

Output Factsheet

Output title: Innovative Training Programme

Summary of the output (max. 2500 characters)

The WE.Circular Innovative Training Programme is a comprehensive, modular and multilingual e-learning programme designed to support women entrepreneurs in building more sustainable, circular and digitally enabled businesses. It addresses clearly identified skills gaps across the Danube Region, where many women entrepreneurs recognise the importance of sustainability and digitalisation but often lack practical guidance on how to apply these concepts in everyday business practice.

The programme follows a learner-centred and practice-oriented approach, combining circular economy principles, digital transformation, entrepreneurial skills and personal development into a single, coherent learning pathway. It is structured into 12 interconnected modules, progressing from foundational knowledge to practical application. The training covers topics such as circular economy fundamentals, circular business models, life-cycle thinking and waste management, environmental policies and sustainable finance, digital transformation and operational digital competences, digital presence, digital tools for circular economy, effective communication, productivity, mindset and collaboration.

A key feature of the programme is the self-assessment tool, which allows participants to reflect on their current knowledge, skills and confidence levels. Based on the results, learners receive personalised recommendations on which modules are most relevant to their needs, enabling flexible and individual learning pathways. This makes the programme accessible and relevant for women entrepreneurs at different stages of their entrepreneurial journey.

The training is delivered through a custom Moodle-based e-learning platform, offering content in 11 languages and allowing participants to learn at their own pace and in their preferred language. Interactive SCORM modules, quizzes, case studies, templates and reflection tasks support active learning and direct application in business contexts. In addition, live and recorded webinars foster exchange, inspiration and peer learning among women entrepreneurs across countries.

Designed with long-term sustainability and transferability in mind, the Innovative Training Programme is embedded in a wider learning and support ecosystem that enables continued use, adaptation and upscaling beyond the project lifetime. It represents a practical and transferable tool for empowering women entrepreneurs and strengthening circular and digital innovation ecosystems across the Danube Region.

Contribution to the programme and project objectives, output and result indicator, as well as to the targets set for the Priority Area concerned (max. 2000 characters)

The WE.Circular Innovative Training Programme directly contributes to the project objective of strengthening digital, circular and entrepreneurial skills of women entrepreneurs and enhancing the capacity of key stakeholders to support the green and digital transitions. By providing a structured, practice-oriented and multilingual learning pathway, the programme addresses identified skills gaps and supports women entrepreneurs in adopting circular business models, digital tools and sustainable practices.

The output contributes to the Interreg Danube Region Programme objective of improving innovation capacity, skills development and institutional cooperation across the region. It delivers a concrete and transferable training solution that supports lifelong learning, digitalisation and sustainable economic transformation. Through its modular structure and learner-centred design, the programme enables flexible uptake by women entrepreneurs, business support organisations, training providers and educational institutions.

The Innovative Training Programme contributes directly to the project output indicator related to the development and implementation of joint solutions, tools and training formats. It also supports the project result indicator by strengthening the capacities of organisations and individuals involved in innovation, entrepreneurship and skills development, fostering behavioural change and improved competences relevant to circular and digital transitions.

In relation to the Priority Area concerned, the output supports targets linked to enhancing innovation ecosystems, promoting sustainable growth and improving skills for smart specialisation and Industry 4.0. By integrating circular economy principles with digital competences and entrepreneurial skills, the programme contributes to more resilient regional economies and inclusive innovation processes. Its multilingual e-learning format and embedded upscaling mechanisms further strengthen transnational cooperation and ensure long-term impact beyond the project lifetime.

How can the output be used and by whom (target group), what is the benefit and the impact for these target groups and the target area / Danube Region? (max. 1500 characters)

The WE.Circular Innovative Training Programme is primarily designed for women entrepreneurs across the Danube Region who want to strengthen their digital, circular and entrepreneurial skills and apply sustainability in practical business contexts. The programme can be used as a self-paced learning pathway that supports women at different stages of their entrepreneurial journey - from early-stage founders to established business owners seeking to transform or scale their activities in a more sustainable and digital way. The main benefit for women entrepreneurs is improved confidence, competence and decision-making capacity, enabling them to adopt circular

business models, use digital tools effectively and increase the resilience and competitiveness of their businesses.

Academia and training centres can use the programme as a ready-made, modular educational resource that can be integrated into formal and non-formal education, lifelong learning programmes and professional training courses. The benefit lies in access to high-quality, practice-oriented content that combines sustainability, digitalisation and entrepreneurship, aligned with regional and EU priorities.

Intermediary organisations, such as business support organisations, chambers of commerce and innovation centres, can use the programme as part of their advisory, mentoring and capacity-building services. It enables them to better support women entrepreneurs and strengthen their role within regional innovation ecosystems.

How can the sustainability of the output be ensured and where and to whom is it going to be transferred? (max. 1500 characters)

The sustainability of the WE.Circular Innovative Training Programme is ensured through a combination of institutional commitment, digital delivery and integration into existing support structures. The programme is hosted on a stable Moodle-based e-learning platform, which enables continuous access to the training content, easy updates and long-term maintenance beyond the project lifetime. Its modular structure allows individual modules to be reused, updated or combined according to future needs without requiring full redesign.

Long-term sustainability is further supported through the WE.Circular Learning Network through the Memorandum of Understanding signed by project partners and key stakeholders. By committing to use, promote and further develop the training programme, these organisations ensure its continued implementation for at least five years after the project's end. Integration of the programme into Regional Action Plans and regular activities of partner institutions strengthens its institutional anchoring and reduces dependency on project-based funding.

The output is transferable to training centres, universities, business support organisations, and innovation hubs across the Danube Region and beyond. Thanks to its multilingual format and digital accessibility, the programme can be easily adapted to different regional, sectoral or target-group contexts. It can be transferred as a full training pathway or as individual modules integrated into entrepreneurship support schemes, mentoring programmes, incubation and acceleration initiatives, or lifelong learning offers.

The training programme remains a living resource that can be replicated, scaled and embedded in regional innovation ecosystems over time.

0.1.1 Innovative Training Programme

12/2025

VFU, UNSA

Versioning and Contribution History

Version	Date	Author/Editor/Contributor	Description/Comments
01	14.11.2025	Iva Moneva/ VFU Antonina Ivanova/ VFU	Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4
01	02.12.2025	Amra Kapo/ UNSA	Chapter 5
01	08.12.2025	Iva Moneva/ VFU	Chapter 2, 3, 4
01	16.12.2025	Miglena Pencheva/ VFU	Chapter 4
01	17.12.2025	Mariya Zlateva/ RAPIV	Revision of Chapter 3, 4, 7 Executive summary
02	19.12.2025	Iva Moneva, Antonina Ivanova, Miglena Pencheva/ VFU Amra Kapo/ UNSA Mariya Zlateva	Final

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1 Executive summary

Across the Danube Region, many women entrepreneurs are ready to innovate, grow and make their businesses more sustainable. They understand that circular practices, digital tools and responsible business models are becoming essential for success. At the same time, many of them face the same challenge: sustainability and digitalisation often feel complicated, fragmented and difficult to translate into everyday business decisions. Practical guidance, real-life examples and step-by-step support are frequently missing, creating barriers that slow down innovation and business growth.

The **WE.Circular Innovative Training Programme** was created to respond to this challenge. It offers women entrepreneurs clear, practical and accessible learning opportunities that help them turn sustainability and digitalisation from abstract concepts into concrete business actions. The programme is designed to support women at different stages of their entrepreneurial journey regardless they are just starting, growing an existing business or looking to transform their operations in a more circular and digital way.

The training follows a modular structure and brings together key topics that women entrepreneurs need today. It covers circular economy fundamentals, circular business models, digital transformation, practical digital tools, environmental policies, sustainable finance, communication skills, productivity and mindset. The content is presented in a simple, engaging way, combining short explanations with real examples, quizzes, templates and reflection tasks that can be directly applied in business practice.

A distinctive feature of the programme is the **self-assessment tool**, which helps participants understand their current strengths and identify areas where further learning would be most useful. Based on their results, women entrepreneurs receive personalised recommendations that allow them to choose the modules that best match their needs and priorities. This makes the learning experience flexible, personalised and efficient.

The training is delivered through an online learning platform and is available in multiple languages, allowing women from different countries to learn at their own pace and in their preferred language. In addition to the self-paced modules, live and recorded webinars create opportunities for exchange, inspiration and peer learning, bringing together women entrepreneurs from across the region.

Beyond individual learning, the training programme is designed to have a long-term impact. It is embedded in a wider learning and support ecosystem that connects entrepreneurs, business support organisations, educators and policymakers. This ensures that the programme can continue to grow, evolve and reach new audiences over time.

The WE.Circular Innovative Training Programme equips women entrepreneurs with practical tools, relevant knowledge and the confidence to act. By making circular economy and digital transformation easier to understand and apply, the programme supports women in building smarter, more sustainable and more resilient businesses by helping them turn ambition into action and ideas into real impact.

2 Introduction

DRP0200020 WE.Circular - Boosting digital and industrial capacity for sustainable circular transition of women entrepreneurs in the Danube Region is a project implemented under the Interreg Danube Region Programme. Its main goal is to **increase digital and business skills of women entrepreneurs for circular transition** and to **equip the main stakeholders with skills necessary to develop and implement smart specialization strategies**, supporting women entrepreneurs from the Danube Region for transition to industry 4.0 while fulfilling circular economy aspects. It will be achieved through better integrated policies and innovative practical solutions.

By **strengthening digital, industrial, and circular competences**, WE.Circular builds an inclusive ecosystem that connects women entrepreneurs, business support organisations, academia, and policymakers through **training, innovation, and transnational collaboration**.

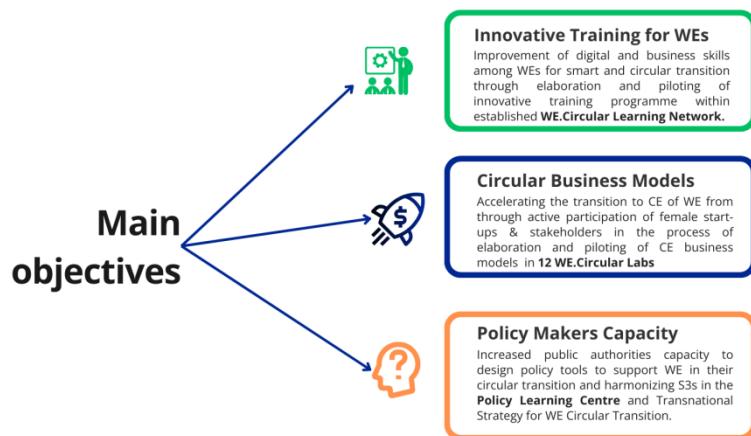


Figure 2-1: WE.Circular project main objectives

The project brings together **15 project partners and 11 associated strategic partners** from **12 countries** who share the belief that women play a key role in shaping the future of sustainable innovation. Through a combination of **capacity-building, research, policy development, and transnational learning**, WE.Circular strengthens the regional ecosystem that supports women entrepreneurs in adopting circular business models and digital technologies.

Lead Partner:

Regional Agency for Entrepreneurship and Innovations – Varna (RAPIV), Bulgaria

Project Partners:

Varna Free University “Chernorizets Hrabar” (Bulgaria) • Innovation Region Styria LTD (Austria) • Technology Park Varaždin (Croatia) • IREAS – Institute for Structural Policy (Czech Republic) • BWCON GmbH (Germany) • Pannon Business Network (Hungary) • MGFU (Hungary) • Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Štajerska (Slovenia) • Slovak Business Agency (Slovakia) • Ropot Boutique (Romania) • Organization for Entrepreneurship Development (Moldova) • Foreign Trade Chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina • University of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) • Association of Business Women in Serbia

Associated Strategic Partners:

SPIRIT Slovenia • Ministry of Economy and Industry (Bulgaria) • Ministry of Culture and Innovation (Hungary) • Circular Slovakia • Women Entrepreneurs Club (Hungary) • Ministry of Economy (Moldova) • Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Youth (Bosnia and Herzegovina) • Economic Chamber of Styria – Dep. founder and economic services (Austria) • City of Varaždin (Croatia) • Chamber of Commerce of Serbia • Viitor Plus (Romania).

One of the outputs of the project is the **WE.Circular Innovative Training Programme**, a comprehensive, modular and multilingual e-learning pathway designed to build circular, digital and entrepreneurial skills tailored to the needs of women entrepreneurs. The programme consists of twelve interconnected modules delivered through a Moodle-based e-learning platform. It is complemented by a self-assessment tool, live and recorded webinars, practical exercises, case studies, templates and curated external resources. Together, these components form a coherent learning framework that supports skill development, practical application and peer learning.

This Output outlines the applied methodology used for programme design, including the role of thematic task group meetings and the iterative co-creation process. The document describes the modular training content, the supporting learning elements and the e-learning environment through which the programme is delivered. Both conceptual and operational dimensions are addressed to ensure transparency, quality, consistency and replicability of the training programme across different regional contexts.

3 Methodology applied

The Innovative Training Programme was developed using a **structured, collaborative and iterative methodology** designed to ensure relevance, quality and applicability for women entrepreneurs across the Danube Region. The methodology integrates digital skills, business competences, circular economy principles, smart specialisation strategies and Industry 4.0 concepts, reflecting both regional development priorities and the practical needs of women-led businesses.

A key feature of the applied methodology is its **participatory and transnational character**, bringing together project partners, external experts and stakeholders through a dedicated Thematic Task Group (TTG). This approach ensured that diverse expertise, regional perspectives and sectoral insights were systematically incorporated throughout the programme development process. The methodology also emphasizes accessibility, inclusiveness, practical orientation and alignment with existing policy frameworks, enabling future replication and upscaling.

To achieve these objectives, the methodology followed a **clear multi-phase process**, progressing from needs identification and co-creation to content development, validation and finalisation. The main methodological steps applied in the development of the training programme are outlined below:

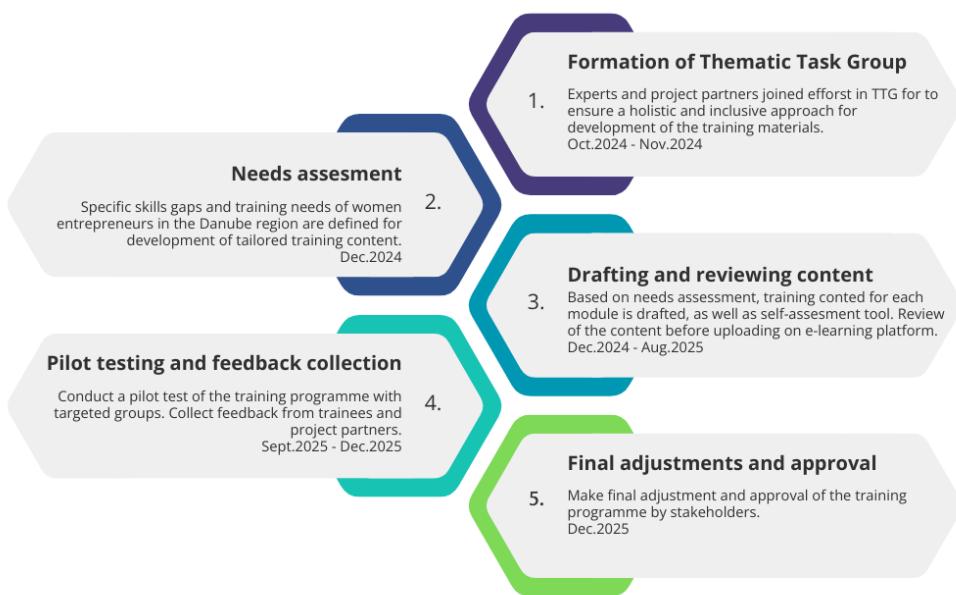


Figure 3-1: Methodology for development of the WE.Circular Training Programme

Formation of the Thematic Task Group

Key activity includes the formation of a Thematic Task Group (TTG), development of training programme, refine and finalize training materials, and pilot testing to gather feedback and make necessary adjustments. The final phase involves expanding the program and integrating it into regional action plans to ensure its sustainability and long-term impact.

The TTG was composed of a **multidisciplinary mix of experts and practitioners** ensuring comprehensive coverage of all thematic areas addressed by the training programme. Its members included specialists in digital technologies and digital transformation, business and entrepreneurship development, circular economy and sustainability, Industry 4.0 and smart manufacturing, as well as regional development and smart specialisation strategies. The TTG brought together representatives of project partners and selected external experts, ensuring a balanced combination of academic knowledge, policy insight and hands-on business support experience.

The TTG meetings served as the main coordination and co-creation mechanism for the training programme. They were used to jointly define the methodology, develop and review training content, validate the programme structure and ensure alignment with project objectives, stakeholder needs and regional priorities.

The 1st TTG meeting, held in Stuttgart, Germany in November 2024, marked the conceptual foundation of the programme. The meeting defined the methodology, criteria, and responsibilities of the task group members. It emphasized the identification of skills gaps in digital, circular, and business/soft skills, and initiated brainstorming sessions to propose preliminary modules. Although time constraints limited the completion of task distribution and timeline planning, the meeting successfully established a collaborative framework and produced an initial matrix of topics for further refinement.



Photo: First Thematic Task Group Meeting, Stuttgart, 25.11.2024, own resources

The 2nd TTG meeting, convened in Maribor, Slovenia in May 2025, advanced the process by presenting draft training modules. Partners introduced content on circular economy, digital transformation, and entrepreneurial skills, supported by quizzes and case studies. Feedback highlighted the need for accessible language, attractive module

titles, and practical examples tailored to the average woman entrepreneur. Plans for pilot testing were agreed, including webinars, video interviews, and self-assessment tools. The meeting underscored the importance of integrating benefits for WEs into each module and simplifying academic content for broader accessibility.



Photo: Second Thematic Task Group Meeting, Maribor 14.05.2025, own resources

The 3rd TTG meeting, organized in Varaždin, Croatia in October 2025, focused on finalization and evaluation. Feedback from pilot testing revealed high satisfaction levels but also pointed to the need for more practical resources, interactive elements, and stronger integration across modules. Participation challenges were noted, with low enrolment and completion rates in several partner countries. Recommendations included targeted re-engagement strategies, improved communication, and enhanced webinar formats to increase involvement. The meeting also addressed sustainability, discussing the integration of the training programme into regional action plans and the establishment of the WE.Circular Learning Network supported by Memorandum of Understanding.

Needs Assessment

The Joint Transnational Skills Needs and Gaps Analysis carried out within the WE.Circular project identified significant and interlinked **training needs among women entrepreneurs across the Danube Region**, particularly in relation to the green and digital transitions. It set the base for development of the training programme. While many women entrepreneurs possess strong sector-specific knowledge and entrepreneurial motivation, the analysis showed persistent gaps in the skills required to adapt business models to circular economy principles and digital transformation processes.

A major training need was identified in the area of **digital skills**, especially regarding the practical application of digital tools for business operations, online communication and

marketing, data use for decision-making, and the understanding of Industry 4.0-related concepts. Many women entrepreneurs reported limited experience in selecting, implementing and effectively using digital solutions to improve efficiency, productivity and market reach.

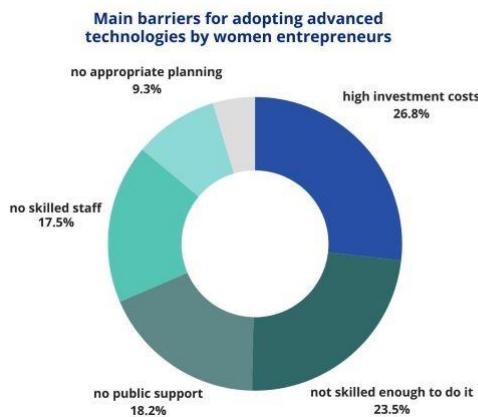


Figure 3-2: Main barriers for adopting advanced technologies by women entrepreneurs: Joint Transnational Skills Needs and Gaps Analysis, 01.10.2024

The analysis also highlighted notable gaps in **circular economy-related competences**. Although sustainability is widely perceived as important, many women entrepreneurs lack concrete knowledge of circular business models, lifecycle thinking, resource efficiency measures, waste prevention strategies and the relevant European and national policy frameworks. This gap constrains their ability to translate sustainability awareness into operational and economically viable practices.

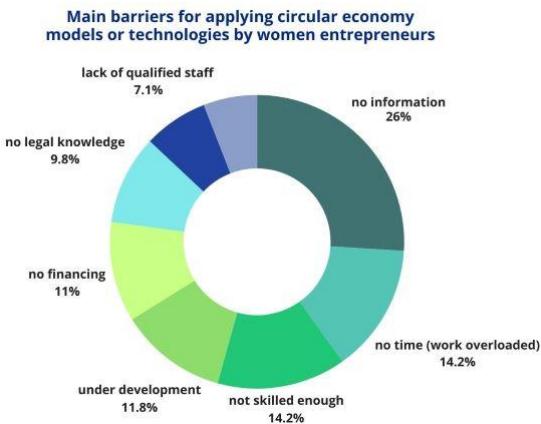


Figure 3-3: Main barriers for applying circular economy models and technologies by women entrepreneurs: Joint Transnational Skills Needs and Gaps Analysis, 01.10.2024

In addition, the needs assessment pointed to gaps in **business and soft skills**, particularly in strategic planning, financial management for sustainable investments, access to sustainable finance, communication of circular value propositions and resilience in managing change and uncertainty. The analysis further underlined the lack of integrated learning opportunities that combine digitalisation, circular economy and entrepreneurship into a single, coherent skill set, rather than addressing these domains separately.

Process of development of the training programme

The WE.Circular Innovative Training Programme was developed through a **systematic, needs-driven and collaborative process**, ensuring that the final training content directly responds to the identified skill gaps of women entrepreneurs across the Danube Region. The development process combined evidence from the joint needs assessment with expert input from the TTG and followed a clearly defined sequence of steps.

As a first step, the results of the joint transnational skills needs and gaps analysis were **structured and translated into concrete training needs**. To support this process, a **dedicated internal mapping tool** was developed. The tool served to link identified skills gaps with specific training topics, learning objectives and competence areas. It enabled partners to systematically organise needs by thematic domain (digital, circular economy, business and soft skills), level of complexity and relevance for women entrepreneurs, and to avoid overlaps or thematic gaps in the future training programme.

Based on this structured overview of needs, the second step focused on defining the **overall structure of the training programme**. This phase addressed the key question of how the programme should respond to the identified needs in a coherent and learner-oriented way. Decisions were taken regarding the modular approach, the balance between theoretical and practical content, and the integration of digital, circular and entrepreneurial competences within a single learning pathway.

In the third step, the Thematic Task Group proposed and validated the **thematic modules** of the training programme. Drawing on the mapping tool and their respective areas of expertise, TTG members jointly identified the main thematic blocks required to cover the priority skill gaps. This resulted in the definition of a set of interconnected modules addressing circular economy fundamentals, circular business models, digital transformation, Industry 4.0, innovation, communication and resilience skills.

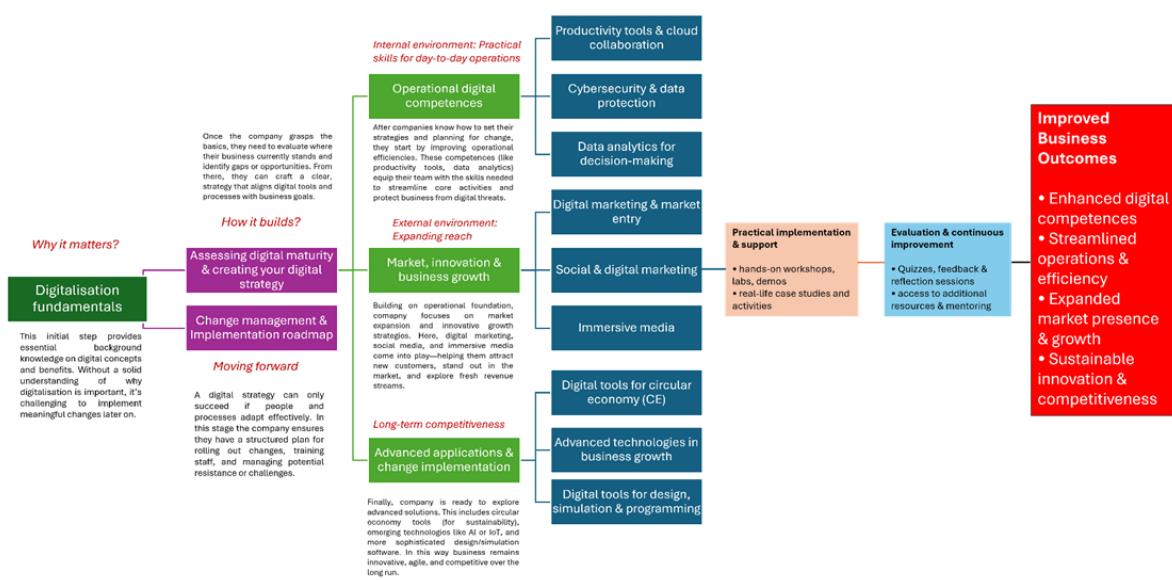


Figure 3-4: Scheme for development of Module 6 Digital transformation foundations

Following the agreement on module themes, the fourth step involved the **development of a detailed content structure for each module**. For every module, learning objectives, key topics, sub-topics, practical elements and supporting resources were outlined. Particular attention was paid to ensuring logical progression between modules and clear interlinkages across the programme, enabling learners to build competences step

by step and to understand the interdependencies between digitalisation, circularity and entrepreneurship.

Finally, responsibilities for content development were **distributed among project partners and TTG members** in line with their specific expertise and institutional competences. Each module was assigned to partners with proven knowledge and experience in the respective thematic field, ensuring high-quality content development, methodological consistency and thematic depth. This division of roles also supported efficient coordination, peer review and alignment across the entire training programme.

4 Structure of the Innovative Training programme

The WE.Circular Training Programme titled: **“Smart & Sustainable Business for Women Entrepreneurs”** is a comprehensive learning pathway designed to strengthen the circular, digital, and entrepreneurial skills of women across the Danube Region. Developed collaboratively by project partners, external experts and national stakeholders, the programme responds to the growing need for women entrepreneurs to navigate the green and digital transitions with confidence. Its structure combines theoretical knowledge, practical tools, interactive learning, and personalized guidance, ensuring that participants gain not only new competencies but also the ability to apply them directly in their business activities.

4.1. Training Modules

The training consists of **12 interconnected modules**, including an introductory module and a comprehensive set of thematic learning topics. The modules follow a progression from foundational concepts to practical applications and entrepreneurial skills. The training covers topics such as sustainable business models, environmental policies, operational digital competences, digital identity, and the creation of circular products and services. Each module presents the content in an accessible and engaging way, using real examples, scenario-based explanations, quizzes and interactive learning elements.

In terms of structure, after the application of the methodology there have been topics suggested, later on composed in modules - thirteen modules. The Modules have been described in Module Curriculum form (Annex 1). The Module Curriculum structure is as follows:

- Cover page,
- Module name,
- Learning outcomes (ILOS) - Knowledge, Skills, Competences;
- Module duration and scheduling,
- Content,
- Assessment and evaluation,
- Feedback and reflection

In terms of form of resources their final form is unified presentation - ppt, with visual aids and all the formal requirements for project branding and disclaimers.

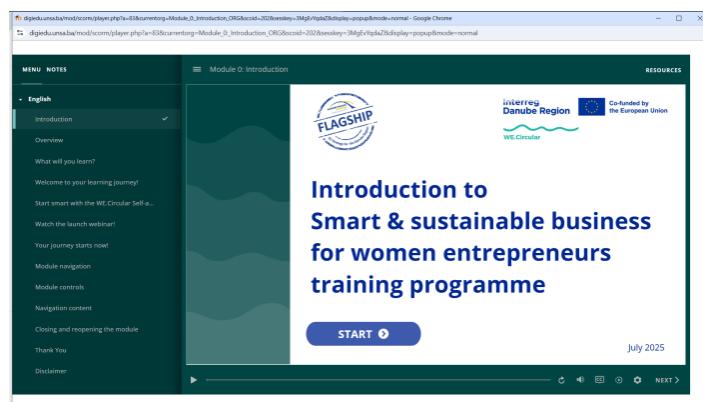


Figure 4-1 Module 0: Introduction of WE.Circular Training Programme

Module 0: Introduction

An orientation module presenting the structure, objectives, and navigation of the training programme.

Each module includes interactive SCORM content, reflection tasks, quizzes, templates, downloadable materials, and practical examples to support learning and direct application in business contexts.

Module 1: Circular Economy – Path to Sustainability

Module 1 introduces the foundations of the circular economy and explains why shifting from a linear “take–make–waste” model toward circular practices is essential for building resilient and future-proof businesses. Through simple concepts, practical examples and short case stories, the module helps participants understand how globalisation, supply chain pressures and environmental challenges influence modern entrepreneurship, and why circular thinking offers new opportunities for innovation, cost reduction and sustainability.

The module also provides an accessible introduction to planetary boundaries, climate mitigation and adaptation, and the three pillars of sustainable development. Participants learn how climate and environmental risks affect business operations and explore practical ways to strengthen local resilience, reduce negative impacts and integrate sustainability into decision-making.

By the end of the module, learners gain foundational knowledge of circular economy principles, develop skills for applying waste reduction and resource-efficiency strategies, and build competences in systems thinking and sustainable business planning. Short quizzes and reflection activities support the application of concepts to their own context, preparing participants for the more advanced modules that follow.

Module 2: Closing the Loop: The Power of Circular Thinking

Module 2 builds on the foundations introduced in Module 1 by showing how circular thinking becomes a practical tool for redesigning business processes, reducing waste and creating long-term value. Participants explore how different economic models—the green, bio, circular and blue economies—interact and why circularity offers businesses a powerful way to turn environmental challenges into strategic opportunities. Through everyday examples, case stories and comparisons between linear and circular systems, the module helps learners understand what it truly means to “close the loop.”

The module then shifts from concepts to application by introducing a range of circular strategies across the value chain, from waste prevention and product life extension to reuse, repair, refurbishment and remanufacturing. Participants are guided in using the Circular Strategy Self-Assessment Tool, which helps them evaluate their current practices and identify achievable next steps for increasing circularity in their operations.

A final section introduces systems thinking as an essential mindset for navigating interconnected economic, environmental and social changes. Real examples show how businesses benefit when they understand feedback loops, leverage points and long-term impacts. Reflection prompts encourage participants to consider where circular strategies and systems thinking can be applied in their own business contexts.

Through the module trainees deepen their understanding of circular economy principles, gain skills in identifying and applying circular strategies and strengthen their ability to analyse their business through a systems lens, making more informed and sustainable decisions.

Module 3: Life Cycle of Materials and Waste Management

Module 3 introduces participants to the journey that materials take from extraction to use and eventually to disposal or recycling, helping women entrepreneurs understand how these stages affect costs, environmental performance and business resilience. The module explains key concepts such as raw vs. recycled materials, recycling processes, the life cycle of materials and the waste hierarchy. Using real examples the module illustrates how circular practices can be applied in real businesses.

Participants learn to recognise different types of waste, classify them correctly and understand the European Waste List, which supports safe handling and compliance. The module also shows why recycling matters for business, how waste can become a resource and how practical actions such as sorting, reducing packaging or collaborating with local partners can significantly improve sustainability performance.

Trainees could gain a solid introduction to material life cycles, waste categories and basic waste management strategies. They develop skills for identifying recyclable materials, applying the waste hierarchy and engaging others in responsible practices, while building the competence to reduce waste, reuse materials and make informed decisions that support circularity in their own organisations.

Module 4: Circular Business Models for Women Entrepreneurs

Module 4 introduces women entrepreneurs to practical ways of embedding circularity directly into their business models. Building on earlier modules, it shifts from understanding circular economy principles to applying them in the way a business creates, delivers and captures value. The module explains what makes a business model

sustainable, introduces the Triple Bottom Line, and presents core circular business models such as Product-as-a-Service, sharing platforms and closed-loop systems. Through simple tools like the Business Model Canvas and the 10R framework, participants learn how to identify opportunities for redesigning products, services and processes to reduce waste and strengthen resilience.

A key part of the module focuses on ecosystem thinking and collaboration. Participants explore how partnerships across the value chain - from suppliers and logistics providers to recyclers and customers can unlock new circular solutions. Examples from fashion, food and construction industries illustrate how small and large businesses turn circular ideas into real business value. The module guides learners through stakeholder mapping and introduces the concept of a circular roadmap, helping them understand the stages of assessing, designing, implementing and evaluating circular business strategies.

Trainees develop the knowledge, skills and competences needed to design or improve circular business models, engage stakeholders and reflect on the sustainability impact of their choices. They gain confidence to explore circular innovation in their own sectors, using practical tools and real examples that demonstrate how circularity can support both purpose and profitability.

Module 5: Environmental Policies, Sustainable Finance and Reporting

Module 5 introduces women entrepreneurs to the policy, financial and reporting frameworks that increasingly shape how businesses operate in Europe. The module explains in simple, practical terms what EU environmental policies mean for small businesses and why understanding them is essential for staying competitive, compliant and future-ready. Participants learn the key principles behind EU environmental law, discover which areas of business are most affected and explore how policy changes can create new risks but also open opportunities for funding, innovation and market differentiation.

The module then turns to sustainable finance, showing how global commitments like the SDGs and the Paris Agreement influence EU financing tools, grants and incentives. Through examples and case stories, learners see how women-led businesses can benefit from green loans, impact investment and sustainability-linked finance. The EU Sustainable Finance Strategy, the EU Taxonomy and related instruments are introduced

in accessible language, helping participants understand how to position their business for future funding aligned with environmental and social goals.

A final section focuses on sustainability reporting. Participants explore what ESG means, why transparency is becoming a basic expectation, and how even small businesses can begin tracking and communicating their environmental and social impact. Case studies illustrate how simple reporting practices help entrepreneurs gain customer trust, improve credibility with banks and unlock funding opportunities.

Till the end of the module the trainees could develop foundational knowledge of EU environmental policy, sustainable finance and reporting frameworks; gain skills to integrate ESG considerations into their business; and build confidence to engage with emerging legal and financial expectations in a practical, opportunity-driven way.

Module 6: Digital Transformation Foundations

Module 6 introduces women entrepreneurs to the core ideas of digital transformation and shows how simple digital tools can support smarter, more circular and sustainable business practices. The module explains what digitalisation means in practice and why this matters for running a resilient, cost-effective business. Participants learn how digital tools can help track materials and waste, personalise customer experiences, improve supply chains and unlock new circular business models such as repair, rental, refill or resale systems.

Through real examples, including small business cases and digital success stories like Refurbed, the module demonstrates how technologies such as AI, blockchain, QR codes and cloud platforms enable transparency, reduce waste and strengthen customer trust. Participants explore the idea of “digital maturity” and assess where their business currently stands, before being guided through a simple roadmap for choosing the right tools, starting small, and growing digital capabilities step by step.

By the end of the module, trainees understand how digital transformation supports circular economy strategies, gain skills to choose and apply practical tools in their business, and build confidence to navigate challenges such as costs, resistance to change or lack of technical knowledge. The module empowers participants to see digitalisation not as a technical burden, but as a strategic enabler of sustainability, efficiency and innovation.

Module 7: Operational Digital Competences

Module 7 introduces women entrepreneurs to practical digital tools that improve everyday business operations and support more efficient, circular practices. Participants learn how productivity platforms such as Trello, Asana and Google Workspace streamline teamwork and reduce time and resource waste. The module also demonstrates how AI-based tools can support smarter planning, automate routine tasks and optimise inventory, helping businesses minimise inefficiencies.

A brief section on cybersecurity provides essential guidance on protecting data, using strong authentication and ensuring safe digital storage. The module also shows how simple data analytics tools and dashboards can turn business information into insights that support better decision-making.

By the end of the module, participants are equipped with the basic digital competences needed to strengthen collaboration, use AI effectively, safeguard their digital assets and apply data-driven thinking to improve the sustainability and performance of their business.

Module 8: Digital Persona

Module 8 introduces women entrepreneurs to the concept of a digital persona and explains why a clear, authentic online presence is essential for business visibility and customer trust. Trainees learn how to define the core elements of their digital identity and how to express these consistently across different platforms.

The module provides practical guidance on using accessible tools to build an online presence, including social media, Google Business, Canva and beginner-friendly website builders. It also highlights the importance of storytelling and community engagement, showing how small businesses can use digital communication to build relationships and strengthen their brand.

By the end of the module, trainees are able to design and maintain a coherent digital persona, create basic content, set up simple online pages or shops and use digital tools strategically to support their business growth and communicate their circular values.

Module 9: Digital Tools for Circular Economy

Module 9 introduces practical digital tools that help businesses operate more efficiently and sustainably. Participants learn how lifecycle assessment (LCA) tools and carbon calculators measure environmental impacts and support better product and process decisions. The module also presents digital solutions for waste tracking, recycling and surplus management, showing how smart bins, material marketplaces and simple apps can reduce waste and improve resource use. AI and data analytics are introduced as powerful enablers of circular business models, helping entrepreneurs optimise production, predict demand and increase transparency. Through examples from textiles, fashion and agriculture, participants see how digital tools turn data into insights that drive circular improvements.

Trainees gain knowledge how to choose and apply relevant digital tools, assess impacts and use data to support more sustainable and circular business decisions.

Module 10: How to Make a Circular Business

Module 10 helps trainees turn circular concepts into a concrete business model. Using the Business Model Canvas, the module shows how to embed circular principles into value creation, customer relationships, operations and revenue streams. Real examples illustrate how circular ideas can shape everyday business decisions.

Trainees learn how to map their value chain, test their ideas with real users, and understand the resources, activities and partnerships needed to operate in a circular way. The module also introduces available funding options for circular businesses and highlights essential legal aspects, including ecodesign rules, extended producer responsibility and the right to repair.

By the end of the module, trainees understand how to design and refine a circular business model that is practical, testable and aligned with sustainability goals.

Module 11: Effective Communication for Circular Business

Module 11 strengthens trainees' ability to communicate circular business ideas clearly, confidently and persuasively. It introduces simple frameworks for structuring messages, including a five-step method for presenting problems, solutions and value in a way that resonates with customers, partners and investors. Trainees learn how to use

storytelling, assertive communication and active listening to build trust, manage difficult conversations and improve collaboration.

The module also guides trainees through the essentials of preparing an effective business pitch, offering practical tips for explaining their value proposition, traction and needs in a concise and engaging way. Finally, it introduces digital tools that support interactive communication helping trainees run meetings, workshops and presentations that encourage participation and strengthen stakeholder engagement.

By the end of the module, trainees are equipped with practical communication techniques that support the visibility, credibility and growth of circular business initiatives.

Module 12: Boost Your Potential: Productivity, Mindset, and Collaboration

Module 12 supports trainees in developing the mindset, resilience and collaborative skills needed to manage and grow a sustainable business. The module highlights how confidence, focus and self-leadership influence daily decisions and long-term success, offering practical tools to overcome stress, set boundaries and stay motivated.

Trainees learn how to work more effectively with others by building trust, clarifying expectations and communicating openly. Simple techniques help improve productivity, strengthen partnerships and maintain wellbeing in demanding environments.

They will be equipped with strategies to stay organised, resilient and collaborative - competences that support both business performance and circular innovation.

4.2. Self-assessment tool

To make the training accessible regardless of location or experience level, the programme is delivered through a custom Moodle-based e-learning platform. This platform serves as the main tool of the Transnational WE.Circular Learning Network and offers multilingual content, certificates, practical resources and continuous access to learning materials. A self-assessment tool is integrated into the platform, allowing women to receive a personalised profile of their digital, circular and Industry 4.0 readiness. Based on this, each participant can identify which modules are most relevant to her needs and plan her learning path accordingly.

The tool was conceived as both a **diagnostic and guidance instrument**, supporting personalised learning pathways within the modular programme structure.

The self-assessment tool is structured around the 12 training modules of the WE.Circular programme and introduces each module through a short thematic teaser followed by a set of targeted questions. These questions allow participants to reflect on their **current knowledge, skills and confidence levels** in key areas related to circular economy, digital transformation, business development, communication and personal effectiveness. The tool covers the full thematic scope of the programme, including circular economy fundamentals, circular business models, environmental policies and sustainable finance, digital transformation and operational digital competences, digital presence, circular digital tools, business model development, communication skills and entrepreneurial mindset.

Rather than functioning as a formal test, the self-assessment tool is designed as a **reflective learning instrument**. Based on participants' responses, it identifies areas where further learning would be beneficial and links these directly to the relevant training modules. When a participant's score falls below a predefined threshold for a given module, the tool recommends completing that module in full, thereby helping participants to **prioritise their learning journey** according to individual needs.

The tool also generates a **personalised recommendation message** upon completion, highlighting modules in which the participant already demonstrates strong understanding, as well as modules recommended for further development. This approach supports learner motivation, avoids unnecessary repetition of content and encourages efficient use of training resources.

From a programme development perspective, the self-assessment tool played a dual role. In addition to supporting learners, it provided a **structured framework for aligning identified skills gaps with concrete training content**, ensuring coherence between needs assessment, module design and learning outcomes. Integrated into the e-learning platform, the tool strengthens the learner-centred character of the Innovative Training Programme and enhances its practical relevance and adaptability.

4.3. Webinars

A key feature of the programme is its interactive dimension. Alongside the self-paced modules, a series of live webinars created a space for direct exchange between participants and trainers. These sessions included an introductory webinar, thematic discussions linked to the module groups, and a closing reflection session. They enabled women from different countries to ask questions, share insights, discuss challenges and learn from each other's experiences. All webinars were recorded and remain available on the WE.Circular YouTube playlist and under the relevant training modules, ensuring that the knowledge shared can be accessed at any time by new learners.

Webinar 0: Introduction of the innovative training programme



Photo: Launch webinar – Introduction of the training programme, 22.09.2025, own resources

The introductory webinar served as the official launch of the WE.Circular training programme, providing participants with a comprehensive overview of the initiative's structure and objectives. The session began with a welcoming address to all enrolled trainees, followed by a detailed presentation of the programme's scope, methodology, and expected outcomes. Participants were guided through the self-assessment test, which serves as a diagnostic tool to evaluate their current knowledge and skills in circular economy practices. The webinar included clear instructions on how to complete the assessment and interpret the results effectively, enabling trainees to identify their starting points and areas for development. A significant portion of the session was dedicated to navigating the online learning platform, ensuring all participants felt comfortable accessing course materials, resources, and interactive elements. The

webinar concluded with a presentation of the complete timeline for upcoming sessions, allowing participants to plan their engagement throughout the programme duration and establish clear expectations for their learning journey.

Webinar 1: Practical cyber security

This webinar addressed the growing importance of digital security in contemporary professional and personal contexts. The session focused on accessible, practical approaches to maintaining digital wellbeing without requiring technical expertise or specialized knowledge. Participants learned fundamental principles of online safety through straightforward examples and actionable strategies that can be immediately implemented in daily routines. The webinar covered essential topics including password security practices, recognizing potential online threats such as phishing attempts and fraudulent communications, and understanding common vulnerabilities in digital interactions. Emphasis was placed on developing sustainable habits that protect personal data, professional information, and digital identity. The session highlighted the parallel between maintaining physical health and protecting digital wellbeing, reinforcing that online security is an essential aspect of professional competence in modern business environments. By demystifying cybersecurity concepts and presenting them through practical applications, the webinar empowered participants to take control of their digital presence and reduce risks associated with online activities.



Webinar 2: Managing smarter: How AI transforms our teams and work

This forward-looking webinar explored the transformative potential of artificial intelligence in modern team management and collaborative work environments. The session provided concrete examples of how AI tools are reshaping communication patterns, decision-making processes, and leadership approaches in contemporary organizations. Participants were introduced to practical applications of AI that enhance team effectiveness while maintaining the human-centered aspects of management. The webinar demonstrated how emerging technologies can streamline routine tasks,

facilitate more fluid information exchange, and enable leaders to focus on strategic and interpersonal dimensions of their roles. Rather than presenting AI as a replacement for human judgment, the session emphasized its role as an enhancement tool that supports better collaboration and more informed management decisions. Real-world case studies illustrated successful integration of AI solutions in various organizational contexts, providing participants with tangible insights they could adapt to their own professional environments. The webinar equipped attendees with fresh perspectives on leveraging technology to improve workplace dynamics, offering inspiration and actionable ideas for implementing smarter management practices.



Webinar 3: Circular business models

This webinar provided an in-depth examination of circular economy principles and their practical application in business contexts. The session explored the fundamental shift required to move away from traditional linear economic models characterized by resource extraction, production, consumption, and disposal. Participants learned innovative approaches to extending product lifecycles through design strategies, maintenance programs, and refurbishment processes, as well as methods for implementing systems for material reuse that create closed-loop processes. The webinar addressed optimization of resource flows throughout production and distribution chains, demonstrating how circular approaches generate greater value while reducing environmental impact. Practical examples illustrated how companies across various sectors have successfully transitioned to circular models, highlighting both challenges encountered and benefits realized. The presentation covered business strategies for capturing value at different stages of the product lifecycle, including take-back programs, sharing platforms, and product-as-a-service models. Participants gained understanding of how circularity



principles align with economic viability, challenging the misconception that sustainable practices necessarily compromise profitability and providing concrete knowledge for incorporating these principles into business planning.

Webinar 4: Violence against women entrepreneurs

This crucial webinar addressed the often-overlooked issue of violence and safety concerns facing women in entrepreneurial contexts. The session introduced participants to Empowerment Self-Defense principles, an evidence-based approach designed to enhance personal safety and professional resilience. Five core principles provided practical tools for recognizing potentially unsafe situations before they escalate, establishing appropriate boundaries in professional settings, and responding effectively to threatening behaviors. The webinar emphasized that personal safety extends beyond physical security to encompass emotional wellbeing and psychological resilience, all of which directly impact entrepreneurial success and leadership effectiveness. Participants learned strategies for building confidence in their professional interactions, asserting their authority in business environments, and creating supportive networks that prioritize safety and mutual respect. The session acknowledged the unique challenges women entrepreneurs face, including harassment, intimidation, and various forms of gender-based violence that can occur in business contexts. By providing concrete skills and awareness-raising information, the webinar empowered participants to protect themselves while pursuing their entrepreneurial ambitions and contribute to creating safer professional environments.



Webinar 5: Pitch training

This practical webinar focused on developing compelling pitch presentations, an essential skill for entrepreneurs seeking funding, partnerships, or market opportunities. The session provided participants with a structured framework for organizing and delivering pitches that clearly communicate business concepts and value propositions. Emphasis was placed on narrative techniques and strategic word choice, demonstrating how storytelling elements make presentations more memorable and persuasive. The webinar guided participants through methods for crafting narratives that resonate with diverse audiences, whether potential investors, clients, or competition judges. Recognizing that contemporary pitching frequently occurs in virtual environments, the session dedicated significant attention to maintaining engagement and impact through digital platforms. Participants learned specific techniques for projecting confidence, managing visual presentation elements, and compensating for the reduced interpersonal connection inherent in screen-mediated communication. The webinar addressed common pitching challenges and provided solutions for handling questions, managing time constraints, and adapting presentations to different contexts. The session served both entrepreneurs preparing for specific competitions and those seeking to improve their general communication effectiveness in business contexts.



4.4. Resources

The training materials provide a coherent resource package that mixes theory, practice, and self-reflection to help (especially women-led) small businesses to move toward circular, sustainable business models, digital tools, finance, soft skills, etc.

In terms of resource content, there are key EU concepts and policies embedded. There are step-by-step templates for building models and applying different tools. That translates abstract concepts into guided worksheets/templates. Where appropriate, there are sets of external tools, portals, and references that participants can use beyond

the training. There is heavy use of short, narrative case studies to bring concepts to life, particularly with women entrepreneurs. Where appropriate there is a specific "Want to go deeper?"/ "Additional resources" section that point to short videos and explainer content. There are curate links that content material provides as follow-up multimedia content. All the topics finish with quiz sections that work as light assessment and reflection tools. Similarly to webinars there are participant support elements that complement the learning content.

5 E-learning platform

5.1 Introduction to e-learning environment

The Innovative Training Programme was developed and delivered through a dedicated e-learning environment built on the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS). Moodle was selected as the primary digital platform due to its reliability, modular design, and strong support for multilingual learning. The platform provided a structured, adaptable, and pedagogically sounds digital space, ensuring that learners from all participating countries could access high-quality training regardless of geographical or time constraints.



The Moodle platform was hosted and administered by the University of Sarajevo (UNSA). UNSA ensured the technical setup, maintenance, and continuous operational support necessary for the delivery of the programme. The platform was configured specifically for the project's needs, incorporating multi-language course duplication, SCORM-based learning modules, webinar integration, resource libraries, and tools for learner progress monitoring.

5.2 Platform architecture and general configuration

The UNSA-hosted Moodle platform operates on a modular architecture that allows administrators to design learning environments based on pedagogical requirements. For this programme, the platform was configured to support:

- **Multilingual course delivery** across 11 participating languages
- **SCORM package integration** for interactive and trackable learning modules
- **Structured module organisation** corresponding to the curriculum
- **User authentication and enrolment** managed by the hosting institution
- **Secure access** with role-based permissions for trainers, administrators, and learners
- **Consistent branding and visual identity** in line with the project's communication standards

The combination of these elements ensured a unified and coherent learning experience for all users, regardless of the language version or country of origin.

A central requirement of the programme was to provide content in multiple languages to ensure accessibility and inclusivity. To fulfil this requirement, the e-learning platform hosted **eleven fully developed and localised courses**, each corresponding to a project partner country or linguistic group. Languages available are Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, English, German, Hungarian, Romanian, Serbian, Slovak and Slovenian.

Each language version followed an identical structure, preserving consistency in learning pathways, instructional design, and user experience. The duplication process was done through Moodle's course backup and restores functionalities, followed by careful manual localisation of front-page texts, instructions, labels, and embedded media.

This multilingual approach enabled the programme to reach a diverse audience and ensured that participants could engage with the content in a language of their preference, thus improving learning outcomes and reducing potential barriers to participation.

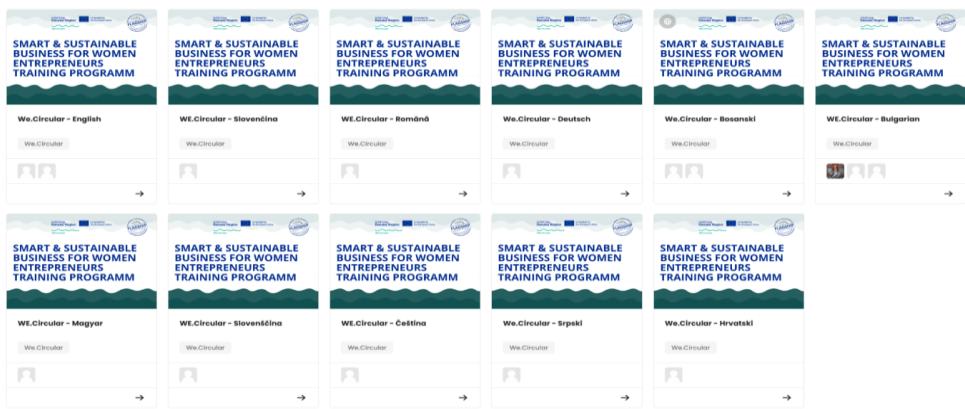


Figure 5-1: Training programme - 11 language courses placed on the e-learning platform

5.3. Course layout and pedagogical design

The course design followed a clear pedagogical logic, beginning with an introductory section aimed at orienting learners to the platform and guiding them through the first steps of the programme. This introductory segment also provided access to the Self-Assessment Tool, which served as a baseline diagnostic allowing participants to reflect on their starting position and future development needs.

The central part of each course consisted of the training modules aligned with the official curriculum. These modules contained the core learning materials presented through SCORM packages, additional documents, templates, case studies and links to external resources. The modules were structured in a way that enabled participants to progress gradually and logically through the content, while also leaving room for self-paced repetition and revisiting of key concepts. Figure below represents the outline of module 1.

Each course also featured sections dedicated to webinars, follow-up discussions and resource libraries. The overall layout was designed to be intuitive, accessible and aligned with established principles of online instructional design, ensuring that participants could navigate the course without difficulty and stay focused on the learning process.

The screenshot shows the structure of a SCORM-compliant training package. It is organized into three main sections: **Module 1**, **Additional Resources**, and **Feedback**.

- Module 1** contains:
 - View** and **Complete the activity** buttons.
 - SCORM package** icon with the title **Module 1: Circular Economy - Path to Sustainability**.
 - Custom certificate** icon with the title **Certificate of Completion**.
 - A note: **Not available unless: The activity *Module 1: Circular Economy - Path to Sustainability* is marked complete**.
- Additional Resources** contains:
 - View** button.
 - File** icon with the title **Planetary boundaries**.
 - View** button.
 - File** icon with the title **Alice case study**.
 - View** button.
 - File** icon with the title **Key CE principles**.
- Feedback** contains:
 - Feedback** icon with the title **Feedback - Module 1**.

Figure 5-2: Visual of the structure of Module 1 Circular Economy - Path to Sustainability

A major instructional element of the programme consisted of SCORM-compliant training packages. SCORM was selected because it allows for interactive, multimedia-rich digital learning while also enabling precise tracking of user engagement. These modules included interactive slides, embedded images and graphics, short explanatory videos, questions for reflection, branching scenarios and knowledge-check tasks.

The SCORM format made it possible to monitor how long participants spent on each segment, which activities they completed and how they performed on intermediate assessments. This ensured pedagogical consistency across all language versions, as the structure and progression remained identical even when translated. The SCORM modules provided a high level of interactivity, which helped maintain learner motivation and supported deeper engagement with the material.

Learning materials and resource collections

Beyond the SCORM modules, the Moodle platform hosted a wide range of support materials essential for the successful delivery of the programme. These included PDF documents, templates for practical tasks, case studies illustrating real-world situations, presentation slides used during live webinars, additional recommended reading and links to digital tools relevant for business development.

All materials were organised within their respective modules or in dedicated resource sections, ensuring that learners could easily locate supporting documentation. The availability of downloadable resources also supported offline learning and allowed participants to apply the content directly to their own business contexts.

Although the programme relied primarily on asynchronous self-paced content, the inclusion of webinars played an important role in strengthening participant engagement. Participants could join live webinars through the external links and receive notifications about upcoming events and revisit recordings at a later time.

The webinar recordings were uploaded to the course environment immediately after each session, ensuring that learners who were unable to attend synchronously still had full access to the content. This blended learning approach increased the flexibility of the training, accommodating different schedules, time zones and learning preferences.

Communication, announcements and networking

Moodle's communication tools were used to encourage interaction, build a sense of community and provide important updates throughout the training period. The announcement section was used extensively by administrators and trainers to share instructions, inform participants about newly uploaded materials and communicate upcoming deadlines.

In addition, the platform offered opportunities for participants to engage in discussion forums, particularly in relation to webinar content or module activities. The integrated messaging features enabled direct communication and contributed to creating a supportive learning environment. Although networking was primarily facilitated during live sessions, the asynchronous tools served as an additional channel for building professional connections across the partner countries.

Certificate generation and completion recognition

The e-learning platform also incorporated an automated certificate system designed to formally acknowledge the successful completion of each training module. Upon finalising the required activities within a module—most importantly, completing the SCORM package and any associated assessments—participants received a personalised digital certificate generated directly through the Moodle environment.

The certificate template was developed in line with the project's visual identity and EU visibility guidelines. It included project branding, the Interreg Danube Region and European Union logos, the project's flagship label, the module title, completion date and a digital signature of the project's authorised representative. Each certificate was automatically populated with the participant's name and the specific module they had completed, ensuring accuracy and consistency across all language versions.



Figure 5-3: Visual of Certificate of Achievement

The design of the certificate reflected the programme's focus on professional development, clearly indicating that the participant had successfully completed an online module within the *Smart & Sustainable Business for Women Entrepreneurs* training programme. In addition to providing formal recognition, the certificate served as a motivational tool, encouraging learners to progress through the modules and engage fully with the training content.

The system ensured that certificates were issued reliably and uniformly across all language versions of the platform. Participants could download the certificate directly from the Moodle course environment, store it digitally or print it for personal or

professional use. This feature contributed to enhancing the overall learning experience, offering an additional layer of value to participants and supporting their continuous professional growth.

Monitoring, evaluation and progress tracking

A key advantage of Moodle is its ability to provide detailed insights into learner behaviour and progress. The training programme made extensive use of Moodle's tracking features, including activity completion indicators, SCORM tracking reports, gradebook functionalities and user interaction logs.

These insights allowed trainers and project coordinators to follow participation rates, identify modules with lower engagement, assess the overall effectiveness of the training materials and provide targeted support where needed. The evaluation process was therefore not limited to final assessments but included a continuous monitoring component throughout the programme.

Administrative management and technical support by UNSA

The University of Sarajevo ensured the technical and administrative functionality of the platform. This included hosting the Moodle environment, managing server stability, controlling access rights, creating user accounts, enrolling participants, duplicating courses for language versions, uploading SCORM packages and troubleshooting technical issues.

UNSA maintained high standards of data security and provided timely technical support whenever issues arose. Their role was essential in maintaining the operational integrity of the platform, particularly given the number of language versions and the volume of participants accessing the materials simultaneously.

User experience, accessibility and platform performance

The platform was designed to offer a highly accessible and user-friendly experience. The course layout was consistent across all language versions, the visual design was clear and coherent, and the navigation structure was intuitive even for participants with limited prior experience in e-learning environments. The platform's responsive design ensured seamless access through computers, tablets and mobile devices.

Throughout the training, the platform performed reliably, with no major technical interruptions. Feedback from participants indicated that the structure of the courses was clear, the materials were easy to access, and the SCORM modules were engaging and well-organised.

In conclusion, the Moodle platform played a central role in achieving the objectives of the training programme. Its multilingual setup enabled inclusive participation across partner countries. The structured course design and SCORM-based modules provided a coherent and interactive learning experience. Live webinars and communication tools supported engagement and community building. Progress tracking features enabled continuous monitoring and evidence-based evaluation.

Through the technical support of the University of Sarajevo, the platform ensured that the quality of the learning experience remained consistently high across all language versions. As a result, the e-learning environment significantly contributed to the overall success and sustainability of the training programme.

6 Upscaling of the training programme

The WE.Circular Innovative Training Programme was designed from the outset with **long-term sustainability and upscaling potential** in mind. Its modular structure, multilingual delivery and strong institutional anchoring enable the programme to extend beyond the project lifetime and reach a wider audience of women entrepreneurs and support organisations across the Danube Region and beyond.

A central mechanism for upscaling is the **WE.Circular Learning Network**, which brings together universities, business support organisations, women entrepreneurship centres, public authorities and other stakeholders committed to strengthening circular and digital skills among women entrepreneurs. The Network functions as an open and collaborative framework that allows the training programme to be continuously used, adapted and promoted by both project partners and new member organisations. Its transnational nature ensures that the programme remains responsive to regional specificities while maintaining a shared quality framework.

The sustainability of the training programme is further reinforced through the **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** signed by project partners and stakeholders. By signing the MoU, organisations formally commit to supporting the Network and to

using, disseminating and further developing the training programme for at least five years after the end of the project. This governance mechanism provides institutional continuity and creates a shared responsibility for maintaining and expanding the training offer. As additional organisations join the Network and sign the MoU, the programme's reach and multiplier effect increase organically within local and regional ecosystems.

Regional Action Plans developed within the WE.Circular project provide another important pathway for upscaling. Several partner regions explicitly included measures related to the continued implementation, adaptation or promotion of the Innovative Training Programme. Through these plans, the programme is linked to regional development priorities, smart specialisation strategies and entrepreneurship support policies. This integration supports the uptake of the training by public authorities and business support organisations as part of their regular services, rather than as a one-off project activity.

The **flexible and modular design** of the training programme further enhances its scalability. Individual modules can be integrated into existing mentoring schemes, incubation and acceleration programmes, vocational and higher education curricula, or lifelong learning initiatives. At the same time, the full programme can be offered as a standalone learning pathway for women entrepreneurs seeking comprehensive support in circular economy, digital transformation and business development. This adaptability allows different types of institutions to adopt the programme according to their mandates, target groups and capacities.

The multilingual Moodle-based e-learning platform provides a stable technical foundation for upscaling. With content already available in eleven languages, the platform significantly lowers entry barriers for new users and institutions. The digital format enables easy replication, localisation and updating of materials, while ensuring consistent quality standards across regions. Certificates of achievement further increase the programme's attractiveness and recognition value for participants.

In addition, the **WE.Circular Labs** established during the project act as **local hubs for implementation and further diffusion** of the training programme. These labs provide practical environments for delivering the training, linking it with mentoring, experimentation and real-life business challenges. Through the Labs, the programme can be embedded in local ecosystems and adapted to sector-specific or regional contexts, strengthening its relevance and impact.

7 Conclusions

The WE.Circular Innovative Training Programme represents a comprehensive and strategically designed response to the skills gaps and development needs of women entrepreneurs in the Danube Region. By integrating circular economy principles, digital transformation, entrepreneurial competences and personal development into a single, coherent learning pathway, the programme supports women entrepreneurs in navigating the green and digital transitions in a practical and accessible way.

Developed through a structured, collaborative and transnational methodology, the training programme reflects the combined expertise of project partners, external experts and stakeholders. The use of a dedicated needs assessment, thematic task group coordination and an iterative co-creation process ensured that the programme content is relevant, up to date and closely aligned with real business challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.

The modular structure, multilingual delivery and integration of interactive learning elements such as the self-assessment tool, webinars, case studies and practical templates, enhance both accessibility and flexibility. Participants are enabled to tailor their learning journey according to individual needs while building competences progressively across circular, digital and entrepreneurial domains. The Moodle-based e-learning platform provides a stable and scalable environment that supports consistent quality and wide geographical reach.

Beyond its immediate educational value, the training programme is embedded within a broader ecosystem for sustainability and long-term impact. Through the WE.Circular Learning Network, Memorandum of Understanding, Regional Action Plans and WE.Circular Labs, the programme is positioned for continued use, adaptation and upscaling beyond the project lifetime. This institutional anchoring ensures that the training can contribute to lasting capacity building, policy alignment and ecosystem development across the Danube Region.

8 Resources

University of Sarajevo (2024). D.1.4.1 Methodology for development of the training programme.

WE.Circular Project Consortium. (2024). D.1.1.2 Joint transnational skills needs and gaps analysis.

Varna Free University “Chernorizets Hrabar” (VFU). (2025). D.1.5.1 Methodology for the Transnational WE.Circular Learning Network.

9 Annexes

Annex 1: Training modules curriculums

Module 1: Circular Economy - Path to Sustainability

Developed by: Diana Gasparik and Hana Paluskova/ Slovak Business Agency

Learning outcomes (ILOS)	Knowledge:	Skills:	Competences:
ILO1: Globalization and Local Resilience	Understanding how globalization shapes today's economy, recognizing both its risks and opportunities, and exploring how local, circular, and resilient business practices can strengthen long-term sustainability.	Applying risk management and sustainable sourcing strategies to strengthen local resilience and responsible business operations.	Ability to integrate climate science insights into decision-making and develop strategies that reduce environmental impact.
ILO2: Sustainable Development: Climate Action for a Better Future	Understanding planetary boundaries and climate challenges, identifying your business's environmental impact, and discovering practical ways to move toward sustainability, resilience, and climate action.	Designing and implementing practical measures for climate change mitigation and adaptation within business contexts.	Ability to apply circular economy strategies across different stages of business development, linking economic performance with social and environmental value.
ILO3: Closing the Loop: The Power of Circular Thinking	Understanding the core principles of the circular economy - what it really means and how it differs from the traditional "take-make-waste".	Applying circular economy principles - such as waste reduction, resource efficiency, and product life-cycle extension - to create sustainable value and innovation.	Ability to recognize global interconnections and adapt business strategies for long-term resilience and sustainability.
ILO4: Systems Thinking for Modern Economic Challenges			

Module duration and scheduling: 1.5 hrs

0 - 10 min: Introduction & Learning Goals
10 - 15 min: Circular Economy Foundations – What it is, linear vs. circular, why it matters for business
10 - 15 min: Key Principles & Practical Strategies – Eliminate waste, keep materials in use, regenerate systems; Product-as-a-Service, reverse logistics, smarter materials
10 - 15 min: Challenges of the Modern Economy – Globalization vs. local resilience, impact on sustainability; Ana's case study
10 - 15 min: Sustainable Development & Climate Action – Planetary boundaries, Doughnut Economy, climate mitigation & adaptation; Alice's story
05 - 10 min: Reflection & Self-Assessment – Quick quiz, personal reflection on climate & business connection
05 - 10 min: Wrap-Up & Next Steps – Key takeaways, additional resources, participant feedback

Content:

Introduction

Section 1: Challenges of the Modern Economy

What is a circular economy?

- Globalization and Local Resilience** – Introduction to the dynamics between globalization and deglobalization, and how these forces shape business vulnerability and opportunity.
- How Is This Connected to the Circular Economy?** – Exploring how global economic systems influence sustainability, communities, and business resilience.
- Understanding the 9 Planetary Boundaries** – Introduction to the planetary boundaries framework and its relevance for businesses; includes the Doughnut Economy concept.
- How Can We Respond to Climate Change?** – Overview of mitigation and adaptation strategies illustrated through real-world examples.
- Changing the System: Foundations of Sustainable Development** – Explanation of the three pillars (environmental, social, economic) and how they align purpose and profit.

Section 2: Sustainable Development & Climate Action

Assessment and evaluation:

- Quick Quiz 1: Are You Climate-Ready? – Assesses understanding of climate response strategies (mitigation and adaptation).
- Reflection Homework: Your Climate & Business Connection – Encourages participants to connect sustainability insights to their own business.
- Reflection Time: Guided reflection on key takeaways and next steps.

Feedback and reflection

- Participant feedback: Quiz
- Reflection Activity 1: Circular business models – learning from real examples.
- Reflection Activity 2: Applying the three pillars of sustainable development to your own business.
- Reflection Activity 3: Examining consumption habits and identifying opportunities for more sustainable choices.

Additional resources:

Reading and watching list: Watch: [Kate Raworth – A Healthy Economy Should Be Designed to Thrive, Not Grow \(TED Talk\)](#)

Module 2: Closing the Loop – The Power of Circular Thinking

Developed by: Diana Gasparik and Hana Paluskova/ Slovak Business Agency

Learning outcomes (ILOs)	Knowledge:	Skills:	Competences:
ILO1: Circular Economy Context	Understand the key economic models (Green, Bio, Circular, Blue Economy) and their interconnections.	Identify opportunities to implement circular economy practices in business operations.	Analyze business processes and recognize where circular solutions can reduce waste and create value.
ILO2: Circular Strategies in Practice	Understand core circular economy principles and practical strategies to implement them across the value chain.	Apply Circular Strategy Self-Assessment Tool to evaluate progress and identify gaps in circular practices.	Implement circular strategies that connect environmental, social, and economic objectives.
ILO3: Systems Thinking for Transformation	Understand systems thinking principles and how they apply to modern economic challenges and business decision-making.	Integrate systems thinking into business strategy and problem-solving to optimize sustainability outcomes.	Make informed decisions that account for interconnections across business, society, and the environment.

Module duration and scheduling: 1.5 hrs

0 - 10 min: Introduction & Learning Goals – Recap Module 1; explain the importance of circular thinking and closing the loop
10 - 15 min: Circular Economy Context – Green, Bio, Circular, Blue Economy; interactions; business implications
10 - 15 min: From Waste to Worth – Learning from nature; turning waste into value; reflection: What would nature do?
10 - 15 min: Applying Circular Economy Across the Value Chain – Extend product value, second life for materials, creative solutions; introduction to Circular Strategy Self-Assessment Tool
10 - 15 min: Systems Thinking for Transformation – Principles, real business examples, applying systems thinking in your business
05 - 10 min: Reflection & Self-Assessment – Short quiz and personal reflection on applying circular strategies and systems thinking
05 - 10 min: Wrap-Up & Next Steps – Key takeaways, additional resources, participant feedback

Content:

Introduction

- **Recap of Module 1** - why sustainability matters, how climate change and resource use affect business. Introduction to circular thinking as a practical mindset that helps design smarter, use resources efficiently, and reduce waste for both business and the planet

Section 1: Context of Circular Thinking

- **Overview of Economic Models** – Green Economy, Bioeconomy, Circular Economy, Blue Economy; focus of each model and how they interconnect.

Section 2: Applying Circular Economy Across the Value Chain

- **Can You Imagine Living Without a Trash Bin?** – Practical comparison of linear vs. circular economy through everyday scenarios.

Section 3: Systems Thinking for Modern Economic Challenges

- **From Waste to Worth: Learning from Nature** – In nature, nothing is wasted; examples of businesses turning waste into value; reflection activity: What would nature do?

Assessment and evaluation:

- **Circular Strategy Self-Assessment Tool** – Evaluate company's alignment with circular economy strategies.

- **Short Quiz** – Test understanding of circular economy and systems thinking principles.
- **Reflection Homework** – Connecting circular strategies and systems thinking to participants' own business practices

- **Principles of Systems Thinking** – Why it matters, key principles, and how it helps businesses understand interconnections.

Additional resources:

- **Real Business Examples** – Illustrative examples of circular and systems thinking in action.

Reading and watching list: N/A

- **Reflection: How to Start Thinking in Systems** – Practical guidance for applying systems thinking in participants' own business contexts.

Feedback and reflection

- Participant feedback: Quiz
- Reflection Activity 1 – Using systems thinking to identify interconnections and opportunities.
- Reflection Activity 2 – Personal reflection on reducing waste, extending product life, and innovating sustainably.

Module 3: Life Cycle of Materials & Waste management

Developed by: Assoc. Prof. Lovorka Gotal Dmitrovic/ Technology Park of Varazdin, Croatia

Learning outcomes (ILOs)	Knowledge:	Skills:	Competences:
ILO1:	Acquiring basic concepts from the Life Cycle of Materials.	Differentiation of common types of recycled material.	Recognizing the benefits of recycling materials.
ILO2:	Acquiring basic concepts from the Waste and Waste Management.	Thinking in accordance with the waste hierarchy.	Distinguishing major categories of waste.
ILO3:	Learn about assessment in waste management.	Engaging stakeholders and raising awareness.	Identifying opportunities for waste reduction, reuse, or recycling.

Module duration and scheduling: 1.5 hrs

0 - 10 min: Introduction & Learning Goals
10 - 15 min: Key words
10 - 30 min: Life Cycle of Materials
10 - 30 min: Waste & Waste Management
05 - 15 min: Case studies and practical applications

Content:

Introduction

- Overview of the module and its relevance to Women Entrepreneurs (WEs)
- Key objectives and expected outcomes

Section 1: Key words

- Subtopic 1: Materials
- Subtopic 2: Life Cycle
- Subtopic 3: Waste
- Subtopic 4: Waste Management

Section 2: Life Cycle of Materials

- Subtopic 1: Raw vs. Recycled materials
- Subtopic 2: Recycling: Giving materials a second life
- Subtopic 3: What can be recycled?
- Subtopic 4: What happens after recycling?
- Subtopic 5: Why does recycling matter for your business?
- Subtopic 6: What is the life cycle of materials?
- Subtopic 7: Key stages of the life cycle of materials

Section 3: Waste & Waste Management

- Subtopic 1: Major Categories of Waste
- Subtopic 2: Hazardous Waste
- Subtopic 3: Waste classification
- Subtopic 4: The European Waste List
- Subtopic 5: The Waste Hierarchy

Case studies and practical applications

- Case study: Case in Waste Management
- Practical activity: Assessment in Waste Management

Assessment and evaluation:

- Quiz 1: Are you ready to close the loop?

Feedback and reflection

- Participant feedback: Quiz

Additional resources:

Reading and watching list: N/A



Module 4: Circular Business Models for Women Entrepreneurs

Developed by: Technology Park of Varazdin, Croatia

Learning outcomes (ILOs)	Knowledge:	Skills:	Competences:
ILO1:	Understand key concepts such as linear vs. circular economy, business models, and sustainability.	Apply Business Model Canvas to assess and design circular business models.	Collaborate with multidisciplinary teams to develop and present circular strategies.
ILO2:	Describe the principles of circular business models including the 10R framework.	Map stakeholders and value chains to identify points of circular innovation.	Demonstrate the ability to integrate circular principles into real-world business scenarios.
ILO3:	Identify ecosystem and value chain opportunities for circular transformation.	Develop a circular roadmap including assessment, design, implementation, and evaluation.	Critically reflect on the transformation process and sustainability impact of business models.

Module duration and scheduling: 1.5 hrs

0 - 10 min: Introduction & Learning Goals
10 - 15 min: Foundations of Circular Business Models
10 - 15 min: What makes a business model sustainable
10 - 45 min: Co-opetition & Ecosystem Thinking
10 - 15 min: Tools and further support
05 - 10 min: Quiz

Content:

Introduction

- Overview of the module and its relevance to Women Entrepreneurs (WEs)
- Key objectives and expected outcomes
- Subtopic 1: What is a business model?
- Subtopic 2: Mapping circular opportunities with the business model canvas

Section 1: Foundations of Circular Business Models

- Subtopic 1: Sustainable business model = Profit + Purpose
- Subtopic 2: Core circular business models
- Subtopic 3: The 10R strategies – your circular toolkit

Section 2: What makes a business model sustainable

- Subtopic 1: Value chain & Stakeholder mapping
- Subtopic 2: Circular roadmap development
- Subtopic 3: Real-world circular models
- Subtopic 4: From fast fashion to smart fashion
- Subtopic 5: Closing the loop on the plate
- Subtopic 6: Building smarter with what we already have
- Subtopic 7: What do they all have in common?
- Tools and Quiz

Section 3: Co-opetition & Ecosystem Thinking

- Subtopic 1: Value chain & Stakeholder mapping
- Subtopic 2: Circular roadmap development
- Subtopic 3: Real-world circular models
- Subtopic 4: From fast fashion to smart fashion
- Subtopic 5: Closing the loop on the plate
- Subtopic 6: Building smarter with what we already have
- Subtopic 7: What do they all have in common?
- Tools and Quiz

Section 4: Tools and further support

Assessment and evaluation:

- Quiz

Feedback and reflection

- Participant feedback: Quiz

Additional resources:

Reading and watching list: webinar - Circular Business Models, guest speaker - Fabian Holly

Module 5: Environmental policies, sustainable finance and reporting

Developed by: Assoc. Prof. Iva Moneva, PhD/ Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar"

Learning outcomes (ILOs)	Knowledge:	Skills:	Competences:
ILO1:	Development of the EU environmental policy.	Environmental Policy and Regulations.	Understanding and complying with environmental laws, regulations, and policies.
ILO2:	Key principles of EU environmental policy.	Integrate ESG Factors.	Understanding and implementing sustainable finance.
ILO3:	Scope & classification of sustainable finance.	Sustainability Reporting.	Understanding and implementing sustainability reporting frameworks.
ILO4:	EU strategy for sustainable finance.		
ILO5:	Sustainability Reporting - Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Factors.		

Module duration and scheduling: 2 hrs

0 - 10 min: Introduction & Learning Goals
15 - 30 min: What do environmental policies mean for your business? What is the EU asking for? Key Terms
15 - 30 min: General Principles & Legal Framework of the EU Environmental Policy
15 - 30 min: Sustainable Finance. Transition to Sustainable Finance Strategy
15 - 30 min: Sustainable Reporting

Content:

Introduction

- Overview of the module and its relevance to Women Entrepreneurs (WEs)
- Key objectives and expected outcomes
- Subtopic 1: Why should you care about EU Environmental Policy?
- Subtopic 2: 4 Principles that guide EU Environmental Policy
- Subtopic 3: Legal foundations — What's behind the rules
- Subtopic 4: Action plans that guide the future
- Subtopic 5: So what can you do?
- Subtopic 6: What does EU Environmental Policy cover?
- Subtopic 7: Want to know more about EU Regulations?
- Subtopic 8: Case studies
- Subtopic 1: What is sustainable finance? Why does it matter to you?
- Subtopic 2: Global commitments behind sustainable finance
- Subtopic 3: What does sustainable finance look like in practice?
- Subtopic 4: Who are the key players?
- Subtopic 5: Why does it matter, especially for women?
- Subtopic 6: What is the EU Sustainable Finance Strategy?
- Subtopic 7: 6 focus areas that matter to you
- Subtopic 8: Key sectors being transformed
- Subtopic 9: What is sustainable finance in practice?
- Subtopic 10: What is EU Sustainable Finance (SuFi)?
- Subtopic 11: Which kind of sustainable finance fits your business?
- Subtopic 12: Why this matters especially for women entrepreneurs
- Subtopic 1: Basic concept of corporate sustainability. Why does sustainability reporting matter?
- Subtopic 2: The Sustainability Reporting Landscape
- Subtopic 3: What you need to know about EU laws?
- Subtopic 4: What are ESG Ratings? Why does this matters for small businesses
- Subtopic 5: Cases

Section 3: Sustainable Reporting

Assessment and evaluation:

- The test consists of 5 questions. One correct answer is selected for each question

Feedback and reflection

- Participant feedback: Quiz

Additional resources:

Reading and watching list: Material with links - Sustainable finance



Module 6: Digital Transformation Foundations

Developed by: Lejla Turulja and Amra Kapo/ University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Learning outcomes (ILOs)	Knowledge:	Skills:	Competences:
ILO1: Digitalisation Fundamentals	Understand the basics of digitalisation and why it matters for business efficiency and sustainability.	Identify digital tools that replace manual work, reduce errors, save resources, and increase efficiency.	Evaluate business processes to recognize where digitalisation can reduce waste and improve sustainability.
ILO2: Digital Tools for Circular Economy & Sustainability	Understand how digital tools (AI, IoT, cloud systems, data analytics) enable circular business models such as reuse, repair, refill and sharing.	Apply digital solutions to track materials, optimize supply chains, and increase transparency for customers.	Integrate digital tools to enable circular strategies (refill models, resource tracking, product passports, reuse models).
ILO3: Digital Maturity & Strategic Transformation	Understand digital maturity levels and how digital transformation supports long-term competitiveness and sustainable growth.	Assess digital maturity using basic self-assessment tools and define priority areas for digital growth.	Make strategic decisions grounded in data, technological trends, and customer expectations for transparency and sustainability.

Module duration and scheduling: 1.5 hrs

0 - 10 min: Introduction — why digital transformation matters; link to circular economy and sustainability
10 - 15 min: What is digitalisation? — replacing paper & manual work, efficiency, resource savings
10 - 15 min: Digital Tools for Circular Economy — examples (QR transparency, product tracking, refill systems, AI for waste reduction)
10 - 15 min: Key Components of Digital Transformation — data management, technology infrastructure, UX
10 - 15 min: Assessing Digital Maturity — 5 stages; digital readiness tools
05 - 10 min: Case studies — Refurbed (Austria) and small-business examples
05 - 10 min: Reflection, Quiz & Next Steps — self-assessment and planning.

Content:

Introduction

- Why digital transformation is essential for modern entrepreneurship.
- Link between sustainability, competitiveness, and digital tools.
- How digitalisation helps businesses reduce waste, increase transparency, and improve efficiency.

Section 1: General Principles & Legal Framework of the EU Environmental Policy

- **What Is Digitalisation and Why It Matters** - Replacing paper processes with digital tools; Reducing errors, saving time, enabling smarter resource use; Tracking stock, materials, and waste in real time.
- **Changing Business Landscape** - Customers expect fast, transparent, eco-friendly services; Digital tools support circular business models; Real-time monitoring improves decision-making.
- **Real Example: The Beauty Refill Model** - Durable packaging, QR codes for tracking refills, AI for suggestions, automated reminders

Section 2: Digital Tools for Circular Economy

- **Digital Tools as Enablers of Circular Models** - QR codes for transparency and product passports.; AI and analytics for demand forecasting → reduced waste; Cloud systems for tracking reuse, returns, repairs; IoT for smart waste sorting or monitoring materials.
- **Key Components of Digital Transformation** - Data management; Technology infrastructure; User experience

- **Everyday Tools for Entrepreneurs** - CRM systems; AI-powered automation; Cloud computing; Inventory & waste tracking platforms
- **Benefits for Women Entrepreneurs** - Efficiency, cost savings, sustainability reporting, customer trust.

- **What Is Digital Maturity?** - Understanding how effectively a business uses digital tools.
- **Five Stages of Digital Maturity** - Getting Started – Mostly manual; Basic Tools – Email, Excel, social media; Organized Systems – Cloud, CRM; Smart Decisions – Analytics, data-driven actions; Fully Digital – Automation & AI

- **Digital Maturity Test Tools** - RISE Digital Readiness Assessment; MIT, Google, and simple self-check frameworks
- **Building Your Digital Roadmap**: Set goals (waste, efficiency, customer focus); Choose tools within your budget; Upgrade step by step; Track KPIs

- **Managing Change** - Communicate benefits clearly; Start small; Train your team gradually; Collect feedback and celebrate small wins.

Section 3: Assessing Digital Maturity

- **Assessing Digital Maturity** - 5 stages; digital readiness tools

Section 4: Digital Strategy & Change Management

- **Digital Strategy & Change Management** - Set goals (waste, efficiency, customer focus); Choose tools within your budget; Upgrade step by step; Track KPIs

Assessment and evaluation:

- The test consists of 5 questions. One correct answer is selected for each question

Feedback and reflection

- Participant feedback: Quiz

Additional resources:

Reading and watching list: webinar: Managing Smarter - How AI transforms our team and work, guest speaker - Veronika Pizano

Module 7: Operational digital competences

Developed by: Antonina Ivanova/ Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar", Bulgaria
Vojtech Dvorak/ IREAS, Czech Republic and Mariya Zlateva/ RAPIV, Bulgaria

Learning outcomes (ILOs)	Knowledge:	Skills:	Competences:
ILO1:	Understand the importance of operational efficiency in circular business models.	Use productivity tools (Trello, Asana, Google Workspace) for team coordination.	Select and apply digital tools to enhance productivity and collaboration.
ILO2:	Know how to use productivity tools and cloud collaboration platforms.	Implement cybersecurity best practices to safeguard business data (2FA, password managers, safe cloud storage).	Integrate AI-based tools for smarter planning and resource use.
ILO3:	Understand how AI can support smarter resource planning and reduce waste.	Apply AI-based tools (Motion, Zoho Inventory, ChatGPT) for resource optimization.	Protect digital assets and customer data responsibly.
ILO4:	Be aware of essential cybersecurity and data protection practices.	Create and interpret simple BI dashboards (Google Sheets, Looker Studio).	Use dashboards and analytics to support operational decisions.
ILO5:	Know how to use data analytics for sustainable decision-making.		Apply digital strategies for circular business improvement.
ILO6:	Be acquired with real-world applications in circular textile, fashion, and agrifood.		

Module duration and scheduling: 2 hrs

5 thematic sections - 2 hours

2 practical use cases - 0.5 hours

Review, quiz and reflection - 0.5 hour

Content:

Introduction

- Overview of the module and its relevance to Women Entrepreneurs (WEs) This module equips women entrepreneurs with essential digital skills to enhance operational efficiency in circular economy businesses. It focuses on optimizing everyday business processes through digital tools, AI, data analytics, and cybersecurity. By mastering these competencies, WEs can improve productivity, reduce waste, and make informed decisions for sustainable growth.

Section 1: Operational Efficiency

- Subtopic 1: Concept of operational efficiency in circular businesses
- Subtopic 2: Real-life example: Bakery goes digital
- Subtopic 3: Reflection and Self-Assessment

Section 2: Productivity Tools & Cloud Collaboration

- Subtopic 1: Core Productivity Tools (Trello, Asana, Google Workspace, Zoho, Slack)
- Subtopic 2: Cloud Collaboration for Teams
- Subtopic 3: Choosing the Right Tools

Section 3: AI for Resource Planning

- Subtopic 1: Forecasting and Scheduling with AI
- Subtopic 2: Inventory and Resource Optimization
- Subtopic 3: Adapting AI to Business Needs

Section 4: Cybersecurity & Data Protection

- Subtopic 1: Protecting Digital Identity and Devices
- Subtopic 2: GDPR Basics and Secure Cloud Practices
- Subtopic 3: Cyber Incident Response

Section 5: Data Analytics for Decision-Making

- Subtopic 1: What is Data Analytics?
- Subtopic 2: Tools for Small Business Data Analysis
- Subtopic 3: Using Data to Drive Decisions

Case studies and practical applications

- Case study 1: Eco Glow – AI & Inventory Optimization
- Case study 2: Organic Farm – Cloud Collaboration and Team Efficiency
- Practical activity 1: Digital Tool Matching Exercise
- Practical activity 2: Build a Performance Dashboard

Feedback and reflection

- Participant feedback: Quiz

Assessment and evaluation:

- The test consists of 5 questions. One correct answer is selected for each question

Additional resources:

Reading and watching list: File with link and information about different tools - Operational Digital webinar: Practical Cyber Security



Module 8: Digital persona

Developed by: Technology Park of Varazdin, Croatia and RAPIV, Bulgaria

Learning outcomes (ILOS)	Knowledge:	Skills:	Competences:
ILO1:	Understand what a digital persona is and why it matters for business visibility.	Build and describe a digital persona that reflects brand values and target audience.	Design and maintain an authentic online brand presence.
ILO2:	Identify the key components of a digital persona: values, tone, visuals, and consistency.	Create a simple and consistent content plan across social media channels.	Apply storytelling, visuals, and digital tools to attract and retain customers.
ILO3:	Recognize major digital platforms and tools for creating and maintaining an online presence.	Use tools such as Canva, Google Business, Instagram, and WhatsApp Business to strengthen online presence.	Confidently use free or low-cost tools for marketing, content creation, and sales.
ILO4:	Understand the basics of content strategy, community engagement, and digital storytelling.	Develop a basic, mobile-friendly website using Wix, WordPress, or Shopify.	Demonstrate awareness of ethical and sustainable digital communication aligned with circular values.
ILO5:	Know how to create a website or e-shop using beginner-friendly tools.	Engage online communities through storytelling and interaction.	Strategically integrate digital persona, website, and marketing actions into one brand narrative.
ILO6:	Explore emerging tools like augmented and virtual reality for immersive marketing.	Apply simple immersive marketing ideas (e.g., Google Tour Creator, QR storytelling).	

Module duration and scheduling: 2 hrs

5 thematic sections - 2 hours
2 practical use cases - 0.5 hours
Review, quiz and reflection - 0.5 hour

Content:

Introduction

- Digital identity and presence are essential for visibility, credibility, and growth. This module empowers WEs to build strong online personas using modern digital tools.

Section 1: Understanding the Digital Persona

- Subtopic 1: What Is a Digital Persona?
- Subtopic 2: Why It Matters for Women Entrepreneurs
- Subtopic 3: Real-Life Example

Section 2: Building Your Persona Step-by-Step

- Subtopic 1: Defining Values and Audience
- Subtopic 2: Developing a Brand Voice and Visual Style
- Subtopic 3: Writing a Digital Persona Statement

Section 3: Content Strategy and Engagement

- Subtopic 1: Planning and Scheduling Content
- Subtopic 2: Storytelling and Community Engagement
- Subtopic 3: Case Study: Bloom Boutique

Section 4: From Social Media to Website and Online Store

- Subtopic 1: Why a Website Matters
- Subtopic 2: Planning and Structure
- Subtopic 3: Tools and Platforms
- Subtopic 4: Real-Life Example

Section 5: Content Strategy and Engagement

- Subtopic 1: What Is Immersive Marketing?
- Subtopic 2: Tools for Beginners
- Subtopic 3: Case Study: Ana's Candle Workshop

Case studies and practical applications

- Case study 1: Maria's Tea Shop - Authentic Storytelling
- Case study 2: Blaga's Restaurant – Building a Website
- Case study 3: Ana's Candle Workshop – Immersive Experience
- Practical activity 1: Crafting Your Digital Persona Statement
- Practical activity 2: Content Plan and Engagement Strategy

Assessment and evaluation:

- The test consists of 5 questions. One correct answer is selected for each question

Feedback and reflection

- Participant feedback: Quiz

Additional resources:

Reading and watching list: The Principles of Beautiful Web Design by Jason Baird and UX for Beginners by Joel Marsh

Module 9: Digital tools for circular economy

Developed by: Antonina Ivanova/ Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar", Bulgaria

Learning outcomes (ILOs)	Knowledge:	Skills:	Competences:
ILO1:	Explain how digital tools support circular economy practices by increasing transparency and resource efficiency.	Match common circular challenges, such as waste or emissions, with suitable digital tools.	Integrate digital circular tools into everyday business processes.
ILO2:	Explain what lifecycle assessment (LCA) tools are used for and how they measure environmental impact.	Use a basic LCA or carbon footprint tool to assess the environmental impact of a product or service.	Choose suitable digital tools based on sustainability goals and business needs.
ILO3:	Identify types and examples of digital tools for waste tracking, recycling and surplus management.	Monitor and reduce business waste using digital waste management tools	Interpret circular data and use it to support business decisions.
ILO4:	Understand how AI and data tools help optimise production, forecast demand and support circular decisions.	Use AI or data tools to understand key circular performance indicators, such as emissions or yield.	Create a practical action plan to improve resource efficiency and reduce environmental impact using digital tools.
ILO5:	Recognise when and how free or freemium tools such as openLCA, CoolClimate, Recykal, Looker Studio and Agremo can be used in fashion, textile and agriculture.	Present sustainability results using dashboards, QR codes or simple environmental reports.	

Module duration and scheduling: 2.5 hrs

- 4 sections - 1 h
- 2 practical case studies - 0.5 h
- Reflection & quiz - 0.5 h
- Independent tool testing - 0.5 h

Content:

Introduction

- This module introduces women entrepreneurs to practical, easy-to-use digital tools that support the circular economy. It explains how to track resources, reduce waste, apply lifecycle assessment, and use AI and data analytics for sustainable growth. Participants learn to make data-informed decisions, enhance transparency, and improve environmental performance in their businesses

Section 1: Integrating Digital Tools in Circular Economy

- Subtopic 1: What Does "Integration" Mean in CE?
- Subtopic 2: Benefits of Digital CE Tools
- Subtopic 3: Sector Use Cases
- Reflection and Self-Assessment

Section 2: Lifecycle Assessment (LCA) Tools

- Subtopic 1: What Is LCA and Why It Matters?
- Subtopic 2: Key Features of LCA Tools
- Subtopic 3: Tools Overview and Access
- Practical Activity

Section 3: Tools for Waste Reduction and Recycling

- Subtopic 1: Why Digital Waste Tools Matter
- Subtopic 2: Types of Tools
- Subtopic 3: Examples in Focus Sectors
- Practical Activity

Section 4: AI and Data Analytics for Circular Economy

- Subtopic 1: Definitions and Circular Applications
- Subtopic 2: Types of AI and Use Cases
- Subtopic 3: Free and Freemium Tools
- Reflection
- Case study 1: Fashion business using CircularID & openLCA to reduce footprint and improve product design.
- Case study 2: Agriculture startup using Agremo & ResQ Club to cut waste and boost circular performance.
- Practical activity 1: Footprint Assessment
- Practical activity 2: Seven-Day Waste Tracker

Case studies and practical applications

Assessment and evaluation:

- The test consists of 5 questions. One correct answer is selected for each question

Feedback and reflection

- Participant feedback: Quiz

Additional resources:

Reading and watching list: LCA tools

Module 10: How to make a circular business

Developed by: Miglena Pencheva/ Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar", Bulgaria

Learning outcomes (ILOS)	Knowledge:	Skills:	Competences:
ILO1:	Know how to build a circular business.	Shape/ improve business model in a way that creates value not just for customers, but for the planet as well.	Integrate circular business tool into production, logistics, and marketing workflows.
ILO2:	Learn how to map out your idea.	Use the Business Model Canvas with a circular lens.	Select appropriate set of steps to generate value based on circularity.
ILO3:	Know how to spot opportunities to reduce waste.	Test and adapt circular idea based on what real users think.	Connect the circular "why" to business decision making.
ILO4:	Understand how to build strong customer connections.	Understanding business environment to spot both challenges and opportunities.	Developing trust and behavior that inspire customers, supporters, community.
ILO5:	Bringing your vision to life.	Tailoring offer and making circular message stick to clear customers.	

Module duration and scheduling: 2.5 hrs

Content:

Introduction

- This module is a guide for designing smarter businesses. Women will learn how to map out their ideas using a practical tool, how to spot opportunities to reduce waste, and how to build strong customer connections. Step by step, the module will bring their vision to life.

Section 1: What is a Circular Business Model?

- Subtopic 1: The tool we use - Business Model Canvas** — a one-page map that shows how the business works.
- Subtopic 2: How it works in practice** - Kalina and Karina case. These are two childhood friends with a shared dream: to make fashion beautiful — without creating more waste. This real-life example is guiding learners all the way through to the Business Model Canvas.
- Subtopic 3: Validating and funding** - Circular businesses don't always fit classic investor models. That's why new funding streams exist: EU green programs, impact investors, and community finance.

Section 2: How to make circular business - shared experience

Assessment and evaluation:

- The test consists of 5 questions. One correct answer is selected for each question

Feedback and reflection

- Participant feedback: Quiz

Additional resources:

Reading and watching list: N/A



Module 11: Effective communication for circular business

Developed by: Miglena Pencheva/ Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar", Bulgaria
Mariya Zlateva/ RAPIV, Bulgaria

Learning outcomes (ILOs)	Knowledge:	Skills:	Competences:
ILO1:	Understand the importance of clear communication for presenting circular business ideas.	Structure clear and persuasive presentations for circular business ideas.	Communicate circular business ideas confidently and clearly.
ILO2:	Recognise the key elements of effective presentations and pitches for circular businesses.	Adapt messages to different audiences, such as investors, clients or teams.	Build trust and credibility through respectful and effective communication.
ILO3:	Understand different communication styles and their impact on business relationships.	Apply assertive communication techniques in everyday business situations.	Manage feedback and disagreements constructively.
ILO4:	Identify the principles of assertive communication and trust-based engagement.	Deliver short and engaging pitches for circular business models.	Engage stakeholders using inclusive communication approaches.
ILO5:	Understand the role of storytelling and evidence in building credibility and engagement.	Use simple digital tools to support presentations and audience engagement.	Apply communication skills to support business growth and partnerships.

Module duration and scheduling: 3 hrs

Self-paced e-learning content: 1.5 hours

Quiz and reflection activities: 0.5 hours

Live or recorded webinar (optional but recommended): 1 hour

Content:

Introduction

- This module is to make others believe in what circular business ladies believe in. Whether they're presenting their business, pitching for funding, or explaining their CE model to customers - how they say it matters just as much as what they say. In this module explore tools to turn your ideas into influence.

Section 1: Why Effective CE Communication Matters?

- Subtopic 1: Presentation is a journey – step by step guide - If people don't understand your circular business idea, they won't support it.
- Subtopic 2: Case Example – ReClean or how it works in practice - Elena's case. Elena used to manage a household goods store in a medium-sized city. One day, while taking out the recycling, she got an idea.
- Subtopic 3: Storytelling framework and elements - Facts tell, but stories sell. A good story builds connection, trust, and memory. It's the difference between 'interesting' and 'I believe you.'

Section 2: Assertiveness

- Subtopic 1: What is assertiveness?
- Subtopic 2: Assertiveness Communication Styles?
- Subtopic 3: Real-life example: Eszter's blueberry farm – Communicating under pressure

Section 3: Pitch Training

- Subtopic 1: What is a pitch?
- Subtopic 2: Pitch structure and elements?
- Subtopic 3: Functional examples

Section 4: Facilitate engagement

- Subtopic 1: Why engagement matters?
- Subtopic 2: Engagement Loop
- Subtopic 3: Real-life example – Eszter's engagement loop

Assessment and evaluation:

- Quiz 1: Presenting Circular Business Ideas with Impact
- Questionnaire 2: For each scenario, choose the communication style being used
- Quiz 3: Pitch Training
- Quiz 4

Feedback and reflection

- Participant feedback: Quiz

Additional resources:

Reading and watching list: video case study - Effective communication

webinar: Violence against women entrepreneurs, guest speaker - Linda Stuchartova

Module 12: Boost Your Potential: Productivity, Mindset, and Collaboration

Developed by: Miglena Pencheva/ Varna Free University "Chernozets Hrabar", Bulgaria
Mariya Zlateva/ RAPIV, Bulgaria

Learning outcomes (ILOS)	Knowledge:	Skills:	Competences:
ILO1:	Understand how mindset influences entrepreneurial behaviour, decision-making and business growth.	Apply mindset shifts to move from perfectionism to action and confident decision-making.	Demonstrate self-leadership by managing priorities, energy and personal boundaries.
ILO2:	Recognise common mindset barriers faced by women entrepreneurs, such as perfectionism, self-doubt and fear of visibility.	Use practical tools for time management, prioritisation and delegation.	Collaborate effectively with others by building trust, sharing responsibility and resolving challenges constructively.
ILO3:	Understand the principles of effective collaboration, including trust, clear roles and communication styles.	Apply strategies for managing stress, setting boundaries and maintaining energy.	Maintain resilience and emotional balance in demanding business situations.
ILO4:	Identify early signs of stress and burnout and their impact on wellbeing and business performance.	Adapt communication and collaboration styles to work effectively with different partners or teams.	Make informed decisions that support both business goals and personal wellbeing.
ILO5:	Understand the role of self-esteem, self-confidence and resilience in sustainable entrepreneurship.	Use self-boosting techniques, such as reflection and affirmations, to strengthen confidence and motivation.	Integrate productivity, mindset and collaboration practices into everyday entrepreneurial activities.

Module duration and scheduling: 3 hrs

Self-paced e-learning content: 1.5 hours

Quiz and reflection activities: 0.5 hours

Live or recorded webinar (optional but recommended): 1 hour

Content:

Introduction

- To lead others effectively, one also needs to lead oneself. That means understanding one's mindset, knowing how to stay strong in tough moments, and finding motivation - even when things feel heavy. This Module is about trainees themselves - their mental habits, their energy, and their belief in their own voice and vision.

Section 1: Mindset

- Subtopic 1: Mindset change
- Subtopic 2: Self-leadership
- Subtopic 3: Self-leadership Case Example
- Subtopic 3: Collaboration

Section 2: Resilience and stress management

- Subtopic 1: Time management – What really matters?
- Subtopic 2: Identifying Your Stress Triggers?
- Subtopic 3: Real-life examples: Time management in action; Building emotional resilience; Setting boundaries; Managing stress triggers; Managing stress triggers; Preventing burnout

Section 3: Stress

- Subtopic 1: What is it and why does it matter?
- Subtopic 2: Nerves system reaction?
- Subtopic 3: Self-check – How balanced is your life?

Section 4: Self-Boosting & Self-Esteem

- Subtopic 1: Why does it matter?
- Subtopic 2: What is self-boosting?
- Subtopic 3: How to handle doubts and keep a success course?

Assessment and evaluation:

- Quiz 1: Boost your potential

Feedback and reflection

- Participant feedback: Quiz

Additional resources:

Reading and watching list: video case study - Boost your potential
webinar: Pitch training, guest speaker - Peter Bartfai

Annex 2: Self-assessment tool

Dear trainee,

We would like to welcome you to our training programme: **“Smart and Sustainable Business for Women Entrepreneurs.”** This programme has been carefully developed to support you in building a resilient, circular, and digitally empowered business - one that creates value for both people and the planet.

This **Self-Assessment Tool** is your starting point. Below, you will find an overview of the **12 training modules**, each focused on a critical area of sustainable entrepreneurship - from circular economy and digital transformation to leadership, funding, and communication.

The tool gives you the opportunity to:

- **Reflect on your current level of knowledge**, skills, and confidence
- **Identify areas for growth** and the modules that can best support you
- **Prioritise your learning journey** based on your individual needs

Each module includes a short teaser and a set of questions designed to challenge your understanding. If you score below the recommended threshold for a specific module, we encourage you to complete it in full, we recommend that you **take that module in full** as part of your training.

This tool is not a test - it's a mirror. It's here to help you discover where you stand today and where your business can go tomorrow.

We're excited to support you on this journey toward smart and sustainable success.

Let's begin!

Module 1: Circular Economy – Path to Sustainability

Teaser: Discover how the circular economy can make your business more resilient, efficient, and future-ready. Learn why shifting from “take-make-waste” to smart and sustainable strategies isn’t just good for the planet — it’s a smart move for your bottom line. Ready to future-proof your business? Let’s get started.

Question 1: Can a business be considered sustainable if it generates economic growth while contributing to the depletion of natural resources?

- Yes
- No

Question 2: Which of the following best explains how the circular economy strengthens business competitiveness?

- A) It reduces operational complexity by avoiding reuse and repair
- B) It improves long-term efficiency by reducing dependence on raw materials
- C) It boosts brand visibility by increasing product turnover
- D) It enhances sustainability by increasing consumption rates

Module 2: Closing the Loop: The Power of Circular Thinking

Teaser: Step into the practical side of circularity. In this module, you’ll learn how to design smarter, reduce waste, and give products a second life — just like nature does. Discover simple strategies like repair, reuse, and redesign that make your business more efficient and sustainable. With real-world examples and tools, you’ll see how even small changes can create big impact.

Question 3: Is it correct to say that the circular economy and bioeconomy aim for the same results by applying identical strategies?

- Yes
- No

Question 4: Which of the following actions best demonstrates the “refuse” strategy in circular business design?

- A) Avoiding unnecessary packaging by offering products in bulk
- B) Sorting production waste into recyclable categories
- C) Designing products that can be easily disassembled
- D) Collecting used items from customers for repair

Module 3: Life Cycle of Materials and Waste Management

Teaser: What happens to your product before it's made, and after it's used? In this module, you'll follow the full journey of materials and learn how smarter choices can reduce costs, cut waste, and boost sustainability. Discover how to classify and manage waste responsibly, and see how recycling, reuse, and circular strategies give materials a second life. It's time to rethink “waste” as a resource.

Question 5: Does waste management include activities such as sorting, recycling, composting, and marketing?

- Yes
- No

Question 6: Which of the following correctly lists three key stages in the life cycle of a material?

- A) Production → Use → Expansion
- B) Extraction → Distribution → Disposal
- C) Procurement → Storage → Incineration
- D) Usage → Marketing → Sales

Module 4: Circular Business Models for Women Entrepreneurs

Teaser: Turn circular thinking into circular business. In this module, you'll learn how to design business models that reduce waste, build customer loyalty, and create long-term value. Discover strategies like Product-as-a-Service, closed-loop systems, and co-operation - all tailored for small businesses and women-led ventures.

Question 7: Which of the following best describes a circular business model?

- A) A business model that encourages resale, recycling, and fast customer turnover
- B) A model that focuses on extending product use and recovering resources at the end of life
- C) A system that reduces emissions by using only renewable energy in production
- D) A framework for maximizing profits through reuse and rapid scaling

Question 8: What is the main purpose of a circular business model?

- A) To maintain customer satisfaction through product replacement cycles
- B) To reduce resource dependency and create value through longer product lifespans
- C) To limit operational costs by outsourcing material reuse
- D) To market sustainability while keeping traditional production processes

Question 9: Which business model best illustrates Product-as-a-Service?

- A) Offering a take-back program for used goods
- B) Leasing products with regular upgrades and maintenance included
- C) Selling a durable product with an extended warranty
- D) Providing digital instructions for repairing purchased products

Module 5: Environmental Policies, Sustainable Finance and Reporting

Teaser: This module shows how your business can grow by aligning with sustainability. Learn how EU rules on waste, climate, and circularity impact your operations, and how sustainable finance and ESG reporting can open doors to grants, loans, and partners. Whether you're just starting or already going green, this module turns compliance into opportunity and values into action.

Question 10: Can EU environmental policies influence how small businesses manage packaging, materials, and supply chains?

- Yes
- No

Question 11: Which of the following most accurately reflects the role of sustainable finance in today's business environment?

- A) A financial strategy focused on maximizing short-term profits through ESG labeling
- B) A funding mechanism reserved for large-scale infrastructure projects with minimal social risk

- C) A system that channels investments into businesses that meet environmental, social, and governance criteria
- D) A policy tool for penalizing businesses that do not meet EU carbon neutrality targets

Question 12: Is sustainability reporting recognized as a competitive advantage for businesses not yet legally obligated to report?

- Yes
- No

Module 6: Digital Transformation Foundations

Teaser: Digital isn't just for big tech — it's a game-changer for small, circular businesses, too. In this module, you'll discover how digital tools like cloud platforms, AI, and smart analytics can streamline your operations, reduce waste, and boost customer engagement. Learn how to assess your digital maturity, choose the right tools, and design a step-by-step roadmap to future-proof your business. Just practical, powerful change - at your pace.

Question 13: Which of the following outcomes are realistic ways digital tools can help small businesses gain a competitive advantage in the circular economy?

- Enable real-time monitoring of supply chains to reduce inefficiencies
- Eliminate the need for staff involvement in operational decisions
- Improve customer loyalty through enhanced service personalization
- Increase overall production volume regardless of demand
- Support business models such as take-back or resale systems through digital interfaces

Question 14: What is the most accurate reason digitalisation is critical to modern circular businesses?

- A) It allows companies to scale rapidly without adjusting resource use
- B) It centralizes all business operations in a physical location
- C) It enables data-driven decisions to reduce waste and adapt to customer demand
- D) It guarantees full automation of all processes regardless of business type

Question 15: Which approach best reflects a realistic and sustainable strategy for introducing digital tools in a resource-constrained business?

- A) Begin with a pilot tool, involve your team in testing, and build adoption incrementally
- B) Invest in AI and blockchain first to attract digital investors
- C) Implement at least three platforms at once to gain momentum
- D) Prioritize automation tools even if they don't match the team's skill level

Module 7: Operational Digital Competences

Teaser: Ready to simplify your day and strengthen your business? This module helps you build essential digital skills — from managing tasks and teams with smart tools to planning inventory with AI and protecting your data like a pro. Whether you're solo or leading a small team, you'll learn how to save time, cut waste, and make confident decisions using real-time information. Practical, powerful, and built for women entrepreneurs.

Question 16: Which of the following are accurate indicators of operational efficiency in a circular business?

- Maximizing output by increasing employee hours
- Reducing resource waste while maintaining product or service quality
- Meeting deadlines at any cost, even with overproduction
- Using fewer materials and time to achieve the same or better results
- Focusing only on financial savings and ignoring process improvement

Question 17: Which of the following best describes how productivity tools support small circular businesses?

- A) They allow full automation so businesses can operate without team input
- B) They centralize communication, task tracking, and document sharing to reduce errors and save time
- C) They replace the need for business planning by generating automatic strategies
- D) They eliminate the need for customer feedback by speeding up delivery

Question 18: What is one of the most effective contributions of AI tools to small, circular businesses?

- A) They ensure business growth by automating product development
- B) They predict patterns from past data to reduce overproduction and improve planning
- C) They completely replace the need for employee input in repetitive tasks
- D) They monitor team performance and replace low-efficiency workers automatically

Module 8: Digital Persona

Teaser: In today's world, your business is only as visible as your digital presence. This module helps you build an authentic, professional online identity that reflects your values and connects with your audience. Learn how to define your tone, choose the right platforms, craft engaging content, and build trust through consistency. From Google to Instagram to immersive storytelling — your digital persona is your business handshake.

Question 19: Can a digital persona be considered strong if the brand's visuals are consistent, but the tone and messaging vary across platforms?

- Yes
- No

Question 20: Can defining a clear audience and communication goal improve the effectiveness of your digital marketing, even with a limited budget?

- Yes
- No

Question 21: Which of the following best explains the role of a business website in the context of a strong digital persona?

- A) It replaces social media by offering a platform for casual updates and influencer collaborations
- B) It serves as a central space where your brand can present its identity, story, and offer clear calls to action
- C) It allows you to publish real-time content more quickly than any other platform
- D) It is mainly useful for SEO purposes and has minimal impact on customer trust

Question 22: Which of the following are recommended practices when launching a basic e-commerce store?

- Use clear product descriptions, ideally supported by original photos
- Focus on branding first — product details and pricing can come later
- Include pages like “About” and “Contact” to build customer trust
- Offer multiple payment and delivery options with transparent terms
- Delay legal and pricing information to avoid overwhelming first-time visitors

Module 9: Digital Tools for the Circular Economy

Teaser: From QR codes to AI-powered insights, this module gives you the tools to make your circular business smarter, leaner, and more impactful. You'll learn how to track your footprint, cut waste, and boost transparency using simple digital systems — even if you're not tech-savvy. Discover free platforms for measuring environmental impact, explore real-world tools used in fashion, farming, and food, and see how data can drive real change.

Question 23: What best describes a lifecycle assessment (LCA) in the context of circular business?

- A) A method for assessing the recyclability of product components
- B) A process to evaluate the cost and energy required during the production phase
- C) A tool that measures the environmental impacts of a product across its entire life cycle, including materials, use, and end-of-life
- D) A checklist used to ensure compliance with packaging and waste regulations

Question 24: Which of the following best explains how AI supports circular economy strategies in small businesses?

- A) It automates marketing tasks to increase online visibility
- B) It tracks website behavior to improve customer engagement strategies
- C) It analyzes data to optimize material use and reduce resource inefficiencies
- D) It replaces manual production steps with robotic equipment to scale faster

Question 25: Which of the following digital tools can help businesses reduce waste and improve circular practices?

- QR codes that share product origin and reuse instructions

- Smart bins that track disposal patterns
- E-commerce automation tools for digital advertising
- Waste tracking software that visualizes where and when waste occurs
- AI-powered customer review filters

Module 10: How to Make a Circular Business

Teaser: Turn your purpose into a plan. In this module, you'll learn how to design a business model that creates value without waste. From mapping your idea with the Business Model Canvas to testing with real customers, you'll explore how to build a circular business that's lean, impactful, and fundable. With insights on pricing, partnerships, and legal strategy - this is your step-by-step guide to launching (or transforming) your business for people, planet, and profit.

Question 26: What best describes the value proposition in a circular business model?

- A) A statement of how your product is priced compared to competitors
- B) A summary of your business's vision and marketing plan
- C) A clear explanation of how your product or service solves a customer problem and delivers environmental or social benefits
- D) A list of partners who support your business operations

Question 27: Which of the following are potential funding options for circular businesses?

- Equity investment from partners focused on growth
- Impact investors who care about both profit and measurable social/environmental results
- Online product reviews that boost customer trust
- Green loans with favorable terms for sustainability goals
- Traditional grants that do not require repayment
- Loyalty programs that reward customer engagement

Module 11: Effective Communication for Circular Business

Teaser: You have a circular idea - now it's time to make others believe in it. This module helps you craft messages that inform, inspire, and influence. Learn how to pitch with confidence, speak clearly under pressure, and build trust with any audience —

investors, partners, or your own team. Whether you're presenting your business, handling conflict, or leading change, you'll master the skills to make your voice heard and your message land.

Question 28: Which of the following best reflects a key principle of delivering an effective business presentation?

- A) Providing detailed explanations and reading from slides to ensure accuracy
- B) Structuring content logically and reinforcing key points through audience interaction
- C) Including specific data and technical terms to establish credibility
- D) Using a neutral tone and minimal movement to maintain professionalism

Question 29: Which of the following best reflects an effective approach when pitching a circular business idea?

- A) Focus on your product's features and technical innovation to impress the audience
- B) Lead with potential market size and financial projections to secure credibility
- C) Clearly show how your solution addresses a real problem and creates measurable impact
- D) Emphasize personal passion and values to build emotional connection with investors

Question 30: Which of the following are examples of assertive communication?

- "I understand your point, but I need more time to complete the task."
- "This is ridiculous — I can't work like this!"
- "Whatever you want, it's fine with me."
- "I'd prefer to discuss this after the meeting, if that's okay."
- "I don't care — I'm doing it my way."

Module 12: Boost Your Potential – Productivity, Mindset, and Collaboration

Teaser: Success starts from within. In this powerful final module, you'll strengthen the foundation of your business: you. Learn how to shift limiting mindsets, set healthy boundaries, manage stress, and lead with confidence — even when things feel overwhelming. Explore practical tools for self-leadership, collaboration, and emotional resilience that help you protect your time, energy, and focus. Because growing your business shouldn't mean burning out — it should mean rising with clarity and strength.



Question 31: Which of the following best reflects a growth-oriented mindset in entrepreneurship?

- A) Success is mostly a result of natural talent, and feedback can distract from your personal vision
- B) Setbacks are expected and can be used to improve future decisions and skills
- C) A strong leader must appear confident at all times, even when uncertain
- D) Mistakes reflect poor preparation and should be avoided through perfectionism

Question 32: Which of the following practices support effective collaboration in a professional environment?

- Sharing your personal views clearly while maintaining control over the final decision
- Listening actively, acknowledging others' contributions, and building on shared ideas
- Dividing responsibilities clearly, but minimizing overlap or discussion to avoid inefficiency
- Setting mutual goals and being open to adapting your approach based on group input
- Communicating efficiently by focusing only on tasks and limiting emotional discussions

Question 33: Which of the following strategies can help entrepreneurs manage their time and energy more effectively?

- Saying "yes" to most opportunities to stay visible
- Using tools or systems to prioritize and organize tasks
- Taking regular breaks to recharge and avoid burnout
- Working longer hours to catch up on incomplete tasks
- Setting boundaries around availability and workload

Recommendation from the tool after completing the evaluation:

Dear [Trainee Name],

Thank you for completing the **Self-Assessment Tool** as part of the *Smart and Sustainable Business for Women Entrepreneurs* training programme.

We're happy to see that you've demonstrated a strong understanding in several important areas - a great foundation for building or growing your circular business. Well done on successfully answering the questions in Modules:

- Module [A]: *[Module Title]*
- Module [B]: *[Module Title]*
- [Add more as needed]

This shows that you already have valuable knowledge and are well on your way to making a positive impact in your business and your community. Even if you performed well in certain areas, you are **more than welcome** to take part in any of the modules out of interest, curiosity, or to reinforce your learning. Many trainees find new insights or unexpected inspiration by revisiting familiar topics from a new perspective.

Based on your responses, we have identified one or more modules where further learning could strongly benefit your development as a circular entrepreneur.

Recommended modules for you are:

- Module [X]: *[Module Title]*
- Module [Y]: *[Module Title]*
- [Add more as needed]

These modules address important areas where your current knowledge could be strengthened — whether it's in circular economy strategy, digital tools, financial planning, or personal leadership.

We encourage you to take these modules as part of your personalized learning path. Each one offers practical tools, real-world examples, and step-by-step guidance to help you:

- Build confidence in key areas.
- Make informed business decisions.
- Grow your impact as a purpose-driven entrepreneur.

Remember, this recommendation is not a judgment - it's a resource. The goal of this training is to **support you where it matters most**, so you can move forward with clarity, competence, and confidence.

If you have any questions or would like support creating a learning plan, feel free to contact us at office@rapiv.org.

Warm regards,