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## Effectiveness in development management of the region

**Abstract:** *This publication focuses on the attempt to determine the effectiveness of regional development management activities on the example of the Bucharest Ilfov Region in Romania. In recent years, the EU's operational programmes have supported the development of many countries such as Poland and Romania. However, the main problem in the development of regions is very often the effectiveness of the use of EU funds and the efficient and effective way of management by intermediaries and beneficiaries themselves. The aim of this article is to present examples of solutions for effectiveness in development management of the region in relation to the EU 2020 Strategy.*

**Keywords:** *effectiveness, regional development, management, EU 2020 Strategy*

### Introduction

The European Union (EU) is one of the richest areas of the world, however, there are big internal disparities of income and opportunity between its regions. Through its regional policy, the EU transfers resources from prosperous to poorer areas in order to reduce the differences among them. The cohesion policy for the programming period 2007-2013 was targeted on the EU's strategic priorities, especially the Growth and Jobs Strategy, and funding was focused on areas such as innovation. But, the need to promote balanced development by reducing the gap between the different regions and helping the most backward to catch up was recognized and, for the first time, it was mentioned as early as 1957 in the preamble to the Treaty of Rome. The enlargement of the EU to 28 Member States increased geographical disparities within the European Union, with many more of our fellow citizens living in disadvantaged regions. Bridging these gaps will inevitably be a long-term process, which is why the least-developed regions are the top priority for a cohesion policy. At the same time, however, virtually all regions are confronted with the need to restructure, modernize and foster continuous knowledge-based innovation in order to meet the challenge of globalization. The cohesion policy is based on a broad vision, recognizing the need to reinforce the competitiveness of all regions in the Union so that they can contribute to the Lisbon strategy of growth and jobs. The Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs is based on a close partnership between the EU and its member countries, with a clear division of responsibilities and a strong emphasis on maximizing synergies between economic policy areas and action at different levels. Local and regional governments may be responsible

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for managing Structural Funds in partnership with the state, the Commission and the beneficiaries — social partners, public authorities NGOs etc.

**Table 1. Systematic classification of selected definitions of the “effectiveness”**

Author	Definition
P. Drucker	A key element of the human and organizational development. It is also used for self-fulfillment and the ability of a contemporary society to survive; is the degree of reaching the goal; it expresses comprehensive relations of effects to incurred expenditures.
E. Skrzypek	The organization's ability to implement the strategy and achieve specific goals. Effectiveness depends on doing a good job; synthesizes and takes into account the efficiency of management, including two points: the internal one - focusing on productivity and the external one - which takes into account customer feedback about the value they perceive.
Z. Krzyżanowski	Effectiveness depends mainly on the actions of people managing the enterprise which materialize at the executive level in the form of objectives, and the basis for the criterion of assessing the efficiency of activities is the degree of achieving its goals.
J. Zieleniewski	Effectiveness is the efficiency that is associated with the dexterity, the benefit and the cost-effectiveness of operations.
T. Pszczołkowski	A positive feature of the action positively focused on the result regardless of whether it was intentional or not.
R.S. Kaplan and D. P. Norton	Effectiveness is a comprehensive application of interdependent dimensions: financial, internal processes, market and development ones.
R. McKenzie	Effectiveness is the maximum output resulting from the appropriate location of resources, with known limitations of supply (costs incurred by producers) and demand (consumer tastes).
P.A. Samuelson and W.D. Nordhaus	Effectiveness is associated with a lack of waste and is related to the main subject of economics. The economy functions effectively if it is not possible to increase the production of one commodity without reducing the production of another, which is clear to reach the limit of production possibilities.
T. Kotarbiński	Effectiveness is always a positive value.

Source: own study based on E. Skrzypek (ed.), *Dojrzałość jakościowa a wyniki przedsiębiorstw zorientowanych jakościowo*, Wydawnictwo DIFIN, Warszawa 2013, p. 45.; P. Drucker, *Skuteczne zarządzanie*, PWN, Warszawa 1976, p. 56; R.S. Kaplan and D.P. Norton, *Strategiczna karta wyników*, PWN, Warszawa 2001.

The main aim of this article is to determine the effectiveness of development management of the region based on the Bucharest-Ilfov Region. However, a very common finding is that effectiveness is one of the basic economic concepts, while studies of its essence allow to point to a wide range of this phenomenon, its multi-dimensional, extensive classifications, and a multitude of definitions<sup>2</sup>. Increasingly, however, suggestions are being made to make research more effective in a broader context. An example of a broader approach is the attempt to determine the essence of effectiveness from a quality perspective, where, according to

<sup>2</sup> B. Domańska-Szaruga, *Efektywność finansowa sektora banków spółdzielczych w Polsce*, Zeszyty Naukowe Instytutu Organizacji i Zarządzania „Nowoczesne Systemy Zarządzania” nr 8/2013, Wydawnictwo WAT, Warszawa 2013.

E. Skrzypek, it is the ability to execute the enterprise's strategy and achieve specific goals. Accordingly, the effectiveness is determined by<sup>3</sup>:

- a) positive results, efficiency, ability;
- b) the key to increase the enterprise's competitiveness;
- c) basic element of human and organizational development;
- d) speed of response to market challenges and expectations;
- e) necessity;
- f) ability to implement strategies and achieve goals;
- g) a measure of the effectiveness of the organization;
- h) efficiency, functionality;
- i) a developmental and interactive process that embraces phenomena inside and outside the organization.

According to A. Pyszka, the quoted interpretation of effectiveness is so broad that it covers most of the definitions that are identified with, among others efficiency, efficacy, output, productivity<sup>4</sup>.

Consequently, depending on what entities we are dealing with, we can determine the level and type of effectiveness. These forms were also presented in the case study below.

### **Regional development as a key policy in the EU**

A wide conceptual framework of regional development originates from a wide regional planning tradition: "Regional/spatial planning gives geographical expression to the economic, social, cultural and ecological policies of society. It is at the same time a scientific discipline, an administrative technique and policy developed as an interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach, toward a balanced regional development and the physical organization of space according to an overall strategy".

Among macro-regions and the European Groupings for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), the relevance of regional and local cooperation has been stressed by the UN Habit, the EIB and the OECD. They all have voices of common concern on the importance of partnerships, and spreading this approach remains a vital component of consensual, effective development policy strategies and an appropriate level for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The trend noticed over the last few years for regional and local authorities to link up within worldwide networks, confirms a mutual interdependence on several fronts: economic, financial and food crisis, adjustment to climate change and the question of natural resources, as well as demographic and migratory challenges, which all require common solutions. In this respect, the 2009 initiatives taken by the Committee of the Regions (CoR) have been welcomed, both by regional authorities and their representative bodies on the one hand, and by a number of international organizations on the other hand. These initiatives are viewed as map-

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<sup>3</sup> E. Skrzypek, *Jakość i efektywność*. Wydawnictwo UMCS, Lublin 2002, p. 190.

<sup>4</sup> A. Pyszka, *Istota efektywności. Definicje i wymiary*, Studia Ekonomiczne. Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Katowicach nr 230/2015, p. 14.

ping out the form and substance needed for a territorial cooperation approach to the European neighbourhood policy and to a territorial approach to development. Some contributions call on the CoR to promote the regional dimension at international level. It could be along the same lines developed for the cohesion policy, which made it possible to demonstrate within the EU the relevance of integrated, growth-generating policies which help reduce inequalities while retaining regional characteristics. Others highlight the experience which the CoR could bring to bear in implementing regional and local authority platforms (e.g. the West African Economic and Monetary Union – UEMOA), thus promoting regional integration.

Regional planning influences both sector policies and local governments, but planning varies from country to country. Coordination and implementation in sector policies for regional planning purposes tends to be problematic, as it complicates decision-making. Complexity in regional planning implementation is a major obstacle as it presumes very good administrative capacity, cooperation ability as well as motivation (to work harder). In the case of redistributing regional planning, administration will act as a re-distributor of finances, but for the effective arrangement of regional development policy, local willingness and the ability of development in the region are required: to initiate and carry out projects, especially in cooperation with the private sector.

If regional statistics are to be a comparable number, the geographical areas need to be of comparable size in population terms. Their political, administrative and institutional arrangements should also be specified. Where applicable, non-administrative units must reflect economic, social, historical, cultural, geographical and environmental considerations. So, territorial units are defined in terms of the existing administrative units in the Member States. An 'administrative unit' marks out a geographical area for which an administrative authority has power to take administrative or policy decisions in accordance with the legal and institutional framework of the Member State. The NUTS level to which an administrative unit belongs is determined on the basis of population thresholds as follows in the NUTS table 2.

**Table 2. Classification of NUTS**

Level	Minimum population	Maximum population
NUTS 1	3 million	7 million
NUTS 2	800 000	3 million
NUTS 3	150 000	800 000

Source: own study based on the classification of the economic territory of the UE Member States.

Where the population of a Member State as a whole is below the minimum threshold for a given NUTS level, the Member State itself constitutes a NUTS territorial unit of that level. If, for a given level in the classification, there are no administrative units of an adequate size in a Member State, that level is to be established by aggregating an adequate number of smaller neighbouring administrative units. The resulting aggregated units are to be known as "non-administrative units".

To strengthen the consistency of the criteria for identifying European regions set to benefit from the Structural Funds and regional state aid in the interests of a

more targeted and more consistent Community action in granting the financial support available.

According to the definition of regional policy<sup>5</sup>, in the EU, one of the objectives is to reduce regional differences. As far as regional differences do not disappear within the market economy, many countries have implemented regional policies to a larger or smaller extent. The main causes of regional problems are changes in economic structure: a new industry tends to avoid the old industrial area<sup>6</sup>. Regional policy assists the economic restructuring of the region: it has an impact on market regulation by either offering direct (tax) incentives to new companies or creating indirect prerequisites such as infrastructure (educational system, roads etc).

### **The Community Strategic Guidelines**

The Community Strategic Guidelines contain the principles and priorities of the cohesion policy and suggest ways the European regions can take full advantage of the € 308 billion that has been made available for national and regional aid programmes over the period 2007-2013. The National Strategic Reference Framework (2007-2013), the key document outlining each Member State's strategic priorities in the implementation of the cohesion policy, establishes a clear link with the Lisbon National Reform Programmes.

According to the guidelines and in line with the renewed Lisbon strategy, programmes co-financed through the cohesion policy should seek to target resources on the following three priorities:

- improving the attractiveness of Member States, regions and cities by improving accessibility, ensuring adequate quality and level of services, and preserving their environmental potential;
- encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy by research and innovation capacities, including new information and communication technologies; and
- creating additional and better jobs by attracting more people into employment entrepreneurial activity, improving adaptability of workers and enterprises and increasing investment in human capital.

The Guidelines seek to provide a balance between the twin objectives of the growth and jobs agenda and territorial cohesion. Thus, it is recognized that there can be no question of a “one size fits all” approach to the 2007-2013 programmes.

### **The regional development policy**

Large differences in prosperity levels exist both between and within EU countries. The most prosperous regions in terms of GDP per capita (the standard measure of well-being) are all urban – London, Brussels and Hamburg. The wealthiest country, Luxembourg, is more than seven times richer than Romania and Bulgaria.

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<sup>5</sup> Derived from [www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu) (10.09.2017).

<sup>6</sup> P. Hall, *The geography of the fifth Kondratieff* [in:] D. Massey, J. Allen. *Restructuring Britain. Uneven Re-development, Cities and Regions in Transition*. London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1988, pp.6-47.

Regional inequalities have various causes. They may result from longstanding handicaps imposed by geographic remoteness or by more recent social and economic changes, or a combination of both. The impact of these disadvantages is frequently evident in social deprivation, poor quality schools, higher joblessness and inadequate infrastructures. In the case of some EU states, part of the handicap is a legacy of their former centrally-planned economic systems.

The key objective of the European Union's regional policy is economic and social cohesion. In order to narrow the socio-economic disparities that still exist between certain regions in the Union, the Commission established a number of financial instruments (Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund) to part-finance regionalized or horizontal measures in Member States. The solidarity tasks for regional economies are performed primarily at regional and national level. The Union contributes in a subsidiary fashion.

The regional policy is an instrument of financial solidarity and a powerful force for cohesion and economic integration. Solidarity seeks to bring tangible benefits to citizens and regions that are least well-off. Cohesion underlines the principle that we all benefit from narrowing the gap of income and wealth between our regions.

The principle of efficiency underlying regional policy entails the ability to identify the worst-affected areas so as to concentrate the Community part-financing in them in order to achieve a more incisive result. From the point of view of the Community competition policy, the objective of concentration is just as important since it makes it possible to demarcate geographically the extent of the distortions resulting from the granting of aid while promoting the development of the regions lagging behind.

An efficient regional policy is also necessarily a consistent policy capable of combining the objectives of regional aid granted at national level with the European regional policy<sup>7</sup>.

## **The European Strategic Development Framework**

The 28 National Strategic Reference Frameworks are set up by the Member States, and the Commission sets out the investment priorities for the new generation of regional and sectorial programmes to be supported by the European Union over the seven-year period 2014-2020. They draw their inspiration from the priorities adopted by the Member States in October 2006 in the "Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion".

In accordance with the Guidelines, the strategies confirm that the cohesion policy has today become the major source of investment from the European budget directly contributing to the Lisbon Strategy. The programmes seek to support the modernization and diversification of national and regional economies, improve competitiveness and underpin efforts to maintain macroeconomic stability<sup>8</sup>.

The implementation of 28 national strategies, and over 420 operational programmes, is only the beginning of the process. It is now down to the management authorities in Member States to ensure that by selecting the best projects, the pro-

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<sup>7</sup> Own elaborations derived from materials of ARDBI - Agency for Regional Development Bucharest Ilfov.

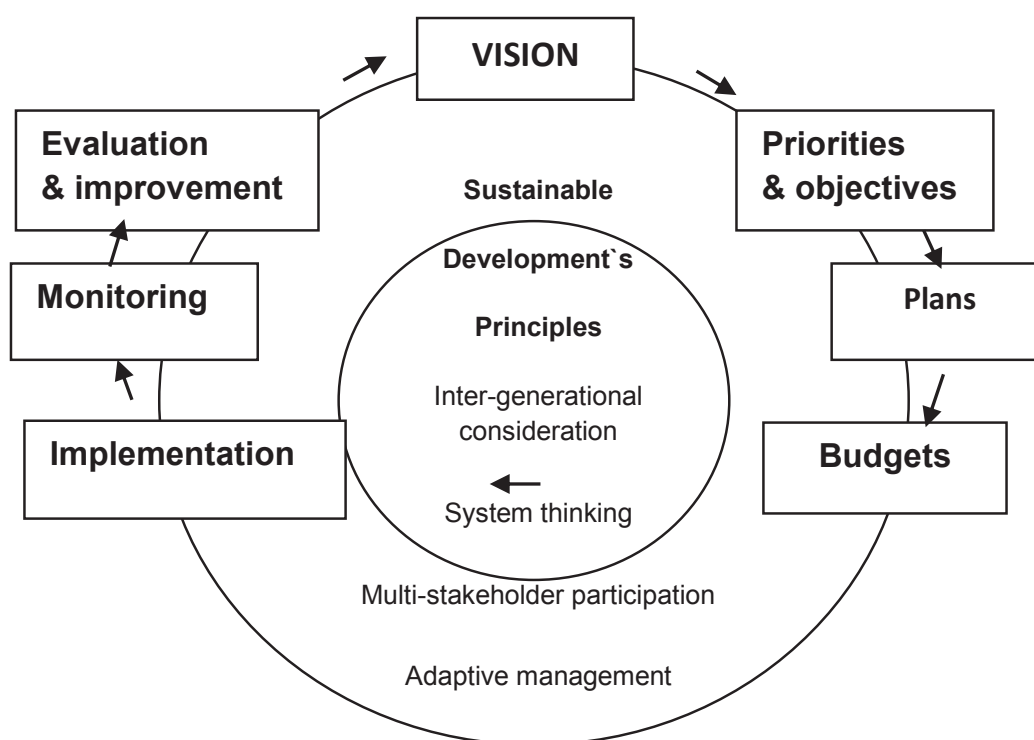
<sup>8</sup> Derived from [www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu) (10.09.2017).

grammes will have a real impact on growth and jobs for the benefit of citizens. The Commission stands ready to support the authorities over the coming period.

### The EU 2020 Strategy

In March 2010, the Commission proposed "Europe 2020: a European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth"<sup>9</sup>. This Strategy is designed to enhance the EU's growth potential and deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. Progress in achieving the objectives of the Strategy will be monitored by theme and by Member States as part of a new economic policy co-ordination process decided by the European Council. To track progress the Commission proposed five headline targets for the EU.

These will be translated into national targets by each Member State, reflecting their different starting points and the diversity of situations across the EU. Member States will pursue growth enhancing reforms in the key Europe 2020 thematic policy areas – these national plans will be set out in National Reform Programmes. Pursuing similar growth enhancing reforms at EU level, the Commission is launching seven flagship initiatives in priority policy areas.



**Figure 1. Effective governance – the synergy between government accountability /whole-of-Government planning and reporting systems and the National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (stylized components of strategic public management)**

Source: own study based on the report D. Swanson, L. Pintér, *Governance structures for National and Sustainable Development Strategies* (prepared for OECD), 2006, p.32.

<sup>9</sup> Communication (COM(2010) 2020 final) – "Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" derived from [www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu) (10.09.2017).

Our exit from the crisis must be the point of entry into a new economy. For our own and future generations to continue to enjoy a high-quality of healthy life, underpinned by Europe's unique social models, we need to take action now. What is needed is a strategy to turn the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. This is the Europe 2020 strategy. This is an agenda for all Member States, taking into account different needs, different starting points and national specificities so as to promote growth for all.

Europe 2020 sets out a vision of Europe's social market economy for the 21st century. The priorities for long term relevance and Europe's wide dimension are:

- limiting climate change and increasing the use of clean energy;
- addressing threats to public health;
- managing natural resources more responsibly;
- improving the transport system and land-use management;
- combating poverty and social exclusion;
- dealing with the economic and social implications of the ageing society.

### **Regional development in Romania and the Bucharest Ilfov Region – a case study**

The approach taken to secure integration in programmes has been the specification of 'horizontal priorities', which complement the 'vertical' priorities associated with the principal social and economic development objectives. These horizontal priorities give weight to environmental and gender equality issues in the design and delivery of programmes that are to be reflected in all of the measures and projects of the Programme.

#### **Operational Programmes 2007-2013 in Romania**

The management and implementation in Romania of the Operational Programme (OP) is the responsibility of the Managing Authority (MA). A number of other entities participate in the implementation and monitoring of OPs. A number of processes apply in the case of potential beneficiaries, submitting, approving and implementing project proposals. A number of strict procedures and management mechanisms apply in the case of the internal evaluation of the OP and reporting to the European Commission.

The evaluation of the OP is an activity inseparable from the overall OP management and implementation arrangements. It is a tool for assessing the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness of the financial assistance deployed, as well as the impact and sustainability of the results achieved. In accordance with all relevant national and EC Regulations, three main types of evaluations are carried out for the OP, namely the ex-ante evaluation (that has already been conducted in order to prepare the programme), the ongoing evaluation (during the implementation of the OP) and the ex-post evaluation (after the OP has been concluded). The OP's Managing Authority is the coordinator of the evaluation process.

The OP Monitoring Committee (OP MC) has a primary role in the monitoring of operations of the OP. The OP Managing Authority submits annually to the Euro-



pean Commission, an Annual Implementation Report by the 30th June each year until 2015. This report will be examined and approved by the OP MC before it is sent to the EC. The European Commission will review the report in view of making comments to the OP Managing Authority and to the national Government that will support the improvement of the implementation of the coming years. The OP Managing Authority will inform the OP Monitoring Committee of these comments.

### **The Regional Operational Programme (ROP) – REGIO**

The 2007-2013 Regional Operational Programme (ROP or Regio) was the main instrument for the implementation of the national strategy and of the regional development policy. It included all the 8 development regions of Romania, established through Law no. 151/1998 (Regional Operational Program, 2007, MRDH).

Regio included 6 thematic priority axes, namely:

- A1: Supporting the sustainable development of cities – potential growth poles;
- A2: Improving the regional and local transportation infrastructure;
- A3: Improving the social infrastructure;
- A4: Supporting the development of the regional and local business environment;
- A5: Sustainable development and promotion of tourism;
- A6: Technical assistance.

The strategic objective of the ROP focused on facilitating the economic and social development of the regions of Romania, in a sustainable manner and balanced at territorial level, in accordance with their needs and specific resources<sup>10</sup>. At national level the programme was handled by the Managing Authority within the Ministry for Regional Development and Public Administration (MRDPA).

Romanian cities, starting from the smallest up to the capital of the country, namely Bucharest, face problems related to the degradation of the buildings, the quality of life which is not always in accordance with the standards and expectations of most of the citizens and problems related to the quality of the environment. In order to solve some of these problems, the 2007-2013 Regional Operational Programme - REGIO - had at its disposal Priority Axis 1 – Supporting the sustainable development of cities – urban growth poles; Key Area of Intervention 1.1 – Integrated urban development plans; Sub-area: Urban centers. The projects submitted by the urban Local Public Authorities within the Integrated Urban Development Plans (IUDP) were able to be funded by means of this Area of Intervention 1.1.

### **The Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency**

The Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency (BIRDA) – non-government, non-profit organization of public utility – handled the implementation of the programme in the Bucharest-Ilfov region, managing approximately 375 mil Euro, the amount which was allocated to the region for the 2007-2013 period (+2 years). The objectives of the Agency focused on achieving territorial, economic and social cohesion, respectively promoting the principles of sustainable development of the Bucharest-Ilfov region, accelerating the innovation and know-how transfer processes.

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<sup>10</sup> Framework Implementation Document 2014, Ministry for Regional Development and Public Administration, derived from [www.fonduri-structurale.ro](http://www.fonduri-structurale.ro) (10.09.2017).

The Bucharest-Ilfov region - with a surface of 1821 square kilometers, out of which 13.1% represents the administrative territory of the Municipality of Bucharest and 86.9% of Ilfov County - is located in the southern part of the country, in the central part of the Câmpia Română region<sup>11</sup>.

### **The support of the Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency to the urban development**

In its capacity as the Intermediate Body for the 2007-2013 Regional Operational Programme - REGIO, the Bucharest-Ilfov RDA played an important role in informing the local public authorities about the possibility of benefiting from the funds provided by the European Union, in order to be able to improve the urban public infrastructure. Thus, in the period 2007-2013, BIRDA organized 368 events (seminars, caravans, conferences, round tables, meetings, exhibitions etc.) which were attended by 12,000 people (representatives of the local public authorities, members of the business environment, citizens, pupils, students, specialists, mass media representatives etc.).

By means of the events organized, BIRDA focused on:

- informing the representatives of the LPAs and the citizens about the possibility of funding projects which focused on improving the local public infrastructure (streets, green areas, public lighting network, public surveillance systems etc.);
- explaining to the representatives of the LPAs and to all the interested parties which are the eligibility conditions (applicant and project) which must be fulfilled in order to evaluate the project and sign the funding contract;
- promoting the results of the implemented projects and the positive impact that they have on the daily life of the citizens;
- bearing in mind that the financial allocation for REGIO comes from public funds, from the taxes and charges which are paid by the citizens of the European Union, and thus of Romania, to the budget of the EU and Romania, BIRDA and the REGIO funding beneficiaries have the duty to promote the funding source and the results obtained by using it.

It should not be forgotten that the direct allocation for the local public administrations (LPAs) through REGIO represented 80% of the total budget and 20% for NGOs, universities, religious institutions and SMEs. Thus, the accomplishments obtained through the projects which were developed by the LPAs have as a final beneficiary, and in many cases as active participants, the citizens from the community where the project was implemented, taking into account that most of these projects are addressed to them, as is the case of the one developed by the Buftea City Hall which we shall present below, bearing the title "Parcul dintre Flori" (the Park between the Flowers). After the funding contracts were signed BIRDA organized meetings with the funding beneficiaries in order to explain to them the provisions from Annex II to the funding contract – "Information and publicity measures" – measures which must be fulfilled.

Since the launching of the calls for proposals until the completion of the REGIO funded projects, the potential beneficiaries and the beneficiaries are per-

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<sup>11</sup> Own elaborations derived from materials of ARDBI- Agency for Regional Development Bucharest Ilfov.

manently advised in relation to the problems that they encounter. As a direct result of these consultations/counselling activities the Applicant's Guidelines were improved by means of corrigendum and implementation instructions for the projects that corrected or clarified specific aspects which were not foreseen when the Guidelines were drafted.

The activity carried out by the BIRDA experts together with the representatives of the LPAs (project team) resulted in the specialization of the latter in the field of the implementation of projects with European funds.

### **The case study of "Dintre Flori" Park (integrated urban planning in Buftea City)**

An example of the good collaboration between the BIRDA experts, the representatives of the LPAs and the local community resulted in the implementation of the Integrated Urban Development Plan (IUDP) for Buftea, respectively the implementation of the project Developing the "Dintre Flori" Park - architectural setting up and landscaping". Thus, the Buftea IUDP included 6 projects and was developed following a public consultation process. The methodology which was utilized for the public consultation was in accordance with the Buftea Integrated Urban Development Plan - IUDP, page 105<sup>12</sup> were the points following:

1. Identification of the problems and opportunities of Buftea City. The study was based on the welfare report method and the research instrument used within the said report was a questionnaire.

2. The public was informed about the development of the Integrated Plan, a press release was published in a national paper, and afterwards an announcement, regarding the development of the plan was published on the website of the city hall as well as on notice boards. The first draft of the Integrated Plan was published on the website of the city hall [www.primariabuftea.ro](http://www.primariabuftea.ro).

3. During the development of the Integrated Plan the population and business environment were constantly involved in the sustainable development of Buftea. The chosen instrument was public consultation, as it is a more sustainable manner of involving the public, taking into account that it involves an interactive exchange of information.

The method chosen for public consultation was a public hearing. Thus, on July 1st 2009 the public consultation was organized at the headquarters of the city hall, having as the topic the development strategy of the Buftea Integrated Urban Development Plan.

The aim of the public consultation was to obtain comments and collect the opinions of the population, business environment, NGOs, local and central public institutions regarding the content of the strategy, the proposed objectives and development measures. At the end of the meeting the participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire regarding the aspects mentioned above. The Integrated Urban Development Plan is based on the 2007-2013 Local Development Strategy of Buftea. The technical and financial developments were based on it, in accordance with the operational, technical and financial capacity of Buftea to accomplish the investments proposed in the IUDP.

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<sup>12</sup> Integrated Urban Development Plan (IUDP) for Buftea derived from [www.primariabuftea.ro](http://www.primariabuftea.ro) (10.09.2017).

One of the 6 projects included in the Buftea IUDP implemented through the 2007-2013 REGIO was: "Creation of the "Dintre-Flori" Park - architectural setting up and landscaping".

The citizens of Buftea City were fully involved since the beginning of this process, and they were consulted on June 7th 2009 about changing the intended use of the former landfill. The city hall organized a referendum to this regard in order to change the intended use of a surface of 59.87 hectares from "grazing land" to "yards-constructions".

The 3.1 hectares of land is situated between two neighbourhoods of Buftea, Buciumeni and Atârnat, having Zambilelor street on the north-west and west border, the Colentina river on the south-west and west border, Panselilor Street on the south-east and east border, and a private property on the northern border. These two neighbourhoods are suffocated by residential buildings which do not take into account any urban plan, nor the need for green areas. Thus, this project focuses on respecting, as much as possible, the human being and his problems, on respecting nature and contributing to improving the quality of the environment, complying with the general objectives in the Regional Operational Programme, as well as with those of the Local Development Strategy of Buftea. Therefore, it focuses on increasing the green areas fitted out to the highest possible standards, standards which are considered as being normal at the European level.

The general objective of the project was to develop the urban infrastructure and increase the quality of life and attractiveness for the youth, by improving the image of the city and by contributing to the creation of a local brand. This project contributes to the "Supporting the sustainable development of cities - urban growth poles" of Axis 1 and meets the strategic objectives and strategic development priorities of the Buftea urban action area. Specific objectives of the project were:

- to ensure non-discrimination, equal treatment, transparency, efficiency of using public funds (European and national), as well as accountability during the public procurement process;
- to develop green areas;
- to develop recreational and outdoor areas and to diversify the possibilities of spending spare time;
- to reduce traffic within the central park;
- to ensure equal living conditions by increasing the accessibility to recreational areas;
- to create new jobs by developing the "Dintre Flori" Park.

The activities of the project:

- Activity 1 – organizing and carrying out the public procurement procedures for the services of developing technical documentation;
- Activity 2 – drawing up the technical documentation;
- Activity 3 – obtaining approvals and authorizations;
- Activity 4 – submitting the funding request;
- Activity 5 – contracting the management services for the project;
- Activity 6 – establishing the Project Implementation Team and starting the project;
- Activity 7 – public procurement of works and services (site inspector, audit and publicity);

- Activity 8 – execution of works;
- Activity 9 – works hand-over;
- Activity 10 – site inspector;
- Activity 11 – technical assistance;
- Activity 12 – visibility of the project and dissemination of results;
- Activity 13 - monitoring, audit and reporting.

Following the implementation of the project, the Buciumeni neighbourhood obtained a park on a surface of 3.1 ha (instead of the landfill that was closed down through the PHARE pre-accession programme). The following results were obtained:

- 17,700 square meters of green areas and turf were fitted out;
- 623 trees and 1740 shrubs were planted;
- 3 playgrounds (667 square meters) were built;
- 155 benches, 6 swings and 84 trash bins were installed;
- alleys were built, having a total surface of 10,350 square meters;
- gazebos were built, having a total surface of 440 square meters.

The “green surface/inhabitant” indicator increased by 1.4 square meters in Buftea. The total value of the project was RON 15,238,361.33, out of which the contribution of the European Union was RON 9,887,316.59. The “Dintre Flori” Park provides the inhabitants with the possibility to spend their spare time in a micro climate which is healthy for outdoor activities.

The impression of the people spending their spare time in the park was also very satisfactory. When asked they said that they are proud that the project was implemented with the support of European funds, as it represents an opportunity to increase the quality of life in their community, an opportunity to improve the image and increase the visibility and attractiveness of the city that they belong to. The implementation of this project increased the influence of the green area, from the social perspective the citizens have a more diversified possibility to spend their spare time, and from the ecologic perspective, an area generating oxygen is improved and a healthy microclimate is created in order to be able to perform outdoor activities, said the representatives of the Ilfov County Council in a press release.

## Summary and conclusions

In order to promote the REGIO funded projects of Buftea City, BIRDA organized on November 18th 2014, a visit with the mass media representatives to four projects with REGIO funding in Buftea City, Ilfov County, including the “Dintre Flori” Park Project. On this occasion, the mayor of Buftea City gave interviews and presented the results, underlining the important support which was provided by the REGIO funds in the accomplishment of these projects. Additional information was provided it means the movie which presents the creation of the “Dintre Flori” Park and pictures from the mass media visit can be accessed on: <http://www.regioadrbi.ro/presa/vizite-la-proiecte/vizita-cu-mass-media-la-proiecte-regio-din-buftea-18092014.aspx>.

The project with REGIO funding - “Dintre Flori” Park was also promoted at international level in Brussels in 2014, when BIRDA organized on October 9th

2014 the Side Event Open Days-*European Week of Cities and Regions*. This event was also attended by the Mayor who opened the section dedicated to concrete examples of projects implemented through the 2007-2013 REGIO, by presenting the projects from Buftea, including the “Dintre Flori” Park<sup>13</sup>.

“Integration<sup>14</sup> is a good proxy for the overall effectiveness of the National Sustainable Development Strategies because the integration of the sustainability concept with existing planning and budgeting processes would:

- require that sustainability priorities and objectives be comprehensive in nature and operate in an integrated manner with economic, social and environmental issues (*relevance and comprehensiveness criteria*);
- inherently involve all departments (*departmental involvement criteria*);
- place responsibility for progress toward priorities and objectives with the Prime Minister or President’s office (or equivalent) and as well would involve the finance departments which coordinate and monitor the expenditures (*placement of responsibility criteria*);
- embed the sustainability concepts naturally within the legal requirement for departments to prepare plans and report annually on progress (*Legislative embedded less criteria*);
- demand formal involvement of multiple stakeholders through the regular process of preparing national budgets (*formal and multi-stakeholder involvement criteria*);
- provide guidance to other levels of government as national-level expenditures inherently impact local economic, social and environmental conditions (*guidance criteria*);
- help coordinate action with other levels of government via fiscal responsibility and accountability (*coordination criteria*)”.

So, the cohesion policy is a key community policy advancing the growth and jobs agenda across all the Union’s territories. It addresses the critical socio-economic challenges facing Europe in complementary and synergy with other community policies and against the background of global changes. „The cohesion policy system of multi-level governance based on decentralisation of responsibilities and a stronger role for actors on the ground has also broadened the ownership of the Lisbon agenda, as called for by the European Council in December 2007<sup>15</sup>.” Importantly, this approach also promotes more economic efficiency, as the local and regional levels increasingly tend to be best placed to meet and benefit from global changes.

The investment allocated to the institutional capacity should result in better quality national institutions involved in policy implementation. This is particularly

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<sup>13</sup> The presentation can be accessed at: [http://www.regioadrbi.ro/media/150878/Buftea% 20Projects\\_9oct2014.pdf](http://www.regioadrbi.ro/media/150878/Buftea%20Projects_9oct2014.pdf) and more details about the event are available on the BIRDA website at: <http://www.regioadrbi.ro/evenimente/parteneriate-pentru-investitii-inteligente-%C3%AEn-bucuresti-ilfov.aspx>.

<sup>14</sup> D. Swanson, L. Pintér, Governance structures for National and Sustainable Development Strategies (prepared for OECD), 2006, p. 26.

<sup>15</sup> Council of the European Union, Portuguese Presidency Conclusions of 14th December 2007, Brussels, 16616/07, Conclusion 3.

important in the context of shared management of the cohesion policy resources, which requires Member States to implement the programmes in accordance with sound financial management and control practices. In the multi-level system of the cohesion policy, the capacities of national and regional administrations are decisive in this respect.

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