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LOCAL ANALYSIS REPORT –
VARAŽDIN



February 2025

Responsible partner:
Development agency North – DAN Ltd.

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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

Geographical location: [The City of Varaždin](#) developed on the peripheral parts of the Pannonian Plain, which is part of the Alpine system. The altitude varies between 169 and 173 meters. The city is situated in northwestern Croatia along the Drava River, in a fertile alluvial plain that slopes towards the Drava in a southwest-northeast direction. To the south, the plain gradually rises into the Haloze and the Varaždin-Toplička Mountain. The City of Varaždin and its natural region are located in northern Croatia. Due to its strategic location, the city is aptly referred to as the “northwestern gateway to Croatia.” The City of Varaždin lies along the underutilized “Croatian corridor” connecting Budapest - Zagreb - Rijeka, with transport routes diverging from the eastern Alpine path and linking to a vital European thoroughfare. The City of Varaždin serves as the center of Varaždin County, which borders the Republic of Slovenia to the northwest, Međimurje County to the north, Koprivnica-Križevci County to the east, Zagreb County to the south, and Krapina-Zagorje County to the southeast. The excellent transportation position is a significant advantage for the City of Varaždin: it is 80 km from Zagreb, 140 km from Graz (Austria), 180 km from Ljubljana (Slovenia), 250 km from Rijeka (Croatia's main port), 280 km from both Budapest (Hungary) and Trieste (Italy's main port), and 330 km from Vienna (Austria). With a population of 46.946, the City of Varaždin ranks as the 11th most populous city in Croatia. Its GDP per capita of 6.300 euros makes it the third in Croatia, following Rovinj and Zagreb.

Demography: [According to the 2021 census](#), the City of Varaždin has 43,782 residents, of whom 23,152 are women. Based on age structure, 1,736 residents are up to 4 years old, 1,914 are aged 5 to 9, 2,078 are between 10 and 14, and 2,011 are between 15 and 19 years old. The City of Varaždin is home to 2,258 young people aged 20 to 24, 2,357 aged 25 to 29, 2,632 aged 30 to 34, and 3,205 aged 35 to 39. There are 3,159 residents aged 40 to 44, 3,100 aged 45 to 49, 2,873 aged 50 to 54, and 3,184 aged 55 to 59. The city has 3,098 residents aged 60 to 64, 2,940 aged 65 to 69, 2,624 aged 70 to 74, and 2,060 aged 75 to 79. Additionally, there are 1,484 residents aged 80 to 84, 788 aged 85 to 89, 239 aged 90 to 94, and 42 who are “around 100” – 95 years or older. Religious affiliation in the City of Varaždin is as follows: 40.900 are Catholic, 324 are Orthodox, 172 are Protestant, 256 are other Christians, 155 are Muslim, 5 are Jewish, 50 follow Eastern religions, and 43 belong to other religious movements and worldviews. There are 553 agnostics and skeptics, 2.569 atheists,

and 1.651 residents who did not specify their religious affiliation. In addition to the majority Croatian population, the City of Varaždin is home to 140 Albanians, 4 Austrians, 48 Bosniaks, 8 Bulgarians, 31 Montenegrins, 14 Czechs, 27 Hungarians, 33 Macedonians, 17 Germans, 1 Pole, 42 Roma, 13 Russians, 3 Ruthenians, 9 Slovaks, 124 Slovenes, 378 Serbs, 13 Italians, 2 Turks, 8 Ukrainians, and 64 people of other nationalities. For Varaždin's demographic strategy, several key documents and plans are relevant. The [Development Plan of Varaždin County 2021-2027](#) aligns with [Croatia's National Development Strategy](#), focusing on regional resilience, green and digital transitions, and balanced growth, which indirectly supports population retention through economic development. This plan includes the goals of sustainable community development and aims to foster quality of life improvements that can positively influence demographics by making the county more attractive for living and working.

Furthermore, the [Strategic Plan for the Urban Area of Varaždin 2021-2027](#) addresses demographic challenges by promoting urban revitalization, regional integration, and sustainable infrastructure improvements. This plan seeks to enhance the local economy and social infrastructure, crucial for maintaining and attracting residents. The plan includes mechanisms like the ITU (Integrated Territorial Investment) that facilitate partnerships and investments across sectors in the City of Varaždin's urban areas to improve overall community standards and long-term population stability. These efforts aim to provide a framework for demographic stability by encouraging socioeconomic development and addressing local needs for better quality of life and employment opportunities, which can help reduce migration trends.

Environmental conditions: The City of Varaždin experiences an average annual temperature of 10.4°C, with an average air pressure of 994 hPa and humidity of 78%. The city receives an annual average rainfall of approximately 1,203 mm. These conditions are shaped by the City of Varaždin's location on the fertile alluvial plain along the Drava River in northwestern Croatia, which experiences a continental climate with warm summers and cold winters. The local geography, including its proximity to the Drava and the surrounding slight elevation changes, contributes to the area's unique microclimatic features. In the context of environmental strategies and plans for the City of Varaždin, document that play a key role is [General Urban Plan](#). This plan outlines the spatial organization and environmental protection measures within the city. It aims to harmonize urban development with ecological sustainability, ensuring that growth respects natural resources and biodiversity. [Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan \(SECAP\)](#) document further supports these goals by addressing climate action and sustainability initiatives specific to the City of Varaždin. In the context of environmental strategies and plans, the City of Varaždin emphasizes sustainable waste management in line with Croatia's [Integrated Waste Management System](#), which aims to minimize waste and promote recycling and environmental responsibility. Two key documents for Varaždin are the General Urban Plan, which outlines spatial organization and environmental protection measures, and the Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP), supporting climate action and sustainability efforts.

1.1.2 Economic characterisation

Analysis of economic structure: On the ranking list of cities and municipalities in Varaždin County, businesses in the City of Varaždin are the most numerous (2,352) and lead in terms of number of employees (21,749), total revenue (€2.7 billion), and net profit (€131.8 million).

According to the number of annual financial reports processed, 2,304 businesses were operating in the City of Varaždin, the county seat, in 2022, employing 21,641 people—an increase of 2.7% compared to 2021. In 2022, businesses in the City of Varaždin recorded a growth in total revenue of 22.5% and in total expenses of 23.5% compared to 2021. In 2023, the City of Varaždin had 2,352 entrepreneurs (ranked 8th in Croatia), employing 21,749 people (ranked 6th), with a total revenue of €2.66 billion (ranked 7th) and a net profit of €131.8 million (ranked 7th) in 2023 (fina.hr). In terms of employee numbers in the City of Varaždin for 2023, companies that stand out are (Source: Fina, Register of Annual Financial Statements, processing of annual financial report for the year 2023):

- Koka d.o.o. with 1,508 employees. It is a prominent Croatian company primarily involved in the poultry industry. Founded in the City of Varaždin, it operates as part of the Vindija Group, one of Croatia's largest food producers. Koka specializes in poultry farming, egg production, fresh poultry meat processing, and the manufacture of various meat products, including breaded and ready-made items. Additionally, the company produces animal feed, ensuring quality control throughout its supply chain.
- Vindija d.d. followed with 1,286 employees. It is one of the country's largest food companies, known for producing dairy, meat, and poultry products. Vindija operates with a strong focus on quality, sustainability, and innovation, and its brands are widely recognized in Croatia and the surrounding region. The company follows a "field to table" concept, which emphasizes local sourcing and quality control across the production chain, contributing to the "Proven Quality - Croatia" certification for its products. Vindija's impact includes a significant role in the Croatian economy, with investments in local agriculture and community engagement.
- Varteks d.d. employed 601 people. Over the years, it has built a reputation for style and quality across various collections, including its recent lines targeting younger demographics, like "Varteks Young." The company operates from three production facilities in the City of Varaždin and employs hundreds in the region. Varteks d.d. underwent significant restructuring to overcome financial difficulties and modernize its operations. This transformation focused on maintaining high manufacturing standards and efficient processes, allowing the company to position itself as a flexible and resilient player in the European textile industry.
- Metalska Industrija Varaždin d.d. had 503 employees. Established in 1939, is a leading Croatian manufacturer of high-quality cast iron and non-ferrous metal products. The company specializes in valves, fittings, and other cast components for water supply, sewage, energy, and industrial systems, serving both Croatian and international markets. Known for its robust engineering and quality, MIV exports about 50% of its production, making it one of the largest valve manufacturers in Europe with an annual output of around 7,500 tons of valves and fittings. Certified by respected quality assurance organizations like Lloyd's Register and Bureau Veritas, MIV's products are recognized globally and are installed in major infrastructure projects worldwide.
- TP Varaždin d.o.o. employed 452. It was one of the first private self-service stores in the area, originally established to cater to local shopping needs and has since grown its presence through both retail and wholesale networks. In recent years, TP Varaždin became a member of the Ultra gros group, a network of Croatian retail companies, helping it expand its offerings and strengthen its regional influence. The company's 97 KITRO-branded stores were acquired by Narodni Trgovački Lanac (NTL), a major Croatian retail group, consolidating TP Varaždin's regional impact and local heritage under NTL's broader operational framework.

Companies that represent a significant segment of the City of Varaždin's industry, contributing to the local economy and employment that are also important to highlight, based in the City of Varaždin by total revenue are: Solvis d.o.o. achieved total revenues of €82.505.000, Kostwein d.o.o. had total revenues amounting to €79,912,000, Gumiimpex-GRP d.o.o. recorded total revenues of €74.364.000. Furthermore, in 2023, the top companies in the City of Varaždin by profit that are also important to highlight are: Solvis d.o.o. with a profit of €5.212.000 and Marlex Pro d.o.o. with a profit of €4.877.000.

Economic role and characteristics of SME sector: Since the late 19th century, industrial production has played a significant role in the economic structure of the City of Varaždin, with the textile industry being the most important sector. In addition to textiles, the food industry is notable, along with other sectors such as metal processing, construction, woodworking, and footwear manufacturing. Although currently facing instability and crisis, industry remains the primary driver of the local economy. However, it has been noted that this economic activity is experiencing a continuous decline in both production and employment levels. Data indicate a dominance of labour-intensive manufacturing industries, which significantly impacts the average wages of employees and, consequently, the overall social standard in the region. The Croatian Employment Service, Regional Office the City of Varaždin, conducts an annual analysis and forecast of labour market needs in Varaždin County, focusing on specific qualifications. They prepare recommendations for educational enrolment policies and scholarship policies. According to the recommendations for the educational enrolment policy and scholarship policy for 2022, there is a clear need to align the education system with labour market demands due to a shortage of skilled workforce that meets the needs of the job market analysis highlights the ongoing challenge of ensuring that educational programs adequately prepare students for available job opportunities, which is crucial for improving employment rates and economic stability in the region.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are essential to the City of Varaždin's economy, making substantial contributions to employment and economic growth. Many of these local businesses are family-owned, underscoring a focus on quality and strong, long-term customer relationships. The City of Varaždin's SME sector encompasses a variety of industries, including manufacturing, services, trade, and agriculture. Local entrepreneurs are actively involved in business associations, promoting collaboration and knowledge sharing. Additionally, the Varaždin Chamber of Commerce plays a vital role in connecting businesses and facilitating dialogue between the private sector and local government, fostering a supportive business environment.

1.1.3 Presentation of the local government/public sector

In Croatia, the local government is organized under a decentralized administrative framework that enables municipalities and cities to exercise self-governance. The local authority in the City of Varaždin operates within this framework, following the principles established by the Law on Local and Regional Self-Government. This law delineates the structure, responsibilities, and decision-making processes of local government units. The City of Varaždin is governed by a City Council and a Mayor, who are elected by the residents. The City Council serves as the legislative body, responsible for making key decisions regarding local policies, budgets, and development plans. It consists of representatives from various political parties, ensuring a democratic representation of the local population. The Mayor, elected directly by the citizens, has executive authority and is responsible for implementing the decisions made by the City Council. The Mayor oversees the municipal administration, which includes various

departments handling specific areas such as education, urban planning, and public services. The decision-making process in the City of Varaždin involves several steps. Proposed policies and initiatives typically originate from municipal departments or the Mayor. These proposals are then presented to the City Council, where they undergo discussion and amendments. The Council votes on these proposals, and a majority is required for approval. This ensures that various viewpoints are considered before final decisions are made. Public participation is also encouraged through public consultations and forums, allowing residents to voice their opinions and contribute to local governance. This transparency and inclusivity aim to enhance the democratic process within the city.

1.1.4 Introduction of the project partner

The Development Agency North (DAN) is focused on supporting regional development in northwestern Croatia, particularly in the City of Varaždin and the City of Koprivnica. Established in 2005, DAN facilitates local growth through services like project development for EU and national funding, strategic urban and rural planning, business networking, and attracting investments. It is jointly owned by the City of Varaždin and Enter Koprivnica d.o.o. Development Agency North has a 20year history with projects of wider spectre where numerous projects regarding green economy and renewable energy took place. Throughout all those projects DAN employees participated in project preparations, implementation and development therefore building their competences and adaptability to all sorts of different themes in those projects. DAN developed a wide net of stakeholders with whom we worked on past projects targeting all sorts of themes and challenges. DAN is founded and works closely with City of Varaždin and City of Koprivnica and can therefore guarantee maximal involvement of local administration. DAN developed numerous strategies for City of Varaždin or was engaged in their development. Many specific strategies, action plans and similar documents were developed in accordance with project themes throughout several other INTERREG projects. DAN is founded by CoV and is directly involved in practices regarding local development. There is an inhouse agreement between DAN and CoV which means that many of City business goes through DAN which is involved in most of City business. The agreement between the CoV and DAN is regulated through yearly contracts that contains list of activities that DAN regularly implement for and on behalf of the City.

1.2 CSR context

1.2.1. Local business culture

Business culture aspects			
<i>Evaluation between 1 to 5 (e.g. open is 1, closed is 5)</i>			
Innovation/Risk embrace	relatively open	4	relatively closed
Business leadership type	organisation- based	4	entrepreneur-based
Work discipline	easygoing	5	strict
Employee vs. productivity	employee- centred	4	productivity-centred
Business leadership/ gender	Masculine/Feminine	4	Gender-balanced
Customer focus	relatively high	4	relatively low

The City of Varaždin stands out for its favourable business environment, which includes a low unemployment rate and a diverse economic structure. The City of Varaždin has a strong tradition of craftsmanship and small-scale manufacturing, which has evolved to include innovative startups and tech companies. The entrepreneurial spirit is often supported by local universities and institutions that foster education and research in entrepreneurship. SMEs form the backbone of the City of Varaždin's economy, contributing significantly to employment and economic growth. Many local businesses are family-owned, reflecting a commitment to quality and long-term relationships with customers. The SME sector in the City of Varaždin spans various industries, including manufacturing, services, trade, and agriculture. Entrepreneurs in the City of Varaždin actively participate in local business associations, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing. The Varaždin Chamber of Commerce plays a crucial role in connecting businesses and facilitating dialogue between the private sector and local government. A variety of financial institutions are available, fostering competition and providing services to businesses. Well-organized land registries support property ownership clarity and business operations. Good conditions exist for developing tourism sectors, including medical, hunting, and congress tourism. The region possesses a reliable communal infrastructure, essential for business operations. Efficient customs service simplify international trade for local businesses. The local population exhibits strong work habits, diligence, and hospitality, crucial for business success. Strong ties between academic institutions and local businesses facilitate talent development and utilization (SECAP).

1.2.2 Government – business relations

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

1.2.3 Experiences working with large enterprises and SMEs

The City of Varaždin has a dedicated Department for Economic Activities within its local government, which plays a crucial role in fostering collaboration between the municipality and local businesses. This department focuses on several key areas:

- **Liaison Services:** The department acts as a liaison between local businesses and government bodies, facilitating communication and addressing concerns related to business operations.
- **Training and Development:** There are initiatives aimed at providing training and skill development opportunities for local entrepreneurs, ensuring they stay competitive in their respective markets. This includes workshops, seminars, and access to educational resources.

- **Supplier Relations:** The municipality promotes cooperation between local SMEs and larger enterprises, encouraging local sourcing and partnerships. This relationship can help SMEs grow by gaining access to larger supply chains.
- **Access to Finance:** The department assists businesses in identifying funding opportunities, including grants and loans, to support growth and development.

The relationship between local economic operators and the municipality can be characterized as proactive and supportive. The local government actively engages with businesses to understand their needs and challenges. Regular meetings and forums are organized to gather feedback from entrepreneurs and adapt policies accordingly. There are collaborative projects aimed at boosting local economic development, which involve partnerships between the municipality, local chambers of commerce, and business associations. This collaborative approach fosters a sense of community and shared goals. While there are initiatives in place to support existing businesses, there is room for enhanced support for new business ideas and startups. Encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship could lead to a more dynamic economic environment.

1.2.4 Specific organisation/government department dealing with CSR

In the City of Varaždin, there is no specific organization or government department exclusively dedicated to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). However, the Department for Social Activities within the local government encompasses various social initiatives, including aspects related to CSR. The department focuses on a range of social services and community programs, which may include energy initiatives and collaboration with local associations. Although CSR is not explicitly mentioned as a primary focus, the activities carried out by this department can contribute to the overall social responsibility goals of businesses operating in the region.

1.2.5 Partnerships with national/international CSR initiatives

N/A

1.2.6 CSR initiatives in the region

CSR activities: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities in cities aim to enhance social, environmental, and economic welfare. Common CSR initiatives include supporting local education, healthcare, and arts programs, promoting sustainability, and engaging in urban greening or pollution reduction. Companies often collaborate with local governments and organizations on projects that address urban challenges such as waste management, energy efficiency, and poverty reduction. By investing in these areas, businesses not only contribute to community wellbeing but also foster goodwill and a sustainable environment aligned with long-term urban development goals. In the City of Varaždin, while not always explicitly categorized under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) label, can be observed in various public and private initiatives. Some of these can be classified according to the ESG criteria (Environmental, Social, Governance). The City of Varaždin promotes energy efficiency projects through the Energy Efficiency Fund, which finances programs for improving building insulation, installing solar panels, and using renewable energy sources. These initiatives help reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. The Waste Management Centre project aims to reduce landfill waste and promote recycling and environmental awareness by developing a new waste management system. Vindija d.d. and other local companies have implemented waste reduction measures and improved energy efficiency in production,

including the use of sustainable energy sources and eco-friendly packaging materials. The City of Varaždin, through the Department for Social Activities, runs several social programs aimed at supporting vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and people with disabilities. There are also educational programs and grants to engage children and youth in community activities.

Social Integration: CSR activities focused on social integration aim to reduce inequalities and promote inclusivity by supporting marginalized groups in areas such as education, employment, and healthcare. Initiatives often include job training for underrepresented populations, scholarships, mentorship programs, accessible housing, and inclusive workplace practices. Companies may also partner with nonprofits and local organizations to address social challenges like poverty, disability inclusion, and refugee assistance, fostering a sense of community and helping individuals achieve economic and social stability within

society. These efforts build stronger, more resilient communities through direct engagement and support. Activities focused on supporting vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, people with disabilities, and youth, as well as involving children and young people in social activities through various social programs. Local companies participate in initiatives that encourage volunteering and donations to local organizations. **Environmental Protection:** CSR activities in environmental protection focus on reducing ecological impacts and promoting sustainable practices. Companies may invest in renewable energy, support biodiversity by protecting local habitats, and promote eco-friendly products. Engaging employees and communities in activities like tree planting, environmental education, and clean-up events is also common. There is a strong focus on energy efficiency projects and sustainable waste management, as well as private sector initiatives aimed at reducing waste and using renewable energy in production. **Education:** CSR activities in education focus on improving access, quality, and opportunities within educational systems. Companies often offer scholarships, sponsor learning facilities, and support STEM programs to enhance skills in underserved communities. The City of Varaždin and private companies are involved in educational programs aimed at raising environmental awareness and engaging young people in socially responsible activities.

Philanthropy and Charity: Through donations and support for local associations, sports clubs, and organizations, local companies actively contribute to humanitarian projects within the community.

Institutionalized relationship: CSR activities focused on institutionalized relationships involve fostering long-term partnerships between businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations. These collaborations can enhance educational resources, improve workforce development, and address community needs. In the City of Varaždin, there is institutionalized cooperation between various associations, the City of Varaždin, public institutions, and the private sector, realized through different projects, contracts, and cooperation agreements. Varaždinski Underground Klub (V.U.K.) as the oldest youth association in the city, V.U.K. has contributed significantly to the local cultural and youth scene, including organizing festivals, collaborating on EU projects, and supporting the development of youth centres. V.U.K.'s partnership with the City of Varaždin, through the P4 Youth Centre, exemplifies how institutionalized cooperation can foster long-term growth and strengthen local community engagement. Croatian Chamber of Economy (HGK) – Varaždin County Chamber - HGK actively collaborates with the City of Varaždin to promote entrepreneurship and develop the local economy. In cooperation with educational institutions, HGK organizes training and seminars for students, focusing on business skills and entrepreneurship. Through partnerships

with the private sector, HGK connects local entrepreneurs with financing opportunities and business prospects.

Motivation behind the initiative and expected outcome: In the City of Varaždin, various associations collaborate with the city, public institutions, and the private sector to address social, educational, and environmental challenges. As already mentioned under the section above, the Varaždinski Underground Klub (V.U.K.), as the oldest youth association in the city, plays a crucial role in the local cultural and youth scene, organizing festivals, collaborating on EU projects, and supporting youth centres. Their partnership with the City of Varaždin through the P4 Youth Centre fosters long-term growth and community engagement. Additionally, the Croatian Chamber of Economy (HGK) – Varaždin County Chamber works closely with the city to promote entrepreneurship and economic development by organizing

training for students and connecting entrepreneurs with financing opportunities. The expected outcomes include a more entrepreneurial-minded youth, enhanced local civic engagement, and a stronger local economy. Overall, the city aims to promote social inclusion, youth engagement, sustainability, and economic development through these collaborations, leading to improved community cohesion and sustainable growth. Incorporating specific budget segments from the City of Varaždin can help assess the impact of CSR activities.

Impact that is achieved: In the City of Varaždin, various associations and the city have engaged in planned activities that promote corporate social responsibility (CSR), leading to both internal and external impacts. An overview of the achieved effects and benefits are enhanced organizational capacity for delivering social programs and workshops. This has improved the skills of staff and volunteers in addressing mental health issues. Increased awareness and acceptance of mental disabilities among the general population, fostering a more inclusive community. Employment programs involving local businesses have successfully integrated people with disabilities into the workforce. Non-financial benefits include improved quality of life for participants and greater community cohesion, while financial benefits arise from reduced social service costs due to successful integration efforts. Strengthened collaboration between youth and local schools, improving educational offerings related to entrepreneurship and social responsibility. Increased youth participation in community activities and volunteerism, enhancing civic engagement and leadership skills among young people. Financially, local businesses benefit from a more skilled and engaged workforce. Non-financially, the community sees enhanced social capital and a sense of ownership among youth regarding local issues. Improved capacity to implement environmental projects and educational programs focused on sustainability. Raised awareness of environmental issues, resulting in increased recycling rates and participation in sustainability initiatives among residents. Financially, participation from local companies in projects leads to cost savings from energy efficiency measures and waste reduction. Non-financially, the community benefits from a cleaner environment and enhanced public health. Croatian Chamber of Economy (HGK) – Varaždin County Chamber enhanced training programs that equip students and entrepreneurs with essential business skills. Increased networking opportunities for local entrepreneurs, leading to greater business collaboration and investment in the community. Financially, the local economy benefits from increased entrepreneurial activity, while non-financial benefits include improved business knowledge and innovation within the community. Overall, these activities reflect the City of Varaždin's commitment to fostering a socially responsible environment, leading to various internal and external benefits for both the organizations involved and the broader community.

According to the budget document, key allocations relevant to social programs, education, and environmental initiatives can be highlighted. Looking ahead, the city plans to maintain or increase funding for these areas to address ongoing community needs and to bolster economic development through entrepreneurship. This commitment is expected to enhance the local economy further and improve social outcomes.

Measurement of impact actions: In the City of Varaždin, the measurement of impacts from various social initiatives and corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities is conducted through specific indicators and procedures. The City of Varaždin monitors these impacts primarily through the Department of Social Activities and the Department of Education, which are responsible for assessing the outcomes of programs related to social inclusion, youth

engagement, and environmental initiatives. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) include metrics related to employment rates for individuals with disabilities, participation levels in youth programs, recycling rates, and the number of educational workshops conducted. The city also evaluates community feedback and participation in projects, which helps in understanding the social impact of these activities. Regulatory frameworks such as the Social Welfare Act and local ordinances guide the implementation and evaluation processes, ensuring compliance with national standards for social programs. Reports on the effectiveness of these initiatives are compiled annually and made available to the public, contributing to transparency and accountability.

Communication: The communication of the impacts from social initiatives and corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities occurs through various channels to ensure both internal and external stakeholders are informed. Departments hold regular meetings to discuss project outcomes, share progress reports, and strategize on future initiatives. This internal dialogue ensures that all staff are aligned with the city's goals and understand the impact of their efforts. Departments prepare comprehensive reports that detail the effectiveness of social programs and initiatives, including KPI assessments. Such reports are circulated among city officials and relevant departments, fostering an environment of accountability and transparency. The city publishes annual reports that highlight the results of CSR initiatives and social programs. These reports are accessible to the public, allowing citizens to see how funds are utilized and the outcomes achieved. They include data on employment rates for individuals with disabilities, youth program participation, and environmental initiatives. Feedback from the community is actively sought through surveys and public forums, which helps the city understand the impact of its initiatives. These engagement activities promote transparency and build trust between the city government and its residents. The City of Varaždin utilizes local media outlets to disseminate information about successful projects and initiatives, increasing public awareness and encouraging community involvement. Partnerships with local associations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) facilitate the sharing of information regarding project successes and community needs, enhancing the overall impact of CSR activities. By leveraging these communication strategies, the City of Varaždin ensures that both internal and external stakeholders are well-informed about the social initiatives undertaken, fostering a collaborative and engaged community.

Challenges or obstacles faced during the activities: Challenges faced during CSR activities include limited funding and personnel can hinder the scale and effectiveness of initiatives. Difficulty in quantifying social or environmental outcomes complicates assessing effectiveness. Aligning interests among diverse stakeholders can be challenging. Ensuring that initiatives have lasting effects and are not just short-term fixes and also navigating local laws and

regulations can pose obstacles. In the City of Varaždin, various social initiatives and corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities face several challenges, which can hinder their effectiveness. Effective communication among stakeholders is crucial for the success of CSR initiatives. Miscommunication or lack of information can lead to misunderstandings and decreased collaboration. To mitigate this, regular meetings and updates are scheduled, fostering a culture of transparency and open dialogue. For instance, the city organizes informational sessions to keep residents and organizations informed about ongoing projects and opportunities for involvement. Cooperation between different organizations, including local businesses, NGOs, and public institutions, can be challenging. Differences in objectives and priorities may lead to conflicts or disengagement. To address this, the city has implemented joint projects that align the goals of various stakeholders, promoting a sense of shared purpose. Initiatives like community forums encourage collaborative planning and execution. Low citizen participation in social programs can undermine their effectiveness. Factors such as apathy or lack of awareness about available initiatives may contribute to this issue. To overcome this, the city employs outreach strategies, including social media campaigns and partnerships with local schools to promote programs and engage residents. Success stories and testimonials from beneficiaries are shared to encourage greater involvement. Limited financial resources can impede the implementation of planned activities. To combat this challenge, the city seeks external funding opportunities, such as grants from national and international organizations. Additionally, partnerships with local businesses can provide sponsorships or in-kind contributions, supplementing the budget for community projects. Some initiatives may not achieve their intended outcomes due to various reasons. For example, a youth engagement program might have struggled due to insufficient outreach or misalignment with the interests of young people. To learn from these failures, the city conducts evaluations of all initiatives, gathering feedback to identify areas for improvement and ensuring that future projects are better tailored to community needs.

Supporting initiatives: Supporting initiatives in CSR activities in cities can include investing in education, health, and job training for underserved populations, supporting initiatives for waste reduction, recycling, and urban greening, enhancing parks, recreational areas, and community centres through funding and volunteer efforts, funding local arts programs, events, and cultural heritage projects to enrich community life, encouraging staff participation in volunteer programs that benefit local communities. The City of Varaždin allocates budgetary resources for specific projects aimed at enhancing social inclusion, youth engagement, and environmental sustainability. This financial support is often provided through grants that organizations can apply for to fund their initiatives. The municipal budget outlines specific allocations for social programs and community development, allowing various associations and NGOs to access funds for their projects. The 2024 budget for the City of Varaždin places significant emphasis on infrastructure upgrades, support for social programs, and economic development. Key allocations include funds for road improvements, public services, and educational institutions. Additionally, there's a commitment to enhancing environmental sustainability through green initiatives and funding for waste management projects. The budget also emphasizes digital transformation and cultural initiatives aimed at enriching community life. The municipality often provides personnel to assist with the organization and execution of social initiatives. This can include training and capacity-building support for volunteers and staff involved in these projects. The city collaborates with local associations, helping to organize events and programs that align with community goals. For example, partnerships with NGOs are fostered to facilitate joint projects that leverage both municipal and organizational strengths. Municipal facilities may be offered for free or at a reduced rate for community events,

workshops, and meetings. This helps reduce costs for organizations and encourages community participation. In some cases, the city provides equipment and materials needed for various initiatives, particularly those related to environmental protection and educational programs. The municipality supports awareness campaigns through local media and promotional channels, helping to raise visibility for social initiatives. This includes collaborating with local newspapers and broadcasting services to publicize events and outcomes. These supportive measures illustrate Varaždin's commitment to fostering a vibrant civil society and enhancing the overall quality of life for its residents through collaborative efforts between the municipality and local organizations. In the context of industrial development, in the City of Varaždin and Varaždin County, numerous businesses and business zones play a crucial role in the region's economic development. The City of Varaždin and Varaždin County promote entrepreneurial infrastructure through initiatives such as the Regional Centre for Pre-Incubation in Smart Industry. This centre, with an estimated budget of €6.2 million, will be the first of its kind in Croatia, aimed at supporting startups and entrepreneurial development in the smart industry sector. Establishing the centre will enable local innovators, students, and entrepreneurs to develop business ideas with expert support through mentoring programs and lifelong learning, contributing to the region's economic growth and competitiveness. The project also includes equipping and launching development hubs in Ludbreg, Novi Marof, and other municipalities near the City of Varaždin. Business zones within Varaždin County, including those in the City of Varaždin, have been established to provide infrastructural and logistical support to entrepreneurs. This includes basic and specialized services for manufacturing, warehousing, and logistics companies, aimed at fostering business growth and attracting investments. Many of these zones, such as the entrepreneurial zones in Ivanec and Jalkovec, facilitate development and collaboration through local incentives and various business benefits. Development agencies like DAN d.o.o. contribute to strategic planning and coordination within these business zones and collaborate with city and county authorities to promote innovation and sustainable development.

Tools and methods: Tools and methods for CSR activities in cities include identifying and prioritizing key stakeholders for effective engagement, gathering community input to understand specific needs and preferences, collaborating with local NGOs, government, and businesses to leverage resources and expertise, utilizing software for planning, tracking progress, and reporting on CSR initiatives, establishing KPIs to measure the impact and effectiveness of CSR activities. To effectively align the political will of the City of Varaždin with the corporate social responsibility (CSR) objectives of local businesses, several tools and methods can be employed. These approaches can facilitate demand-supply matching in CSR initiatives and ensure that both the municipality and local business actors collaborate towards common goals. Establishing dedicated communication platforms, such as online forums or social media groups, can facilitate dialogue between local government and businesses. These channels can serve as spaces for sharing ideas, discussing community needs, and showcasing successful CSR initiatives. Engaging local media outlets to promote CSR activities and urban projects can enhance visibility and encourage participation. Articles, interviews, and features about successful local CSR programs can inspire other businesses to adopt similar practices. Forming a CSR advisory group that includes representatives from the municipality, local businesses, and community organizations can provide strategic direction. This group can meet regularly to discuss CSR challenges, share best practices, and coordinate joint initiatives. Creating an online platform that serves as a hub for CSR-related resources, such as best practices, funding opportunities, and project ideas, can help businesses find ways to contribute to community goals. This platform could also feature a directory of local NGOs and community

needs. Sending regular newsletters to local businesses that highlight ongoing urban projects, funding opportunities, and CSR initiatives can keep stakeholders informed and engaged. This can include success stories, upcoming events, and ways for businesses to get involved. Organizing workshops that educate businesses on the importance of CSR and how to implement effective strategies can foster a culture of social responsibility. These sessions can provide tools and frameworks for measuring impact and engaging employees. By adopting these tools and methods, the City of Varaždin can create a robust framework that aligns local political will with the CSR objectives of its business community. This synergy can lead to more impactful initiatives that benefit both the community and the economy).

CSR action: CSR actions in cities often focus on improving community well-being through various initiatives. These include supporting local education and health programs, promoting environmental sustainability, enhancing public spaces, and fostering economic development. Collaborations with local governments, nonprofits, and community groups are common to address specific urban challenges. In the City of Varaždin, while there is no specific operational CSR financial fund established by the municipality, various forms of indirect support for corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives are present. Local companies often engage in CSR activities through donations, sponsorships, and partnerships with non-profit organizations. Local companies contribute to community development through various projects that exemplify corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Local businesses have actively participated in EU-funded initiatives aimed at improving community services and infrastructure. For instance, the project "Digitalization of City Services" focuses on enhancing public services through digital solutions, which not only improves efficiency but also supports the local economy by fostering a tech-savvy community. Additionally, the "Sustainable Waste Management" project encourages businesses to engage in environmentally friendly practices, further promoting CSR. Companies often sponsor educational programs and workshops that align with their CSR goals. Projects like "Youth Empowerment" and "Skills Development for the Future" aim to equip young people with essential skills, enhancing employability. Local businesses contribute by providing resources, mentorship, and training sessions, creating a direct link between their CSR strategies and community improvement. Businesses are also involved in initiatives that promote public health and well-being. For example, the "Healthy Lifestyle Awareness" project includes campaigns and events supported by local companies that encourage physical activity and healthy eating among residents (varazdin.hr). Many local enterprises support cultural events, such as the "Varaždin Baroque Evenings," which enrich the community's cultural life and promote local heritage. This sponsorship not only fosters community spirit but also enhances the visibility of participating businesses. Local businesses often collaborate with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to implement social projects. This partnership can include financial support, resource sharing, or employee volunteer programs that benefit the community. For instance, companies may partner with local charities to organize events or initiatives that align with their CSR objectives. Some companies provide training programs for local youth or marginalized groups, contributing to skills development and workforce integration. Such initiatives not only fulfil CSR objectives but also help address local employment challenges. Identifying sustainable funding sources and ensuring a consistent flow of financial contributions from local businesses can be difficult. Many companies may prefer to allocate resources directly to specific projects rather than contributing to a central fund. Raising awareness among local businesses about the benefits of contributing to a CSR fund is essential. Without clear communication on how their contributions can make a difference, companies may be hesitant to participate. Managing a CSR fund would require additional administrative resources and oversight to ensure transparency and effective

allocation of funds, which could pose a challenge for the municipality. While the City of Varaždin does not currently have a specific CSR fund, there are numerous indirect ways in which local businesses engage in CSR activities. Establishing a dedicated fund could enhance the impact of these initiatives but would require addressing several challenges.

General procedure: The general procedure for CSR activities in cities typically involves several key steps such as identifying specific social, economic, and environmental challenges within the city. Collaborating with local government, community organizations, and residents to gather input and foster partnerships. Designing initiatives that address identified needs while aligning with the company's values and goals. Executing programs with a focus on community involvement and transparency and measuring impact and effectiveness to inform future CSR strategies. There is currently no formalized procedure or agreement specifically tailored for implementing CSR actions between local companies and the municipality. Instead, the city facilitates various calls for projects that allow associations and businesses to apply for funding to support community initiatives. These calls for proposals are typically aimed at NGOs and other organizations seeking financial support for their projects, which can include social inclusion, environmental protection, and youth engagement. For example, various programs and calls for proposals are published on the City of Varaždin's official website, outlining opportunities for organizations to secure funding (varazdin.hr).

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 , Governmen t-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	√	√	√	√			
Urban Regeneration and Area-Upgrading	√					√	
Environmental Protection	√	√	√	√	√		
Social/ Community Development	√		√		√		
Land-Use, Transport, Infrastructure	√						√
Cultural Integration and Inclusion	√						
Participation and Active Citizenship	√		√				
Education, Lifelong Learning and Labour Markets	√						
Other Policy Arena:							

Indirectly, through various activities, the local government in the City of Varaždin implements a range of instruments and policies that encourage corporate social responsibility in businesses.

Awareness-Raising: The City of Varaždin has employed several initiatives to increase public and business awareness, including recognition awards for businesses and accessible information platforms. These serve to encourage economic development, environmental stewardship, and social inclusion, supporting the objectives in urban regeneration,

environmental protection, community development, and education. This raises awareness among citizens and organizations alike, promoting active citizenship and fostering a sustainable, inclusive community culture.

Facilitation: The city facilitates local economic growth and environmental practices by coordinating business networks and alliances. This includes assisting with infrastructure for entrepreneurial activities and ensuring that businesses have supportive frameworks to enhance local economic resilience and environmental sustainability.

Partnering: Partnerships have been developed through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and government-business contracts. These partnerships strengthen economic development, environmental protection, and social development initiatives, and encourage citizens' participation. A specific example is the "Contact Us" form on the City of Varaždin website, allowing residents to engage with local government, fostering transparency and supporting the active involvement of citizens in local decision-making.

Soft Law: The city applies soft law principles, including criteria-based procurement and codes of conduct for contractors, especially in economic development and public procurement activities. These measures ensure that contractors adhere to standards that align with sustainable development goals and promote responsible business conduct.

Financing: In Social and Community Development, the city has applied targeted grants and financing initiatives, often leveraging budget allocations to support local initiatives that align with CSR objectives. Potential financing tools may include grants to encourage sustainable development or specific budgetary allocations toward socially impactful projects.

Planning: Through land-use planning and the designation of activity zones, the city supports Urban Regeneration and development initiatives, aiming to promote sustainable land-use practices and enhance the urban landscape. Local planning documents reflect an integrated approach to area upgrades, ensuring that developmental policies are in line with environmental and social goals.

Mandating: Regulatory measures, by-laws, and codes are employed by the city to govern land use, transportation, and infrastructure. These mandates are essential for maintaining order in infrastructure development and ensuring that regulations align with sustainable land use and transportation goals.

1.2.8 Implicit – Explicit CSR

CSR-Approach: IMPLICIT

Comment: In the City of Varaždin, the approach to corporate social responsibility (CSR) aligns more closely with an implicit CSR model. This means CSR is integrated into the city's socio-economic structure through shared norms, values, and informal practices that guide socially responsible conduct among businesses. Rather than following strict regulations or official guidelines specific to CSR, local companies and organizations engage in CSR activities through established cultural and social expectations, supporting community-oriented programs on an informal basis. While explicit CSR initiatives like dedicated CSR strategies or standardized procedures are less common, the city facilitates engagement through calls for community projects, where companies and associations can apply for funding to support social and environmental initiatives. This approach is not strictly codified or regulated but reflects a community-driven model where CSR is encouraged and supported indirectly. The focus on

implicit CSR in the City of Varaždin highlights a commitment to socially responsible values within the community without requiring detailed regulatory frameworks or dedicated financing channels specifically for CSR, aligning closely with a culture of voluntary corporate support and civic engagement.

Implicit CSR integration in local policies - Evaluating the effectiveness of community-driven CSR approaches that function without formal regulation. Smart technology and digital tools play a crucial role in optimizing municipal energy use, reducing waste, and improving overall efficiency. When businesses contribute digital solutions to public institutions, cities benefit from real-time energy monitoring and optimization. This is connected with SECAP by supporting digitalization efforts in energy monitoring and smart city development.

1.3 Approaching sustainability

1.3.1 Budget dedicated to sustainability in the Municipality

The City of Varaždin has included sustainability-focused allocations in its budget, particularly within the latest budget amendments. Notable areas of investment encompass projects related to energy efficiency, environmental management, and infrastructure improvements aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Several ongoing EU programs fund sustainability projects, including those targeting carbon reduction and green energy transitions. Funding opportunities also support green urban spaces and sustainable public transportation improvements. Through public procurement plans, specific calls address needs for energy-efficient technologies and materials for public buildings and environmental protection (urban-initiative.eu). The Procurement Plan for Varaždin further highlights various tenders that support sustainable projects, such as eco-friendly public infrastructure and waste management systems. Additionally, the city's budget amendment document outlines financial resources directed toward these sustainability goals. Specific funds are allocated for the energy-efficient refurbishment of public buildings, aiming to reduce carbon emissions through better insulation, energy-saving lighting, and heating systems. The city plans to enhance urban green spaces with eco-friendly infrastructure developments, aligning with efforts to improve air quality and reduce the urban heat effect. Allocations in the budget support improvements in waste sorting, collection, and recycling facilities, contributing to a more circular economy approach in municipal waste management. Funding is directed toward the development of sustainable public transportation solutions, including infrastructure for bicycles and electric vehicles, as well as reducing the carbon footprint of existing public transport.

1.3.2 Sustainability-related strategic documents

The City of Varaždin has implemented several strategic documents to address sustainability and climate goals, including the [Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan](#) (SECAP) and other environment-focused plans. The SECAP outlines key objectives for reducing carbon emissions and increasing energy efficiency, with a target of a 20% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2030. This document, aligned with EU goals, includes indicators like reduced energy consumption, increased renewable energy usage, and specific targets for improved public building energy performance. Additionally, the Environmental Protection Programme and Climate Adaptation Strategy include objectives on air quality, waste management, and water conservation, supporting a cleaner, greener urban environment. Indicators within these

strategies often monitor air quality index improvements, waste recycling rates, and water usage reductions, helping track the city's progress on sustainability initiatives.

1.3.3 Regional GHG Emissions and Climate Change Challenges

The main issues affecting the City of Varaždin in terms of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are largely associated with the transportation, energy, and industrial sectors, as detailed in the Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP).

Transportation is one of the largest emitters, with high dependency on fossil-fuel-powered vehicles. The city's reliance on road transport, combined with older vehicles, contributes significantly to urban emissions. Reducing these emissions poses a challenge due to infrastructure limitations and the need for expanded public and alternative transportation options.

Energy is another critical sector, particularly regarding heating and electricity. Public and residential buildings in the City of Varaždin are often older, with lower energy efficiency standards. Efforts to retrofit these buildings are ongoing, but the scale and cost of these upgrades remain a challenge.

Industrial Emissions stem primarily from manufacturing and food processing. Although these sectors provide economic stability, transitioning to lower-emission processes and energy sources requires substantial investment and technological upgrades.

Challenges with Climate Change in the City of Varaždin include frequent extreme weather events, such as intense rainfall and flooding, which impact agriculture, infrastructure, and public health. The city is also working to address heat island effects and the vulnerability of older infrastructure to climate-related wear.

These factors make achieving climate goals complex, requiring multi-sector collaboration, significant investment, and increased public awareness to address emissions comprehensively and sustainably.

1.4 Identifying knowledge needs and good practices

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

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The city has a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP), which sets clear goals for energy efficiency, emission reduction, and environmental awareness Rising CSR demand, with consumers and banks favouring sustainable practices, motivates local businesses to adopt CSR initiatives The City of Varaždin promotes sustainability via initiatives like the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of a dedicated CSR policy or fund limits structured support for businesses. No specific organization or department handles CSR Lack of a formal CSR framework hinders systematic development and evaluation. CSR activities have limited visibility, reducing public awareness and engagement Resource constraints challenge local businesses in aligning CSR with community needs

<p>Energy Efficiency Fund, strengthening community engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment to social programs supports vulnerable groups, including the elderly and disabled ▪ Local businesses contribute to social welfare through donations, sponsorships, and community involvement ▪ Environmental programs for youth build a foundation for future responsible citizens ▪ NGO partnerships enhance social cohesion and community programs through collaborative events and resource sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fragmented initiatives limit potential for synergy and broader community impact
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EU funding provides strong support for CSR and sustainability projects ▪ Formalizing CSR practices can boost regional partnerships and collaboration on social goals ▪ Raising CSR awareness can drive engagement from both private and public sectors ▪ Project-driven CSR policy creation. ▪ Digitalization initiatives enable tech-driven community improvements ▪ Establishing a CSR fund could support community initiatives and partnerships ▪ CSR workshops can foster social responsibility among local businesses ▪ Online platforms for CSR resources can enhance collaboration and transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited CSR-specific funding may hinder sustainable progress ▪ Knowledge gaps on CSR among stakeholders can lead to inconsistent practices ▪ Economic uncertainty may reduce businesses' capacity for CSR involvement ▪ Resource competition could challenge initiatives in securing necessary support ▪ Regulatory changes may increase compliance burdens for businesses ▪ Poor communication of CSR efforts may lead to public scepticism

The SWOT analysis reflects a strong foundation for CSR potential in the City of Varaždin, with established frameworks such as SECAP and supportive external funding opportunities. The key challenges lie in the lack of direct CSR policy and budget and a need for further education on CSR's benefits and best practices. Knowledge needs focus on: understanding CSR best practices and metrics that align with local industry strengths, developing a knowledge-sharing platform for businesses to learn about effective CSR integration and opportunities, identifying case studies from other regions to illustrate practical CSR implementation. Good Practices will

be outlined in more detail in the following report section, providing examples from the EU-funded projects, community-driven initiatives, and integration of sustainability practices into local businesses.

2. Good Practice collection

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

2.1. Good Practice 1: Joint public procurement as a tool for making financial and human resources more efficient

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: National

Country: Croatia

Region: N/A

City: City of Varaždin / 15 Croatian local self-governments

Practice image:



Title of the practice: Joint public procurement as a tool for making financial and human resources more efficient

2.1.3 Good practice detailed information

Short summary of the practice: Aggregating solar PV purchase and installation demand in cities and municipalities to make financial and human resources more efficient. Joint public procurement of solar power plants - Measuring efficiency gains, cost reductions, and optimization of human resources. When cities and the private sector collaborate on procuring solar panels, costs decrease, resources are optimized, and implementation becomes more efficient. This is connected with SECAP by promoting renewable energy in public buildings.

Detailed information on the practice:

36 power plants with a total power of over 1.5 MW were purchased through the joint public procurement of PV plants. One procurement procedure joined 21 partners (public bodies) in total. Thru procedure, a significantly lower price of equipment and works was obtained, but there was also a significant saving of human resources in the process of carrying out only one procurement instead of 21 of them.

The main challenge was the preparation/implementation of joint public procurement procedure. Surging prices, problems in supply chains, lack of installation companies, and payment terms were all considered during the market research phase. Insight into market conditions proved to be crucial in process of preparation of public procurement documentation, not only from the perspective of suppliers, but also from the partners. PV capacities ranged from 3.6 kWp to 400 kWp.

In addition to financial savings, standardization has proven to be a major advantage and added value in the implementation process where we managed to streamline part of activities, simplify project monitoring, and reduce risks in the implementation process.

Implemented joint public procurement can be considered as CSR initiative, since it is joining many of entities to work together on a long term and to gain sustainable solutions (PVs) as well as to make human resources more efficient given that each partner does not have to do individual procurement.

Timescale (start/end date): June 2022 – April 2024

Resources needed: 1,740,000 EUR (85 % was financed through EEA Grants)

Project team (including staff for public procurement procedure) - project manager, project coordinator, head of department for finance and general affairs, finance and general affairs expert

Evidence of success (results achieved):

A total of 36 power plants with a total power of over 1.5 MW were installed on the roofs of public buildings such as hospitals, kindergartens, schools, faculties, utilities, sports, and cultural heritage buildings in 17 Croatian municipalities and cities.

Through these projects a collaboration between public sector and academic community in Norway was also established facilitating the knowledge and experience exchange in harnessing the solar energy in the North and the South of Europe.

Potential for learning or transfer:

The knowledge and experience gained from the project resulted in replicable (and further improved) procurement documentation that can be used in similar projects (not only for PV plants) in Croatia and other countries in Europe. Through this approach of joint public procurement, in the future procedures, institutions could be included not only from one country, but also from many countries across the EU. Replication of this approach is essential for strengthening cooperation between multiple entities, but also for financial savings and reducing human resources, which is certainly interesting for replication in other countries.

External website: <https://rea-sjever.hr/onesun/en/home/>

Images (optional):



2.2. Good Practice 2: Skill-based volunteering

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: National

Country: Croatia

Region: N/A

City: City of Zagreb

Practice image:



Title of the practice: Skill-based volunteering

2.2.3 Good practice detailed information

Short summary of the practice: Skill-based volunteering assisting nonprofit organizations by providing effective and long-lasting solutions to optimize and simplify daily operations.

Corporate volunteering in digital solutions - Assessing the role of CSR in capacity building and digital transformation of non - profits. Digital transformation enhances the efficiency of public services and non-profits, helping them manage energy and resources more effectively. When companies contribute their IT expertise through volunteering, they empower communities with

long-term digital solutions. This is connected with SECAP by supporting information and education on energy efficiency in municipal and residential buildings.

Detailed information on the practice:

Span is an international IT firm-service provider which also implements Skill-Based Volunteering. It is a form of volunteering that utilizes the expertise of employees to help nonprofit organizations/associations develop effective and sustainable solutions in their daily operations. Through their analysis, Span identified an opportunity to assist in optimizing the IT operations of individual association with its expertise. Since each association managed its business in outdated IT programs, which became unwieldy and hard to maintain over time, Span proposed developing an application through another platform, to completely replace the existing one. The application is user-friendly and intuitive, and it stores upgrated data, eliminating the need for generating and saving outdated information. To facilitate daily operations, faster information sharing, and better planning, training for usage of new platform was also conducted. Several key lessons which make this good practice feasible and diffusive: connecting experts with social organizations; supporting nonprofit organizations; creating sustainable solutions for community; education and mentorship for citizens while engaging local/regional public actors; technological transformation and digitalization.

Timescale (start/end date): May 2023 - Continuous

Resources needed: 19.100 EUR

Span's resources: Project Manager, Consultant, Sales Consultant Team Leader, and Technical Consultant, with funding sourced from Span's ESG budget.

Evidence of success (results achieved):

The practice of skill-based corporate volunteering has proven successful, as the application not only accelerated daily operations but also provides an overview of all essential information in one place. It allows for easy and quick access to necessary data and serves as a digital database. Utilizing Microsoft tools improves communication with clients, facilitates better self-organization, planning, and execution of business tasks, ultimately boosting employee productivity.

Potential for learning or transfer:

The implementation of the application has improved:

- a) Productivity and Efficiency - By automating routine tasks and reducing manual data entry, the application saves time and resources, allowing employees to focus on more complex tasks, thus enhancing productivity and operational efficiency.
- b) Employee Satisfaction - Digital tools that simplify processes increase employee satisfaction by enabling them to focus on more important and creative tasks. Optimized processes lead to faster, higher-quality services, boosting client satisfaction.

c) Data Quality and Business Insights - application collects accurate, up-to-date data, enabling real-time data analysis that supports informed decision-making and quicker responses to business changes.

Public institutions/organizations can learn a lot from the approach of Skill-Based Volunteering implemented. This form of volunteering utilizes the expertise of employees to help nonprofit organizations develop effective and sustainable solutions.

External website: <https://www.span.eu/hr/price/nisi-sama-uz-prijatelje-iz-spana/>

Images (optional):



2.3. Good Practice 3: Green Wave - a wave of inspiration and education

2.3.1 Organisation in charge of the good practice

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

No

2.3.2 Good Practice general information

Implementation level of the practice: National

Country:

Region:

City: City of Zagreb

Practice image:



Title of the practice: Green Wave - a wave of inspiration and education

2.3.4 Good practice detailed information

Short summary of the practice: Green Wave project intends to extend knowledge/practices of Atlantic Group employees with set of educations for better sustainability understanding. Employee sustainability education initiatives - Tracking knowledge transfer and behavioural

changes influenced by corporate sustainability programs. Awareness and education are key drivers of behaviour change. When companies invest in sustainability education for their employees, this knowledge extends beyond the workplace to public institutions, schools, and households, leading to tangible reductions in energy consumption. This is connected with SECAP by supporting awareness programs on energy efficiency in schools, kindergartens, and municipal institutions.

Detailed information on the practice:

Atlantic Grupa (AG) is a large international company based in Croatia, engaged in production and distribution of a wide range of products. It includes food industry, pharmaceuticals, personal care products and products in sports and wellness segment. "Green Wave" is educational program organized by AG, focusing on sustainability and environmental responsibility. Program is promoting sustainable development, environmental protection and raising awareness about ecological issues. Education within this program covers various aspects of environmental protection, such as recycling, waste reduction, energy savings, eco-friendly production and other activities that can contribute to preserving the planet.

Green Wave program includes various forms of education, from seminars and workshops to engaging employees and the community. Through this program, AG often collaborates with educational institutions, organizations and government bodies to ensure broader social responsibility regarding ecological initiatives.

The goal of this program is not only to educate employees within the company but also to contribute to a wider societal impact through raising awareness and education.

Key lessons for a good practice: Collaboration in organizing educational sessions and / workshops / Creating joint ecological initiatives / Raising awareness among citizens / Implementation in schools and educational institutions / Access to information and resources / Development of ecological policies and strategies

Timescale (start/end date): June 2024 - Continuous

Resources needed: Budget for 2024 - €10.000 / Budget for 2025 - €20.000

Human resources - project team of 11 employees from different sectors (CQM, marketing, R&D, procurement, corporate communications, P&C)

Evidence of success (results achieved):

For company/institution/organization to become sustainable, its employees must understand essence of sustainability goals, which are implemented at operational level on daily basis. Through their awareness and actions, employees should contribute to achieving these goals. Defined ESG goals for each year are measurable through Sustainability INDEX and can only be achieved if all employees are aware of their significance and overall benefit, which aim to accomplish through this type of education

Potential for learning or transfer:

Key things which can adopt from this project:

- 1.Sustainable Mobility: Green Wave relies on promoting eco-friendly solutions in everyday life.
- 2.Education and Public Awareness: education of local/regional community about the importance of environmental conservation and sustainable business practices (by organizing workshops, lectures, and campaigns to raise awareness among citizens about ecological issues, waste reduction and energy efficiency)
- 3.Investment in Green Infrastructure:examples of installing renewable energy systems in public systems
- 4.Support for Green Innovation: public institutions/organizations could encourage entrepreneurs and startups that focus on sustainable technologies and products, creating a space for innovations that will improve ecological sustainability.

External website:

<https://www.atlanticgrupa.com/en/sustainability/corporate-social-responsibility/>

Images (optional):

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: Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP)

Is this instrument an Investment for jobs and growth goal programme?

SECAP is not part of an Investment for Jobs and Growth goal programme, as it is a dedicated climate action plan rather than a national or regional operational programme.

Please indicate the geographical scope of this policy instrument:

This policy instrument is implemented at the local municipal level, focusing specifically on the city or regional areas committed to achieving sustainable energy and climate goals.

Name of the policy responsible authority:

The primary authority responsible for SECAP is the local municipal government (e.g., the City of Varaždin), which oversees the development and implementation of climate-related initiatives at the municipal level.

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

Partner organization is not the direct policy authority, it has an advisory or cooperative role. Partnerships between municipalities and local organizations or businesses are fostered to support SECAP's goals, particularly in areas of data sharing, planning, and execution of sustainable energy projects. Additionally, the Development Agency North (DAN) collaborates closely with the City of Varaždin's structure, acting as a key intermediary for implementing strategic initiatives that align with both municipal objectives and SECAP's sustainable energy targets.

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

While organizations not directly control the SECAP policy, they influence its direction by contributing to public consultations, providing feedback, or participating in partnerships that support SECAP goals. Additionally, local stakeholders, such as business groups and NGOs, often play a role in the practical implementation of SECAP projects, influencing both execution and priority-setting.

How the relation with the policy responsible authority can ensure/influence the effective implementation of the policy change?

Effective policy implementation can be supported through clear communication channels with the responsible authority, participation in local stakeholder meetings, and collaboration on specific projects within the SECAP framework. Partnerships with the responsible authority are

crucial for addressing key sustainability targets, especially if there's shared access to funding and resource allocation.

3.2 Deep-dive analysis

3.2.1 Main features of the policy instrument

The SECAP (Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan) is a policy instrument designed to support local governments in developing strategies to address energy efficiency and climate change.

Objective: The main goal of SECAP is to promote sustainable energy use and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by enabling municipalities to create tailored action plans.

Characteristics: SECAP provides a structured framework for local authorities to assess their energy consumption and emissions, set measurable targets, and outline specific actions to achieve these goals. It encourages stakeholder engagement and fosters collaboration between various sectors.

Priority measures addressed: The plan prioritizes energy efficiency improvements, the use of renewable energy sources, and climate adaptation strategies. It aims to enhance urban resilience by integrating climate considerations into local planning and development.

Other relevant aspects: SECAP supports knowledge sharing and capacity building among municipalities, helping them leverage available funding and resources. By adopting SECAP, local governments demonstrate their commitment to sustainable development and contribute to broader national and international climate goals. The implementation of SECAP can also enhance the quality of life for residents through improved energy security and environmental sustainability.

3.2.2 Policy structure – planning

The SECAP employs a both top-down and bottom-up approach in its policy structure.

Policy planning process: The planning process begins with top-level guidance from the municipality's leadership, establishing strategic goals aligned with national and EU climate objectives. This leadership ensures a clear vision and commitment to sustainability at the governmental level. Simultaneously, a bottom-up approach involves engaging local stakeholders, including citizens, businesses, and community organizations, in identifying specific needs and priorities. Workshops and public consultations are organized to gather input and foster collaboration among diverse groups. Once initial data is collected, a comprehensive assessment of the city's energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions is conducted. This analysis helps identify key areas for improvement and action. Based on stakeholder feedback and assessment results, measurable targets and tailored action measures are formulated, ensuring that local contexts and capacities are considered.

The final SECAP document is drafted and subject to review by stakeholders, allowing for further refinement. Implementation of the plan is monitored, with regular evaluations to assess

progress and adapt strategies as needed. This iterative process ensures that SECAP remains responsive to changing circumstances and community needs, promoting long-term sustainability and resilience for the City of Varaždin.

3.2.3 Policy structure – financing

The financing scheme for the SECAP primarily relies on a combination of local, national, and EU funding sources.

Local budget allocation: The municipality allocates specific funds from its budget to support initiatives outlined in the SECAP, ensuring a baseline of financial commitment.

National grants and programs: Local authorities access various national grants and programs aimed at promoting energy efficiency and climate action. These funds help supplement municipal financing.

EU funding opportunities: EU programs, such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Horizon Europe, provide significant financial resources for sustainability projects. The SECAP positions the City of Varaždin to apply for these funds, which can enhance project implementation.

Public-Private Partnerships: The SECAP encourages collaboration between the public sector and private businesses to leverage additional investment for climate initiatives. Such partnerships facilitate co-financing arrangements that pool resources for specific projects.

Stakeholder contributions: Local businesses and community organizations are encouraged to participate financially in projects that align with SECAP goals. This multi-source financing approach enhances the overall capacity for implementing sustainable actions.

Monitoring and evaluation: Regular assessments of funding utilization ensure transparency and accountability, allowing for adjustments in financing strategies as needed.

3.2.4 Policy structure – implementation

SECAP involves collaboration among various stakeholders to achieve its objectives.

Local government: The City of Varaždin is responsible for developing and overseeing the SECAP, ensuring coordination among municipal departments and alignment with local policies.

Energy agencies: Organizations like HEP (Croatian Electricity Company) provide technical support, funding opportunities, and expertise in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Research institutions: Universities and research organizations contribute through data analysis and climate modelling, developing innovative solutions applicable to the city.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): Environmental NGOs advocate for sustainable practices, raise public awareness, and engage the community, mobilizing local initiatives.

Private sector: Local businesses implement energy-efficient practices, and public-private partnerships facilitate investments in renewable energy projects and infrastructure.

Community groups: Residents play a crucial role, ensuring that SECAP measures reflect public needs and promote a culture of sustainability.

ADDITIONAL ASPECTS:

Stakeholder engagement: Active involvement from all stakeholders is essential. Continuous dialogue, workshops, and public consultations foster community support and identify local challenges.

Monitoring and evaluation: A robust framework is necessary to track progress, involving measurable indicators and regular reporting to assess the impact of measures.

Funding and resources: Identifying funding sources, such as EU grants or national programs, is critical for the financial sustainability of SECAP initiatives.

3.2.5 Policy structure - monitoring

The monitoring of the SECAP for the City of Varaždin is structured to ensure effective implementation and assessment through various stakeholders.

Monitoring organization: The City of Varaždin, particularly the Department of Environmental Protection and Energy, oversees monitoring efforts, coordinating data collection and analysis. External consultants and technical experts provide specialized knowledge, while local universities contribute data analysis, modelling capabilities, and indicator development. Involving NGOs and community groups enhances transparency and public engagement, providing essential feedback on the social impacts of SECAP initiatives.

Monitoring process: The process includes gathering data on energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and other relevant indicators through surveys, energy audits, and monitoring technologies. Specific indicators measure progress, including energy savings, renewable energy generation, and emissions reductions. Regular reports communicate findings to stakeholders, with annual or biannual updates. Conducted quarterly or semi-annually during the early phases to identify challenges and adjust strategies. Comprehensive reviews assess overall progress and include stakeholder feedback to inform future actions. Longer-term reviews occur every five years to update the SECAP based on evolving circumstances, technology, and climate goals.

Concrete SECAP metrics enhanced with CSR insights:

- Public procurement for renewable energy - Number of joint procurement initiatives with the private sector and achieved efficiency gains (MWh saved and CO2 emissions reduced).
- Energy awareness in municipal buildings - Percentage of public sector employees participating in corporate-sponsored sustainability training and the corresponding reduction in energy use.

- Community engagement in energy efficiency - Number of public-private initiatives supporting energy efficiency education for households, leading to measurable energy savings.
- Smart city & digital innovation - Adoption rate of corporate-donated digital tools for energy monitoring and optimization in municipal infrastructure.

3.2.6 Timespan of the policy

SECAP for the City of Varaždin is structured as a long-term strategic framework, generally designed to operate continuously while incorporating periodic assessments and updates.

Timespan of the policy instrument: SECAP spans a period of 5 to 10 years, aligning with broader European Union goals and local sustainability objectives. The SECAP for the City of Varaždin was adopted in 2020. The revision of the plan is already in progress, as outlined in the document, and it will continue to be monitored, reported on, and revised according to the plan. This process will remain ongoing, with regular updates and adjustments as needed, with the revision expected to be finalized by the end of the 2025.

Policy planning schedule: Initial assessment (Year 1) involves data collection on energy usage and emissions, stakeholder consultations, and public engagement. Drafting (Year 2) is creation of the SECAP draft based on assessments, followed by stakeholder feedback. Finalization (Year 3) incorporates feedback leading to official adoption by the local government. Implementation (Years 3-10) includes active execution of projects, funding acquisition, and stakeholder collaboration. Regular monitoring with annual reports to assess progress and adapt as needed. Comprehensive review is conducted every 5 years to update goals and reflect new data or policy changes.

3.3 Policy improvement objectives

Policy improvement type:

Revision of the instrument itself – structural change

3.3.1 Policy improvement description

The improvement of the indicator system aligns with the ACROSS topic of CSR by integrating CSR related insights into the SECAP's framework for better monitoring and evaluation. Lessons from ACROSS, such as best practices in corporate sustainability, stakeholder engagement, and impact measurement, can be applied to enhance the SECAP indicators. For instance, the integration of CSR related metrics, such as the impact of public - private partnerships, community engagement in sustainability efforts, and social responsibility initiatives, will allow for a more comprehensive evaluation of the SECAP's effectiveness.

Conducting a comprehensive revision of the SECAP aims to ensure alignment with updated climate goals, local needs, and emerging technologies. Given the rapid advancements in energy technologies and changes in regulatory frameworks, a timely review is crucial. This will

help incorporate new data, address challenges encountered during implementation, and refine targets to enhance effectiveness.

The revision will involve stakeholder consultations, public feedback, and technical assessments conducted by local experts and research institutions. Data will be gathered on energy performance, emissions, and community needs to inform updates.

The revision is planned for the upcoming year, allowing for adjustments based on the experiences and insights gained during the initial implementation phase. This proactive approach aims to ensure the SECAP remains relevant and effective in meeting the city's sustainability objectives. The goal is incorporating necessary policy improvements based on lessons learned from ACROSS. While key policy adjustments need to be identified in time for the revised SECAP, there will still be opportunities for further refinements even after the planned completion in 2026. Continuous monitoring, stakeholder engagement, and insights gained from ongoing implementation will allow for additional improvements beyond the initial revision. Additionally, the SECAP is subject to a mandatory revision every five years, ensuring that policies remain aligned with evolving climate goals and local needs. The revision is an ongoing process with periodic updates, so the policy improvements based on lessons learned can be integrated at each stage.

REVISION OF THE SECAP

Implement structural changes to the SECAP by revising indicators across various sections of the document. This includes assessing baseline conditions, current performance, and target indicators in collaboration with stakeholders.

KEY ACTIONS:

Assessment of current indicators: Evaluate the existing indicators for their relevance and effectiveness in measuring progress. This involves reviewing data on energy consumption, emissions, and community engagement to establish a clear baseline.

Target indicator re-evaluation: Collaborate with stakeholders to determine the feasibility and justification of target indicators. This process will ensure that the targets set are realistic and aligned with the city's goals and available resources.

Stakeholder collaboration: Engage with local government, community groups, NGOs, and experts to gather input and insights. Their participation is crucial for identifying areas needing adjustment and ensuring that the revised indicators reflect the community's priorities and capacities.

DATA COLLECTION PHASE:

In the second phase, gather comprehensive data to understand current performance and progress. This will include:

Conducting surveys and energy audits to gather quantitative data.

Analysing trends in emissions and energy use.

Assessing public sentiment and engagement levels through community feedback sessions.

By undertaking this structured revision of the SECAP, the City of Varaždin aims to create a more effective and responsive framework for addressing energy and climate challenges, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with local and EU sustainability 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: National Development Strategy of Croatia until 2030

Name of the policy responsible authority: Government of the Republic of Croatia, managed primarily by the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds.

Brief description of the policy content: This comprehensive strategy outlines Croatia's goals for sustainable development, emphasizing economic growth, environmental protection, digitalization, and social equity. It reflects key objectives such as aligning with the European Green Deal's goals for climate neutrality, promoting circular economy principles, enhancing local and national resilience, and fostering sustainable urban development. The policy aims to reduce environmental impacts, increase energy efficiency, and strengthen public and private sector collaboration for sustainability. By setting measurable targets, it encourages corporate social responsibility and aligns closely with the goals of the ACROSS project, particularly in fostering partnerships for environmental and economic resilience.

Policy structure (if relevant): POLICY STRUCTURE

Planning: The strategy addresses Croatia's development needs and potential, aligning national targets with EU policies like [the Green Deal](#) and [Digital Europe](#). Planning includes input from national and local governments, economic sectors, and community stakeholders.

Financing: Funded through EU mechanisms, including the [European Structural and Investment Funds](#), as well as national and private investments. A focus on public-private financing models supports initiatives aligned with sustainable development, renewable energy, and digital transformation.

Implementation: Coordinated by the Ministry of Regional Development, with participation from regional and local authorities and partnerships with private entities. The strategy encourages cross-sectoral initiatives, such as CSR partnerships, to leverage corporate involvement in achieving climate neutrality.

Monitoring: A structured monitoring system assesses progress on key indicators, with regular reporting to ensure compliance with sustainability and economic development targets. Performance is evaluated in alignment with EU standards, with adjustments made to address challenges like demographic shifts, digitalization, and climate adaptation.

This policy aligns well with the ACROSS project by fostering sustainable development and public-private cooperation, driving Croatia toward its 2050 climate neutrality targets and building resilience across local communities and industries.

3.4.2 Policy 2: Low-Carbon Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2030 with a view to 2050

Name of the policy responsible authority: Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Climate Activities Directorate

Brief description of the policy content: This strategy aims to transition Croatia toward a low-carbon economy, targeting climate neutrality by 2050. The policy outlines goals for sustainable economic growth with reduced carbon emissions, focusing on energy efficiency and the expansion of renewable energy sources. Sector-specific measures will impact energy, transportation, industry, agriculture, and more, encouraging eco-friendly practices among citizens and businesses.

Policy structure (if relevant): POLICY STRUCTURE:

Planning: Croatia's plan centres on a sustainable transition roadmap that involves cross-sectoral measures to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050 relative to 1990 levels. The planning includes a long-term vision and immediate actions to achieve interim targets by 2030.

Financing: Investment in renewable energy, energy efficiency technologies, and innovation will be essential, supported by EU funding mechanisms and national resources. The strategy sees economic gains as part of this investment, with the expectation of job creation and enhanced energy security.

Implementation: A five-year Action Plan directs specific actions to meet reduction targets. Measures involve sustainable urban development, green public procurement, and public awareness campaigns to promote low-carbon living.

Monitoring: The Ministry's Climate Activities Directorate oversees the monitoring process, with performance indicators for each sector and regular updates to ensure alignment with EU regulations and national goals.

3.4.3 Policy 3: Adaptation to Climate Change Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2040, with a View to 2070

Name of the policy responsible authority: Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (Directorate for Climate Activities)

Brief description of the policy content: This strategy represents Croatia's first comprehensive climate adaptation policy, detailing expected climate changes and vulnerabilities. It identifies priority areas impacted by climate change, such as water resources, agriculture, forestry, biodiversity, energy, tourism, and health, along with spatial planning and risk management. Its goal is to integrate adaptation into national and local policies to reduce environmental, economic, and societal vulnerabilities.

Policy structure (if relevant): POLICY STRUCTURE:

Planning: The strategy involves assessments of climate impacts up to 2040 and projections through 2070. It incorporates climate scenarios, including extreme events, which affect national priorities across various sectors, supported by the [EU's Climate-ADAPT platform](#).

Financing: Financing is anticipated through both national funds and EU support, particularly for data management, infrastructure resilience, and nature-based solutions.

Implementation: This is coordinated at multiple levels, encouraging cross-sectoral actions and local implementations, particularly focusing on green and blue infrastructure and sustainable land use.

Monitoring: Regular monitoring is required, with updates reported to the European Commission, which includes evaluation of adaptation goals and compliance with EU regulations for climate governance and tracking adaptation progress across sectors.

3.4.4 Policy 4: Energy Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2030, with a View to 2050

Name of the policy responsible authority: Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Directorate for Climate Activities

Brief description of the policy content: This strategy is Croatia's long-term energy policy framework, designed to support sustainable economic growth, enhance energy security, and align with EU energy and climate objectives. This strategy emphasizes transitioning to a low-carbon energy sector, boosting renewable energy sources, and improving energy efficiency across various sectors to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on fossil fuels.

Policy structure (if relevant): POLICY STRUCTURE:

Planning: The strategy provides a roadmap for energy sector transformation, with detailed objectives for 2030 and a broader vision for 2050. The plan involves integrating renewable energy sources, increasing energy efficiency, and promoting technological advancements to transition from high to low-carbon energy.

Financing: It relies on both national funding and EU financial mechanisms, such as the EU Cohesion Fund, to support renewable energy projects, grid modernization, and energy-efficiency initiatives. Funding is focused on innovative and sustainable projects to foster growth and meet climate targets.

Implementation: Specific measures include promoting renewable energy sources, enhancing energy efficiency across production and consumption sectors, and expanding Croatia's renewable energy infrastructure. Implementation requires collaboration across government bodies, private industries, and international partners.

Monitoring: Progress is tracked through performance indicators and regular evaluations, ensuring alignment with EU standards. Monitoring mechanisms are designed to adjust strategies based on sectoral feedback and the outcomes of implemented projects, reinforcing Croatia's commitment to climate goals by 2050.

3.4.5 Policy 5: Nature Protection Strategy and Action Plan of the Republic of Croatia for 2017-2025

Name of the policy responsible authority: Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Croatia

Brief description of the policy content: This strategic document is aimed at preserving Croatia's natural heritage, addressing biodiversity and landscape conservation within the framework of the EU's nature protection regulations. The plan aligns with the country's obligations under international agreements like the Convention on Biological Diversity and the European Union's [Natura 2000 network](#) requirements. Its key objectives include habitat preservation, species protection, sustainable use of natural resources, and climate change adaptation.

Policy structure (if relevant): POLICY STRUCTURE:

Planning: The strategy is based on detailed environmental assessments and biodiversity inventories, setting clear goals to reduce threats to natural habitats and species. It includes developing management plans and guidelines tailored to Croatia's diverse ecosystems.

Financing: Funding is provided through a mix of national budgets, EU funds, and international grants, supporting the implementation of conservation projects, education initiatives, and scientific research.

Implementation: The policy involves local and national institutions in conservation activities, habitat restoration, public awareness programs, and the establishment of protective regulations.

Monitoring: The Ministry oversees regular reporting on biodiversity trends, habitat status, and the effectiveness of conservation efforts, adjusting actions as necessary to achieve set objectives.

3.4.6 Policy 6: Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan for the Republic of Croatia (NECP) for the period from 2021 to 2030.

Name of the policy responsible authority: Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development

Brief description of the policy content: The NECP is a comprehensive document outlining Croatia's energy and climate policies from 2021 to 2030, with a vision toward 2050. It aims to align with EU regulations, specifically the [EU Regulation 2018/1999](#) on the Governance of the Energy Union. The plan addresses five key dimensions of the Energy Union, focusing on:

- Decarbonization: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Energy Efficiency: Improving energy use in various sectors.
- Energy Security: Ensuring a stable and reliable energy supply.
- Internal Energy Market: Enhancing energy market integration.

Research, Innovation, and Competitiveness: Fostering innovation in energy technologies.

Policy structure (if relevant): POLICY STRUCTURE:

Planning: The NECP is developed in accordance with EU directives, emphasizing stakeholder involvement and inter-sectoral coordination.

Financing: The plan outlines various funding sources, including EU funds, national budgets, and private investments aimed at supporting the implementation of energy and climate measures.

Implementation: The Ministry coordinates the execution of policies, ensuring collaboration among government bodies, local authorities, and the private sector.

Monitoring: Regular assessments and reports are mandated to track progress against established targets, ensuring accountability and transparency.

3.4.7 Policy 7: Program for the Development of Circular Spatial and Building Management for the Period from 2021 to 2030

Name of the policy responsible authority: Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets

Brief description of the policy content: This program aims to promote circular economy principles within the management of space and buildings in Croatia. It focuses on revitalizing unused spaces and buildings, implementing guidelines for the planning of new constructions based on circular economy models, and enhancing the durability and lifespan of existing buildings. Additionally, it seeks to improve energy efficiency and reduce construction waste, aligning with global and EU sustainability goals

Policy structure (if relevant): POLICY STRUCTURE:

Planning: The program outlines priorities such as revitalization of abandoned areas, innovative urban management, and models to enhance employment and entrepreneurship in the context of circular cities.

Financing: The program is expected to leverage existing funding opportunities related to EU regulations and sustainable development initiatives

Implementation: The program encourages the circular renovation of existing buildings and promotes shared use of spaces among multiple users to optimize resource use.

Monitoring: The monitoring aspect is implied through the commitment to achieving sustainability and circularity goals.

3.4.8 Policy 8: Program of Development of Green Infrastructure in Urban Areas for the period 2021 to 2030

Name of the policy responsible authority: Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning

Brief description of the policy content: This program aims to establish sustainable, resilient, safe, and pleasant living environments in Croatian cities and municipalities. It is based on the Construction Act and aligns with the Strategy for Spatial Development of the Republic of Croatia. The program focuses on ecological and energy transitions towards climate neutrality, contributing to the goals of the National Development Strategy of Croatia until 2030.

Policy structure (if relevant): POLICY STRUCTURE:

Planning: The program outlines specific goals for enhancing green infrastructure in urban areas, addressing issues like urban heat islands and climate change adaptation.

Financing: Funding will come from [European Structural and Investment Funds during the financial period 2021-2027](#), as well as from the Recovery and Resilience Facility through [the National Recovery and Resilience Plan \(2021-2026\)](#).

Implementation: The program anticipates creating new jobs and companies related to green infrastructure construction and maintenance, energy savings, and urban gardening.

Monitoring: The effectiveness of the program will be monitored through various indicators related to urban quality, health benefits, and environmental improvements, including air and water quality.

3.4.9 Policy 9: Program for Energy Renovation of Public Sector Buildings until 2030

Name of the policy responsible authority: Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction, and State Assets.

Brief description of the policy content: This program aims to enhance energy efficiency in public sector buildings, targeting both undamaged and damaged structures from earthquakes. It aligns with Croatia's long-term strategy for building renovation, aspiring to achieve nearly zero energy consumption in all buildings by 2050. The program also promotes funding through EU mechanisms, aiming to increase the renovation rate by 2030.

Policy structure (if relevant): POLICY STRUCTURE:

Planning: The program is based on existing laws ([Article 47.b of the Construction Act](#)) and national strategies for building renovation.

Financing: Primarily funded by EU resources, including [the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism \(2022-2024\)](#) and [ESI funds for the 2021-2027 programming period](#), along with other funding sources like the [Social Climate Fund](#).

Implementation: Energy renovations will be carried out on eligible buildings, with provisions for both structural and energy rehabilitation post-earthquake.

Monitoring: The program includes measures to evaluate energy savings, CO2 emissions reduction, and overall energy consumption reductions, contributing to a more sustainable public building portfolio.

3.4.10 Policy 10: Strategy for the Development of the Urban Area of Varaždin for the Period 2021-2027

Name of the policy responsible authority: City of Varaždin

Brief description of the policy content: The Strategy aims to promote sustainable urban development in Varaždin by focusing on three main strategic goals:

- **Competitive, innovative, and sustainable economy:** Enhancing the competitiveness of local businesses, fostering innovation, and developing sustainable tourism.
- **Clean and resilient environment:** Addressing environmental protection, promoting sustainable transport (like electric vehicles), and improving urban infrastructure.
- **Inclusive and safe citizens:** Enhancing public safety, ensuring equal access to community resources, and promoting citizen engagement in local governance.

The strategy also outlines the need for integrated, multisectoral projects across various domains, including science, education, transport, culture, tourism, and social care, with active participation from local citizens and authorities.

Policy structure (if relevant): POLICY STRUCTURE:

Planning: The strategy includes stakeholder consultations and participatory approaches to incorporate local community needs and insights into the planning process.

Financing: Funding mechanisms are anticipated to be diversified, potentially drawing on EU funds, national government allocations, and local budget resources to support the strategy's implementation.

Implementation: Specific projects and initiatives will be outlined to achieve the strategic goals, with a focus on collaboration between different governmental levels and local stakeholders.

Monitoring: A system for tracking progress and assessing the effectiveness of the strategy will be established, allowing for adjustments based on performance indicators and changing circumstances.

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)
Green Fusion	Promotes sustainable practices and influences local policies by advocating for green technologies and sustainable development initiatives.	Engaging the public and businesses can be difficult, especially in overcoming resistance to change and securing funding for projects. Limited resources can also hinder outreach efforts.	2
Croatian Business Council for Sustainable Development	Shaping business practices and influencing sustainability policies at the national level through collaboration with businesses and governmental bodies.	Aligning the interests of diverse businesses can be challenging, as priorities may differ, and some companies may be resistant to adopting sustainability measures.	4
Varaždin City	The municipality is responsible for implementing and enforcing local policies, including SECAP. They play a crucial role in decision-making and resource allocation.	Limited budget and competing priorities can affect the implementation of sustainability initiatives. There may also be a lack of awareness or training among municipal staff regarding sustainable practices.	3

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Regional Energy Agency North	Provides expertise and support for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, influencing local energy policies and practices.	Gaining support from local stakeholders and ensuring their initiatives align with community needs can be challenging.	4
InfoDesign Ltd.	As a consultancy, InfoDesign Ltd. provide insights and analyses that inform policy decisions related to sustainability and energy efficiency.	The firm may face difficulties in communicating complex information to non-expert stakeholders, leading to misunderstandings or resistance to proposed solutions.	4
People's Open University Varaždin	Has a role in educating the public about sustainability issues and fostering community engagement in local initiatives.	Limited resources and outreach capabilities may hinder their ability to engage a broader audience.	3
University North Varaždin	The university conducts research and offers educational programs that can influence local sustainability policies and practices	Bridging the gap between research findings and practical applications in the community can be challenging.	4
Technology Park Varaždin	Supports innovation and entrepreneurship in sustainable technologies, influencing local economic development policies.	Attracting and retaining businesses focused on sustainability can be challenging, particularly in a competitive market. Additionally, aligning the interests of startups with local sustainability goals may require ongoing support and resources.	4

Corporate entities/associations:

Corporate entity 1.	Technology Park Varaždin
Corporate entity 2.	University North Varaždin
Corporate association 1.	County Chamber of Commerce - Croatian Chamber of Economy (HGK)
Corporate association 2.	Croatian Business Council for Sustainable Development

Leaders:

	name, professional background	why important to be involved?
Individual 1.	dr. sc. Mirjana Matešić graduated 1995 ecology at the Faculty of Science and Mathematics of the University of Zagreb. In 2008, she received her master's degree in business economics at the Faculty of Economics, University of Zagreb, and in 2010, she received her doctorate in the sociology of sustainable development at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb.	She actively promotes the implementation of sustainable development in the economy of the Republic of Croatia through organization and participation in projects and as an organizer of workshops, seminars and projects with the aim of raising awareness of the need to apply the concept of sustainable development in Croatia.
Individual 2	To be confirmed	

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/per son	Reference – links	Contact information
Croatian Business Council for Sustainable Development	The Croatian Business Council for Sustainable Development (HR PSOR) is an independent association of the private sector. It was founded by leading Croatian businessmen to encourage sustainable development in the economy and represent the economy in sustainable development. Members manage the association and finance its activities. HR PSOR has 75 members today.	Stakeholder	https://hrpsor.hr/	Address: Jurišićeva 12, 1. kat, 10 000 Zagreb Phone: +385 (0)1 4836 650 E-mail ured@hrpsor.hr
Varaždin City	Socially responsible business operations of the City of Varaždin has two dimensions: towards the employees of the City of Varaždin, and towards the citizens and society themselves. Employees of the City of Varaždin have the opportunity to attend classes to improve the English language. Team building and gatherings during festival „Špancirfest” and Christmas holidays are organized in order to strengthen collegial relations. Because - only satisfied employees can provide quality services to citizens. In the transport fleet of the City of Vražadin, there are electric cars, as well as electric bicycles in order to reduce the carbon footprint. Furthermore, every second Tuesday of the month, joint morning exercise of the employees of the City of Varaždin is held in the Atrium	Associated Policy Authority	https://varazdin.hr/javni-pozivi-arhiva/javni-poziv-jednodnevni-izlet-more-umirovljenike-11234/ Javni poziv za podnošenje prijave za dodjelu organskog peletiranog gnojiva	Mirna Mikulek, City of Varaždin, mirna.mikulek@varazdin.hr , Phone: +385 42 658 010 Renata Frntić, City of Varaždin, renata.frntic@varazdin.hr , Phone: +385 42 402 513

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	<p>of the Town Hall, because - mens sana in corpore sano. As for the citizens themselves and the socially responsible business of the City of Varaždin, energy efficiency is encouraged by co-financing the energy renovation of family houses in the area of the City of Varaždin, co-financing the costs of creating documentation for the application for the Public call for energy renovation of family houses of the Fund for Environmental Protection and Energy efficiency. Entrepreneurial spirit is also encouraged by giving support to entrepreneurs and farmers through 7 measures. The City of Vraždin subsidizes the costs of children's accommodation in kindergartens for beginning entrepreneurs for the first year of business. Once a year, the allocation of organic pelleted fertilizer is organized for lands suitable for the production of agricultural products. On an annual basis, the City of Varaždin co-finances the purchase and service of bicycles for citizens of the City of Varaždin. A one-day trip to the sea during the summer months is financed for the pensioners of the City of Varaždin. In addition to the human component, we should also mention the part where the City of Varaždin takes care of our dear animals - the sterilization and castration of cats is co-financed.</p>		<p>u 2024. godini</p> <p>Javni poziv veterinarskim organizacijama i veterinarskim praksama za sudjelovanje u provođenju mjera poticaja sterilizacija i kastracija mačaka na području Grada Varaždina u 2024. godini</p> <p>Javni poziv građanima za ostvarivanje prava u provođenju mjera poticaja servisiranja ili kupnje bicikala u 2024. godini</p>	<p>Marijana Jambrešić, City of Varaždin, marijana.jambrešić@varazdin.hr,</p> <p>Phone: +385 42 402 523</p> <p>Ana Tkalčec, City of Varaždin, ana.tkalcec@varazdin.hr,</p> <p>Phone: +385 42 402 528</p>
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			https://varazdin.hr/javni-pozivi-arhiva/javni-poziv-podnosenje-prijava-dodjelu-potpore-poljoprivrednicima-g-sufinanciranje-projektne-dokumen-10871/	
			https://varazdin.hr/javni-pozivi-arhiva/javni-poziv-podnosenje-prijava-	
			https://varazdin.hr/javni-pozivi-arhiva/javni-poziv-podnosenje-prijava-	

			<u>dodjelu- potpore- poljoprivr ednicima- e- sufinancir anje- prihrane- pcelinji- 10869/</u>	
			<u>https://var azdin.hr/j avni- pozivi- arhiva/jav ni-poziv- podnosen je-prijava- dodjelu- potpore- poljoprivr ednicima- b- sufinancir anje- izravne- prodaje- p-10866/</u>	
			<u>https://var azdin.hr/j avni- pozivi- arhiva/jav ni-poziv- podnosen je-prijava- dodjelu- potpore- poljoprivr ednicima- sufinancir anje- programa - samoops</u>	

			krb-10865/ https://varazdin.hr/javni-pozivi-arhiva/javni-poziv-podnosenje-prijava-dodjelu-potpore-poduzetni-cima-potpore-poduzetni-cima-i-obrtnicima-kroz-10847/ https://varazdin.hr/javni-pozivi-arhiva/javni-poziv-sbvencioniranje-troskova-smjestaja-djece-djecjim-vrticima-poduzetni-cima-pocetnici-ma-prv-10846/	
Regional Energy Agency North	Regional Energy Agency North mission is to provide technical assistance to public authorities and other local and regional stakeholders, build their capacities and raise awareness	Stakeholder	https://rea-sjever.hr	Address: Trg dr. Žarka Dolinara 1 48000 Koprivnica

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	<p>of renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, and rational energy use. Since 2009 we developed expertise in the following fields:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AND CLIMATE PLANNING • ENERGY MANAGEMENT • SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS • RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES • SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY • EMERGING ENERGY SYSTEMS AND SMART CITY SOLUTIONS • FINANCING MODELS • PUBLIC PROCUREMENT 			<p>Republic of Croatia</p> <p>Phone: +385 48 289 245 +385 48 289 242</p> <p>info@rea-sjever.hr</p>
InfoDesign Ltd.	<p>Infodesign Ltd. specializes in the development of business systems, focusing on information systems for managing business processes and resource planning (ERP). Their solutions support sustainability goals through resource optimization and improved operational efficiency. Additionally, they provide consulting services in IT, which can be beneficial for implementing sustainability-focused technologies. The company actively contributes to CSR by supporting SOS Children's Village with an annual financial donation.</p>	<p>Infodesign Ltd. is a local company based in Varaždin, which enables potential collaboration on projects focused on sustainability and corporate social responsibility.</p>	https://www.infodesign.hr/	<p>Address: Tina Ujevića 44, 42000 Varaždin, Croatia E-mail: info@infodesign.hr</p> <p>Phone: +385 42 206 610</p>
People's Open University Varaždin	<p>POU Varaždin is a public institution for adult and vocational education and culture founded by the City of Varaždin. Principally is engaged in the education of adults through training programs for unemployed people or people at risk of unemployment according to the needs of the labour market and conducts entrepreneurship education for entrepreneurs. POU Varazdin is a publicly-owned education entity in the City of Varazdin. It works with the city, civil society</p>	Stakeholder	https://www.pouvarazdin.hr/about_us.html https://azp.hr/	<p>Lana Velimirovic Vukalovic, Director Mobile: +385 99 4955 151 Email: vukalovic@pouvarazdin.hr</p> <p>Sunčica Stanić-Gluhinić, project coordinator</p>

	<p>organizations (CSOs) or & other institutions (schools, social services, etc.) to manage programs that enhance civic participation, local development, and democratic processes. POU educates CSO reps, volunteers, students, public servants, etc. so that they can organize actions that address specific themes (re: education, social inclusion, civil protection, applying specific EU policies, etc.). POU also organizes actions that inform citizens of the benefits & challenges of EU integration.</p> <p>Our participants are of different age groups and interests, from children attending STEAM programs and teenagers involved in youth entrepreneurship programs and IT programs to seniors attending digital literacy, foreign language courses, and programs to improve the quality of life.</p> <p>However, most of the participants are adult persons attending training and development programs and the Academy for Entrepreneurship (AfE). The AfE program is especially important nowadays when entrepreneurs need professional help in business management, human resource management, business communication, but also opportunities to expand business through internationalization, use of available funds and transformation of businesses due to COVID-19 pandemics. Inclusive access and equality are implied in all activities. As a public institution and being our legal duty, we pay special attention to accessibility and</p>			<p>Email: stanic@pou varazdin.hr</p> <p>Address: POU Varazdin Hallerova aleja 1/II HR-42000 Varaždin T: +385 42 320 634 Email: pou@pouva razdin.hr</p>
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	<p>inclusiveness with a particular focus on disadvantaged people.</p> <p>Academy for Entrepreneurship is a nonformal educational program for micro, small and medium sized entrepreneurs from the Varaždin region, financed by the City of Varaždin and formed by POU Varaždin. It has been launched in Autumn 2018 and has been implemented until today every year. Each year a specific focus group of local SMEs is being identified to participate in an open call to access the Academy program. Elected SMEs have the possibility to participate in free of charge education. The program modules are being developed according to special needs of a focus group for competences and knowledge in order to stay competitive on the market. This is a socially responsible project of the City of Varaždin and POU Varaždin and has already been recognized as an example of good practice on the European level:</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8ZhGlevlc8</p> <p>The core principles of the Academy also demonstrate the social responsibility dimension of this program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing assistance and support to entrepreneurship by spreading entrepreneurial knowledge and skills the inclusion of successful local and regional entrepreneurs in the teaching process, who testify by example to the possibility of achieving business success in a smaller environment like Varaždin encouraging the start-up of private businesses (start-up entrepreneurs) and retaining 			
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	<p>young people in the city of Varaždin</p> <p>encouraging the competitiveness of entrepreneurs by adopting the latest knowledge and skills</p> <p>networking of local and regional entrepreneurs and encouraging their cooperation and business expansion in Croatia and abroad</p> <p>flexible, up-to-date and tailor-made approach in designing and implementing programs adapted to the needs of entrepreneurs</p> <p>regional networking of entrepreneurs</p> <p>social responsibility and sustainability in approach and business</p> <p>win-win-win principle</p> <p>Academy for Entrepreneurship</p> <p>website:</p> <p>https://azp.hr/</p>			
University North Varaždin	<p>The university carries out activities of higher education, scientific and artistic activities and professional activities in a large number of scientific areas and fields. Educating young people according to the principles of the Bologna Declaration and developing the concept of lifelong education in accordance with the real economic needs of northwestern Croatia and the wider area, the University North constantly applies the latest scientific, artistic and professional knowledge in the development of new study programs and the modernization of existing ones, and cooperates with related higher education and economy institutions in country and abroad.</p>	Stakeholder	https://www.unin.hr/	<p>Address:</p> <p>Jurja Križanića 31b 42000 Varaždin</p> <p>E-mail: tajnistvo.vz@unin.hr</p>

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	<p>University North incorporates CSR principles into its academic programs, offering students the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and engage with sustainable business practices and social responsibility. This includes Sustainability in business: Teaching students about ethical business models, green technologies, and corporate strategies that promote social, environmental, and economic sustainability.</p> <p>The fundamental institutional values of the University are key determinants of the environment in which all scientific-artistic, professional and teaching processes take place; and these are responsibility, openness, ethics, excellence and innovation. Responsibility -We are convinced that it is the responsibility of every stakeholder of the University to promote academic freedom and institutional autonomy as a prerequisite for the true progress of the institution and the sustainable development of society. Openness - We promote openness, inclusiveness and diversity as well as all forms of cooperation and connection as the most important prerequisites on the way to a fair society with equal opportunities. Ethics -The activities of the University North and each individual within the system must take place within the ethical principles of the scientific, artistic, professional and social community. Excellence -Excellence and creativity in science, art and higher education - as a measure of the continuous</p>			
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	<p>progress of each individual and the institution as a whole - are a prerequisite for quality achievements and true development of society. Innovation -We support innovation as a fundamental value of development and this is the key thing we offer in cooperation with the economy, the local and regional community and society as a whole.</p> <p>University North continuously works to increase cooperation with economic entities in order to provide the highest possible quality training of competent professional staff. Active cooperation and listening to the real needs of the economy in the region is precisely one of the key goals and conditions for the development and progress of the University itself, as well as the quality of the study programs and increasing the competence and employability of students through participation in many types of projects in cooperation with the economy.</p>			
Technology Park Varaždin	Technology Park Varaždin was established in 2007 as a collaboration between the City of Varaždin, University North, and Faculty of Organisation and Informatics. It was founded through a collaboration between local government, educational institutions, and business stakeholders, aiming to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem focused on long-term sustainable development. The Park actively supports sustainable growth by providing incubation services to start-ups, particularly those with a focus on green technology,	Stakeholder	www.techpark.hr	Address: Zagrebačka 89, 42000 Varaždin, Croatia E-mail: info@tp- vz.hr Phone: +385 42 492800 Fax: +385 42 492801

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	<p>digital transformation, and innovative solutions that address environmental challenges. The Park's sustainability efforts extend to promoting corporate social responsibility in the regional business environment. It encourages its member companies and start-ups to adopt environmentally friendly practices, align their goals with local climate and sustainability objectives, and consider social impact as an essential element of their business models. Technology Park Varaždin also regularly organizes workshops and training on sustainability topics, including corporate sustainability practices, eco-innovation, and energy efficiency, to build CSR-related competencies within the local entrepreneurial community. Additionally, Technology Park Varaždin collaborates with the local community by offering its facilities, such as a multimedia hall, free of charge to local non-profits and associations engaged in charitable activities. Organizations such as "Njezina druga šansa" and the Diabetes Association regularly utilize this space for public engagement, thus fostering a supportive, inclusive environment that benefits the broader Varaždin community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Through its Enterprise Europe Network membership, the Park helps connect local companies with international partners, facilitating knowledge exchange and partnerships that align with CSR and sustainability goals on a European scale. These initiatives collectively strengthen local and regional sustainability frameworks by			
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	bridging public and private sector efforts.			
NORTH-DAN Development Agency Ltd.	Development agency North – DAN is municipality owned company. DAN was established in 2005 and its main mission is to provide institutional support to all stakeholders regarding local development (application of projects to domestic and EU funds, development of project ideas, strategic planning, business networking and attracting investment in the economy and communal infrastructure).	Project partner	https://dan.hr/	<p>Address: Trg bana Josipa Jelačića 17 42 000 Varaždin</p> <p>Phone: +385 (42) 213 700</p> <p>Email: info@dan.hr</p>