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Abstract	This deliverable documents SafeTouch's stakeholder engagement activities from project launch (January 2025) through M16 (April 2026), and sets out the forward engagement plan for the remainder of the project (M17–M36). It identifies and maps six stakeholder groups, reports on engagement activities carried out during Phase 1 and the opening months of Phase 2, draws lessons from the reporting period, and defines priorities and planned activities for Phase 2 and Phase 3. The deliverable also reports KPI performance at M16 and establishes the tracking methodology for the remainder of the project.
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Disclaimer



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SEN	Sensitive, limited under the conditions of the Grant Agreement	
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* R: Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports)

DEM: Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs

DEC: Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos, etc.

DATA: Data sets, microdata, etc

DMP: Data management plan

ETHICS: Deliverables related to ethics issues.

SECURITY: Deliverables related to security issues

OTHER: Software, technical diagram, algorithms, models, etc.

Executive summary

This document, D5.5 Engagement, reports on SafeTouch's stakeholder engagement activities from project launch (January 2025) through M16 (April 2026), and sets out the forward engagement plan for the remainder of the project (M17–M36). It is led by Martel Innovate under Task T5.6.

The reporting period covers Phase 1 (M1–M10) and the opening months of Phase 2 (M10–M16). Phase 1 was deliberately weighted toward foundation-building: establishing the project's digital presence, visual identity, and content infrastructure. The project's website, three social media channels, and newsletter are operational. Key content assets produced during this period include the Meet the Consortium video series, a project explainer video, two newsletter editions, and targeted campaigns for International Women's Day and World Health Day. Conference participation began with TERMIS-AM 2025, the project's first international scientific conference presence, with further events confirmed for Phase 2.

Phase 2 engagement is now active across a broader range of stakeholder groups. Outreach to related Horizon Europe projects — RELIANCE, MIRIA, and SUSAAN — is planned for Q2–Q3 2026. Industry awareness activities and initial civil society outreach are underway.

The forward engagement plan sets out priorities for the remainder of Phase 2 and Phase 3, sequenced around the availability of technical results and pilot data. KPI performance at M16 and the tracking methodology for the remainder of the project are covered in Section 7.

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Abbreviations

AMR	Antimicrobial Resistance
B2B	Business to Business
CAI	Community-Acquired Infection
HAI	Healthcare-Associated Infection
iST	iSafeTouch Microfilm
SHG	Smart Hygiene Grid
WP	Work Package
EU	European Union
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
KPI	Key Performance Indicator

1 Introduction

This deliverable, D5.5 Engagement, documents SafeTouch's stakeholder engagement activities from project launch (January 2025) through M16 (April 2026), and sets out the forward engagement plan for the remainder of the project (M17–M40). It is led by Martel Innovate under Task T5.6, covering active engagement of target groups towards supporting the defined paths for transition to innovation.

Stakeholder engagement is crucial to the project's success. Moving iSafeTouch (iST) microfilm technology from laboratory concept to deployable solution requires sustained dialogue with the communities that will adopt, regulate, or benefit from it. This deliverable documents how that dialogue has been approached and how it will develop.

1.1 Purpose and Structure of this Document

D5.5 builds directly on the Communication and Dissemination Strategy established in D5.3 (submitted M06): where D5.3 set out intent, D5.5 reports on execution and plans the next phase. This deliverable aims to:

- Document the engagement activities carried out from M1 to M16, covering events, digital channels, content produced for engagement, related project outreach, and consortium-internal engagement
- Provide an account of what was delivered in Phase 1, what was adjusted, and the rationale for sequencing decisions taken
- Set out the forward engagement plan for M17–M36, defining priorities, planned activities, and the stakeholder groups that will be activated as technical results and pilot data become available
- Report KPI performance at M16 against the targets defined in the Grant Agreement, and establish the tracking methodology for the remainder of the project

This document is organised as follows:

- Section 2 defines the objectives of stakeholder engagement and situates them within the EIC Pathfinder context
- Section 3 presents the stakeholder identification and mapping methodology, including a structured overview of the six stakeholder groups
- Section 4 documents engagement activities carried out from M1 to M16, organised by activity type
- Section 5 draws conclusions and lessons from Phase 1 and the opening months of Phase 2
- Section 6 sets out the forward engagement plan for M17–M36
- Section 7 covers monitoring and evaluation, including KPI performance at M16 and the tracking methodology for the remainder of the project

2 Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement in SafeTouch serves a specific function: to ensure that the development of iSafeTouch (iST) microfilm technology and the Smart Hygiene Grid (SHG) concept is informed by, visible to, and ultimately accepted by the communities that will determine its real-world adoption. This section defines the objectives that govern SafeTouch's engagement approach, situates them within the conditions of an EIC Pathfinder project, and maps them to the project's three communication phases.

2.1 SafeTouch Engagement Objectives

SafeTouch's engagement objectives are derived from the Grant Agreement and the Communication and Dissemination Strategy established in D5.3. They reflect the distinct role that engagement plays at this stage of development: not simply communicating what has been achieved, but building the relationships, understanding, and readiness among target communities that will make eventual technology uptake possible. The project's engagement activities are directed toward five core objectives:

- 1. Build awareness and credibility in relevant scientific communities.** SafeTouch operates at the intersection of antimicrobial technology. Establishing visibility within the research communities working in these areas is a prerequisite for peer validation, collaboration, and scientific impact, pursued through participation in relevant conferences, contributions to scientific publications, and consistent communication of technical progress.
- 2. Validate the iST approach with clinical and healthcare end-users.** The technology's value proposition depends on real-world performance in clinical and care environments. Engagement with healthcare providers, infection control specialists, and facility managers, including through the project's two pilot sites, is central to validating usability, safety, and adoption readiness. Early dialogue with clinical communities and senior home facilities shapes the technology's development trajectory, not just its eventual communication.
- 3. Prepare pathways to industry uptake and exploitation.** Commercial adoption of iST-based solutions requires that industry actors, including manufacturers, integrators and facility operators, understand the technology, its performance characteristics, and its business case. Groundwork begins through presence at industry-relevant events and targeted content, intensifying as prototype and pilot data become available.
- 4. Support informed policy and regulatory dialogue.** Surface hygiene and infection control sit within a complex regulatory landscape. Engagement with public health authorities, standardisation bodies, and policymakers serves a dual purpose: ensuring SafeTouch's approach aligns with evolving regulatory frameworks and contributing to the evidence base that may inform them.
- 5. Build connections within the EU-funded research ecosystem.** Adjacent Horizon Europe programmes represent a natural engagement community — shared challenges, complementary expertise, and potential for joint dissemination and longer-term collaboration. This group also supports SafeTouch's visibility within the broader EU research and innovation landscape.

2.2 The Role of Engagement within the EIC Pathfinder Context

EIC Pathfinder Open funds research into breakthrough technologies at low technology readiness levels. At M16, SafeTouch is demonstrating a novel concept rather than entering a market. This shapes what stakeholder engagement looks like at this stage.

Unlike later-stage Horizon Europe projects, where dissemination typically centres on communicating validated outputs to defined beneficiary communities, an EIC Pathfinder project must build awareness and receptivity among target communities well before results are available. This requires a longer engagement horizon and different entry points: scientific credibility before commercial claims, pilot site relationships before broad clinical outreach, ecosystem presence before exploitation activity.

Against this background, the activities documented in Section 4 are not measured against a dissemination model designed for a more advanced project. They represent appropriate engagement for a project in Phase 1 and early Phase 2 — building the infrastructure, presence, and initial relationships on which Phase 2 and Phase 3 engagement will build.

2.3 Communication and Engagement Phases

D5.3 established a three-phase communication model that governs the sequencing and intensity of all engagement activities:

Phase 1 — Awareness Creation and Communication Foundation (M1–M10). This phase focused on establishing the infrastructure needed for credible, consistent engagement: platform setup, brand development, foundational content production, and first appearances at relevant events. External stakeholder activation was intentionally limited — engaging target communities before the project has substantive results to show produces limited return and risks credibility.

Phase 2 — Stakeholder Engagement and Ecosystem Activation (M10–M22). The infrastructure and content assets built in Phase 1 now serve as the basis for more active stakeholder outreach. Engagement with scientific communities, healthcare networks, related projects, and industry contacts is being scaled in parallel with early technical results from the consortium. Events, content campaigns, and direct stakeholder outreach are the primary instruments of this phase.

Phase 3 — Results Dissemination and Uptake Promotion (M22–M40). As pilot results and validation data become available, engagement shifts toward evidence-based dissemination with exploitation-oriented communities — targeted outreach to industry, engagement with policy and regulatory audiences, and the consolidation of Phase 2 relationships into more substantive collaborations or knowledge transfer activities.

The forward engagement plan in Section 6 outlines activities for the remainder of Phase 2 and the entirety of Phase 3.

3 Stakeholder Identification and Mapping

This section documents how SafeTouch identified and mapped its stakeholder landscape, describes the six groups that structure engagement activities, and sets out the prioritisation logic that governs engagement intensity across project phases.

3.1 Methodology for Stakeholder Identification

Stakeholder identification was carried out in two stages. The initial mapping, conducted during Phase 1, drew on three sources:

- The stakeholder groups and engagement channels defined in D5.3
- The networks and domain expertise of consortium partners
- A structured review of the scientific, clinical, industry, and policy landscape relevant to surface hygiene, infection control, smart materials, and flexible electronics

This mapping was formalised into a Stakeholder Tracker, a living document maintained by the consortium, which records identified organisations by group, engagement channel, priority level, and current status. The tracker will be kept updated as the project progresses and new contacts are established or engagement activities are initiated.

In developing D5.5, the stakeholder group structure from D5.3 has been reviewed and consolidated. The seven groups defined in D5.3 have been reduced to six. Industry and SMEs, Start-ups and Innovators are treated as a single group, reflecting their shared engagement channels and the greater operational significance of the commercial/non-commercial distinction over the established/emerging one at this stage. Public Health Authorities and Standardisation Bodies are consolidated under Policy and Regulatory Bodies. A sixth group, Related Projects and EU-funded Initiatives, has been added, reflecting the active role of peer project engagement in SafeTouch's ecosystem strategy.

3.2 Stakeholder Groups and Rationale

The six groups below represent the full range of communities whose awareness, input, or acceptance is relevant to SafeTouch's objectives. Each group is characterised by distinct engagement needs, channels, and appropriate timing within the project lifecycle.

3.2.1 Scientific and Research Community

This group encompasses researchers and academics working in the fields most relevant to iST technology: micro-engineering, microelectronics and micro-heat transfer, antimicrobial surfaces, thermal engineering, and infection control science. It also includes early-career researchers, doctoral candidates, and research institutions with active programmes in these areas.

Engagement with this community serves two purposes. First, it establishes SafeTouch's credibility and visibility within the peer research environment — a prerequisite for scientific publications, citations, and collaborative opportunities. Second, it ensures that the project's technical approach is exposed to expert scrutiny and informed by the broader state of the field.

- **Primary channels:** Scientific conferences, publications, research workshops, social media
- **Key organisations:** TERMIS, IEEE MEMS community, The Chemical and Biological Microsystems Society (CBMS), international AMR research conference circuit, etc

3.2.2 Healthcare, Care, and Community Settings

This group includes hospital infection control teams, clinical microbiologists, nursing and facility management professionals, senior care operators, and those responsible for hygiene in settings where vulnerable people are present — including schools. It encompasses both the project's two pilot sites — the HUD hospital and the Moschato senior care facility in Athens — and the wider community of practitioners and operators with an interest in surface hygiene and infection risk.

This is the group whose practical acceptance of iST technology is most consequential for the project's impact. Engagement here is not primarily about awareness: it is about co-validation. Practitioners and operators need to understand what the technology does, how it integrates into existing cleaning and disinfection protocols, and what evidence supports its safety and efficacy.

- **Primary channels:** Pilot sites, demonstration events, co-design sessions, clinical publications, newsletters
- **Key organisations:** HUD hospital, Moschato senior care facility, ESCMID, national infection control networks, etc

3.2.3 Industry and Commercial Partners

This group covers manufacturers of hygiene and infection control products, facility management companies, health technology companies, smart infrastructure developers, and start-ups working in adjacent technology spaces. It includes both potential licensing partners and potential co-development or integration partners for the Smart Hygiene Grid (SHG) concept.

Industry engagement during Phase 1 primarily focuses on establishing awareness and early visibility. Positioning SafeTouch as a credible emerging technology becomes the focus in Phase 2, as prototype results and certification progress provide the foundation for substantive industry claims. Commercially oriented engagement — licensing discussions, exploitation partnerships — is appropriate from Phase 3 onward, when pilot data are available to support a business case.

- **Primary channels:** Industry events, trade fairs, B2B networking, online campaigns
- **Key organisations:** MedTech Europe, health technology industry associations, Interclean Amsterdam, IoT organisations, door handle and light switch manufacturers, etc

3.2.4 Policy and Regulatory Bodies

This group includes public health authorities at national and European levels, regulatory bodies relevant to medical devices and surface hygiene products, standardisation organisations, and policymakers engaged in health infrastructure and smart building regulation.

Engagement supports two outcomes: ensuring SafeTouch’s technology development aligns with the regulatory frameworks it will eventually need to comply with, and contributing to evidence-based and policy conversations that may shape those frameworks. At this stage, engagement is observational and preparatory rather than advocacy-oriented.

- **Primary channels:** Policy forums, white papers, direct outreach
- **Key organisations:** Association of Pest Control and Extermination Companies of Greece, World Health Organisation, ECDC, CEN/CENELEC, national public health agencies, relevant ISO technical committees, etc

3.2.5 Civil Society and Patient Organisations

This group encompasses patient advocacy organisations, consumer groups, disability and elderly care networks, and the wider public with an interest in or exposure to the infection control challenges SafeTouch addresses. It also includes science communication channels and media outlets covering health innovation.

Engagement with civil society serves the dual purpose of building public trust and ensuring that the technology’s development is informed by the perspectives of those most affected by healthcare and community-acquired infections. Patient organisations are a distinct sub-group: their input can materially strengthen the credibility of SafeTouch’s clinical and social impact claims.

- **Primary channels:** Public-facing content, press releases, social media, partner channels
- **Key organisations:** European Patients’ Forum, national patient advocacy bodies focused on infection-related conditions

3.2.6 Related Projects and EU-funded Initiatives

This group covers Horizon Europe projects working on antimicrobial surfaces, smart hygiene, infection control, or related technologies. Confirmed related projects include RELIANCE, MIRIA, and SUSAN.

Unlike outward-facing engagement with other groups, this is primarily peer-to-peer. Engagement serves several practical purposes: mutual visibility through social media cross-promotion and newsletter exchange; identification of synergies and complementary results; potential for joint events or publications; and collective representation within the EIC ecosystem. Coordination is managed through direct consortium-to-consortium contact.

- **Primary channels:** Direct contact, social media, newsletter exchange, joint events
- **Key organisations:** RELIANCE, MIRIA, SUSAN, etc

TABLE 1: STAKEHOLDER MAPPING SUMMARY TABLE

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	KEY ORGANISATIONS (EXAMPLES)	PRIMARY CHANNELS	ENGAGEMENT PRIORITY	STATUS AT M16
Scientific and Research Community	TERMIS, IEEE MEMS community,	Conferences, publications,	High — ongoing	Active: events attended, content published

	AMR conference network	workshops, social media	throughout the project	
Healthcare, Care, and Community Settings	HUD hospital, Moschato senior care facility, ESCMID	Pilot sites, demonstration events, clinical publications, newsletters	High — critical for validation	Active: pilot sites engaged; broader network in early outreach
Industry and Commercial Partners	MedTech Europe	Industry events, B2B networking, online campaigns	Medium Phase 1–2 / High Phase 3	Early stage: awareness activities initiated
Policy and Regulatory Bodies	ECDC, CEN/CENELEC	Policy forums, white papers, direct outreach	Medium — preparatory Phase 1–2	Monitoring and initial identification
Civil Society and Patient Organisations	European Patients' Forum	Public content, press releases, partner channels	Medium — growing through Phase 2	Early stage: public-facing content established
Related Projects and EU-funded Initiatives	RELIANCE, MIRIA, SUSAN	Direct contact, social media, newsletter exchange, joint events	Medium — active from Phase 2	Contact initiated; joint SMS 2026 session confirmed

3.3 Stakeholder Prioritisation Logic

Engagement intensity is not uniform across groups or across the project timeline. It is sequenced according to what is credible, productive, and appropriate at each phase:

- **Phase 1 (M1–M10):** Engagement was weighted toward the scientific community and the consortium's immediate networks — audiences for whom early-stage project communication is both credible and useful without requiring validated results. Broader engagement with industry and policy audiences at this stage would have been premature, given the technology readiness level and the absence of demonstrable outputs.
- **Phase 2 (M10–M22):** Engagement broadens. The scientific and clinical communities remain central, but industry awareness activities, related project engagement, and civil society outreach are being activated in parallel. The stakeholder tracker's Phase 2 action column, which maps specific organisations to planned activities, is the operational instrument for managing this expansion.
- **Phase 3 (M22–M40):** Engagement intensity shifts toward exploitation-oriented audiences — industry, policy, and regulatory bodies — as pilot data and validated results provide the substantive basis for those conversations. The relationships built during Phases 1 and 2 are the foundation for Phase 3 engagement.

4 Engagement Activities: M1–M16

This section documents external engagement activities carried out by the SafeTouch consortium from project launch (January 2025) through M16 (April 2026). Activities are organised by type rather than chronologically, to reflect the breadth of the engagement approach and to avoid a diary format that would obscure the cumulative logic behind what has been done.

The period covered spans Phase 1 (M1–M10) and the early part of Phase 2 (M10–M16). As set out in Section 2, Phase 1 was deliberately weighted toward infrastructure and content development. The activities documented here reflect both the Phase 1 logic and the activation of more outward-facing engagement that characterises the opening of Phase 2.

4.1 Events and Conference Participation

Conference and event participation serves a distinct engagement function that digital channels cannot replicate: it places SafeTouch researchers and communicators in direct conversation with the scientific, clinical, and technical communities whose attention and validation the project needs. Events are selected for their relevance to SafeTouch's core stakeholder groups, opportunity for presenting technical or pilot results, and potential for substantive follow-up engagement rather than passive attendance.

The table below covers events attended during M1–M16, as well as those confirmed or under active consideration for Phase 2 and Phase 3. Details will be completed as participation is confirmed.

TABLE 2: LIST OF EXTERNAL EVENTS – ATTENDED AND UPCOMING

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION	STAKEHOLDER GROUP / RELEVANCE	STATUS
TERMIS-AM 2025	November 2025	Detroit, USA	Scientific and Research Community	Attended
ESCMID Global 2026	April 2026	Munich, Germany	Scientific and Research Community	Abstract submitted/Attended
Interclean Amsterdam	April 2026	Amsterdam, Netherlands	International cleaning and hygiene industry	Attended
Swiss Biotech Day	May 2026	Basel, Switzerland	Life sciences and biotech investment ecosystem	Confirmed
Bio USA	June 2026	San Diego, USA	Biopharma investment and innovation ecosystem	Confirmed

EIC Summit 2026	June 2026	Brussels, Belgium	European Commission and EIC Community	Confirmed / Under consideration
The 30th International Conference on Miniaturized Systems for Chemistry and Life Sciences — μ TAS	October 2026	Spain	Scientific and Research Community	Confirmed / Under consideration

4.2 Digital Engagement

Digital channels serve as the primary vehicle for continuous visibility, content distribution, and audience development between events. SafeTouch operates across three platforms — LinkedIn, Mastodon, and YouTube — each serving a distinct purpose within the overall engagement mix.

4.2.1 LinkedIn



FIGURE 1: SAFETOUCH'S LINKEDIN ACCOUNT

The SafeTouch LinkedIn page is the project's main professional-facing channel and the primary instrument for reaching scientific, clinical, and industry audiences through digital content. The page was established in Phase 1 and has been maintained with a consistent posting cadence throughout the reporting period.

At M16, the page has 59 followers since launch. The highest-performing content category has been the Meet the Consortium series, which introduced individual consortium members and their expertise through a personal, story-led format. Posts in this series consistently outperformed project news posts in reach and engagement, indicating a stronger audience response to human-centred content at this stage of the project.

Key content campaigns to date:

- Meet the Consortium video series (4 episodes published): Introduced consortium partners through short-form video content, combining personal narrative with technical context
- International Women's Day 2026: A campaign post foregrounding the fact that 70% of the global health workforce are women — the people most exposed to the surfaces and disinfectants SafeTouch is working to make safer.
- World Health Day 2026: A campaign post tying SafeTouch's work to the WHO's World Health Day theme, anchored by the statistic that 4 million healthcare-associated infections occur in Europe every year.
- Project news and event coverage: Posts covering conference participation, website content, and project milestones.

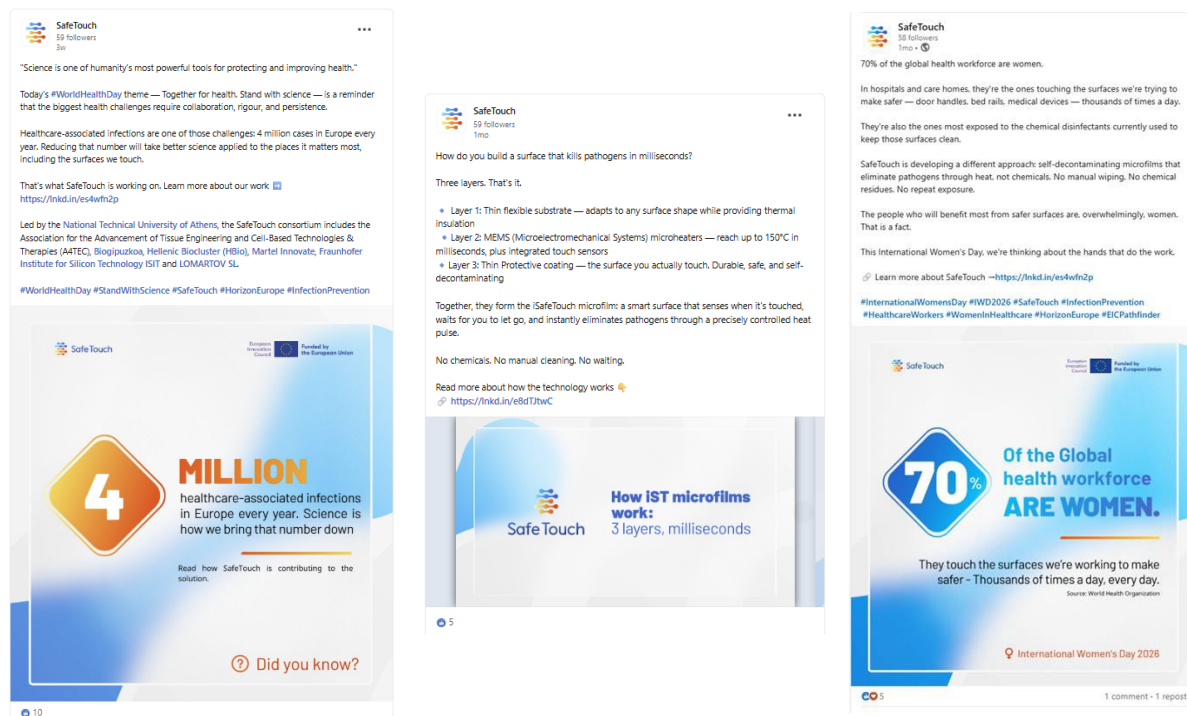


FIGURE 2: LINKEDIN POSTS

4.2.2 Mastodon



FIGURE 3: SAFETOUCH'S MASTODON ACCOUNT

The decision to maintain a SafeTouch presence on Mastodon rather than X (formerly Twitter) was made during Phase 1 on the grounds of platform alignment with open science values and the composition of the research community the project seeks to reach. Mastodon has a smaller but more engaged academic and research audience than X, and its decentralised structure is consistent with SafeTouch's responsible communication principles.

The Mastodon account has been maintained in parallel with LinkedIn, with adapted content suited to the platform's norms and audience expectations. Follower count at M16 is 11. The channel functions primarily as a secondary amplification channel for scientific community content rather than as a standalone engagement vehicle.

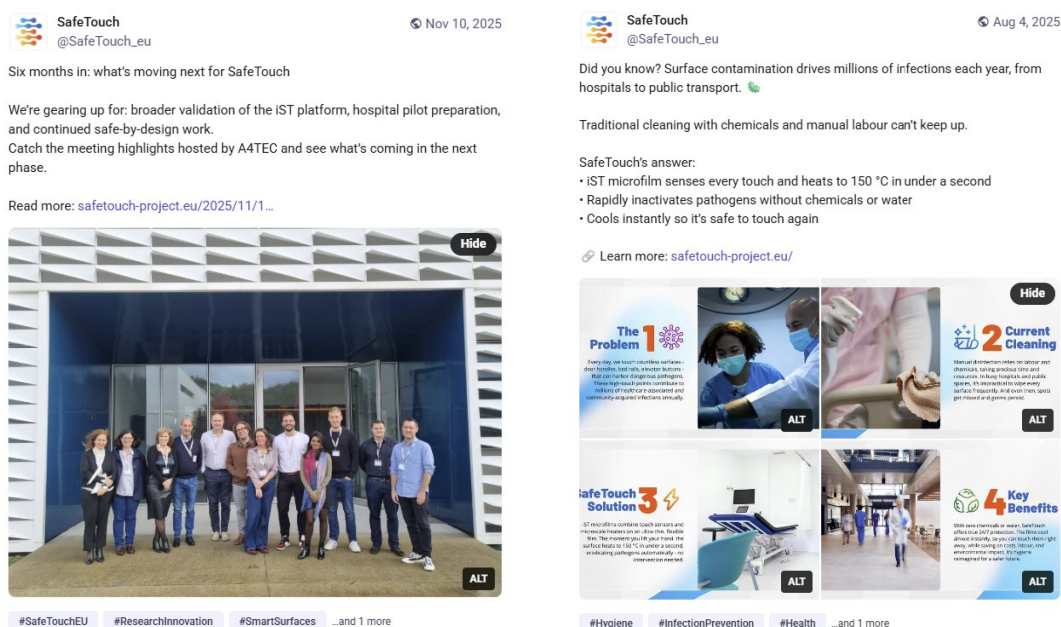


FIGURE 4: MASTODON POSTS

4.2.3 YouTube



FIGURE 5: SAFETOUCH'S YOUTUBE ACCOUNT

The SafeTouch YouTube channel hosts the project's video content and will serve as the repository for future material, including pilot site footage and webinar recordings. At M16, the channel has published 5 videos with a combined view count of 124.

Content published to date:

- **Meet the Consortium series:** Introduced consortium partners through short-form video, combining personal narrative with an explanation of their contribution to SafeTouch.
- **Project explainer video:** Introduces iST microfilm technology to a general professional audience, covering the surface infection challenge, how the technology works, the sustainability case for chemical-free disinfection, and the pilot deployment context. Serves as a standalone introduction to the project for audiences encountering SafeTouch for the first time.

4.3 Content Produced as Engagement Tools

Content production is not a standalone activity — each piece produced serves a defined engagement function: building audience, demonstrating credibility, explaining the technology, or prompting dialogue with a target stakeholder group. The following content assets produced during M1–M16 are documented here as engagement instruments, not simply as communication outputs.

4.3.1 Meet the Consortium Video Series

Four episodes published as of M16, each featuring a different consortium partner and combining personal narrative with an explanation of their contribution to SafeTouch. The series was designed to humanise the project for external audiences and to establish the consortium's

credibility before detailed technical results were available to share. A further 3 episodes are planned for Phase 2.

4.3.2 Website News Items

8 news articles have been published on the SafeTouch website as of M16, covering project milestones, partner activities and event participation. The website has received 1284 visits in the reporting period, with an average session duration of 2 minutes 51 seconds. News items are written for a mixed audience — accessible enough for civil society readers, substantive enough to hold the attention of scientific and clinical readers.

4.3.3 Newsletter

Newsletter #1 and Newsletter #2 have been published and distributed during the reporting period. The newsletters are produced in MailerLite and distributed to the project's subscriber base. Each edition combines a project update with a feature article on a thematic topic relevant to the project's domain, ensuring value to readers beyond project news alone.

4.3.4 Project Explainer Video

A project explainer video was published on the SafeTouch website and YouTube channel in April 2026. The video introduces iST microfilm technology to a general professional audience, covering the challenge of surface-transmitted infections in healthcare, how iST microfilms work, the sustainability case for chemical-free disinfection, and where the technology is being piloted. It draws on the full breadth of consortium expertise — spanning materials science, microengineering, microfabrication, clinical microbiology, and sustainability assessment — to present the project's scope in an accessible, standalone format.

The video serves a distinct engagement function from the Meet the Consortium series: where that series builds familiarity with the people behind the project, the explainer provides a durable, shareable introduction to the technology itself. It is the primary content asset for audiences encountering SafeTouch for the first time.

4.4 Related Project and Ecosystem Outreach

RELIANCE, MIRIA, and SUSAN are Horizon Europe projects working on antimicrobial surface and coating technologies in adjacent domains. Their technology areas are directly relevant to SafeTouch, with potential for complementary results and, in some cases, synergistic applications. Engagement with these projects also offers an opportunity to share experience of common business and commercialisation challenges at an early stage. Structured outreach, therefore, represents a logical component of SafeTouch's ecosystem strategy, offering opportunities for mutual visibility, content exchange, joint events, and identification of complementary results.

Formal outreach to these projects has not yet been initiated as of M16. This reflects a deliberate sequencing decision rather than an oversight. Peer project engagement is most productive when both parties have substantive content to exchange — published work, event coverage, a defined collaboration offer — and when there is enough shared understanding of each other's work to make the conversation useful. Reaching out to these projects during Phase 1, before SafeTouch had developed its content infrastructure and before any technical

results were available, would have yielded little of value and risked establishing a superficial connection that would prove difficult to deepen later.

The appropriate moment for initiating structured outreach is Phase 2, once SafeTouch's digital channels are active and populated, its key content assets are in place, and the consortium has a clear sense of its own positioning within the EIC ecosystem. That moment has now arrived.

The following outreach sequence is planned for Q2–Q3 2026:

Q2 2026 — Initial contact and channel follows. The SafeTouch LinkedIn account will follow the pages of RELIANCE, MIRIA, and SUSAN, building low-commitment visibility through organic content engagement (resharing and commenting on relevant posts). This establishes a visible presence before any formal outreach, which reduces the cold-contact dynamic of a first email.

Q2–Q3 2026 — Direct consortium-to-consortium contact. The SafeTouch consortium will initiate direct contact with the communications leads of each related project to introduce SafeTouch, share project materials, and explore mutual interest in newsletter exchange and social media cross-promotion.

Q3 2026 — Newsletter exchange. Subject to agreement with individual projects, SafeTouch will include a related project feature or mention in upcoming newsletters and will seek equivalent coverage in their respective newsletters. This provides mutual audience reach at a low production cost.

Q4 2026 onward — Joint event activities. Where event calendars align, SafeTouch will explore opportunities for joint presence, shared sessions, or co-organised satellite events with related projects.

5 Conclusions and Lessons Learned

Phase 1 (M1–M10) had a clear and bounded purpose: establish the project's identity, build the content infrastructure, and create the conditions for more active stakeholder engagement in Phase 2. Assessed on those terms, it delivered. The website is live and active; the brand is consistently applied across all channels; three social media platforms are operational; two newsletters have been published; and the consortium has a credible external presence with initial representation in relevant scientific communities.

The clearest content lesson from the reporting period is that human-centred formats outperform project news at this stage of development. The Meet the Consortium video series was the strongest-performing content across both LinkedIn and YouTube, generating higher reach and more meaningful engagement than milestone or technical update posts. The International Women's Day 2026 campaign reinforced the same point from a different angle: content anchored to a wider cultural moment, with a clear audience hook beyond the project itself, reached significantly further than standard posts. Both findings will shape the Phase 2 content approach. The decision to maintain a focused three-platform presence — LinkedIn, Mastodon, and YouTube, without X — has also proven appropriate: the model is manageable, coherent, and well-matched to SafeTouch's target audiences at this stage.

Two adjustments were made during the reporting period. The content mix shifted toward narrative and partner-focused formats earlier than originally planned, in response to audience data and editorial judgment. Newsletter publication was not tied to a fixed schedule; two editions were published when substantive content warranted them, rather than to meet a calendar target. This trade-off — quality and relevance over cadence — is the right one and will continue into Phase 2 as technical results begin to provide more regular content triggers.

Four priorities follow for Phase 2. First, expand the engagement perimeter to industry awareness and civil society outreach, both of which are feasible without validated results and both of which now have a content infrastructure to draw on. Second, shift content from concept communication to progress communication as early technical and pilot results become available — this is the most significant content transition of the project and should be planned, not reactive. Third, broaden event participation beyond technical scientific conferences to include clinical, industry, and policy venues consistent with the project's expanding stakeholder scope. Fourth, treat the related project outreach sequence set out in Section 4.4 as a Q2–Q3 2026 priority: the window for productive pre-exploitation peer collaboration is finite.

6 Forward Engagement Plan: M17–M36

The forward engagement plan sets out how SafeTouch will develop and intensify its stakeholder engagement across the remainder of Phase 2 (M17–M22) and the entirety of Phase 3 (M22–M40). It builds directly on the foundations established in Phase 1 and reflects the sequencing logic set out in Sections 2 and 5: engagement activities are timed to the availability of credible content, technical progress, and validated results.

6.1 Phase 2 Priorities: M17–M22

Phase 2 is the project's primary stakeholder activation window. The content infrastructure, digital presence, and scientific credibility built in Phase 1 now provide the basis for more substantive outreach across a broader range of groups.

Event participation will increase in both volume and range, moving beyond purely technical scientific conferences to include clinical, industry-facing, and policy-adjacent venues. Related project relationships with RELIANCE, MIRIA, and SUSAN will be formalised through the outreach sequence set out in Section 4.4, with newsletter exchange and social media cross-promotion as the first concrete outputs. Industry audiences will be reached through awareness activities — participation at relevant events and targeted content — positioning SafeTouch as a credible emerging technology before prototype data is available to support commercial dialogue. Initial civil society outreach, through patient organisations and public health communicators, will begin in Q3–Q4 2026 via public-facing content and direct contact with identified organisations in the stakeholder tracker.

6.2 Phase 3 Priorities: M22–M40

Phase 3 marks a substantive shift in the nature of engagement. As pilot results and validation data become available from M22 onward, the project moves from concept communication and relationship-building to evidence-based dissemination and exploitation-oriented dialogue.

Peer-reviewed publications, conference presentations of pilot results, and clinical co-publication activities with the pilot site partners are the primary instruments for scientific and clinical community engagement. Industry engagement shifts from awareness to substance: from M24 onward, targeted outreach to licensing and co-development candidates will be supported by the technology's documented performance characteristics. Substantive engagement with regulatory bodies and public health authorities — including direct outreach and participation in policy forums — is appropriate from Phase 3 onward, when pilot deployment findings may establish the framework for regulatory alignment and open certification pathways. Related project relationships initiated in Phase 2 will be deepened through joint publications and, where applicable, shared dissemination activities.

6.3 Digital and Content Activities

Newsletter production will continue at a content-driven cadence. The four remaining editions (#3–#6) are planned across M17–M40, each timed to a substantive project milestone — a conference appearance, pilot deployment update, or technical result — rather than a fixed calendar schedule.

Content production will shift from concept communication to progress communication as technical and pilot results become available. Three streams will be maintained: technical progress content explaining and contextualising results for scientific and professional audiences; pilot site storytelling drawing on the HUD hospital and Moschato senior care facility deployments, developed in coordination with pilot partners and with appropriate attention to consent and confidentiality; and exploitation and impact content addressing the technology's commercial and societal potential as the project moves toward M40. The Meet the Consortium series will continue with further episodes in Phase 2. Video content will expand to include pilot site footage and technical explainers as material becomes available. Community engagement on social media — responding to interactions, engaging with partner and related project content — will be prioritised alongside content publication.

6.4 Project-Organised Events and Webinars

SafeTouch will organise webinars timed to coincide with significant technical milestones or pilot results, with format, audience, and topic confirmed as the technical programme develops. The consortium will also explore opportunities to co-organise workshops or networking sessions at relevant conferences in Phase 2 and Phase 3, particularly where a SafeTouch-convened session could bring together clinical, industry, and research communities around a shared infection control challenge.

7 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation serve two functions in D5.5: an honest account of KPI performance at M16, and the tracking methodology that will govern how engagement performance is assessed through to M36.

7.1 KPI Performance at M16

TABLE 3: KPI PERFORMANCE AND MONITORING

KPI	GA TARGET	STATUS AT M16	NOTES
Website visits	≥1,500/year	1284	Website visits are tracked from May 2025 – April 2026, due to a 4-month delay in kicking off the project
LinkedIn followers	≥100	59	LinkedIn followers are tracked from May 2025 – April 2026, due to a 4-month delay in kicking off the project
Press releases	≥3 lifetime	1	On track for lifetime target
News items	≥6/year	8	On track
Newsletters	6 lifetime	2 published	On track — cadence adjusted to content availability
Flyers / brochures	≥3 lifetime	1	On track
Videos	≥5 lifetime	5	Meet the Consortium series accounts for 4 episodes so far + 1 explainer video
Events attended	≥3/year	2	2 more events have been planned for May 2026, keeping us on track
Events organised	≥6 lifetime	0	Phase 2–3 activity; webinars and workshops planned
Scientific publications	>10 lifetime	0	Phase 2–3 activity; not expected at M16
Patent applications	≥2 lifetime	0	Phase 3 activity; not expected at M16

7.2 Tracking and Reporting

KPI performance is monitored quarterly by Martel Innovate as WP5 Lead, drawing on website analytics, social media platform data (LinkedIn native analytics as the primary source), MailerLite newsletter metrics, event participation records, and the stakeholder tracker. Quantitative tracking is complemented by qualitative assessment, where possible — event feedback, newsletter responses, and the nature of social media interactions — to distinguish between passive visibility and substantive engagement.

D5.5 Engagement (V1.2)

KPI performance will be reported in D5.6 (Dissemination and Communication Material, M18) as an interim Phase 2 check, and in D5.8 (Final Dissemination and Communication Plan, M36) as a comprehensive account of all engagement and dissemination activities across the project lifetime. Engagement data will also be incorporated into periodic reporting to the EIC as part of the standard project reporting cycle.