

Output Factsheet

Output title: Regional Action Plans

Summary of the output (max. 2500 characters)

The output consists of **12 Regional Action Plans (RAPs)** developed within the WE.Circular project to support women entrepreneurs in the circular and digital transition across the Danube Region. The RAPs cover **Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Baden-Württemberg/Germany, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia**. Each plan translates the analytical findings of the project into concrete, context-specific measures adapted to the needs of the respective country or region.

The RAPs are based on the results of the Transnational Skills Gaps and Needs Analysis, the Policy and Legislative Framework Analysis, National Stakeholder Group consultations, co-creation activities, peer-review feedback and transnational learning exchanges. They identify the main challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, including limited access to finance, insufficient circular and digital skills, low awareness of support instruments, fragmented business support ecosystems, lack of mentoring and networking opportunities, and limited integration of gender-sensitive approaches into circular and digital transition policies.

Across the 12 RAPs, the proposed measures focus on several common priority areas: strengthening circular and digital skills; improving access to finance and advisory support; raising awareness of circular economy opportunities; increasing the visibility of women entrepreneurs and role models; developing mentoring, peer-learning and networking structures; improving access to digital tools and platforms; and supporting policy dialogue for more inclusive circular and digital transition frameworks.

Although each RAP reflects specific national or regional conditions, together they form a coherent transnational output contributing to the common WE.Circular objective: empowering women entrepreneurs as active drivers of sustainable, circular and digital transformation in the Danube Region. The output provides a structured roadmap for action for the period up to 2030 and creates a basis for future cooperation among public authorities, business support organisations, chambers, innovation actors, financial institutions, academia and women entrepreneurs

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 output directly contributes to the WE.Circular project objective of strengthening the

capacity of women entrepreneurs to participate in and benefit from the circular and digital transition. By transforming project analyses and stakeholder feedback into practical regional measures, the 12 RAPs create a bridge between evidence, policy dialogue and implementation.

The RAPs contribute to the programme's objectives by supporting a greener, smarter and more inclusive Danube Region. They promote circular economy practices, digital transformation, innovation capacity, smart specialisation, resource efficiency and gender-responsive entrepreneurship support. The output also supports the improvement of policy and business support frameworks by identifying practical actions that can be taken by public authorities, chambers, business support organisations, innovation actors, training providers and women entrepreneurship networks.

In relation to project output and result indicators, the RAPs represent a concrete strategic and operational output that consolidates project knowledge into country- and region-specific action frameworks. They contribute to increase institutional and stakeholder capacity to support women-led SMEs in adopting circular business models, digital tools and sustainable innovation practices. The plans also strengthen the project's long-term result by creating a common basis for future implementation, cooperation and transfer beyond the project lifetime.

The output is aligned with the relevant programme Priority Area by addressing the green and digital transition through inclusive innovation, skills development, SME support and cooperation across the Danube Region. The 12 RAPs contribute to the target of improving the ability of regional ecosystems to respond to transition challenges by proposing coordinated, realistic and measurable actions. Together, they support the Danube Region's transition towards a more circular, resource-efficient and competitive economy, while ensuring that women entrepreneurs are not only beneficiaries but active drivers of this transformation.

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 output can be used by public authorities, ministries, regional and local governments, chambers of commerce, business support organisations, innovation agencies, financial institutions, training providers, universities, NGOs, women entrepreneurship networks and women entrepreneurs themselves.

Public authorities can use the RAPs as practical guidance for improving policy measures, funding schemes and support programmes for women-led SMEs in the circular and digital economy. Business support organisations and chambers can use the measures to design training, mentoring, advisory services, peer-learning formats and awareness campaigns. Financial institutions and investors can use the findings to better understand the needs of women entrepreneurs and develop more accessible financial and advisory products. Training providers and universities can use the RAPs to adapt

educational content to circular economy, digitalisation and smart specialisation needs.

For women entrepreneurs, the output provides better visibility of their challenges and proposes targeted support in areas such as finance, skills, mentoring, networking, digitalisation and circular business model development. For the Danube Region, the benefit lies in creating a shared but locally adapted framework for accelerating the circular and digital transition. The impact is expected in stronger women-led business capacity, better ecosystem cooperation, increased awareness of circular opportunities, and more inclusive participation of women entrepreneurs in green and digital innovation.

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 output can be ensured by integrating the RAP measures into existing national, regional and local support structures rather than treating them as stand-alone project results. The measures can be embedded into entrepreneurship programmes, SME support schemes, chamber services, innovation hubs, training curricula, mentoring networks, digital platforms and policy dialogue processes.

The RAPs should be transferred to relevant ministries, regional and local authorities, chambers of commerce, business support organisations, women entrepreneurship associations, innovation agencies, financial institutions, universities, training providers and civil society organisations active in gender equality, entrepreneurship, circular economy and digital transformation. They can also be transferred to transnational networks and future Danube Region cooperation initiatives as a basis for follow-up projects and joint actions.

Sustainability can be strengthened through continued use of the WE.Circular learning materials, peer-learning formats, stakeholder groups and transnational cooperation mechanisms developed during the project. Regular monitoring of proposed actions, use of simple indicators, annual stakeholder discussions and integration into future funding opportunities will help maintain the relevance of the output.

By transferring the RAPs to both policy and implementation actors, the output can continue to support women entrepreneurs beyond the project lifetime and contribute to long-term systemic change in the Danube Region's circular and digital transition.