

## Output Factsheet

**Output title: Strategy for Sustainability of the WE.Circular Labs**

### Summary of the output (max. 2500 characters)

The **Strategy for Sustainability of the WE.Circular Labs** is a strategic framework developed within the WE.Circular project to ensure the long-term continuation, relevance and transferability of the Labs after project closure. The document responds to a clearly identified gap in the Danube Region, where women entrepreneurs are motivated to engage in circular and digital transition, but often lack practical, integrated and gender-sensitive support to translate these ambitions into viable business development. In response, the WE.Circular project established WE.Circular Labs in 12 Danube Region countries as collaborative environments for co-creation, testing, validation and ecosystem connection.

The Strategy builds on the WE.Circular Labs Concept, the Methodology for Pilot Testing, pilot implementation results, the Regional Action Plans and the Transnational Strategy for Women Entrepreneurs' Circular Transition. It summarises the main lessons learnt from piloting, identifies the shared barriers and support needs of women entrepreneurs in the Danube Region, and confirms the strategic relevance of the Labs as integrated support structures combining skills development, business advisory, test-before-invest logic, stakeholder engagement and ecosystem cooperation.

The output defines a common vision and strategic objectives for the Labs and sets out a sustainability model built around four dimensions: organisational sustainability, stakeholder engagement, financial sustainability and service sustainability. It also explains the role of transnational cooperation, including the use of common WE.Circular business models, visibility and matchmaking formats, and links with the Transnational Learning Network. In addition, the document provides a five-year implementation roadmap for the period July 2026 to June 2031 and a proportionate framework for monitoring, evaluation and risk mitigation. Overall, the Strategy provides a practical basis for embedding the Labs into existing ecosystems and for continuing their function as support structures for women entrepreneurs in circular and digital transition 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 Strategy contributes directly to the WE.Circular project objective of strengthening the digital, business and circular transition capacity of women entrepreneurs and improving the wider support ecosystem through better integrated policies and practical solutions. It supports the Interreg Danube Region Programme objective related to better governance and more effective policy frameworks by providing a strategic and implementation-oriented mechanism for sustaining the WE.Circular Labs beyond the project lifetime. The output strengthens the link between project piloting and long-term policy uptake by translating tested approaches into a structured sustainability model.

More specifically, the Strategy contributes to the project's objectives by ensuring that the Labs remain operational as practical support environments where women entrepreneurs can access integrated services related to business model redesign, validation, mentoring, skills development, finance-related guidance and networking. It also supports the continuation of transnational cooperation through common business models, peer learning, dissemination and the Transnational Learning Network. In this way, it reinforces both project-level and programme-level results related to increased institutional capacity, stronger ecosystem cooperation and improved conditions for women entrepreneurs' circular and digital transition.

The output also contributes to the targets of the relevant Priority Area by supporting better coordination between innovation actors, business support organisations, public institutions and women entrepreneurs across the Danube Region. It provides a concrete follow-up mechanism for the tested Labs model and supports the continued use of project outputs through institutional embedding, service continuity and transnational cooperation. As such, it is not only a strategic document, but also a practical instrument for ensuring that the WE.Circular approach remains visible, usable and transferable after the end of the project.

**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 Strategy can be used by project partners hosting the WE.Circular Labs, associated strategic partners, business support organisations, chambers, universities, innovation intermediaries, public authorities, policy-makers and other organisations interested in supporting women entrepreneurs in circular and digital transition. It provides these target groups with a practical framework for continuing, adapting or transferring the Labs model after project closure.

For host organisations, the main benefit is a structured pathway for embedding the Labs into existing organisational functions and services. For policy-makers and public institutions, the Strategy offers a practical instrument for linking policy priorities to implementation-oriented support. For business support actors and innovation organisations, it provides a tested model for integrated service delivery and stakeholder engagement. For women entrepreneurs, the long-term impact lies in improved access to

relevant support structures that combine skills, business development, testing and ecosystem connection.

At Danube Region level, the output contributes to stronger continuity of support, increased transnational exchange and better visibility of women-led circular and digital business solutions. It helps preserve the value generated during the project and supports further uptake of the model in other contexts and organisations.

**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 through its practical use by host organisations of the WE.Circular Labs and by its integration into existing support, innovation and policy ecosystems. The Strategy itself is designed as a long-term reference framework and includes concrete provisions for organisational anchoring, stakeholder engagement, diversified funding, service prioritisation, transnational cooperation, implementation planning and monitoring. This makes it directly usable beyond the project lifetime.

Its transferability is strengthened by the fact that it builds on a tested model, a common methodology and six shared WE.Circular business models, while also allowing adaptation to different national and institutional contexts. The output can be transferred to other business support organisations, public institutions, chambers, universities, innovation actors and networks in the Danube Region that are interested in supporting women entrepreneurs through circular and digital transition measures.

A further basis for sustainability and transfer is provided through the existing Transnational Learning Network and signed MoUs, which offer a light framework for post-project cooperation, exchange of information and continued visibility of the Labs. In this way, the Strategy can continue to serve both as a sustainability instrument for current WE.Circular partners and as a transferable reference document for other interested organisations and policy actors.