

**PROJECT TITLE**

**DigEXT: A DIGITALISED, RESOURCE-EFFICIENT AND RESILIENT EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY**

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE**

**Policy objective 1:** A smarter Europe

**Specific objective:** (iv) Skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition & entrepreneurship

**PROJECT LEADER**

GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF INDUSTRY AND MINES - REGIONAL MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION, INDUSTRY, KNOWLEDGE AND UNIVERSITIES. JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA (SPAIN)

Policy instrument: S4Andalucía

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

The aim of the DigEXT project is to improve the policy instruments of the involved European regions to support the extractive industry as a result of the emergence of Industry 4.0.

In this context, the main objective of the DigEXT partnership is to achieve, by 2026, a 15% increase in the number of companies in the extractive sector cooperating with other innovation actors in the participating regions to implement I4.0 solutions as a result of improved innovation policies.

The project partners will cooperate and exchange experiences and best practices in order to propose measures to facilitate improved I4.0 policy cooperation between regions, increased industry involvement and the availability of I4.0 skills.

DigEXT aims to benefit all stakeholders in each region's innovation ecosystem, i.e. innovation policy makers, SMEs using I4.0 solutions, suppliers of I4.0 services, universities and innovation centres.

This will be achieved by learning about useful good practices from DigEXT partners which will then be included in their corresponding action plans, specifically tailored to each region. These action plans should help policymakers address the identified needs and transfer available solutions.

Proposed solutions include strengthening capacity of priority sectors (RIS3), using innovation in soft digitalisation measures and ensuring cooperation along the innovation chain, among others.

## CONTEXT

One of the main objectives of the EU Raw Materials Strategy and Next Generation Funds is to increase access to primary raw materials, in particular to critical raw materials for the EU's industrial value chains and strategic sectors.

The needs of extractive operations must give in and allow for a transformative change in the EU's extractive industries that ensures EU's raw materials autonomy, while protecting and restoring biodiversity, boosting its resilience, fighting climate change and recovering from the COVID-19 crisis. But while large mining companies are anticipating the changes brought about by the digital revolution in the production and value creation process, mining companies are struggling to embrace the Industry 4.0 revolution.

One of the main problems is that many extractive companies are not aware of the need to adapt to this huge ongoing digitalisation process and are unaware of the possibilities. There seems to be a gap between the willingness to use highly digitalised products in private and professional life. It is therefore crucial to inform extractive companies about possible benefits that digitalisation can bring and about the impact that falling behind this process can have on almost all areas of a company.

## APPROACH

DigEXT is born to establish a common basis for policy learning among its members in order to overcome the fragmentation of Industry 4.0 solutions and their enabling potential for the small-scale extractive industry by addressing the main challenges hampering their dissemination into the European Union ecosystem. It is therefore essential to bring together and connect best capabilities across the EU to foster the development, scale-up and commercialisation as well as the dissemination of Industry 4.0 solutions – whether these are new technologies, products, services, business models, etc.

All partners will work together on policy analysis at regional level tasks before exchanging their best initiatives and transferring them from one country to another. This close cooperation will enable them to create the best conditions for promoting innovation through more effective Structural and Regional Funds policies.

Small scale extractive industries are often located in rural areas, characterised by a lack of research, development and innovation tools and critical mass, and therefore struggled to keep experienced small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as highly qualified people in the region. DigEXT focuses on these rural areas because they not only offer benefits, but are also bottlenecks for attracting and retaining knowledge, people and capital.

## MAIN ACTIVITIES & OUTPUTS

Exchange of experience: Mutual improvement analysis and study trips with peer-review of each partner's practices in order to improve the policy instruments addressed. Outputs: SWOT analysis, policy learning events, identified good practices, guidelines with policy recommendations.

Communication: Video reports and other communication actions for effective dissemination to other territories in Europe.

Management and coordination to ensure that the project is implemented according to the work plan and the Programme requirements.

**BUDGET:** The project budget will be the result of an average budget of the participant regions (for one or more partners representing the same territory/policy instrument) of about 250.000,00€.

**ESTIMATED DURATION:** 4 years

## PARTNERSHIP PROFILE

- **Public authorities**– local, regional and national authorities with competences in the matter and managing policy instruments related to improving the competitiveness of the extractive industry through innovation and digitalisation of processes.
- **Managing authorities/intermediate bodies** in charge of the Investment for Growth and Jobs programmes or European Territorial Cooperation.
- **Agencies, research institutes, thematic and non-profit organisations.**

## POLICY INSTRUMENTS ADDRESSED

National and regional policy instruments including measures addressed to the extractive industry and ERDF regional Operation programmes.

## CONTACT

F. Javier Fernández Cortés  
Manager  
**Marble, Stone and Materials Technological Center**  
[javier.fernandez@ctmarmol.es](mailto:javier.fernandez@ctmarmol.es)

Tel. +34 968 74 15 00