



Interreg Europe action plan template

Produced by each region, the **action plan** is a document providing details on **how** the lessons learnt from the cooperation will be implemented in order to improve the policy instrument tackled within that region. The minimum information to be provided per action includes the way the action is linked to the project, the nature of the activities to be implemented, their timeframe, the stakeholders involved, the costs and funding sources. If the same policy instrument is addressed by several partners, only one action plan is required. The action plan should also include actions that may have already been initiated in phase 1.

ACTION PLAN FOR THE REGION OF ALBA IULIA, ROMANIA

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Part I – General information

Project: EURE- Effectiveness of environmental urban policies to improve resource efficiency

Partner organisation(s) concerned: Alba Iulia Municipality

Country: Romania

NUTS2 region: RO12

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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(s) addressed: **INTEGRATED URBAN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF ALBA IULIA MUNICIPALITY 2021-2030**

Further details on the policy context and the way the action plan should contribute to improve the policy instruments:

The Regional Operational Programs were created to support the specific needs of each region of Romania. They take into account regional potential and focus on important, converging and complementary areas that have a real impact on the quality of life and well-being of local communities. One of the main source of financial input for the implementation of the actions envisaged in The Integrated Urban Development Strategy is The Regional Operational Programme for the Centru Region. This Policy instrument, through its thematic axis *3- A Region with environmentally friendly communities*- has two main objectives: 1) Promoting energy efficiency measures and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and 2) Increasing the protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution. Under this priority axis, urban areas in the Centru Region, such as the Municipality of Alba Iulia, can undertake and request funding for the following types of orientative actions:

- Improving the energy efficiency of public and residential buildings, including buildings identified as historical monuments, structural consolidation measures;
- Strengthening the administrative capacity of public authorities for the development of projects aimed at "deep renovation" on energy efficiency through the development of guides and good practice solutions, etc. and developing energy efficiency strategies;
- Creating and / or expanding the green corridors in the urban areas of the Center Region and / or reorganizing the street network by increasing the surface of green spaces and reducing the road area;
- Construction / modernization / extension of green spaces, as they are defined in the legislation (parks, urban forests, urban gardens) in urban areas / functional urban areas.

Indeed, it is undeniable that each of these eligible actions contributes in some way to the overall goal of this thematic axis - the creation of environmentally friendly communities that produce as few greenhouse gases as possible, protect biodiversity, pollute the environment as little as possible, and are energy efficient. However, the focus of this policy instruments relies heavily on energy efficiency measures and expanding green space. Environmentally friendly communities, in addition to all these initiatives, also require rational and efficient consumption of all types of resources, not just energy. In other words, an environmentally friendly region is a resource-efficient region.



We believe that this thematic axis must be expanded to include a broader perspective of resource efficiency in order to achieve a sustainable way of working. The circular economy in urban environments can be a means to achieve this resource efficiency, as it has been shown to be able to regenerate natural systems and improve resilience, health, and well-being. It is well known that CE can also help address global issues such as climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. Focusing only on expanding green space or constructing energy-efficient buildings could be an impediment for resource efficient urban areas. We believe that focusing exclusively on these measures limits the implementation of the principles of circular economy in urban policy.

Therefore, the Integrated Urban Development Strategy of Alba Iulia Municipality *can be improved* from the following points of view:

- ☑ First, by *broadening the strategic focus of the policy instrument* to include new circular economy actions to be eligible for funding to improve urban environmental management and resource efficiency;
- ☑ Second, by creating a *set of recommendations and an evaluation grid* for circular economy projects tailored to the specifics of both small and medium cities, as the implementation of the circular economy in the urban environment can vary greatly depending on the size of the city, type of resources available, etc.

Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

ACTION 1: Preparation of a set of recommendations/guidelines for the inclusion of circular economy projects/actions as eligible for funding under *Priority 3 - An Environmentally Friendly Region* of the Regional Operational Program for the Centru Region and a corresponding evaluation grid for their assessment.

1. **Relevance to the project** (*please describe how this action derives from the project and in particular from the interregional exchange of experience. Where does the inspiration for this action come from?*)

The interregional cooperation in this project produced an Opinion Report containing several Political Recommendations addressed for the European Commission for the next programming period with the purpose of strengthening presence of small and medium cities in the definition of next European Urban Policies. One of the recommendation was that Circular Economy *should be mainstreamed into European Urban Policy for small, medium and peripheral cities*. Specifically, local and regional authorities have an important role in launching and accelerating the transition to a circular economy, whether by leading by example, setting clear framework conditions or directly supporting local and regional stakeholders. There is an opportunity to tie in sustainable resource management objectives of decentralized authorities with the climate change adaptation and mitigation plans. The CE has a tremendous potential to mitigate the impact of products by preventing waste generation, extending the lifetime of products, and closing the loops of materials. It is possible for European cities and regions to contribute to reduction of the EU carbon footprint in several key sectors by



implementing ambitious, yet feasible actions. The inspiration of this action resulted from the observation that all the projects from the interregional exchange experience demonstrates an impressive level of regional innovation (e.g. Pielsen, Lubelskie - Photovoltaic and biogas farm in "Hajdow" Wastewater Treatment Plant) in the field of circular economy or sustainability. Since the lack of eco-innovation is a drawback in Alba Iulia, believe that the creation of a framework where innovation in circular economy can be fostered is essential for the regions' transition to a more circular manner of functioning.

Considering all these facts and the results of the joint opinion report, we arrived at the conclusion that introducing circular economy as a means to ensure resource efficiency of cities in this policy instrument would bring added value to the cities' potential of sustainable development.

2. **Nature of the action** (please describe precisely the content of action 1. What are the specific activities to be implemented?)

We propose 4 main activities:

- ⇒ **Activity 1:** Preparation of the documents containing the recommendations for guidelines on the inclusion of circular economy projects/actions in small and medium-sized cities as eligible for funding under the policy instrument. This document will be made by the Municipality of Alba Iulia in cooperation with the Institute for Research in Circular Economy and Environment „Ernest Lupan” (IRCEM) and it will be based on the experience gained through the interregional cooperation in the project EURE.
- ⇒ **Activity 2:** Creation of an evaluation grid to assess the potential projects/actions that will be proposed by urban authorities of small and medium-sized cities. This document will be made by the Municipality of Alba Iulia in collaboration with IRCEM and aims to provide clarity on what is expected from a project focused on circular economy aimed at resource efficiency.
- ⇒ **Activity 3:** Involving the managing authority for feedback or any other useful information for the two documents from a technical and political point of view, in order to produce a final version.
- ⇒ **Activity 4:** Organize dissemination activities such as public events, webinars, etc., to present the policy instrument improvements to relevant stakeholders so that they are known by as many beneficiaries as possible

3. **Stakeholders involved** (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the implementation of the action1 and explain their role)

Name of the Stakeholder	Role
Alba Iulia Municipality	Engaging in the elaboration of the recommendations/ guidelines and the evaluation grid in cooperation with IRCEM
Institute for Research in Circular Economy and Environment „Ernest Lupan”	Engaging in elaboration of the recommendations/ guidelines and the evaluation grid in cooperation with Alba Iulia and bringing expertise on circular economy projects



RDA Centru (Regional Development Agency Centru)	This organization manages the regional operational program for the whole Centru Region will participate with feedback, necessary info
Romanian Cities Association	Disseminating the final deliverables of the action plan among eligible authorities for financing situated in Centru Region

4. **Timeframe** (*please specify the timing envisaged for action 1*)
One year, between September 2022 → August 2023

5. **Costs** (*please estimate the costs related to the implementation of action 1*)

- 8.000 euro to engage experts in circular economy
- 5.000 euro for dissemination activities

6. **Funding sources** (*please describe how action 1 will be financed. Is it through the policy instrument(s) indicated in part II*):
Internal sources

Date: February, 2022

Name of the organisation(s):

Alba Iulia Municipality

IRCEM

Signatures of the relevant organisation(s): _____