

Peer Review Report

North-West Regional Development Agency

EMOBICITY Project

"Increase of energy efficiency by Electric Mobility in the CITY"

July 2022





General project data

Project: **EMOBICITY** - "Increase of energy efficiency by Electric Mobility in the CITY"

Partner organisation: **North-West Regional Development Agency**

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant):

Country: **Romania**

NUTS2 region: **North-West**

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Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
<input type="checkbox"/>	European Territorial Cooperation programme
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed:

Regional Strategy for Sustainable Urban Mobility and Smart Cities of the North-West Region 2021-2027 (RS – SUMSC 2021-2027)

Brief description of the Peer Review

The whole process of preparing and approving the Action Plan (AP) for the NWRDA took about 12 months. In this process there have been two extensive meetings with the Local Stakeholder Group (LSG). From the first meeting of the LSG when the first draft of the AP has been discussed to the final validation there have been more than 6 versions of the document. The Peer Review Workshop was held online on the 28th of July and had 10 participants attending, with members from each project partner. As a result of the Peer Review Workshop improvement have been done to the AP in terms of monitoring and action implementation.





Policy Context

In Romania, at national, regional and local levels there are multiple policy instruments addressing electromobility. These are not always correlated and the communication between the local, regional and national level is not really efficient.

At EU/ national level following policies target electromobility:

- Connecting Europe Facility – funds for installing charging stations along the TEN-T network
- The National Resilience and Recovery Programme (funds electric charging stations in most interested localities -13k charging points as target, also as part of housing stock renewal projects – residential charging stations, also funds acquisition of electric busses, trams, trolley buses and trains)
- Environment Fund Administration – funds the installation of electric vehicle charging stations (public or private) and the acquisition of electric / hybrid vehicles (subsidy scheme)

At regional level following policies target electromobility

- Regional Operational Program 2014-2020 – funds acquisition of electric charging stations, electric busses, trams and trolley buses.
- **Regional Strategy for Sustainable Urban Mobility and Smart Cities of the North-West Region 2021-2027 (RS – SUMSC 2021-2027)** – supports the development of electromobility
- Regional Operational Program 2021-2027 – will fund acquisition of charging stations for public transport and electric busses, trams, trolley buses and trains.

At local level following policies target electromobility:

- Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans of cities and metropolitan areas include projects for the electrification of public transport fleet, installation of EV charging stations and sometimes include local subsidy schemes or regulations for electric vehicles.

Electromobility in the North-West Region of Romania – needs and challenges

At the end of 2021, 1280 electric vehicles and 111 buses were registered in the North-West Development region. More than half of the electric vehicles and 72% of buses are located in the county of Cluj. This trend can also be seen when analysis the number of charging stations. Even if electromobility projects (charging stations and acquisition of e-buses) had financial support from the ROP 2014-2020 a rather low number of cities implemented such projects. Most cities focused just on buying electric busses but did not use the ROP funds for electric vehicle charging stations¹. They mostly either relied on the private sector to install charging points or accessed other funds to install a few stations (generally less than 5).

¹ Projects that involved the acquisition of electric busses included slow charging station at the depot and usually 1 charging station at a public transport terminal.



To kickstart the development of the Action Plan the first step was to identify the most important needs and challenges in the field of electromobility. This has been done as part of the Stake Holder meeting held in December 2022 where following needs and challenges have been highlighted:

1. Lack of expertise at local level to develop and implement electromobility projects,
2. High cost for the acquisition of electric vehicles (even with subsidies),
3. A still low number of EV charging points,
4. The power grid is not prepared for a large number of fast charging stations,
5. A low diversification of subsidies for the acquisition of electric vehicles (subsidies just for cars but none for e-bikes, e-scooters, e-mopeds etc.).

These challenges have to be approached within the main policy instruments supporting the green and digital transition at national, regional and local level.

Policy instrument addressed

The policy instrument selected by PP6 in the application form is The Regional Operational Programme (ROP) 2014-2020- Priority Axis 4. At the time the project started calls for funding were still active. However, due to a strong demand for mobility projects, funds have been rapidly consumed while most projects are now in process of being implemented. **Changes to the policy instrument are impossible to be made at the moment.** It is only possible to improve the impact of already funded projects and help local authorities achieve better impact indicators. For the case of the ROP 2021-2027, developed by the NWRDA it is not yet 100% sure that relevant calls will be launched by June 2023. Under these conditions **PP6 The North-West Regional Development Agency decided to change the addressed policy instrument and target the Regional Strategy for Sustainable Urban Mobility and Smart Cities of the North-West Region 2021-2027 (RS – SUMSC 2021-2027).** The policy instrument lies at the basis of the future ROP 2021-2027 when it comes to the fields of smart city and sustainable urban mobility. Funding needs and development gaps in these fields identified in the RS – SUMSC 2021-2027 shaped the priorities and targets of the ROP 2021-2027. On the other hand, the ROP 2021-2027 as well as the National Resilience and Recovery Plan, are the main sources of funding for the projects integrated into the RS – SUMSC 2021-2027.

Within the RS – SUMSC 2021-2027 electromobility is included in the objective “OS6 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM CONTINUOUSLY OPTIMIZED THAT SUPPORTS TRAVEL WITH REDUCED GHG EMISSIONS” and has a dedicated steering action: DA 6.4 Supporting means of transport with alternative fuels (including electric). Proposed local projects refer to:

- Development of the electric parking network in points of interest
- Implementation of measures to support the electrification of taxi fleets (e.g. new permits for electric vehicles only)
- Development of electric vehicle charging facilities in collective housing areas

Matching local needs with good practices

For the NWRDA the aim of the EMOBICITY project is to help stakeholders to overcome main challenges in further promoting electromobility and to improve the selected policy instrument. This is to be achieved by knowledge and experience exchange actions specific for most Interreg Europe projects. As good practices lie at the base of this project, with the support of our stakeholders, we selected the most relevant good





practices, linked them to local challenges and analysed how they can be transferred. Details are presented in the table below.

Table 1 Link between good practices, local challenges and transferability potential

Good practice	Local challenge addressed	Potential to adapt for the regional level
E-Lotsen in Hessen	1. Lack of expertise at local level to develop and implement electromobility projects	This project can be transferred completely, with maybe a slight focus on electric public transport.
Annual Electric Mobility Project Manager Meeting	1. Lack of expertise at local level to develop and implement electromobility projects	This measure can be transferred with slight adjustments: more frequent meetings and stronger focus on technical assistance.

The focus of the Action Plan will rely mostly on the good practice: E-Lotsen in Hessen - <https://www.interregeurope.eu/good-practices/e-lotsen-in-hessen>. Additionally, parts of the Annual Electric Mobility Project Manager Meeting - <https://www.interregeurope.eu/good-practices/annual-electric-mobility-project-manager-meeting> good practice will be integrated into the proposed action.

The Action Plan

ACTION 1: Network of Smart Mobility Managers

1. **The background** (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

As part of the EMOBICITY project the NWRDA could access important knowledge on electromobility and found inspiration to further boost the adoption of electric vehicles at multiple levels (national, regional and local). See “Table 1 Link between good practices, local challenges and transferability potential” that presents a synthesis in terms of knowledge transfer. Because not all actions that inspired can generate trackable improvements of the policy instrument (RS – SUMSC 2021-2027) we decided to focus on a single good practice “E-Lotsen in Hessen”.

This good practice helped us to better understand how important communication is in the case of policies emerging fields where not all stakeholders are familiar with the latest evolution in technology and how to make use of it. Bringing relevant stakeholders at the same table would help the NWRDA to better overcome one of the main challenges, the lack of expertise at developing electromobility projects at local level. The “E-expert”, a local expert with knowledge on the future of mobility and that is in direct contact with the managing authority, as in the example from Hessen, is something that we consider could help us to improve the communication between the NWRDA and the local level – cities (beneficiaries) while also facilitating access to important knowledge.

There are multiple challenges in the transition to electromobility that don’t have yet a solution in our regions. For example, from EMOBICITY study visits we found how important the placement and usage of charging stations is in relation to the power grid. This may not yet be an issue for smaller cities in our region, but it will be something very important in the new 2-3 years. Addressing such challenges will be part of the training provided for the future “E-experts” (or “smart mobility managers” – for the case of NWRDA).

A second important good practice is the “Annual Electric Mobility Project Manager Meeting” from where we could learn how important exchange of knowledge and experience is between experts from various cities / counties that





activate in the same field. We consider such meetings extremely helpful as cities that struggle with certain projects can learn from others that already manage to overcome them. An annual or semestrial meeting of project managers would be that best environment to solve such issues.

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

There is a strong need for capacity building for local and regional authorities to support the uptake of electromobility and smart city projects. A first step in this direction was already done by the NWRDA as part of the Interreg project TRAM where a Regional Strategy for Smart Cities and Sustainable Urban Mobility for the 2021-2027 period has been created. Within this process a strategic framework at regional level was created and cities had access to expertise to draft a preliminary pipeline of smart city and sustainable urban mobility projects. Even with this strategic framework and the draft pipeline of projects there is further need for local and regional authorities to strengthen their internal human resources to be better prepared to develop and implement electromobility / smart mobility projects. This need for expertise is slightly different at regional compared to the local level.

At the regional level, the team involved in the preparation of the ROP 2021-2027 (the main funding source for the RS – SUMSC 2021-2027) needs to better understand the potential of electromobility and smart mobility in order to ensure a lean integration of these kind of projects into the guidelines. Also, a better understanding of electromobility and smart mobility help the NWRDA to transfer knowledge and help local authorities prepare projects. The NWRDA is used to visit cities at least 2-3 times per year to discuss the state of project development and implementation.

At local level the need for expertise is related more to the technical specificities of electromobility and smart city projects: how to prepare tenders, access to service providers, project operation (ex. what kind of charging station to buy, what is the optimum placement of a station related to the need and the power grid, how to operate a charging station etc.).

After the RS – SUMSC 2021-2027 has been approved it is still not very clear which projects have been implemented or are being prepared for accessing various funding sources. There is still a gap of information at the level of the NWRDA regarding the main challenges cities encounter in preparing smart mobility projects and how the local project portfolios evolved since the approval of the strategy. This is even more important as the NWRDA is now designing the ROP 2021-2027 which will be the main funding source for the strategy. In this regard, there is a need to optimize the governance structure of the RS – SUMSC 2021-2027 in order to create an intermediary body between the NWRDA and the cities, especially in the field of smart mobility.

Starting from the above-mentioned needs, this action builds on the good practices E-Lotsen and Annual Electric Mobility Project Manager Meeting from Hessen. **The aim is to improve the governance of the RS – SUMSC 2021-2027 by strengthening the capacity of regional and local authorities and forming a regional network of “smart mobility managers”.** This will be done by starting a training and networking programme called “Smart mobility Manager Academy”.

The result of the programme would be a network of approx. 20 “smart mobility managers” at regional and local level. The smart mobility manager will be the contact person for the NWRDA (and for other managing authorities) for all smart mobility projects that are part of the RS – SUMSC 2021-2027, especially those to be financed under the ROP 2021-2027. This would mean a **direct change of the governance structure** of the policy instrument.

The local “smart mobility manager” will have following roles:

- further prepare the pipeline of smart mobility (including electromobility) projects from the RS – SUMSC 2021-2027
- submit or coordinate the submission of smart mobility projects (including electromobility)
- communicate funding needs and give feedback on the ROP 2021-2027 design guidelines (funding source for the RS – SUMSC 2021-2027)





- help the NWRDA with monitoring of project implementation

The NWRDA will also have a pool of smart mobility managers that will be in direct contact with each local manager. These managers will have following roles:

- ensure that guidelines of the ROP 2021-2027 are adapted to the funding needs of the projects from the RS – SUMSC 2021-2027
- support local authorities in further developing smart mobility (including electromobility) projects
- monitor the implementation RS – SUMSC 2021-2027

In this way, the communication on in the field of smart mobility will be streamlined that will ensure a better implementation of this kind of projects under the RS – SUMSC 2021-2027.

To strengthen the network, the action also includes annual meetings for the smart mobility managers building on the Annual Electric Mobility Project Manager Meeting good practice from the EMOBICITY project. The annual meeting of the network has two aims:

- support monitoring of the RS – SUMSC 2021-2027 (project implementation and preparation)
- identify and debate local challenges
- ensure that the ROP guidelines are adapted to the financing needs of local authorities and the RS – SUMSC 2021-2027.

The first annual meeting is expected to take place in the first half of 2023. For this meeting, a short monitoring report should be prepared with the help of local authorities. From the RS – SUMSC 2021-2027 each city has a city file with smart city and mobility projects. The report should include main challenges in the preparation / implementation of projects as well as the status of the projects from the city file. The structure of the report will be prepared by the NWRDA and will be completed in a collaborative manner by each city. The exact form of co-design of the report is to be established (questionnaire, collective document, integration of dedicated reports etc.).

3. Envisaged impact on the Policy Instrument

The “Smart Mobility Academy” will improve the governance and monitoring of the selected policy instrument (RS – SUMSC 2021-2027) by adding an intermediary network of local and regional experts that should ensure:

1. A better communication between the managing the authority (NWRDA) and the local level (beneficiaries) – a network of regional experts in smart mobility.
2. Stronger knowledge in preparing and implementing smart mobility projects (no more reluctance and scepticism towards electromobility or smart mobility projects).
3. Easier monitoring of project progress (from development till implementation) – annual “smart mobility manager meetings”.

4. Timeframe

- May – June 2022 preparation of the TOR for the training services (possible validation of ROP 2021-2027 frameworks)
- June 2022 establishment of preliminary network of smart mobility managers (staff to be trained)
- June 2022 – August 2022 launch of the tender and selection of the service provider
- August 2022 – September 2022 preparation of the training material
- November 2022 – January 2023 launch of trainings
- January 2023 – Validation of the “smart mobility managers network”
- February 2023 – April 2023 first meeting of the “smart mobility managers” network
- May 2023 launch of the first monitoring report for the RS – SUMSC 2021-2027





The Peer Review Workshop

The Peer Review Workshop was organized by the NWRDA on the 28th of July 2022 from 13:30 to 14:30 CET. Due to still active traveling restrictions the workshop was held online, using the Zoom platform. 9 persons attended the meeting (see below)

Name	Project Partner
Ana Cardoso	Portuguese Energy Agency (ADENE)
Astrid Szogs	Regional Management Northern Hesse GmbH (RMNH)
Bruno Zidov	Energy Institute Hrvoje Požar (EIHP)
Cristian Dobler-Eggers	Regional Management Northern Hesse GmbH (RMNH)
Cristina David	North-West Regional Development Agency (NWRDA)
Diogo Beirao	Portuguese Energy Agency (ADENE)
Miguel Quinto	Azorean Government - Regional Directorate for Energy (AZORES)
Nikos Ntaras	Centre for Renewable Energy Sources and Saving (CRES)
Reinhold Stadler	North-West Regional Development Agency (NWRDA)

The presentation was help by urb. Reinhold Stadler (Technical Expert of Civitta Strategy & Consulting – the service provider hired by the NWRDA) who also moderated the discussions afterwards. The workshop started with a brief presentation of the outline / national context. R. Stadler briefly explained what policies are active in Romania in the field of electromobility and what their impact is by now (number of registered electric vehicles, number of charging stations etc.). Afterwards there was a longer presentation of the policy instrument and the challenges faced in selecting the right option.

The second part of the presentation focused on the action plan starting from the inspiration (good practices selected and they way they have been transferred) and a short listing of actions that have been considered to be part of the plan. Afterwards, R. Stadler presented the final action, among the motivation behind. In the end, Mr. Stadler presented the progress of the action mentioning that a first part of the training has already been completed.

Following the presentation, the project partners started a short debate aiming to improve the action plan. N. Taras from CRES started the discussion with a question about monitoring and guidance related to what to focus on while implementing the action. An additional suggestion was to have a quick discussion with the stakeholder from RMNH that implemented the GP used as inspiration from the AP. During the meeting a follow up interview was agreed on to gather additional experience from the RMNH. This short debate on monitoring was followed by a brief discussion on the possibility of providing a kind of certificate for the participant of the training. Unfortunately, as it is not directly linked to a university degree no academic certificate can be offered. Under Romanian law, trainings are regulated by the Ministry of Work (not Ministry of Education) and various diplomas can be offered for trainings as long as a certified trainers if conducting them.

Conclusions of the Peer Review Workshop and follow up interview





- Focus on the monitoring and creating the framework for a constant improvement of the Policy Instrument. There is no need to monitor the impact as in number of applications / number of EV charging stations etc. But a clear documentation of the project manager meetings and outcomes is important. Any change generated by the new governance structure should be reported. These changes can be guidelines that are integrated into the programme or directly to the call or an improved call that have been launched.
- The focus on the action should be on the **creation of the network** and not on the training of public servants and stakeholders.
- The training for Smart Mobility Managers should be held at a yearly or biannual rate. In this way, more cities could send representatives and also ensure training for new employees (in case persons trained leave the city hall). Having learning materials available together with a regional communication platform could be a good option to continue the action and ensure long term impact.
- It helps if the trainer is also guiding the meeting of the project managers.
- Content and structure of the training is not necessarily defined in the ToR, it can be easier and open for innovation if just learning objectives are stated. The service provider can afterwards propose the best solution to fulfil the learning objectives.

Annexes

Print screens from the event

National context

National programme for acquisition of electric vehicles (subsidy)
ERDF / CF for building charging stations in cities and along main roads

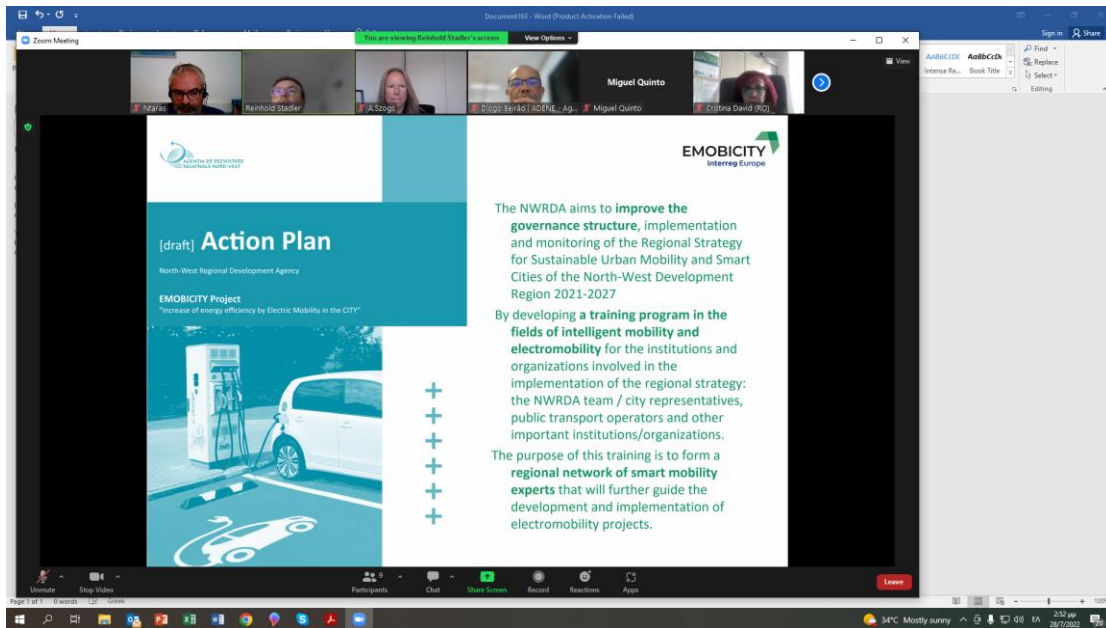
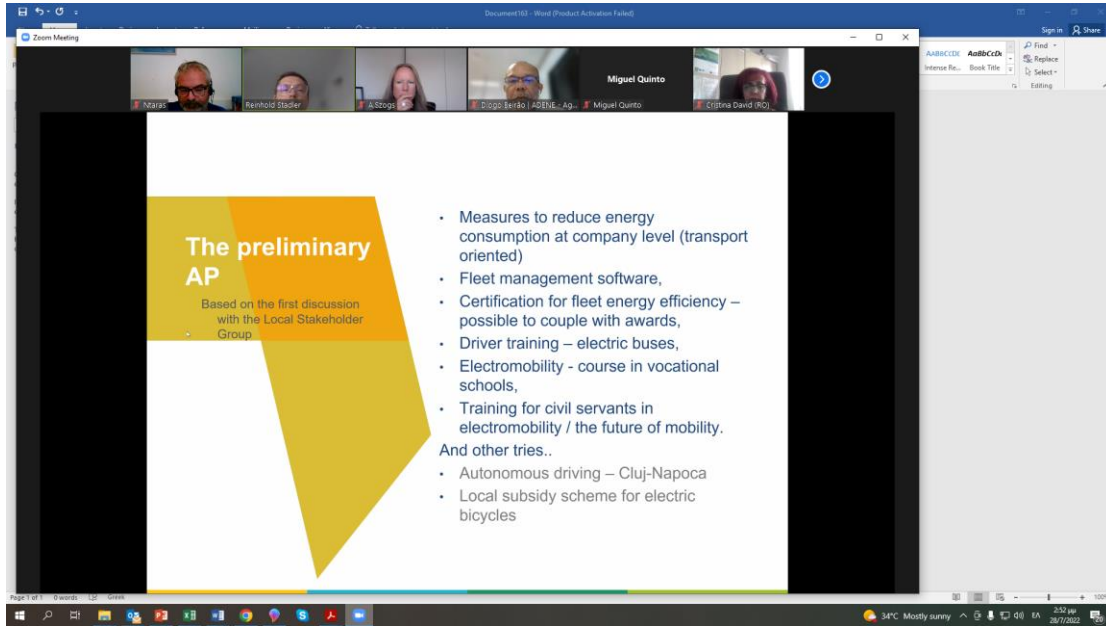
A rapid increase of electric vehicles (114% between 2020 and 31.12.2021).

In 2022 there are more than 12.4k electric vehicles registered and more than 250 electric busses

Approx. 175 EV charging stations in the NWDR

The number of electric vehicles is expected to continue to grow even faster based on the following:

- An increase in purchasing power at national level
- The continuing of the national subsidy scheme for electric vehicles
- The launch of extremely cheap electric vehicles (Dacia Spring – 20.300 € or 10.300 € with maximum subsidy)
- The increase in funding targeting the development of charging infrastructure - 3 different funding sources: Regional Operational Programme 2021-2027 / National Resilience and Recovery Fund / Administration of the Environment Fund (in the NRRF there is a target of 13208 charging points by 2027).





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EMOBILITY
interreg Europe

From E-Lotsen in Hessen E-Expert to NWRDA Smart Mobility Project Manager

Continuing the process started with the Regional Strategy for Urban Mobility and Smart Cities of the North-West Development Region 2021-2027

Cities and other stakeholders have a schematic portfolio of smart mobility and sustainable urban mobility projects, but need further guidance

A training program called "Smart mobility Manager Academy" open to:

- The NWRDA team involved in the preparation of the 2021-2027 ROPb) Representatives of county councils, municipalities and cities and metropolitan areas Representatives of local / metropolitan public transport companies
- The four modules of the Academy**
 - Introduction to smart mobility and electromobility (new concepts, trends, emerging technologies and the future of mobility)
 - Smart mobility – from opportunity to problem solving
 - [Focus area] Electromobility – main benefits and challenges
 - [Area of interest] Traffic and public transport management systems
- 1 meeting of the "smart mobility project manager" network**

The action plan can be accessed by using this link:
https://www.dropbox.com/s/1sbysk5hskm5iu5/Action%20Plan_final_EMOBI_NWRDA.docx?dl=0

Zoom Meeting interface showing a 3x3 grid of participants. The participants are: Reinhold Steiner, nbaras, Cristina David (RO), Diogo Sardo (PT), A. Szegő, Diogo Sardo (ADEN: Agência para a Energia), Miguel Quinto, Ana Carolina, and Cristóbal Eggeri. The interface includes a toolbar at the bottom with options like Mute, Stop Video, Participants, Chat, Share Screen, Record, Reactions, and Apps. A sidebar on the right shows PDF tools like Export PDF, Edit PDF, Create PDF, Comment, Combine Files, Organize Pages, Compress PDF, Redact, Prepare Form, Request E-signatures, Fill & Sign, Send for Comments, and More Tools.

