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# Accelerating the circular 4.0 transition

The Circular4.0 project supports SMEs from Alpine Space to move faster into the circular economy through digitalisation

The overall objective of the Circular4.0 project is to improve the Alpine Space ecosystem of innovation and contribute to accelerating the transition of SMEs in the Alpine Space from linear to circular and to more sustainable business models using digitalisation.

The Alpine region ecosystem of innovation (national and regional policy makers, academic and research institutions, intermediary organisations, entrepreneurs, and citizens) is in the process of strengthening its cooperation according to the principles of sustainable development and a green and digital economy. The stakeholders are working closely together, targeting SMEs to contribute to making the Alpine Space a cleaner and greener environment, open to innovation and new businesses addressing the challenges of a digitised European economy.

Fifteen project partners and twenty-three observers from five Alpine Space countries (Austria, Germany, France, Italy, and Slovenia) are working together within the Circular4.0 project. Technology Park Ljubljana (TPLJ) is a lead partner of the project. Other collaborating project partners are TUAS Rosenheim, BWCON, AWS, ITG, BIZ-UP VENINNE, Grand E-nov, AURAE, JSL, TOWL, CONFBO, CCIAA Venezia Rovigo, UCB, and RISINGSUD. The project began in October 2019 and will be implemented by the end of June 2022. It is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund programme through the Interreg Alpine Space programme.

As the circular economy starts at the very beginning of a product or service design and not at the end of the product cycle when the waste is already created, the Circular4.0 project is taking into consideration three relevant approaches i.e., **circular design, value recovery, and an optimal use approach**, which are supported by the **digital technologies of Industry 4.0** such as artificial intelligence (AI), digital twinning, 3D printing and robotics.

Within the project three transnational working groups of partners, experts and observers were established according to the three approaches to add value with their expertise in the circular economy and digitalisation throughout the project.

Priority sectors and sectoral needs in various Alpine regions have already been identified, including plastics, textiles, wood, electronics, and construction. Key regional stakeholders involved in the circular/digital economy, which act as brokers/promoters and with SMEs as frontrunners, have been mapped. A set

[www.alpine-space.eu](https://www.alpine-space.eu)

of tools and training needs to assist SMEs with a faster transition to the circular economy, addressed towards intermediaries (business incubators, technology parks and industry clusters), has been developed.

By the end of June 2022, it is expected 280 SMEs will have been trained and assisted to identify their circular and digital maturity level and to develop their business and investment plans to become ready for the financial investment in their circular business transformation.

The Circular4.0 action plan and Circular4.0 community development activities will be intensified from July 2021 until the end of the project, while the Circular4.0 community will continue to be built and regularly updated on an existing **Smart Space platform** (<https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/smart-space/en/smart-space-hub>), which will continue after the end of the Circular4.0 project. More information about the Circular4.0 project is available at <https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/circular4.0/en/home>.

Circular4.0 is inviting you to join a green and digitised journey in the Alpine region.

**Interreg**  
Alpine Space  
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