

Output Factsheet

Output title: Transnational Strategy for WEs Circular Transition

Summary of the output (max. 2500 characters)

The Transnational Strategy for Women Entrepreneurs' Circular Transition is a policy-oriented framework developed within the WE.Circular project to support women entrepreneurs across the Danube Region in their circular and digital transition. It responds to the need to strengthen women-led businesses as active drivers of sustainable economic transformation, innovation and competitiveness, while addressing barriers related to access to skills, finance, mentoring, networks, innovation support and policy recognition.

The Strategy is based on the main evidence and lessons generated through the project, including the Transnational Skills Needs and Gaps Analysis, Policy Analysis, good practice mapping, pilot activities, stakeholder consultations, co-design processes and policy dialogue. It reflects the results of practical validation through the WE.Circular Training Programme and the testing of six circular business models in WE.Circular Labs.

The Strategy defines a common vision and strategic framework structured around four pillars: Circular Economy Transition, Digital Transition, Policy Improvement and Smart Specialisation. These pillars are translated into 6 transnational intervention areas: capacity building for circular and digital skills; access to finance, investment readiness and business advisory support; mentoring, networking and ecosystem cooperation; awareness raising, visibility and communication; business support for circular model application and scaling; and policy dialogue, institutional support and Smart Specialisation integration.

The document provides recommended measures and implementation directions that can be adapted to national and regional contexts through the Regional Action Plans developed by project partners. It does not aim to create parallel policy structures, but to support better integration of women entrepreneurship into existing SME, innovation, digitalisation, circular economy, gender equality and Smart Specialisation instruments.

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 boosting digital and industrial capacity for the sustainable circular transition of women entrepreneurs in

the Danube Region. It translates the project's analytical findings, pilot results and stakeholder consultation outcomes into a common transnational framework for future policy uptake and practical implementation.

The Strategy contributes to strengthening the capacity of women entrepreneurs and women-led SMEs to participate in the circular and digital transition by identifying strategic priorities, recommended measures and implementation pathways. It supports the project's policy dimension by providing a shared framework that can guide Regional Action Plans, stakeholder cooperation and the integration of WE.Circular results into relevant policies, programmes and support schemes.

The output contributes to improved transnational cooperation by aligning partners and stakeholders around common strategic pillars and intervention areas. It supports the transfer and adaptation of project results, including the WE.Circular Training Programme, good practices, circular business models, WE.Circular Labs, Learning Network, Policy Learning Centre and Virtual Policy Toolbox.

At programme level, the Strategy contributes to the competitiveness and innovation capacity of SMEs in the Danube Region, with a specific focus on women entrepreneurs. It is strongly aligned with EUSDR Priority Area 8 – Competitiveness of Enterprises, while also contributing to PA7 – Knowledge Society, PA9 – People and Skills, PA10 – Institutional Capacity and Cooperation, and indirectly to PA6 through circular economy practices that support resource efficiency and sustainability.

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 policy makers, public authorities, business support organisations, chambers, innovation agencies, Digital Innovation Hubs, universities, financial institutions, women entrepreneurship networks, civil society organisations and project partners. It provides guidance on how to better support women entrepreneurs in adopting circular economy principles, strengthening digital capacities and accessing finance, mentoring, networks and innovation ecosystems.

For policy makers and public authorities, the Strategy can support the integration of women entrepreneurship into circular economy, SME, innovation, digitalisation and Smart Specialisation policies and programmes. For business support organisations and innovation actors, it offers a practical reference for designing training, mentoring, advisory services, networking activities and circular-digital support structures. For women entrepreneurs and women-led SMEs, the Strategy creates a clearer support framework and promotes more accessible, practical and gender-sensitive support measures.

The benefit for the Danube Region is a more coordinated and inclusive approach to circular and digital transition, where women entrepreneurs are recognised not only as beneficiaries, but also as active contributors to sustainable economic development,

innovation and regional competitiveness.

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 Strategy will be ensured through its use by project partners, Associated Strategic Partners and relevant stakeholders after the project end. Its implementation will be supported through the Regional Action Plans, which translate the common transnational priorities into concrete national and regional actions adapted to local contexts.

The Strategy can be transferred to public authorities, policy makers, business support organisations, chambers, innovation agencies, women entrepreneurship networks, Digital Innovation Hubs, universities, financial institutions and other organisations working with SMEs and circular economy transition. It can also be used by other Danube Region stakeholders interested in supporting women entrepreneurs' circular and digital transformation.

Sustainability will be supported by the continued use and adaptation of WE.Circular outputs, including the Training Programme, good practice knowledge base, circular business models, WE.Circular Labs, Learning Network, Transnational Policy Learning Centre and Virtual Policy Toolbox. The Strategy encourages institutional anchoring, policy uptake, stakeholder ownership, financial continuity and integration into existing support systems. Future funding opportunities under national programmes, EU funds, Interreg, Horizon Europe and private-sector partnerships can further support continuation, transfer and scaling.