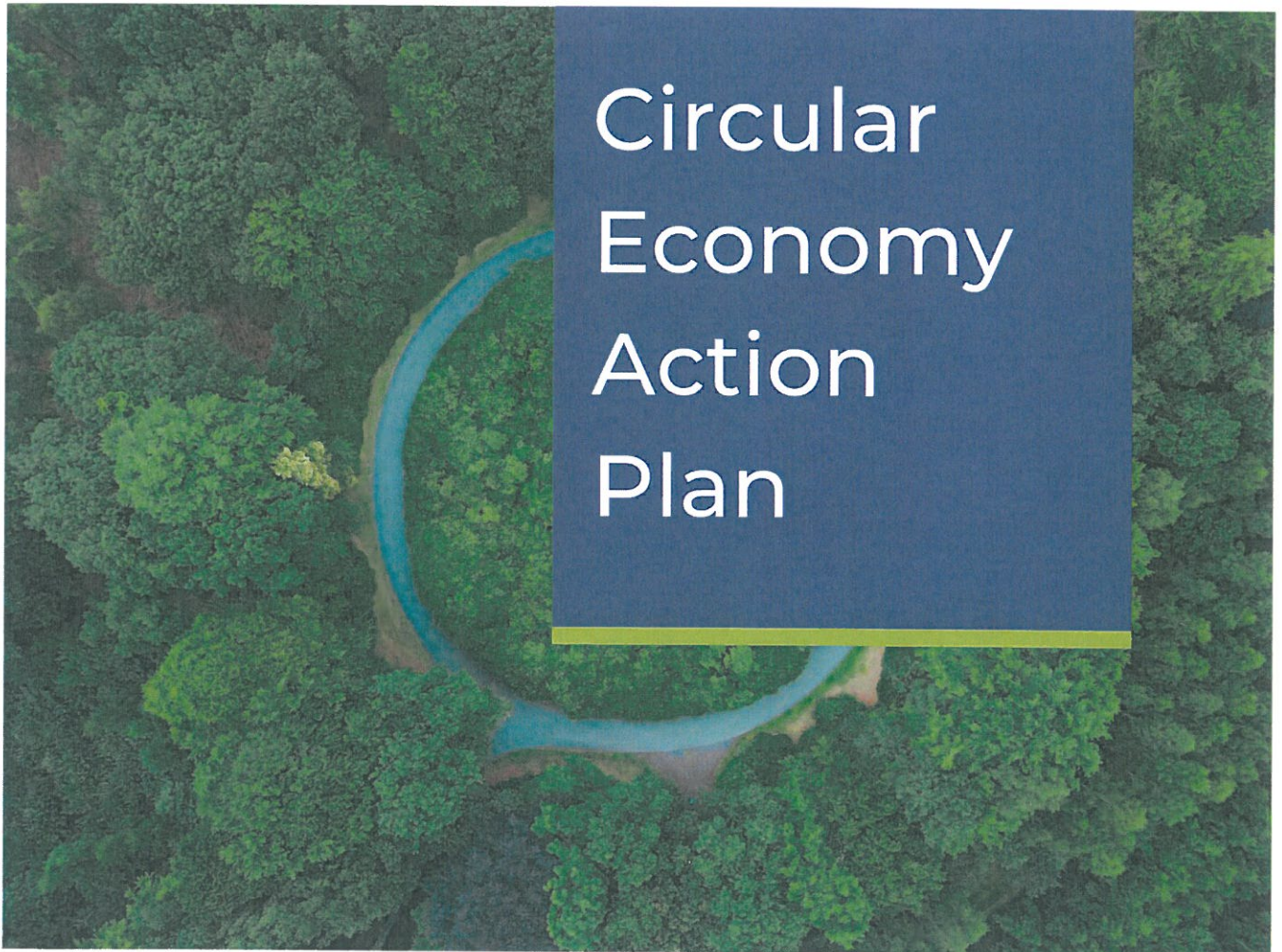




European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



AGENȚIA pentru
DEZVOLTARE
REGIONALĂ
CENTRU



Action plan made by the Regional Development Agency Centru (PP5)
within the **COLOR CIRCLE** - " *Connecting and empowering Local authorities
with Research capacities to unlock the full potential of CIRCular project economy*"
project

Approved on the 19/10/2022

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Preface

Opening the horizon to the next stage of development and implementation of circular economy related initiatives in small urban communities from Centru Region involves awareness of the profile of urban settlements on one hand, of their needs and challenges and of the existing policy and financing context on the other hand.

Circular economy challenges come with questions that cannot be answered with one size fits all solutions. This implies a capacity from the side of local authorities to analyze the situation at stake, to characterize the issue and to develop solutions that build on local assets. More than often sustainable solutions will come with extensive cooperation with local communities, and will be preceded by processes of co-creation.

Through the COLOR CIRCLE project, the Regional Development Agency Centru (RDA Centru) aimed to support the small urban communities from Centru Region, Romania to better understand the circular economy concept and to create a platform for developing cooperation among several stakeholders (public local authorities, academia, NGOs, companies etc) in order to develop new projects that answer the regional challenges.

Cooperation between local actors capitalize the local potential and involves scanning and mapping (documentation, research, GIS, etc.) the existing needs in relation to opportunities (landscape, attractions, population, historical and built heritage, etc.) and support the establishment of an environment innovative solutions based on inter-community cooperation.

In the implementation of new policies, the administrative environment plays the role of a catalyst, the academic one provides research and substantiation support while the business environment identifies the potential for growth and financial support. The civil society engaged through the contribution of NGOs has the role of participant in the monitoring of the implementation process.

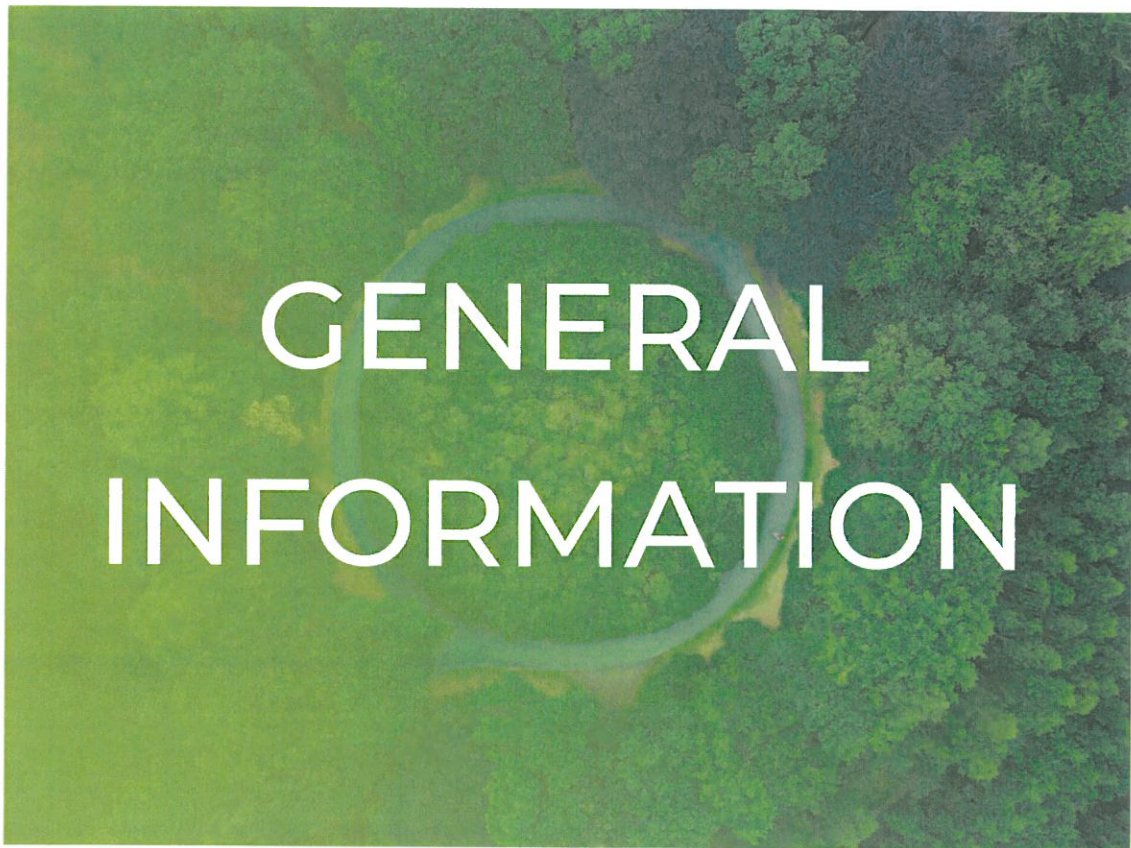
Based on the regional assessment, the needs and opportunities identified in Centru Region and the interregional learning events & the GPs exchange facilitated by the COLOR CIRCLE project, this action plan aims to improve the policy instruments tackled by RDA Centru (PP5) through one action – the creation of 5 working groups.

Taking into account that the previous programming period was finished before the first phase of the project have finished, besides the policy instrument included in the application form (ROP 2014-2020, PA 13) this action plan will also have effects on ERDF 2021-2027, currently under elaboration – namely the Regional Operational Programme 2021-2027 for Centru Region, Priority 3. A region with greener communities. This way, based on the regional assessment, the interregional know-how exchange and GPs transfer the influence envisaged at these 2 policy instruments is at **governance level**:

-
- For ROP 2014-2020, PA13, the policy instrument mentioned in the application form – the improvement is at a governance level - based on the lessons learned and the GPs promoted within COLOR CIRCLE project circular economy other environmental issues were integrated in the implementation of the projects funded in Centru region under this policy instrument (ROP 2014-2020, PA13); the beneficiaries of ROP PA13 were directly involved in COLOR CIRCLE as stakeholders, being active in the meetings organised at regional level (one meeting/semester), were actively involved in the regional assessment on circular economy conducted at regional level and attended the IRLEs organises online/of-line within the project and used the lessons learnt during the project in the implementation of their projects. Also, Cugir Municipality (a beneficiary of ROP PA13) attended the bilateral meeting with the COLOR CIRCLE Dutch partner being interested to develop at local level a circular living lab.

For ROP 2021-2027 for Centru Region, PA3, the improvement is also at management level, as 5 working groups will be created – these working groups will work together to develop innovative projects which will integrate CE related topics and will be submitted under the circular urban living lab – an open innovation platform included as a strategic project under ROP 2021-2027 for Centru Region (total allocation 1.5 mil Euro) but also, their reports will be used to finetune the guidelines for ROP Centru PA3 (the first calls related to PI 3 will be launched by November 2022).

Part I



Project

This **action plan** aims to identify **solutions for better implementation of circular economy actions in small urban areas from Centru Region** by improving the policy instrument /policy instruments that contribute to the support and development of the circular economy (CE) in the Centru Region, namely ROP 2014-2020, PA13 and ROP Centru 2021-2027, PA3

For drafting the action plan, PP5 first established a regional stakeholder group (RSG) and set several semestrial meetings with them. Besides the regional events, the members of the regional stakeholder group, during the project lifetime, the RSG members attended all interregional learning events organised online/on-site. Also PP5 with the support of an external services provider (IRCEM) drafted an analysis of the current situation of CE in Centru Region and mapped all existing initiatives related to circular economy, made an inventory of all relevant projects, including the interregional good practices presented within the COLOR CIRCLE project, identified the stakeholders needed to be involved in improving policy instruments addressing CE and, based on the regional needs identified, established a set of necessary measures for better implementation of CE in Centru Region.

Based on the good practices presented within COLOR CIRCLE project and the needs identified at regional level, for improving the governance of the policy instruments addressed within the project, the need of creating 5 working groups was identified. These working groups will set the framework for the circular urban living lab which will be designed in Centru Region. This circular living lab, was designed following the GP shared by PP4 within the COLOR CIRCLE project and was included as a strategic project in ROP Centru 21/27.

Project

COLOR CIRCLE - COnnecting and empowering LOcal authorities with Research capacities to unlock the full potential of CIRCular economy

Nationality partner organisation



Regional Development Agency Centru, ROMANIA

Country & NUTS2 region



Romania, 12 Decebal St, 510093, Alba Iulia

Contact details



Ovidia Caba, ovidia.caba@adrcentru.ro

Director of the Regional Policies and Programming Unit



Gabriela Tarau, gabriela.tarau@adrcentru.ro

Head of Project Development & Interregional Cooperation Office, Regional Policies and Programming Unit

Part II



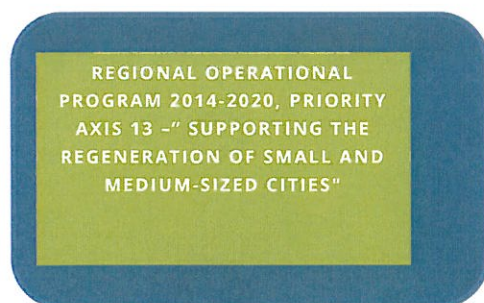
The action plan

The action plan aims to impact

- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- European Territorial Cooperation programme
- Other regional development policy instrument

The paradigm of circular economy is strongly interconnected with the way regional economies work. The diversity of the stakeholders and the density of resources that are concatenated in a city, along with their interaction with the rest of the country, can create fertile ground for the implementation of the circular economy system. In the particular case of regions and localities, circular economy generally aims to reduce carbon emissions and enhance resource efficiency along supply chains, addressing global issues of climate change and resource depletion while contributing to local viability and the attractiveness of cities. Thus, the transition to circular economy is an opportunity for small and large municipalities to generate competitive advantages and create jobs through the sustainable use of local resources.

The European Union addresses all these opportunities and promotes circular economy, by creating policies and allocating funds for implementation, but also as a part of the long-term economic recovery strategy of the EU budget 2021-2025 (e.g., the Europe Green Deal and the New Circular Economy Action Plan). In this sense, recognizing the importance and at the same time the need to support the path of sustainable development through circular economy in Romania, the regional authorities have created, as support, throughout the budget years, various political and financial instruments that included, among others, support measures for the transition to the circular economy. In the case of the Central Region of Romania, we present in a summative manner the following instruments covered by this Action Plan:



This policy instrument was included in the application form, being the starting point around which the regional analysis of the circular economy in the Centru Region was built, in particular Priority Axis 13 – “Supporting the regeneration of small and medium-sized cities”. The regional analysis was an essential preliminary step in building the current action plan,

providing an overview of the state of implementation of circular economy in the Centru Region. The vision of the Regional Operational Program 2014-2020 (POR) was built taking into account specific development needs, prioritized based on the most relevant, in the context of the current stage of socio-economic development of the regions of Romania. Among these needs, the problem of degraded, vacant or unused urban areas in cities was identified.

The program was built on the idea that with the transition to the market economy system, there were major changes in the structure and functionality of cities in Romania. Due to reduced industrial activities, reducing the investment capacity of local authorities, a number of areas inside cities have reached a state of degradation, leaving their mark on the quality of the environment and, implicitly, on the quality of life in cities. Investments for modernization, reuse and refurbishment of various inner-city areas play an important role in sustainable urban development strategies, helping to reduce uncontrolled urban sprawl and sustainable urban growth. Specifically, the Priority Axis 13 – “Supporting the regeneration of small and medium-sized cities”- created the premises for improving the quality of life of the population in small and medium-sized cities and promoting social inclusion of disadvantaged people by supporting investments in basic urban utilities, social, community, cultural centres, etc. In general, the interventions aimed at various urban regeneration activities, taking into account the specific needs identified locally in the local development strategies, such as investments in buildings for public use for day-to-day social, educational, cultural and recreational services, social housing or investments into spaces intended for public use, such as: parks, green spaces, public spaces, etc., as well as facilities for sports and recreational activities of small sizes. The main results looked into were:

- increasing the population's satisfaction with the public services provided by small and medium-sized cities;
- increasing the number of people benefiting from public services provided by small and medium-sized cities;
- increasing the attractiveness of small and medium-sized cities.

Therefore, this investment channel aimed, through an integrated approach, at solving infrastructural, social, etc. problems at the level of small and medium-sized cities, in order to contribute to increasing the quality of life of the population and to promote the social inclusion of the disadvantaged population.

During the implementation of the COLOR CIRCLE project, after several interregional meetings with the COLOR CIRCLE PPs and based on the needs assessment conducted in Centru Region (in the communities who received funding under ROP 2014-2020 PA13), PP5 organised a **Circular Economy Hackathon**, a hack-and-learn race where young academicians proposed several solutions to the problems and challenges identified in the small communities beneficiaries of finance under ROP 2021-2020, PI 13.1. The focus of this HACATHLON was to unleash innovation in these communities. This event was organised on June 11-12 and participants worked collectively with the scope of developing ideas, involving students, recent graduates, PhD students and Postdoc in a process of designing and redesigning these communities, according to CE principle. The idea of this hackathon emerged from PP1 (1000 PhD) and PP4 (living lab). Based on the learning process and the innovation capacities the aim of this event was to deep-dive into the problems identified in these communities and reveal the possible solutions.

REGIONAL
OPERATIONAL
PROGRAM 2021-2027,
PRIORITY AXIS 3 – “A
REGION WITH
ENVIRONMENTALLY
FRIENDLY
COMMUNITIES”

Given the fact the 2014-2020 programming period has been completed, before the first period of the project was finalized and the elaboration of the new ERDF 21/27 programming period started, besides the policy instrument mentioned in the application form (PA 13.1) PP5 will also tackle the Regional Operational Programme 2021-2027 for Centru Region (ROP Centru 2021-2027), Priority 3. A region with environmentally friendly communities. PP5 is the managing authority for ROP Centru 2021-2027, being in charge of its elaboration, management and implementation.

ROP Centru 2021-2027 is an ERDF-funded Program built according to the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 and contains investments related to all 5 policy objectives. The programme's strategic vision is to ensure that Centru Region becomes a cleaner and more attractive region for its inhabitants and tourists, with a competitive economy based on knowledge and innovation in which the environmental care and the rational and sustainable use of resources will be the goal of every citizen. The focus under PA3, the policy instrument tackled by PP5 within COLOR CIRCLE project is support investments that ensure the development of more environmentally friendly communities in Centru Region by promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving the protection of nature and biodiversity, green infrastructure, especially in urban areas, and reducing pollution.

Calendar of the calls of proposals proposed under ROP Centru 2021-2027					
Estimated date for the programme's approval by EC September 2022					
Title of the call	Total allocation (EUR) ERDF+ BS	Total allocation (EUR) ERDF	Estimated date for launching the call under consultation	Estimated date for launching the call for the proposals	Estimated deadline for the call for the proposals
ROP Centru 2021-2027 Strategic project – open innovation platform dedicated to smart cities <i>This project will be approved along with the programme</i>	1,764,705.88	1,500,000	Dec 2022	March 2023	June 2023
ROP Centru 2021-2027, PA3 Energy efficiency – public buildings	72,490,588.24	61,617,000	Aug 2022	Nov. 2022	Apr 2023
ROP Centru 2021-2027, PA3 Energy efficiency – public buildings – complex projects – financial instrument	17,647,058.82	15,000,000	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc
ROP Centru 2021-2027, PA3 Energy efficiency – residential buildings	29,411,764.71	25,000,000	Aug. 2022	Nov-22	May-23
Green & blue infrastructure -cities	88,475,521.18	75,204,193	Aug. 2022	Nov-22	May-23
Green & blue infrastructure – small communities	25,757,714.12	21,894,057	Sept 2022	Jan-23	Aug-23

Through this project, and based on the GPs and know-how exchange, improved governance for the policy instruments above-mentioned (ROP 2014-2020, PA 13.1 & ROP Centru 2021-2027 PA3), is envisaged – through better management and better implementation of the projects funded in Centru Region under Priority Axis 13 of the ROP 2014-2020, and by supporting cooperation among different stakeholders (academia, public organisations, private entities and NGOs) in order to identify better solutions for sustainable communities in the region – in this context, based on GPs shared by PP4, PP 5 intends to create 5 working groups at regional level which will share ideas and develop common projects which can be submitted under ROP Centru 21/27. The idea of these working groups come from the Fjildlab initiative shared by PP4 during phase 1 of the project. The Fjildlab is a living lab approach that includes several roundtables which support development of projects in Friesland. Starting from the GPs shared by PP4, PP5 included in its Regional ERDF-funded programme an open innovation platform – a strategic project which will be approved in the same period with the programme. The final version of the ROP Centru 2021-2027 was submitted to CE and it is estimated to be approved by September 2022.

Part III



ACTION PLAN PREPARATION

Action plan preparation

COLOR CIRCLE project goals

The overall objective of the COLOR CIRCLE project is to unlock the full potential of circular economy by reinforcing the role and capacities of local authorities thanks to strengthened cooperation with local research communities. The project focuses on rural and small cities areas. It relies on sharing good practices of cooperation between research and local authorities that boost and tool territorial intelligence. Color Circle contributes to improve the role of local governance in regional circular economy policies by recognising circular economy as a cross cutting priority, by strengthening the connection between research and local communities and by empowering local authorities.

Action plan development

- **Regional stakeholder group:** consists of representative of local public authorities, academia, NGOs etc. The RSG members were directly involved in the implementation process of the project at regional level and contributed to the design of the these working groups, the action included in the action plan. For drafting the action plan, PP5 first established a regional stakeholder group and set several semestrial meetings with them. Besides the regional events, the members of the regional stakeholder group attended all interregional learning events organised within the COLOR CIRCLE project. The RSG members were also involved in the regional mapping. This assessment was prepared with the support of an external services provider (IRCEM) and included an analysis of the current situation of CE in Centru Region, the existing initiatives related to circular economy, an inventory of all relevant projects, including the interregional good practices presented within the COLOR CIRCLE project, the stakeholders needed to be involved in improving policy instruments addressing CE and, based on the regional needs identified, established a set of necessary measures for better implementation of CE in Centru Region.
- **Timeline for implementation** – the action plan was designed with the support of IRCEM and was finalised at the end of November 2021. On January RDA Centru organised a RSG meeting to present the AP to all parties including the members of the COLOR CIRCLE RSG. The timeline for the implementation of the AP is presented in the following chapters.
- **Who will monitor** – RDA Centru (PP5)

Good practices methodology as base for the Action Plan

The Interreg Europe programme supports the exchange of good practices and experience between public authorities, managing authorities, research institutes, as well as non-profit organisations to develop and deliver better public policy. During the first phase of the project, partners have to set up a stakeholder group, contribute to the policy learning platform and


produce an action plan based on the good practices identified by the other partners in their regions. This action plan is implemented during phase two.

During the interregional learning events, the partners presented their situation according to the case study methodology that enabled different stakeholders - regional and local authorities, research centres, circular economy solution providers, civil society - to cross views on good practices. Following this presentation, parallel sessions were held by peer groups (Local Government group; Regional policy makers' group; University / Research group; other stakeholders) to analyse the case study against several criteria: policy challenges; improvements; conditions on transferring the good practices in other regions. The groups reported in plenary. A dedicated time was given to partners from the same region to share their views on the case study, identify first lessons for their territory, and input for regional stakeholder group (RSG) meetings.

Criteria for COLOR CIRCLE good practices

The idea behind this action relies on the interregional GPs exchange conducted within the COLOR CIRCLE project. The idea of designing this action comes from the interregional exchanges of experience and especially from the bilateral meeting organized with Dutch partners during October 25-26, 2021 in the Centru Region. In this context, the Fjildlab approach was presented - a living lab designed to strengthen the circular economy and the sustainable agricultural sector in the north-east of the Friesland region of the Netherlands.

Partner Good Practice

Name	Short description	Link to the COLOR CIRCLE webpage for more information
Fjildlab 	Fjildlab is a field laboratory (living lab) for the strengthening of the circular economy and a sustainable agricultural sector in Northeast Friesland.	https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/6052/fjildlab-fieldlab-for-implementing-circular-agriculture-in-northeast-fryslan/

Part IV



ACTIONS

RDA Centru (PP5) and the regional stakeholder group has defined the one action for improving the policy instruments tackled within the COLOR CIRCLE project –setting up **5 working groups on CE related topics**. These groups will act as the backbone for the strategic project included under ROP Centru 2021-2027.

Action 1 – Setting up 5 working groups

The background

Inspired from PP4 and the Circular Living lab implemented in Friesland Region, NL, given the fact that circular economy is a core topic, horizontally addressed by all the priorities of ROP Centru and with specific focus by Priority 3, 4 and 8 and because the solutions identified and proposed by project beneficiaries requires adequate expertise and involvement of multiple stakeholders to generate and propose innovative solutions, in order to improve the way CE is addressed in Centru Region, and to improve the policy instruments related to CE, PP5 identified the need of developing a similar concept based on cooperation and open innovation in Centru Region.

This idea is based on the interregional exchanges of experience organized within the COLOR CIRCLE PPs, namely from the Fjildlab GP, presented by PP4. Fjildlab is a circular living lab on agriculture related topics, which support innovation and cooperation among the relevant stakeholders from Friesland Region, NL. Within the Fjildlab, several roundtables are organised on different topics. Each roundtable includes stakeholders from Friesland and based on the results they develop ideas and work together to

create more sustainable and more circular agriculture.

Starting from this idea the Fjildlab, PP5 intends to transfer and **adapt** the circular living lab into Centru Region and to create an open innovation platform – a circular urban lab based on the Fjildlab concept and the knowledge roundtables created around the Fjildlab. For organising this, the first step consists in creating and setting up 5 Working groups on the themes connected to CE and relevant for ROP Centru 2021-2027 PA3. These WPs will create the premises for the strategic project, and will strengthen the regional stakeholders capacity to work together to develop innovative projects which include circular economy issues and, based on the partnership principle and the multi governance principles of the Cohesion Policy will ensure that the needs and challenges identified at regional level are gathered and included into the guidelines for the calls of proposals developed and elaborated by PP5 for ROP Centru PA3. These WPs are organised by themes related to CE and include topics relevant for ROP Centru PA3 and are inspired from the knowledge roundtables created around the Fjildlab concept, the GP which is the inspirations for this action.

This way, based on the GP presented by PP4 – the Fjildlab concept, through this AP PP5 aims to improve the governance and implementation of ROP 2021-2027 P3 by setting up **5** regional working groups on the following topics: energy efficiency, green infrastructure, blue infrastructure, green and recreational spaces, urban regeneration. These working groups will include organisations from the quadruple helix (academia, public authorities, NGOs, private organisations) and the results/reports resulted during the meetings will be used for drafting and

finetuning the guidelines for ROP Centru 2021-2027, PI3 but also the ideas emerge might/will be submitted under the strategic project developed by PP5. This way the WPs will be a preparatory action for the living lab developed under ROP Centru 2021-2027 –an open innovation platform included as a strategic project -a cooperation platform between public authorities and academia/private organisations which will integrate smart CE solutions for the urban areas of Centru Region and developed as a result of COLOR CIRCLE's implementation in Centru Region, based on the needs and challenges identified at regional level and the GPs shared within the project. In order to better draft the idea, PP5 asked JS (through LP) for the approval of a bilateral meeting with PP4. During this bilateral meeting PP4 presented how the living lab works Friesland, how is managed by PP4, how much it costs etc. Following this meeting, and based on the regional need assessment, PP5 drafted and included within ROP Centru 2021-2027 a strategic regional project with an estimated budget 1.5 mil euro – an open innovation platform designed to support cooperation and innovation at regional level. This platform will ensure that the public authorities requests (on smart city, circular economy, etc) are met and all conditions to facilitate cooperation among stakeholders are created. *The strategic project (the platform) will be approved once the programme will be approved - estimated date September 2022*, but will be fully operational only after the launch of a call for proposals for selecting an operator. According to the calendar provided for ROP Centru, the call of proposals for this strategic project will be launched on March 2023 with a deadline till June 2023. After an operator will be selected and the platform will be fully operational, the municipalities from Centru Region will submit

their challenges and the representatives of academia/private companies will identify solutions with to these challenges. Given the wide range of problems that can be addressed while considering circular solutions in the Centru Region, for defining the most stringent challenges from the small communities/urban areas of Centru Region, **this AP aims to support the creation of 5 working groups**. These groups are formed around the objectives promoted by priority investment 13 of the POR 2014-2020, respectively Priority 3 of the POR 2021-2027 (which continues ROP 2014-2020, PA13). Hence, the working groups will be formed around the following topics.

- ☑ **1. Promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions** (energy efficiency and increasing the energy performance of residential and public buildings, rehabilitation / modernization of electrical, water supply and ventilation installations, which contribute to reducing energy consumption and increasing energy performance);
- ☑ **2. Green infrastructure** (implementation of green infrastructure projects in urban areas / functional urban areas in the Centru Region in order to conserve urban biodiversity, awareness projects on nature protection and biodiversity in urban areas);
- ☑ **3. Blue infrastructure** (implementation of blue infrastructure projects in urban areas / functional urban areas in the Central Region in order to conserve urban biodiversity, awareness projects on nature protection and biodiversity in urban areas, etc.);

- ☑ **4. Green and recreational spaces** (establishment / modernization / extension of green spaces / public spaces / recreational spaces / cultural spaces in urban areas / functional urban areas in the Centru Region);
- ☑ **5. Urban Regeneration** (recovery of abandoned, under-used spaces, regeneration of brownfield sites, etc.).

These 5 above-mentioned working groups, are inspired from the knowledge tables developed around the Fjildlab approach and will be the backbone of the open innovation platform created under ROP Centru 2021-2027, ensuring its functioning.

The reports of the meetings conducted within the working groups will be integrated in the guidelines for ROP 2021-2027, PA3. Also based on the cooperation among the regional stakeholders within this platform, the innovation capacity at regional level will be increased and new projects related to more efficient use of resources/EE/green infrastructure/nature-based solutions will be developed and funded under ROP Centru 21/27 PA 3. The WGs will support increasing the capacity of innovation at regional level. The members of these 5 working groups will meet and will identify innovative solutions to the existing challenges, based on the specifics of the Centru Region. The projects developed under the working groups can be funded under ROP CENTRU 2021-2027, AP3.

According to 2019 (Research and Innovation Observatory), data provided by the RIO Report the Centru Region presents modest development in terms of innovation. Correlating this innovation deficit with the intentions to empower local authorities to implement circular

economy, the idea to create an open innovation platform - an urban circular similar to Fjildlab, was born. This platform will be the space to catalyse **innovation in the field of circular economy**. The first step for this platform are the working groups – similar to the knowledge tables created around the Fjildlab.

Following the interregional cooperation conducted under COLOR CIRCLE, and the presentation of Fjildlab, PP5, as Managing authority for ROP Centru, included under this program a strategic project – an open innovation platform dedicated to smart cities, supporting cooperation among stakeholders from academia/private entities and public bodies . This way the WGs created within COLOR CIRCLE will act as a preparatory step, being similar to the knowledge tables created by the Dutch partner and will identify solutions to the wide range of challenges that can be addressed while considering circular solutions in the Centru Region, and will support defining the most stringent challenges from the small communities/urban areas of Centru Region.

During the meetings of these WGs joint project writing sessions/workshops will be designed, information and good practices will be shared and the results and the reports of the meeting will be included in the guidelines for ROP Centru 2021-2027, PA3. Also, the innovative projects developed will be included in the strategic platform.

The justification for this action- **creation and operationalisation of 5 working groups-** is that the implementation of the circular economy is highly dependent and correlated with innovation, being an essential condition for circularity to emerge and function at the

community level. Thus, the empowerment of the authorities to implement circular economy in the Centru Region must be carried out simultaneously with the stimulation of innovation. The mission of these WPs is to contribute to the development of inclusive and sustainable urban communities through implementing solutions based on circular economy resulting from a co-creation process.

Expected impact in the regional context

The establishment of such working groups supports cooperation and sets the ground and the framework for experimentation and evaluation of a different range of circular solutions targeting the points of interest of the policy instruments described above.

These 5 working groups will be composed of organisation active in the regional innovation ecosystem, which will cooperate to ensure better implementation of ROP Centru 2021-2027 PI 3, development of optimised, scalable, cost-effective and locally tailored circular solutions for the small communities in Centru Region, will support the development of a solid knowledge base and the development of innovative, replicable and locally adapted solutions, based on cooperation among different stakeholders.

The WPs are a transposition of the knowledge roundtables developed by the Dutch partner and represents the first step of ensuring good functioning of the living lab (open innovation platform in Centru's case). The results of the meetings organised in the context of each WP will be: at least 1 concept note developed for being submitted under the open innovation platform created under the ROP Centru + the reports of these meetings will be included in the guidelines of prepared for the calls of proposals

developed under ROP Centru PA3, both for EE and green/blue infrastructure.

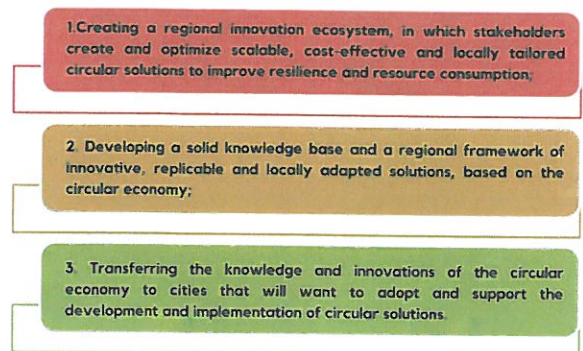


Figure 1. steps of the actions

The action proposed, is based on the GP shared by PP4 and is operating by:

1. Encouraging inclusive stakeholder participation (quadruple helix structure);
2. Creating a genuine learning environment and a common agenda for stakeholders in education, civil society and private sector in the Centru Region in relation to circular solutions;
3. Facilitating interaction, knowledge sharing and management as an open system: respectful relationships and reciprocity are preconditions for multi-stakeholder learning processes;
4. Pursue clear and common work concepts to achieve the objectives with the help of a clearly structured roadmaps.
5. Develop innovative solutions, integrating CE at local challenges.

In order to achieve the assumed objectives, this action plan aims to initiate and develop 5 working groups. The focus is on awareness, as well as on the identification of key actors, and concrete agendas and projects. At this stage, it is necessary to obtain a common perspective on the objectives to be pursued.

Players involved

Each working group will have quadruple-helix structure, in which the private economic environment, public authorities, the NGO sector

and academia will work together to identify solutions specific for circular economy.

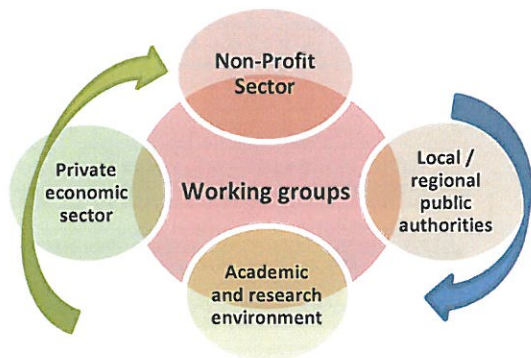


Figure 3. Quadruple helix structure in the Working Group

Addressing complex issues, such as sustainable development and building resilient communities, involves a wide range of issues to be considered. Therefore, they should be addressed in the same way, by involving a complex network of stakeholders, including citizens, companies, academia and the public sector. Each working group will bring together all these actors through the co-creation process, which involves different phases to reach a final solution.

The first phase of co-creation consists of a joint exploration in order to identify different challenges and needs from the perspective of all stakeholders. The second phase is the experimentation phase, which includes building a prototype of the proposed solution, testing it and re-building it - each time there will be an improvement based on the feedback collected from previous stages.

The Working groups will also be the place for experimentation is always a real-life framework: the solution is tested in the real environment, right where the implementation is planned. The third phase of the co-creation process is evaluation and implementation. In this final

phase, the solution is evaluated and its final version can be built.

The groups of the four sectors shown in Figure 3 will meet at regular intervals and perform tasks for initiating projects, defining project teams and supporting project funding arrangements. In addition, the thematic groups will use the “ABCD” approach (Figure 4) to iteratively update the baseline of the current state (knowledge and knowledge gaps), follow the project results and guide towards a common vision. In this way, each group will be able to follow the implementation of three main aspects of innovation in the development of their projects:

- ☑ Development of innovative technologies;
- ☑ Circular business and financing models;
- ☑ Facilitating regional governance and regulations.

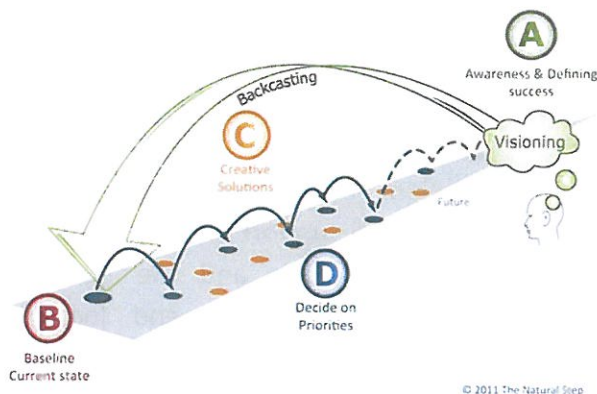


Figure 4. ABCD method. Image adapted from The Natural Step, 2011 - Sustainability Planning. (<https://www.naturalstep.ca/abcd>)

Timeline

August 2022 -August 2023

Cost and source of finance

The creation of these 5 working groups will ensure the ground for the next strategic project. The costs for the working groups are related to the meetings, which can be organised either

online/offline. For offline meetings the cost were estimated at 400 euro/meeting.

In the estimated timeframe of 12 months, are envisaged the following activities:

- Creation/Setting up the working groups – PP5 will identify relevant stakeholders for each working group, and will create these groups – deadline December 2022, output: 5 lists of organisations, 1/WG.
- Organising at least 1 meetings/working group – deadline Aug 2023; output: 5 reports of the meeting
- Preparing of at least 1 concept note, an innovative project involving both academia and public organisation for submission under the strategic project developed under ROP Centru and integrating the results of the meeting into the guidelines, ensuring stakeholders participation, according to EU's partnership and multi-level governance principles.
-

Estimated costs for implementing the action:

- Costs for organising the on-site meetings 400 EUR/meeting => $5 \times 400 = 2000$ euro

Indicative funding sources: RDA Centru will provide the staff and logistical arrangements to organize two meetings for each working group and the effort of the staff involved in operationalization of each WG.

Transferability to other territories

Creation/setting up of new working groups and involving all relevant stakeholders in all stages of a policy instrument improvement has high potential of transfer in other communities/regions, as demonstrated in the regions partner in COLOR CIRCLE project. For a

successful implementation, the promoter should take into consideration involving all relevant stakeholders and their roles in implementing the project.

Contacts

Regional Development Agency Centru Romania

Contact person Gabriela Tarau
gabriela.tarau@adrcentru.ro

Institute for Research in Circular Economy and Environment" Ernest Lupan" – IRCCEM

Contact person Simina LAKATOS
simina.lakatos@ircem.ro

Signature

On behalf of the Regional Development Agency Centru, I agree to support and promote the implementation of the action plan detailed above.

The Regional Development Agency Centru recognises the significance of the Color Circle project in the promotion of cooperation between the research community and local authorities and the role both can play on identifying circular economy solutions.

Date :

Signature :

Stamp :



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