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LOCAL ANALYSIS REPORT – ALBA IULIA

CITIZENS

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Responsible partner:

Municipality of Alba Iulia

Content

Introduction

The Local Analysis of the CSR context is the first activity of the ACROSS Interreg Europe project. It aims to support partners in listing all their learning needs and their good practices and competences relevant for the project. This analysis is the foundation of the project and the basis of all activities; thus it maps all aspects partners need to work on during the project.

1. Local CSR context analysis

1.1 Introduction of the region

1.1.1 General description of the region

Alba County, centrally located in Romania, features a diverse landscape comprising the Apuseni Mountains, the Transylvanian Plateau, and the fertile Mureș River Valley. Alba Iulia, the county seat, is a key urban hub benefiting from strategic road networks that enhance connectivity. The region has a mixed demographic profile: a significant elderly population in rural areas and a younger, more active workforce in urban centres. Environmental concerns include air pollution and waste management, exacerbated by industrial activities and a temperate continental climate that can trap pollutants. Alba County's geographical advantages and rich natural resources have historically supported both agriculture and industrial growth.

1.1.2 Economic characterisation

● **Analysis of Economic Structure**

Alba County's economy is diverse and balanced across several key sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing, and services. The economic landscape is shaped by both large corporations and a dynamic small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector.

● **Main Sectors:**

○ **Agriculture:** The region benefits from fertile soil and a favourable climate, supporting a robust agricultural sector. Key products include grains, dairy, poultry, and wine, with significant investments in sustainable agricultural practices.

○ **Manufacturing:** This sector includes wood processing, automotive components, construction materials, and food processing. The presence of major industrial players has created a well-established manufacturing hub.

○ **Services:** The service sector is expanding, with a focus on logistics, retail, tourism, and information technology, leveraging the region's rich cultural and historical heritage.

○ **Main Employers:**

- **Companies with More than 500 Employees:**

  1. **Transgaz:** The national leader in gas transmission infrastructure, engaged in energy efficiency and climate-neutral projects, employing over 500 workers.

  2. **TRANSAVIA:** Romania's largest poultry producer, known for its vertical integration and sustainability efforts. The company plays a crucial role in food security and the local economy.

  3. **Star Assembly (Daimler AG):** An essential automotive manufacturing and assembly plant contributing significantly to the industrial sector, with a large workforce.

  4. **DN AGRAR Group:** The largest dairy producer in the country, focusing on sustainable farming and biogas projects, employing over 500 people.

  5. **Bosch Automotive:** Specialises in producing automotive components and is committed to innovation and efficiency, employing a substantial number of people.

- **Companies with More than 250 Employees:**

  1. **Kronospan:** A major wood processing company, producing construction boards and laminate, employing more than 250 workers.

  2. **Albalact:** Part of the Lactalis Group, this leading dairy manufacturer supplies a wide range of dairy products and has a strong workforce.

  3. **PeHart Tec Grup:** Known for producing paper and hygiene products, contributing significantly to local industrial production.

  4. **Elit SRL:** A key meat processing company, providing employment and driving the food industry in the region.

  5. **Jidvei SRL:** The largest wine producer in Romania, located in the Târnave wine region, supporting both the agricultural and tourism sectors.

b) Economic Role and Characteristics of the SME Sector

The SME sector in Alba County is vibrant and diverse, playing a critical role in the local economy. SMEs are active in agriculture, artisanal food production, hospitality, small-scale manufacturing, and technology. These businesses support the region's economic resilience, often complementing the operations of larger corporations by acting as suppliers or through niche markets, such as agro-tourism and organic farming.

Characteristics of SMEs:

- **Agility and Innovation:** SMEs in Alba County are known for their adaptability and innovative approaches, especially in agri-business and eco-friendly solutions.

- **Economic Contribution:** SMEs generate significant employment opportunities and drive local economic diversification, contributing to the overall economic stability of the region.

- **Community Involvement:** Many SMEs engage in community-based CSR initiatives, such as supporting local events, investing in environmental projects, and promoting cultural heritage.

This economic structure, characterised by a mix of large corporations and a robust SME sector, offers multiple opportunities for CSR initiatives that can focus on sustainability, workforce development, and community engagement.

1.1.3 Presentation of the local government/public sector

The local government operates through an administrative structure that includes the Alba County Council and municipal councils. The Alba Iulia municipality employs a collaborative decision-making mechanism, engaging with stakeholders through public consultations and partnerships. The government prioritises attracting EU funding for infrastructure and energy efficiency projects, demonstrated by successful non-reimbursable funding for sustainable urban development. Local authorities also implement policies to support SMEs, improve workforce mobility, and enhance the city's environmental sustainability.

1.1.4 Introduction of the project partner

The City Hall of Alba Iulia is a municipal public authority with a high potential for growth and development, focused on institutional, economic, social and cultural interests of more than 63 536[1] inhabitants, providing a democratic local government of Alba Iulia Municipality. The establishment date of the City Hall is 26th of November, 1991.

Among its activities and objectives, we mention:

- to ensure the provision of public services for the inhabitants of Alba Iulia Municipality in a sustainable manner respecting the equality of chances;
- to promote social and economic development;
- to promote a safe and healthy environment;
- to encourage the involvement of citizens and of nongovernmental organisations in the matters of local government;
- to make sure the citizens of Alba Iulia Municipality benefit from a healthy living environment and from good living conditions.

In its actions, the City Hall of Alba Iulia is in direct relation with the citizens and is permanently contributing to the improvement of the quality of the services offered by reducing the bureaucracy and improving its e-administration services. For achieving its objectives, the City Hall of Alba Iulia benefited for the period 2007-2024 the financial support of the EU and has implemented European projects with a total value of more than 350 mil. Euros[2], in order to implement ideas with an important impact on the local community.

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[1] According to the Population and Housing Census, 2021

[2] Please see the activity report of the City Hall of Alba Iulia

Alba Iulia Municipality is managed by a dynamic administration open to private investors, which is constantly valorizing the touristic and economic potential by organising and promoting various types of events. The historical centre of the city is highlighted as a geometric centre and core of the urban organisation of Alba Iulia municipality. It represents a well-defined zone, where most of the buildings have a significant historical value, having as reference point the **Alba Carolina Citadel**, the most representative Vauban citadel in Romania, which outlines the city of Alba Iulia.

1.2 CSR context

1.2.1. Local business culture

Business culture aspects			
Evaluation between 1 to 5 (e.g. open is 1, closed is 5)			
Innovation/Risk embrace	relatively open	2	relatively closed
Business leadership type	organisation- based	3	entrepreneur-based
Work discipline	easygoing	3	strict
Employee vs. productivity	employee- centred	3	productivity-centred
Business leadership/ gender	Masculine/Feminine	3	Gender-balanced
Customer focus	relatively high	2	relatively low

The local business culture in Alba County is moderately open to innovation, with a focus on structured, organisation-based leadership. There is a balance between employee well-being and productivity, and gender diversity is improving. Companies emphasise customer satisfaction, especially in key sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and hospitality, fostering strong community ties.

1.2.2 Government – business relations

Government - business relations				
Describing the government-business relations by ticking the boxes fit the best				
Mode of engagement	more formal	X	more informal	
Inter-organisational conduct	high trust	X	low trust	
Communication	direct	X	indirect	
Orientation	process-oriented	X	results-oriented	
Time Horizon	short-term		long-term	

Rationale for Each Aspect:

1. **Mode of Engagement: More Formal**

   ○ Rationale: In Alba County, as in many post-socialist regions, interactions between the government and businesses are generally formal. This is due to the bureaucratic legacy and structured nature of administrative processes, often dictated by regulatory compliance and EU funding requirements.

2. **Inter-organizational Conduct: Moderate to High Trust**

   ○ Rationale: While there is a level of trust established, it isn't uniformly high. Businesses that have worked closely with the local government on development projects, such as infrastructure and digital initiatives, have developed a reasonable degree of trust. However, smaller businesses may feel left out or distrustful due to experiences with bureaucratic hurdles.

3. **Communication: Direct**

   ○ Rationale: Communication channels between the government and large enterprises tend to be direct, especially for initiatives that receive significant public attention, like the Alba Iulia Smart City project. However, for smaller or less connected enterprises, communication may be less straightforward, leading to perceptions of inaccessibility.

4. **Orientation: Process-Oriented with Increasing Results Focus**

   ○ Rationale: Historically, government activities have been process-oriented, emphasising compliance and procedural rigor. However, there is a gradual shift towards more results-oriented approaches, especially in projects funded by the EU that require measurable outcomes, like urban development and smart city initiatives.

5. **Time Horizon: Short to Long-term**

Rationale: While many initiatives are designed with a long-term vision, implementation challenges sometimes result in short-term fixes. Projects tied to EU funding, in particular, have to balance long-term goals with the short-term deadlines imposed by grant cycles. The time horizon varies depending on the project's scope and funding source.

In Alba County, Romania, the relationship between government and businesses is evolving, influenced by the region's post-socialist context and efforts toward modernization.

Government–Business Relations:

● **Mode of Engagement:** The local government engages with businesses through formal partnerships and structured dialogues. For instance, the Alba Iulia Smart City initiative involved collaborations with over 100 private companies to implement smart solutions across various sectors. BeeSmart

- **Inter-organizational Conduct:** While there is a foundation of trust, challenges persist. Some projects have faced issues with sustainability and long-term commitment from private partners. A 2021 report noted that out of 106 smart city projects initiated, only about 28 remained operational, indicating potential gaps in ongoing collaboration. Alba24

- **Communication:** Direct communication channels exist between the government and businesses, facilitating efficient decision-making. However, the effectiveness of these channels can vary, with some businesses expressing concerns over bureaucratic hurdles.

- **Orientation:** The approach is results-oriented, aiming for tangible outcomes that benefit both the community and the business sector. The implementation of smart city solutions, such as digital education platforms and intelligent public lighting, exemplifies this focus. BeeSmart

- **Time Horizon:** Collaborations are designed with a long-term vision, aiming for sustainable economic growth and regional development. However, the discontinuation of certain projects suggests that maintaining long-term engagement remains a challenge. Alba24

1.2.3 Experiences working with large enterprises and SMEs

The local government actively engages with both large enterprises and SMEs through various initiatives:

- **Liaison and Training:** Workshops and consultations are organised to support SMEs in understanding local regulations and accessing funding opportunities. The "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia offers programs aimed at developing business expertise, contributing to the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. UAB English

- **Supplier Relations:** Efforts are made to connect SMEs with potential clients, including government contracts. However, some businesses have reported challenges in navigating the procurement process, indicating room for improvement in fostering supplier relationships.

- **Access to Finance:** The government facilitates connections with financial institutions and provides guidance on grants and funding schemes. Despite these efforts, access to finance remains a critical barrier for local businesses, particularly SMEs. Academia

1.2.4 Specific organisation/government department dealing with CSR

Although there isn't a dedicated government department specifically for CSR, the local administration actively promotes socially responsible practices among businesses. The Department of International Relations, Partnerships, and Urban Innovation oversees initiatives in this area, supporting projects aligned with CSR principles, such as restoring cultural heritage

sites and improving energy efficiency in public buildings, often in collaboration with organisations like the World Bank. Overall, Alba County demonstrates a strong commitment to fostering government-business relations, with ongoing efforts to tackle challenges and create a sustainable economic environment.

1.2.5 Partnerships with national/international CSR initiatives

The Municipality of Alba Iulia has collaborated and been actively involved in CSR initiatives by involving its own volunteers or mobilizing organizations / institutions / companies to come up with answers to the needs of the community.

Since 2017, the municipality of Alba Iulia has collaborated with the One Kind association to organize local campaigns addressed to vulnerable groups and not only, campaigns that have mobilized an average of 30 initiators / year. Given the fact that we are an example of good practice at national level and internationally recognized, starting with 2024, the municipality of Alba Iulia has taken over the role of national leader (instead of the One Kind -The Municipality of Alba Iulia takes over the coordination of the "Week of Generosity" - Generosity Week) of the global movement Giving Tuesday. Currently, we are part of 2 European/national working groups, with representatives on the CSR component from over 90 countries (Global - GivingTuesday).

The Municipality of Alba Iulia is the mobilizer of the community youth dynamics to develop and submit the application for the title Alba Iulia – Youth Capital of Romania 2026. This application was developed 100% by young people and youth organizations mobilized and coordinated in this endeavor. At the moment, both the municipality of Alba Iulia and the youth sector are working on outlining the procedures and the program agenda for 2026. In this dynamic, the role assumed by the municipality is to provide the necessary support to the youth ecosystem, but also to increase the impact of this program at national/international level by identifying and developing collaborations with entrepreneurs, banking institutions, NGOs and institutions. The direct interest is to challenge and support the development of the youth ecosystem, with the involvement of relevant stakeholders from the local, national and international environment.

Over the last few years, the municipality has started a series of campaigns / activities aimed at supporting the proactive involvement of local stakeholders by carrying out actions such as calls for involvement / networking actions or appreciation of community involvement.

Among them I can mention:

- The National Volunteering Week (an event with a tradition in Alba Iulia), through which we challenge the involvement of NGOs, institutions and companies to get proactively involved in the community, to promote volunteering in the community for a week. The last day of the week was intended for the organization of an NGO "Fair", an action through which they promoted their activities and animated the atmosphere through socio-educational animation activities.

the 2024, In 2023, In 2022,

- The Alba Iulia Volunteers Gala (an event with tradition in Alba Iulia), in which the best initiatives are promoted in areas such as: Volunteer of the Year, Volunteer Coordinator of the Year, Volunteering Project of the Year, Volunteering Project of the Year for Vulnerable People, respectively the CSR project.

or 2024, 2023, 2022.

- Community lunch organized outdoors to support the development of networking between initiators of social actions.

a Resources: https://www.facebook.com/share/15iCY47dYC/

- Bubble Parade: an event through which we mobilize NGOs, institutions and companies to develop a context for families for outdoor socializing.

a Resources: In 2017, In 2019.

The Municipality of Alba Iulia is recognized as an example of good practice by the General Secretariat of the Government - SGG - Volunteer Promoters – Municipality of Alba Iulia

1.2.6 CSR initiatives in the region

1/Public Initiative: Alba Iulia Municipality's Energy Efficiency Projects

a) Detail the CSR activities implemented (classified according to ESG criteria): Alba Iulia Municipality has implemented several energy efficiency initiatives, aligning primarily with environmental (E) and social (S) goals. Key projects include modernizing public lighting systems, thermally rehabilitating residential buildings, enhancing energy efficiency in public buildings, and introducing electric buses for public transport. **(Managenergy)**

b) Objectives in focus (social integration, environmental, education, charity, etc.): The main objectives are reducing energy consumption, cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and improving public infrastructure for enhanced urban quality of life.

c) Is this relationship institutionalised (contract, cooperation agreement with the municipality)? Yes, these projects are institutionalised through agreements with EU funding bodies, local authorities, and established policies.

d) Motivation behind the initiative: commitment to sustainability, environmental protection, and the need for Alba Iulia to align with European climate goals.

e) Expected outcome: significant reductions in energy consumption, improved cost efficiency in public services, and a healthier urban environment.

f) Actual impact achieved (internal + external effects, financial/non-financial benefits): The municipality has reported measurable energy savings, improved air quality, and a positive impact on public infrastructure.

g) How the impacts of the actions were measured: Impacts are tracked through regular energy audits, GHG inventories, and public feedback mechanisms.

h) Communication method (internal + external): Communication occurs through local media, municipal bulletins, and public engagement workshops, ensuring community awareness and support.

i) Challenges or obstacles encountered and mitigation strategies: Challenges include securing adequate funding and citizen engagement. These were mitigated through strategic partnerships, EU funding applications, and proactive public communication.

j) Municipal support for these initiatives: Support includes financial grants, resources for project management, and organisational assistance to drive these initiatives forward.

k) Tools and methods used to align political will with CSR objectives: The municipality uses tools such as an online energy dashboard, frequent community workshops, and social media platforms to engage and educate stakeholders on CSR objectives.

l) Type of support used (financial/non-financial): Support is both financial (through EU and local grants) and non-financial (administrative resources, space provision, and press support).

m) General procedure for implementing CSR actions: The CSR initiatives follow a structured approach involving defined roles, collaborative project planning, and systematic monitoring to ensure successful implementation.

2/Private initiative: THE URBAN LIBRARY

a) Classification: The Urban Library is classified as a (2) private initiative, funded and implemented by Transavia, a leading poultry company in Romania. The project is supported by non-financial contributions from the local municipality.

b) CSR Activities Implemented: The Urban Library project involved setting up 10 mini-libraries in prominent public areas across Alba Iulia. Each mini-library features a unique design and uses sustainable materials. The libraries operate on a "take one, leave one" book exchange model, encouraging residents and tourists to read and share books. This initiative addresses several ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) criteria:

- **Environmental: Use of sustainable materials for the mini-libraries and promoting the idea of book recycling.**

- **Social Integration: Creating inclusive spaces that are accessible to all members of the community.**

- **Education: Promoting literacy and lifelong learning among all age groups.**

c) Institutional Relationship: The relationship between Transavia and the local municipality is not formalised through a contract or cooperation agreement. However, the municipality has provided support through non-financial means, such as allocating public spaces for the mini-libraries and promoting the project.

d) Motivation Behind the Initiative: Transavia's motivation stems from a strong commitment to social responsibility and a desire to give back to the community where the company was founded. The project aligns with their mission to promote education and cultural enrichment and to contribute to the social well-being of Alba Iulia's residents.

e) Expected Outcome:

- Increase access to educational resources and promote a culture of reading.

- Provide an attractive and interactive public space for community engagement.

- Strengthen Transavia's brand as a socially responsible company.

f) Impact Achieved:

- **External Effects:** High community engagement, with frequent use of the mini-libraries and positive feedback from residents and tourists. The project has enhanced the cultural landscape of the city and created a new attraction for visitors.

- **Internal Benefits:** Strengthened Transavia's reputation as a leader in CSR, fostering a sense of pride among employees and reinforcing the company's image.

- **Non-Financial Benefits:** Improved literacy rates among young people and an increase in cultural activities in public spaces.

g) Measurement of Impact:

The impact has been measured through:

- **Community Feedback:** Surveys and direct feedback from users of the mini-libraries.

- **Usage Rates:** Monitoring the number of books exchanged and the frequency of visits to the mini-libraries.

- **Social Media Engagement:** Tracking interactions, comments, and shares related to the project.

h) Communication:

- **Internal:** Shared with Transavia employees through newsletters and meetings to highlight the company's CSR efforts.

- **External:** Promoted through press releases, local media coverage, and social media campaigns. The municipality also helped spread awareness through community bulletins.

i) Challenges and Obstacles:

- **Challenge:** Vandalism and Maintenance – Concerns about the potential for vandalism and damage to the mini-libraries.
  Solution: Engaged the community to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility for maintaining the libraries**.**

- **Challenge:** Book Supply – Ensuring a steady flow of books for the mini-libraries.
  Solution: Partnerships with the County Library, local bookstores, and private donations have helped maintain a diverse collection.

- **Failed Initiatives**: No major failures have been reported, but weather-related damage to the structures has occasionally required repair**.**

j) Municipality Support: Non-Financial Support: The municipality provided spaces for the mini-libraries, organisational help, and promoted the project through local press. There was no direct financial support from the municipality.

k) Tools and Methods Needed:

- New Communication Channels: Creating an online platform to showcase CSR projects and connect local businesses with municipal initiatives.

- CSR Group: Setting up a dedicated CSR group to facilitate collaboration between the municipality and local businesses.

- Local Media: Using local newspapers and radio to regularly update the community on CSR efforts.

- Newsletters: Sending newsletters to businesses about upcoming urban projects and opportunities for involvement.

l) CSR Financial Support: Currently, there is no operational CSR financial fund in the municipality for local companies to contribute to. Setting up such a fund could face bureaucratic challenges but would be beneficial for coordinating and expanding CSR efforts.

m) General Procedure: CSR actions are implemented through informal agreements. There is no standardised procedure, such as a framework agreement or dedicated contract management, for these projects. Formalising these processes could improve coordination and accountability

1.2.7 CSR instruments

Local Government CSR-Instrument/ *Policy Arena*	Awareness-raising (e.g. Business awards, information platforms...)	Facilitation (e.g. coordinating local business networks, facilita-ting alliances...)	Partnering (e.g. public private partnerships ,Government-business contracts, etc.)	Soft Law (e.g. criteria-based procure-ment, codes of conduct for contractors.)	Financing (e.g. special grants, criteria-based local rates)	Planning (e.g. land-use planning, special activity zones)	Mandating (e.g. by-laws/ local codes, regulations, licensing of business)
Economic/Business Development	Business workshops (e.g., chamber of commerce events)	Coordination of SMEs through business incubators	PPPs for economic zones	Codes of conduct for fair business practices	SME grants, EU co-financed programs	Local development plans Circular Economy Plan	Licensing requirements, compliance standards
Urban Regeneration and Area-Upgrading	Public information campaigns on urban renewal projects	Support for investor-developer liaisons	Partnerships for revitalization (e.g., historical area upgrades	Urban design recommendations (source: Local Planning Office Reports)	EU structural funds for urban upgrades	Master plans for urban regeneration	Building and zoning regulations
Environmental Protection	Environmental awareness campaigns (e.g., recycling)	Networks for sustainable practices, like green energy clusters	Collaborations with NGOs for eco-projects Lets do it	Guidelines for environmental impact assessments (source: Environmental Agency Reports)	Subsidies for renewable energy adoption	Protected natural zones, urban green spaces	Legal norms on emissions and waste management

Social/ Community Development	Community-driven awareness efforts	Engagement with local NGOs for social projects	Social partnerships with foundations	Social inclusion policies (source: Social Development Framework)	Funds for local community centres	Social infrastructure integrated into urban plans	Zoning laws favouring social cohesion
Land-Use, Transport, Infrastructure	Campaigns promoting sustainable transport modes	Local mobility projects (e.g., bicycle lanes)	Joint ventures for public transport systems	Sustainable infrastructure guidelines (source: Transport Ministry Reports)	Grants for transport infrastructure improvements	Integrated land-use and transportation plans	Regulations on urban sprawl, density
Cultural Integration and Inclusion	Events celebrating cultural diversity	Roles for cultural mediators	Partnerships for cultural festivals	Standards for cultural site preservation	Support for cultural initiatives through public funds	Plans for cultural district development	Heritage protection laws
Participation and Active Citizenship	Civic education on democratic participation	Support for neighbourhood councils	Co-design projects with citizens (e.g., participatory budgeting)	Recommendations for civic engagement (source: Governance White Paper)	Micro-grants for local initiatives	Participatory urban planning frameworks	Statutory requirements for public consultations
Education, Lifelong Learning and Labour Markets	Workshops for upskilling (source: Local Education Authority)	Coordination with universities for workforce development	Internship programs with local businesses	Standards for educational quality (source: Education Ministry)	Scholarships and vocational training funds	Spatial planning for educational facilities	Employment laws favoring youth and retraining
Other Policy Arena:	Tech and innovation events	Facilitation of tech start-ups through hubs	Collaboration with IT companies	ICT policy guidelines (source: Digital Strategy Office)	Funding for digital infrastructure, EU tech grants	Smart city initiatives for data integration	Digital security and data protection regulations

Alba Iulia Municipality has gradually developed an approach to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). While the CSR culture is not yet deeply embedded, the presence of several major economic actors with significant national relevance has driven the region's engagement in impactful sustainability initiatives. In Alba County, these key players, particularly in sectors such as food production, energy, and manufacturing, are increasingly adopting CSR practices. This evolving commitment reflects a broader awareness of CSR's importance and highlights the region's potential to foster sustainable development.

1. Awareness Raising

● Smart City Workshops and Campaigns: The Alba Iulia Municipality has conducted workshops to engage citizens and businesses in understanding the benefits of smart city technologies and sustainability practices. Public awareness campaigns on digital innovation, energy conservation, and waste reduction have been integral to promoting community participation.

● Community Information Platforms: The municipality has developed information platforms to keep residents informed about urban projects, sustainability initiatives, and

opportunities for civic involvement. These efforts have aimed to increase transparency and public awareness.

2. Facilitation

- Business and Innovation Hubs: The municipality has facilitated the establishment of hubs that support local start-ups and SMEs. These hubs provide mentoring, networking, and access to resources, fostering a climate of innovation and entrepreneurship.

- Green Energy Facilitation: Alba Iulia has actively supported renewable energy initiatives by connecting local businesses with funding opportunities and technical expertise to promote the use of solar panels and energy-efficient infrastructure.

3. Partnering

- Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): The city has successfully implemented PPPs for major urban development projects, including the Smart City Alba Iulia initiative. These partnerships have brought in tech companies to deploy smart technologies in public services, such as intelligent lighting, waste management, and digital tourism.

- Collaborations with Universities and Research Institutions: The municipality collaborates with academic partners, such as the "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia, to conduct research and implement projects related to urban sustainability, digital innovation, and cultural preservation.

4. Soft Law

- Urban Design and Sustainability Guidelines: While not legally binding, the municipality encourages adherence to guidelines that promote sustainable building practices, green spaces, and eco-friendly urban design. These guidelines are often used as best practice standards for developers.

- Corporate Responsibility Promotion: The city promotes CSR principles through voluntary codes of conduct for local businesses, emphasising ethical practices, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship.

5. Financing

- EU Structural and Investment Funds: Alba Iulia Municipality has effectively leveraged EU funding for infrastructure upgrades, cultural heritage projects, and smart city initiatives. These funds have been critical in driving the city's modernization and environmental sustainability efforts.

- Local Grant Programs: The municipality provides grants and co-funding opportunities to support local businesses, especially those investing in digital solutions or green technologies. This financial support is aimed at boosting the local economy and encouraging innovation.

6. Planning

- Comprehensive Urban Planning: The municipality has developed integrated urban plans that prioritise sustainable land use, efficient transportation networks, and the preservation of cultural heritage. These plans are aligned with EU urban development strategies and incorporate public input to ensure inclusivity.

- Protected Cultural and Natural Areas: Strategic planning has included the designation of protected areas to conserve Alba Iulia's rich history and natural environment. These efforts have supported tourism while safeguarding local biodiversity.

7. Minima (Regulations)

- Building and Environmental Regulations: Strict building codes and environmental regulations ensure that new developments meet safety and sustainability standards. The municipality enforces compliance to maintain the quality of life and reduce environmental impact.

- Digital Infrastructure Standards: As part of the Smart City initiative, the municipality has set regulations to standardise digital infrastructure, ensuring that technological upgrades are secure, efficient, and beneficial to the public.

Specific Examples of Applied Instruments in Alba Iulia:

- Smart City Alba Iulia Initiative: This flagship project has used a combination of PPPs, EU funding, and digital innovation guidelines to transform urban services. Collaborations with companies like Orange and Microsoft have led to the implementation of smart lighting, traffic management, and digital tourism solutions.

- Cultural Heritage Preservation: The city has worked with academic institutions and heritage organisations to restore historic landmarks like the Alba Carolina Fortress. Funding from the EU and strategic partnerships have made these projects possible, benefiting both the local economy and cultural tourism.

1.2.8 Implicit – Explicit CSR

CSR-Approach:The approach to CSR in Alba County is more explicit, driven by voluntary programs and corporate strategies rather than deeply ingrained cultural norms or values.

Comment: In a post-socialist context, CSR practices are not yet a deeply embedded part of business culture. Therefore, companies engage in explicit CSR through structured and strategic initiatives. Examples include sustainability certifications, energy efficiency projects, and environmental programs carried out by large corporations like Transgaz and TRANSAVIA. These initiatives are often influenced by external factors, such as EU regulations and global market expectations, rather than long-standing local cultural values or norms. The explicit nature of CSR is evident in formal partnerships, published sustainability reports, and organised campaigns that are clearly communicated to stakeholders.

1.3 Approaching sustainability

1.3.1 Budget dedicated to sustainability in the Municipality

In 2024, the city of Alba Iulia allocated a total budget of approximately €134 million, with around €74 million (approximately 55%) dedicated to investments. A significant portion of these investments focuses on sustainability projects, including:

- **Energy Efficiency**: Enhancing the energy efficiency of educational and residential buildings, as well as the energy renovation of public facilities like the "Horea, Closca și Crișan" National College. Alba24

- **Renewable Energy**: Promoting renewable energy production through the installation of photovoltaic panels on public buildings and the development of a solar park. Alba24

- **Urban Mobility**: Developing bicycle infrastructure in the Mamut area and improving the public transport system by acquiring non-polluting vehicles and installing charging stations. Alba24

While an exact percentage of the budget specifically allocated to sustainability initiatives is not explicitly stated, these allocations reflect Alba Iulia's substantial commitment to sustainable development and environmental protection.

1.3.2 Sustainability-related strategic documents

Alba County has developed several strategic documents to address sustainability and environmental challenges:

1. **Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP)**:

   - **Overview**: Alba Iulia's SECAP outlines measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. The plan includes initiatives such as modernising public lighting systems, thermally rehabilitating residential buildings, enhancing energy efficiency in public structures, and integrating electric buses into the public transportation fleet. Managenergy

   - **Targets**: The municipality aims to reduce CO_2 emissions by at least 40% by 2030, aligning with the Covenant of Mayors objectives. Fedarene

2. **Planul de Atenuare și Adaptare la Schimbările Climatice (PAASC)**:

   - **Overview**: This plan focuses on mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts within Alba Iulia. It includes a study to identify areas vulnerable to heavy rainfall and proposes solutions for efficient stormwater management. Alea

- **Targets**: The PAASC aims to align local actions with national and international climate strategies, planning concrete measures for the 2022-2030 period. Alba24

3. **Green City Accord Commitment**:

- **Overview**: In June 2021, Alba Iulia joined the European Commission's Green City Accord, committing to ambitious environmental protection targets beyond EU minimum requirements. The city focuses on improving air and water quality, enhancing urban biodiversity, advancing towards a circular economy, and reducing noise pollution. Interreg Europe

- **Targets**: By 2030, Alba Iulia aims to significantly improve air quality, enhance water body quality, conserve urban biodiversity, and advance waste management practices.

4. **Strategia Integrată de Dezvoltare Urbană (SIDU) 2021-2030**:

- **Overview**: The Integrated Urban Development Strategy outlines Alba Iulia's vision for sustainable urban growth, emphasizing environmental sustainability, economic development, and social inclusion. APMAB

- **Targets**: The strategy includes objectives such as increasing green spaces, promoting sustainable mobility, and improving energy efficiency in public and private buildings.

1.3.3 Regional GHG Emissions and Climate Change Challenges

Alba County faces several critical challenges concerning greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, with key sectors contributing to the problem. **Transportation** is one of the most significant sources of emissions, driven by heavy road traffic both within the city and across the region, exacerbated by the prevalence of older, less efficient vehicle fleets. The **industrial sector** also plays a major role, with emissions stemming from manufacturing and processing activities, particularly in construction materials, food production, and metal processing. Additionally, **agriculture** contributes substantial methane and nitrous oxide emissions, primarily from livestock farming and fertiliser use, making it another high-impact sector. Lastly, **residential energy use** is a concern, as many older buildings have poor insulation and rely heavily on inefficient heating systems.

The county is grappling with multiple climate change-related challenges. One of the most pressing issues is the **deterioration of air quality**, especially in urban areas, where stagnant air masses allow pollutants to accumulate. Furthermore, the region is experiencing **extreme weather events**, such as heatwaves, floods, and droughts, which are becoming more frequent and severe. These events have direct implications for agriculture, a vital economic sector, by disrupting crop yields and affecting livestock health. The **economic impact** is considerable, as climate variability threatens local food security and livelihoods.

I**nfrastructure vulnerability** poses a significant challenge, as many roads, bridges, and other critical systems are not designed to withstand the effects of climate change. This vulnerability

risks connectivity, safety, and long-term economic stability. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that includes improving energy efficiency, investing in renewable energy sources, modernising transport infrastructure, and adopting sustainable practices in agriculture

1.4 Identifying knowledge needs and good practices

1.4.1 SWOT analysis based on the Local Stakeholder Group (LSG) meeting

Strengths

1. **Established CSR Initiatives**: Companies like Bosch Automotive and Kronospan Foundation have already implemented impactful CSR projects, setting a precedent in the region.

2. **Public-Private Collaboration**: The meeting highlighted the willingness of both sectors to engage in collaborative projects, such as the proposed Science Museum.

3. **Strategic Location and Connectivity**: Alba Iulia's location facilitates partnerships and CSR initiatives that can reach a wider regional impact.

4. **Support from Educational Institutions**: Universities and research institutions are engaged, providing expertise and knowledge resources for CSR projects.

Weaknesses

1. **Limited SME Engagement**: Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) show lower engagement in CSR activities compared to large corporations.

2. **Resource Constraints**: Municipal resources are limited, impacting the ability to support and monitor CSR activities efficiently.

3. **Complex Administrative Procedures**: Bureaucratic hurdles slow down the implementation and scaling of CSR projects.

4. **Awareness Gaps**: There is a need for more awareness and education on the benefits of CSR, especially among smaller companies.

Opportunities

1. **EU Funding and Regulations**: Upcoming European regulations (e.g., Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive) are likely to drive more companies to adopt CSR practices.

2. **Community Engagement**: There is growing community interest in environmental and social well-being, offering opportunities for impactful CSR projects.

3. **Education and Training**: Developing educational programs on sustainability and CSR for local businesses could increase awareness and participation.

4. **Technological Innovation**: Embracing advancements in energy, manufacturing, and sustainable practices can accelerate the impact of CSR initiatives.

Threats

1. **Economic Uncertainty**: Fluctuating economic conditions may discourage smaller businesses from investing in CSR.

2. **Climate Change Risks**: Environmental challenges threaten agriculture and local infrastructure, complicating sustainability efforts.

3. **Regulatory Compliance**: New EU mandates may be perceived as burdensome, resulting in minimal compliance rather than proactive CSR engagement.

4. **Competition for Funding**: High demand for EU and other grants may limit the resources available for local CSR initiatives.

Summary and Conclusion of the SWOT Analysis

The analysis underscores that while large corporations are actively engaged in CSR, SMEs need more support and awareness. There are solid opportunities to leverage EU regulations and community interest to boost CSR efforts. However, bureaucratic hurdles and resource limitations remain significant challenges. Climate change and economic instability pose risks, emphasizing the importance of proactive, long-term strategies.

Knowledge Needs

1. **Best Practices for SME Engagement**: Effective methods for encouraging SMEs to participate in CSR initiatives.

2. **Simplified Administrative Processes**: Strategies to streamline bureaucracy for quicker and more efficient project implementation.

3. **Impact Measurement**: Tools and methods for assessing and communicating the impact of CSR projects to stakeholders.

4. **Collaborative Frameworks**: Models for improving communication and partnerships between businesses, the public sector, and educational institutions.

Good Practices

1. **Collaboration with Universities**: Leveraging academic knowledge and research to support CSR projects, as demonstrated by the involvement of educational institutions.

2. **Community-Based Projects**: Initiatives like the proposed Science Museum that engage and benefit the local community while promoting CSR values.

Cross-Sector Partnerships: Examples of successful partnerships between public authorities and large corporations, setting a model for future collaboration.

2. Good Practice collection

This section is dedicated to the Good Practices collected under the ACROSS project.

2.1. Good Practice 1: "Blauer Stern" Kindergarten in Sebeș: Sustainable German-Language Education

2.1.1 Organisation in charge of the good practice

Is your organisation the main institution in charge of this good practice?

No.

2.1.2 Good Practice general information

Implementation level of the practice: ONGOING

Country: Romania

Region: Center

City: Sebeș

Practice image:

Title of the practice: "Blauer Stern" Kindergarten in Sebeș: Sustainable German-Language Education

2.1.3 Good practice detailed information

Short summary of the practice: Initiated in November 2022 and set to open in September 2025, the "Blauer Stern" Public Kindergarten and Nursery in Sebeș, funded by Star Assembly, will provide German-language education to 97 children in a modern, sustainable facility featuring solar panels, energy-efficient design, and innovative learning spaces.

Detailed information on the practice:

Problem Addressed and Context

Sebeș, Romania, has faced a shortage of early childhood education facilities, particularly institutions offering instruction in German, which is essential for the local German-speaking community. This gap has limited access to quality bilingual education and created challenges for families seeking culturally relevant early learning opportunities. Additionally, the increasing demand for modern, sustainable educational infrastructure has called for new solutions.

Recognizing the importance of early childhood education and cultural preservation, the "Blauer Stern" Public Kindergarten and Nursery was initiated as a public-private partnership, ensuring access to high-quality education while incorporating environmental sustainability into its design and operations.

Objectives and Implementation

The primary objective of the "Blauer Stern" project is to provide a bilingual German-Romanian educational environment that supports language acquisition, cultural continuity, and modern pedagogical approaches. The project is structured to accommodate 97 children in an innovative, sustainable learning environment.

- November 2022 – A cooperation agreement is signed between the Municipality of Sebeș, Star Assembly, and the German High School in Sebeș.
- 2023-2024 – Construction begins on a state-of-the-art, eco-friendly facility designed to meet modern educational standards.
- September 2025 – Official opening and enrolment of the first generation of students.

Implementation Timeline:

- November 2022 – A cooperation agreement is signed between the Municipality of Sebeș, Star Assembly, and the German High School in Sebeș.
- 2023-2024 – Construction begins on a state-of-the-art, eco-friendly facility designed to meet modern educational standards.
- September 2025 – Official opening and enrollment of the first generation of students.

Key Features of the Facility:

- Educational Spaces: Three kindergarten classrooms and three nursery rooms, all equipped with interactive learning tools and outdoor play areas.
- Sustainable Infrastructure: The building integrates solar panels, smart energy management systems, and rainwater recycling to reduce environmental impact.
- Flexible Learning Areas: A multi-functional central hub with interactive walls, library space, and collaborative zones encourages dynamic learning experiences.
- Extended Program Hours: The curriculum is designed to support working parents, ensuring high accessibility and inclusivity.
- Health & Safety: A dedicated medical office and isolation room ensure children's well-being.

The educational program will be managed under the coordination of the German High School in Sebeș, ensuring consistency and adherence to high academic standards.

Main Stakeholders and Beneficiaries

- **Star Assembly SRL – T**he primary financier, supporting the initiative as part of its corporate social responsibility strategy.
- **Municipality of Sebeș –** Provided the land and facilitated administrative approvals to ensure smooth implementation.
- **German High School Sebeş – Oversees the educational program, ensuring curriculum alignment with linguistic and cultural needs.**

Local Community – The direct beneficiaries are the 97 children who will receive early education in German, alongside families who gain access to high-quality childcare and education.

Timescale (start/end date):
Start Date: November 2022
Projected Completion and Opening Date: September 2025

Resources needed:

Financial Resources: Fully funded by Star Assembly, covering construction, equipment, and operational setup costs.

Human Resources:

- 12 educators proficient in German-language early childhood education.

- 10 support staff (administrative, maintenance, and medical personnel).

Evidence of success (results achieved):

Although the project is still under construction, its success is already evident through:

- Strong collaboration between corporate, municipal, and educational partners, ensuring a sustainable model.
- High anticipation from the local community, with strong demand for early enrollment.
- Implementation of eco-friendly, energy-efficient building solutions, setting a new standard for sustainable early education in Romania.

Upon completion, the kindergarten will provide bilingual education to 97 children, enhancing early childhood learning, linguistic diversity, and cultural heritage preservation.

Potential for learning or transfer:

The "Blauer Stern" project serves as a model public-private partnership that can be replicated in other regions facing educational gaps, particularly in bilingual or minority-language communities.

Key Success Factors for Replication:

1. Cross-Sector Collaboration – Engaging local government, private companies, and educational institutions in joint efforts.
2. Sustainability & Green Architecture – Integrating renewable energy solutions and smart infrastructure into school designs.
3. Cultural Relevance in Education – Ensuring early education aligns with local linguistic and cultural needs.

Other regions interested in enhancing early childhood education and sustainability in public-private initiatives can adapt this model to their specific needs.

External website (optional):

Star Assembly și Star Transmission: Extinderea implicării sociale și educaționale în 2024 (P) - Alba24

Star Assembly și Star Transmission: Extinderea implicării sociale și educaționale în 2024 - Revista Urbea Mea - Revista de Alba

Star Assembly și Star Transmission: Extinderea implicării sociale și educaționale în 2024 - Ziarul Unirea

2.2. Good Practice 2: *''Your Professional Partner'' program for vocational and dual education in Alba County*

2.2.1 Organisation in charge of the good practice

Is your organisation the main institution in charge of this good practice?

No

2.2.2 Good Practice general information

Implementation level of the practice: ONGOING

> Country: Romania

> Region: Center

> City: -

Practice image:

Title of the practice: *''Your Professional Partner'' program for vocational and dual education in Alba County*

2.2.3 Good practice detailed information

Short summary of the practice:

Launched in 2019, *Your Professional Partner* connects schools, businesses, and local authorities to enhance vocational education, offering career guidance, industry visits, and apprenticeships.

Detailed information on the practice:

In **Alba County, Romania**, vocational education has traditionally been undervalued, leading to a **shortage of skilled workers** in key industries such as **automotive, manufacturing, and**

agribusiness. Many young people **leave school without practical skills**, limiting their employment opportunities.

To address this, the **Alba County Council** and **Alba County School Inspectorate** launched **Your Professional Partner** in **2019**, following the **Alba County Strategy for Education and Vocational Training (VET) 2018**. The initiative builds on the establishment of the **Dual Vocational School in Alba Iulia in 2013**, making the county a leader in vocational education.

Objectives and Implementation

- Strengthen **school-business collaboration** to align training with market demands.
- Increase **enrolment in vocational and dual education** by raising awareness and promoting technical careers.
- Provide **hands-on experience** through internships and apprenticeships.
- Improve **youth employability** by equipping students with industry-relevant skills.

The programme includes:

- **Career guidance sessions** in schools for students in the **final two years of lower secondary education** (equivalent to **ISCED Level 2**, typically ages **13-15 yrs**, before transitioning to upper secondary or high school).
- **Industry visits and job shadowing** to familiarise students with workplaces.
- **Apprenticeships and internships**, developed with over **10 key companies**.
- **Educational fairs and open days**, including the **Educational Offers Fair**, held annually since **2022**.
- **Parent-teacher engagement sessions** to promote vocational education awareness.

Main Stakeholders and Beneficiaries

VET Working Group

- **Public Authorities:** Alba County Council – Project initiator and coordinator, local administrations (UATs);
- **Educational Institutions:** The Alba County School Inspectorate- oversees integration into the education system., the County Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance (CJRAE Alba), and 1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia; **Vocational Schools** – 9 institutions across **seven localities**: **Alba Iulia, Abrud, Baia de Arieș, Blaj, Cugir, Ocna Mureș, Sebeș**.
- **Economic Sectors:** Major industry representatives, including:
  - Automotive: Star Assembly & Star Transmission, Bosch Automotive, VCST Automotive Production Alba;
  - Food Industry: Transavia, Albalact;
  - Ceramics: IPEC;
  - Construction: Marinex;
  - Paper Manufacturing: Pehart Tec Group;
  - Wood Processing: Kronospan Trading;
  - Metal Constructions: Industeam East Europe;

○ Defence Industry: Fabrica de Arme Cugir, Uzina Mecanică Cugir.

Beneficiaries:

Students from vocational schools and from low secondary schools – Structured training in six key sectors: **mechanics, electromechanics, electrical, construction, commerce, tourism & catering**.

Parents & Educators – Informed through awareness campaigns and counselling.

Impact and Measurable Results

- **46% increase** in dual education enrolment between **2021 and 2025**.
- **Over 900 students** enrolled in **dual vocational programmes for 2024-2025**.
- **More than 300 students** complete apprenticeships annually.
- Thousands of students, parents, and educators engaged through **vocational fairs and promotional campaigns**.

Existing Agreements and Future Outlook

- **Partnership Framework Agreement** signed on **16 March 2023** between **Alba County School Inspectorate and Alba County Council** to support ongoing cooperation.\
- The success of vocational education initiatives in Alba County contributed to securing **€26 million in funding through PNRR** for the development of the **Crescendo Dual Education Campus**, strengthening long-term educational infrastructure.
- The **2025-2030 VET Strategy** is under review to enhance vocational education and labour market alignment.

By integrating **public authorities, educational institutions, and businesses**, Your Professional Partner serves as a **scalable model** for vocational education reform, addressing **labour shortages** and offering **practical career pathways for students**.

Timescale (start/end date):
2019 – Ongoing

Resources needed:

Financial Resources: Approximately **€300,000 annually**, funded by Alba County Council and local business contributions for campaigns, training, and infrastructure.

Human Resources: Teams of **educators, career counsellors, business mentors, and industry professionals** provide career guidance, organise internships, and facilitate industry partnerships.

Evidence of success (results achieved):
Between 2021 and 2025, student enrolment in dual education increased by 46% in Alba

County. Over 500 students annually participated in career guidance sessions and company visits, strengthening school-business collaboration. Employers report improved job readiness and practical skills, with a high employability rate among graduates. The Educational Offers Fair connects thousands of students with companies, reducing skill gaps and enhancing career prospects.

Potential for learning or transfer:

The Your Professional Partner initiative provides a **scalable model** for regions seeking to **bridge the gap between education and employment** through vocational and dual education.

Key Success Factors

- **Strong collaboration** between local authorities, schools, and businesses to align education with labour market needs.
- **Awareness campaigns** targeting students and parents to change perceptions of vocational training.
- **Practical learning opportunities**, including apprenticeships and internships, to ensure hands-on skill development.
- **Career counselling and industry visits** to help students make informed career choices.

Challenges & Solutions

- **Changing perceptions:** Many parents and students initially resist vocational education. **Solution:** Continuous engagement and success stories to highlight career prospects.
- **Funding sustainability:** Ensuring long-term financial support. **Solution:** Ongoing collaboration with businesses and local authorities.
- **Policy differences and employer engagement** may affect implementation. **Solution:** Customised partnerships based on regional needs.

The programme's **Educational Offers Fair** serves as a **model for vocational education promotion**, supporting informed student decisions. This structured approach can be **adapted by regions** aiming to **enhance youth employability**, **reduce skills mismatches**, and **strengthen industry readiness** through targeted vocational training.

External website (optional):

https://isjalba.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Pliant-Partenerul-tau-profesional-2-1.pdf

Campania VET în cadrul Programului Partenerul Tău Profesional – Consiliul Judetean Alba – Județul Alba

FOTO | Învățământul profesional și dual, promovat în rândul elevilor din Alba: Avantajele unei meserii căutate pe piața muncii - Ziarul Unirea

O nouă etapă în campania de promovare a învățământului profesional, tehnic și dual în Alba

Ministra Ligia Deca a semnat, la Alba, contractul de finanţare pentru campusul de învăţământ dual CRESCENDO - finanţare prin PNRR în valoare de 26 milioane de euro - PNL media

Târgul Ofertelor Educaţionale la Alba Iulia. 16 licee tehnologice din Alba prezintă detalii despre admitere 2024 şi specializări - Alba24

2.3. Good Practice 3: **Alba Iulia's Smart City Public-Private Partnership**

2.3.1 Organisation in charge of the good practice

Is your organisation the main institution in charge of this good practice?

Yes.

2.3.2 Good Practice general information

Implementation level of the practice: ONGOING

> Country: Romania

> Region: Center

> City: Alba Iulia

Practice image:

Title of the practice: Alba Iulia's Smart City Public-Private Partnership

2.3.4 Good practice detailed information

Short summary of the practice:

Alba Iulia's Smart City Public-Private Partnership integrates technology into urban services, improving efficiency, sustainability, and citizen engagement

Detailed information on the practice:

The Smart City Alba Iulia initiative was launched to address inefficiencies in urban management, such as high energy consumption, traffic congestion, and outdated waste management systems. Given the city's status as a historical and cultural hub, modernization efforts had to balance innovation with heritage preservation. The city partnered with tech companies like Orange, Microsoft, and Siemens to implement smart city solutions that address these challenges.

The initiative involves deploying intelligent street lighting, optimising waste collection through sensor technology, and enhancing tourism with digital platforms and augmented reality. These measures have improved service delivery, reduced costs, and boosted environmental sustainability. The municipality's facilitation role involved providing pilot zones for testing and data collection while ensuring community engagement through information campaigns and workshops.

Main Stakeholders and Beneficiaries:

- Municipality of Alba Iulia: Project oversight and facilitation
- Tech Partners (e.g., Orange, Microsoft): Solution implementation and co-investment
- Residents and Local Businesses: Primary beneficiaries of improved urban services
- Tourists and Cultural Organisations: Enhanced cultural experiences and tourism management

Timescale (start/end date):

2016 – Ongoing

Resources needed:

Financial Resources: Approximately €6 million in total, combining EU structural funds and private investment

Human Resources: A core team of municipal officials, project managers, and tech company staff, supported by university researchers for data analysis

Evidence of success (results achieved):

Energy Savings: Smart street lighting reduced energy consumption by 40%

Operational Efficiency: Waste management costs decreased by 20% through optimised collection routes

Community Engagement: Surveys show an 85% approval rate for the improvements in public services

Potential for learning or transfer:

This practice showcases effective collaboration between public and private sectors, making it a transferable model for cities seeking digital transformation. The key success factors include

strong stakeholder commitment, co-funding mechanisms, and adaptability to local contexts. However, challenges such as initial resistance to change and the need for ongoing digital

literacy efforts may hamper transfer. Cities like Valencia, Spain, have already expressed interest in adopting similar smart solutions, demonstrating the model's potential for widespread application.

External website (optional):

https://smartcity.albaiulia.ro

Video (optional):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BNduu2-mpY

3. Policy instrument analysis tackled in ACROSS project

This section aims to elaborate on the policy instrument tackled in ACROSS project, focusing on the related challenges in any aspect of the policy instrument.

3.1. General information

Name of the policy instrument: Integrated Urban Development Strategy of Alba Iulia Municipality 2021-2030

Is this instrument an Investment for jobs and growth goal programme? No

Please indicate the geographical scope of this policy instrument: Local

Name of the policy responsible authority: Municipality of Alba Iulia

If policy responsible authority is other than the partner organisation, what is the relation between you and how do you cooperate? NA

If policy responsible authority is other than the partner organisation, what are your abilities to influence the policy? NA

How the relation with the policy responsible authority can ensure/influence the effective implementation of the policy change? The Municipality of Alba Iulia is the owner.

3.2 Deep-dive analysis

3.2.1 Main features of the policy instrument

Strategic Objective 1 - People's City

Intervention Area 1 - Community development, social inclusion, housing Intervention Area 2 - Competent public administration

Intervention Area 3 - Education and youth

Strategic Objective 2 - Performing city

Intervention Area 1 - Economic Development Intervention Area 2 - Circular Economy

Strategic Objective 3 - Connected, efficient, resilient city

Intervention Area 1 - Spatial planning and sustainable urban mobility Intervention Area 2 - Energy efficiency

Intervention Area 3 - Environment and adaptation to climate change

Strategic Objective 4 - Cultural and artistic city

Intervention Area 1 - Valorization and promotion of cultural heritage

Intervention Area 2 - Cultural, leisure and business tourism and city marketing

Strategic Objective 5 - Smart City

Intervention Area 1 - Digitalization Intervention Area 2 - Smart City Solutions

3.2.2 Policy structure – planning

The PI is a basic document in defining the framework that ensures the implementation of a coherent vision of integrated evolution of the development sectors specific to the community.

As a planning tool, the integrated strategy had as its starting point the analysis of local development needs and this was done within a participatory process, with the involvement and collaboration of the community, thus laying the foundations for a long-term continuity of the vision of development outlined as a result of this approach.

The planning was approached in two directions: one vertically, for coordination with the strategic documents at the European, national, regional, county level, and one horizontally - for coordination with the relevant sectors and actors, at the community level.

In order to ensure a structured dialogue and a functional connection with the relevant actors, AIM established the Urban Advisory Group (UAG, as a body through which the collaborative framework is ensured for the extended partnership with the relevant actors and the local community in the process of developing and implementing the strategy. The establishment of the UAG involved the identification and selection of interested parties whose activities significantly impact the sustainable urban development of the city of Alba Iulia, and who have the necessary information and experience to contribute to the improvement of the strategy.

The UAG includes representatives of civil society, the academic environment, the business sector, the social sector and other public and private institutions from different fields, from the local, county and regional level.

3.2.3 Policy structure – financing

The PI contains the list of the proposed projects to be implemented by the Municipality during the lifetime of the strategy. Their potential funding sources are diverse, starting with amounts allocated from the local budget of the municipality, financial sources coming from the private sector, amounts coming from various funding programs that will be accessed by AIM.

3.2.4 Policy structure – implementation

The main responsibilities in the implementation of the SIDU rest with the Municipality of Alba Iulia and will consist primarily of the responsibilities related to the implementation of individual projects from the strategy portfolio.

These responsibilities will be carried out through the collaboration between the departments/public services related to the mayor's office, depending on the specific needs that

will arise during the implementation of the individual projects in the strategy and depending on the specifics of each department/service.

3.2.5 Policy structure - monitoring

The monitoring and evaluation of SIDU will be carried out by AIM's own staff, with the support of the entities included in the Urban Consultative Group and will consider several distinct levels:

- Monitoring the legislative context related to the urban development strategies of the local authorities, in order to identify the need to update and/or adjust the strategy for the municipality of Alba Iulia.

Monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken by AIM departments and services

- Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of individual projects included in the SIDU portfolio, which will be selected for funding under various national and transnational programs.

This process will be ensured through the internal monitoring and evaluation system of the Municipality of Alba Iulia, taking into account criteria such as: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, as well as the achievement of technical and financial indicators. Monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken by AIM departments and services together with members of UAG.

- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Strategy as a whole, evaluating the implementation stage of each of the 5 strategic objectives and the 12 related intervention areas.

Monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken by AIM departments and services together with members of UAG.

3.2.6 Timespan of the policy

The action plan for the implementation of SIDU will take into account the following main stages:

- Updating the strategy in line with the definition of the legislative framework that will regulate the role of SIDU and any mandatory framework content in the new programming period.

Estimated time horizon: 2021-2023.

- Writing and submitting funding applications for individual projects included in the strategy portfolio

Estimated time horizon: continuous, as funding lines and specific guidelines are launched, 2021-2027

- Contracting projects selected for funding: continuous, 2021-2027

- Starting and carrying out public procurement procedures necessary for the implementation of projects

Estimated time horizon: continuous, 2021-2029

- Realization of works/services/actions foreseen in the implementation of each project selected for financing from the SIDU portfolio

Estimated time horizon: 2021-2030.

3.3 Policy improvement objectives

Policy improvement type:

New projects financed by the instrument / Change in the management of the instrument – governance change / *Revision of the instrument itself – structural change*

3.3.1 Policy improvement description

Cities are the vibrant centres of human activity, driving economic growth, innovation, and cultural exchange. However, as urbanisation intensifies, cities face a lot of challenges from social inequality and environmental degradation to inadequate infrastructure and urban sprawl. Urban environments are complex, interconnected systems with social, economic, and environmental components. A thorough Integrated Urban Development Strategy acknowledges this complexity and provides a comprehensive structure for addressing these challenges. The urgency to combat climate change and promote sustainable development cannot be overstated.

An improved strategy will emphasise CSR activities by aligning urban development with sustainability objectives and CSR activities, we will mitigate the negative effects of urbanisation and build resilient and sustainable cities for future generations.

The shaping of a clear vision of the economy for the municipality of Alba Iulia needs to be based on a systematic, innovative thinking of all relevant actors, on a collective strategic planning, with a participatory approach in the whole decision-making process at local level. Therefore, having a distinct chapter in the strategy on this type of cooperation and CSR activities will ensure an organisational framework that will lead to the achievement of the strategy objectives.

3.4 Policy environment influencing the policy instrument tackled

This section serves to identify the strategies and plans influencing or interrelated with the tackled policy instrument in the region.

3.4.1 Policy 1: Romania's National Sustainable Development Strategy 2030

Name of the policy responsible authority:

Department of Sustainable Development, as part of the Working Apparatus of the Romanian Government and with the contribution of the Editorial Commission, the General Secretariat of the Government, the ministries and other central institutions, local authorities, regional

development agencies, academic and university forums, national institutes of research and development, employers' associations and trades unions, the private sector and non-governmental organisations, and other bodies of civil society and interested citizens.

Brief description of the policy content:

The strategy represents the national strategic framework for supporting the 2030 Agenda and implementing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 104 associated targets. The concept of sustainable development underpins the Integrated Urban Development Strategy of Alba Iulia Municipality 2021-2030, which aims to ensure a better quality of life for the residents of Alba Iulia and, implicitly, for those in the functional urban area, both in the present and in the future.

Policy structure (if relevant):

Planning: The Strategy contains the main directions for development and comprises the basis for the future sectoral, regional, and local strategies. The Strategy includes the development of an Action Plan, the establishment of a set of national indicators to monitor implementation progress, and the creation of a Sustainability Code aimed at the private sector and other types of organisations

Financing: Accessing EU structural funds.

Implementation: To ensure efficient implementation of the Strategy, the institutional framework will be strengthened by increasing staff at the Department of Sustainable Development. Additionally, Sustainable Development Hubs will be established within central public authorities responsible for sustainable development, where they do not already exist.

Monitoring: The National Institute of Statistics INS) will update, within two years of the adoption of the Strategy (approved on November 9, 2018, through Government Decision no. 877/2018), the set of national indicators for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals, aligned with the priorities of the Strategy and the standards of the UN and the EU for the 2030 Agenda. INS will be supported by the Department for Sustainable Development in collecting data from central and local authorities. The Department will periodically report Romania's progress to the EU and support participation in global initiatives, with a commitment to present at least two additional reports by 2030

3.4.2 Policy 2: Alba Iulia Green City Action Plan

Name of the policy responsible authority: Municipality of Alba Iulia

Brief description of the policy content:

This action plan aims to improve air quality, manage urban green spaces, and promote environmentally friendly transportation. It includes specific measures to reduce pollution and increase the use of green technologies within the city.

Policy structure (if relevant):

Planning: Develops urban greening and pollution reduction initiatives in collaboration with local stakeholders.

Financing: Secures funding from local budgets, European grants, and partnerships with private companies for environmental innovations.

Implementation: Executes measures such as expanding public transport networks, introducing bike-sharing schemes, and increasing tree coverage in urban areas.

Monitoring: Conducts regular assessments of air quality and environmental impact, with adjustments to policies based on collected data.

4. Stakeholder analysis

The objective of the stakeholder analysis is to map which organisations, institutions, individuals, etc. have influence on the tackled policy instrument and in which way.

List of stakeholders	Role of stakeholder in the policy influencing	Challenges related to working with this stakeholder group	Knowledge – interest (1-lack of knowledge/interest 5-deep knowledge/interest)
Regional Development Agency - Center	As IUDS is a necessary document in order to access structural funds and it ADR has a crucial role in drafting the strategy	Even tho Alba Iulia Municipality and ADR collaborate very well, due to their busy schedule sometimes it might be complicated to find dates to organise meetings.	4
FLOREA GROUP	Private body with a vast activity in CSR and they will be able to offer input on how the public authority can help in the process	The lack of trust of the private sector into the public sector	3
KRONOSPAN	Private body with a vast activity in CSR and they will be able to offer input on how the public authority can help in the process	The lack of trust of the private sector into the public sector	4
Bosch Automotive	Private body with a vast activity in CSR and they will be able to offer input on how the public authority can help in the process	The lack of trust of the private sector into the public sector	4
Star Transmission SRL	Private body with a vast activity in CSR and they will be able to offer input on how the public authority can help in the process	The lack of trust of the private sector into the public sector	4
Transavia	Private body with a vast activity in CSR and they will be able	The lack of trust of the private sector into the public sector	3

	to offer input on how the public authority can help in the process		
ALBA COUNTY COUNCIL	Public regional authority that is also a policy maker and can provide support and know how during the policy improvement process	Even tho Alba Iulia Municipality and Alba County Council collaborate very well, due to their busy schedule sometimes it might be complicated to find dates to organise meetings. Also a difference in visions can be a challenge.	4
Chamber of Commerce Alba	Autonomous, non-governmental, apolitical, non-political, non-political, non-political, non-profitable organizations of public utility, with legal personality, created in order to represent, defend and support the interests of their members and the business community in relation to public authorities and bodies in the country and abroad. Through the activity they can facilitate collaboration between the private and public sector.	lack of time for meetings and difference in vision	3
University "1 December 1918" Alba Iulia	The "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia is a public higher education and research institution, with legal personality and autonomy. Their expertise can provide significant feedback in the policy improvement process.	lack of time for meetings and difference in vision	3

DN AGRAR	Private body with a vast activity in CSR and they will be able to offer input on how the public authority can help in the process	The lack of trust of the private sector into the public sector	3

Corporate entities/associations:

Corporate entity 1.	TRANSAVIA
Corporate entity 2.	DN-AGRAR
Corporate entity 3.	Star Transmission SRL
Corporate association 1.	Chamber of commerce
Corporate association 2.	ICJ

Leaders:

	name, professional background	why important to be involved?
Individual 1.	Iulia Haiduc	Director marketing Florea Grup.
Individual 2	Sebastian Onac	Director

5. Competence analysis

The aim of this section is to map the partner organisation's network to see if there is expertise that should be channelled into the programme of the Thematic Expert Team meeting in the form of presentations, workshops.

Organisation/ person	Competence description	Partner's relation with this organisation/person	Reference – links	Contact information
ADR Centru	Regional Development Agency responsible for coordinating regional development projects and distributing EU funds.	Long-term collaboration on projects like Smart City and regional development strategies.	https://www.adrcentru.ro/	office@adrcentru.ro
FLOREA GROUP	Private body (top company at national level) with a vast activity in CSR from the constructions and catering sector	Long term collaboration on developing the local community through local contracts, CSR initiatives and headquarter city	COMPANIA - Florea Grup	contact@floreagrup.ro
KRONOSPAN	Private body with a vast activity in CSR that is producing wood-based panels using recycled wood and residue from the sawmill industry	Closely geographical linked to the municipality of Alba Iulia and a big employer for the local community in the metropolitan area of Alba Iulia	Kronospan	office.ro@kronospan.ro

Bosch Automotive	Private body with a vast activity in CSR that is a major player at local/county and national level in the field of mobility, goods, technologies for the construction and energy sectors	Long term collaboration on developing the local community and the metropolitan area, especially through the dual consortium that will be built in Alba Iulia, along with a campus and other facilities	Bosch România | Bosch în România	directly through their website form
Star Transmission SRL	Private body with a vast activity in CSR that is a part of the global car production network of Mercedes Benz	Long term collaboration on developing the local community and the metropolitan area, especially through the dual consortium that will be built in Alba Iulia, along with a campus and other facilities	Star Transmission & Star Assembly – Welcome to Star Transmission & Star Assembly – Mercedes-Benz Group Companies	office.stc@mercedes-benz.com
ALEA	Alba Local Energy Agency, specialising in energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.	Partner on initiatives promoting sustainable energy practices and community energy programs.	http://alea.ro/	contact@alea.ro
Alba County Council	Public county authority that is also a policy maker and responsible for county governance	Long term collaboration as they govern the county level as opposed to the municipality that governs the city that is the county capital city	Consiliul Judetean Alba – Judeţul Alba – Virtus, Romana, Rediviva	cjalba@cjalba.ro

APM	Environmental Protection Agency, focused on environmental monitoring and policy implementation	Cooperation on environmental assessments and projects related to sustainable urban development.	https://apmab.anpm.ro/	office@apmab.anpm.ro
Chamber of Commerce Alba	Autonomous, non-governmental, apolitical, non-political, non-political, non-political, non-profitable organizations of public utility, with legal personality, created in order to represent, defend and support the interests of their members and the business community in relation to public authorities and bodies in the country and abroad.	Long standing partnership in helping and recognizing the input of the local businesses on the local economy and the involvement in the life of the community and CSR projects	Camera de Comerț si Industrie Alba – Împreună pentru afacerea ta	cciaalba@cciaalba.ro
1 Decembrie 1918 University	Public higher education and research	Long-term partner on projects of interest for the local community and	Universitatea „1 Decembrie 1918" din Alba Iulia	cond@uab.ro

of Alba Iulia	institution, with legal personality and autonomy	developing/implementing local strategies in different sectors		
TRANSAVIA	Private body with a vast activity in CSR that is a major player at local/county and national level and is the owner of the most modern vertical integrated poultry business system in Romania	Long standing partnership in helping and recognizing the input of the local businesses on the local economy and the involvement in the life of the community and CSR projects	Cine suntem | Transavia	relatii.publice@transavia.ro
DN-AGRAR	Private body with areas of activity such as zootechnics, vegetal agricultural production, agricultural services, logistics, transport, tourism and business and management consulting services	Closely geographical linked to the municipality of Alba Iulia and a big employer for the local community in the metropolitan area of Alba Iulia	About - DN Agrar Group SA	investors@dn-agrar.eu