



Action Plan for Improving the Low Carbon Economy in Bucharest – Ilfov Region (Partners 7 and 8)

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1. General information

Project: Sustainable Metropolitan Areas and the Role of The Edge City (Smart Edge)

Partner organisation: **Ilfov County Council**

Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests – Romania

Other partner organisations involved:

- Bucharest City Hall;
- Municipalities (edge cities) and communes placed around Bucharest, interested in contributing how the issues regarding the impact of Climate Change can be mitigated;
- Significant stakeholders, for example: The Intercommunity Development Association for Public Transport Bucharest – Ilfov (Transport Authority for Bucharest – the entity through which the implementation of SUMP is monitored Ilfov The Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan;
- We are also going to identify any other entity available and willing to become part of our project (schools, hospitals, and kinder gardens), also universities and education Institutions.

Country: **Romania**

NUTS2 region: **Bucharest - Ilfov**

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2. Information and details about the project

The SmartEdge project is carried out in two stages. Stage I of it runs from 01/11/2018 to 30/11/2020, and stage II from 01/12/2020 to 30/11/2022. The project is created by eight partners from the metropolitan areas of Akershus, Barcelona, Brandenburg, Ilfov, Krakow, Milan and Stockholm, and the Romanian Ministry of Environment.

The key concept of the project is “edge cities”.

The project provides for the transfer of good practices, mutual learning and experience in the field of innovative spatial planning tools, low-emission transport, as well as increasing the energy efficiency of public buildings using the potential of renewable energy sources.

Edge cities are an integral part of the existing metropolitan fabrics. The development of smaller cities within metropolitan areas play a crucial role in the transition towards a low carbon economy. It is a huge potential for reducing the greenhouse gas emission in the metropolitan regions. We believe that by addressing this issue with the perspective of both the region and the edge city, we might be able to support relevant authorities, stakeholders and other actors in the process of creating smart, green and economic solutions.

The overall objective of the SmartEdge-project (Sustainable Metropolitan Areas and the Role of The Edge City) is to improve low carbon economy policies in edge cities and their metropolitan regions. To achieve this, the eight partners from the metropolitan areas of Akershus (now a part of Viken), Barcelona, Brandenburg, Ilfov, Krakow, Milano, Stockholm and the Romanian Ministry of Environment have exchanged experiences in 5 thematic workshops. We have identified good practices, exchanged experiences and facilitated learning between the partner regions and our stakeholders. For each workshop the partners have issued an inventory, described a good and bad practice and at the workshop we have been able to learn from the partners and seen the results in the organized study visit, where practical experiences have been presented and discussed on site or digitally. The last two WSs have been carried out digitally due to Covid 19, while as the site visits will be planned spring 2021 if the Covid status allows us to travel again.

The five themes we have addressed in the SmartEdge project are:

- Multi-level governance;
- Participation in urban and climate and energy planning;
- Business development based on energy production;
- Energy efficiency and energy systems in the built environment;
- Energy efficiency and energy systems in the transport sector.

We have identified innovative tools for urban and energy planning, measures in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in transport and buildings, and on the other side institutional or structural barriers that needs to be addressed in order to comply with the overall goal. We have explored the potential for local renewable energy production, reduction of emissions from transport through renewable energy and energy systems and reduction of emissions from buildings through renewable energy and energy systems.

SmartEdge has been an important arena to challenge our view on what measures to implement when working with low carbon policies, and we have used the arena allowing our local actors and partners to be exposed to other ways of seeing and solving a policy challenge.

The SmartEdge-project has shown that the challenges in our partner regions are overlapping and, in some cases, the same, but each partner region might have their take on how to address the challenge. The project outputs such as the selected good practice descriptions and regional stakeholder meetings contributes to the Interreg Europe Program by aiding managing authorities and regional and local authorities in improving low carbon economy policies. At metropolitan level the partners have used the experience gained through SmartEdge to set own activities and goals that are presented as an action plan.

3. Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact: Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
 European Territorial Cooperation programme
X Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed:

National Climate Change and Low Carbon Green Growth Strategy for 2016-2020

The policy context will be piloted by the National Climate Change and Low Carbon Green Growth Strategy for 2016-2020 in Romania and the Regional Development Plan of the Bucharest Ilfov region 2014-2020

The National Climate Change and Low Carbon Economic Growth Strategy is periodically revised according to the needs imposed by issues related to low carbon economy. The participation of both the Ministry of Environment Waters and Forests – Romania and Ilfov County Council (ICC) was envisaged to acquire experiences meant to improve the policy on the basis of good practices from the project partners. The two partners addressing the same policy instrument aim at improving the cooperation between stakeholders in the region and at developing a complex governance approach. SmartEdge will generate new projects meant to improve the low carbon policies. Acquiring lessons learnt from the best practices in the field of low carbon economy it is a good tool to address efficiently the National Strategy. The policy by aiming at addressing the measures related to climate-friendly measures in the environmental field. The main objective of the national strategy on climate change and growth based on low carbon is to mobilize and enable private actors and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, GHGs from economic activities in line with EU targets and adapt to the impact of both current climate change, as well as future ones.

The Action Plan is meant to bring its contribution to the revising of the addressed policy instrument:

- by emphasizing the importance of the participatory intervention of the citizens
- by an increased institutional cooperation
- by widening the problematics of the document to the function and intervention of the civil society, of the relevant stakeholders and of the research segment in the field.
- Also, it will contribute to the increasing of using new technologies that should become a major objective in the revised strategy.

The action plan developed in the present document will be an effective tool to help improve the addressed documents, as it will collect, promote, connect practices that will make visible what is necessary to be improved at the national strategic level in the environmental field.

The Action Plan also addresses the policy document in the light of strategic documents assumed and promoted by ICC, which will be taken into account within the configuration of the platform that constitutes the core of the action designed in the Action Plan.

- By the Decision of the Ilfov County Council no. 89 / 13.08.2019, the Air Quality Maintenance Plan for Ilfov County was approved, 2019-2023. The mission of the “Air Quality Maintenance Plan for Ilfov County” is to maintain and improve the air quality in Ilfov County to protect human health and the environment as a whole. The specific objective of the Plan is to implement the measures identified in other local, national or national projects, plans and strategies, as well as additional measures with an impact on reducing emissions in order to maintain air quality and the quality of the environment as a whole
- The Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) 2016-2030 for the Bucharest – Ilfov Region, which aims to be a strategic plan for both citizens and areas and is shall contain the development vision regarding mobility and it shall be correlated with the vision of spatial development of the entire metropolitan area. The SUMP 2016-2030 was prepared for the Municipality of Bucharest (with its 6 districts) and for Ilfov County, comprising of 8 cities (Otopeni, Voluntari, Buftea, Chitila, Pantelimon, Bragadiru, Popești – Leordeni, Măgurele) and 32 communes (1 Decembrie, Afumați, Balotești, Berceni, Brănești, Cernica, Chiajna, Ciolpani, Ciorogârla, Clinceni, Copăcenii, Corbeanca, Cornetu, Dărăști-Ilfov, Dascălu, Dobroești, Domnești, Dragomirești-Vale, Găneasa, Glina, Grădiștea, Gruiu, Jilava, Moara Vlăsiei, Mogoșoaia, Nuci, Periș, Petrăchioaia, Snagov, Ștefăneștii de Jos, Tunari and Vidra). The municipalities mentioned above are integrated part of the action that the Action Plan is based upon, as they are edge cities.
- Ilfov County Council Energy Strategy, which has as its main objective the reduction of carbon emissions, a goal which will be attained through the project portfolio included in the strategy. One of the specific objectives is to achieve and ensure the energy efficiency in the transport sector.

4. Details of the action envisaged

4.1. Action – Online platform for matchmaking environmental initiatives of the edge cities in Bucharest – Ilfov region

4.1.1. The background

Regarding the SmartEdge partnership, all the partners has provided inspirational lessons but, during the pandemic context, it came out as necessary a tool that could work rapidly under circumstances that could not be physically controlled all the time.

Background of Ilfov County Council and the Ministry of Environment

1. As far as the national background is concerned:

The Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests implements the national policy in the fields of environmental protection, green economy, biodiversity, protected natural areas, climate change regarding all sectors and subsectors that it manages, elaborates the strategy and specific regulations for development and harmonization of these activities within general policy of the Government, ensures and coordinates the application of the Government's strategy in its fields of competence.

The Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests acts to protect the environment and conserve natural resources, to guarantee a clean environment for the current and future generations, in harmony with economic development and social progress.

At local level:

2. **Ilfov County Council** is the local government of the county surrounding Bucharest and:

- it was designated to handle and manage, on behalf and in the interest of the county local public affairs
- has main duty of the County Council is to integrate the work of all local authorities to ensure the sustainable development of the county.
- adopts strategies, forecasts and programs of economic and social development of the county.

There must be specified that the action is in tune with the fact that Ilfov County Council focuses on polycentric regional vision based upon the following principles:

- The efficient use of local resources within a specific area;
- The functioning of a public – private partnership;
- The active involvement of the population in the process of decision making;
- The involvement of the stakeholders of all economic sectors;
- The interconnectedness of local partnerships

The platform that will be the result of the proposed action will take into account this polycentric view.

The Action Plan, worked upon together with the Ministry of Environment, is thought like a framework meant to make new initiatives emerge in the field of environment protection through a tool meant to match make local and regional projects, according to assumed practises and strategies, with the clear purpose to improve the strategic document addressed through the project (National Climate Change and Low Carbon Green Growth Strategy for 2016-2020).

An important function of this Action Plan is to develop a process to further develop the Ilfov County Council and The Ministry of Environment network initiative for participatory interventions and for a polycentric view on the environment protection, by introducing matchmaking, methods, measures, and a context for multi-level-government cooperation. The suggested action has been derived from the experiences shared in the SmartEdge-project.

4.1.2. The source of inspiration

The proposed practice by Ilfov County Council and the Ministry of Environment are inspired by two best practices implemented by the following best practices:

1. *Regional Energy Observatory - Big Data for smart energy action in collaborative multilevel governance (Barcelona)*

The source of inspiration consists in the fact that the Spanish Web platform automatically collects energy information from the municipalities of a territory (county, metropolitan area, province, region...) in an integrated environment of data visualization and analysis. It also provides the participating municipalities with continuous access to energy-use performance benchmarking and best practices. We also intend, like the Spanish partners to use the online tool to allow municipalities to benchmark/match make their practices in order to increase the efficiency in environment protection.

The Spanish platform offers public and clear information on the municipality's use of energy and Greenhouse Gases Emissions. The aim is to give visibility to current energy policies and raise awareness about the rational use of energy and the promotion of self-consumption. In Ilfov, according to that model, the online platform aims at involving the public in contributing to the environment protection and also for the 8 edge cities, it aims at monitoring the degree that is attained, as far as their projects in the field, included in Ilfov strategies, are accomplished.

According to this model the platform will have the following functions:

- Consultation by time-periods of consumption, generation and energy expenditure filtered by city councils ;
- Graphic visualization in the form of a thematic map of the municipal indicators of energy consumption, expenditure and GHG emissions;
- Rankings of consumption and energy generation, emissions and expenditure;
- Rankings of energy indicators, emissions and expenditure of buildings and lighting panels

2. *Virtuous Territories - The energy efficiency project of Milan Metropolitan City:*

The source of inspiration consists in the fact that the platform will collect information in order to generate initiatives meant to reduce the CO2 emission percentage and energy consumption in the buildings based in Bucharest- Ilfov region, more precisely in the edge cities of Ilfov.

Both practices are very much in tune with the strategies of Ilfov County Council, especially with the *Air Quality Maintenance Plan* and also with the profile of the action chosen for the present Action Plan.

The European Union, with the agreement of the international community, has called for a drastic reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions, with the aim of limiting climate change to less than 2 ° C.

Achieving this target means reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 20-95% by 2050 compared to 1990 levels (reference level). With regard to the transport sector, in order to achieve these targets, it is necessary to obtain GHG reductions of at least 60% compared to 1990 - which corresponds to a reduction of about 70% compared to the levels recorded in 2008.

No major changes in improving low carbon economy will not be possible without the support of an adequate network and a more intelligent use of it. Overall, investment in infrastructure boosts economic growth, creates well-being and jobs, and promotes geographical accessibility, trade and mobility. It must be planned in such a way as to ensure that the positive impact on economic growth is maximized and, consequently, that the impact on the environment is minimized. **Therefore, creating a platform that will connect environmental initiatives will increase the possibility to create integrated projects that will be in tune with the E.U perspectives.**

4.1.3. Description of the action

The web online platform will be developed in order to facilitate the transfer and to trigger the harmonization between local practices in the field. In designing the matchmaking tool, the latest technological developments were taken into account, with a personalized web design (Responsive Web Design), so that it can be used from any device, from PCs to mobile phones.

It will be developed starting from the participatory action of the target group, as it was inspired by the best practices in the project.

Consistency with the project

The action's starting point is the key concept of the project – “Edge Cities”, taking into account the fact that Ilfov County has **8 edge cities** placed around the capital of Romania: Otopeni, Voluntari, Buftea, Chitila, Pantelimon, Bragadiru, Popești – Leordeni, Măgurele.

The projects of the edge cities are correlated with the above mentioned principles included in the strategic documents. The platform will be based on practices from measures in those documents.

It consists in a web tool meant to match practices included in the above mentioned strategies of Ilfov County Council. The Ministry will be in charge with analyzing the participatory input generated by the action to improve the Strategy addressed by the project at all levels involved by the project.

- It is a need to integrate coherent infrastructure for matchmaking, through a specific tool, the environmental initiatives, especially regarding the situation that can be found in the edge cities, with their specific profile of municipalities around the capital of Romania.
- It is also a need to provide and share initiatives, regarding the improvement of the environment protection at regional and national level
- The joint experiences should be treated as means of improving the legal frame in the field.
- The theoretical and practical vision of the action is based on the participatory principle. The matching will be mostly based on the feedback received from the most important segment of the target group, the citizens in the region;
- This matchmaking tool will work as a decisive factor in hindering the process of transferring a practice is the fact that there should be transparent, credible and unitary means to promote the experiences of edge cities with different profiles in the region;
- The target group consists in the public administration of each edge's city, Ilfov County Council, and all the inhabitants of Bucharest Region.
- The role of the Ministry of Environment is, according to its attributions that will be listed below, to improve the addressed strategy, as a result of the implementation of the action.

The Ministry of Environment implements the national policy in the field of environmental protection, green economy, biodiversity, protected natural areas, climate change regarding all sectors and subsectors that it manages. It elaborates the strategy and specific regulations for development and harmonization of these activities within general policy of the Government. It also ensures and coordinates the application of the Government's strategy in its fields of competence.

As conceived together with the Ministry of Environment, the platform can be a bridge between the central and regional levels in terms of environmental policies. In developing environmental policies, the Platform would facilitate stakeholder consultation, an extremely important technical

component. The platform would be an effective means of communication and information on the policies and programs promoted by MMAP. Depending on how it is structured, the platform:

- will be a monitoring tool on the implementation of AFM (environmental fund administration) program;
- will provide statistical data, resulting in possible estimates of emission reductions or other indicators that reflect the effectiveness of the implementation of measures / programs developed at national level;
- will provide feedback on the efficiency or shortcomings of how to implement or structure programs;
- it will be an extremely effective communication tool regarding the exchange of experience in best practices. The data and information provided by the platform may suggest up-to-date information at the time of the review of the National Climate Change Strategy.

4.1.4. The exigencies, structure and content of the Platform

Web application solution

The functionalities of the integrated information system proposed in the project refer to the subsystems that make up the integrated system and which, together, contribute to the realization of the web application development services and to the efficiency of the Contracting Authority's (Ilfov County Council) activities.

The practice is inspired, but it is not duplicating the source of inspiration, as the contexts have their social, political and economic differences. The main connection of the action relates to the model proposed by the Spanish partners.

<https://energia.barcelona/en/energy-observatory-0>

Basic requirements of the Web application solution

The aim is to make the information available to the public and users, through the web application, in an organized, easy to use, transparent and easy to maintain by the designated staff.

The lessons learnt from the partnership will be visible in the application, as it follows:

- Using new technology to facilitate awareness and intervention in the field of environment protection;
- A participatory view on designing a tool for match making good practices;
- constant updates of the information in order to manage the environmental exigencies within the edge cities;
- the importance of monitoring the initiatives in the field.

To achieve this goal there will be created a web application to facilitate and promote the environmental activity of the edge cities in the online environment. This will be achieved by:

- Creating an identity consistent and in tune with the message conveyed by the project principles;
- Development of functional models;
- Structuring information;
- Creating a database with a unitary format that would allow the further development of the application;
- Configuring the server to host the application;
- Online promotion on niche social networks (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, etc.);

- Online promotion focused on the niche market of the application;
- Implementation of counters and analysis reports for application visitors with detailed information for its sections (Google Analytics etc.).

The server will need to provide the following minimum and mandatory requirements:

- The server up-time will be at least 99.9% for the entire hosting period;
- The technical maintenance service associated with hosting the portal must be 24 hours a day;
- The server must allow optimal monthly traffic and a capacity adapted to the needs of the Contracting Authority, minimum 300 GB per month.

First page contents:

- Presentation of the **edge cities**
- Environmental practices (degree of achievement according to the local strategies)
- Citizens' voice (public opinions and interventions);
- Matchmaking corner (working title – this section is meant to match make practices in order initiate integrated in the territory)
- Stakeholders' corner

Players involved

Ilfov County Council – local government for Ilfov County

Role: implementation of elaborating and maintaining the services of the application, development of the application and accomplishment of content regarding the matchmaking of environmental initiatives within the application

The Ministry of Environment

Role: assimilating the practice for revising the strategic document addressed within the project.

The local authorities of the edge cities in the region

Role: providing the necessary information and practices in the field in order to create a systemic vision an a coherent strategy for developing an efficient low carbon economy.

The stakeholders in the region

Role: giving steady feedback through the development and materialization of the action.

4.1.5. Timeframe, methodology and implementation process

STAGE I: (from the action plan approval to October 2021)

The table below presents the time frames for this stage, followed by an explanation of the principles that the actions are based upon:

| May 2021 | June 2021 | July | August 2021 | September 2021 | October 2021 |
|--|---|--|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| Public consultations in the edge cities; Meeting with relevant stake holders. | Public consultations in the edge cities | Public consultations in the edge cities Launching the procurement for the regional analysis and elaboration of the platform | Elaboration of the regional analysis Meetings of the experts with relevant stakeholders | Elaboration of the regional analysis | Elaboration of the regional analysis Publication of the regional analysis on the website of Ilfov County Council, The Ministry and of the edge cities. |

Ilfov County Council and The Ministry of Environment will strongly ground the necessity of the envisaged action and they will map together the initiatives that exist or are going to be developed in Bucharest – Ilfov Region. In the first three month of the implementation of the action plan, there will be organized public consultations in order to construct the basis of the structure and content of the platform. The public consultations will be organized by the Ilfov County Council and The Ministry of Environment.

Ilfov County Council will launch the procurement procedure for the platform, according to the legal framework

There will be a constant connection between the technical process and the process related to the content of the platform, as it was previously described.

In order to understand the transfer process in the field of environment and to support the involved entities, it will be necessary to carry out an analysis of the existing situation at regional level, the challenges and problems faced by the municipalities wishing to transfer / take over a good practice in the environmental field and the measures taken by public authorities to solve existing problems and stimulate the transfer and the matchmaking.

The regional analysis will be made by the experts that will be procured and it will be carried out during the above-mentioned period of time (Stage 1).

The following aspects must be taken into account in order to carry out the regional analysis:

- awareness of public authorities and stakeholders on the importance of the good practice's matchmaking in the field of environment;
- dissemination of information at regional level;

- the main actors at regional and national level involved and their role in the implementation of the action;
- institutional / bureaucratic obstacles encountered at regional and national level;
- identification of examples of good practices (concrete examples through which a practice was transferred, and following the transfer its activity is continued);
- identifying the mechanisms by which matchmaking can be facilitated;
- it is important to notice that, even if some processes seem to be overlapping, it is necessary to be so. Some actions, like data collection, will be necessarily overlapped with data collection, as they are connected processes. Also the dissemination must be a constant action, as well as the involvement of the institutions, stakeholders and civil society;
- identifying methods to change the legislative framework so as to simplify the transfer/matchmaking process. This task will be accomplished through legislative initiatives that will be fed by the matchmaking process. We consider that, in this respect, the main function will be held by NGO's, by civil society in general, in cooperation with the local and public administration;
- identification and description of intermediation methods that can facilitate the transfer/matchmaking process;
- The analysis will follow the comparative study of the regional and national context in relation to the European one on the accomplishment of the good/best practice transfer.

STAGE II: (November 2021 – January 2022)

Time frame of the stage II:

| November 2021 | December 2021 | January 2022 |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| First stage of the elaboration of the platform Meetings with stakeholders in order to manage the gathered content | First stage of the elaboration of the platform Public consultations with the presentation of the regional analysis | Finalization of the tool |

Elaboration of the platform

The procured provider will present the basic structure of the application, The provider will provide ICC with a procedure for use in both Romanian and English for the components of the developed system and to ensure the transfer of skills for the administration of the system through a form of training, until the end of the project. The system must also include a backup mechanism, which can be used in case of need; must allow for centralized management (including databases).

The provider will provide technical support in order to remedy possible problems in the operation and optimal use of the application and provide training to the staff responsible for managing the application by the Contracting Authority throughout the project implementation.

Throughout the Stage 2, the public consultation and gathering of the content will be a steady action.

STAGE III: (March 2022 – November 2022)

Time frame of the stage II:

| March -May 2022 | June -August 2022 | August – October 2022 | November 2022 |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| Adding content to the platform | Participatory interventions regarding the content Good practices of the edge cities added to the platform's content | Matchmaking process | Elaboration of the recommendations for improving the policy instrument and the legal background in the field of low carbon economy |

- **Adding content to the platform and the matchmaking process**
- **Formulation of the recommendations in order to improve the addresses policy document**

In the process of adding the content and matchmaking and transferring the practices and initiatives, there will take into account the results obtained from the exchange of good practices, as well as the above-mentioned regional analysis.

Other significant actions in this stage:

- Dissemination of knowledge on interregional policies at all levels (from local government to stakeholders);
- Mobilization of stakeholders at regional level and their contribution through the specific expertise of each to achieve the objectives of the project;
- Mobilization of sources of expertise and funding for new projects that support the transfer/matchmaking;
- Raising awareness on this topic and disseminating the project at regional and European level;
- The participatory process will be carried on all along the implementation of the plan;
- Potential projects resulted from the matchmaking process will be formulated.

6. Costs

- the costs are approximated, they can change according to new challenges in the project
- the component of creating the web application the budget is 15,000 Euros
- the costs for promoting the matchmaking online platform are for 2021- 2022 year 20,000 euros

Total amount: 35,000 euros

7. Funding sources:

Local Budget
European funds

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Stamp of the organisation (if available): _____