in other countries, gain insights into the administrative and financial units supporting grant applications and their implementation, and facilitate the exchange of experiences and best practices. The overarching theme of these meetings was the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning into sustainable textile design and textile recycling.

In addition to in-person meetings, **regular online consultations** formed an integral part of the AldesignTEX networking activities. This virtual gathering provided an opportunity to align efforts, address emerging challenges, and ensure continued momentum in collaboration across all partner institutions.

2. Kick-off meeting

The first key event was the Kick-off Meeting, held on October 4, 2024, in Łódź, Poland, at the "Alchemium" building of Lodz University of Technology. Representatives from Stavanger University (UiS), Ghent University (GU), and the Catholic University of Avila (UCAV) attended the meeting. The agenda focused on introducing the project's objectives, establishing a collaborative framework, and strengthening the foundation for long-term cooperation.

The person composition of TUL (project leader) representatives was as follows:

Here is the translation of the titles into English:

- Professor Katarzyna Grabowska – Project Coordinator
- Professor TUL Monika Malinowa-Olszowy
- Dr. Eng. Anna Bacciarelli-Ulacha
- Dr. Eng. Iwona Nowak
- Associate Professor Eng. Michał Puchalski
- MSc Małgorzata Michalak
- Associate Professor Eng. Marcin Barburski
- Associate Professor Eng. Zbigniew Mikołajczyk
- Dr. Eng. Katarzyna Piekłak
- Dr. Eng. Magdalena Kłonowska
- Dr. Eng. Grzegorz Szparaga
- Dr. Eng. Agnieszka Cichocka
- MSc Agnieszka Michałowska-Dutkiewicz
- MSc Katarzyna Szypułka
- MSc Monika Kardacka

Representatives from the project partner UiS:

- professor RM Chandima Ratnayake (project coordinator at US)

Representatives from the project partner GU:

- professor Karen De Clerck- (project coordinator at GU),
- Sofie Morkens.

Representatives from the project partner UCAV:

- dr. Ricardo Reier (project coordinator at UCAV),
- dr. Miguel Ángel Gutiérrez (professor associated with the project).

A detailed agenda of the meeting is shown in Figures 1,2 and 3.

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AldesignTEX

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Title: Innovative It Tools For A Circular Textile Economy: Driving Sustainability And Resource Efficiency



Grant Agreement number: 101159060

Project acronym: AldesignTEX

Project title: Innovative It Tools For A Circular Textile Economy: Driving Sustainability And Resource Efficiency

Funding Scheme: HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02

Start date of the project: 01.10.2024

Duration: 36 months

Project coordinator name, title and organization: Katarzyna Grabowska, professor, Lodz University of Technology

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Fig. 1. Kick-off Meeting Agenda- page 1

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HOST PARTNER

Organization: Lodz University of Technology
Short name: TUL

CONTACT PERSONS

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Project's office:
Lodz University of Technology,
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Consortium Beneficiaries:
Lodz University of Technology, TUL, PIC 999886671 Poland
Stavanger University, UIS, PIC 998023689, Norway
Ghent University, GU, PIC 999986096, Belgium
Catholic University of Avila, UCAV, PIC 949619913, Spain

Fig. 2. Kick-off Meeting Agenda -page 2

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MEETING AGENDA

TIME	SESSION	SPEAKER
09:00-09:30	Welcome coffee	
09:30-10:30	Start of the Meeting, Welcome Word and Introduction	TUL
10:30-11:10	Presentation of the Partners	TUL, GU, UiS, UCAV
11:10-11:30	Coffee Break	
11:30-12:30	Project Work Plan, Budget Allocation and Partner Responsibilities	TUL
12:30-13:00	Q&A Session	TUL
13:00-14:00	Visiting of the Faculty of Material Technologies and Textile Design	
14:00-15:00	Lunch	

Project's office:
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Fig. 3. Kick-off Meeting Agenda – page 3

3. Visit to Stavanger University (UiS) – Norway

The first short-term visit to the project partner, which is Stavanger University, took place on 6-9 November 2024 in Stavanger, Norway.

The person composition of TUL (project leader) representatives was as follows:

- professor Katarzyna Grabowska – project coordinator
- profesor TUL Monika Malinowa-Olszowy
- Małgorzata Michalak
- Dr. Eng. Anna Bacciarelli-Ulacha
- Dr. Eng. Iwona Nowak.

Representatives from the project partner UiS:

- professor RM Chandima Ratnayake (project coordinator at US)
- professor Helge Bøvik (vice dean for research)
- Zuzana Pickova (advisor division for research)
- Dr. Mona Wettrhus Minde (head of Department of Mechanical and Structural Engineering and Materials Science (IMBM):
- Martin Georg Maier (Adviser, Finance Department, Section for Externally Funded Projects)
- Jon-Erik Karlsen
- Jan-Tore Jakobsen
- professor Samindi Samarakoon.

During the meeting, the structure and development strategies of the university were presented to the participants, with particular emphasis on the Department of Mechanical and Structural Engineering and Materials Science (IMBM), programs and students' recruitment. The process of applying for grants was presented and the great importance of the administrative and accounting departments when writing European projects was emphasized. Current scientific issues faced by IMBM employees are presented, including, m.in others, embedding fibers in cement in order to strengthen the mortar and give it greater flexibility and resistance to cracking. The 3DS Experience Life Cycle Assessment program was also shown – a solution designed to manage all information and processes at every stage of the product or service life cycle in globalized supply chains. The problems with textile waste, which has nowhere to be stored, and the related threats to the natural environment, and thus to human health in the later phase, are discussed. UiS didactic and laboratory rooms were also presented. During the meeting, the issues of long-term visit were also discussed, with it initially agreed that scientists from TUL will come to Stavanger in August 2025 for 31 days.

A detailed agenda of the meeting is shown in Figure 4.



Agenda

The agenda for the Lodz University team on November 6-7, 2024, AlDesignTEX: Innovative IT Tools for a Circular Textile Economy: Driving Sustainability and Resource Efficiency, HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02 (Twinning), Model Grant Agreement: HORIZON Lump Sum Grant, Proposal Number: 101159060.

Activity	Presenter	Time
Day1: 6th November 2024	Dinner at Phileas Fogg, Skagen 27, 4006 Stavanger (MENU)	Arrival: 18.15 p.m. 18.30 - 21.00 p.m.
Day 2: 7th November 2024		
Arrival to KE D-303 : Registration and Coffee		8.40 - 8.50 a.m.
Welcome and start of the meeting.	Project leader at UiS_IMBM - AlDesignTex: Prof. R.M. Chandima Ratnayake	8.50 - 9.00 a.m.
UiS's structure and strategies	Vice dean for research: Prof. Helge Bøvik Larsen	9.00 - 9.30 a.m.
How does the UiS support applications for externally funded projects, and what is the role of the Research Department in this process?	Advisor Division for Research: Ms. Zuzana Pickova	9.30 - 10.00 a.m.
Department of Mechanical and Structural Engineering and Materials Science (IMBM): programs, strategy, students' recruitment, and lab facilities.	HoD IMBM: Dr. Mona Wettrhus Minde	10.00 - 10.50 a.m.
Development funding and financial management structure in UiS for Externally Funded Projects.	Adviser, Finance Department, Section for Externally Funded Projects: Mr. Martin Georg Maier	11.00 - 11.40 a.m.
CE (Conformite Europeenne) certification and use of CEDOC system for CE (Conformite Europeenne) marking.	Head engineer: Mr. Jon-Erik Karlsen	11.40 - 12.10 p.m.
Additive manufacturing optimal structure nTop next generation design software and LCA software for circular economy product development and sustainability .	Head engineer: Mr. Jan-Tore Jakobsen	12.10 - 12.40 p.m.
	- Lunch -	13.00 - 14.00 p.m.
Future project opportunities: The incorporation of recycled textile fibers in concrete to improve flexural and impact strength.	Program leader structural engineering discipline: Prof. Samindi Samarakoon	14.00 - 15.00 p.m.
Role of IMBM_UiS in AlDesignTEX project and wayforward.	Discussion and concluding the day: Prof. R.M. Chandima Ratnayake	15.00 - 16.00 p.m.

Contact:

1. IMBM Office Manager: Ms. Eva Teresia Alsvik eva.t.alsvik@uis.no ; Phone: +47 518 31 949
2. AlDesignTEX project leader at IMBM_UiS: chandima.ratnayake@uis.no ; Phone: +47 486 00 616

Fig. 4. Stavanger Meeting Agenda

4. Visit to Ghent University (GU) – Belgium

The second visit to the project partner, which is Ghent University, took place on 11-13 November 2024 in Ghent, Belgium

The person composition of TUL (project leader) representatives was as follows:

- Prof. Katarzyna Grabowska – project coordinator
- Prof. TUL Monika Malinowa-Olszowy
- Dr. Eng. Iwona Nowak
- Associate Professor Michał Puchalski
- Dr. Eng. Grzegorz Szparaga.

On the part of Ghent University (GU), the meeting was attended by:

- Prof. Karen De Clerck- (project coordinator at GU)
- em. Prof. Paul Kiekens
- Sofie Moorkens
- Lieve Huys.

Partner showed the visitors around the CTSE laboratory park, discussed the scientific and research equipment and the most important work carried out by the unit. Unfortunately, due to the confidentiality of the research carried out during the visit for the industry, it was not possible to make photographic documentation of the presented equipment.

Then took place two very interesting presentations about Ghent University. The first one concerned the organizational structure of the university, the number of employees and the number of students was given, the strategy and educational goals of the university were described broken down into primary, doctoral and post-doc studies, then she talked about the Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe programs in progress and completed.

The second presentation concerned the role and organizational structure of the eu team, i.e. a special organizational unit created to support for project applications (calculate staff costs, help and check with budget, administrative support for UGent-professors), support for erc-applications (exploratory talk, introducing candidate to faculty to ask for faculty approval, check submitted proposal (page limits, mandatory annexes), upload hi-letter).

Lieve Huys from EU Team offered the possibility for administrative staff from TUL to follow a staff-exchange-week. In this week, they could get to know the central administration at UGent (i.a. financial, legal, subvention).

The thematic scope of the scientific research that two scientists from TUL will conduct as part of the long-term visit when they come to Ghent in the first quarter of 2025 was discussed.

A detailed agenda of the meeting is shown in Figure 5.

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AGENDA

Meeting in Ghent 14.11.2024

14:00 – 16:00 Welcome, guided tour at CTSE

16:00 – 18.45 Meeting

- information about Ghent University (i.a. how do we submit projects, project administration)
- discussion on the long-term visits (topics + timing)

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Stavanger University, U.S, PK 998023685, Norway
Ghent University, GU, PK 99666066, Belgium
Catholic University of Avila, UCAV, PK 949619913, Spain

Fig. 5. Ghent Meeting Agenda

5. Visit to Catholic University of Avila (UCAV)- Spain

The third visit to the project partner, which is Stavanger University, took place on 20-22 November 2024 in Avila, Spain.

The person composition of TUL (project leader) representatives was as follows:

- Prof. Katarzyna Grabowska – Project Coordinator
- Prof. TUL Monika Malinowa-Olszowy
- Associate Professor Eng. Marcin Barburski
- Dr. Eng. Iwona Nowakdr.
- MSc Tsegaye Lemmi.

Representatives from the project partner UiS:

- dr. Ricardo Reier (project coordinator at UCAV)
- dr. Miguel Ángel Gutiérrez (professor associated with the project)
- dr. Noelia Muñoz (professor associated with the project)
- dr. Sergio Nájuez (professor associated with the project)
- Sergio Alonso Del Pozo (economic responsible project office)
- Alonso Escamilla (technical manager project office)
- Annete Beermann (head of international relations department)
- David Sanchez (Responsible for Research Projects)
- Antonio del Bosque (TiDEE Research Group) and others.

In the first part of the meeting, the role of the Catholic University of Avila in the AldesignTex project was discussed, work packages with the participation of the partner were analyzed, as well as the types of training and seminar planned to be carried out by the UCAV team. Then, the rules for writing and settling projects at the university were presented, the vice-rectorate structure, research teams functioning at UCAV, research and educational projects that are currently in progress and the scientific interests of the unit in terms of obtaining new funds and possible international cooperation were presented. The unit is very open to cooperation, willingly joins in writing further project applications and has interesting ideas for future research and scientific work.

After the presentation and discussion of the administrative, financial and research content, the project partner presented the leader with the didactic and laboratory laboratories of the Catholic University of Avila. The unit educates students in a very wide range: from economists to chemists and pharmacists.

A detailed agenda of the meeting is shown in Figure 6.

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AGENDA Meeting in AVILA 21.11.2024

10:00-11:00 Welcome coffee; presentation of attendees and objectives of the day.
Place: Meeting Room of the Catholic University of Avila 3rd Floor. Calle Canteros s/n, 05005 Ávila.

11:00-11:45 Specific meeting on the status of the project and forecasts.
Place: Meeting Room of the Catholic University of Avila 3rd Floor. Calle Canteros s/n, 05005 Ávila.

12:00-12:30 Specific meetings with members of Vice-rectorate for Research. Financial Area, Global Management.
Place: Campus Inmaculada Universidad Católica de Ávila. Avenida Inmaculada s/n, 05005 Ávila.

12:40-13:00 Visit to University facilities.

13:00-14:30 International Relations and Research Groups Meeting.
Annete Beermann (Head of International Relations Area). David Sanchez (Responsible for Research Projects). Sergio Nájuez (Dekis Research Group). Antonio del Bosque (TiDEE Research Group). Noelia Muñoz (ESODS Research Group).
Place: Meeting Room of the Catholic University of Avila 3rd Floor. Calle Canteros s/n, 05005 Ávila.

Project's office:
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Ghent University, GU, PIC 996666066, Belgium
Catholic University of Avila, UCAV, PIC 949619913, Spain

Fig. 6. Avila Meeting Agenda

6. Online meetings

In addition to in-person meetings, **regular online meetings** formed an integral part of the AldesignTEX networking activities. On December 22, 2024, the project partners convened for an online meeting to summarize the first three months of collaboration and review the progress made toward achieving the project's initial milestones.

During this meeting, participants presented the achievements from the first quarter, including the establishment of communication platforms and advancements in initial research activities. They also reviewed individual partner responsibilities, provided updates on deliverables, and discussed challenges encountered during the early stages of the project.

The meeting further included brainstorming sessions to propose solutions for identified challenges and setting goals for the next phase of the project. Future activities, including workshops and additional online meetings, were also planned.

Additionally, partners scheduled dates for long-term visits of TUL research groups to partner institutions for 2025, aiming to deepen collaboration and foster knowledge exchange. Future activities, including workshops and additional online meetings, were also planned.

This virtual gathering provided an opportunity to align efforts, address emerging challenges, and ensure continued momentum in collaboration across all partner institutions.

The person composition of TUL (project leader) representatives was as follows:

Here is the translation of the titles into English:

- Professor Katarzyna Grabowska – Project Coordinator
- Dr. Eng. Anna Bacciarelli-Ulacha
- Dr. Eng. Iwona Nowak
- Associate Professor Eng. Michał Puchalski
- MSc Małgorzata Michalak
- Associate Professor Eng. Marcin Barburski
- MSc Katarzyna Szypułka

Representatives from the project partner UiS:

- professor RM Chandima Ratnayake (project coordinator at US)

Representatives from the project partner GU:

- Sofie Morkens.

Representatives from the project partner UCAV:

- dr. Ricardo Reier (project coordinator at UCAV),

Screen from online meeting from December 23 is shown below.

Summary of the First Three Months
AIdesignTEX

- **Short-Term Visits to Partners**
 - Stavanger University (UiS), Norway (November 6-9, 2024).
 - Ghent University (GU), Belgium (November 11-13, 2024).
 - Catholic University of Avila (UCAV), Spain (November 20-22, 2024).





Fig. 7. Online Meeting Screen