



Output Factsheet

Output title: Output 1.1 - TEX-DAN Strategy for improving circularity in the textile and fashion value chains in the Danube Region

Summary of the output (max. 2500 characters)

The TEX-DAN Strategy represents a shared vision for guiding the circular transformation of the textile and fashion value chains across the Danube Region. It serves as a regional framework for connecting innovation, policy, financing, skills development, infrastructure, and standards in a coherent way. By fostering collaboration among public institutions, businesses, and knowledge actors, the Strategy helps the region meet EU ambitions on circularity, strengthen competitiveness, lower environmental pressures, and anticipate upcoming regulatory changes.

Fully aligned with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), the TEX-DAN Strategy supports the objectives of Priority Areas 6 (Environment), 7 (Knowledge Society), 8 (Competitiveness), and 9 (People and Skills). Through this alignment, the Strategy translates broad policy commitments into practical actions tailored to the economic and social realities of Danube countries. It builds on an integrated process that combined analysis, experimentation, stakeholder input, and knowledge sharing. This collaborative approach ensured that the resulting framework is both evidence-based and rooted in regional practice.

The process began with an in-depth assessment of the textile and fashion landscape across the Danube Region. Partners explored regulatory systems, market dynamics, infrastructure gaps, and the specific needs of small and medium-sized enterprises. The analysis revealed key challenges such as limited innovation capacity, fragmented recycling systems, and low consumer awareness. These insights led to the identification of seven common areas for joint intervention.

To complement analysis with practice, pilot activities were carried out using a Living-Lab approach. These real-life tests provided a valuable understanding of how circular approaches can be integrated into business settings, highlighting obstacles and opportunities related to digitalisation, renewable energy, and resource recovery. Feedback from these pilots guided the shaping of strategic measures and ensured their relevance for SMEs.

A regional mapping of 118 good practices further enriched the Strategy. The examples showcased innovations in circular materials, reuse and repair initiatives, local value chains, digital tools, and educational programs. Together, they proved that progress towards circularity is already underway and can be expanded across the region.

National stakeholder workshops in all participating countries played an important role in adapting the Strategy to local conditions. The discussions emphasised the need for better policy alignment, accessible financing, partnerships, and continuous knowledge exchange. This co-creation process ensured that the Strategy reflects shared ownership across borders.

The Strategy includes 7 strategic objectives and 30 measures. The strategic objectives are:

- 1. Foster innovation and technological transition**
- 2. Empower consumers and raise public awareness**
- 3. Strengthen policy and regulatory frameworks**
- 4. Enhancing finance and incentives for circular business models**
- 5. Build capacity and share knowledge across the value chain**
- 6. Develop circular infrastructure and regional value chains**
- 7. Establish standards, certification, and new business models**

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 TEX-DAN Strategy directly contributes to the objectives of the Danube Region Programme under Specific Objective 1.1 “Enhancing innovation and technology transfer in the Danube Region”. By establishing a macro-regional framework for improving circularity in textile and fashion value chains, the Strategy promotes innovation, knowledge transfer and collaboration between businesses, research organisations, public institutions and business support organisations across the Danube Region.

The Strategy contributes to the programme output indicator “Strategies and action plans jointly developed” by one transnational strategy developed and agreed by the project partnership. Through its seven strategic objectives and thirty measures, the Strategy provides a structured roadmap for strengthening innovation capacity, improving regulatory conditions, promoting sustainable business models and supporting the uptake of circular technologies in the textile sector.

The Strategy also contributes to the objectives of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), particularly Priority Areas 6 (Environment), 7 (Knowledge Society), 8 (Competitiveness) and 9 (People and Skills). By addressing environmental impacts of the textile sector while strengthening innovation ecosystems and skills development, the Strategy supports the transition toward a more sustainable and competitive regional economy.

Within the TEX-DAN project, the Strategy acts as a key policy-oriented output that connects the results of territorial analyses, pilot activities and good practice mapping. It provides the strategic foundation for the preparation of regional action plans and the Joint Action Plan, which will translate the identified measures into concrete actions supporting circular transformation in the textile and fashion sector across the Danube Region.

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 TEX-DAN Strategy can be used by a wide range of stakeholders involved in the textile and fashion ecosystem across the Danube Region. The primary target group of the project is micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises active in textile production, design, recycling and related value chains. Further target groups include policymakers at regional and national level public bodies, business support organisations, innovation agencies, clusters, research and educational institutions.

SMEs can benefit from improved access to knowledge, financing opportunities, innovation support and cross-border cooperation. By encouraging the adoption of circular technologies, sustainable materials and new business models, the Strategy supports companies in improving competitiveness while reducing environmental impacts.

For policymakers, the Strategy provides a structured reference framework for designing policies, support programmes and regulatory measures that facilitate the transition toward circular textile value chains. For business support organisations and clusters, it offers guidance for developing innovation services, training programmes and cooperation initiatives that strengthen circular business models and value chain integration.

At the macro-regional level, the Strategy contributes to strengthening cooperation among innovation actors and policymakers, fostering knowledge exchange and supporting the development of a more resilient, resource-efficient and competitive textile and fashion sector in the Danube Region.

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 TEX-DAN Strategy will be ensured through its integration into follow-up activities and policy development processes during and after the project lifetime. A key mechanism for implementation is the preparation of 11 regional action plans and a Joint Action Plan at Danube Region level, which translate the strategic objectives and measures of the Strategy into concrete actions adapted to regional conditions. These action plans will support the gradual implementation of circular economy solutions in the textile and fashion value chains.

Long-term sustainability will also be supported by the establishment of the Danube Circular Textile Cluster, which provides a platform for continued cooperation among businesses, innovation agencies, research institutions and



public authorities. The cluster will facilitate knowledge exchange, dissemination of good practices and the development of new collaborative initiatives building on the Strategy.

The Strategy will be disseminated and transferred to policymakers, business support organisations, clusters and innovation actors across the Danube Region through project events, stakeholder networks and communication activities in the remaining months of the project implementation and beyond by the project partners. In addition, the methodology and lessons learned from the Strategy development process can be transferred to other regions and sectors interested in accelerating circular transformation and strengthening sustainable value chains.