

Action Plan



Interreg Europe
SUBTRACT
Action Plan
PP6 Styria



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Abfall- und Ressourcenwirtschaft

The **action plan** provides details on **how** the lessons learnt from the cooperation will be exploited in order to improve the policy instrument tackled within the region of Styria. It specifies the nature of the actions to be implemented, their timeframe, the players involved, the costs and funding sources.

The main lessons learnt from the Styrian experience implementing this project are the following:

Learning 1: use digital tools

Matching supply and demand of reusable goods is difficult and should be optimised with digital tools. The increased use of digital technologies seems to be a key factor for re-use in the area of reusable goods' flows as well as for customer relations, awareness raising and information for the general public. Re-use in its entirety has to appear more attractive to the population. The visibility of the whole sector has to be increased through professional marketing using suitable techniques.

Learning 2: cooperate with municipal waste management

Increasing the availability of reusable goods is crucial for the future development of this sector. In particular, selection of reusable goods from municipal waste streams, preferably before reusable goods become waste but also in the sense of preparation for reuse, requires improved cooperation with municipal waste management.

Learning 3: support SMEs with relevant guidance

The distinction between the preparation for re-use and the re-use is interpreted differently in different European regions. In case of the preparation for re-use, waste legislation is applicable in Austria. This often leads to uncertainty among SMEs, as they often have no experience in waste legislation. Better SME support with information materials and guidelines is, therefore, desired by the regional re-use stakeholders.

Part I – General information

Project: SUBTRACT – Sustainable Reuse Centers

Partner organisation:

Office of the Regional Government of Styria,
Directorate 14 – Water Management, Resources and Sustainability

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant): -

Country: Austria

NUTS2 region: AT22 Styria

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Part II – Policy context

- The Action Plan aims to impact:**
- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
 - European Territorial Cooperation programme
 - Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed: Regional Waste Management Plan Styria
(https://www.abfallwirtschaft.steiermark.at/cms/dokumente/10177492_136114083/c1d2cdf8/LAWP2019-20200125_WEB_SRGB.pdf)

The addressed policy instrument is the Regional Waste Management Plan of Styria. The Styrian Waste Management Plans have to be decided by the Regional Government of Styria. They are outline plans on the basis of which the detailed annual work programmes of the Department Waste and Resource Management are to be drawn up.

The currently valid Regional Waste Management Plan of Styria was decided in 2019 and covers the planning period until 2024. However, due to the earlier update of the Federal Waste Management Plan the Styrian Waste Management Plan must also be revised as early as 2023.

To implement the vision of the current Styrian Waste Management Plan, i.e. a circular economy by 2050, Styria is pursuing three strategic approaches. The first strategy regards the European five-stage waste hierarchy as the central element of circular economy. The five-stage waste hierarchy has been established by law already >10 years ago. Since then, Styria has implemented numerous measures for more waste avoidance and re-use. Nevertheless, waste generation is relatively high, and re-use is still waiting for its big break.

Therefore, Action 1 is intended to take important steps to improve the visibility of the reuse sector and to broadly raise awareness of the crucial role reuse plays in the transformation to circular economy. This will subsequently increase both the donation of reusable goods and higher sales by attracting new customers. In this sense, the interactive online Re-Use Map Styria (see also https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/news/12829/waste-prevention-3-key-learnings-from-the-styrian-re-use-map/?no_cache=1&cHash=c71b551b0d52fd93e331c392f9ca918a) has to be further developed to provide comprehensive information on all Styrian businesses working in the reuse sector. The Re-Use Autumn Styria 2022 will be planned as an accompanying high profile event to increase public awareness about re-use and the recognition of the re-use enterprises in the region. Action 2 targets at more confidence with the legal requirements for the re-use sector for their daily business activities and is therefore an essential foundation for the sustainable establishment of this sector.

The actions defined in this action plan are being incorporated into the working programme for 2022 and are influenced to the highest degree by the learnings from the SUBTRACT project. Consequently, the learnings from these actions will impact the annual working programme for 2023. Beyond, in the second half of 2022 the revision process of the Styrian State Waste Management Plan will start. The outcome of the actions will naturally impact this revision, too. However, the completion of and the decision by the Styrian Government on the Regional Waste Management Plan will only take place in the course of 2023 and thus after the end of the project.

Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

ACTION 1 - Styrian Re-Use Map & Re-Use Autumn 2022

1. The background

Within the framework of the SUBTRACT project and the three regional stakeholder workshops held so far, it has become apparent that the Styrian re-use operators wish to increase visibility and awareness towards re-use among the Styrian population. A common appearance of the Styrian re-use sector under a common umbrella brand, as it takes place in Upper Austria under the brand "revital", is not desired by the diverse and very inhomogeneous re-use sector in Styria, as it would push the individual marketing of each organisation into the background. But what is highly desired, is an official common information platform for re-use purchase options in Styria, comparable to the Styrian repair guide (see: www.reparaturfuehrer.at) which informs about repair companies and services they offer in Styria.

The re-use operators in Styria believe that the share of the Styrian population that is sufficiently informed about the possibility of re-use, the goods and services offered by the re-use shops as well as the possibility of donating goods to re-use organisations is still not enough and needs to be increased. The potential has not yet been fully exploited in both the acquisition and sale of re-use goods.

In order to increase this potential, an improved information offer (internet platform) on the one hand and the promotion of the information provided on the other hand is required. The appropriate platform will provide the information, and an accompanying publicity campaign with the support of the Styrian waste management and reuse actors will ensure the necessary dissemination.

Based on the bilateral exchange with our advisory partner RREUSE we found out that similar online platforms supporting SMEs working in the re-use sector already exist in Europe and are typically managed directly by the social enterprises themselves (Kringwinkels in Flanders, AERESS in Spain).

The Re-use Autumn 2022 is inspired by existing awareness raising initiatives, such as communication campaigns organised on a regular basis by the social cooperative "Insieme", targeting different groups including young people. This type of actions contributes largely to the visibility of re-use operations and attracts new customers.

Styria is particularly inspired by the re-use scene in Finland and Sweden, where it seems that the topic of "re-use" has already a better image and has reached the society in general. It is reflected in the financial situation of re-use centres and increased access to re-use goods in these countries. Their strategy is to increase value of the re-use products by ensuring that their quality is perceived as equal to new products. While organizing Re-Use Autumn 2022 in the region of Styria we would like to pursue a similar strategy in order to help establish a new quality image for re-use in Styria and to attract additional customers, thus ensuring an increased flow of re-use goods in long term.

Therefore, Action 1 is intended to take important steps to improve the visibility of the reuse sector and to broadly raise awareness of the crucial role reuse plays in the transformation to circular economy. The decision to develop such a map was based on the main learning from the exchange of experiences with the regional stakeholder group during the first SUBTRACT regional stakeholder workshop. It had been emphasized by the stakeholders that there is an urgent need for developing digital tools and to offer the re-use sector more accessible and visible for the public. The same issue has frequently been discussed during the SUBTRACT interregional seminars and other partner meetings as well as observed during Interreg Europe Webinars.

2. Action

Action 1 is developed with the aim of increasing both visibility and recognition of the small and medium-sized reuse enterprises in the region. The ultimate goal is to increase their sales and competitiveness. This action is performed with two subactions: a) Styrian online Re-Use Map and b) Re-Use Autumn Styria 2022

a) Styrian online Re-Use Map

A preliminary version of the Styrian online re-use map has already been published. It will be extended, maintained, and promoted among the Styrian population. Finally, the re-use map should include all possibilities to buy and donate reuse goods in Styria. Based on the GIS system (Geographical Information Systems), it displays the following information:

1. Location of the re-use shop
2. Contact details
3. Name of the key contact person
4. Segments of goods offered at the re-use shop
5. Additional services offered at the re-use shop (e.g. repair services)
6. Opening hours of the shop

The current map was created by the Province of Styria (Dept. Waste and Resource Management) as a result of the SUBTRACT stakeholder meetings and inspiration of the SUBTRACT exchange of experience activities (for details see above chapter 1. The Background). The preliminary version was published in May 2021. It is maintained and further developed with the resources of the Dept. Waste and Resource Management; technical support is provided by the GIS team of the Region of Styria. It currently comprises about 80 enterprises. Nevertheless, it does not yet cover all existing re-use and second-hand shops in Styria. The target to include all of them can only be achieved if the regional stakeholders will support promotion and completion of the map. It can be considered a great success if re-use shop operators will proactively ask for inclusion in the map. This, on the other hand, will ease the permanent update and areal coverage of the map.

The map is published on the web portal of the Styrian Regional Government and will be administered by a staff member of the Department Waste and Resource Management based on information provided by the re-use operators, regional waste advisers (see also: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/subtract/news/news-article/11937/styrian-waste-advisers/>) or other stakeholders.

Beyond, the Styrian Reuse Map will be developed towards an information platform for the general public on the topic of re-use and a basis for a broad network of all stakeholders in the reuse sector.

Evaluation will focus on the following indicators:

- number of registered businesses
- number of visits to the online map
- regional distribution of registered businesses
- range of goods and services offered

An accompanying survey amongst the players involved should provide a picture of the perception of the Styrian Reuse Map. Such first evaluation will show the supply and gaps of re-use goods and services in the individual districts as well as the acceptance of the re-use map by entrepreneurs and customers. Consequently, it should enable a better focus on measures for small and medium-sized reuse enterprises in the next revision of the Styrian Waste Management Plan in 2023.

b) Re-Use Autumn Styria 2022

The Re-Use Autumn Styria will be a one-week campaign with various events throughout Styria. The main objective is to draw more attention to the range of re-use products and enterprises. Re-use enterprises and various stakeholders, such as the Styrian waste management associations, should offer regional and local events including repair cafés, workshops, re-use art, and open house days for the Styrian population.

Styrian waste advisers should play an active role in the promotion of Re-Use Autumn. The Styrian waste advisers will be included in the planning via the waste advisor forum (i.e. a regular exchange of experience and information between the Region of Styria (Dept. Waste and Resource Management) and the Styrian waste advisers; it is organised by the Region of Styria, Dept. Waste and Resource Management). In order to use a high-profile moment, the official kick-off of the actions will take place during the annual Austrian Re-Use Conference in January 2022. Accompanying measures in terms of public information/awareness raising and network meetings up to the highlight “Styrian Re-Use Autumn” are planned.

Evaluation will focus on the following indicators:

- number of events/activities
- number of visitors (estimation) of certain events/activities
- press review (number of media reports on certain events/activities)

The evaluation will provide insight into the most successful format of public awareness raising for re-use and recognition of re-use enterprises and form the basis for targeted measures in the next revision of the Styrian Waste Management Plan.

3. Players involved

- Office of the Regional Government of Styria (experts for circular economy and waste/resource management, platform provider, service provider, information of the public)
- SMEs in the reuse sector (platform users, interested parties, and co-organisers of the reuse autumn)
- Organisers of the Austrian Re-Use Conference (promotion partner)
- Network of Styrian waste advisers (multipliers for the population, information mediators in both directions)
- The Styrian population (platform users, users of the offers and services, participants of the Re-Use Autumn)

4. Timeframe

Timeframe: January 2022 – December 2022 with preparatory work starting in October 2021

Preparatory work:

- Information and ideation of Re-Use-Map and Re-Use-Autumn at the “waste adviser forum” (i.e. a regular exchange of experience and information between the Region of Styria (Dept. Waste and Resource Management) and the Styrian waste advisers; organised by the Region of Styria, Dept. Waste and Resource Management) (Oct. 2021)
- Preliminary information of selected re-use enterprises about Re-Use Autumn and first discussion of possible lighthouse-projects (Nov./Dec. 2021)

- Milestone 1: Kick-off of at the Austrian Re-Use Conference 2022 (Jan. 2022):
- Roll-out of Re-Use Map v.2
 - Introduction to the concept of the re-use autumn and start of the planning phase
- Milestone 2: Promotion of Re-Use-Map via the Styrian Waste Management Information System (www.abfallwirtschaft.steiermark.at plus sub-pages like web-pages of waste management organisations and waste advisers) and further appropriate channels (Feb. – June 2022)
- Milestone 3: Development of the overall concept for the Re-Use Autumn and agreement on the exact date of implementation with stakeholders (Feb. – March 2022)
- Milestone 4: Planning/organisation of the individual events of the Styrian Re-Use-Autumn (April – September 2022)
- Milestone 5: Implementation of the Styrian Re-Use-Autumn (one week in Sep. or Oct. 2022 (“Re-Use Week Styria”) – as agreed with stakeholders in milestone 3)
- Milestone 5: Evaluation of the Styrian Re-Use-Map and Re-Use-Autumn 2022 (Oct./Nov. 2022) and finalization of the evaluation report incl. recommendations for the policy instrument (Dec. 2022)

5. Costs

Work for the Re-Use Map Styria, organisation of the waste adviser forum, and information via the Styrian Waste Management Information System is largely carried out within the framework of the existing work contracts of the Office of the Regional Government of Styria.

Costs for the Re-Use Autumn and the evaluation process have to be determined/allocated together with the stakeholders.

6. Funding sources

The design and technical implementation of the preliminary version has been financed by the means of the Regional Government of Styria. Data collection of SMEs working in the re-use sector, which have been included in the map so far (preliminary version), was partly carried out by the Office of the Regional Government of Styria and partly within the framework of the project (staff costs).

The expansion of the Re-Use Map in the sense of this action plan is funded from own funds according to the annual working programme, which is to be drawn up on the basis of the Regional Waste Management Plan of Styria. Technical support for the re-use map is provided by the GIS team of the Region of Styria. There will also be support from the waste advisors, whose staff costs are partly covered by the Regional Government of Styria, for research and dissemination.

Concerning the Styrian Re-Use-Autumn 2022, in addition to the funding from own funds according to the annual working programme, which is to be drawn up on the basis of the Regional Waste Management Plan of Styria, also various regional SUBTRACT stakeholders (in particular re-use enterprises and initiatives) will support and participate in this event.

ACTION 2 - Re-use guide for re-use operators & workshop

1. The background

A second finding from the regional stakeholder workshops in Styria is that re-use operators and those who want to become re-use operators find Austrian waste legislation rather complex and overwhelming. They would like to gain more confidence with the legal requirements for the re-use sector for their daily business activities. They also lack well-prepared information on which waste management and commercial legal regulations apply to their business activities, which permits are needed in order to fulfil all requirements and how to apply for them. This was one of the major outcomes and key learnings from the first SUBTRACT regional stakeholder workshop held in Styria. Based on that, Action 2 aims at drafting a re-use guide covering all legal topics of interest for re-use operators and start-ups, as well as additional information on important aspects related to re-use in Styria such as information on the Styrian Re-Use Map and how to participate in it. During the third SUBTRACT regional stakeholder meeting in Styria in July 2021 contents of the guide have been discussed. Styrian stakeholders gave also important indications on the aspects that should be included in the guide for reuse operators and start-ups, including re-use criteria (what is reusable/saleable, recognizing trends), relevant information on “end-of-waste” regulations as well as information on cooperation possibilities with municipalities and waste management associations.

During the interregional learning processes within the SUBTRACT project, the project partner Waste Agency Catalonia reported on a similar guideline that was developed in Catalonia already in the year 2015

(http://residus.gencat.cat/web/.content/home/lagencia/publicacions/prevencio/guia_deixalleries_en.pdf).

This guideline comprises an overview of the regional legal framework and the current facts and figures related to re-use/preparation for re-use, step-by-step performance on re-use/preparation for re-use activities, technical, administrative and management requirements, and related recommendations. The publication is an important source of inspiration when it comes to contents of the Styrian Re-Use-Guide.

Moreover, a bilateral exchange with the Waste Agency of Catalonia to discuss the important aspects to be considered while designing the guide is planned during the SUBTRACT Interregional Seminar in Catalonia in November 2021.

The current Styrian Waste Management Plan regards the legally anchored precautionary principle as one of the three strategic approaches towards circular economy. It has become apparent in the stakeholder workshops that the correct interpretation and application of the legal requirements in reuse/preparation for reuse is not always obvious. The creation of a re-use guide is intended to remedy this situation. The evaluation of this guide will then clarify whether and what kind of further supporting measures or adjustments to the framework conditions appear necessary in the future. This result will be incorporated into the next revision of the Styrian Waste Management Plan.

2. Action

The Department Waste and Resource Management (Office of the Regional Government of Styria), in consultation with the Department for Waste, Energy and Water Law, will develop a re-use guide on the applicable regulations, background information and helpful tips for re-use enterprises in Styria. The re-use guide will be designed in a way that it can easily be understood also by operators who are new in the field of re-use. The guide will be provided electronically and free of charge. For dissemination, the project partner will use information channels that address the target group e.g.:

- Workshop organised by the Department Waste and Resource Management to present and distribute the new re-use guide
- Existing info pools, e.g.: online waste management information portal of the Region of Styria www.abfallwirtschaft.steiermark.at, info pool of the Association RepaNet www.repanet.at/re-use-toolbox, website of the Association of Austrian of Waste Advisors www.vaboe.at, website/newsletter of Styrian Chamber of Commerce etc.
- Newsletters and print publications of the above-mentioned organisations and other multipliers

Evaluation will focus on:

- the number of downloads/requests
- feedback of users

The evaluation will mirror the need for such a guide. The feedback will provide clarity on whether the guide is understandable and covers all relevant topics. Likewise, it will contribute to a better understanding for which concrete additional measures are required in the context of framework conditions for SMEs in the re-use sector.

3. Players involved

- Office of the Regional Government of Styria – Department Waste and Resource Management (preparation of the re-use guide)
- Office of the Regional Government of Styria – Department Waste, Energy and Water Law (legal consultant)
- Multipliers, such as waste advisers, re-use operators, umbrella organisations and other stakeholders
- Existing and future operators of re-use businesses (users of the re-use guide)
- Styrian Chamber of Commerce (Representation of interests and advice for companies and start-ups)

4. Timeframe

Preparatory Work: Drawing up a rough concept based on previous experience and discussions finding particularly in the course of the SUBTRACT regional stakeholder workshops in Styria; see also above chapter 1 The Background). (Dec. 2021)

Milestone 1: First draft of the re-use guide (April 2022)

Milestone 2: Discussion of the first draft with legal consultant (May 2022) and – if necessary - clarification of open legal questions in the waste management work group of the provinces etc. (June 2022)

Milestone 3: Workshop with stakeholders on applicability and completeness of the draft version (July 2022) and appropriate revision (Aug. 2022)

Milestone 4: Graphic design and layout of final version (Sep. 2022)

Milestone 5: Dissemination (publication via appropriate channels and workshop during the “Re-Use Week Styria” (Sep./Oct. 2022 – see Action 1)

Milestone 6: Evaluation and finalization of evaluation report incl. recommendations for the policy instrument (Nov./Dec. 2022)

5. Costs

The work is largely carried out by the Office of the Regional Government of Styria within the framework of existing work contracts. Costs for compilation and design of the guide will be covered by the Regional Government of Styria. Costs for the information event and evaluation process have to be determined/allocated together with the stakeholders

6. Funding sources:

Own funds according to the annual working programme, which is to be drawn up on the basis of the Regional Waste Management Plan of Styria. Legal consultancy will be provided by the Legal Department of the Office of the Regional Government of Styria.

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Signature: Mag. Dr. Ingrid Winter



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