D1.3: Second Report

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ABSTRACT:	The XR4HUMAN project has strengthened Europe's capacity to address ethics, inclusivity, and human-centred design in XR and virtual worlds. Guided by a structured stakeholder engagement methodology, the project created a multichannel, multimodal forum for dialogue, combining online platforms, live discussions, workshops, and conference participation. This approach enabled diverse stakeholders, including policymakers, researchers, developers, and end-users, to contribute to the development of practical guidance and shared understanding on ethical issues in immersive technologies. Challenges such as the loss of the original discussion platform were overcome through rebuilding and diversification of engagement channels. The project's methods and results now provide a transferable model for future European initiatives, contributing to the long-term embedding of ethics, accessibility, and inclusivity into the XR ecosystem.
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Table of contents

1 Review of Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Horizontal Coordination

The XR4HUMAN project was designed to bring together European XR stakeholders in a structured and inclusive way to co-create ethical and human-centred guidance for the sector. Its main goals are to support the uptake of the XR Code of Conduct, advance the Interoperability Guide, and encourage the empowerment of end-users in shaping the technologies they use. To achieve this, the project established the XR4Human European Forum as its central meeting point, complemented by workshops, conferences, and direct consultation activities. The Forum is envisioned not only as a project tool, but as a long-term platform to remain active beyond the project's lifetime.

Deliverable 1.1 defined the engagement methodology, built around a 7-step model for stakeholder interaction. The model begins with monitoring and communicating to stakeholders, and develops through creating value, involving stakeholders in decision-making, fostering collaboration, and empowering actors to take ownership. The final step focuses on innovation, encouraging stakeholders to co-develop ideas and contribute to sustainable XR practices. This structured process has provided a roadmap for stakeholder engagement across the project.

Stakeholders were identified and categorised into four broad groups:

- General public, including end-users and families, with particular concerns about inclusion, safety, and the impact of XR on children.
- Companies, of all sizes, seeking guidance on ethical standards and opportunities to apply XR technologies responsibly;
- Policymakers, responsible for regulation and ensuring societal protection and fair markets;
- Non-profit organisations, who act as intermediaries, informing communities and supporting digitalisation efforts;

The plan ensures that engagement activities are integrated across work packages. These include policy debates (WP3), governance and ethics consultations (WP3, WP5), co-creation of interoperability guidelines (WP4), development of the Code of Conduct (WP5), and evaluation of case studies (WP6). The structured approach also supports data collection, feedback loops, and alignment with other Horizon Europe initiatives, helping to embed XR4HUMAN outputs into the broader European research and innovation landscape.

During the first 18 months of the project, emphasis was placed on establishing the Forum, building initial awareness, and creating working groups and stakeholder lists. In the second half of the project, the engagement focus has shifted toward intensifying participation, particularly around the public consultation for the Code of Conduct, expanding discussions on interoperability, and ensuring that stakeholder contributions shape the evaluation of use cases.

By combining online and in-person channels, XR4HUMAN has created a multi-layered engagement strategy. The Forum paltform, LinkedIn Live discussions, and virtual workshops have reached broader audiences, while conference presentations have ensured targeted interactions with key groups.

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1.1 Alignment of WP1 Tasks with Reported Activities

The activities and results described in this report directly follow the objectives for Work Package 1 as defined in the Grant Agreement:

- **Task 1.1 Stakeholder Engagement Methodology** – The 7-step methodology from Deliverable 1.1 continued to guide engagement activities. In the second half of the project, emphasis was placed on *Message* (through LinkedIn Live sessions and Forum posts), *Collaborate* (through Working Groups and workshops at Stereopsia 2024), and *Innovate* (through the introduction of the Arrival.Space 3D environment).
- **Task 1.2 XR4Human Forum** – The Forum was rebuilt on Discourse's managed hosting platform (forum.xr4human.eu) after the failure of the initial deployment. Updated Data Process Agreements and onboarding processes were introduced. The Forum became part of a broader multimodal ecosystem including LinkedIn Live events, Zoom and Google Meet workshops, and the Arrival.Space 3D world.
- **Task 1.3 Horizontal Coordination** – XR4Europe coordinated with European initiatives and Horizon Europe projects, securing feedback from MAX-R, MASTER, INDUX-R, and HEAT, while contacting 16 projects in total. Synergies with OPENVERSE were explored through discussions on the Observatory. XR4HUMAN was also presented in the BeyondXR cluster (July 2025), reinforcing its role within the broader European XR ecosystem.
- **Task 1.4 XR4Human Encounters** – A series of encounters were organised, both physical and digital. These included two workshops at Stereopsia 2024 (on the Code of Conduct and interoperability, the latter in collaboration with OPENVERSE), participation in major events such as Immersive Tech Week and Nordic VR Forum, and a sequence of LinkedIn Live encounters that collectively generated more than one hundred hours of viewed content.
- **Task 1.5 Project Legacy** – Deliverable D1.4 Plan on Legacy was prepared to ensure the sustainability of XR4HUMAN outputs. The Experience Library and Ratings Repository are planned to migrate to XR4Europe's servers by January 2026, while the XR4HUMAN website will continue to be hosted by NTUA. XR4Europe committed to ongoing promotion and adaptation of the Code of Conduct and Experience Library, with long-term visibility supported by both XR4Europe and NTUA.

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2 Execution of Stakeholder Engagement Plan

2.1 The Forum

The Forum was originally conceived as a central venue for stakeholder dialogue, designed to support the co-creation of the XR Code of Conduct, the Interoperability Guide, and other project outputs. Built as a message-board structure, its purpose was to give end-users , companies, policymakers, and non-profits a transparent and inclusive space for discussion. According to the plan in Deliverable 1.1, the Forum was to be hosted under the XR4Europe domain and maintained for at least five years after the project, ensuring a sustainable European platform for ethical debate around XR.

Technical Challenges and Rebuilding

In practice, the Forum encountered a major obstacle. A technical failure late October 2024 struck the initial implementation, which had been deployed as an independently hosted version of the Discourse SDK within XR4Europe's website, led to the total loss of content. The failure occured during a required software update of the Discourse SDK, which failed several times over a period of two weeks before a total loss of all deployed access. The contracted service provider, Voice Agency, was unresponsive and the Discourse company itself was unable to restore the platform as it had been created and deployed independently. An in-house recreation of the Forum was required. After consultation with the Project Officer, the consortium decided not to switch platforms to Discord, but to once again use Discourse—this time through Discourse's own hosted platform service to guarantee stability and sustainability.

The new Forum was rebuilt with close attention to recreating the original design, categories, and discussion topics. The familiar forum.xr4human.eu URL was retained, ensuring continuity for users arriving from the main XR4HUMAN website. By moving to Discourse's managed hosting, updates and technical maintenance are now seamlessly provided by the platform itself, significantly reducing risk of failure.

User Experience and Participation

As part of the relaunch, all Data Process Agreements and Code of Conduct documents were reviewed and updated. A notable change is that participants must now register free accounts directly with Discourse to comment or contribute. Previously, registration required creating XR4Europe accounts, a process that proved more cumbersome. While the Forum no longer inherits XR4Europe's 1,800 registered members automatically, this was not seen as a drawback, since participation from that membership in the original Forum was limited. Current engagement levels—both in volume and quality of contributions—are consistent with those of the original version of the Forum.

Engagement with the new Forum peaked in the first half of 2025, during an active period of Code of Conduct stakeholder engagements. Signups and postings, while modest in number, peaked during this time along with views of the posts and topics: 1000 views in February, 1150 in March, and 1200 in April. Daily active registered users fluctuated between 8 and 16 between January and June. A total of 64 posts, which include new topics and comments, were made in this period since 1 January 2025. Comparative data for the first iteration of the Forum was lost with it, but page views roughly tracks with data reported in D1.2 First Report.

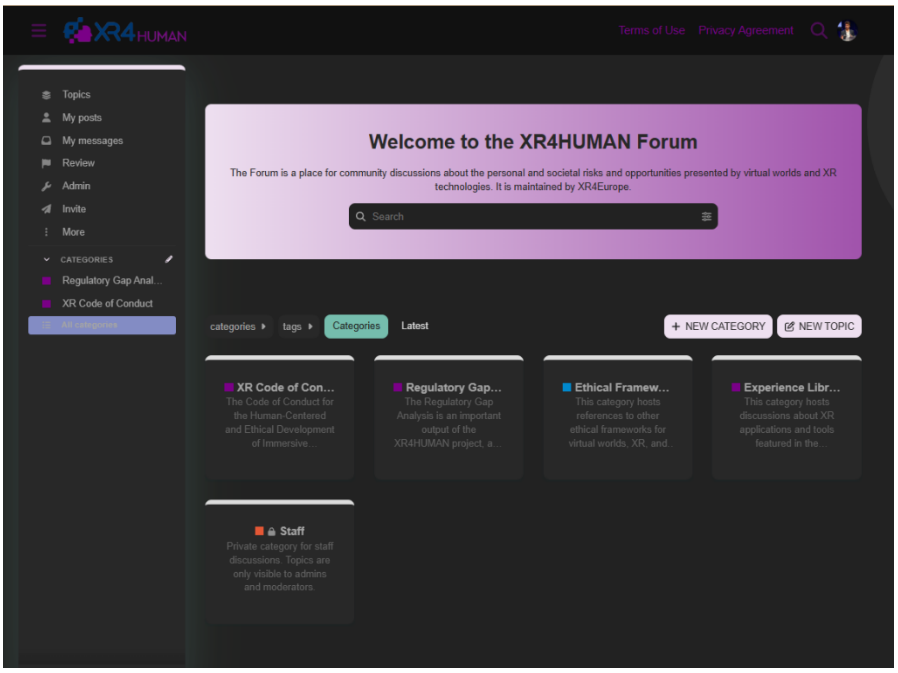

Figure 1. Screenshot of the remade Forum, demonstrating visual and structural consistency with the original version.

Figure 2. Depiction of site traffic, indicating period of high engagement during active consultation activities for the XR Code of Conduct in first half of 2025.

Evolving the Forum Concept

Early in the project it became clear that a single message-board structure could not capture all types of stakeholder engagement. The Forum concept therefore expanded into a broader, multimodal set of tools and channels, combining:

- LinkedIn Live events and announcements, reaching wide professional audiences;
- Online workshops via Zoom and Google Meet, facilitating more interactive stakeholder input;
- A 3D webspace on Arrival.Space (Austria), offering a virtual world environment for presenting project deliverables.

The Arrival.Space platform was developed as a spatialised landing page, allowing users to explore information about XR4HUMAN deliverables through images, text, and embedded links. This environment was particularly suited for audiences already engaged in virtual worlds, providing an intuitive, exploratory alternative to traditional websites. The space went live on 23 May 2025 (link: https://live.arrival.space/xr4human) and, while not extensively used during the Code of Conduct consultation phase, it is expected to play a larger role in post-project sustainability planning. It offers a persistent venue for engagement once project-led workshops and direct researcher involvement come to an end.

2.2 Working Groups

From the outset, Working Groups (WGs) were envisioned as a mechanism to involve external stakeholders more directly in the co-creation of project outputs. Coordinated by XR4Europe, these groups were to focus on topics such as the XR Code of Conduct, the Interoperability Guidelines, and the Ratings Repository. The intention was to provide structured opportunities for stakeholders to contribute expertise, test assumptions, and propose improvements. As described in the first report, XR4HUMAN partners identified and prioritised more than ninety relevant stakeholders across organisational types, services, and domains of expertise, ensuring a broad pool of potential contributors to Working Group activities.

Implementation

In practice, a Working Group was formed in early 2025 focusing on the XR Code of Conduct developed in WP5. Three extended Zoom-based sessions were organised on 24 April 2025, 6 and 13 May 2025, bringing together a small number (3 to 5) of recruited experts from policy, academia, industry, and civil society. The draft Code was reviewed in real-time for between 1.5 and 2 hours, with participants offering comments directly into the document while consortium partners facilitated and recorded the discussion. This approach ensured that feedback was not only collected but also contextualised through dialogue, clarifying the reasoning behind specific proposals and surfacing points of consensus and divergence.

Outreach to Horizon Europe Projects

With the support of the Project Officer, the Working Groups also extended their scope to engage with other Horizon Europe projects active in related domains. Outreach was conducted through targeted invitations and cross-project meetings, ensuring that feedback from parallel initiatives could be incorporated into XR4HUMAN deliverables. With the INDUX-R project, a dedicated meeting was organised, during which partners reviewed the draft Code of Conduct collectively and provided feedback in real time.

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Ultimately, comprehensive feedback was gathered from 4 Horizon Europe projects: MAX-R, MASTER, INDUX-R, and HEAT. This process strengthened cross-project alignment, avoided duplication of efforts, and ensured that the XR4HUMAN Code of Conduct reflects not only the perspectives of individual stakeholders but also the broader landscape of European-funded XR and virtual worlds research.

Outcomes

The Working Groups proved effective in utilising structured consultation with open-ended discussion to gather much richer feedback than could be taken from anonymous comments in the draft Code of Conduct's shared doc. They helped identify critical issues such as language accessibility, practical implementation pathways, and alignment with broader European regulatory initiatives. Importantly, the process demonstrated the value of synchronising synchronous dialogue (Zoom sessions) with asynchronous tools (the Forum's message boards and document sharing), offering multiple entry points for stakeholder engagement. In some cases, Zoom session participants contributed further to the shared doc after the session ended.

2.3 Conference and Events

Planned Role

From the beginning of the project, conferences and events were identified as a key mechanism for stakeholder engagement. They offered opportunities to disseminate project objectives, present emerging results, and collect feedback from diverse audiences. In the first 18 months, XR4HUMAN was represented at major events such as AWE Europe, Nordic VR Forum, Immersive Tech Week, and Stereopsia, as well as several academic conferences and specialist workshops. These activities reached industry actors, developers, policymakers, researchers, and civil society groups, building visibility for XR4HUMAN and its goals.

Workshops at Stereopsia 2024

In the second project period, XR4HUMAN contributed two dedicated workshops at the Stereopsia EUROPE conference in Brussels on 9 December 2024. Attendance for each was between 15 and 25 expert stakeholders from policy and industry.

The first workshop focused on the European Code of Conduct for XR, presenting the draft created within XR4HUMAN and inviting participants to provide direct feedback. The session was structured as a stakeholder consultation, ensuring input from a broad range of voices including policy advisors, developers, researchers, and representatives of civil society. Participants were encouraged to engage critically with the Code, highlighting strengths, gaps, and opportunities for further refinement. Workshop details

The second workshop, organised in support of WP4, addressed the theme of interoperability. It was led by Alina Kadlubsky (OpenAR Cloud) and conducted in close collaboration with the OPENVERSE project, represented by Arta Ertekin (Martel) on behalf of OPENVERSE's Communication and Dissemination Work Package. This workshop gathered a diverse audience including EU policy advisors, developers, representatives of Horizon Europe projects, and leaders of European national XR initiatives. The discussions provided an essential platform for cross-project dialogue, aligning XR4HUMAN's guidance on interoperability with broader European efforts. Workshop details

Together, these two workshops demonstrated XR4HUMAN's role as a convener of dialogue on both ethics and interoperability, two pillars of the project's mission. They also reinforced cooperation with related Horizon Europe projects, ensuring that XR4HUMAN's outputs were informed by and contributed to the wider European XR ecosystem.

LinkedIn Live Events

To complement physical workshops and conferences, XR4Europe organised a series of LinkedIn Live

events as part of the XR4HUMAN engagement strategy. These online sessions promoted the Forum, showcased the Experience Library, and supported the Code of Conduct's stakeholder consultation phase. They provided an accessible format for reaching large professional audiences across Europe, enabling real-time interaction while leaving a recorded archive for ongoing dissemination.

One session was also conducted in collaboration with the OPENVERSE project, reinforcing horizontal coordination and addressing shared themes such as interoperability, ethics, and the future of European virtual worlds. Together, these events contributed significantly to broadening XR4HUMAN's visibility, fostering cross-project dialogue, and driving stakeholder contributions to key outputs.

The events are listed below by focus area. Where possible, viewership data is listed. However, LinkedIn erases data older than one year, so for earlier events the data has been erased on LinkedIn and only shows views from the past year. While unique viewers are likely shared across all these events; conservatively we confidently report that more than one hundred hours of XR4HUMAN content were viewed on LinkedIn during the project.

Experience Library Promotion

- *Presenting VR-ACE: Ace the Job Interview* – Jun 11, 2025 – 318 Unique Views – 503 Minutes Viewed - https://www.linkedin.com/events/7336365124720488450/
- *XR4HUMAN Experience Library: Presenting Wisor XR* – Jul 22, 2024 – 70 Unique Views – 480 Minutes Viewed - https://www.linkedin.com/events/7215015355142811648/
- *Deep Dive Discussions: XR4HUMAN Experience Library* – May 7, 2024 – https://www.linkedin.com/events/7190432144819716097/

Code of Conduct Promotion and Stakeholder Consultation

- *Guidance or Governance?* – Apr 29, 2025 – 168 Unique Views – 256 Minutes Viewed - https://www.linkedin.com/events/7313524939150491648/
- *The Language of Ethics* – Apr 22, 2025 – 237 Unique Views – 617 Minutes Viewed - https://www.linkedin.com/events/7313521359827947520/
- *What Guides Ethical XR?* – Apr 15, 2025 – 279 Unique Views – 870 Minutes Viewed - https://www.linkedin.com/events/7313517658300166144/

Forum Promotion

- *Proud Voices - Darkrooms and Consent in Immersive Storytelling* – Jun 9, 2025 – 461 Unique Views – 774 Minutes Viewed - https://www.linkedin.com/events/7335612596839931904/
- *What makes You your Avatar(s)?* – Apr 7, 2025 – 240 Unique Views – 1147 Minutes Viewed - https://www.linkedin.com/events/7313576449641177089/
- *Deep Dive Discussions: XR & ETHICS* – Mar 27, 2024 – https://www.linkedin.com/events/7171146567293288448/

General Promotion, Collaboration with OPENVERSE, and Relevant Topics

- *Deep Dive Discussions: Proud Voices* – Jun 13, 2024 – https://www.linkedin.com/events/7191215330172567552/
- *Deep Dive Discussions: What Makes a Virtual World European?* – May 22, 2024 – https://www.linkedin.com/events/7203394677767581697/
- *Deep Dive Discussions: Europe's Role in the Global XR Ethics Discussion* – May 17, 2024 – https://www.linkedin.com/events/7187236176003506177/

Most of these live stream videos are also preserved on XR4Europe's YouTube channel as part of a dedicated playlist of content ensuring that the videos remain available and easily embedded in the XR4HUMAN website and others:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7Tkodi4ediqypgD9evcYIsuGZePy7err

Final Event Preparation

As the project moves into its concluding phase, preparations are underway for the Final Event. XR4Europe has taken a leading role in organising this event in collaboration with NTUA, assuming part of the production responsibilities to ensure smooth delivery. The Final Event will take place at the European Commission venue in Brussels on 30 September, providing a high-level stage for disseminating project outcomes. XR4Europe is inviting a broad spectrum of stakeholders drawn from both the original and updated engagement lists, ensuring representation from policymakers, researchers, industry, civil society, and end-user communities.

To complement the in-person programme, the Final Event will be supported by digital activations. New discussion topics have been created in the Discourse Forum, highlighting trending ethical questions and inviting contributions from the community. These Forum discussions are being promoted via LinkedIn, linking online and offline engagement.

2.4 Horizontal Coordination

Synergies with OPENVERSE

XR4Europe leveraged its dual role in XR4HUMAN and OPENVERSE to ensure alignment between the two CSA projects and to identify opportunities for synergistic cooperation. A primary area of focus was the planned OPENVERSE Observatory, designed to represent an evolving map of market players and ecosystem stakeholders. Discussions explored how the XR4HUMAN Experience Library could be integrated into the Observatory. While the Observatory remains a work in progress both technically and conceptually, the current plan is for the Experience Library to be represented at least through a direct link. This will ensure XR4HUMAN's sustainability benefits from the Observatory's visibility while also contributing to the Observatory's broader scope.

Similar conversations were held regarding the Interoperability Guide and the Rating Repository. To date, the Observatory has not appeared technically or structurally ready to incorporate these outputs, but XR4Europe continues to monitor developments and will revisit opportunities for coordination as the Observatory evolves.

Cross-Project Outreach

XR4Europe also conducted targeted outreach to other Horizon Europe projects, with the support of the Project Officer. The focus was on engaging relevant partners and subgrantees to:

- Review and provide feedback on the XR Code of Conduct;
- Contribute non-commercial XR projects to the Experience Library.

At the time, the Interoperability Guide was not yet ready for demonstration and inter-project engagement, though it was highlighted in discussions. Outreach was directed to the following projects: ARETE, CORTEX2, DIDYMOS-XR, EMIL, HEAT, INDUX-R, MASTER, MAX-R, THEIAXR, SHARESPACE, SUN, VR2Care, XReco, XR4ED, XR2Industry, and XTREME. Responses varied, but overall engagement was productive. In particular, MAX-R, MASTER, INDUX-R, and HEAT provided extensive feedback on the Code of Conduct and meaningful contributions to discussions. Projects with cascade funding schemes amplified impact by disseminating XR4HUMAN materials within their networks of partners and subgrantees.

Clustering and Ecosystem Engagement

In addition, XR4Europe participated in BeyondXR, a clustering initiative led by the XR5.0 project. While BeyondXR's primary focus is AI-related initiatives, XR4Europe presented XR4HUMAN at the 5th BeyondXR Webinar on 14 July, simultaneously alongside OPENVERSE. This presentation underscored the

complementary roles of the two CSA projects and their contribution to the broader Virtual Worlds Partnership and the forthcoming HUMAN-17 CSA under the 2025 Horizon Europe work programme. The session also included contributions from projects such as XR2Industry and SPIRIT, situating XR4HUMAN within a larger ecosystem of European XR and AI projects.

Link to recording of event and presentations:5th BeyondXR Webinar: How Open XR Standards Unlock Interoperability and Compliance

First slide of XR4Europe's presentation, focusing on XR4HUMAN's contributions to ethical standards and interoperability

Continuity
These horizontal coordination activities will continue beyond the formal end of XR4HUMAN. XR4Europe will maintain responsibility for aligning XR4HUMAN outputs with ongoing European initiatives, as detailed in Deliverable D1.4 Plan on Legacy. This ensures that the collaborations initiated during the project will continue to evolve and provide long-term value to the European XR ecosystem.

3 Plan on Legacy

XR4Europe has prepared Deliverable D1.4 Plan on Legacy, which defines the long-term sustainability strategy for XR4HUMAN's key outputs. XR4Europe assumes responsibility for hosting and maintaining the Experience Library, Ratings Repository (including the living XR Code of Conduct), and the XR4HUMAN Forum, while NTUA will continue to host the project website and Interoperability Guide for at least five years. Migration of dynamic assets to XR4Europe's infrastructure will be completed by January 2026 to ensure administrative access, continuity, and visibility.

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The Forum will evolve into a broader European hub for ethical dialogue, supported by semesterly workshops and integration with new Horizon Europe projects. The Experience Library will expand through academic partnerships, annual reviews, and an evolving evaluation process coordinated by Professor Oliver Schreer. The Ratings Repository will act as the public access point for the living Code of Conduct, updated through stakeholder input and disseminated via the Virtual Worlds Partnership Association. The Interoperability Guide will remain hosted by NTUA, complemented by XR4Europe's engagement in international standards groups.

Risks relating to finance, engagement, adoption, technology, and alignment are addressed through joint commitments by XR4Europe and NTUA, proactive outreach to universities and the forthcoming Virtual Worlds Skills Academy, and collaboration with initiatives such as XRSI Europe and the XR Guild. Together, these measures ensure that XR4HUMAN's outputs remain accessible, relevant, and impactful well beyond the project's conclusion.

4 Conclusion

The XR4HUMAN project has significantly advanced ethical, inclusive, and human-centred approaches to XR and virtual worlds. Through the Forum, working groups, workshops, conferences, and cross-project collaborations, the project has delivered key outputs such as the XR Code of Conduct, the Experience Library, and the Interoperability Guide. These achievements were realised despite major challenges, including the loss of the original Discourse-based Forum platform in 2024. Its recreation on Discourse's managed service, together with the integration of complementary channels; LinkedIn Live sessions, virtual workshops, and the 3D Arrival.Space environment; reaffirmed the Forum as a multichannel, multimodal platform that can adapt to diverse stakeholder needs.

Yet XR4HUMAN's work is not finished. Its ultimate impact depends on the successful execution of the sustainability plan and the ongoing commitment of partners to extend the project's outcomes both collectively—facilitated by XR4Europe—and independently in their own research, educational, and industrial domains. The stakeholder engagement methodology developed in XR4HUMAN has already been adopted as the basis of the OPENVERSE project's approach, and stands as a transferable, ethical, and inclusive framework that future EU-funded projects can build upon.

The importance of XR4HUMAN's stakeholder engagement work continues to grow as Europe develops its strategic initiatives for the virtual worlds ecosystem. The project's outcomes—such as the Code of Conduct and the Experience Library—are directly relevant to the Virtual Worlds Partnership and the Virtual Worlds Skills Academy, providing tested, community-informed resources that can guide ethical practice, interoperability, and inclusivity across sectors. XR4HUMAN has ensured that these topics, often acknowledged but under-prioritised in day-to-day business and research, are brought into the workflows and decisions of XR professionals across Europe.

At the same time, XR4Europe's network of members and stakeholders has grown substantially since the start of the project. This community now brings together a diverse mix of researchers, designers, developers, deployers, and users who are more engaged than ever before in discussions of ethics, human-centred design, interoperability, accessibility, and inclusivity. By embedding ethics into these conversations and connecting them to European and international policy agendas, XR4HUMAN has created a living foundation for continued dialogue and action. With its multichannel Forum, living Code of Conduct, expanding Experience Library, and strengthened community of stakeholders, XR4HUMAN's legacy is positioned to become an essential driver of trustworthy and human-centred virtual worlds in Europe.