

South Muntenia Region Action Plan
on enhancing Circular Economy of the Agri-Food Chain

carried out within the INTERREG project

***SinCE-AFC Enhancing the Entrepreneurship of SMEs in
Circular Economy of the Agri-Food Chain***



SUD MUNTENIA 
Agenția pentru Dezvoltare Regională

Part I – General information

Project: SinCE-AFC

Partner organisation: South Muntenia Regional Development Agency (SMRDA)

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant):

Country: Romania

NUTS2 region: South Muntenia

Contact person: Monica Magureanu

email address: programe@adrmuntenia.ro

phone number: +4 0728 282 196

Part II – Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact: Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
European Territorial Cooperation programme
Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed: **Regional Operational Programme (ROP) 2021-2027**

Within the SinCE-AFC project, SMRDA has initially planned to influence the 2014-2020 Regional Operational Programme, the Priority Axis 2 – Improving the Competitiveness of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises. Given the fact the 2014-2020 Programming Period is coming to an end, SMRDA does not have the possibility to influence the policy instrument initially addressed in the project, thus, it decided to change the PI addressed within SinCE-AFC project, and improve the South Muntenia ROP 2021-2027.

SM Regional Development Agency is Intermediate Body for 2014-2020 ROP, however, for the 2021-2027 programming period, SMRDA will assume a new role as Managing Authority for the South Muntenia ROP. As a result, SMRDA aims to support SMEs to access funding within the South Muntenia ROP 2021-2027, Priority 1. A competitive region through innovation, digitalisation and dynamic enterprises, Specific objective *a (iii) Boosting sustainable growth and the competitiveness of SMEs and creating jobs for SMEs, including through productive investment* and *a (iv) Developing skills for smart specialization, industrial transition and entrepreneurship*.

The investments proposed to be financed aims to increase the critical mass of regional enterprises, to provide them with targeted support to increase their resilience in the market especially for micro and small enterprises, these two categories of companies registering the lowest survival rates in the first 5 years of activity.

At the same time, the interventions aim to support SMEs through operations that increase their capacity to advance in the value chain by providing access to finance, assistance and markets as well as access to know-how for the development and implementation of new business models. These interventions will be accompanied by investments in intangible assets, such as: management and production methodologies and procedures, adaptation of new technologies to production flows, acquisition and use of intellectual property rights, use of information technology, development of skills and abilities related to use of new technologies.

As far as the **circular economy** is concerned, this is an integral part of sustainable development, highlighting the need to optimize resource consumption to prevent, reduce waste and promote reuse.

The indicative actions for specific objective *a (iii) Boosting sustainable growth and the competitiveness of SMEs and creating jobs for SMEs, including through productive investment* to be supported are:

- **Supporting micro-enterprises and SMEs by investing in tangible and intangible assets (including the adoption of digital technologies and tools), in activities specific to the circular economy, internationalization, certification and approval of products and services, for technological upgrading, which will lead to improving technical, industrial and organizational capacities for the development of products and services;**
- Promoting entrepreneurship through the establishment, development and operationalization of business incubators and industrial parks;
- Supporting the entrepreneurial innovation ecosystem by supporting clusters and business networks, including for the development of interregional, international and cross-sectoral collaboration.

For the SO *a (iv) Developing skills for smart specialization, industrial transition and entrepreneurship*, the indicative measures that will be supported are the following:

- **Development of skills and abilities for smart specialization, industrial transition, circular economy, eco-innovation and entrepreneurship at the level of SMEs / universities and RDI organizations / public authorities / entities involved in PDA for smart specialization;**
- Developing the skills of staff in research and higher education institutions to increase the commercial feasibility and market relevance of research projects, as well as the ability to take part in open innovation processes;
- Developing the administrative capacity of the actors involved in the development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review of RIS3 and MDA.

In order to support the future beneficiaries in accessing the funds, SMRDA has developed a support measure to develop the circular economy at local and regional level.

SM ROP 2021-2027 will represent the strategic foundation for regional development within the next programming period (2021-2027 + 2 years).

ROP SM 2021-2027 ensures the implementation of the strategic vision for a sustainable and balanced development of the South Muntenia Region (SMR), contributing to the development of pillars, actions and priorities from the SMR Regional Development Plan (RDP-SMR 2021-2027), Smart Specialization Strategy (SMR-RIS3 2021-2027) and the SMR Integrated Territorial Development Strategy (ITDS-SMR 2021-2027).

SM ROP 2021–2027 has set as its general objective the stimulation of smart, sustainable and balanced economic growth in SMR.

From the socio-economic development perspective, it should be noted that SMR has a special characteristic, being the only region in Romania that contains an enclave region in the central part, namely the Bucharest-Ilfov Region (BIR), the most developed region in the country. Thus, RBI exerts

a socio-economic influence, SMR having great difficulties in retaining the young and highly qualified population. Additionally, development disparities between the northern and southern SMR must be highlighted, where the northern part (NUTS3 regions Arges/AG, Prahova/PH and Dambovita/DB) is heavily industrialized (especially the automotive, mining and metallurgy industry), together generating 71% of regional GDP. The remaining four counties (NUTS3 regions Calarasi/CL, Giurgiu/GR, Teleorman/TR and Ialomita/IL) have a much smaller contribution to the regional GDP (29%), being specialised in agriculture.

Thus, starting from the European and national policies and programs, from the lessons learned during 2014-2020 and from the socio-economic development priorities inside the SMR strategic documents mentioned above (PDR, RIS3, SIDT 2021-2027), and considering the specifics of SMR, the 6 specific strategic objectives of ROP SM 2021-2027 are:

OST.1. Stimulating the smart and sustainable development of the region, based on innovation, digitalization and the development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem;

OST.2. Stimulating the region's transition to a zero-emission economy by increasing energy efficiency, improving environmental protection and increasing urban mobility;

OST.3. Increasing accessibility of rural and urban areas to the TEN-T network through investments in the road infrastructure at county (NUTS3) level;

OST.4. Increasing access to quality and inclusive services in education, training and LLL through the development of educational infrastructure;

OST.5. Increasing the attractiveness of the region by investing in tourism infrastructure and cultural heritage;

OST.6. Developing the administrative capacity of the Management Authority SMRDA and of the project developers and future beneficiaries.

The actions proposed by SMRDA in this Action Plan aims to correlate the SM ROP 2021-2027 - OST.1 with the EU priorities for the same period, respectively the first European policy objective, with the associated specific objective:

- OST.1. Stimulating the smart and sustainable development of the region, based on innovation, digitalization and the development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The proposed action is the result of the exchange of experience between the project partners, combined with the recommendations/needs of stakeholders highlighted by their participation in LSG meetings and analysis of the evaluation of the implementation of the Priority Axis 2 – Improving the Competitiveness of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises of the ROP 2014-2020 (the study conducted by Lattanzio). The study conducted by Lattanzio aimed at analysing the success of the implementation of the PA2. The purpose of this interim evaluation of PA 2 of the Regional Operational Program 2014-2020 in Romania was, mainly, to evaluate whether the implementation of the axis leads to the achievement of the objectives set out in the programming document, what types of interventions have proven to be more effective and how sustainable the interventions performed can be considered.

As a result, the action proposed aims at supporting SMEs in South Muntenia region to develop their skills in terms of project development and implementation to ensure a higher absorption of the funds available within the **ROP 2021-2027, Priority 1. A competitive region through innovation, digitalisation and dynamic enterprises, Specific objective a (iii) Boosting sustainable growth and the competitiveness of SMEs and creating jobs for SMEs, including through productive investment and a (iv) Developing skills for smart specialization, industrial transition and entrepreneurship.**

The AP will further develop the CE sector in South Muntenia region by creating the South Muntenia **Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform**. The platform is developed within the framework of **DigiPrime (Digital Platform for Circular Economy in Cross-sectorial Sustainable Value Networks) project**, funded within EU Research and Innovation Programme Horizon 2020. The DigiPrime project aims to develop a digital platform that will allow European regions to identify **cross-regional, cross-sectoral value chains, monitor material flows, and identify barriers and existing legislation for the regional implementation of a circular economy model**. In other words, the platform provides a complete mapping of the region's value chains and the tools to close the loops, identify synergies between sectors and regions, and provide support to decision-makers and institutions in circular economy.

Including the South Muntenia region in the community provides a great opportunity to unlock new circular economy business models at regional level.

Inspired by the best practice introduced by the Italian partner Metropolitan City of Bologna during the 2nd Interregional Meeting, 19-20.02.2020, Bologna, Italia – “Italian Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform”, SMRDA developed its action plan which will setup the Circular Economy platform for South Muntenia Region.

The opportunity has arisen during the event 'Europe, let's cooperate' that took place on April 4th 2022, attended by SMRDA experts which expressed their interest to further cooperate in order to enhance Circular economy in the region. As a result, SMRDA received an invitation from Veltha, a Brussels-based international research organization focused on performing research in the field of circular economy and fostering its implementation at the European level to join DigiPrime project as a pilot user.

Given the fact that this initiative was in line with the SinCE-AFC project activities and would support the transition to circular economy in the region, SMRDA has started to conduct several discussions with the representatives of Veltha on how it can benefit from their targeted support to develop the CE platform. Thus, this is a good opportunity to create synergies with another EU funded project and achieve concrete results in the region.

Within SinCE-AFC project we have identified best practices that can be replicated in the SM region and with the support of DigiPrime, we can now take advantage of the opportunity and achieve tangible results, namely to develop the Circular Economy Stakeholder platform.

The CE platform will be provided free of charge within the project mentioned, however, the necessary data that will be included in the section dedicated for South Muntenia region by the SMRDA staff.

The Digi Prime project will not provide any type of funding (staff costs or other funding) for these activities that will be performed by SMRDA experts, except for technical support and training free of charge, in order to understand how the platform works and how the data should be inserted by SMRDA experts.

Being a part of SinCE-AFC project and analysing the best practices introduced by PPs, SMRDA staff realized the importance of developing the CE stakeholder platform within which it will provide services to SMEs and consultancy in developing joint projects that can be funded by the SM ROP.

It is important to mention the fact that SMRDA will have the unique opportunity to develop and test a new and innovative circular economy platform that will support regional stakeholders not only to identify new opportunities to develop new projects but also to identify cross-regional, cross-sectoral value chains, monitor material flows, and identify barriers and existing legislation for the regional implementation of a circular economy model.

In other words, the platform offers a complete mapping of the region's value chains and the tools to close the loops, identify synergies between sectors and regions, and provide support to decision-makers and institutions in circular economy.

Including the South Muntenia region in the community provides an excellent opportunity to unlock new circular economy business models at a local level.

The main services that can be accessed within the platform are: Cross regional value chain identification; Material flow monitoring and aggregated system oriented KPIs; Circular Innovation Hubs Integration; Barrier Identification and Legislation support. The platform will contain the following information: RIS3 sector, SWOT analysis, focus sectors, companies, capability's view, R&D capacities, innovation capabilities, education capabilities, emerging ideas, existing CE legislation, existing funding instruments and hotspots.

After the region fills in the mapping tool on the CE stakeholder platform, it obtains a dashboard with a complete overview of the regional context and it highlights the existing and potential circular value chains in the region. Following this step, the companies can be supported through Circular innovation Hubs, e. g., support to specific companies for specific projects by connecting them to different hubs of service providers.

The proposed action is the result of the exchange of experience between the project partners, combined with the needs of stakeholders highlighted by their active participation in LSG meetings and consultation process.

Thus, in order to support future beneficiaries of the ROP, SMRDA has developed a support mechanism in order to give the opportunity to SMEs to further develop their skills in CE area, identify potential business partners and develop new and innovative project ideas that can be funded by the South Muntenia ROP. As Managing Authority for POR SM 21-27, South Muntenia RDA aims to enhance the cooperation and act as a catalyst for all key stakeholders in the region in order to increase the level of expertise, knowledge and best practice sharing.

A detailed description of the action will be presented in Part III of the Action plan.

Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

ACTION 1

1. The background

The proposed action is the result of the exchange of experience between the project partners, lessons learned, interregional learning, combined with the recommendations/needs of stakeholders highlighted by their participation in LSG meetings and the consultation process with the stakeholders.

As a result of the interregional learning process and exchange of experience, South Muntenia RDA has selected several good practices which can be included in the Action Plan for South Muntenia Region.

Best practices from partner regions

The first two GPs were introduced by the Italian partner Metropolitan City of Bologna during the **2nd Interregional Meeting, 19-20.02.2020, Bologna**. The first BP was presented by Francesca Cappellaro from ENEA (Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development) who introduced the European/Italian Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform.

The **Italian Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ICESP)** is promoted by ENEA (National Agency for New technologies, energy and sustainable economic development) as a mirror initiative and integrated with ECESP (European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform).

ICESP is a network whose goal is to create a national convergence on initiatives, experiences, criticalities and expectations on the circular economy that Italy should represent in Europe, promoting the "Italian way of making circular economy". ICESP has as objectives: to promote circular economy in Italy, mapping Italian good practices, implement a permanent operational instrument to facilitate inter-sectoral dialogue and synergies between the Italian actors.

The ICESP members are representative of local and central public administration, of educational, research and innovation system, of companies and professional associations, and representatives of civil society. All members adhere to the ICESP Charter, which defines the objectives, composition, fields of interest and operational tools of the platform.

The platform is organized into 7 working groups, each with specific expertise on issues related to the circular economy. Currently ICESP is formed by 94 organisations as signatories and 177 organisations as expert participants in working group, of which 60% are companies and trade associations, 20% came from research and innovation sectors, 11% are public institutions, 9% are citizens and part of the Third sector.

The 2nd best practice from Italy is **Agrofood BIC, a start-up accelerator in the food & beverage and agro-industrial sectors**.

The vision of Agrofood Business Innovation Centre is to ***inspire innovative ecosystems and design the future of agri-food value chain, acting in synergy with other partners to find solutions to meet the needs of an ever-changing society.***

Agrofood BIC is an accelerator of promising start-ups in the food & beverage and agro-industrial sectors, able to convert innovative ideas into concrete entrepreneurial initiatives, with adequate operational and strategic support. The shared goal is the creation of an accelerator of promising and innovative start-ups specialized in selected focus areas including Sustainability & Circular economy.

In particular, the start-ups are followed along their growth path through targeted advice and specific tools to facilitate market entry and break down the initial barriers to their entry. The partners of the Agrofood BIC Project have created a real ecosystem for start-ups, providing factories, pilot systems, research and development support and access to a network of relationships in the food production chain that will decisively enhance the new entrepreneurs' chances of success.

Three more good practices were of interest for the South Muntenia RDA, due to the fact that fits very well with the agricultural specific of the region and can be replicated in South Muntenia region. The BP are:

- Staramaki, Greece - a unique straw made of wheat;
- Enviro Grind Ltd, Ireland - Company that is reprocessing household, agricultural and commercial waste and

- FOODSI app, Poland - a phone application that aims to reduce food waste in restaurants, bakeries, pastry shops and supermarkets.

The best practices from partner regions were presented to the local stakeholders and within the discussions, they selected these 3 best practices that could be implemented in the region given the fact that the agriculture represents one of the main economic traditional sectors of the South Muntenia Region.

Following the **stakeholder meetings** organized during the implementation of SinCE-AFC project, a set of challenges were identified along with recommendation and actions required in order to surpass the challenges.

Challenges highlighted by stakeholders:

- *eliminate/ reduce excessive bureaucracy, complicated and laborious guidelines, extremely long duration of evaluation and selection processes, high co-financing rates applied in projects*
- *Lack of information, the legislative framework to stimulate SMEs*
- *Lack of training programs in energy/resource savings and environmental biotechnology*

Recommendations/ actions required

- *support innovative technologies in Circular Economy area*
- *FoodsI application can be reproduced in the South Muntenia Region*
- *capitalizing on agricultural biomass for the production of sustainable products (eg organic straw) is an activity very useful for SM Region, which has a high agricultural potential*
- *enhance Awareness Raising on circular economy and its benefits*
- *expand the advanced production and service development capacities in circular economy area*

In order to deepen the learning process, South Muntenia RDA has organized on 9th of September 2021 an **Import workshop** and invited the best practice representative to provide more information. Within the event, were presented and debated good practices of the circular economy in small and medium enterprises in the agri-food sector, from the other regions participating in the project, and which have been selected by SMRDA as best examples and to transfer knowledge to the South Muntenia Region.

During the event, a series of presentations of good practices identified in partner regions and virtual study visits on the circular economy in the agri-food sector were presented, namely Staramaki (Greece) – producer of straws from wheat - an environmentally friendly product to phase out plastic drinking straws; Enviro Grind Ltd (Ireland) - a long-term sustainable solution for the treatment of organic waste through its composting process and FOODSI app (Poland) – a tool to reduce food waste in restaurants, bakeries, pastry shops and supermarkets.

At the end of each presentation took place an interactive Q&A session where each representative of the good practice answered the participants' questions. The discussions were about how the good practice presented was implemented, providing detailed and useful information for planning the actions to be included in the Action Plan of the South Muntenia RDA.

The Workshop was attended by representatives of SMRDA, partners of the project, ANATOLIKI SA from Greece, Donegal County Council from Ireland, Wielkopolska Region from Poland, and representatives of national and local public authorities, business and research from the level of the

South Muntenia region, namely the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the National Research and Development Institute for Electrical Engineering Bucharest (INC DIE ICPE-CA), ICECHIM Călărași, Giurgiu and Călărași County Councils, Argeș Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture and Teleorman Agency for Environmental Protection. During the workshop, the draft of the Action Plan of the South Muntenia region within the SinCE-AFC project was presented.

During Semesters 2 and 3 of the SinCE-AFC project, Donegal County Council conducted a preliminary survey of the Stakeholders of all Project Partners to assess the level of awareness and knowledge of the theory and practice of the Circular Economy (CE) and CE policies/strategies.

After the **Stakeholder's Consultation** process, it appeared that there is a lack of strong meaningful policies and measures to support the CE within most partner regions. The report prepared by PP6 also revealed that whilst there is an understanding of the concept of CE, there was very limited knowledge or experiences of the practices involved in the CE.

The lack of awareness and understanding within the partner regions pointed to the need for this fundamental challenge to be addressed at an early stage and to be an essential part of the partners' Action Plans. It also concluded that the PPs and public agencies need to have a much better knowledge of the real market opportunities within the CE and of the commercial models that can be applied to the sector.

The report surmised that there was significant opportunity for projects such as SinCE-AFC to identify and raise awareness through Good Practices in the CE and use these as a means of creating awareness, improving understandings and affecting future policies.

In relation to the preparation of Action Plans the survey identifies very clearly the key areas which the partners should include in their plans:

- a) Awareness raising and marketing of the circular economy,
- b) The development of strong local stakeholder engagement and the need for strategic alliances,
- c) The identification and use of case studies and good practices as a key tool to educate and inspire, and
- d) The development of a dedicated funding measure/stream to support the circular economy at local/regional level.

In addition, SMRDA has analysed the conclusions of the **Report of the implementation of the Priority Axis 2 of the ROP 2014-2020**, the study conducted by Latanzio.

Main conclusions of the study were:

- *The SME sector has become a strategic one for Romania. That is why it has been and is extremely important to provide financial and non-monetary assistance to SMEs in order to reduce the large differences in economic competitiveness compared to the European average, in particular by increasing labour productivity as a result of reducing the technological gap and reducing production costs, reindustrialization based on innovation and smart specialization in sectors with development potential at regional level, stimulating participation in the EU internal market and stimulating exports and the circular economy;*
- *There is a need to improve the operational procedure, trainings and introducing a mechanism of exchange of experience, lessons learned;*
- *In order to avoid mistakes in the planning it is recommended that the planning process is conducted in a more participative manner.*

Thus, the Action Plan is a part of the SINCE-AFC project and was written in cooperation with the regional stakeholders involved in bio-based economy, representatives of governmental authorities, research experts, industry and NGOs representatives. Actions were inspired by good practices from lessons learned during the SINCE-AFC project. The Action Plan promotes the circular economy concept supported by the Smart Specialization Strategy of South Muntenia Region and includes the following actions to promote the bio-based circular economy in agri-food sector.

2. **Action** (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

Developing the South Muntenia Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform.

The proposed action is the result of the exchange of experience between the project partners, combined with the needs of stakeholders highlighted by their active participation in LSG meetings and consultation process.

In order to support future beneficiaries of the ROP, SMRDA has developed a support mechanism in order to give the opportunity to SMEs to further develop their skills in CE area, identify potential business partners and develop new and innovative project ideas that can be funded by the South Muntenia ROP. As Managing Authority for POR SM 21-27, South Muntenia RDA aims to enhance the cooperation and act as a catalyst for all key stakeholders in the region in order to increase the level of expertise, knowledge and best practice sharing.

As a result, SMRDA has started to conduct several discussions with the representatives of Veltha, a Brussels-based international research organization focused on performing research in the field of circular economy and fostering its implementation at the European level. Following the discussions, Veltha has invited SMRDA to take part in an ongoing project as a pilot user. The participation will help South Muntenia region in transitioning of circular economy and offered the opportunity to stakeholders in the region to join the project community.

In the framework of EU Research and Innovation Programme Horizon 2020, Veltha is currently participating in DigiPrime (Digital Platform for Circular Economy in Cross-sectorial Sustainable Value Networks), a project developing a digital platform that will allow European regions to identify cross-regional, cross-sectoral value chains, monitor material flows, and identify barriers and existing legislation for the regional implementation of a circular economy model. In other words, the platform provides a complete mapping of the region's value chains and the tools to close the loops, identify synergies between sectors and regions, and provide support to decision-makers and institutions in circular economy.

Including the South Muntenia region in the community provides an excellent opportunity to unlock new circular economy business models at a local level.

With the support of the mapping tool, it can be performed actions such as cross regional value chain identification and open innovation services. The objective of DigiPrime is to develop a new concept of Circular Economy digital platform overcoming current information asymmetry among value-chain stakeholders, in order to unlock new circular business models based on the data-enhanced recovery and re-use of functions and materials from high value-added post-use products with a cross-sectorial approach.

The main services that can be provide within the platform are: Cross regional value chain identification; Material flow monitoring and aggregated system oriented KPIs; Circular Innovation Hubs Integration; Barrier Identification and Legislation support.

The regional profile of the South Muntenia region will contain the following information: RIS3 sector, SWOT analysis, focus sectors, companies, capability's view, R&D capacities, innovation capabilities,

education capabilities, emerging ideas, existing CE legislation, existing funding instruments and hotspots.

After the region fills in the mapping tool it obtains a dashboard with a complete overview of the regional situation and gives notification of the existing and potential circular value chains in the region. After this step, the companies can be supported through Circular innovation Hubs, e. g., support to specific companies for specific projects by connecting them to different hubs of service providers.

In addition, companies and R&DI institution can join the platform and benefit from its instruments. The stakeholder that will join the platform will be representative of local and central public administration, of educational, research and innovation system, of companies and professional associations, and representatives of civil society. All members will adhere to the Digital Platform for Circular Economy in Cross-sectorial Sustainable Value Networks Charter, which defines the objectives, composition, fields of interest and operational tools of the platform.

Given the fact that circular economy in South Muntenia region is at a low level of development it is essential to identify the barriers to progress in adopting circular economy practices and to create an overview of the potential and support that can be provided by the region for the development of the circular economy. Thus, we consider that this action will provide the stakeholders in the region the opportunity to develop and learn from other regions, to identify and ask for further support and access several services such as : "barrier identification" and "Legislation support". In addition, they will have access to information on the value chain in their sector and can identify the challenges and opportunities in their specific sector.

Actions envisaged:

I. South Muntenia Region (SMR) Stakeholders structure analysis

- a. Circular economy stakeholders mapping and identification of the key SMR actors at community level. Finally, the structure of the SMR Key Stakeholders Community will be defined, considering the Quadruple helix approach (similar to the EDP – Entrepreneurial Discovery Process), with the definition of a bottom-up consultative and decision-making process.

II. SMR Key Stakeholders Community in Circular Economy Area

- a. drafting and adopting at community level, by the Key Stakeholders Community in South Muntenia region, of an agreement (MoU or collaboration agreement) defining a common regional vision for 2021-2027 related to SMR transition to Circular Economy;
- b. initiating and implementing actions for the inventory of success stories, in the SMR and at SINCE-AFC partners' regions, for the development of adequate information-kits to be used in the implementation stage of the programme, as best practice and steps to follow in the establishment of future projects. SMRDA will organize local events with stakeholders discussing the main funding opportunities, conditions to access the grants, etc. (B2B events, seminars, learning and knowledge sharing events).

III. Registering the South Muntenia profile in the DigiPrime project and testing the platform as a pilot user

- a. **Creating the regional profile of the SM region in terms of CE data**, focusing on RIS3 sector, SWOT analysis, focus sectors, companies, capability's view, R&D capacities, innovation capabilities, education capabilities, emerging ideas, existing CE legislation, existing funding instruments and hotspots. Within this activity,

SMRDA will introduce all data at the regional level in order to analyse the potential of the region and identify optimal solutions to use in order to develop the circular economy in the South Muntenia region. This will also support the region to identify barrier, to find the proposed solution and to exchange experience with other entities in other regions and learn from them.

- b. **Supporting quadruple helix actors in the region to register in the DigiPrime project** and to complete the South Muntenia profile with data about R&D environment, education, companies and innovation capabilities.

IV. Launching a Media Package with information about the Since-AFC project

The MP will promote the project, the Action Plan developed and the main results, including the **Digital Platform for Circular Economy in Cross-sectorial Sustainable Value Networks**, and best practice that can be replicated in our region. In addition, the media package is important to promote the results of the project and to ensure the acces to information to the general public. It will include articles on circular economy in agri-food sector, the dimensions of circularity and business and environment benefits, such as: exploitation of wastes; sustainable packaging, efficient use of materials in the production process; etc..

In will also promote the good practices for the use of by-products in the production process, specifically the ones selected and proposed by stakeholders which can be successfully replicated in South Muntenia region, such as: FOODSI app, Poland - a tool to fight with a problem of food waste and food losses; **Staramaki, Greece** - Staramaki - a unique straw made of wheat and **Enviro Grind Ltd, Ireland** - Reprocessing of household, agricultural and commercial waste. Four digital newsletters will be created (2 per semester) promoting articles in CE area, new initiatives, funding sources, legislative measures, events, workshop sessions, etc.

3. **Players involved** (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)
- Veltha will support the registration of the South Muntenia profile in the platform and performing the analysis of the regional data;
 - South Muntenia RDA staff will be in charge of setting up and developing the profile of the South Muntenia region on the Digital Platform for Circular Economy in Cross-sectorial Sustainable Value Networks and supporting regional stakeholders to create their profile. In addition, SMRDA will elaborate the media package to disseminate the results of the project to general public;
 - Stakeholder group members:
 - Managing Authority for the Regional Operational Program Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration
 - Ministry of Environment - General Directorate of Waste, Contaminated Sites and Hazardous Substances
 - Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
 - The representatives of the county councils and the city halls in the South Muntenia region
 - Business support organizations
 - Research and Development institutions, clusters, universities
 - SMEs, and civil society

will join the CE platform and will be engaged in the events organized in order to create business opportunities for SMEs and innovative projects that can be further funded by the South Muntenia ROP 2021-2027.

4. Timeframe

August 2022- July 2023

- 4.1 August – September 2022 – Circular economy stakeholders mapping and identification of the key SMR actors at community level.
- 4.2 July 2022 - Developing the SMR Key Stakeholders Community. Organizing local events with stakeholders discussing the main funding opportunities, conditions to access the grants, creating business opportunities for SMEs, creating partnerships for further accessing available funds, etc
- 4.3 August – July 2023 - Registering the South Muntenia profile in the DigiPrime project and testing the platform as a pilot user. Providing support for quadruple helix actors to register to the DigiPrime platform
- 4.4 August 2022 – July 2023 Launching a Media Package with information about the Since-AFC project

5. Costs (if relevant)

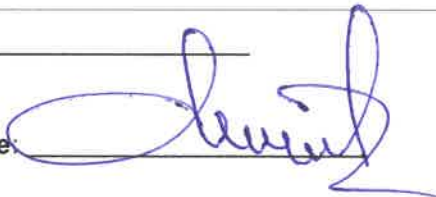
The costs for the implementation of the action plan will be related to staff costs for implementing the foreseen activities and will be covered from the SMRDA own budget. The DigiPrime project will provide the free access to the CE platform to SMRDA for testing and further use.

6. Funding sources (if relevant):

SMRDA budget

Date: _____

Signature: _____



Stamp of the organisation (if available): _____

