Impact Report

2025-2026

Co-funded by
the European Union

An Impact Enterprise Scaling Programme
– a joint initiative of ERSTE Foundation,
ERSTE Social Finance Holding,
IFUA Nonprofit Partner and SIMPACT.

Marc.

Make a Change, Leave a Mark

ERSTE Stiftung

ERSTE Social Finance

IFUA NONPROFIT

SIMPACT
increasing your social impact

IMPACT HUB Vienna

synerb

Poduzetnički centar
Krapinsko-zagorske županije

STARTUP KITCHEN

ASK

What is Marc?

The Marc Impact Programme is a unique initiative for impact enterprises development boosting finance-readiness and social impact.

Why Marc?

With 13 million people at risk of poverty in Central and Eastern Europe, Marc empowers bold entrepreneurs to lead change. Backed by ERSTE Foundation, Erste Social Finance, SIMPACT & IFUA Nonprofit, Marc bridges critical gaps in funding and know-how, helping impact enterprises grow, adapt, and build a more inclusive, sustainable future.

What are the advantages of the programme?

Tailored impact advisory — Built around impact enterprises

Personalised, context-aware guidance designed to amplify social and environmental impact, aligned with the growth journey of impact enterprises.

01

Access to relevant funding pathways and impact centric support instruments

02

We don't promise investments — we help get impact enterprises investment-ready, connect
with the right ecosystems, and build the resilience to grow on their terms.

Long-term support within a regional impact community

Marc is building a dynamic CEE network of impact entrepreneurs with long-term mentorship, visibility, and lasting collaboration beyond the programme.

03

Click here for more details!

Marc Impact Programme in Numbers 2025-26

2nd year

99 Impact enterprises trained

79% of participants created or improved their business model

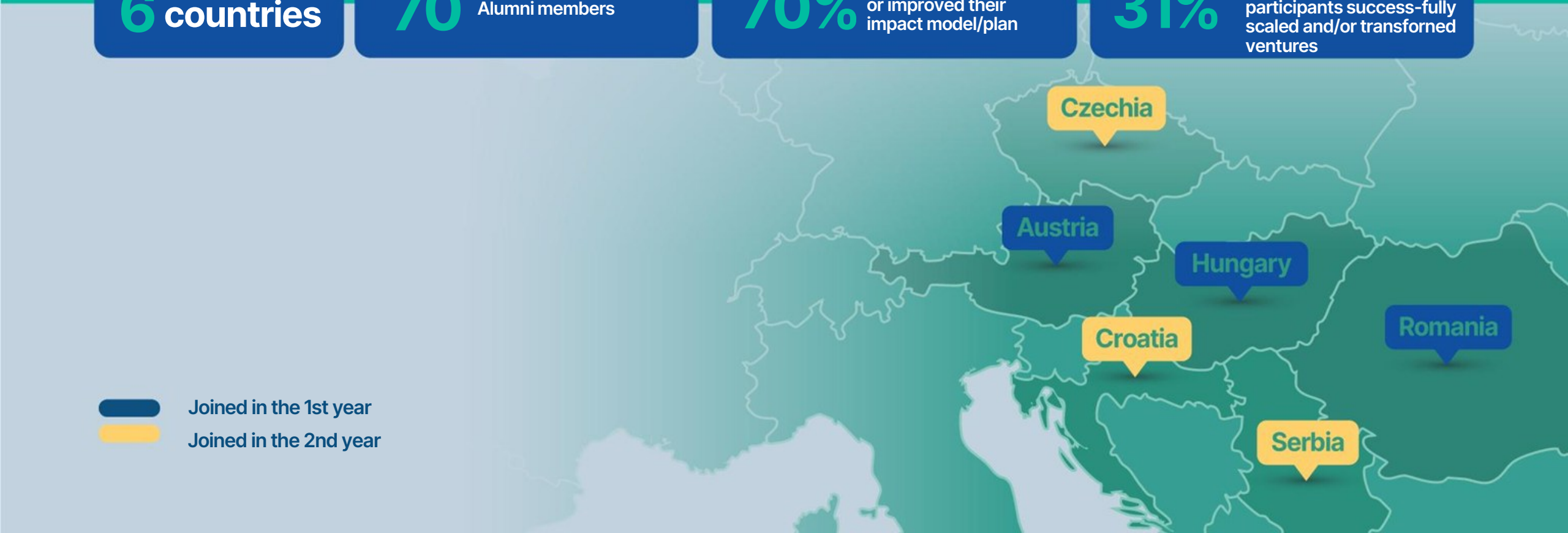
12+ million EUR new funding raised by our impact enterprises

6 countries

70 Alumni members

70% of participants created or improved their impact model/plan

31% of previous-year participants success-fully scaled and/or transforned ventures



Welcome to Marc

What began with the simple idea of collaborating across sectors has turned into an already thriving ecosystem across CEE. The Marc Impact Programme not only supports outstanding entrepreneurs but reimagines how impact and business can truly go hand in hand together in this region.

At ERSTE Foundation and the entire ERSTE family, there is a strong belief that ventures combining purpose with business discipline will shape the future of the region, enabling more people to have self-determined lives. Yet many of these entrepreneurs are still navigating systems that were never designed for them. Marc was built as their home base, a place to grow, belong and inspire the region's impact economy. In just two years, it has shown that a more inclusive, resilient economic model is not only possible but already taking shape. At its core is a powerful community. Ventures demonstrate what happens when ambition meets customised support and a regional network. As many of them say, Marc is not just another accelerator, it is a place where they belong, and where they gain a real chance to perform and grow.

And this journey continues. Marc is helping to build trust and social capital across CEE, carrying forward Erste's legacy that began over 200 years ago: creating opportunity where there was none before.



Philipp Thurn und Taxis
Deputy CEO
of ERSTE Stiftung



Welcome to Marc

The first two years of Marc have been an incredible journey. Together with our partners, we built a regional programme from the ground up. Today, Marc operates across six countries and has already supported 169 impact ventures.

Building something like this has taken a lot of work, with challenges and tough decisions along the way. But when we look back at the past two years, we don't first think about the programme itself. We think about the people who have become part of it. What makes us proud is seeing a community take shape around Marc. Not only among the ventures themselves, but also among local programme partners, social bankers, mentors, investors and funders. More and more often, we see people sharing opportunities, exchanging experiences and helping each other move forward. To us, this is one of Marc's biggest achievements.

We set out to support impact ventures, but we have also started building a community around them: people who believe that business can be a force for positive change and who are willing to work together to make that happen.

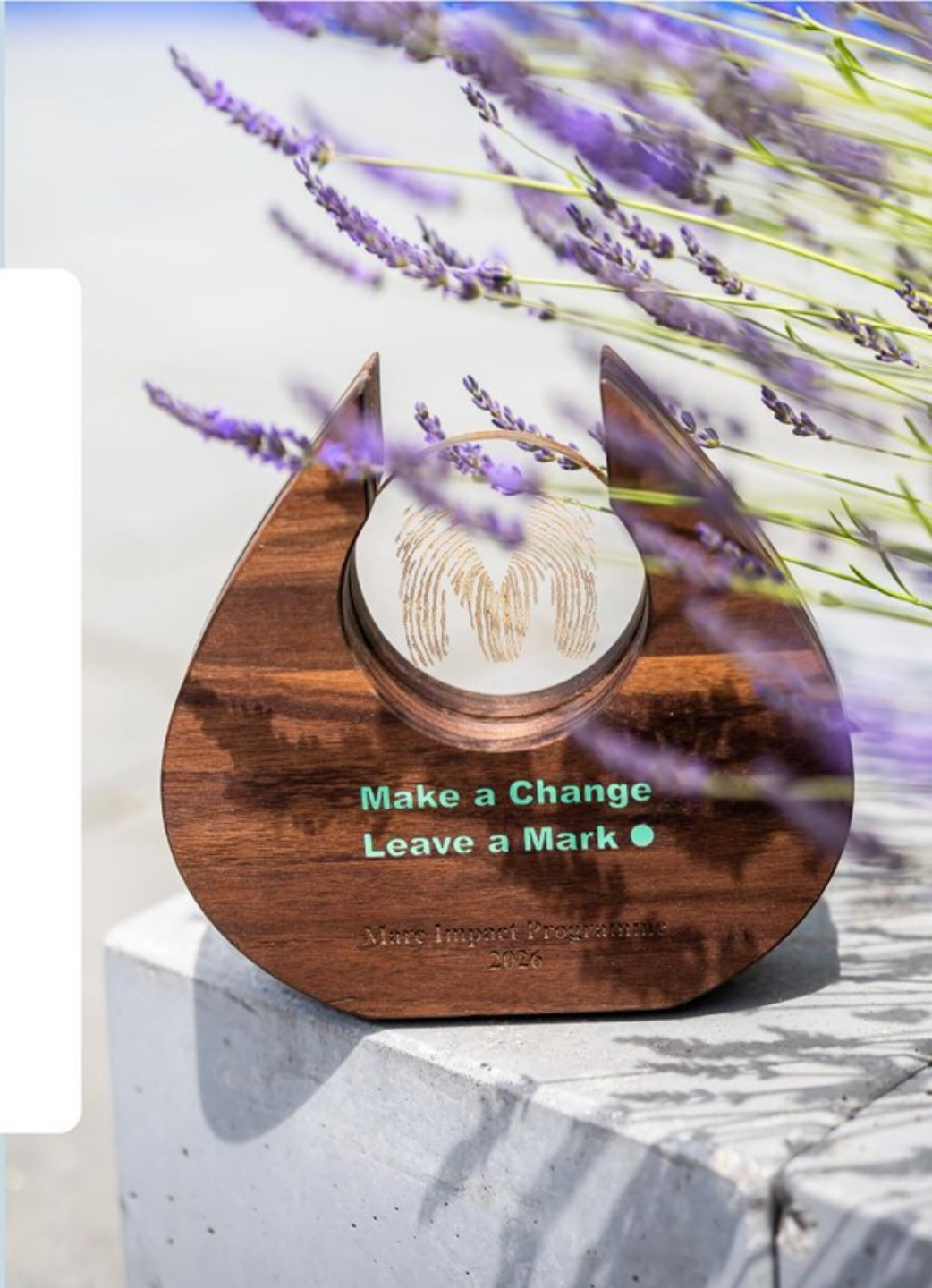
This report reflects the achievements of our second year, but also the collaboration, commitment and ambition of everyone involved. We still have a lot to do, but we are excited to see what we can build together in the years ahead.

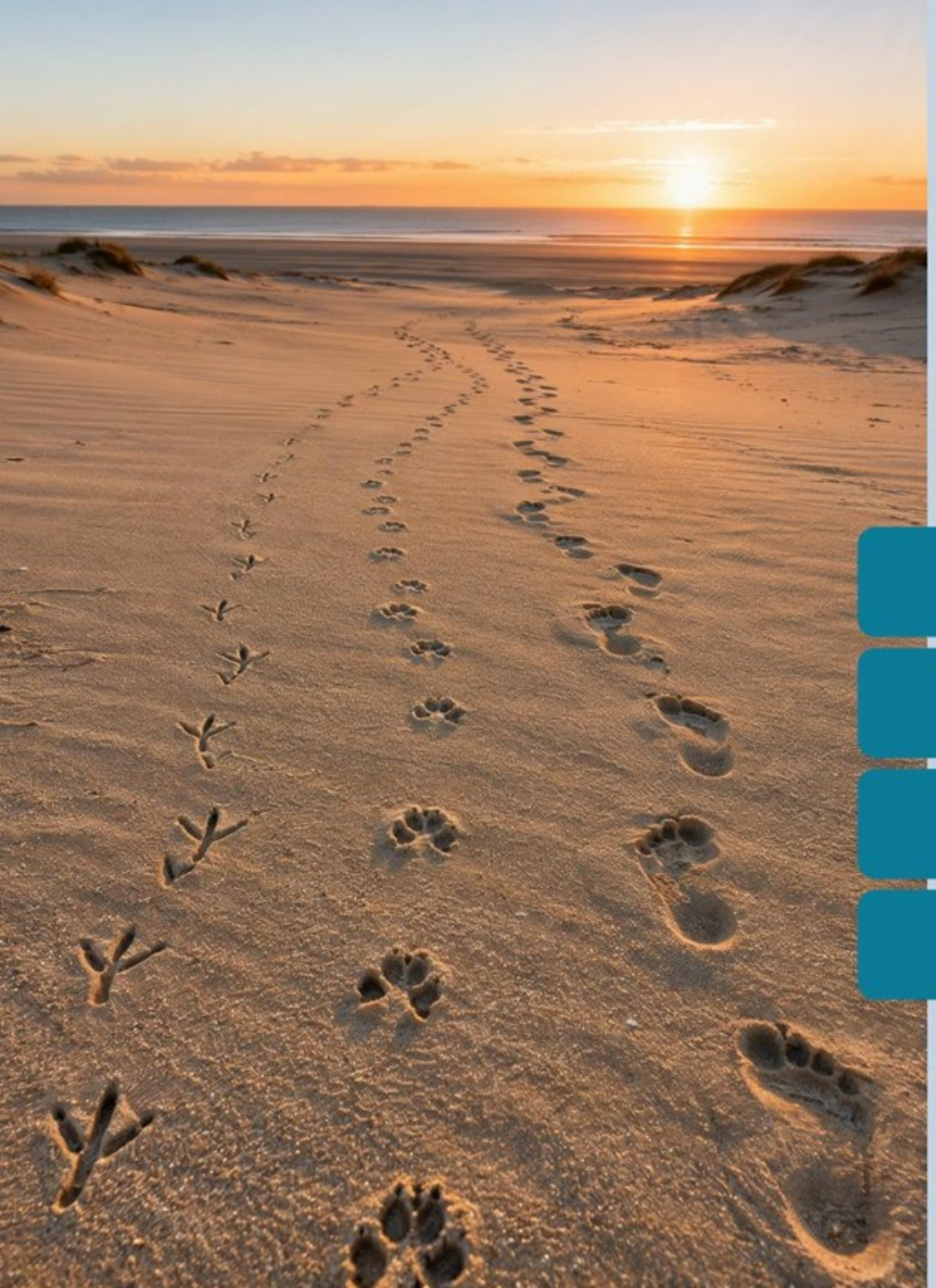


Zsuzsanna PÁL,
Managing Director
IFUA Nonprofit Partner
Marc Impact Programme
Implementing Partner



Gábor Lajos NAGY,
Co-Founder & Co-CEO
SIMPACT
Marc Impact Programme
Implementing Partner





Marc Impact Report at a Glance

- Our Ambition
- The Marc Journey in 2025-26
- Our Impact
- What comes next

Our Ambition

Our mission

Marc supports impact entrepreneurs across CEE to build scalable, impact-first ventures that maximize social impact and attract aligned capital needed for long-term growth. Through locally tailored capacity building, access to strategic networks and expertise, and growth-enabling financing, Marc helps ventures strengthen their impact and business models and progress sustainably to their next stage of development.

Our vision

A thriving CEE support ecosystem where impact ventures have the capabilities, networks and capital needed to create lasting positive change by solving the region´s most pressing social challenges.

Our impact objective

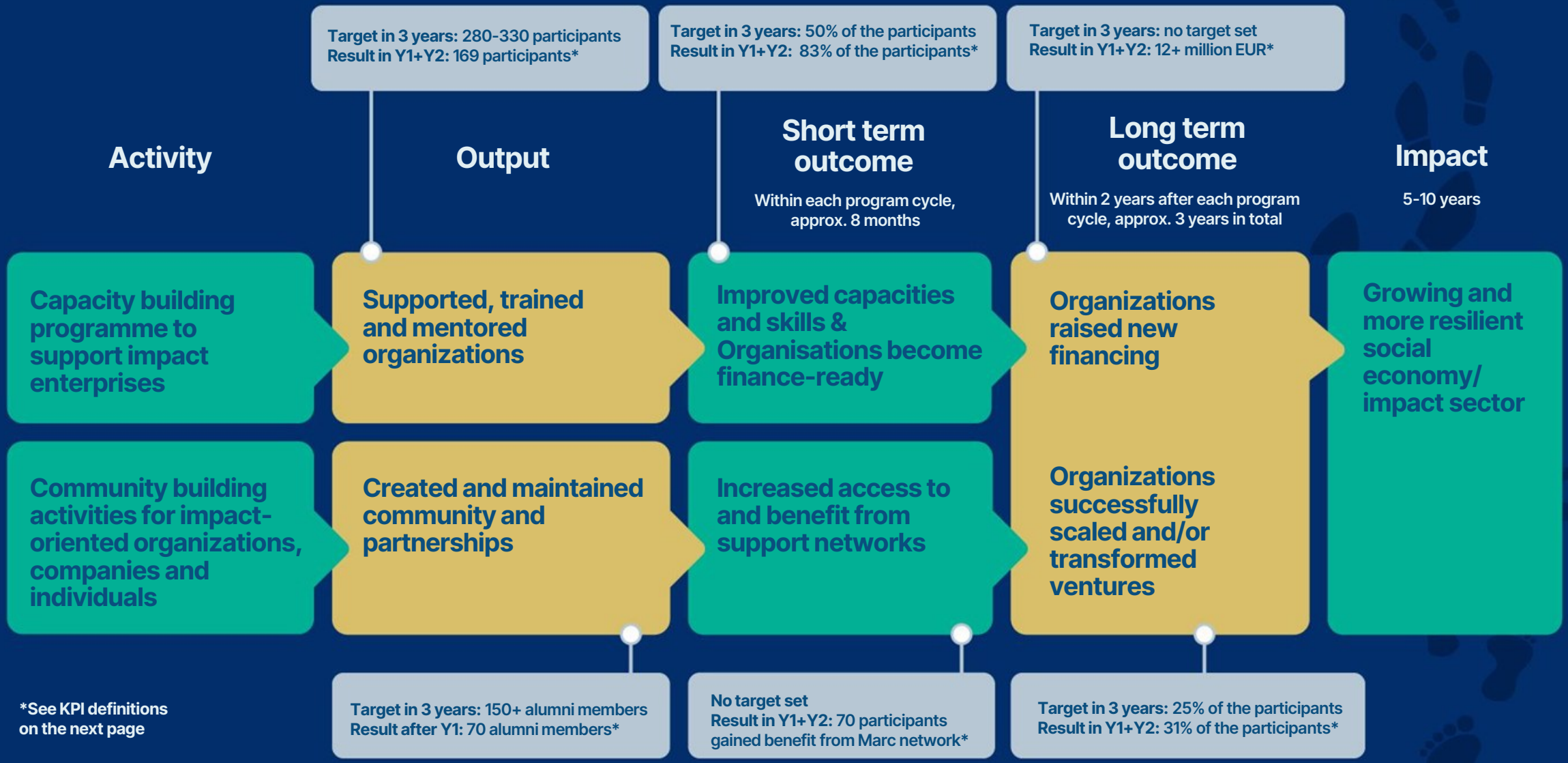
Growing & more resilient social economy / impact sector
Higher and more sustainable social and ecological impact of the supported organizations and supportive ecosystems around impact enterprises in the CEE region.

Our ambition

Marc aims to become the most relevant CEE community for impact entrepreneurs and investors focused on scalable, impact-first business models.



The Theory of Change Model of Marc



*See KPI definitions on the next page

Marking our Impact Targets

Impact Goal	KPI Measure	KPI Target for 3 Years	Results in Y1	Results in Y2	Results in Y1 + Y2
Supported, trained and mentored organisation	Number of impact enterprise participants	280-330	70	99	169
Improved capacities and skills of the organizations	% of participants improved their impact / business model	50%	88%	79%	83%
Created and maintained community and partnership	Number of volunteers	70+	39	84	123
	Number of alumni members	150+	n.a.	70	70
Increased access to and benefit from support networks	Number of participants received additional external funding, award visibility, partnership within the program cycle	no target set	13	57	70
Organizations raised new financing	Amount of new funding raised by Marc participants and alumni*	no target set	2.5 million+ EUR	9.5 million+ EUR	12 million+ EUR
Organisations successfully scaled and/or transformed their ventures	% of participants successfully scaled and/or transformed their ventures within 2 years after the program cycle**	25%	n.a.	31%	31%

* Current and previous year's cohorts together
** Based on the follow-up of previous years' cohorts 1 year after the program cycle

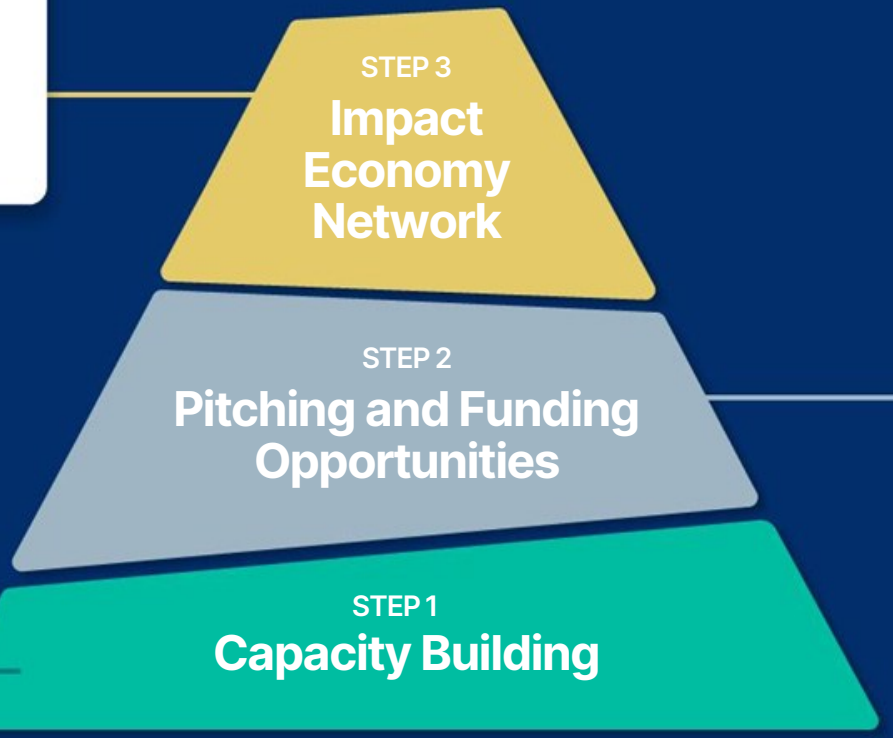
ACTIVITY

Step by Step: The Marc Journey

Marc offers capacity-building solutions for impact enterprises, improving their ability to generate social and ecological impact and secure financing. Through this initiative, enterprises receive essential support, including practical assistance and expert guidance. To reflect on the market differences among countries, Marc partners with local players, who are responsible for the local programmes. However, all local programmes generally offer the following:

Impact Economy Network

Long-term access to a community of like-minded impact entrepreneurs as well as other stakeholders of the impact ecosystem in seven CEE countries



Capacity Building

Several group trainings or a two-day-long boot camp, where our Marc participants receive expert guidance and knowledge. Additionally, one-on-one mentoring for 3-5 months with professional mentors.

Pitching and Funding Opportunities

Our re:Marc event hosts pitches with the participation of Investors and loan providers. The best enterprises have an opportunity to receive a catalytic grant from the Marc Impact Programme

Participants of Marc Impact Programme

The 2025–2026 cycle marked the second year of the Marc Impact Programme. Building on the foundation of the first year—which spanned Austria, Hungary, and Romania—the program expanded to include three new countries: Croatia, Czechia, and Serbia. This regional growth enabled the cohort to grow from 70 participants in the first year to 99 impact enterprises in 2025-26.

99 Participants **332 Applicants**



First year

70 Participants

145 Applicants



Altogether, the program has **now supported 169 impact enterprises** in its first two years, putting it well on track toward its overarching three-year goal of empowering 280-330 ventures.

The Enterprises Marc Supported in 2025-26

Click here for more details!



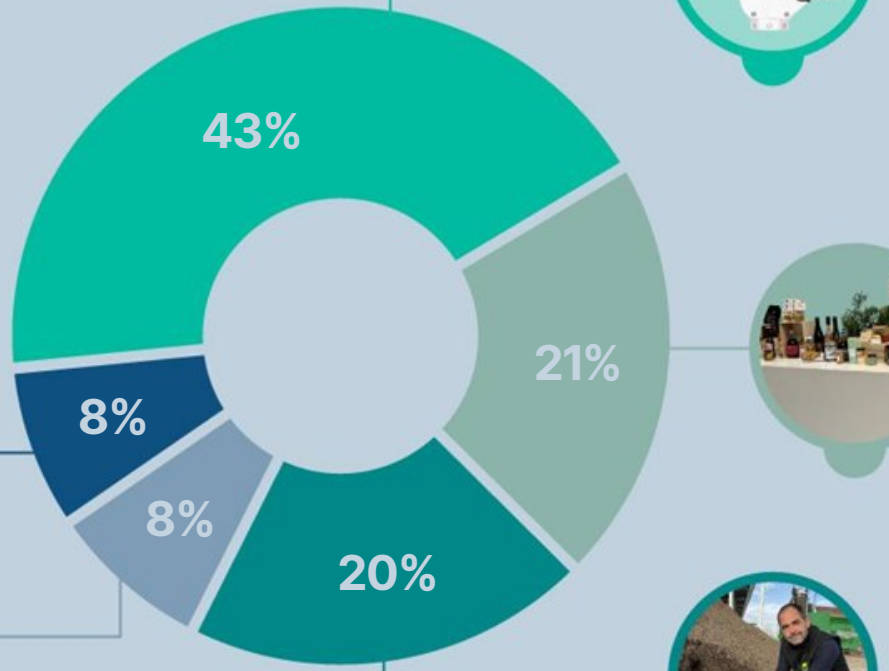
Social Enterprises for Employment

Enterprises, that employ people with disadvantages. In some of our countries, it may be called WISE (Work Integration Social Enterprise).



NPOs with a Business Activity

Non-profit organisations, which run a business, and aim to earn sustainable and growing business incomes.





Tech Startups with Impact

Technology-driven companies focused on creating innovative solutions that address significant social or environmental challenges while pursuing scalable business growth.

Impact First Enterprises

Dynamic enterprises/startups with hardware involved (not tech) generating social or ecological impact.



Enterprises with Organic, Natural, Traditional values

Enterprises that prioritize sustainability, authenticity, and heritage by using natural ingredients, eco-friendly practices, and shorter supply change methods in their products or services.

Where Do Our Participants Leave Their Footprint?

The impact enterprises in the 2025–26 Marc cohort represent a dynamic tapestry of purpose-driven innovation, addressing some of the most pressing social and ecological challenges of our time. The most common objectives and examples of solutions for them:

Social Inclusion & Empowerment

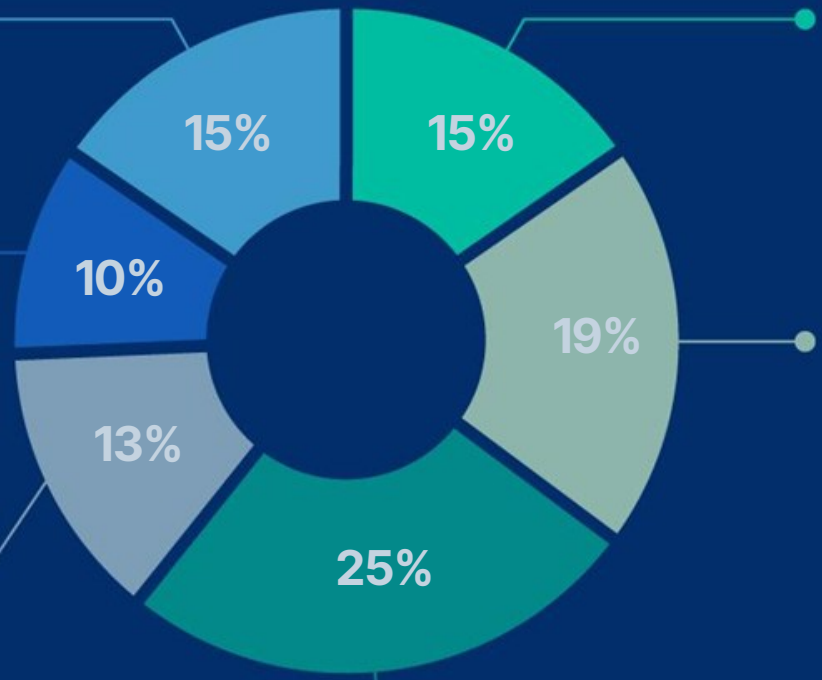
NRG Čačak (RS) is a unique hazardous-waste social enterprise that employs people with disabilities, with strong demand, recurring clients, and proven community impact.

Mental Health, Wellbeing & Safety

Czech Red Cross (CZ) offers a "Red Button" tele-care service for seniors and other vulnerable people. It is a simple emergency button with 24/7 monitoring and follow-up field assistance.

Healthcare Services & Care Provision

Origin BCI (RO) is developing an affordable bionic hand prosthesis that restores not only movement but also the sense of touch, bringing a new level of independence to people living with limb loss.



Circular Economy & Waste Reduction

TransFoodMission (HU) offers a retail focused upcycling platform aimed at reducing food waste. It offers retailers category management, waste reduction measurement, supplier programs, and communications support.

Climate Action & AgriTech

Project O2 (HR) offers drone-based reforestation combining biodegradable SeedBombs with advanced aerial monitoring systems (LiDAR, RGB, and multispectral sensors) to enable data-driven, efficient, and sustainable restoration of degraded ecosystems.

Education & Youth

TalentsLounge by DaVinciLab (AT) is helping teachers bring coding, AI, and digital skills into classrooms through hands-on learning experiences that can scale far beyond national borders.

Read our participant booklet!

Step 1: Capacity Building

GOAL

To build a roadmap to scaling and finance-readiness

SUPPORTS

Group training days, bootcamps for learning new skills

Expert consultation sessions to tailor the topic to participants' needs

Business modelling, financial planning training to prepare for finance-readiness

High-level (individual) development plan to prepare further steps

Individual mentoring sessions to address the specific needs of each participant (developing business model, impact model, finance-readiness, organisation, processes etc.)

*1 Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a customer loyalty metric that measures the willingness of customers to recommend a company, product, or service to others. (scale: 0-10)

99
participants

15-30
hours per participant provided for professional support and mentoring

9,1
average of the NPS*1 (based on participants' review)



OUTPUT

Step 2: Highlights from re:Marc 2026

Re:Marc is the annual international conference and pitch event of the Marc Impact Programme to recognise impact excellence. The event took place in June 2026 in Budapest, Hungary, with 187 participants: entrepreneurs, investors, mentors, ecosystem builders, and changemakers from six regional countries.

The keynote speech was delivered by Uli Grabenwarter (European Investment Fund Deputy CIO & Head of Equity Investments) after the welcome speech by Radován Jelasity (Erste Bank Hungary, CEO). The event featured a dynamic pitch competition where the top 2 ventures from each of our program countries presented their innovative solutions to the jury and the expert audience. Beyond the pitches, re:Marc created space for founders to exchange experiences, investors to explore new opportunities, and participants to find out what it truly takes to scale impact-driven ventures in the region.

187 participants in re:Marc	**17** impact investors	**12** selected pitching enterprises	**3** re:Marc award winners	**9** special award winners



Imprints of Change: Honouring the re:Marc Award Winners

The three main awards were presented by the Marc Impact Programme, providing catalytic grants to support the winners' further development, scalability, and long-term impact.







Grand Impact Award

Nepanikař, Czechia

Nepanikař z.s.ř (Czech Republic), winner of the Marc Grand Impact Award 2026 and a catalytic grant of EUR 20,000, is making mental health support accessible through a free app that provides immediate, anonymous help to people in crisis.
Nepanikař plans to use the catalytic grant to develop and maintain their biometric module, to translate and localise their interface for cross-border expansion, and to run marketing campaigns.

nepanikar.eu

Innovation Champion Award

Origin BCI, Romania

Origin BCI (Romania), winner of the Marc Innovation Champion Award 2026 and a catalytic grant of EUR 15,000, is developing an affordable bionic hand prosthesis that restores not only movement but also the sense of touch, bringing a new level of independence to people living with limb loss.
Origin BCI plans to use this grant for relevant testing to improve reliability of their motors, and compliance of their materials.

originbci.com

Scalability Champion Award

DaVinciLab, Austria

TalentsLounge by DaVinciLab (Austria), winner of the Marc Scalability Champion Award 2026 and a catalytic grant of EUR 15,000, is helping teachers bring coding, AI, and digital skills into classrooms through hands-on learning experiences that can scale far beyond national borders.
DaVinciLab plans to use this grant to localise their offering and validate its pilots, establish new educational partnerships and a replication toolkit.

davincilab.at

Industry
Health

Nepanikař

Why Nepanikař?

Nepanikař is the largest Czech app dealing with mental health issues. Every day, it is used by 500 people with suicidal thoughts and 1.000 people with anxiety.

Problem

One in four people worldwide experiences mental health issues and someone dies by suicide every 40 seconds. Access to timely, affordable support remains limited.

Solution

Nepanikař provides comprehensive psychological support via an app, crisis hotlines and therapy, while training new specialists.

Ambition

Expanding the application to as many countries as possible and expanding its team of instructors, who will be able to train even more experts.



Key Figures

Turnover (EUR)	Capital needs (EUR)
125K	200K

Type of capital need
Grants + Institutional Cofunding

No. of customers	No. of employees
~300	23

Social Impacts

In 2024, 783.577 users used the app, with over 60.000 new downloads. The crisis counseling center responded to over 4.000 chats and 3.500 emails. Over 80 workshops were held for schools and companies, and 13 crisis intervention courses took place. Thanks to the platform, 520 online therapy sessions were conducted.

Contacts
Radka Novotná
novotna@nepanikar.eu

Industry
Health

Origin BCI

Why Origin BCI?

Our bionic hand combines high dexterity with an accessory-like design, delivering an affordable solution that feels less like a medical device, while remaining versatile enough for both everyday use and robotic applications.



Problem

Demand for advanced bionic devices is rising due to increasing cases of stroke, obesity, diabetes, and injury.

Solution

Origin BCI develops powerful, durable bionic devices that remain affordable for insurance coverage, using high-fidelity biosensors for control.

Ambition

Becoming the leading provider of bionic devices, removing stigma and improving lives with functional, beautiful designs.

Social Impacts

By 2030, bionic hands will help over 300 patients regain their sense of touch, while robotic manipulators will bridge the gap between robotic and human colaboration.

Contacts
David-Alexandru Popescu
david.popescu@originbci.com

Key Figures

Turnover (EUR)	Capital needs (EUR)
0	600K

Type of capital need
Impact-focused VC capital supporting product affordability, Angels & Grants

No. of employees	No. of customers
4	0



Industry
Education

DaVinciLab.at

Problem

Many schools lack qualified IT teachers and structured digital literacy programmes. As a result, students, especially those in rural or disadvantaged communities, have limited access to coding and AI education, while gender gaps in STEM continue to persist.

Solution

TalentsLounge offers a scalable "Teacher-as-a-Coach" platform that enables teachers to deliver high-quality coding and AI education. The platform provides curriculum support, automated tools and corporate-sponsored modules to expand digital learning opportunities.

Social Impacts

TalentsLounge has reached 120 schools and up to 12.000 pupils, democratizing AI and coding education across Europe. With 85% completion and 95% school retention rates, it increases digital literacy, empowers girls in STEM, and enables students, especially in underserved regions, to become creators of technology, not just consumers.



Key Figures

Turnover (EUR)	Capital needs (EUR)
100K	500-750K

Type of capital need
to be defined

No. of employees	No. of customers
5	~100



Contacts
Anna Gawin
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Positive Futures Award

The Positive Futures Award, offered by Fourfold Foundation and implemented by FASE, supports high-impact CEE ventures in food systems, nature-based solutions and circularity, providing each recipient with a €25,000 fundraising support voucher to accelerate growth and strengthen investment readiness.



This year's winners are:

Recycllux,Romania

Recycllux (Romania), winner in the Nature-Based Solutions category, for tackling marine plastic pollution through satellite-powered waste detection and partnerships with local fishers to recover plastic from the sea

recycllux.com

Holy Pulp, Hungary

Holy Pulp (Hungary), winner in the Food Systems category, for transforming surplus juice pulp into natural dog treats and creating a circular solution to food industry waste.

ebkeksz.hu

Industry
Waste management

Recycllux

Why Recycllux?

Recycllux deeptech solution transforms marine plastic cleanup into measurable, scalable global impact through AI, satellite data and blockchain.

Problem

Millions tons of plastic pollute our seas, harming life and coastal economies. Companies face pressure to act but lack tools to prove real impact.

Solution

Recycllux uses AI, satellite data, and blockchain to detect and coordinate marine clean-ups with local networks, creating verified plastic offsets.

Ambition

Expanding across Europe's seas, restoring marine ecosystems and setting a global benchmark for transparent, trusted plastic offsetting.

Key Figures

Turnover (EUR)	Capital needs (EUR)
335K	1M

Type of capital need
VC Impact Capital, Grants

No. of employees	No. of customers
15	2





Social Impacts

Over the next five years, Recycllux aims to remove 5.000 tons of marine plastic, prevent 1.2 million tons of CO_2 emissions, create 5.000 local jobs, and improve the lives of 5 million people in coastal communities.

Contacts
Sorina Uleia
sorina@recycllux.com

Why Holy Pulp?

Circular pet-food brand turning food waste into scalable retail products with proven market demand.

Problem

Food byproducts are wasted while pet-food production still relies heavily on unsustainable new raw materials.

Solution

We transform fruit pulp into premium dog treats, converting waste into scalable, retail-ready products with real market demand.

Industry
Waste Management, Production

Ambition

Expanding across EU and becoming a leading brand in upcycled pet nutrition.





Key Figures

Turnover (EUR)	Capital needs (EUR)
260K	75-150K

Type of capital need
Impact Investment, Angel Investment, Strategic Partners

No. of employees	No. of customers
5	15K+



Social Impacts

Upcycled 2.000+ kg of fruit pulp into pet products in 2025, reducing food waste and CO_2 emissions through circular production.

Contacts
Virág Perl
hello@ebkeksz.hu

OUTPUT

Special Awards & In-Kind Support

In addition to the main competition prizes, several partners offered special in-kind awards, which were open to all 99 impact enterprises participating in the competition. Award recipients were selected by the sponsoring partners following an independent review of all participating ventures, taking into account the relevance of the support offered, the venture's development stage, and its potential to benefit from the partner's expertise.

Award

Legal Consultation support, €7.500

Pro bono support will help the venture prepare for the platform's qualification process and future investment opportunities.

Winner

TransFoodMission, Hungary

GROWCEANU
Investment Platform Listing

DENTONS
Legal Consultation Support

HORVÁTH IFUA
Consultation Support

Award

Legal Consultation support

The support will provide access to professional legal expertise during the venture's development.

Winner

WOW Lab, Romania

Award

Management Consultation Support, €3-5.000

Pro bono consultation will help strengthen the venture's business strategy, operations, and long-term development

Winner

Hunnia Patika, Hungary

Salt COMM
Marketing & comms Support

brutkasten
Media Visibility

Award

Branding and PR support, €8.000

The services will help communicate the venture's mission, work, and impact more effectively.

Winner

KórházSuli, Hungary

Award

Media visibility, €4.500

The services will bring the winners' solutions and impact stories to a wider international audience.

Winner

Nepanikař, Origin BCI and DaVinciLab GmbH

Step 3: Community Building

In 2025-26, our community-building strategy centred on strengthening local ecosystems. We focused on increasing the frequency of local events, deliberately prioritising in-person gatherings to foster deeper connections, trust, and meaningful collaboration among the participants. Having established these strong local foundations, the primary focus for the upcoming year will shift toward international integration. The next phase will be dedicated to bridging these regional hubs, facilitating cross-border partnerships, and creating a truly cohesive, cross-border network of impact entrepreneurs.

GOAL

Networking & pear-to-pear learning

Introductions to potential partners, investors, and collaborators

SUPPORTS

Long-term access to a community of like-minded impact entrepreneurs as well as other stakeholders of the impact ecosystem

Regular local Alumni events

Access to further knowledge sharing

Invitation to our annual re:Marc event

35
face-to-face events

27
online events

1500
participants all together



Who Walked This Path With Us

During the programme we supported, trained and mentored impact enterprises, and put effort on creating a community and partnerships. This could not have been possible without the Marc team, mentors, volunteers and community partners.

84 corporate or private volunteers participated in Marc Impact Programme

79 mentors / experts / trainers supported the development of impact enterprises

WORK LOUNGE
TILIA IMPACT VENTURES
BIC Business Innovation Centre Plzeň
PLUS INOVACE
AmpliFY ONG
MSP Magurele Science Park
brandom
Externalis.
forvis mazars
Impact CEE
GROWCEANU
HORVÁTH IFUA
DENTONS
PurposeTech
Balthazar Professor
PANDA KOMUNIKACIE
Fourfold
FASE
Salt COMM



Short Term Outcomes: Improved Capacities and Skills

During the programme, participants developed the areas with the greatest growth potential for them in a tailored approach, thereby increasing their capacity and capabilities and became more finance ready. Indicators belonging to outcomes will be evaluated yearly in the following years.



79% of participants created or improved their business model

A business model describes how an impact enterprise creates, delivers, and captures value through its value proposition, target customers, revenue streams, cost structure, key resources, and operational processes. The participants in Marc received methodological support for the development and refinement of their business model.

70% of participants created or improved their impact model/plan

During the Base phase participants received methodological support to create or improve their impact model / plan based on the „theory of change" framework. In the Advanced phase, developing the impact model was an important element of their pitch preparation.

Feedbacks about improved skills from participants

The mentoring helped us to clarify our customer journey and to build the foundation for proper sales.

We received relevant, approachable, supportive, and professionally well-prepared mentoring. We were able to move to a different level or league!

The mentoring helped with a clear view on the finance plan and how I can have a better preview for the next years, to see where we will have a finance gap.

Our work together produced results at both the strategic and operational levels. It opened up new business perspectives, and we were also able to improve our operating system.

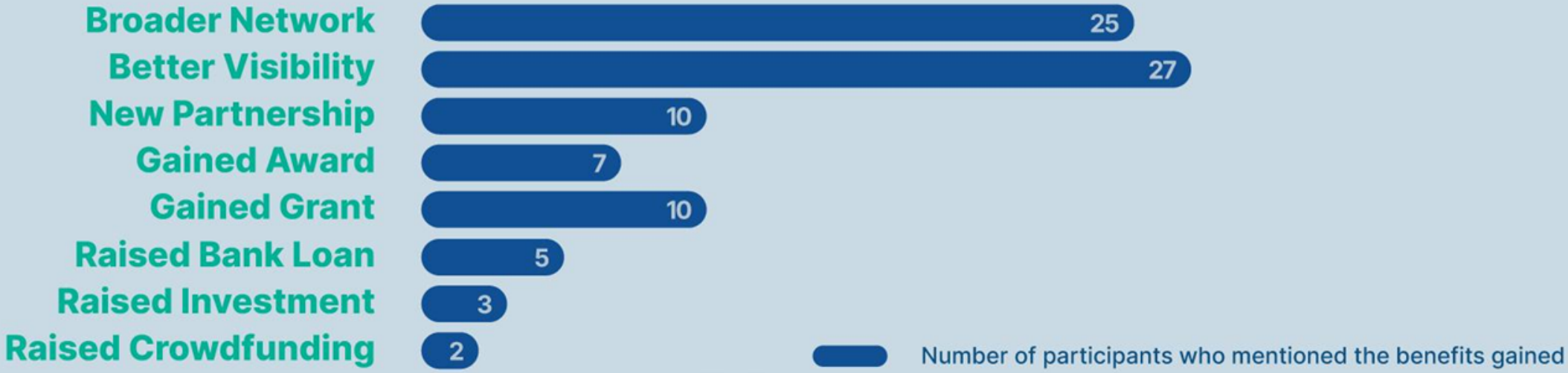


Short Term Outcomes:

Increased access to and benefit from support networks

A cornerstone of the Marc programme is building a supportive impact ecosystem that unlocks valuable opportunities for meaningful connections, strategic partnerships, heightened market visibility, and broader access to financing.

Based on feedback from the 2025-26 cohort, 57 participants highlighted the following key benefits gained through the Marc network.



> We expanded our network from a smaller remote community; built closer relationships with Erste Bank within the impact ecosystem.

> We benefited from comparing strategies with other startups, expert speakers, and gaining access to new investor-facing partnerships.

Paving the Way to Success

What were the immediate results of the programme?

HobbyLobby

Hobby Lobby offers free extracurricular courses for children and teenagers across 15 locations in 3 countries, providing access to non-formal education and contributing significantly to equal opportunities.

During the program, Hobby Lobby worked intensively on two central questions: defining a future-proof organisational structure and establishing a sustainable growth financing strategy.

Through Marc's support, Hobby Lobby developed a clearer vision for its sustainable fundraising strategy and a concrete plan to scale its impact into new countries.

Additionally, the process highlighted the vital importance of strengthening internal processes and workflows to support long-term, scalable expansion effectively.

www.hobbylobby.ngo/en

Project O2

Having already restored nearly 50 hectares of degraded land in Croatia, Project O2 joined the Marc programme to prepare its drone-based reforestation technology for international expansion—particularly into Austria and Germany.

The key result was winning the Croatian national final of the Marc programme, which secured their place at the international final in Budapest.

Project O2 was presented to a broader international audience and further strengthen its visibility at the European level.

The programme also influenced the way they approach the future development of the project. Alongside their existing cooperation with the private sector, they have started developing collaboration models with public institutions responsible for managing forests and restoring degraded landscapes.

https://project-o2.org/

Nepanikař

Nepanikař offers comprehensive psychological support through an app and has the ambition to expand the app to as many countries as possible. Nepanikař joined the Marc programme at a pivotal stage in their development, as they were transitioning from an informal, grassroots initiative into a stable, clearly structured organisation.

As the programme progressed, focused training in marketing, fundraising, and presentation skills refined their ability to articulate their vision, values, and impact clearly to business partners, potential investors, and end customers.

Nepanikař secured €20,000 in funding at a European conference, where their initiative was recognized for its potential to deliver high-impact solutions across Europe.

https://nepanikar.eu/

Paving the Way to Success

What were the immediate results of the programme?

Origin BCI

Origin BCI has the ambition to become the leading bionics provider, removing the stigma around having a limb difference issue by creating beautiful and useful devices.

The support they got during the Marc programme on structuring the pitch, public speaking and financial planning enabled them to take part in many important events and discussions.

Now, people know about Origin BCI . They grew their community and made clinical and research partnerships.

They know how to make their message understood and cared about by talking more about the end-users and their issue, rather than how an electrode works.

https://originbci.com

Duna Dog Center

After more than a decade of building dog-assisted programmes, child development services and a strong professional community, Duna Dog Center was preparing for their most ambitious step: launching an inclusive primary school for children who often struggle to find the right support in the traditional education system.

During Marc, Duna Dog Center worked on translating the many elements of their organisation into one coherent impact business model. Instead of presenting education, diagnostics, therapy and animal-assisted programmes as separate activities, they started framing them as an integrated ecosystem and mapped out a path from their first school.

The Duna Kid Center Primary School received its operating licence and opened its doors in September 2026.

http://www.dunadogcenter.com//

Njuppa

NJUPPA offers a mobile app connecting consumers with shops offering surplus food in "surprise baskets" at a 50–70% discount, reducing waste and saving CO_2. They joined Marc with the ambition of scaling nationally and regionally, reaching 1M users, saving 2M baskets by 2030.

By developing a systematic, repeatable sales process, the company enhanced its market visibility and strengthened its product positioning. These operational milestones culminated in winning the PwC Serbia ESG Leader Award in the Innovation (Start-up) category, recognising their use of new technologies to advance sustainability and resource efficiency while inspiring other startups across Serbia.

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https://njuppa.com/

Why Marc Matters



Libor PODLAHA,
Social Banking Česká spořitelna
(Erste Bank Czechia)

NADACE Česká spořitelny

"For me, Marc is where impact and finance come together. It connects inspiring founders with the networks, knowledge and support they need to grow, while building trust and lasting relationships that continue creating value long after the programme ends.„



Tina SIROTIC,
Head of Social Banking
Erste&Steiermärkische Bank d.d.
(Erste Bank Croatia)

ERSTE

"Marc in Croatia represents more than a programme for us – it is an investment in people and ideas with the potential to create meaningful change. We believe that real impact happens when entrepreneurship combines economic sustainability with a clear social purpose and a strong sense of responsibility towards the community. Through Marc, our ambition is to create a space where such ideas can grow, connect and become drivers of lasting positive change in Croatia."

"Over the past year, the Erste Stiftung's Marc Impact Programme has continued to strengthen Romania's social entrepreneurship ecosystem. Through access to expertise, mentoring, and the Erste Universe network, participants have expanded their knowledge, increased their impact, and become more investment-ready.

As the programme evolves, we are seeing stronger organizations, greater social impact, and growing investor confidence, with several ventures attracting new funding and partnerships. Marc is helping create a more resilient and sustainable ecosystem that delivers lasting value for communities across Romania."



Stefan BUCIUC,
Head of Social Banking
Banca Comercală Română
(Erste Bank Romania)

BCR

Why Marc Matters



Ivan RADOJEVIĆ
Head of Social Banking Unit,
Erste Bank Serbia

„Marc is directly contributing to the development of Serbia's social and impact enterprise community by connecting local stakeholders with a broader regional network of peers, resources, and opportunities. In this way, Marc represents a unique opportunity for the Serbian ecosystem—not only by bringing together organisations and entrepreneurs who often lack adequate support to strengthen their financial sustainability, but also by helping them grow, scale, and further develop their impact models at the same time. Through tailored and individual support for participants and access to diverse financing opportunities, Marc addresses an important need within Serbian society- creating stronger conditions for innovative and social entrepreneurship to thrive. By strengthening both the organisations themselves and the connections between them, Marc contributes to a more resilient, collaborative, and impact-oriented ecosystem."



Sevgi DUMAN-WOLF,
Social Banking Investment Manager
Erste Bank und Sparkasse Austria

"What inspires me most about Marc are the participants. Their commitment, positive energy and determination to strengthen impact-driven businesses are truly remarkable – especially when facing challenges along the way.
Being able to accompany them on this journey, to see their development and the strong sense of shared purpose they bring to Marc, is incredibly rewarding. It's a privilege to be part of their journey!"

"Erste was founded over 200 years ago with a very simple principle: everybody has the right to create a better life. This statement is simple, but impactful. It ultimately resulted in creating the largest banking group in the CEE region, that have never lost sight of its founding purpose to improve the quality of life in our region's societies. This purpose-driven thinking and the drive to have a positive social impact quite naturally positions us the proud banking partners of Marc in Hungary. We are pleased to help a new generation of entrepreneurs that share our vision of a stronger, happier, and prosperous Europe and willing to work not only for profits, but also for impact."



Radován JELASITY,
CEO and Chairman of the Board,
Erste Bank Hungary

Long Term Outcome:

Organisations raised new financing

Marc has the ambition to prepare participating impact enterprises to secure external financing for their growth. Through tailored business mentorship, capacity building in impact measurement, and access to an international network, Marc Impact Programme equips founders with the readiness and credibility needed to unlock funding. Whether they are targeting grants, debt, or equity investments, we provide dedicated support to help them navigate and access the financing structures best suited to their long-term expansion goals.

Marc participants and alumni raised 12+ million EUR new funding



EcoVolve

Supported by the European Union, the EcoVolve project enabled us to expand our capacity-building initiatives while placing a strong focus on fostering a more supportive financing ecosystem for impact ventures. Throughout 2025 and 2026, we engaged with over 100 key stakeholders across both the demand and supply sides of the market. As a direct result of these extensive consultations and cross-sector collaborations, the following key deliverables were created:

- A deep market map of the CEE impact market
- Impact-linked financing for impact enterprises
- A new impact fund structure



Take a look at EcoVolve's Market Research Report

LONG TERM OUTCOME

Leaving Their Mark

Impact Enterprises Successfully Scaled Their Ventures

The core ambition of Marc is to empower participating impact enterprises to transform their strategic vision into reality. By equipping social and environmental founders with tailored support, actionable tools, and regional networks, the program enables these ventures to execute their growth plans effectively. Ultimately, this structured guidance helps organisations scale their solutions, driving deeper, more sustainable ecological and social impact across Central and Eastern Europe in the long term.

Of the 70 participants in the previous year's cohort 22 impact enterprises successfully scaled and/or transformed their ventures over the past year.



Stepping Up: Stories of Alumni Scaling Their Impact

byeagain

byeagain.eu

byeagain—winner of last year's Marc AT Excellence Award—is redefining circularity by giving returned children's products a second life through smart automation and reverse logistics.

Over the past year, the company demonstrated remarkable growth, successfully securing €700,000 in debt and quasi-equity financing from AWS (Austria Wirtschaftsservice) and Erste Bank in 2025.





Stepping Up: Stories of Alumni Scaling Their Impact

Autism Voice

autismvoice.ro

Autism Voice increased turnover by 50% and shaped Work Aid Kit into an integrated intervention model that works with employers, neurodivergent people seeking work and academia. Significantly increased impact in the number of neurodivergent people supported, but also in the number of clients trained in non-typical recruitment.

Over the past year, they became an important voice in employment inclusion and gained €90,000 from corporate sponsorship.





Stepping Up: Stories of Alumni Scaling Their Impact

Merova Health

merovahealth.com

Merova Health develops digital health solutions that help podologists and nutritionists deliver more personalised, data-driven care. By making health data easier to understand and act on, the company supports better patient engagement and long-term health outcomes.

Building on the momentum gained during last year's Marc cohort, Merova secured €270,000 in equity financing to further scale its technology and expand its reach.





Stepping Up: Stories of Alumni Scaling Their Impact

Context.ro

context.ro

Vetted, the first commercial venture of Context.ro is one of Romania's leading independent investigative journalism platforms. They work in a sensitive, fast-changing media environment, and their investigations inform public debate and strengthen democratic processes in Romania.

After Marc, they show how independent media can build income streams beyond grants and attract impact-driven investors via securing €75,000 from an impact fund, only two months after incorporation.

This deal crossed the traditional line between grant funding and investment, this is exactly Marc´s mission in action. Other NGOs with specialised expertise can follow the same path, turning their expertise into services that fund their mission.



LONG TERM OUTCOME



Stepping Up: Stories of Alumni Scaling Their Impact

SSH Boards

szalmapaplan.hu

SSH Boards, our first Marc CEE winner, sells a patented, ETA-validated insulation solution made from straw, turning an agricultural by-product into a building material that can help make homes more energy efficient and reduce the environmental footprint of construction.

After winning, SSH Boards received a **€50,000** catalytic grant from the Marc Impact Programme to support the next stage of their journey. Following the grant, they secured a **€108,000 (HUF 20 million)** loan from Erste Magyarország, further strengthening their ability to scale.

SSH production and sales are growing, the team is expanding its facility, and a new production machine is being developed for Italy, the first steps towards an international licensing partnership happened.

Their technology is also becoming part of a bigger story, SSH Boards is one of around 20 partners contributing to the @Equinox-led Kádár Cube pilot in Martonvásár, where its straw insulation will be used as part of a model for sustainably renovating one of Hungary's most widespread housing types.





Looking Ahead: Year 3 Priorities

In 2026-27, Marc will focus on strengthening its value proposition through community-building, programme professionalisation and regional growth

Marc Connect
Building a stronger community around impact ventures
- Launch and grow the Marc Connect community
- Strengthen alumni engagement and peer learning
- Foster cross-country collaboration
- Connect ventures with experts, investors, corporates and funders

Programme Professionalization
Strengthening Marc's value proposition
- Refine programme methodologies and participant journeys
- Build stronger partnerships with investors, funders and financing experts
- Create more participant-investor engagement opportunities
- Enhance programme quality and consistency across countries

Regional Expansion
Growing Marc's reach and impact
- Expand the programme to Slovakia
- Increase the overall number of participating ventures (100-120)
- Continue building a regional ecosystem of high-impact organisations
- Strengthen Marc's visibility across CEE



The expansion and continuation of the Marc Impact programme is co-funded by the European Union within the EcoVolve project (full project name: EcoVolve: Evolutionizing
Ecosystems for Social Enterprises in the CEE Region, Project number: 101188814).

Marc

Make a Change,
Leave a Mark