

# Action Plan



Interreg Europe  
**Plasteco**  
**Action Plan**  
PP3 Styria



Das Land  
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European Union  
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Abfall- und Ressourcenwirtschaft

## Part I – General information

**Project:** PGI06169 PLASTEKO – Supporting EU regions to curb plastics waste and littering

**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](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 prevention, re-use, and recycling. However, waste volumes, recycling rates and applications for reused or recycled plastics show that the level of circularity still leaves some room for improvement. The following three actions aim to initiate essential steps towards full circularity in the plastics economy:

- Action 1 Fostering plastic circular economy in the automotive sector.
- 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 annual working programme for 2022 and 2023. Beyond, in the second half of 2022 the revision process of our policy instrument, the Styrian Regional Waste Management Plan will start. The Styrian Regional Waste Management Plan is updated by Directorate 14 – Waste and Resource Management Department according to the legal requirements (§ 5 Styrian Waste Management Act 2004) within one year after publication of the Federal Waste Management Plan. This is done in close coordination with the stakeholders. According to § 5 Styrian Waste Management Act 2004, the provincial waste management plan shall refer to municipal waste. It shall contain: an inventory of waste generation, a description of treatment facilities, a forecast of the development of waste generation, the objectives for sustainable waste and material flow management as well as strategies for waste prevention and waste treatment (waste recovery and waste disposal).

Traditionally, Styria has also considered other relevant waste streams (e.g. C&D waste) in the past and taken measures for sustainable waste management. The current version of the Provincial Waste Management Plan Styria 2019 already focuses on an intensified implementation of the circular economy. The intended PLASTEKO actions presented here make it possible to significantly sharpen this focus in the area of plastics management. The automotive sector is a significant economic factor in Styria, and there is also interest in the circular economy here. However, especially in technically highly demanding

applications, the use of recycled plastics is not trivial and is also viewed critically with regard to the required material properties. Action 1 aims to bring together stakeholders from both worlds, the circular economy and the automotive industry, and to identify promising future measures.

The other action aims at achieving better legal certainty for reuse and upcycling activities of plastic waste in the future. Preparation for reuse is the second level of the waste hierarchy. Nevertheless, it has not yet been sufficiently implemented. Here, as in the case of upcycling, there are obstacles in the form of uncertainties on the part of the players with regard to legal requirements (waste status, end of waste status, permitting requirements for companies etc.) and, in some cases, there are also “grey areas”. It is important to identify these areas, to describe the requirements clearly, and to strive for improvements and simplifications where possible.

The results of these actions will directly feed into the measures of the Styrian Waste Management Plan, which is the basis of the annual working programme and allocation of resources in the respective period of validity.

Our policy instrument Styrian Regional Waste Management Plan will be updated in 2022/23. The draft for comment (comment procedure according to the Styrian Waste Management Act 2004) is planned for the first half of 2023. The completion (incorporation of the comments) and finally the decision by the Styrian Regional Government will take place in the course of 2023.

### Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

#### **ACTION 1 - Circular economy for plastics in the automotive sector**

##### **1. The background**

The separate collection of plastic waste and its recycling are comparatively very well developed in Styria in many areas. In individual industrial sectors, however, the circular economy in the plastics sector has only been considered in a rudimentary way so far. This potential must be better identified and utilised. One of these sectors is the automotive industry. Here, recycled plastics could be used to a much greater extent. Conversely, plastic parts from end-of-life vehicles should also be reused or recycled to a greater extent. This is where Action 1 should come in:

Styria has about 180 companies in the automotive sector, which are active in everything from the production and processing of raw materials and components to the manufacture of complete vehicles. This is accompanied by the R&D. There is already a focus on decarbonized value chains, however, circular economy in the plastics sector has not been a main focus so far.

##### **2. Action**

The automotive sector is a significant economic factor in Styria, and there is also interest in the circular economy here. However, especially in technically highly demanding applications, the use of recycled plastics is not trivial and is also viewed critically with regard to the required material properties.

Action 1 aims to bring together stakeholders from both worlds, the circular economy and the automotive industry

Therefore, a specialist event for stakeholders is to be held in cooperation with both the Styrian Green Tech Cluster and the Styrian Automotive Cluster in autumn 2022, to which international high-level speakers on recycling plastics in the automotive sector will be invited and an intensive exchange with all stakeholders will take place. This event will serve to identify promising future measures, which will then be incorporated in an appropriate manner in the update of our policy instrument, the Styrian Regional Waste Management Plan.

Interregionality:

The increased use of recycled plastic in different products is mandated according to the European Plastics Strategy. How this can be achieved was also discussed in the interregional exchanges within the framework of PLASTEKO.

The ideas for this action were in particular stemming from the good practice of the Lombardia region "Plastica Seconda Vita". The expansion of the market for recycled plastics described therein through the application of standards for environmental labelling could be a possible solution to meet the high product requirements in the automotive sector (which is currently hindering a broader application of recycled plastics), and will be discussed in the planned specialist event.

Focusing on the automotive sector and triggering the plastic oriented networking with the greentech sector was also encouraged by the interregional workshop on "how to support regional businesses to invest in eco-innovation in plastic production and reuse" (PLASTEKO activity 3.2a, organised by Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Energy Environment Agency AURA-EE, Jan. 2021). The input paper prepared for this purpose describes projects and industry examples that target solutions for niche products in the

automotive sector. These examples will be us as a starting point for the detailed programming of the planned specialist event.

Evaluation will focus on the following indicators:

- number of expert visitors (companies)
- number of specialist topics raised during the event
- discussed ideas for solution measures

The evaluation will form the basis for the formulation of targeted measures to be included in the next revision of the Styrian Waste Management Plan.

### 3. Players involved

- Office of the Regional Government of Styria, Directorate 14 – Department for Waste and Resource Management: experts for circular economy and waste/resource management, platform provider, service provider, information of the public; administrative unit responsible for updating the regional waste management plan
- ACstyria Mobility Cluster GmbH (mobility cluster (network of ca. 300 companies from automotive, aerospace and rail technology sectors): Central contact to the automotive sector and partner for the organisation of the specialist event
- Green Tech Cluster Styria GmbH (network of ca. 250 companies in the greentech sector in the Green Tech Valley, the #1 global hotspot for climate and circular solutions): Central contact to the greentech sector and partner for the organisation of the specialist event
- Stakeholders in both the automotive and waste/resources management industry: Participation in specialist event, active participation in specialist event, stakeholder for identification of future measures and partner in their implementation

### 4. Timeframe

- Preparatory work: will start in June 2022
- Information event and exchange of experience with high-level speakers of the automotive and waste/resource management sector (November 2022).
- Evaluation of the information event (December 2022).
- Discussion of the results of the expert interviews with the stakeholders. (January 2023)
- Inclusion in the draft of the updated policy instrument (i.e. Styrian Regional Waste Management Plan 2023) (March 2023)

### 5. Costs

Planning and conception is largely carried out by the Office of the Regional Government of Styria within the framework of existing work contracts.

The players involved will announce the event.

Costs for the event (venue and event technology, speaker fees and travel costs, break refreshments) and the evaluation process will be covered largely by the Office of the Regional Government of Styria (Waste and Resource Management), support from stakeholders within the scope of possibilities.

### 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 plus support from stakeholders within the scope of possibilities (i.e., no Interreg Europe funds).

### **ACTION 2 - Guideline / proposal for legal framework**

#### 1. The background

When it comes to the reuse or upcycling of waste, the legal framework is often not clear for many stakeholders. Furthermore, existing grey areas need to be identified and clear solutions proposed. In the area of plastic waste, this can be particularly true of upcycling activities, which have the effect of extending the lifetime of a product, but at the same time often encounter difficulties to prove the end of waste according to the waste management law. Here, a guideline including proposals to improve the legal framework should be worked out together with the legal experts of the state and federal governments in order to achieve better legal certainty for reuse and upcycling activities of plastic waste in the future.

#### 2. Action

Elaboration of a guideline on legal and technical requirements in the field of reuse and upcycling with special reference to the plastics sector. Recommendations for improving the legal framework are derived hand in hand. The drafting is done in cooperation with the legal experts of the state government and in consultation with the relevant national authorities (federal ministry) and institutions (e.g. environmental agency, chamber of commerce). The aim is to achieve better legal certainty for reuse and upcycling activities of plastic waste in the future.

Interregionality:

The ideas for this action to promote the adoption of policy measures were in particular stemming from the interregional workshop “How to facilitate the market placement of alternatives for single-use plastics (Activity 3.2b, organized by SZREDA – Stara Zagora Regional Economic Development Agency, Nov. 2020,). In the related input paper, a lack of clear guidelines about the application of national regulations on recycling, recovery, and reuse is clearly highlighted as an obstacle. Although this statement refers to GPP in particular, it has general validity and coincides with practical experiences and stakeholder feedbacks. Especially in the area of reuse, there are different interpretations in the European regions, particularly with regard to waste or product status a harmonised approach is not fully established. This will also be addressed in the planned guideline.

Evaluation will focus on:

- Documented request for guide
- Feedback of guide users on applicability, clarity, open questions/missing topics

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 additional measures are required in the context of framework conditions for the re-use/upcycling of plastics.

The evaluation will form the basis for the formulation of targeted measures to be included in the next revision of the Styrian Waste Management Plan.

### 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
- Styrian Chamber of Commerce: Representation of interests and advice for companies and start-ups
- Austrian Environmental Agency: experts for waste data management and state of the art of waste management
- Further stakeholders, e.g. SMEs operating in the field of plastic reuse and recycling: stakeholders

### 4. Timeframe

- Preparatory coordination with representatives of authorities regarding the legal framework (Dez. 2022)
- First draft of the guideline (Feb. 2023)
- Presentation of the guideline to stakeholders and discussion followed by finalization of the guideline (March 2023)
- Information event for the stakeholders (April 2023)
- Inclusion in the draft of the updated policy instrument (i.e. Styrian Regional Waste Management Plan 2023) (May 2023)

### 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 guideline, the information event and evaluation process will be covered by the Regional Government of Styria.

### 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. No Interreg Europe funds will be used

**Date:** 20.07.2022

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