





# OUTPUT 1.2. JOINT ACTION PLAN OF THE CIREVALC PARTNERSHIP

Name and number of responsible project partner:	PP4 - Rzeszow Regional Development Agency  LP - South-Transdanubian Regional Innovation Agency  with contribution of the whole CIREVALC consortium
Project partner representatives:  (name, surname, phone no and e-mail address of the project partner contact persons responsible for preparation of the Action Plan):	<ul> <li>Marek Duda, +48178676215, mduda@rarr.rzeszow.pl</li> <li>Beata Hulinka, +48178676214, bhulinka@rarr.rzeszow.pl</li> <li>Małgorzata Kilian, +48178676229, mkilian@rarr.rzeszow.pl</li> <li>Zoltan Bendo, +36304360431, bendozoltan@ddriu.hu</li> </ul>
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## Table of content

1.	OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND	3
2.	JOINT ACTION PLAN	18
3.	RISK ASSESSMENT	40
4.	MONITORING AND EVALUATION	44

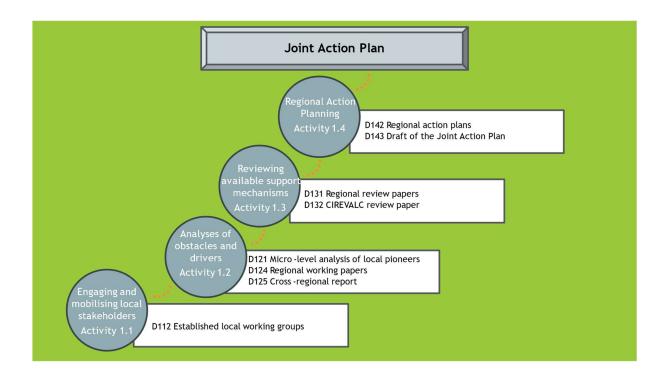






## 1. Overview and background

The Joint Action Plan (JAP) has been developed as part of the CIREVALC project. It includes such feasible actions for the uptake and promotion of circular economy models in the food, catering and packaging sectors that have relevance for at least some of the Central-European countries participating in the project. The joint actions were formed using the results of the analysis activities that had been carried out in preceding stages of the project (Activity 1.1, Activity 1.2, and Activity 1.3).



As part of these activities the CIREVALC project partners conducted extensive desk research and had professional dialogues with numerous stakeholders:

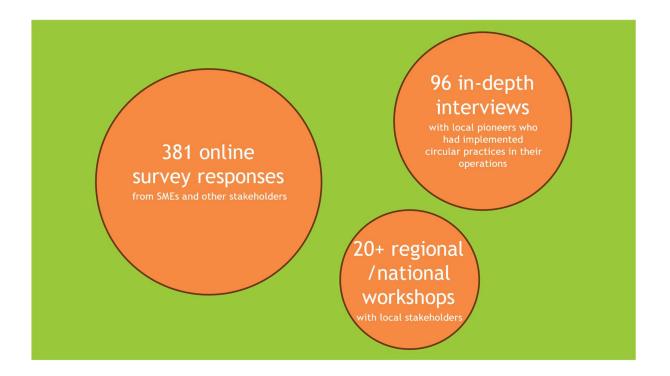
- 96 in-depth interviews with local pioneers who had implemented circular practices in their operations
- 381 online survey responses from SMEs and other stakeholders
- 20+ regional/national workshops with local stakeholders

Beyond the above, each participating CIREVALC country/region had previously developed its Regional Action Plan. Each regional action plan reflects on its respective regional/national challenges and features corresponding actions for the improvement of circularity in the food, catering and packaging sectors. Through a series of discussions, project partners concluded that there are several actions that have relevance beyond regional borders and are better implemented in the transnational context. These actions are included and detailed out in this document.









Project partners have determined 5 actions that they plan to carry out during the implementation period of CIREVALC. Furthermore, partners identified 5 additional actions that will be implemented after project end. Each action has two project partners (a primary and a secondary responsible) that coordinate the implementation of the action but all project partners will contribute. The defined joint actions are of different nature. There are some actions that raise awareness on issues that had been identified as highly relevant during the analysis phase. Some other actions extend further the deliverables and outputs of the CIREVALC project, whereas there are actions that mobilise our main target groups in new ways.

The CIREVALC Joint Action Plan is aligned with broader EU strategies:

- The European Green Deal: The JAP contributes to the EU's goal of becoming climate-neutral by 2050 by promoting CE models that decouple economic growth from resource use and reduce waste.
- **Territorial Agenda 2030:** The JAP supports balanced and sustainable development across EU regions by encouraging regional cooperation and the transfer of CE solutions.
- Regional Strategies: The JAP aligns with macroregional strategies such as the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region, all of which prioritise sustainability and regional collaboration.

By ensuring that its actions are in line with these strategic frameworks, the JAP not only addresses the immediate needs of the FCP sectors but also contributes to the long-term sustainability and environmental goals of the European Union.

The document is structured as follows:







- The current chapter includes the background for the actions, some of the main findings from the related deliverables. The following deliverables served as main inputs for the joint actions:
  - o D.1.2.1 Micro-level analysis of local pioneers
  - o D.1.2.2 Local success stories
  - o D.1.2.4 Regional working papers with results of the sectorial mapping
  - o D.1.2.5 Cross-regional report including inter-regional collaboration perspectives
  - D.1.3.1 Regional review papers
  - o D.1.3.2 CIREVALC review paper
  - o D.1.4.2 Regional action plans
- The actions are listed in Chapter 2 and they are presented in a uniform structure. Actions are grouped in two parts:
  - o Actions to be carried out during the project implementation period (Section A)
  - o Actions to be carried out after the project ends (Section B)
- Chapter 3 includes a risk assessment and a mitigation plan regarding the implementation of the actions
- Chapter 4 details out how partners will monitor the implementation of the actions.
- Annexes: 9 Regional Action Plans (in separate documents)

## Main findings of our analysis

The food value chain includes agriculture, food and beverage processing, food and beverage wholesaling and retailing, and food and beverage serving activities. In the CIREVALC project we deal with:

- 1. the food and beverage processing (labelled also as food industry)
- 2. packaging: both related and not related to food and beverage wholesaling and retailing
- 3. and serving activities related to food and beverage (catering).

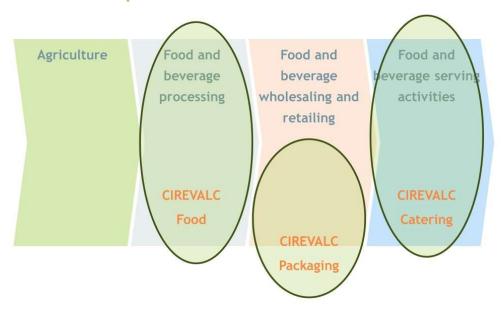
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> EUROSTAT: Key figures on the European food chain - 2023 edition







## The European food chain and the focus of CIREVALC



Source: EUROSTAT: Key figures on the European food chain - 2023 edition, own editing

### Food sector

The food sector ranks among the top manufacturing industries in terms of turnover and employment in the CIREVALC regions. In Croatia and in Poland, it ranks number one in these aspects. In terms of turnover, the largest producers are Germany, Italy and Poland among the CIREVALC countries. Each country has its own, specific product portfolio determined by soil and climate conditions. Most of the CIREVALC countries export a significant share of their production.







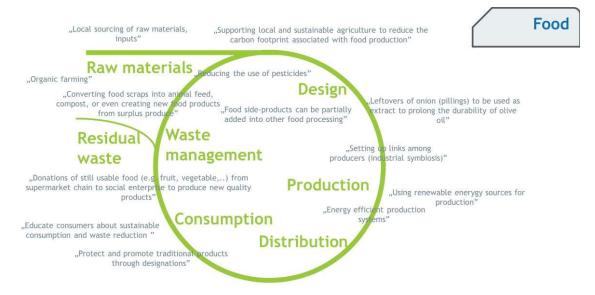
## Food sector - a key industry in the economies of the EU member states and also in CIREVALC countries (2020)

Country	Employment Ranking in Manufacturing	Turnover (billion EUR)	Number of employees (1,000)	Number of companies
Austria	2	25.7	87.2	3,883
Croatia	1	4.7	58.7	3,260
Czech Republic	4	15.1	116.1	11,516
Germany	4	185.0	614.0	6,163
Hungary	2	12.6	85.3	4,097
Italy	2	143.8	472	56,750
Poland	1	68.4	448.9	18,911
Slovakia	3	4.9	42.5	4,889
Slovenia	3	2.2	14.5	772

Source: FOODDRINK EUROPE: Data and Trends, EU Food and Drink Industry, 2022 Edition

Source: FOODDRINK EUROPE: Data and Trends, EU Food and Drink Industry, 2022 Edition

Our analysis yielded many practical solutions applied in the food industry in Central Europe:



Source: Regional working papers







### **Catering sector**

The catering sector includes serving businesses such as restaurants, bars, cafés and caterers. Essential figures for the catering sector<sup>2</sup> in the CIREVALC countries are displayed below. From the data it can be seen that the sector has a significant contribution to turnover and also number of people employed is substantial. Availability of skilled labour is scarce in most CIREVALC regions. At EU level, the EC seeks commitments from these businesses in various health and sustainability issues, among others: reformulating food products in line with guidelines for healthy diets, reducing their environmental footprint, or cutting packaging (EU's Farm to Fork Strategy).

## Catering sector in CIREVALC countries (2020)

Country	Enterprises - number	Turnover or gross premiums written - million euro	Value added at factor cost - million euro	Persons employed - number
Austria	4,878	4,227.8	745.0	21,460
Croatia	893	442.5	79.9	7,004
Czech Republic	5,679	1,353.0	198.4	17,087
Germany	38,842	31,308.5	6,953.8	308,948
Hungary	9,845	3,273.7	388.0	33,459
Italy	113,186	22,052.5	4,509.8	242,587
Poland	16,299	6,124.8	1,016.5	65,168
Slovakia	1,130	829.5	82.4	7,326
Slovenia	417	149.1	26.4	1,226

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: sbs\_na\_dt\_r2 and sbs\_na\_1a\_se\_r2)

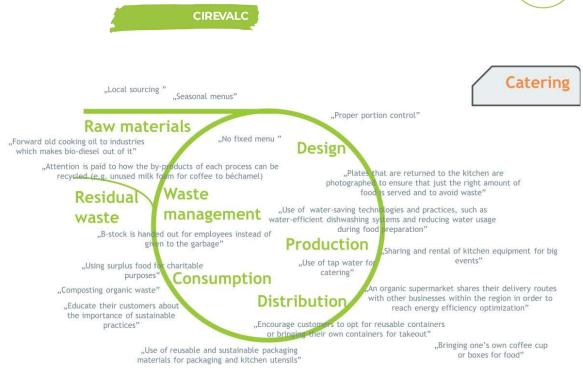
Source: Eurostat (online data codes: sbs\_na\_dt\_r2 and sbs\_na\_1a\_se\_r2)

The analysis of the CIREVALC partners resulted in many examples for circular solutions in the catering industry:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Retail sale of food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores







Source: Regional working papers

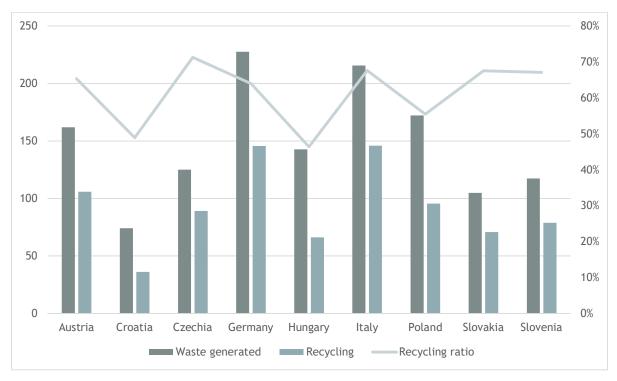
### Packaging sector

Looking back for many years, the amount of packaging waste in the EU is steadily increasing and the CIREVALC countries are no exception to this. In recent years, the main driver of growth is online purchases and home deliveries, as well as on-the-go consumption. Following general EU trends, the generated packaging waste volume is larger than the recycled waste volume. Packaging waste recycling rates vary across the CIREVALC countries: Czech Republic and Italy are frontrunners in this respect, whereas Hungary and Croatia lag behind.





## CIREVALC



Source: Eurostat

Our analysis brought lots of circular solutions that are applied in the packaging industry in Central Europe:



Source: Regional working papers

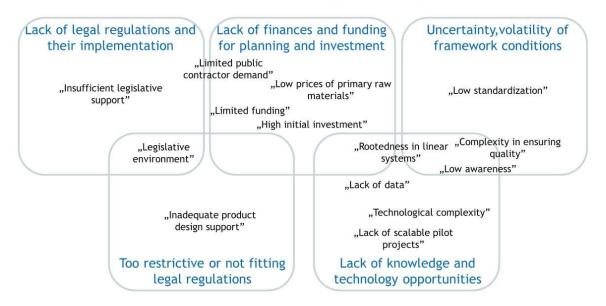






The partnership identified and analysed numerous obstacles that hinder the introduction and spread of circular solutions in the food, catering and packaging sectors in Central Europe. Many of these are horizontal and not specific to the FCP sectors, still some of the obstacles relate to specific sectors.

## Obstacles of implementing circularity



Source: Regional working papers

Across the CIREVALC countries, common challenges for SMEs in adopting circular economy practices include:

- Financial Barriers: High initial costs and limited access to financing options for circular innovations.
- Regulatory Complexity: Navigating complex regulatory environments can be difficult for SMEs with limited resources.
- Awareness and Education: A significant gap in knowledge and understanding of circular economy principles.
- Infrastructure and Technology: Insufficient infrastructure and technological capabilities to support circular processes.







The lack of legal regulations and too restrictive or not fitting legal regulations together are as important obstacle as the missing financial means in the CE regions.

Lack of finances and funding for planning and investment is among the most frequent mentioned obstacles in each region and in each sector. It holds generally that SMEs lack finances more than large companies for needed investments to improve circularity.

The lack of legal regulations and too restrictive or not fitting legal regulations together are as important obstacle as the missing financial means in the CE regions according to our results. Project partners brought concrete examples for these obstacles.

The relevance of the obstacle of lack of knowledge and technology changes across the CE territories. In Hungary and in Czech Republic, online survey respondents mentioned this obstacle the least frequently (27% and 8.5% respectively), whereas in Austria this is a prominent challenge according to survey results. A potential obstacle to move forward with circularity is the lack of comprehensive, up-to-date and precise knowledge of the management about the material flows in companies/organisations. According to the original analysis approach project partners conducted not just an in-depth interview with local pioneers (mainly a qualitative analysis) but also carried out a simplified material flow analysis (mainly a quantitative analysis) focusing on some of the key processes of the interviewed organisations. In fact, partners managed to complete the simplified material flow analysis only for a moderate share of the interviewed local pioneers. Main reasons were the lack of interest and also lack of time to gather the data, since it would have required more preparatory efforts from interviewees to collect the needed information.

### **Drivers of implementing circularity**



Source: Regional working papers







The partnership analysed drivers of implementing circularity, as well. Both the online surveying and the interviews gave the result across regions and sectors that sustainability as value of corporate culture is the leading motivation for circularity. It can be interpreted as a reassuring outcome since it means that managements have internalized the need to change from linear to circular systems in their operations and it is coherent part of their operations. Moreover, since the change to circularity is widely recognized by companies and

Companies do not deal with circularity because they have to do so required by external factors but because they want to do so.

other type of organisations and it is considered as a strategic issue for most (as replies to other questions revealed), it can be claimed that there is a widely confirmed internal motivation to implement circularity. In the Slovene regional working paper, it is formulated as follows: "There is also a growing number of food producers and catering gastronomy providers that see circularity as an essential part of the identity of their company/entity and they see it as a way of living." There are cases in which the internal drive of the management is against purely business thinking: "We will try it regardless if it pays off" as quoted in the Slovene analysis.

In contrast to the above, other external requirements from customers or from partners seem to be somewhat less relevant than the internal corporate value as driver. It means that companies do not deal with circularity because they have to do so required by external factors but because they want to do so. This is an important and welcome difference.

Productivity at company level does not go hand-in-hand with circular solutions in many cases. Still, many companies find their ways to increase productivity while operating in a circular way.

productivity while operating in a circular way.

Analysis results show that the overwhelming part of companies and other type of organisations see further improvement opportunities of circular solutions. It reconfirms results raised in related questions: circularity is important on companies' agenda, most of them consider it as a strategic issue and they want to make further steps for circular operations. However, there is no clear pattern in what fields respondents see most

As much legal regulations were quoted as an obstacle, they are also recognized as important drivers for circularity. Frequently quoted were the regulations related to waste management but also in other areas.

Increasing productivity is crucial for companies since it reduces costs and yields higher earnings. Pursuing productivity increase as the sole goal has however negative effects on raw material optimization, on the volume of waste produced, etc. Productivity at company level does not go hand-in-hand with circular solutions in many cases. Still, from our analysis it seems companies find their ways to increase

Overwhelming part of companies see further improvement opportunities of circular solutions.

frequently improvement opportunities. In the online survey, 94% of respondents from Hungary see







opportunities in technology, 57% consider skills development of staff and 46% a step forward in using circular business models.

The state of play of circularity processes for SMEs in the catering, food, and packaging sectors across Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Germany, and Poland is shaped by various national policies, industry initiatives, and levels of adoption of circular economy principles. Here is a summary country by country, considering key aspects such as regulatory frameworks, industry practices, and challenges.

## Italy

- Regulatory Framework: Italy has been proactive in promoting a circular economy with policies such as the "Circular Economy Package" and the "National Strategy for Sustainable Development."
- Industry Practices: Italian SMEs in the food sector are increasingly adopting sustainable practices, including waste reduction, recycling, and the use of biodegradable packaging.
- Challenges: Barriers include high implementation costs and limited awareness among smaller businesses.

## Slovenia

- Regulatory Framework: Slovenia has integrated circular economy principles into its national development strategies, with emphasis on waste management and resource efficiency.
- Industry Practices: Slovenian SMEs are participating in initiatives like zero-waste certification and sustainable catering practices.
- Challenges: Key challenges are the high cost of circular technologies and insufficient financial incentives.

### Croatia

- Regulatory Framework: Croatia is aligning with EU directives on circular economy, with a focus on waste management and recycling.
- Industry Practices: There is growing interest in circular practices among Croatian SMEs, particularly in sustainable packaging and food waste reduction.
- Challenges: Limited infrastructure and financial resources for circular investments pose significant hurdles.

## Hungary





## CIREVALC

- Regulatory Framework: Hungary has developed strategies to foster circular economy, including the National Waste Management Plan.
- Industry Practices: Hungarian SMEs are beginning to embrace circular models, particularly in packaging innovation and sustainable food production.
- Challenges: Awareness and adoption are still in early stages, with financial and regulatory support being key barriers.

## Czech Republic

- Regulatory Framework: The Czech Republic is implementing the "Circular Czechia 2040" strategy to enhance circular economy practices.
- Industry Practices: SMEs are focusing on reducing food waste and utilizing recyclable materials in packaging.
- Challenges: Main challenges include limited knowledge and expertise on circular practices among SMEs.

## Slovakia

- Regulatory Framework: Slovakia is working on policies to support circular economy, with particular attention to waste reduction.
- Industry Practices: Adoption of circular economy practices is growing, especially in sustainable catering and packaging.
- Challenges: Financial constraints and lack of incentives are major barriers for SMEs.

### Austria

- Regulatory Framework: Austria is a leader in circular economy within the EU, with comprehensive policies and support mechanisms.
- Industry Practices: Austrian SMEs are highly active in circular practices, including innovative recycling technologies and sustainable food systems.
- Challenges: High regulatory standards and market competition are the primary challenges.

## Germany

- Regulatory Framework: Germany has robust circular economy policies, including the "German Resource Efficiency Programme."
- Industry Practices: German SMEs are at the forefront of circular innovation, particularly in advanced recycling and sustainable packaging.







Challenges: The complexity of regulations and high compliance costs can be burdensome for SMEs.

## **Poland**

- Regulatory Framework: Poland is progressing towards circular economy through national and EU regulations.
- Industry Practices: Polish SMEs are gradually adopting circular principles, especially in waste reduction and sustainable packaging.
- Challenges: Economic barriers and lack of awareness hinder wider adoption of circular practices.

Regarding policies and strategies, the CIREVALC Review Paper concludes that the CIREVALC countries show a strong commitment to adopting strategies and programs to promote the circular economy, each with a unique approach reflecting their priorities and resources. Hungary and Poland focus on financial and infrastructural support, while Slovenia and the Czech Republic emphasize regulations and training. Italy stands out for integrating sustainable agricultural practices and strong regional participation. These collective initiatives significantly contribute to the sustainability and economic resilience of the European Union. The national policies across these countries demonstrate a shared commitment to transitioning towards a circular economy, albeit with varying approaches and emphasis areas. Common strategies include comprehensive waste management plans, extended producer responsibility, resource efficiency, and green public procurement. Financial incentives and innovation support are prevalent to foster sustainable practices and technologies. Each country's unique cultural, economic, and environmental context shapes its specific strategies and implementation methods. Collaboration and continuous policy refinement will be crucial in achieving the goals of a circular economy and enhancing sustainability across Europe.

## Comparative analysis of national policies

- Waste Management and Recycling: All countries have comprehensive policies focusing on waste prevention, recycling, and proper disposal

  Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR): Most countries implement EPR schemes to ensure producers manage the lifecycle of their products
- resource efficiency, eco-design, production and consumption patterns
- Innovation and Support for SMEs: Many countries offer financial incentives, advisory support, and promote innovation in sustainable technologies
- Green Public Procurement (GPP): Several countries integrate environmental criteria into public procurement processes

- comprehensive waste management laws

  <u>Hungary</u>: Emphasis on promoting heritage, culture, and
  environmental assets through circular economy practices

  <u>Italy</u>: Significant budget allocation for circular economy
  in the PNRR, with a strong focus on eco-design and reuse
- Poland: National plans with specific waste management goals and regional development strategies.

  Slovenia: Integration of circular economy principles into national and regional policies, with a strong sustainability
- Czech Republic: Emphasis on innovation and integrating circular economy strategies into broader national policies Germany: Comprehensive and established policies with strong financial support and EPR schemes
- Slovakia: Focus on enhancing waste management and promoting eco-friendly practices through innovation
- <u>Croatia:</u> Promotes circular economy through regional and local initiatives with a focus on environmental protection







A for the main actors, the institutions dealing with circular economy across the CIREVALC countries share common goals of promoting sustainability, waste reduction, and resource efficiency. Despite these shared objectives, each country tailors its approach to reflect its unique cultural, economic, and environmental contexts. Public agencies, universities, and non-profit organizations collaborate to drive circular economy initiatives, often supported by comprehensive policies and financial incentives. The integration of circular economy principles into national and regional strategies is key to achieving sustainable development and environmental protection across Europe.

## Common elements of main actors for circularity

### Public agencies and Ministries

- agencies often focus on developing and implementing national policies, providing funding, and supporting research and

### University and Research Institutions

### Non-Profit Organizations

### Green Public Procurement (GPP)

- Integration of environmental criteria into public procurement processes is a common practice among several countries. This approach encourages the adoption of sustainable products and services, driving market demand for circular economy

To enhance circularity processes for SMEs in these sectors, the following recommendations can be made based on the analysis of support mechanism in Activity 1.3:

- 1. Financial Incentives: Provide grants, subsidies, and low-interest loans specifically for circular economy initiatives.
- 2. Regulatory Support: Simplify regulatory frameworks and offer clear guidelines to facilitate compliance.
- 3. Awareness Campaigns: Implement education and training programs to raise awareness and build expertise in circular practices.
- 4. Infrastructure Development: Invest in infrastructure and technology that support recycling, waste management, and sustainable production.







## 2. Joint Action Plan

## **Summary of Joint Actions**

#	Action	Outcome		
	A. Actions implemented during the project timeframe			
A1	Preparation and dissemination of	3 infographics published on CIREVALC		
	infographics on targeted circular	website and social media channels		
4.2	economy topics			
A2	Preparation and dissemination of a	1 joint Newsletter published on		
	newsletter referring to the circular	CIREVALC website, social media		
4.2	product design	channels and through emails		
A3	Preparation and publication of	2 podcasts published on CIREVALC		
	podcasts referring to the circular	YouTube channel and shared through		
	economy topics	CIREVALC and project partners'		
		institutions' websites and social		
A 4	66: 1:	media channels		
A4	Ambassadors of Circularity	1 joint "Ambassadors of Circularity"		
4 =		campaign		
A5	Transnational matchmaking event	1 joint CIREVALC matchmaking event		
	ions implemented beyond the proje			
B1	Raising the knowledge and skills of	20 enrolled SMEs, NGOs at		
	SMEs, NGOs operating in the food,	partnership level		
	catering and packaging sectors			
B2	Providing ongoing support for	20 SMEs, NGOs at partnership level		
	SMEs, NGOs through matching,			
	facilitating and pitching actions			
В3	Preparation and publication of a	1 joint video published on CIREVALC		
	joint video presenting the	YouTube channel and shared through		
	CIREVALC Circular Community	CIREVALC and project partners'		
	Accelerators network	institutions' websites and social		
		media channels		
B4	Creating of an electronic (online)	1 joint guideline shared on CIREVALC		
	guideline on circularity	project and partners websites and by		
		CIREVALC Circular Community		
		Accelerators network		
B5	Preparation of a transnational	1 new project prepared based on the		
	project focused on circular	announced transnational or trans-		
	economy and green transition	border call for projects		







# A. Actions implemented during the project timeframe







1. Preparation and dissemination of infographics on targeted circular economy topics		
Responsible partner:	JAIP - South Bohemian Agency (CZ)	
Supporting partner:	AZRRI - Agency for Rural Development of Istria Ltd. (HR)	
Description:	Preparing infographics aimed at increasing and disseminating knowledge on identified relevant issues related to the circular economy, in particular on:  specific circular economy principles in the food, catering and packaging sectors;  cooperation of the supply chain entities fostering efficiency of circular economy in SMEs, NGOs;  how society can benefit from implementing circular solutions in the food, catering and packaging sectors;  circular business models in the food, catering and packaging sectors;  packaging materials used in catering from a circularity point of view.  Infographics will be prepared in an interesting form (including drawing, diagram and/or other graphics) with attention to clarity of the shared information. Infographics will be prepared in various formats enabling their dissemination through the project's and the partner institutions' websites and social media channels.	
Outcome:	3 infographics published on CIREVALC website and social media channels	
Time frame:	1 <sup>st</sup> infographic: June 2025 2 <sup>nd</sup> infographic: December 2025 3 <sup>rd</sup> infographic: March 2026	
Link with project action / deliverable:	<ul> <li>D.1.2.3 Communication pack using local success stories</li> <li>D.2.3.3 Mid-term dissemination event</li> <li>D.3.3.1 Communication pack: project results</li> <li>D.3.3.3 Final dissemination event</li> </ul>	
Target group:	<ul> <li>SMEs representing food, catering and packaging sectors</li> <li>NGOs</li> <li>Clusters</li> <li>General public</li> </ul>	







- Business support organisations
- NGOs
- Local, regional and national authorities
- Sectoral agencies
- Clusters
- Regional / national / transnational EEN







## 2. Preparation and dissemination of a newsletter referring to the circular product design $% \left( 1\right) =\left( 1\right) \left( 1\right) +\left( 1\right) \left( 1\right) \left( 1\right) +\left( 1\right) \left( 1\right) \left( 1\right) \left( 1\right) +\left( 1\right) \left( 1\right) \left($

Responsible partner:	STRIA - South Transdanubian Regional Innovation Agency (HU)
Supporting partner:	RARR S.A Rzeszow Regional Development Agency (PL)
Description:	One of our important analysis results is that product design is just to a limited extent in the minds of business owners when considering circularity even if it is common sense that end of the pipe solutions are far less efficient compared to well-designed products and services. Therefore, the newsletter will feature design focused circular issues and practices in the FCP sectors.  Preparation and dissemination of a joint project CIREVALC newsletter in the subject defined above.  Newsletter will be prepared in an interesting graphic form. It will include thematic oriented articles, infographics, links to internal and external sources of information i.e. podcasts, thematic literature and websites.  The Newsletter will be shared on the project's website and social media
	channels, and disseminated on a regional level among local, national and transnational stakeholders, as well as key members of regional cooperation networks.
Time frame:	December 2025
Outcome:	1 joint Newsletter published on CIREVALC website, social media channels and through emails
Link with project action / deliverable:	<ul> <li>D.1.2.3 Communication pack using local success stories</li> <li>D.2.3.3 Mid-term dissemination event</li> <li>D.3.3.1 Communication pack: project results</li> <li>D.3.3.3 Final dissemination event</li> </ul>
Target group:	<ul> <li>SMEs representing food, catering and packaging sectors</li> <li>Business support organisations</li> <li>NGOs</li> <li>Sectoral agencies</li> <li>Clusters</li> <li>Local, regional and national authorities</li> <li>General public</li> </ul>







- Business support organisations
- NGOs
- Local, regional and national authorities
- Sectoral agencies
- Clusters
- Regional / national / transnational EEN







3. Preparation and publication of podcasts referring to the circular economy topics		
Responsible partner:	BIZUP - Business Upper Austria (AT)	
Supporting partner:	STRIA - South Transdanubian Regional Innovation Agency (HU)	
Description:	Preparation and publication of podcasts aimed at increasing and disseminating knowledge and sharing good practices on important issues related to the circular economy, in particular on:  • how implementing circular solutions affects the value of corporate culture, company's image and efficiency of its operation (a case study of at least 1 SME, NGO representing food, catering or packaging sector);  • transition to a circular economy - why and how SMEs, NGOs should adapt to new challenges  • waste management in the FCP sectors based on latest EU regulation - optional.  The podcasts will be prepared by project partners, with the participation of representatives of the companies, and entities supporting the implementation of circular economy models and/or experts working in this field. The recorded material will be enriched with graphic (photos/infographics) and English subtitles.  Podcasts will be posted on the CIREVALC YouTube channel and shared through the project's and partners websites and social media channels.	
Time frame:	December 2025	
Outcome:	2 podcasts published on CIREVALC YouTube channel and shared through CIREVALC and project partners' institutions' websites and social media channels.	
Link with project action / deliverable:	<ul> <li>D.1.2.3 Communication pack using local success stories</li> <li>D.2.3.3 Mid-term dissemination event</li> <li>D.3.3.1 Communication pack: project results</li> <li>D.3.3.3 Final dissemination event</li> </ul>	
Target group:	<ul> <li>SMEs representing food, catering and packaging sectors</li> <li>Business support organisations</li> <li>NGOs</li> <li>Sectoral agencies</li> <li>Clusters</li> </ul>	







- Business support organisations
- NGOs
- Local, regional and national authorities
- Sectoral agencies
- Clusters
- Regional / national / transnational EEN







4. Ambassadors of Circularity		
Responsible partner:	MGFÜ - Hungarian Economic Development Agency (HU)	
Supporting partner:	CC Padova - Padova Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture (IT)	
Description:	Preparation of the campaign appreciating and distinguishing companies and NGOs that successfully implement circular economy solutions and promote circularity among members of local and national networks.  The project partners will jointly develop the criteria and rules of operation, based on which the "Circularity Ambassador" campaign will be organised and announced at each of the CIREVALC partner regions to select outstanding entities.  As a part of this campaign the outstanding and topic engaged SMEs and NGOs (including already identified CIREVALC pioneers) will be awarded with the title and CIREVALC diploma of "Ambassador of Circularity".  The main goal of this campaign is promoting good examples of experienced entities "Ambassadors of Circularity" and through this inspiring other SMEs/NGO's from the food, catering and packaging sectors to implement circular economy models.  The "Ambassadors of Circularity" campaign will be conducted using social media channels, project partners' and stakeholders' websites, press announcements, potentially interviews in radio and TV.	
Time frame:	December 2025	
Outcome:	1 joint "Ambassadors of Circularity" campaign	
Link with project action / deliverable:	<ul> <li>D.1.2.3 Communication pack using local success stories</li> <li>D.2.3.3 Mid-term dissemination event</li> <li>D.3.3.1 Communication pack: project results</li> <li>D.3.3.3 Final dissemination event</li> </ul>	
Target group:	<ul> <li>SMEs representing food, catering and packaging sectors</li> <li>NGO's</li> </ul>	







- Business support organisations
- NGOs
- Local, regional and national authorities
- Sectoral agencies
- Clusters
- Regional / national / transnational EEN







	5. Transnational matchmaking event
Responsible partner:	B I C Bratislava, Ltd. (SK)
Supporting partner:	RKW Saxony GmbH Service and Consulting (DE)
Description:	Connecting regional SMEs and NGOs operating in the food, catering and packaging sectors by providing them with opportunities to exchange knowledge, experience, good practices, networking and establish long term international cooperation, through the organisation of a joint CIREVALC online/live/hybrid transnational event focused on matchmaking in the value chain.  Planned event will be organised in connection with one of the CIREVALC events, external 3 <sup>rd</sup> party events or with the support of the regional Enterprise Europe Network B2 match platform.
	Registration to the matchmaking event will be open for SMEs representing the CIREVALC partner regions and areas outside the project network.
Time frame:	March 2026
Outcome:	1 joint CIREVALC matchmaking event
Link with project action / deliverable:	<ul> <li>D.1.2.5 Cross-regional report including interregional collaboration perspectives</li> <li>D.2.5.3 Summary report from Study visit 3</li> <li>D.2.5.4 Summary report from Study visit 4</li> <li>D.3.3.5 Signed agreement of the CIREVALC ACCELERATOR Network</li> </ul>
Target group:	SMEs, NGOs representing food, catering and packaging sectors
Stakeholders supporting implementation:	<ul> <li>Regional / national / transnational EEN</li> <li>Business support organisations</li> <li>NGO's</li> <li>Clusters</li> <li>Sectoral agencies</li> <li>Local, regional and national authorities</li> </ul>







# B. Actions implemented beyond the project timeframe







## 1. Raising the knowledge and skills of SMEs, NGOs operating in the food, catering and packaging sectors

Responsible partner:	BSC Kranj - BSC, Business support organisation L.t.d., Kranj (SI)
Supporting partner:	MGFÜ - Hungarian Economic Development Agency (HU)
Description:	Raising the knowledge and skills of SMEs, NGOs operating in the food, catering and packaging sectors on circular economy and green transition requirements through:  • offering advisory by transnational experts;  • offering to SMEs, NGOs circularity transnational assessment / peer review;  • organisation of a joint live/online transnational workshop/webinar focused on circular economy and ESG topics.  This action is a continuation of the support offered under the pilot actions and will be carried out by experts working within the framework of CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerators operation, established in the project partners regions.  The action involves cooperation between the established CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerators in order to offer complementary support at the transnational level for promising SMEs that would like to develop their ideas and operation with the support of international experts.
Time frame:	Starting from April 2026 to April 2027
Outcome:	20 enrolled SMEs, NGOs at partnership level
Link with project action / deliverable:	<ul> <li>D.2.1.2 Regional pilot plans</li> <li>D.2.1.4 Online marketplace,</li> <li>D.2.2.1 Regional expert pools</li> <li>D.2.2.2 Transnational expert pool</li> <li>D.2.1.1 CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerator design</li> <li>D.2.4.2 Finetuned CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerator design</li> <li>D.3.3.5 Signed agreement of the CIREVALC ACCELERATOR Network</li> </ul>
Target group:	SMEs and NGOs representing food, catering and packaging sectors







## 1. Raising the knowledge and skills of SMEs, NGOs operating in the food, catering and packaging sectors

- Experienced SMEs
- Business support organisations
- NGO's
- Sectoral agencies
- Clusters
- Regional / national / transnational EEN







## $\hbox{\bf 2. Providing ongoing support for SMEs, NGOs through matching, facilitating and pitching actions }$

Responsible partner:	RKW Saxony GmbH Service and Consulting (DE)
Supporting partner:	BIZUP - Business Upper Austria (AT)
Description:	Providing SMEs, NGOs operating in the food, catering and packaging sectors with ongoing support in:  a) matching / finding best international cooperation partners; b) facilitating cooperation of matched SMEs, NGOs; c) undertaking new international initiatives with growth and innovation potential; d) obtaining financing /grants, loans, attracting Venture Capitals, investors, business angels enabling development, implementation and upscaling of their circular solutions on transnational level. This action requires cooperation between the established CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerators in order to support promising SMEs in developing their ideas and operation with the support of international accelerators' experts through offering: individual online consultations; hybrid/online/live matchmaking events; online pitching events;
Time frame:	Starting from April 2026 to April 2027
Outcome:	20 SMEs, NGOs at partnership level
Link with project action / deliverable:	<ul> <li>D.1.2.1 Micro-level analysis of local pioneers</li> <li>D.1.3.2 CIREVALC review paper</li> <li>D.2.1.3 Mapping tool</li> </ul>
Target group:	SMEs, NGOs representing food, catering and packaging sectors







- Business support organisations
- NGO's
- Sectoral agencies
- Local, regional and authorities
- Venture Capitals, investors, business angels







## 3. Preparation and publication of a joint video presenting the CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerators network

Responsible partner:	RARR S.A Rzeszow Regional Development Agency (PL)
Supporting partner:	JAIP - South Bohemian Agency (CZ)
Description:	Preparation and publication of a joint video presenting the CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerators network and its operation in order to:  • encourage regional and national SMEs, NGOs to implement and develop circular solutions through the support offered by CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerators;  • invite new experts and stakeholders to join the CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerators;  • support transfer on knowledge and good practices arising from the implementation of the CIREVALC pilot action;  • foster creation of Circular Community Accelerator in regions beyond the CIREVALC partnership.  The video will be prepared with the participation of project partners and CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerators network members. The recorded video material will be enriched with graphic (photos/infographics) and English subtitles.  Video will be posted on the CIREVALC YouTube channel and shared on through the project's and partners websites and social media channels.
Time frame:	Starting from April 2026 to April 2027
Outcome:	1 joint video published on CIREVALC YouTube channel and shared through CIREVALC and project partners' institutions' websites and social media channels.
Link with project action / deliverable:	<ul> <li>D.2.1.2 Regional pilot plans</li> <li>D.2.1.1 CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerator design</li> <li>D.2.4.2 Finetuned CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerator design</li> <li>D.3.3.5 Signed agreement of the CIREVALC ACCELERATOR Network</li> </ul>
Target group:	<ul> <li>SMEs, NGOs representing food, catering and packaging sectors</li> <li>entities (SMEs, business support organisations, NGO's, sectoral agencies, clusters, regional / national / transnational, EEN) representing regions outside the CIREVALC partnership</li> </ul>







- Experienced SMEs
- Business support organisations
- NGO's
- Sectoral agencies
- Clusters
- Regional / national / transnational EEN







4. Creating of an electronic (online) guideline on circularity		
Responsible partner:	CC Padova - Padova Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture (IT)	
Supporting partner:	BSC Kranj - BSC, Business support organisation L.t.d., Kranj (SI)	
Description:	Creating a joint electronic (online) publication "Circular solutions in my company - step by step guideline for beginners" addressed to SMEs, NGOs in the food, catering and packaging sectors.  The guideline will be addressed to companies, NGOs that lack knowledge or experience in the subject of possible circular economy solutions, ways of implementing them in their company, organisation and the benefits that this may bring to their operation and competitiveness.  The guideline will enable:  • raising the knowledge and skills of SMEs, NGOs operating in the food, catering and packaging sectors on circular economy and green transition requirements;  • directing them to where they can obtain additional professional expertise and assistance in:  • analysis of the SMEs, NGOs current business operations and sustainability practices to assess their current potential for developing and/or implementing circular solutions:  • selection and implementation of the circular business model optimal for their organisation's potential and needs,  • obtaining the financial support for implementation and development of circular economy solutions.  The guideline will be uploaded on the CIREVALC project and partners websites and shared/disseminated by CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerators network.	
Time frame:	Starting from April 2026 to April 2027	
Outcome:	1 joint guideline shared on CIREVALC project and partners websites and by CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerators network.	
Link with project action / deliverable:	<ul> <li>D.2.1.2 Regional pilot plans</li> <li>D.2.1.4 Online marketplace,</li> <li>D.2.2.1 Regional expert pools</li> <li>D.2.2.2 Transnational expert pool</li> <li>D.2.1.1 CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerator design</li> <li>D.2.4.2 Finetuned CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerator design</li> <li>D.3.3.5 Signed agreement of the CIREVALC ACCELERATOR Network</li> </ul>	







Target group:	SMEs, NGOs representing food, catering and packaging sectors
Stakeholders supporting implementation:	<ul> <li>Experienced SMEs</li> <li>Business support organisations</li> <li>NGO's</li> <li>Sectoral agencies</li> <li>Clusters</li> <li>Regional / national / transnational EEN</li> </ul>







# 5. Preparation of a transnational project focused on circular economy and green transition

Responsible partner:	AZRRI - Agency for Rural Development of Istria Ltd. (HR)
Supporting partner:	B I C Bratislava, Ltd. (SK)
Description:	Preparation of a transnational project focused among others on sharing best practices, gaining experience by SMEs and NGOs operating in different market conditions and supporting cross-border innovation based on circular economy solutions. The planned project will refer to the solutions developed and experience gained during the implementation of the CIREVALC project with intention to support regional/national authorities in better adaptation of policies and linked tools/mechanisms to enable efficient uptake of the circular economy models by SMEs, NGOs and social economy entities.  The project will be addressed to transnational or trans-border cooperation programme calls.
Time frame:	Starting from April 2026 to April 2027
Outcome:	1 new project prepared based on the announced transnational or trans- border call for projects
Link with project action / deliverable:	<ul> <li>D.1.2.1 Micro-level analysis of local pioneers</li> <li>D.1.3.2 CIREVALC review paper</li> <li>D.2.1.3 Mapping tool</li> <li>D.2.1.2 Regional pilot plans</li> <li>D.2.1.4 Online marketplace,</li> <li>D.2.2.1 Regional expert pools</li> <li>D.2.2.2 Transnational expert pool</li> <li>D.2.1.1 CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerator design</li> <li>D.2.4.2 Finetuned CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerator design</li> <li>D.3.3.5 Signed agreement of the CIREVALC ACCELERATOR Network</li> </ul>
Target group:	<ul><li>SMEs</li><li>NGOs</li><li>Social economy entities</li></ul>







Stakeholders supporting implementation:

- Business support organisations
- Sectoral agencies
- Regional / national / transnational EEN







### 3. Risk assessment

No.	Identified bottlenecks and	Potential risk factors	Probability of	Corrective actions
	challenges		occurrence and	(if any challenges and risks has been identified)
			impact	
1	Gaining interest of the target group in offering consulting services, events, tools and materials.	<ul> <li>Lack of awareness of the importance of circular approach in the target organisation's operation and possible, future benefits arising from implementing and developing of such solutions,</li> <li>Little interest of target groups in the offered consulting services, events, tools and materials due to lack of time and limited human resources (limited capacity).</li> <li>"Fatigue" / discouragement of target group members from getting involved / familiarising themselves with the content shared through planned actions.</li> </ul>	High probability and high impact	<ul> <li>Putting emphasis on a well-prepared information and promotion campaign of offered support, prepared tools and materials.</li> <li>Involving local entities, including the media, in information, promotion and dissemination actions, so that the content promoted in the campaign reaches entrepreneurs through various channels, not necessarily via emails.</li> <li>Reaching out to entrepreneurs through networks of contacts, including those built within CIREVALC project.</li> <li>Acquiring experienced experts and specialists to cooperate with, who will prepare the abovementioned materials and tools, conduct events and provide consulting services.</li> <li>Adjusting the hours and duration of the support to the needs of the target groups members, combining planned actions with other industry/thematic events, advisory/consultation meetings at the company's headquarters, etc.</li> <li>Ensuring the attractiveness of the form of content disseminated as part of events, advisory, tools and materials.</li> </ul>





# CIREVALC

No.	Identified bottlenecks and challenges	Potential risk factors	Probability of occurrence and impact	Corrective actions (if any challenges and risks has been identified)
				<ul> <li>Inviting interesting experts-practitioners to share their knowledge, presenting case studies of local pioneers, etc.</li> </ul>





# CIREVALC

No.	Identified bottlenecks and	Potential risk factors	Probability of	Corrective actions
.,,,,	challenges		occurrence and impact	(if any challenges and risks has been identified)
2	Providing a budget/financial resources for planned joint actions.	<ul> <li>Insufficient project partners' resources to conduct thematic events, advisory and to prepare educational material as experts (the growing knowledge and needs of target groups will require the provision of speakers, panellists with specialist/expert knowledge and experience in the implementation of circular solutions in companies, therefore at some stage there will be a need to reach out to external experts who will address evolving needs of target group).</li> <li>Difficulty in securing an appropriate additional budget / financial resources to ensure the appropriate expertise level of the support offered, developed tools and materials.</li> </ul>	Medium probability and high impact	<ul> <li>Building a lasting partnership/network of regional entities interested in raising the knowledge and awareness of local entrepreneurs in the field of circular solution, in order to jointly co-organise thematic events and/or share the costs of their organisation.</li> <li>Basing joint planned actions on regional resources of the CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerators network</li> </ul>
4	Gaining interest of national / regional / local experienced stakeholders to contribute to the elaboration of planned tools, campaign, materials and carrying out the events and advisory.	<ul> <li>Lack of interest of stakeholders to support joint action plan implementation - limited resources.</li> <li>High requirements of stakeholders' experts regarding remuneration / cooperation rules.</li> </ul>	Medium probability and high impact	<ul> <li>Building a lasting partnership/network consists of regional entities having common operational goals, interested in raising the knowledge and awareness of target groups in the field of circular economy, in order to jointly co-organise thematic events and advisory, prepare educational tools and materials and share the costs of their preparation.</li> </ul>





# CIREVALC

No.	Identified bottlenecks and	Potential risk factors	Probability of	Corrective actions
	challenges		occurrence and	(if any challenges and risks has been identified)
			impact	
				Basing joint planned actions on regional resources of the CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerators network
5	Language barrier that makes it difficult for representatives of the target groups to fully benefit from the international consulting and events, and cooperate with international experts.	offered consulting services, events,	Medium probability and high impact	Preparation of tools and materials additionally in the national partner languages, providing translation during advisory meetings/events or preparing transcripts of online/hybrid events.







### 4. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring is aimed at continuous tracking of the project partners progress in achieving the joint plan covering all necessary actions, implementation time frames and expected outcomes.

The conducted monitoring actions will also have an informative function, i.e. thanks to the systematically collected data, they will enable the control of the Joint Action Plan implementation process, including the involvement of participants (target group members) and engagement of the stakeholders in the process, the effectiveness of actions taken by partners, the compliance of actions and the degree of achievement of outcomes in relation to the planned schedule, which will allow for possible interventions necessary to follow the direction set by the project partners.

Monitoring will be carried out by the responsible project partners, separately for each planned action.

#### The performed monitoring actions will measure if:

- actions are implemented according to the planned time frames
- actions lead to the planned outcomes
- are any plan adjustments or implementation changes necessary (corrective actions)
- taken corrective actions (if any) enabled achievement of the planned outcomes
- target group members are satisfied with the participation in the planned actions
- · identified stakeholders were fully committed to the implementation of the Joint Action Plan
- implementation of the Join Action Plan was successful from the perspective of ensuring longterm horizon of the CIREVALC actions

Monitoring of actions will be carried out in fixed periods of time in terms of quantity and quality of achieved outcomes.

Monitoring of actions will be a source of information necessary to carry out the evaluation to assess whether the implementation of actions included in the Joint Action Plan is bringing the expected outcomes and taking decisions regarding necessary Joint Action Plan updates and improvements in case of any challenges / problems that may occur.







Outcome A1 3 infographics		
Measurement method:	The target value will be counted as the number of prepared and published infographics: 3 pieces.	
Data sources:	Print screen of 3 infographics shared on the CIREVALC website and social media channels.	
Measurement frequency:	<ul> <li>The measurement will be carried out on two levels:</li> <li>advancement level: every six months, at the end of semester 4, 5 and 6;</li> <li>final measurement at the end of the action implementation: March 31, 2026.</li> </ul>	

Outcome A2 1 joint Newsletter		
Measurement method:	The target value will be counted as the number of prepared and published Newsletters: 1 piece.	
Data source:	<ul> <li>Print screen of 1 Newsletter shared on CIREVALC website, social media channels and through e-mails;</li> <li>300 project entities and individuals reached through e-mails.</li> </ul>	
Measurement frequency:	<ul> <li>The measurement will be carried out on two levels:</li> <li>advancement level: every six months, at the end of semester 4, 5 and 6;</li> <li>final measurement at the end of the action implementation: December 31, 2025.</li> </ul>	







Outcome A3  2 podcasts		
Measurement method:	The target value will be counted as the number of prepared and published podcasts: 2 pieces.	
Data source:	<ul> <li>Print screens of 2 podcasts shared on CIREVALC YouTube channel, project partners institutions' websites and social media channels;</li> <li>Links to the podcasts shared on CIREVALC YouTube channel.</li> </ul>	
Measurement frequency:	<ul> <li>The measurement will be carried out on two levels:</li> <li>advancement level: every six months, at the end of semester 4, 5 and 6;</li> <li>final measurement at the end of the action implementation: December 31, 2025.</li> </ul>	

Outcome A4			
1 j	1 joint "Ambassadors of Circularity" campaign		
Measurement method:	The target value will be counted as the number of prepared, announced and conducted campaigns: 1 campaign "Ambassadors of Circularity"		
Data source:	Campaign documentation:  terms & conditions document;  print screens of campaign announcements in partners regions;  links to appearances on media platforms announcing the campaign;  list of awarded SMEs and NGO's (including pioneers);  campaign summary report.		
Measurement frequency:	<ul> <li>The measurement will be carried out on two levels:</li> <li>advancement level: every six months, at the end of semester 4, 5 and 6;</li> <li>final measurement at the end of the action implementation: December 31, 2025.</li> </ul>		







Outcome A5		
	1 Transnational matchmaking event	
Measurement method:	The target value will be counted as the number of organised transnational matching events: 1 event.	
Data source:	<ul> <li>Event documentation:</li> <li>agenda;</li> <li>list of participants;</li> <li>event photo documentation and/or print screens (in case of the online / hybrid event);</li> <li>print screens / links to the event announcement;</li> <li>event summary report.</li> </ul>	
Measurement frequency:	<ul> <li>The measurement will be carried out on two levels:</li> <li>advancement level: every six months, at the end of semester 4, 5 and 6;</li> <li>final measurement at the end of the action implementation: March 31, 2026.</li> </ul>	







## Outcome B1 20 SMEs, NGOs operating in the food, catering and packaging sectors with increased knowledge and skills The target value will be counted as the number of SMEs, NGOs operating in the food, catering and packaging sectors with an increased level of Measurement method: knowledge and skills: 20 SMEs/NGOs. Documentation: agenda of the transnational workshop/webinar; • list of participants of the transnational workshop/webinar; • event photo documentation and/or print screens (in case of the online / hybrid event); print screens / links to the event announcement; Data source: advisory card (with service description and participant signature); circularity transnational assessment / peer review card (with service description and participant signature); applicants registration forms (registration for the service / event); evaluation surveys (to be filled in by SMEs/NGOs); joint report summarising implementation of the action. Measurement One-time measurement, one year after the project completion: April 30, 2027. frequency:

Outcome B2 20 SMEs, NGOs participating in matching, facilitating and pitching actions	
Measurement method:	The target value will be counted as the number of SMEs, NGOs operating in the food, catering and packaging sectors participating in matching, facilitating and pitching actions: 20 SMEs, NGOs.
Data source:	Documentation: - advisory card (with service description and participant signature); - joint report summarising implementation of the action.
Measurement frequency:	One-time measurement, one year after the project completion: April 30, 2027.







Outcome B3		
1 joint video		
Measurement method:	The target value will be counted as the number of prepared and published videos: 1 piece.	
Data source:	<ul> <li>Print screens of 1 video shared on CIREVALC YouTube channel, project partners institutions' websites and social media channels;</li> <li>Links to the video shared on CIREVALC YouTube channel.</li> </ul>	
Measurement frequency:	One-time measurement, one year after the project completion: April 30, 2027.	

Outcome B4		
1 joint guideline		
Measurement method:	The target value will be counted as the number of prepared and published guidelines: 1 piece.	
Data source:	<ul> <li>Print screens of 1 guideline shared on CIREVALC project and partners websites and by CIREVALC Circular Community Accelerators network;</li> <li>Link to the electronic version of the guideline.</li> </ul>	
Measurement frequency:	One-time measurement, one year after the project completion: April 30, 2027.	







Outcome B5  1 new project proposal prepared based on the announced transnational or trans-border call for projects	
Measurement method:	The target value will be counted as the number of prepared new project proposals: 1 piece.
Data source:	<ul> <li>Final version of the prepared application form.</li> <li>Print screens of the call for project;</li> <li>Applicants documentation (under the announced call).</li> </ul>
Measurement frequency:	One-time measurement, one year after the project completion: April 30, 2027.

#### Annexes:

• 9 Regional Action Plans