Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE

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ReBuilt

D.3.3.2 – Report on pilot testing of Regional Circular and Digital Construction Hubs

Dr. Dragica Marinič, ZAG
Dr. Alenka Mauko Pranjić, ZAG

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Summary

Within the framework of the ReBuilt project, the project partners have established a digital network of Regional Circular and Digital Construction Hubs to foster the sustainable transformation of the construction sector. The overarching goal is to accelerate the circular and digital transition of the construction industry across the Interreg Central Europe region. This is a summary report on the operation of pilot hubs for circular and digital construction in the Interreg Central Europe territory.

The Regional Circular and Digital Construction Hubs network aims to build a robust and resilient innovation ecosystem throughout Central Europe. It also seeks to establish links with other EU-level hubs relevant to circular and digital construction, particularly those engaged in developing new technologies, processes, and innovative products using secondary raw materials and other sustainable resources.

Drawing on the extensive expertise and experience of the ReBuilt project consortium, the initiative leverages knowledge gained from previous research, pilot activities, and participation in diverse professional networks.

The Central Circular and Digital Construction Hub, headquartered in Slovenia at the Slovenian Building and Civil Engineering Institute (ZAG), is a cornerstone of this transnational ecosystem. It is supported by eight regional or national hubs that operate as interconnected centres of innovation. Together, they are key enablers for promoting, developing, and implementing circular and digital construction practices under the Interreg Central Europe framework.

This specialisation pilot hubs model allows each hub to cultivate its own expertise while contributing to a broader transnational knowledge base and support network. The Slovenian Central Hub at the Slovenian Building and Civil Engineering Institute plays a pivotal coordinating role, ensuring strategic alignment, efficient knowledge transfer, and close collaboration among all regional hubs.

1. Introduction

The construction sector remains one of the largest consumers of natural resources and a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and waste generation across Europe. In Central Europe, transitioning to a circular and digital construction paradigm is increasingly critical to achieving a resource-efficient, climate-neutral, and resilient regional economy.

However, the adoption of circular principles and digital technologies in construction remains fragmented across the region. While some countries have made notable progress through supportive policy frameworks, innovation ecosystems, and education initiatives, others still face structural, regulatory, and capacity-related barriers.

There is a pressing need for systemic, collaborative, and innovation-driven approaches capable of scaling sustainable practices to bridge these disparities. Digital technologies, such as material traceability systems, data platforms (e.g., *CinderOSS, Gaia-X*), and digital tools such as digital product passports, are recognised as key enablers of circularity by ensuring transparency, efficiency, and accountability throughout the construction value chain.

By establishing **Central and Regional Circular and Digital Construction Hubs**, interconnected with the *Gaia-X* data infrastructure, the. *The ReBuilt project is actively* strengthening the regional ecosystem for circular and digital construction in Central Europe.

This framework ensures a balanced integration of innovation, education, and entrepreneurship, supported by robust governance and strategic partnerships, similar to those of EIT RawMaterials.

2. Objectives and Strategic Roles of the Hubs

The main goal of Central and Regional Circular and Digital Construction Hubs is to create a long-term, sustainable, and interconnected support system for the transition to circular and digital construction in Central Europe. This new ecosystem aims to:

- foster collaboration between academia, business (targeting SMEs), the public sector, and civil society;
- support for the innovation, development, and implementation of legislation in the field of circular and digitalised construction in Central Europe;
- support the reduction of construction waste and the development and use of secondary raw materials;
- facilitate the implementation of innovative circular and digital construction solutions within construction companies;
- encourage the development of targeted education and training for new competencies among workers in the construction sector and other target groups;
- contribute to public-private dialogue aimed at overcoming regulatory barriers (e.g., regulatory sandbox);
- promote interregional cooperation and knowledge exchange both within and beyond the region.

The operation of the hubs is strategically aligned with several key European frameworks and goals, including:

- the EU Green Deal and the Circular Economy Action Plan;
- activities to create a built environment that is more resource-efficient and climate-resilient.
- The New European Bauhaus promotes sustainability, inclusion, and aesthetics in architecture and urban development.
- Green Public Procurement[1] (GPP) is the voluntary practice where public authorities buy goods and services with reduced environmental impact over their life cycle. It supports the EU's shift to a resource-efficient economy and is part of Strategic Public Procurement alongside social and innovation aspects.

In this way, the hubs serve as catalysts for regional transformation, positioning Central Europe as a proactive leader in the European circular, green, and digital transitions — both within the construction sector and beyond. The hubs could also be extended to other stakeholders in the Interreg Central region.

[1] https://green-forum.ec.europa.eu/green-business/green-public-procurement_en

3. Pilot Testing of the Operation and Network of Central and Regional Hubs for Circular and Digital Construction

The aim of the **pilot testing** design for a network of Central and Regional Circular and Digital Construction Hubs is to validate how the network's technical, operational, and collaborative functions before full rollout. In September 2025, we tested the operation of pilot hubs for circular and digital construction hubs in the Interreg Central Europe territory.

3.1 Overall Structure

A. Hierarchical Network Model

- **Central Hub at ZAG, Slovenia:**
  - *Serves* as the center for *coordination, knowledge, and innovation center*.
  - Hosts the digital platform, data standards, and governance.
  - Facilitates cross-border collaboration and benchmarking.
  - Coordinates the MOOC and digital tools.

- **Regional Hubs in various partner countries:**
  - *Function* as *local/regional implementation nodes*.
  - Adapt EU strategies to regional contexts in collaboration with the central hub for circular and digital construction.
  - Collect and provide feedback on local data to the central hub.
  - Test specific use cases (e.g., digital product passport, BIM, material flows, demonstration projects, etc.).

3.2 Purpose of the Hub's Pilot

The pilot aims to test and refine:

i) **The collaboration model** (governance, communication, data flow between hubs).
ii) **Digital infrastructure** (interoperability, platform usability, data sharing).
iii) **Circular and digital construction services** (regional pilots testing digital tools, reuse, recycling, secondary raw materials, etc.).
iv) **Performance metrics** (efficiency, stakeholder engagement, environmental impact).

4. Hubs Structure and Governance

4.1 Central Construction and Digital Hub (Slovenia)

The Central Circular Construction Innovation Hub, based in Slovenia, at **the Slovenian Building and Civil Engineering Institute (ZAG)**, serves as the core coordination and strategic leadership body for the transnational network of circular construction and digital hubs. Its primary role is to ensure consistency,

quality, and synergy across regional activities while supporting each hub's development in line with its thematic specialization.

To ensure the excellence and sustainable collaboration and networking between central and regional hubs, we created an internal web platform **http://circularconstruction.zag.si**
with a link to the official website of the Interreg Central Europe ReBuilt project:

https://www.interreg-central.eu/projects/rebuilt/

The internal web platform comprises: HUBs, MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses), and digital tools (digital product passport, CinderOSS platform for the marketplace - secondary raw materials). All activities were developed within the framework of the ReBuilt project.

4.1.1 Role and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities include:

- Leading the overall strategic direction and vision of the hubs network;
- Developing and maintaining shared methodologies, frameworks, and digital tools;
- Acting as the central point of contact for external stakeholders, including EU institutions, industry networks;
- Facilitating the integration of cross-cutting topics, such as circular business models, system innovation, and cross-border materials development;
- Supporting visibility, pilot activities, and dissemination of outcomes at the European level.

Note: ZAG follows minimum standards and conducts activities modeled after EIT RawMaterials[2].

4.1.2 Coordination with Regional Hubs

The Central Hub coordinates the regional hubs network, enabling structured collaboration between the eight regional/national hubs. This includes:

- Hosting regular network meetings, joint events, workshops, and exchange events;
- Coordinating joint initiatives (e.g., innovation challenges, pilot projects, capacity-building programs);
- Supporting the regional hubs in their specialization areas, offering knowledge and best practices;
- Promoting and supporting the replication of successful approaches across borders;
- Managing a shared digital platform for circular and digital construction, information data exchange, and resource sharing among hubs.

Coordination based on a collaborative governance approach, with regular input and feedback loops among all hub representatives.

Coordination and Communication

- Monthly: Internal coordination: via online meetings (shared data on platform, feedback loops)
- Quarterly: Steering committee review (strategic alignment, stakeholder feedback)
- Shared tools: Common cloud space (SharePoint, Miro, etc.)

Evaluation Framework

- Network Functionality
  - Data interoperability rate (% of data successfully shared across hubs)

[2] https://www.eit.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ris_hubs_minimum_standards_and_guiding_principles_final_agreement.pdf

- Platform uptime and user satisfaction
- Circular Economy and Digitalization Impact
  - % of reused/recycled construction materials tracked digitally
  - Reduction in embodied carbon in pilot projects
- Collaboration & Knowledge (MOOC activities, CinderOSS platform for secondary raw materials, Gaia-X)
  - Number of cross-regional knowledge exchanges
  - Number of SMEs engaged per region

4.1.3 Governance and Sustainability Plan

The governance of the Central Hub will be structured around the following elements:

- A Hub Steering Committee, composed of representatives from all regional hubs and the lead partner (ZAG), responsible for strategic decisions and oversight;
- Thematic Working Groups ensuring focused collaboration across hubs.

To ensure long-term sustainability, the Central Hub will:

- Establish partnerships with European networks and initiatives (e.g., EIT RawMaterials, New European Bauhaus, etc.) and carry out promotional activities for the hubs network;

The Central Hub will implement a monitoring and evaluation system, based on qualitative and quantitative indicators. Key features include:

- Regular progress reports and self-assessments, coordinated with regional hubs;
- Annual impact reviews, assessing alignment with EU policy goals and stakeholder needs.

This governance and monitoring framework will underpin the credibility, effectiveness, and replicability of the Central and Regional Circular Construction Hubs in Central Europe and across Europe.

4.2 Regional/National Hubs

The eight Regional/National Circular and Digital Construction Hubs form the backbone of the transnational network coordinated by the Central Hub in Slovenia. Each regional hub is embedded within its national or regional innovation ecosystem and focuses on driving context-specific transformation in the construction sector towards circularity and digitalization.

All regional hubs incorporate a set of cross-cutting enablers that support effective implementation and collaboration:

- Stakeholder Engagement: Active involvement of local governments, industry, academia, and civil society (NGOs) in hub activities through co-creation, partnerships, and advisory roles.
- Digital Tools: Adoption of digital technologies (e.g., material passports, databases, platform for secondary raw materials - CinderOSS) to enhance transparency, traceability, and decision-making in circular construction.
- Knowledge Sharing and Networking (MOOC): Participation in transnational learning exchanges, joint events, and thematic working groups coordinated by the Central Hub to ensure consistent knowledge flow and policy alignment.

- Policy Dialogue and Alignment: Contribution to the development and implementation of regional policies and action plans that support circular and digital construction, aligned with national and EU strategies.

While maintaining this shared structure, each hub specialises in a specific thematic area based on its knowledge and experience. This ensures harmonisation and diversity across the hub network, enabling innovation at multiple levels.

Each regional/national hub partner:

- Leads the operational setup and execution of its respective hub;
- Engages regional stakeholders and coordinates local/regional innovation, business, and academic activities;
- Promotes solutions aligned with its thematic specialisation;
- Participates actively in transnational exchanges, events, and working groups;
- Contributes to monitoring, evaluation, and sustainability planning efforts.

4.2.1 Regional Specialisation of Hubs

State	ReBuilt Partner/ Organisation	Focus area	Website
HR/Croatia	Company POR	Legislation for Circular Construction	https://www.por.com.hr/en/interreg-ce-rebuilt
IT/Italy	Infordata Openconten t	Digitalisation	https://rebuilt.infordata.eu/hub
CZ/Czechia	Green Building Council	Circular Design	https://www.czgbc.org/en/rebuilt-circular-and-digital-renewal-of-central-europe-construction-and-building-sector
HU/Hungary	Vas County BURST	Policy and Regulatory	https://www.vasmegye.hu/en/nemzetkozi-projektek/rebuilt/ https://burstgroup.eu/project/rebuilt/
AT/Austria	TUW	Circular Construction Education and Training	https://rebuilt.project.tuwien.ac.at/hub/
PL/Poland	IETU	Demand-Side Measures	https://ietu.pl/en/rebuilt-circular-hubs-platform/
GE/Germany	HM	Innovation in Circular Construction Materials	https://hm.edu/forschungsprojekte_de/forschungsprojekt_detail_7433.de.html
SL/Slovakia	IIC URSTARCH	Industrial Symbiosis in Construction	https://www.industryinnovationcluster.sk/our-projects/rebuilt/ https://matcons.sav.sk/contact.html
SI (Slovenia)	ZAG (central hub) SGZ NIGRAD	Circular value chains and business models	https://circularconstruction.zag.si/ https://www.stajerskagz.si/en/projects/rebuilt/ https://www.nigrad.si/o-nas/evropski-projekti/interreg-central-europe-re-built

4.2.1.1 HR (Croatia): ReBuilt partner POR

Legislation for Circular Construction

Croatia's hub will focus on developing and promoting legal and regulatory frameworks that support circular construction practices across Central Europe. Given the complexity of existing construction laws and the lack of circular-specific regulations, this hub works to harmonise policy frameworks, identify legal barriers, and co-create recommendations for effective policy implementation. It will engage public authorities, experts, and the construction sector to accelerate the implementation of legislative recommendations.

Contacts
Website:
https://www.por.com.hr/en/about
https://www.por.com.hr/en/interreg-ce-rebuilt
Contact person: Tadej Žurman
E-mail: info@por.com.hr
Phone: 00386 31 309 070

4.2.1.2 IT (Italy): ReBuilt partners Infordata and Opencontent

Digitalisation

Italy's hub leverages a strong digital innovation ecosystem to support the development and adoption of digital tools for circular construction, such as digital passports, the CinderOSS digital platform (a marketplace for secondary raw materials), and integration with the Gaia-X platform (in collaboration with ReBuilt partner IIC, Slovakia). It aims to improve decision-making, design efficiency, and circular and digital management through data-driven solutions and collaboration with technology companies and research institutions.

Italy's Hub – Driving Digital Innovation for Circular Construction

The hub develops and validates advanced tools, including Digital Product Passports, integration with the Gaia-X federated infrastructure, and the CinderOSS marketplace, ensuring trusted data exchange, BIM interoperability, and real-time lifecycle tracking. Validated at the NIGRAD demonstration center, these solutions provide complete documentation from demolition to reuse, supporting environmental goals and enabling new business opportunities.

Activities

- Digitalisation
- Digital Product Passport
- CinderOSS platform
- Gaia-X platform
- BIM integration

Infordata Sistemi (Infordata)

Infordata Sistemi is one of the leading companies in Italy and Europe in providing comprehensive solutions for business digital transformation and offering expertise in ICT. They deliver complex solutions that require a broad range of skills and are adaptable to market needs.

Contacts
Website:
https://www.infordata.pro/about-us/
https://rebuilt.infordata.eu/hub
Contact person: Marko Petelin
E-mail: marko.petelin@infordata.it
Phone: +39 335 838 0888

Opencontent

OPENCONTENT S.C.A.R.L. is an SME based in Trento (Italy) specialising in digital-transformation methodologies and web-based ICT platforms that streamline contentand/information management within and across organisations. OpenContent operates in the field of digitalisation for the technological transformation of the public sector, primarily targeting municipalities and local authorities. They use open-source software designed in accordance with guidelines for the development of digital public services in the cloud.

Contacts
Website:
https://www.opencontent.it/
https://rebuilt.infordata.eu/hub
Contact person: Ronald Chenu Abente
E-mail: info@opencontent.it
Phone: (+39) 0461 917437

4.2.1.3 CZ (Czechia): ReBuilt partner Green Building Council

Circular Design

The Czech hub specialises in advancing circular design principles, and the new Bauhaus, emphasising architectural innovation, modularity, and adaptability. It will support the development of circular design and guidelines for architects and engineers, helping to integrate circularity early in project lifecycles. The hub will also promote green procurement and collaborative planning processes.

Contacts
Website:
https://www.czgbc.org/en
https://www.czgbc.org/en/rebuilt-circular-and-digital-renewal-of-central-europe-construction-and-building-sector
Contact person: Marie Koflák
E-mail: marie.koflak@czgbc.org
Phone: +420 775 577 495

3.2.1.4 HU (Hungary): ReBuilt partners VAS County and BURST

Policy and Regulatory

Hungary's hub focuses on policy innovation, serving as a bridge between circular-economy goals and practical implementation in the built environment. The hub will lead policy activities, multi-stakeholder consultations, and advocacy for incentive mechanisms. It aims to build policy capacity and promote cross-sector collaboration to inform national and regional strategies.

Vas County

Contacts
HU version: https://www.vasmegye.hu/nemzetkozi-projektek/rebuilt/
EN version: https://www.vasmegye.hu/en/nemzetkozi-projektek/rebuilt/
Contact person: Krisztina Rimányi
E-mail: rimanyi.krisztina@vasmegye.hu
Phone: +36 30 277 5703

BURST

Contacts
https://burstgroup.eu/project/rebuilt/
Contact person: Eszter Fodor-Kun
E-mail: eszter.kun@burstgroup.eu
Phone: + 36 20 283 8579

3.2.1.5 AT (Austria): ReBuilt partner TWU

Circular Construction Education and Training

Austria brings strong knowledge and expertise in sustainability education and training. Its hub focuses on developing and disseminating educational content, training programs, and curricula for professionals, students, and workers across the construction value chain. It will collaborate with universities, vocational schools, and other relevant stakeholders to build a skilled workforce for circular construction.

Contacts
Website:
https://rebuilt.project.tuwien.ac.at/
https://rebuilt.project.tuwien.ac.at/hub/
Contact person: Dipl.-Ing. Lukas Hausner
E-mail: lukas.hausner@tuwien.ac.at
Phone: +43 1 58801 207221

3.2.1.6 PL (Poland): ReBuilt partner IETU

Demand-Side Measures

The Polish hub addresses a key challenge: limited market demand for circular construction products and services. It will work to stimulate demand through awareness campaigns, public procurement strategies, and buyer engagement. The hub will support business models that respond to user needs and explore incentives for clients adopting circular approaches.

Contacts
Website:
https://ietu.pl/en/
https://ietu.pl/en/rebuilt-circular-hubs-platform/
Go to the ReBuilt Circular Hubs platform: https://circularconstruction.zag.si
Contact person: Marek Matejczyk
E-mail: lch_pl@ietu.pl

3.2.1.7 GE (Germany): ReBuilt partner HM

Innovation in Circular Construction Materials

Germany's hub focuses on research and development of innovative materials, such as bio-based composites, recycled aggregates, and secondary raw materials. With its strong research base and collaboration with the industry, the hub will support material performance, standardisation, and foster industry uptake of next-generation circular construction materials.

Contacts
Website:
https://hm.edu/forschungsprojekte_de/forschungsprojekt_detail_7433.de.html
Contact person: Prof. Dr.-Ing. Andrea Kustermann
E-mail: andrea.kustermann@hm.edu

3.2.1.8 SL (Slovakia); ReBuilt partners IIC and URSTARCH

Industrial Symbiosis in Construction

Slovakia's hub will promote industrial symbiosis, encouraging resource and waste exchange between construction companies and other sectors (e.g., manufacturing, demolition). It will develop the ecosystems for material reuse, recycling, secondary raw materials, facilitate matchmaking between stakeholders, and demonstrate the economic and environmental value of symbiotic collaboration.

Activities:

- Industrial symbiosis in construction
- Business models
- Gaia-X

Industry Innovation Cluster (IIC)

IIC is a collaborative network of companies, research institutions, and public organisations driving innovation and digital transformation in Slovakia and across Europe. Its mission is to accelerate technology adoption, promote sustainable growth, and enhance the competitiveness of SMEs. By fostering partnerships, sharing knowledge, and providing access to expertise, technology, and funding, IIC supports the adoption of Industry 4.0 principles and the creation of a smarter, greener, and more resilient industrial future.

Contacts
Website:
https://www.industryinnovationcluster.sk/
https://www.industryinnovationcluster.sk/our-projects/rebuilt/
Contact person: Martina Le Gall Maláková
E-mail: malakova@industryinnovationcluster.sk
Phone: +421 903 610 261

Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS)

The SAS is the authoritative public institution undertaking academic non-university research in Slovakia. It generates and advances scientific knowledge that supports the country's long-term social, economic, and technological development. By addressing both strategic research priorities and applied challenges, the SAS complements university-based research and fosters innovation. Its activities enhance Slovakia's research capacity and contribute to the broader European and global scientific ecosystem.

Contacts
Website:
https://www.sav.sk/?lang=en&docactivity-proj-int&institute_no=65
https://matcons.sav.sk/index.html
Contact person: Prof. Dr. Ing. Palou Martin-Tchingnabé
E-Mail: martin.palou@savba.sk

3.2.1.9 SI (Slovenia): ReBuilt partners ZAG, NIGRAD, SGZ

Circular Value Chains and Business Models

As the Central Hub and thematic leader in business transformation, Slovenia will focus on circular value chain integration and new business models. This includes mapping value chains, identifying opportunities for circularity, and designing scalable models for service-based construction, and reuse centers and reuse marketplaces.

Each hub's specialisation contributes to the broader network by deepening expertise in a key area, while also sharing knowledge, experiences and methodologies with other regions. This creates a dynamic and resilient structure, capable of addressing regional challenges while advancing common European objectives in circular and digital construction.

Slovenian Building and Civil Engineering Institute (ZAG, central hub)

ZAG is an internationally recognised research institution, delivering advanced knowledge and innovative technological solutions across the construction sector. Its research spans structural safety, the development of new materials, recycling materials, environmental technologies, fire safety, and, more broadly, ICT applications. ZAG actively engages with industry, society, and educational institutions, ensuring that its research outcomes have a practical impact and contribute to societal and economic development.

Contacts:
Website:
https://www.zag.si/en/
https://circularconstruction.zag.si/
Contact persons: Dr Alenka Mauko Pranjić, Dr Dragica Marinič
E-Mail: ReBuilt@zag.si; alenka.mauko@zag.si; dragica.marinic@zag.si
Phone: +386 1 2804 25

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Štajerska (SGZ)

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Štajerska, based in Maribor, represents businesses across the region and supports their growth locally, nationally, and internationally. SGZ works to strengthen regional cooperation and promotes the development of sustainable and competitive economic practices.

Contacts
Website:
https://www.stajerskagz.si/
https://www.stajerskagz.si/en/projects/rebuilt/
Contact person: Nika Djordjevič
E-mail: nika.djordjevic@stajerskagz.si
Phone: +386 30 343 868

Javno podjetje Nigrad, d. o. o.

Nigrad provodes municipal services for local communities, companies, institutions, and individuals in north-eastern Slovenia, primarily in the Maribor area. The company also operates a centre for the reuse of construction waste in Maribor, supporting circular economy practices in the construction sector.

Contacts
Website:
https://www.nigrad.si/o-nas/evropski-projekti/interreg-central-europe-re-built
Contact person: Sergej Gutsmandl
E-mail: sergej.gutsmandl@nigrad.si
Phone: +38640472406

5. Collaborative Business Model

The success of the Circular and Digital Construction Hubs initiative depends on strong transnational cooperation and a well-structured collaboration model that fosters continuous knowledge exchange, joint innovation, and mutual learning across the Central European region. The collaborative model will ensure that each hub contributes to and benefits from the collective expertise, experience, and tools developed within the network in the Central Europe territory.

5.1 Transnational Cooperation and Knowledge Exchange

All nine hubs (Central + 8 regional/national) operate as part of an integrated ecosystem, with cooperation embedded in the operational structure. Transnational collaboration will be coordinated by the Central Hub in Slovenia, with structured mechanisms to:

- Facilitate the exchange of best practices and regional pilot cases;
- Support cross-border development, innovation projects and pilot initiatives;
- Enable the joint development of methodologies, standards, and digital tools;
- Create an open innovation environment that transcends national boundaries and fosters cross-sector collaboration;
- Conduct MOOC activities;
- Provide support between hubs to address common challenges.

Knowledge exchange will be supported through regular bilateral and multilateral meetings, thematic working groups, online forums, and similar activities.

5.2 Joint Activities and Events

To further support collaboration, the hubs will implement a calendar of joint activities and high-impact events, designed to bring together innovators, policymakers, businesses, and academics across regions. These activities include:

- Hackathons and Innovation Cafés: Thematic innovation competitions focused on specific circular and digital construction challenges (e.g., digital tools, design, construction and demolition waste, reuse, secondary raw materials, etc.).
- Structured events involving public authorities and experts to co-design policy frameworks, address regulatory barriers, and pilot legislative innovations.
- Joint Demonstration Projects: Collaborative pilots that test circular technologies or business models across borders and showcase replicable outcomes.
- Annual Hub Forum: A transnational event hosted in rotation by regional hubs, serving as a platform for networking, showcasing results, and aligning strategic directions.

These events aim to strengthen the internal network and enhance external visibility and impact.

5.3 Communication and Networking Platform

To ensure continuous engagement and effective collaboration, the network will establish, the following:

- A shared online collaboration platform, offering access to project resources and other relevant documents;
- Social media channels and newsletters to promote hub initiatives and share success stories;

- Regular virtual exchanges and webinars

These activities will play a key role in collaboration, maintaining transparency, and building a pan-European community of practice focused on circular and digital construction.

6. Roadmap for the Implementation of the Hubs

The establishment and operationalisation of the Central Circular and Digital Construction Hub and the eight Regional/National Hubs will follow a phased, collaborative approach. The roadmap outlines the implementation and long-term sustainability.

Phase	Timeline	Focus
Phase 1: Setup and Alignment	May - June	Strategic planning, stakeholder mapping, governance setup, identification of regional priorities
Phase 2: Operational Launch/Testing	July - September	Launch the hub, implement the technical solution, and test the Hub platform
Phase 3: Consolidation and follow-up after project completion	October 2025-March 2026, and ongoing operation of the hubs	Strengthening of partnerships, policy engagement, scaling services, organising events, etc.

Each hub will align its internal timelines with the central roadmap while maintaining flexibility to accommodate regional conditions and stakeholder readiness.

7. Conclusion

The Central and Regional Circular and Digital Construction Hubs are a key initiative of the ReBuilt project, designed to transform the construction sector in Central Europe towards sustainability, innovation, and resilience. Led by the Central Hub in Slovenia and supported by eight regional/national hubs, the network combines a unified strategic vision with regional adaptability. Each hub specialises in specific thematic areas, enhancing both local and transnational innovation capacity.

The initiative's strength lies in its systemic approach—integrating governance, stakeholder engagement, cross-border cooperation, and alignment with major EU strategies such as the European Green Deal, the Circular Economy Action Plan, and the New European Bauhaus. Together, these elements create a long-term framework for regulatory, educational, and technological transformation in construction.

Currently, the hubs are entering a **testing phase on the new digital platform**, where their collaborative tools, resources, and governance models are being evaluated and refined. This platform is **directly linked to the regular ReBuilt website**, ensuring transparency, accessibility, and smooth integration for partners and stakeholders.

In the long term, the network aims to act as an engine of change—driving the shift towards a resource-efficient, low-carbon, and digitally advanced construction ecosystem across Central Europe.

The Circular and Digital Construction Hubs will serve as dynamic engines of change—accelerating the shift towards a resource-efficient, low-carbon, and knowledge-driven construction sector. By promoting interregional cooperation, fostering knowledge exchange, and supporting the practical implementation of circular and digital solutions, they will contribute significantly to a more sustainable and competitive Europe.