



Developing Compassionate Workplaces in Europe for the digital and green work environment to protect employees' mental and physical health and wellbeing

Deliverable no. D10.8 Policy Strategy of the Cluster

Document name: EU-COWORK_DELIVERABLE D10.8_WP 10

Deliverable no. D10.8 Policy Strategy of the Cluster

Part of WP 10: Cluster activities

28 April 2025

TYPE: Other

DISSEMINATION LEVEL: Public

Lead Beneficiary WP 10: Vrije Universiteit Brussel (P1)

EU Project Officer: Sara Brazys



Policy strategy of the cluster

Document date: 25 April 2025

Document version: v2.0

Cluster: HORIZON-HLTH-2023-ENVHLTH-02-02 <i>"Evidence-based interventions for promotion of mental and physical health in changing working environments (post-pandemic workplaces)"</i>			
Project Full Name	Short Name	Grant No.	Deliverable No.
Developing Compassionate Workplaces in Europe for the Digital and Green Work Environment to Protect Employees' Mental and Physical Health and Wellbeing	EU-CoWork	101137223	D10.8
Interventions to promote mental and physical health in changing working environments due to climate change, sustainable work practices, and in green jobs	INTERCAMBIO	101137149	13.5
Promoting Positive Mental and Physical Health at Work in a Changing Environment: A Multi-level Approach	PROSPERH	101137256	D11.8
Situation-aware OrchestratioN of AdapTive Architecture	SONATA	101137507	D1.13
Healthy Working environments for all Ages: An evidence-driven framework	WAge	101137207	D8.5



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HADEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them. WISEWORK-C as a cluster includes the following projects: EU-CoWork, INTERCAMBIO, PROSPERH, SONATA, Wage.

AUTHORS		
WG1 WISEWORK-C members		
Revision history		
REVISION	DATE	DESCRIPTION
v0.1	2024-11-05	First draft
v0.2	2024-12-09	Second
v1.0	2024-12-16	Final
v2.0	2025-04-25	Final, Version 2, Addressing comments to DG RTD

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the granting authority, European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HADEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them

POLICY STRATEGY OF THE CLUSTER

1	Executive Summary	4
2	Introduction & Background	4
2.1	WISEWORK-C Overview.....	4
3	Cluster policy background	6
3.1	Background.....	6
3.2	The policy background.....	7
3.3	Cluster contribution to evidence.....	7
3.4	WISEWORK-C Working Group 1: Science translation for policy and practice.....	8
3.4.1	Partners	8
3.4.2	Expected deliverables of WG1.....	9
3.4.3	Aim of WG1	10
3.4.4	Synthesis.....	11
3.4.5	Synergy	12
3.4.6	Strategic mapping.....	13

1 Executive Summary

WISEWORK-C is a cluster of Horizon Europe projects focusing on using evidence to improve mental and physical health in working environments. The aim of the WISEWORK-C Policy Strategy is to foster the use of evidence for policy in three integrated ways:

1. To *synthesize* evidence by producing policy briefs containing insights from multiple projects.
2. To seek *synergies* by identifying further opportunities to work with the stakeholders associated with each project.
3. To inform *strategy* with mapping exercises to identify who makes policy.

2 Introduction & Background

WISEWORK-C is a cluster of Horizon Europe projects focusing on using evidence to improve mental and physical health in working environments. The aim of the WISEWORK-C Policy Strategy is to foster the use of evidence for policy, via collaboration between partners, to identify the opportunities to synthesise evidence and identify synergies between projects.

Each project has made a commitment to produce policy relevant evidence in separate Deliverables, to produce new insights on: compassionate workplaces and employee wellbeing, interventions to foster physical and mental health in relation to physically and mentally challenging outdoor environments, improve office environments in multiple sectors, and integrate the means to understand the physical and psychosocial demands of working environments. Although focusing on different workforces, sectors, or environments, there is a common focus on promoting more equitable, productive, and healthy working environments. As such, there is high potential to synthesise their insights and produce results that are greater than the sum of their parts. To that end, the WISEWORK-C Policy Strategy will harness collaboration across projects in three integrated ways:

1. To *synthesize* evidence. The main aim is to produce and communicate three joint policy briefs that harness evidence from multiple projects.
2. To seek *synergies* in relation to stakeholder engagement. The objective is to identify further opportunities and resource-efficient ways to work with the main stakeholders of all projects to boost the relevance of the cluster's evidence.
3. To inform *strategy* with background research on policymaking systems. The objective of mapping exercises is to identify how WISEWORK evidence would be relevant to (a) specific policy instruments and (b) the policymakers responsible for those instruments.

This production of policy briefs, supported by relational and systems-based approaches to evidence-informed policy, supports WISEWORK's aim to inform policy and policymakers with new evidence. Synthesis is essential to the supply of new policy-relevant evidence to inform policy and policymakers and will be more effective if backed by systems approaches to understand who would use this evidence and which instruments they would change, and relational approaches to understand how they interpret and use evidence.

2.1 WISEWORK-C Overview

WISEWORK-C is a cluster of projects brought together under the call HORIZON-HLTH-2023-ENVHLTH-02-02 "Evidence-based interventions for promotion of mental and physical health in changing working

environments (post- pandemic workplaces)”¹ funded by the Horizon Europe framework programme for research and innovation. The aim of the cluster is to foster synergies, encourage collaboration and maximize the impact of the research and innovation efforts of the projects. WISEWORK-C is comprised of the five funded projects under the call: WAge, SONATA, PROSPERH, INTERCAMBIO and EU-CoWork (Table 1).

Table 1 WISEWORK-C Projects

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT FULL TITLE
EU-COWORK ²	Developing Compassionate Workplaces to Protect Employees Health and Wellbeing
INTERCAMBIO ³	Interventions to promote mental and physical health in changing working environments due to climate change, sustainable work practices, and in green jobs.
PROSPERH ⁴	Promoting Positive Mental and Physical Health at Work in a Changing Environment: A Multi-level Approach
SONATA ⁵	Situational-aware Orchestration of Adaptive Architecture
WAGE ⁶	Healthy Working environments for all Ages: An evidence-driven framework

The cluster will be operational until December 2028, with each project actively contributing to the goals of the cluster while active, as shown in Figure 1.

¹<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/horizon-hlth-2023-envhlth-02-02>

² <https://eu-cowork.eu>

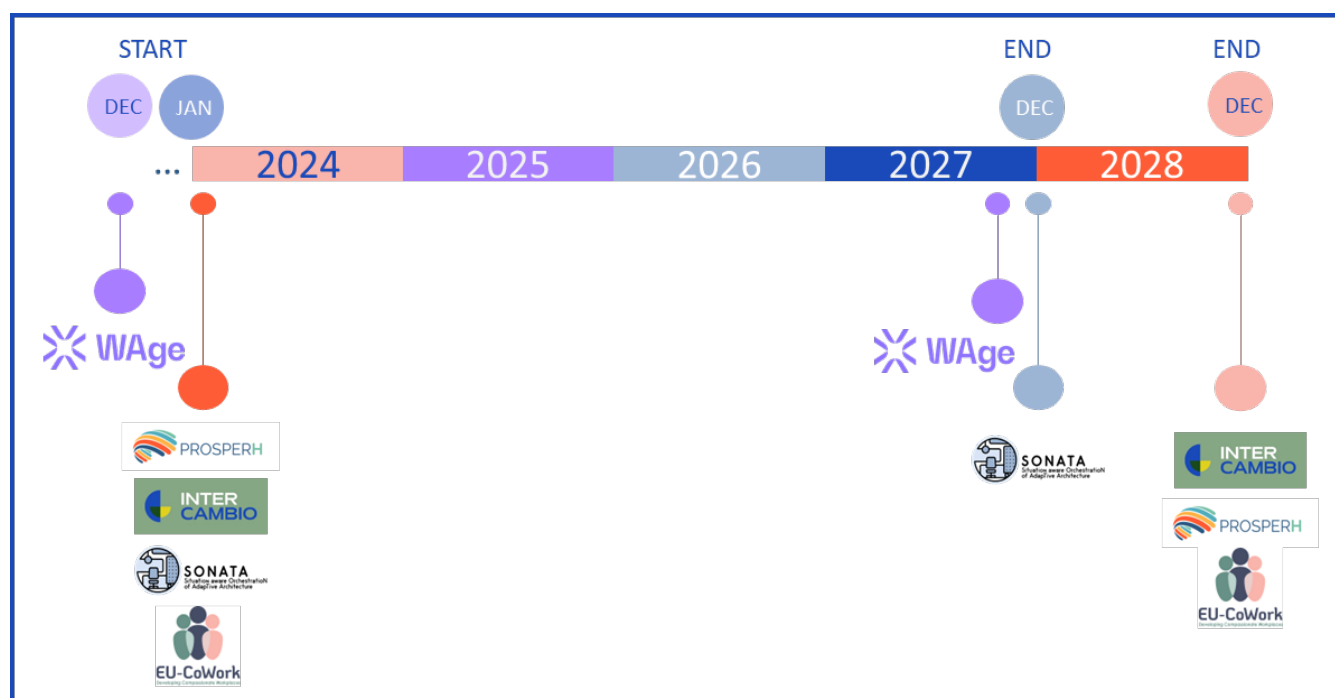
³ <https://intercambio-project.eu>

⁴ <https://www.prosperh.eu>

⁵ <https://sonata-horizon.eu>

⁶ <https://wagehealth.eu>

Figure 1 WISEWORK-C Duration of projects in the cluster



WISEWORK-C has four main goals:

- Promote the benefits of addressing mental and physical health in workplaces
- Develop and test a range of evidence-based interventions addressing mental and physical health in workplaces
- Influence policy and decision makers to take greater action in addressing mental and physical health affecting EU workers, leading to more sustainable workplaces
- Inform via scientific findings, the future development and implementation of mental and physical health practices for workplaces

WISEWORK-C will achieve these main goals through the work being carried out in the cluster working groups. This deliverable, **“Policy strategy of the cluster”** describes how **Working Group 1 - Science translation for policy and practice** will work to contribute to the cluster goal to influence policy and decision makers.

3 Cluster policy background

3.1 Background

The aim of WISEWORK-C is to contribute to evidence for health-promoting rapidly changing working environments. These changes are driven by new jobs, forms of work, management and work organisation propelled by the digital and green transitions. Examples of these changes include hybrid work (multilocal, including home), gig economy jobs, and digital worker performance monitoring. These changes can lead to the disruption of the work-life balance, musculoskeletal disorders, inadequate occupational safety and health, and compromised social protection, leading to both physical and mental health challenges, as well as psychosocial challenges in the workplace. Currently, there is limited information regarding the effects of these changes to workers' physical and mental health and wellbeing.

This cluster of projects will be gathering evidence from a variety of sectors and environments, including health, telework, construction, shared open offices and co-working spaces, public transit, renewable energy, waste management/recycling, and automotive factories. It will provide evidence for policymaking on the effects of workplaces, including changing workplaces and adaptive built environments, on physical and mental health of workers and psychosocial environments as well as evidence for promotive interventions, frameworks, tools and recommendations. While each project provides a distinctive approach, and focuses on particular sectors, there is high potential for synergy across methods and sectors. For example, projects can compare research/data on working conditions and the impact of interventions, and compare experiences inside and outside of the workplace, to examine research implications beyond health and safety towards health and wellbeing more generally.

3.2 The policy background

WISEWORK-C, and specifically WG1, will work to strengthen and make accessible the evidence-base for policymaking and practice and in this manner align its efforts to the objectives of the EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027⁷ of anticipating change, improving prevention, and increasing preparedness underpinned by the strengthened evidence base, social dialogue, awareness raising and improved enforcement.

3.3 Cluster contribution to evidence

Based on the objectives of the individual projects in the cluster, the provision of evidence for policymaking can be vast and includes the following:

- Data on impact of ongoing changes in the workplace (e.g. hybrid, atypical hours, work-life balance) in different categories of workers and sectors.
- Evidence on mental health and well-being at the workplace.
- Evidence on risk factors in development of chronic diseases in the workplace
- Evidence on the impact of adaptive architectural technologies on health and wellbeing, including recommendations and measurement of wellbeing benefits from these adaptations
- Evidence of how to balance different needs in shared workplaces
- Recommendations for cost-effective interventions to prevent occupational risks and support well-being across various sectors
- Develop scientific frameworks for OSH across policies and sectors
- Support sustainable tools, guidelines, and policies for evaluating and designing physical and psychosocial work.
- Provide tools and approaches to anticipate new OSH risks, also in relation to digital technologies and associated new ways of working
- Development and evaluation of compassionate workplaces for health promotion
- Development of an age-sensitive framework to assess interactions between psychosocial and physical factors for healthy working environments.

⁷ <https://osha.europa.eu/en/safety-and-health-legislation/eu-strategic-framework-health-and-safety-work-2021-2027>

WISEWORK-C'S extensive scientific evidence (outlined in Table 5) will be analysed to identify common themes, which will then be highlighted in the policy briefs. All evidence included in the policy briefs will be simplified to ensure impactful practice and policy changes, making it accessible and usable for the targeted audience.

3.4 WISEWORK-C Working Group 1: Science translation for policy and practiceⁱ

3.4.1 Partners

The partners involved in WG1 are listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2 WISEWORK-C Projects

PROJECT NAME	PARTNER INVOLVED IN WG1
EU-COWORK	Vrije Universiteit Brussel (BE); Sorgenetz (AT); IDEWE (BE)
INTERCAMBIO (CO-LEAD)	ISGlobal (ES); Halmstad University (SE)
PROSPERH	Hospital del Mar Medical Research Institute, IMIM (ES)
SONATA	Università degli Studi di Perugia (IT); Conseil Des Architectes D'Europe (BE)
WAGE (CO-LEAD)	University of Stirling (UK); SINTEF (NO)

WG1 began its work in the autumn of 2024, holding three meetings that year. The group established a working method involving 1) meetings for discussion, consensus, and task delegation, and 2) collaborative document work using a digital platform, where different projects contributed and provided feedback. This document reflects the effectiveness of this approach. Consequently, starting in 2025, WG1 will plan six meetings annually, with additional meetings as needed to ensure timely deliverables. WG1 will initiate the work described in this strategy with a planning session in the spring of 2025 for activities of the same year. This will take place once the RTD Policy Officer has reviewed this document. Table 3 outlines expected outcomes for each reporting period, aligned with the activities in the *Modalities of Implementation* document for WISEWORK-C.

Table 3 WG1 expected outcomes for each Reporting Period

OUTCOMES	P1 (M17) *	P2 (M35)	P3 (M47)	P4 (M60)
CLUSTER POLICY STRATEGY	X			
MEETINGS 2024-2025	4			

CLUSTER POLICY BRIEF 1		X		
MEETINGS 2025-2026		11		
MEETINGS 2027			6	
CLUSTER POLICY BRIEF 2			X	
MEETINGS 2028				6
CLUSTER POLICY BRIEF 3				X
STAKEHOLDER MAPPING COMPLETED		X		
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**		1-2	1	1

* Based on M1=January 2024

** No. of engagement sessions (see 3.4.2) coordinated with WG events planned by the Coordinating Team

3.4.2 Expected deliverables of WG1

The expected deliverables of WG1 consists of three policy briefs and this document, the policy strategy of WISEWORK-C. Table 4 shows the expected deliverables and their due dates according to the document drafted by the EU DG Research and Innovation.⁸ The months shown in the table are based on projects starting in January 2024 and ending in December 2028, but these dates may be adjusted to better accommodate all projects.

Table 4 WISEWORK-C WG1 deliverables

DELIVERABLES	DUE DATE
CLUSTER POLICY STRATEGY	M12
CLUSTER POLICY BRIEF 1	M24
CLUSTER POLICY BRIEF 2	M48
CLUSTER POLICY BRIEF 3	M60

As described in WISEWORK-C's Common Dissemination and Communication (D&C) Strategy, the topics of the policy briefs will be determined as projects start obtaining preliminary results and common themes emerge. The status of project activities and results will be discussed in the first WG1 meeting in 2025, to determine possible topics for the first policy brief. As evidence becomes available and published, it will be easier to find

⁸ EU DG Research and Innovation. Modalities for implementing the 'ENVHLTH-02-02' Cluster. Brussels: 2023-2024.

common themes and plan topics for the policy briefs and to provide evidence-based recommendations as explained in the D&C Strategy.

The dissemination of the policy briefs and their feedback will be planned closely with WG3. We will utilise existing dissemination channels and leverage stakeholders which are currently being mapped and those which are already being targeted. Examples of dissemination channels to leverage for policy feedback include the “thematic workshops” being organised and promoted by WG3, and the opportunity this provides for incorporating sessions on evidence for policy change. These thematic workshops are valuable arenas for engagement because they are being strategically planned by WG3 and include targeting important days like Awareness and National Days. In addition, these workshops are flexible arenas, since they are also being planned as online workshops. Policies for stakeholder engagement on social media, will be developed together with WG3 during P2 and before the first policy brief launch.

3.4.3 Aim of WG1

The overall aim of WG1 is to synthesise insights from all WISEWORK-C projects to produce evidence to inform policy.

This informs the following objectives, focused on synthesis, synergy and strategic mapping:

1. **Synthesis** of evidence harnessed from multiple projects in three joint policy briefs.
2. **Synergy** of efforts by identifying further opportunities and resource-efficient ways to work with key stakeholders and maximise capacity to inform their policymaking
3. **Strategic mapping** of WISEWORK-C evidence to relevant policy instruments and policymaking actors, identifying key audiences for its research.

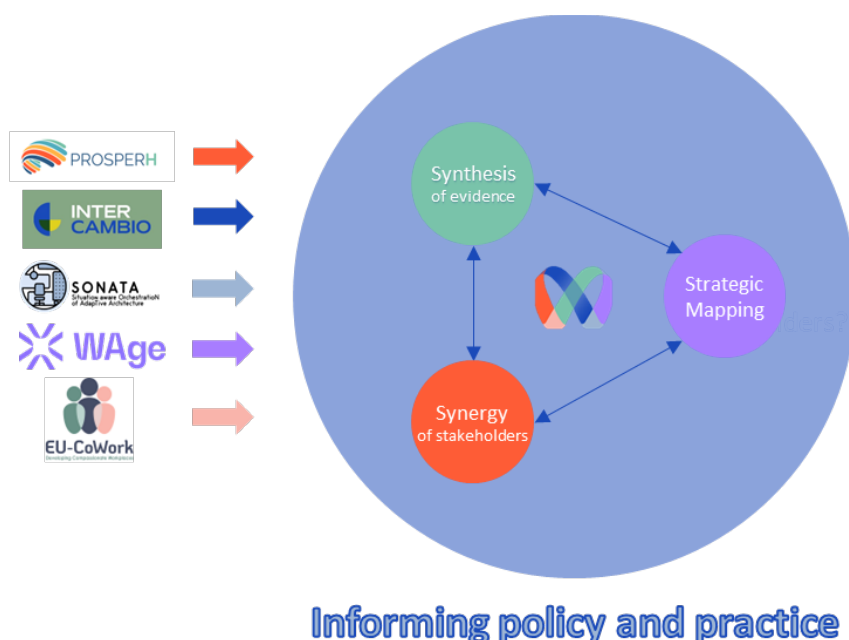


Figure 2 WISEWORK-C WG1's approach to informing policy and practice

3.4.4 Synthesis

This objective consists of synthesising evidence from the multiple projects to produce three joint policy briefs. WG1 will need to agree on the topics for the joint policy briefs, which will be aligned to the priorities set by the WISEWORK-C Coordination team. The synthesis of prioritised evidence should help policymakers and workplace organisations: understand the most important evidence emerging from the cluster projects and ensure that policies and practices are based on the most relevant information. It can also identify gaps in the evidence.

The first step to synthesis consists of summarising all plans for evidence from the cluster projects. Table 5 provides an initial overview of expected evidence emanating from WISEWORK-C projects and when these might be available for use in policy briefs. This overview identifies some initial challenges to address: the data from the projects are not always available in a timely manner to support the development of joint briefs. Therefore, in Year 2, WG1 will need to have more exhaustive discussions to determine which preliminary findings can be made available in time for joint policy development.

Table 5 Expected evidence from WISEWORK-C

PROJECT NAME	EVIDENCE	EXPECTED AVAILABILITY
EU-COWORK	Development and evaluation of tailored Compassionate Workplace programs	M36
	Cross-sectional analysis of baseline observational data	M36
	Longitudinal qualitative & quantitative subgroup and country analyses	M54
	Cost-effectiveness analysis	M54
	Process evaluation of the tailored Compassionate Workplace program	M60
INTERCAMBIO (CO-LEAD)	Multi-level stakeholder mapping	M18
	Results of - Interventions - outdoor construction workers - Interventions - renewable energy workers - Interventions - waste management workers - Sustainable work practices - health care - Sustainable work practices – public transit	M48
	Final job-exposure matrices, databases, searchable tool	M48
PROSPERH	Literature reviews on effective promotional interventions for improving mental and physical health outcomes, and individual, workplace and organisational interventions, and optimal care pathways for the identification and subsequent self-management and treatment of musculoskeletal disorders, depression and anxiety	M09
	Stakeholders' consultation for the identification of attitudes towards workplace digital interventions for physical and mental wellbeing,	M10

	country-specific workplace contexts, specific needs of employees and supervisors for self-management of physical and mental disorders, the impact of severe physical and mental health needs of employees and employers	
	Literature review on barriers and facilitators related to implementing interventions for physical and mental health in workplace settings	M12
	Identification of current literature reviews on the relationship between working hours and health	M18
	Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the optimised PROSPERH Intervention	M54
	Identification of studies that analyse the impact of changes in work organisation factors on workers' health	M60
SONATA	Synthesis of evidence from literature on environment-, activity-, and individual-related factors impacting workers' health and well-being in office-like environments	M15
	Restructuring evidence on environment, activity, and individual-related factors impacting workers' health and well-being in office-like environments based on tracks outcomes: • Situation track • Orchestration track • Socio-cultural track • Field track(s): open-plan office, coworking cafe, home offices	M42
	Situational aware Digital Twin and adaptive-layers orchestration model synthesis. Reports with recommendations for standardization	M48
WAGE (CO-LEAD)	Identification of most important physical factors for adverse health outcomes by age (and gender)	M20
	Identification of the most significant health promoting psychosocial factors associated with psychological well-being across age and gender	M20
	Model integrating physical and psychosocial factors linked with well-being in the workplace	M24
	Guidelines and recommendations on use of International Data Spaces for research	M42
	Age-sensitive recommendations for change and interventions in work environments	M48
	Healthy working environments policy roadmap	M48

3.4.5 Synergy

This objective involves creating synergies between projects by identifying further opportunities and efficient ways to work with a small number of key common stakeholders within WISEWORK-C. Each project could also have key unique stakeholders which would be important to target. Therefore, one would identify not only key audiences with high level of interest, like EU OSHA or EU DG RTD, but also the most important recipients of WISEWORK-C research within each project. A relational approach underpins this work: identifying key stakeholders, engaging with them to understand how they would interpret and use new evidence, and

reflecting on the production and communication of evidence in that context. Each project is currently compiling a list of relevant stakeholders, including national and local policymakers with the objective of inviting them to local events and webinars. This will not only provide an opportunity for stakeholders to discover research that is highly relevant and aligned with their priorities, but also facilitate active engagement, allowing us to obtain constructive feedback on the use of evidence for policy change. This stakeholder identification exercise should be consolidated in time for the release of the first policy brief. This timeline will enable active stakeholder participation in policy feedback as explained in 3.4.2.

How well WISEWORK-C can help inform policymaking and practice is dependent on how well we can correctly identify actors with the highest level of interest and ability to inform or influence policymaking or practice. There are several ways to do this analysis, including using Mendelow's Matrix. However, at this preliminary stage, we identified: (a) which stakeholders were already essential to each project, or (b) the future means for partner projects to inform this process. The method to be used for this analysis will be decided by WG1 and will be based on the initial mapping done by the WISEWORK-C coordinators. This objective also involves identifying common opportunities for engaging these key stakeholders.

3.4.6 Strategic mapping

The objective is to produce initial 'maps' to guide the process of connecting WISEWORK-C evidence to (a) potentially relevant instruments, and (b) who is responsible for those instruments. A systems approach underpins this work, to identify all policy instruments relevant to WISEWORK-C evidence, establish which actors influence and make these instruments, and therefore determine how new evidence would inform policy in a policymaking system. This work is already a feature of project WAge, and we will harness this capacity to support the overall work of the cluster.

This supportive work will enable the cluster to have a clear visualisation of the specific policies which can be influenced by the evidence, and the corresponding policymakers which could have an interest in the evidence. This mapping would also help to explore the interconnections between the available evidence in the cluster, the relevant policies, and interested stakeholders, providing a comprehensive understanding of how they influence each other. The focus on evidence synthesis would identify the relevant evidence for joint policy briefs, which would inform the mapping process (such as to identify key stakeholders and policymakers and their use of policy instruments). The mapping, in turn, could be used to guide the communication of evidence-informed briefs. This mapping can also aid transparency on how evidence is used in policymaking, to enable researchers to understand policymaking processes and communicate more effectively with stakeholders and policymakers.

As previously stated, we will access the policy landscape through a thoughtful plan of dissemination and engagement in collaboration with WG3. Additionally, we can ensure timely access to the policy cycles of the EU's Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work by utilising the current engagement of EU-OSHA in WISEWORK-C activities to target the actors within EU-OSHA, who work closely with this committee.

ⁱ Policy is often the umbrella term to describe the strategies adopted by policymakers, the instruments they use, and the outcomes to which they contribute. Practice is an umbrella term to describe the routine behaviours relevant to policy outcomes, including the impact of policy on organisational rules and behaviours (inside and outside of government).