



Action plan

Project: PLASTEKO

Date: 21.06.2022



PART I – GENERAL INFORMATION

Partner

PROJECT: PLASTEKO - Supporting EU regions to curb plastics waste and littering

PARTNER ORGANISATION CONCERNED: Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency

COUNTRY: Romania

NUTS2 REGION: Bucharest-Ilfov

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Introduction

The widespread plastic pollution necessitates a strong reaction from EU regions, to address growing environmental and health concerns. PLASTEKO, in line with the “European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy”, will support participating territories to take the steps necessary for a transition towards a “new plastics economy”. The focus of the project will be on advances in waste management, eradication of single-use plastics from regional value chains, and spurring growth through eco-innovation. PLASTEKO will cover the areas of waste management, public procurement, funding/investments, secondary raw materials, and awareness raising.

PLASTEKO will support 8 partners from 8 EU countries, through joint policy learning efforts and exchanges of experiences, to benefit from the momentum of the EU plastics strategy and achieve their goals in terms of protecting the environment, increasing resource efficiency, alleviating health effects, and boosting innovation. PLASTEKO will enable partners and key stakeholders to:

- assess the current situation, potential, and barriers in their regions;
- identify pathways for sustainable growth in plastics value-chains;
- design and put into effect new policy measures and regulations.

The implementation of PLASTEKO will:

- Lead to increased capacity of 180 staff of public administrations to effectively support new growth trajectories & energy security
- Potential 19 million euros unlocked to support projects on plastic reuse, eco-innovation, alternative technologies

- Increased awareness & consensus building among plastic producers and consumers/the public

PART I – POLICY CONTEXT

The Policy Instrument

The Action Plan aims to impact:

- x Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- ☐ European Territorial Cooperation programme
- ☐ Other regional development policy instrument
- ☐ Operational/cooperation programme financed by Structural Funds

Name of the policy instrument addressed: Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Operational Program 2021-2027

Bucharest - Ilfov Regional Development Agency (ADR-BI) was established by Law 315/2004, on regional development in Romania. ADR-BI is the Intermediate Body for the Regional Operational Program (ROP) 2007-2013 and ROP 2014-2020 at regional level, also the Implementing Agency for the Phare - Economic and Social Cohesion Program, as well as for certain financing programs of the Romanian Government. Since the date of signing the financing contract of the PLASTEKO project, the Romanian legislation has been modified and, starting with 2020, updated some measures to ensure the efficiency of the decision-making process of external funds non-reimbursable for regional development in Romania. According to the new legislative provisions of Emergency Ordinance no. 122/2020, approved by law 277/2021, ADR-BI is in the process of being reorganized from an Intermediate Body into a Managing Authority for ROP Bucharest-Ilfov 2021-2027.

According to the application form, the policy instrument that ADR-BI aims to influence, as a result of the implementation of the PLASTEKO project, is the Regional Operational Program (ROP) 2014-2020. Given that the implementation of the PLASTEKO project started at the stage when the ROP 2014-2020 was already in implementation, the programming stage in which we could have intervened being completed, we decided to focus on the next programming period, 2021-2027.

ROP BI 2021-2027 is under elaboration by ADR-BI's Planning Department and negotiated with the European Commission, and several working drafts have been already sent to the Commission until now, the completion of this process and the approval of the final form being estimated at the earliest September 2022.

PART III – Annex 1 – Action Plan

Action Plan of the Bucharest-Ilfov Region

ACTION 1

Eligible costs through ROP BI promoting plastic waste sorting at source

1. The background

During the second semester of implementation of the project, the PLASTEKO partners identified territorial policies regarding approaches to separate, sort, and recycle plastic waste, including efforts to separate waste at the source (in the context of the activity A.1.2). Based on partners' input, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Energy Environment Agency (AURA-EE) delivered a [Comparative analysis of policies to promote the separation, sorting and recycling of plastic waste](#). Studying the analysis elaborated by AURA-EE, we found particularly interesting two good practices detailed: "Innovative Separate Waste Collection System for Public Space", implemented in Austria and "[Sorting at source and door to door collection system](#)", implemented in Greece. Both good practices involved investments in infrastructure made by local public authorities or located in public spaces, measures that have contributed to increasing the degree of separate collection of plastic and implicitly of subsequent recycling.

The Austrian good practice example showed that by implementing it higher amounts of correctly separated waste were achieved, including recyclable materials such as lightweight packaging (i.e. plastics and composites) and proved to benefit awareness-raising for waste separation and anti-littering. The Greek good practice is a great source of inspiration, as the Municipality of Lipsi is among the first places in Greece regarding the average recycling per inhabitant (with the quantities being five times in relation to the average per inhabitant throughout Greece).

2. Action: Eligible costs through ROP BI promoting plastic waste sorting at source

ADRBI aims to include costs for the infrastructure/equipment/other features for the separate collection of plastic waste (collection systems, average bins or smart innovative bins etc.) in the list of eligible expenses within the projects financed by the ROP BI 2021-2027, in order to promote plastic waste sorting at source. These categories of expenses could be made in the

context of an infrastructure project (creation / rehabilitation / extension of parks or other green spaces, public transport stations, public buildings such as kindergartens, schools, universities, museums, local government headquarters, etc.). Given that most future investments through ROP BI will be accessed by public authorities, this type of expenditure may support these authorities in extending (even at project level, individually) the selective at source collection system.

Through our action the eligibility of expenditures will be considered implicit at program level. Then, the first document that will explicitly certify eligibility will be the applicant's draft guide which will include in detail all categories of eligible expenditure. We estimate that the first drafts of the guidelines will be available by spring 2023.

3. Players involved

ADR-BI, as future Managing Authority, will draft specific guidelines and launch the call(s) for projects. Applicants (local public authorities) will elaborate the grant application that will include eligible costs for the infrastructure for the separate collection of plastic waste, and implement approved projects.

4. Timeframe

Referring to the final date of the negotiations for the approval of the ROP BI 2021-2027, September 2022, and considering that specific guidelines for project calls are being drafted simultaneously (to be adjusted according to any updates), we estimate that the first project calls will be launched until mid-2023. Thus, by the end of phase 2 of the PLASTEKO project, we expect to have a clear picture of the guidelines that will include these types of eligible expenditure and funding applications submitted which will include in their budget's eligible expenses for the infrastructure for the separate collection of plastic waste.

We hope that our endeavor will create premises for investments in the separate collection of plastic waste infrastructure in our region that can be monitored by the end of PLASTEKO's Phase 2, and we will do our best to obtain the expected results within the established term.

5. Costs (if relevant)

N/A

6. Funding sources (if relevant):

ROP BI 2021-2027

ACTION 2

Eligible costs through ROP BI promoting the use of raw material obtained from recycled plastics

1. The background

Studying the [comparative analysis of policies to promote the separation, sorting and recycling of plastic waste](#) and participating during the third semester of implementation to the [interregional workshop](#) on how to support regional businesses to invest on eco-innovation in plastic production and reuse, hosted by AURA EE, we found out about the good practice [ORPLAST “Objectif Recyclage PLASTiques”](#). ORPLAST intends to promote the uptake of recycled plastics by plastic manufacturers, based on 3 financial tools: #1 grants for diagnostics and feasibility studies; #2 investment grants and #3 financial support scheme to the purchasing of regenerated resins above a price maintaining the viability of the regeneration process compared to virgin resins in a period (from 2015) where these resins were more competitive because of the crude oil price. We decided to present in detail ORPLAST during the third stakeholders group meeting in Bucharest, grants being one of the topics of interest in our region.

2. Action: Eligible costs through ROP BI promoting the use of raw material obtained from recycled plastics

The materialization of the introduction of the use of recycled plastic in new products as one of the elements that define the solutions regarding the circular economy.

Related to the PLASTEKO project, in the last two versions ([version 3](#) and [version 4](#)) of the ROP BI 2021-2027 submitted to the European Commission, one provision was introduced and maintained under Priority 1, which mentions that "Investments dedicated to supporting the circular economy (implementation of circular economy solutions) will receive additional points during the selection and evaluation stage". This update already has the attributes of a significant improvement of the program in terms of supporting the private sector in approaching investments from the perspective of the circular economy, including plastic's waste circularity as well.

This first step being already done, the premises are created for the inclusion in one of the specific guidelines related to ROP BI, Priority 1- *A competitive region through innovation, digitalization*

and dynamic enterprises, of a financing opportunity opened to companies promoting circular economy, including plastic's waste circularity as well.

This action, aims to significantly improve technical, industrial and / or organizational capabilities to more effectively manage the development of products and services, including support for internationalization. Support involves priority financing of micro-enterprises, but also small and medium-sized enterprises for productive investment in equipment, technology (including green technologies) and innovative machinery, aiming at business development (where appropriate and internationalization) and the transition to a green economy, by implementing circular economy solutions, promoting green / environmentally friendly production processes and by promoting the efficient use of resources. A significant percentage of the eligible expenses within the future projects will be obligatorily dedicated to the activities that contribute to the circular economy, including implicitly the plastic.

Although ORPLAST good practice, that inspired us, provides national funding, the applicant's guide and applicable rules may also be adapted for European funded projects.

We hope that our action will create premises for investments in circular economy solutions in our region, including the use of recycled plastic in new products, that could be monitored by the end of PLASTECO's Phase 2 and we will do our best to obtain the expected results within the established term.

3. Players involved

ADR-BI, as future Managing Authority, will draft specific guidelines and launch the call(s) for projects. Applicants (small / medium / large enterprises) will elaborate the grant application. In order to be eligible, the grant application must prove that a significant percentage of the eligible expenses within the future projects are dedicated to the activities that contribute to the circular economy, including implicitly the plastic.

All aspects regarding , circular economy solutions, promoting green / environmentally friendly production processes and by promoting the efficient use of resources, as well as the methods of monitoring this aspects will have to be clearly defined in the specific financing guide.

4. Timeframe

Referring to the final date of the negotiations for the approval of the ROP BI 2021-2027, September 2022, we estimate that the first project calls will be launched until mid-2023. Thus, by the end of phase 2 of the PLASTECO project, we expect to have a clear picture of the guidelines that will include these types of eligible expenditure and funding applications submitted which include circular economy solutions as mentioned in the specific guidelines.

5. Costs (if relevant)

N/A

6. Funding sources (if relevant):

ROP BI 2021-2027

ACTION 3 Developing a toolkit aiming to improve activity in terms of the environment protection and plastic pollution.

1. The background

During the implementation of the PLASTEKO project, we learned with great interest about the [Green Public Procurement \(GPP\)](#) guidelines supporting the purchase of products with less environmental impact, elaborated by the city of Hamburg, promoted as an example of good practice in the partnership. GPP is a great tool to support the transition to greener products and production processes. The city of Hamburg developed GPP guidelines covering 20 different product groups. The details of this good practice were also provided during the regional stakeholders group meeting, held on the 19th of January 2022, and we concluded that a similar approach implemented in our region would be welcomed and could have significant results.

2. Action : Developing a toolkit aiming to improve activity in terms of the environment protection and plastic pollution.

Starting from the idea of the Hamburg Green Public Procurement (GPP) guidelines, we decided to develop and disseminate a toolkit that aims to improve activity in terms of the environment protection and especially plastic pollution.

The toolkit will include similar rules and recommendations as the Hamburg guidelines does, which address the issue of plastic pollution, and will be disseminated especially to public authorities (motivating them to apply such rules and recommendations) and also to private organizations that want to implement environmentally friendly procedures. For the efficient guidance of the users of this toolkit, we will refer to the provisions of the national and European legislation in the field of plastic management and also to lessons learned during the implementation of PLASTEKO project, that have a high transferability potential to Bucharest-Ilfov region.

When elaborating the toolkit, we will pay special attention in creating a specific section addressed to potential funding opportunities in the field of environment and circular economy

and general rules which applicants and funding applications must comply with when accessing funding.

The financing opportunities offered by ROP BI 2021-2027 will also be presented, in this way ensuring that PLASTEKO stakeholders will receive current and useful information in carrying out their activity. By February 2023, when we will start disseminating the toolkit, ROP BI will certainly be approved by the European Commission and it is possible that some project calls will already be launched, so the information provided regarding ROP will be up to date.

The toolkit will be a prerequisite supporting action, correctly guiding and familiarizing future beneficiaries of ROP BI 2021-2027 with the legislative provisions on environmental protection and compliance with directing investments towards sustainable projects and activities. Issues related to the circular economy, which of course include the correct management of waste, green public procurement that support also the purchase of products obtained from recycled plastics, will be addressed and respected at the level of ROP BI 2021-2027 priorities, depending on their objective and the established eligible investments. The better guided the applicants are, the better the quality of their project proposal will be and they will have a higher chance of receiving funding and will lead to a more effective implementation.

The toolkit aims to offer potential beneficiaries of ROP BI 2021-2027 lucrative knowledge support based especially on the experience gained during the implementation of the PLASTEKO project. The essential elements of all joint studies, analyzes as well as the sustainability plan developed within the PLASTEKO project will be integrated in such a way that the future projects to be submitted under the program cover in a correct and complete way the aspects related to plastic pollution and protecting the environment.

3. Players involved

ADRBI's PLASTEKO team will elaborate the toolkit based on the example of the Hamburg Green Public Procurement (GPP) guidelines, and, in order to support its users, will include additional information on funding opportunities and applicable legislation. For the accuracy of the information provided by the toolkit we will rely on the experience and expertise of the regional stakeholders that have already joined the Bucharest-Ilfov PLASTEKO group.

4. Timeframe

The toolkit will be elaborated by ADRBI's PLASTEKO team during the first half of Phase 2 (August 2022 – January 2023) and disseminated in the second half of Phase 2 (February 2023 – April 2023). By February 2023 ROP BI will certainly be approved by the European Commission and it

is possible that some project calls will already be launched, so the information provided will be up to date.

5. Costs (if relevant)

10.000 euro

6. Funding sources (if relevant)

ADR BI

Date: 21.06.2022

Name of the organisation : Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency

Signature of representative of the relevant organisation: