



EUROPEAN UNION



GOVERNMENT OF ROMANIA



MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



INSTRUMENTE STRUCTURALE
2007 - 2013

Strategic IDPs Assessment



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Inițiativă locală. Dezvoltare regională.

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The team would like to thank the counterparts in the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, for the timely feedback, the support offered in the elaboration of this study, and the excellent collaboration throughout. The team would also like to thank the growth pole coordinators as well as the local authorities in the seven cities, for the feed-back and inputs provided during the elaboration of this report.

The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the Executive Directors of the World Bank, the European Union, or the Government of Romania.

December 20th, 2013

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Executive Summary

Integrated urban development planning has been increasingly emphasized in policy recommendations and guidelines at the EU level during the last decade in an effort to increase synergies and impact of public actions and investments. Integrated Development Plans have been introduced, in Romania, as prerequisite for accessing EU funds under the Regional Operational Program. During 2007-2013, at least 117 Romanian cities have drafted such plans either covering the urban and peri-urban areas (in the case of cities designated as growth poles) or specific areas within the urban administrative borders, defined as intervention areas.

The IDPs designed for growth poles represent a specific category of such strategic planning documents as (1) they need to be considered within the frame of the national policy to whose implementation they contribute and (2) they represent a first endeavor to think of development across functional areas rather than confined to the administrative borders of the main cities. The first aspect implies that the quality and effectiveness of IDPs must not only be seen with regards to the locally set objectives but also in the perspective of the aims of the growth poles policy to which they are subsumed. The second aspect brings about a set of legal and institutional challenges required to ensure proper governance and implementation of such plans. Adding to this and with reference to the novelty of such a planning practice in Romania, capacity building and communication is equally important.

There have been several positive aspects that need to be showcased in this first systematic exercise. The growth poles IDPs have generated a first opportunity for authorities within metropolitan areas to interact and debate on perspectives and priorities for development. Moreover, this interaction and dialogue has also engaged regional and national authorities. All these have been unprecedented as current practice shows that local authorities regularly draft strategies confined to own administrative borders and with little interest or engagement from other layer institutions. The IDPs have represented significant data gathering and consultation endeavors, with first attempts to underline growth area dynamics and integrate intra-urban territorial analysis. The architecture put in place has catalyzed the formation of metropolitan area inter-municipal cooperation structures. Also it has brought Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) closer to growth poles issues, by having them host the growth pole coordinators. Last but not least the IDPs have helped develop no less than 160 projects valued at 786 mil EUR, out of



which 123 projects are currently completed or in implementation (as of May 2013), and these include only the projects submitted for ROP funding.

As the current growth poles program is the first of its kind in Romania, there are several lessons learned as well as aspects that can be pushed forward in terms of quality and effectiveness in the next IDP generation. A set of such aspects regards the IDP design and quality, including:

- **Better sectorial integration of projects as well as integration at territorial level:** the mere existence of projects covering a wide array of sectors does not necessarily imply a truly integrated approach. Also territorial integration implies going beyond administrative borders and thinking of actions at wider metropolitan areas or zones within, which experience common challenges.
- **Better use of evidence:** the IDPs should move forward from using data as comprehensive documentation of the growth poles areas to evidence that help authorities better understand and discern among development scenarios. It is to stress that data is relevant to the extent that it reveals something useful for the authorities. This implies sets of indicators that would show tendencies and patterns both in time and territorially, and could also ensure comparability amongst poles. This also includes the use of data to communicate about challenges and solutions foreseen, which implies that attention should also be paid to data visualization and interpretation.
- **Mainstream of best practices and principles in sustainable urban development:** while the IDP, as an underlying principle, is aligned to planning practice recommendations, more can be done to integrate best practice planning principles within their content and set of prescription. Sustainable mobility projects, as opposed to anachronic investments on infrastructure enhancing automobile traffic, smart growth and density control as opposed to lack of control of urban sprawl or neglecting brownfield redevelopment, or attention to intra-urban inequalities are just a number of areas of concern for planners and urban developers across Europe, whose research results and lessons learned could be better integrated in the underlying concepts and action plans of growth poles IDPs.
- **Enhance monitoring and evaluation** is one of the aspects where IDPs have seemed to be unfinished work. The design of monitoring and evaluation mechanism should build more on instruments used,



indicators, and responsibilities. Indeed, this is dependent on having a clear set of targets for proper monitoring and evaluation.

- **Improve guidelines and methodologies:** that should not only provide for indicative content structure but also help authorities better understand the usefulness and rationale of integrated urban planning bring forward best practices from the country or abroad and promote sustainable urban planning principles. This is even more important as both integrated development planning as well as the growth poles policy are at their beginning and more communication and capacity building needs to be done for those involved – authorities, local stakeholders, consultants, etc – grasp their objectives, reach a common understanding and assume a similar set of minimum quality standards. General guidebooks, communication materials and sets of best practice examples are necessary accompanying (and preceding) guidelines for accessing funds.

Other aspects that can be object for improvement refer to the framework set to ensure effectiveness, including:

- **Institutional design:** more needs to be done in order to have local authorities better engage and assume the IDPs as overarching strategic planning document. This is an even more significant challenge as it implies the partnership among authorities of different sizes and political colors which reside under the same metropolitan area.
- **Legal framework:** be it straightly connected to an IDP or not, different regulatory improvements are necessary to increase the effectiveness of IDPs in Romania. This includes a better regulatory framework for inter-municipal cooperation, to allow for enhanced governance structures at metropolitan level, functional public-private partnership regulations, essential to be able to mobilize the business environment in jointly funding and implementing integrated projects or other legal aspects that hinder different urban interventions (such as dealing with private property rights in urban regeneration initiatives, and so on).
- **Overarching policy:** last but not least, IDP improvements are dependent on growth poles policy improvements as well as other policies planned with regards to urban development.



Those highlighted above imply responsibilities for several layers of administration. Qualitative improvements require increased dialogue between growth poles policy proponents (i.e. the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration (MDRPA)) and growth poles governance bodies (i.e. local and regional administration). More engagement from the part of central authorities with regards to presenting examples of best practices, (non-restrictive) methodological guidelines and facilitating contact among growth poles to share experiences. Local authorities should assume such exercise more than a means to access EU funds, and more as a means to coordinate efforts and discuss common metropolitan level development challenges and objectives. Also, it is essential to generate bottom-up pro-activity and ownership with respect to IDPs and be able to assume the implied roles.

Improvements with regards to an enabling environment for IDPs focus to a larger extent on the role of central authorities. Long term improvements in growth poles governance is reliant on different regulatory progresses such as laws referring to inter-municipal cooperation or facilitating public-private partnership.

This report has aimed to assess the 2007-2013 IDPs and come up with a coherent set of recommendations that will help the next generation of IDPs move forward in terms of standards and impact. While this endeavor has brought to light many aspects that will hopefully be of use in the learning process, some open questions still remain.

Introduction

The Romanian Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration has signed an agreement with the World Bank for a set of technical assistance projects aiming to determine how cities in Romania can become more competitive, sustainable, and inclusive as well as help the ministry develop administrative capacity to better manage its policy and investment work.

The Romania Regional Development Program, comprising these technical assistance projects, is in tune with the Europe 2020 Strategy and includes the following components:

1. Enhanced spatial planning as a precondition for urban development;
2. Upgrade growth poles strategic planning and economic impact;
3. Assessment of the communication and collaboration between Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies of the ROP and facilitation of proactive and direct support for beneficiaries;
4. Technical assistance for the identification of project selection models;
5. Elaboration of integration strategies for poor areas and disadvantaged communities.

The current report is part of the second project regarding the growth poles policy and aims to provide a strategic assessment of the contents of the existing seven Integrated Development Plans of Romania's growth poles, in the context of preparing for the next programming period (2014-2020). More specifically, the report represents the third component of the growth poles policy project, having as objectives:

- To carry out a strategic evaluation of the seven IDPs and assess how the current plans compare with the diagnostic of the challenges identified in the work on urban development, the functional review of growth poles, and the TRACE analyses.
- To provide clear recommendations for the improvement of existing IDPs which, on the one hand, will contribute to the elaboration of the future generation of plans implemented during the next programming period and, on the other hand, will help improve the targeting of investments to enhance their economic impact.



This report is complementary to other project components, namely the functional review of the current growth poles policy in Romania as well as a the socio-economic analyses linked with the Europe 2020 strategic objectives for each of the 7 growth poles (including Tool for Rapid Assessment of City Energy – TRACE – analyses). Other activities under the Romania Regional Development Program are strongly correlated with the current work, especially the reports *Competitive Cities: Reshaping Romania's Economic Geography* and *Enhanced Spatial Planning as a Precondition for Urban Development*.

The final aim of the current project is to help the Government of Romania prepare the next programming period by strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of the growth poles policy in the country. A related objective is to enhance the strategic planning capacity of the seven growth poles identified in Romania in order to better target investments that enhance economic impact.

The report is composed of three main parts. The first chapter sets out the context of the emergence of integrated development planning in Romania, contextualizing these developments amidst EU policy documents and conceptual debates. The second chapter briefly presents the analysis of each growth pole IDP, following a methodology and detailed evaluation fiches presented as annexes. Based on these evaluations, the third chapter highlights a set of challenges to be considered, both in terms of integrated development planning in general in Romania, as well as the new generation of growth poles IDPs for the next programming period. Lastly, these three chapters are followed by a set of synthetic conclusions designed for each main parties involved in this process, on one hand the growth poles governing bodies and on the other hand, the MRDPA.

Chapter I. The emergence of integrated development planning in Romania

What are the integrated plans for (urban) development of Romanian growth poles and what are they expected to achieve? First of all, IDPs are instruments created in order to implement the EU cohesion policy in Romania, through the Regional Operational Programme. Second, IDPs are non-statutory plans that promote an integrated urban development approach, which has become a best practice for urban development within the EU. Third, IDPs are integrated plans for urban development, which is different from “plans for integrated urban development”, a subtle, but important difference. IDPs are on the one hand based on the concept of integration, as well as on the other hand being tools for sustainable urban development overall. Finally, there is the dimension of growth poles themselves and how IDPs contribute to achieving the objectives of the growth pole policy in Romania.

Understanding the strengths and limitations of the IDPs of growth poles in Romania means first of all unpacking what IDPs are from these four perspectives. The analysis of growth pole IDPs has been made using a methodology derived from the triangulation of criteria emerging from these perspectives (Annex 1). Complementary to this, discussions with each growth pole representatives have taken place and conclusions have been integrated in the discussion on each IDP. Lastly, a specific commentary on recommendations from the next programming period based on other World Bank reports, including TRACE reviews, have been added.

IDPs and the EU 2007-2013 Programming Period: Introducing the Focus on Cities

While integrated urban development is a concept with decades-long history, in Romania it was popularized more recently, catalyzed by the accession to the EU and increased exposure to the practice and policies of urban development in the European space. The concept was introduced as structural funds were redirected to cities based on IDPs and as part of a growing emphasis of the EU's cohesion policy on cities.

Since 1986, the European Community, the predecessor of the European Union has embraced the Cohesion Policy as a way to strengthen economic and social cohesion within Europe. Since the Lisbon Treaty and the Europe 2020 Strategy, territorial cohesion emerged as a third



dimension of the Cohesion Policy. The territorial cohesion policy aims to capitalize on the strengths of each territory, to manage concentration of the positive impacts of cities, such as innovation and economies of scale, and to address negative externalities such as pollution or social exclusion, and to better connect territories and enhance territorial cooperation.

The EU Regional Policy is centered on cohesion. Between 2007 and 2013 the EU invested 347 billion euros in Europe's regions, aiming to reduce social, economic and territorial disparities between them. According to the Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion 2007-2013, the Goals of Cohesion Policy for 2007-2013 were:

- Improving the attractiveness of Member States, regions and cities by improving accessibility, ensuring an adequate quality and level of services and preserving the environmental potential;
- Encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy;
- Creating more and better jobs, improving adaptability of workers in enterprises and increasing investments in human capital.

The urban dimension of these guidelines was developed by a subsequent EU document called "Cohesion Policy and Cities: the Urban Contribution to Growth and Jobs in the Regions", which contains several suggestions for the Member States to prepare programmes financed based on Structural Funds. The document gave examples of recommended projects and programmes to be financed by the EU:

- rehabilitation of urban streets;
- modernization of urban transport;
- support for development of business structures and the entrepreneurial environment;
- the creation of infrastructure needed for business;
- rehabilitation of social infrastructure (child care facilities, centers for elder persons, assistance centers for persons with disabilities, youth centers, etc);
- acquisition of equipment needed for increasing safety and preventing criminality (surveillance systems, etc).



In order to introduce this approach to Romania, an **Ex-ante evaluation of the Regional Operational Programme**, conducted as part of the PHARE program, gave several recommendations¹:

- “1. Socio-economic analyses should be structured in such a way that all factors for regional development are taken into account. A rather comprehensive analysis of all aspects of these determinants should be taken into account. The relevance of the chosen strategy, its objectives and priorities will improve if this starts from a complete picture of the socio-economic situation. (...)
2. It is strongly recommended to strengthen the relationship between the regional policy objectives and those for the spatial development. For this reason the tools for spatial planning and regional development should be adapted and fine-tuned in such a way that the available potentials can be better utilized for the region as a whole. Also closer relations should be built between the authorities that are responsible for these policy areas. (...)
3. For a more balanced development in Romania the capital cities should be better used as engines of socio-economic development in their region (growth poles). At the same time, possible agglomeration effects of small and medium sized cities in the more rural areas have to be utilized if their potentials have been proved. Also, in order to make programme activities as visible as possible, the ROP should strongly anticipate on these development opportunities. (...)
4. It is the intention of the Romanian authorities to direct, to a certain extent, the available resources to the regions which are most lagging behind. It is however, expected that financial, administrative and technical bottlenecks at regional and local level do exist. It is recommended to monitor closely the division of the resources among the regions and to deliver additional technical assistance to those regions /municipalities that could otherwise be excluded from EU support. (...)
5. Tourism development is by all means development. Regions are seen as an important potential for improving economic growth and employment. To utilize these potentials as optimal as

¹ Government of Romania. **Ministry of Development, Public Works and Housing (2007)** “Regional Operational Programme. 2007-2013”. retrieved from http://www.mdrl.ro/_documente/POR/ROP%20Final%20Version.pdf.



possible, it is recommended – if they don't already exist - to draft regional tourism development strategies in the beginning period of the ROP. These strategies should also comprise components for information and promotion. (...)

6. When elaborating implementation documents it is further recommended to give priority to projects which:
 - Strongly relate to other priority axes and/or SOPs;
 - Are commonly submitted by groups of municipalities / communes;
 - Which also orient strongly on Strengths and Opportunities;
 - Promote sustainable economic and social development.”

The result of this analysis and the expression of EU cohesion policy in Romania has been the **“Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013”**, conceived by the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism in 2007. According to the ministry, “the purpose of ROP is [...] to support, to the extent possible, an equally balanced growth of all parts of the Country not that much by redistributing public resources but by ensuring that all areas should have a minimum level of business, social and human capital infrastructure to allow growth to take place.”

Strategic Objective

The ROP strategic objective consists in supporting the economic, social, territorially balanced and sustainable development of the Romanian regions, according to their specific needs and resources, focusing on urban growth poles, improving the business environment and basic infrastructure, in order to make the Romanian regions, especially the ones lagging behind, more attractive places to live, visit, invest in and work.

Specific Objectives of ROP

In order to accomplish the strategic objective of ROP, the Ministry established a series of specific goals:

- To increase the economic and social role of urban centers, adopting a polycentric approach, in order to stimulate a more balanced development of regions;
- To increase accessibility within regions and in particular the accessibility of urban centers and their connection to surrounding areas;
- To increase the quality of social infrastructure of regions;
- To increase the competitiveness of regions as business locations;



- To increase the contribution of tourism to the development of regions.

The growth poles play a privileged role in the ROP, as they are seen as the engines of regional development and cohesion. Priority Axis 1 approaches the development of these growth poles through the creation of integrated urban development plans.

Objectives of Priority Axis 1

This priority axis aims to *"increase the quality of life and to create new jobs in cities, by rehabilitating the urban infrastructure, improving services, including social services, as well as by developing business support structures and entrepreneurship"*.²

The rationale of this objective lays in the conception that *"it is essential to support the local urban growth poles in order to perform their urban functions, especially those urban centres, which have intense connections with and influence the development of the surrounding rural areas."*³ The program foresees that, considering the current development context of Romania's urban centers, funds allocated to urban development will be spent following a rough division, as follows: 60% for urban public infrastructure, 25% for social infrastructure and 15% for business environment.

The key instrument of intervention is the **integrated urban development plan**. The IUDDP is a non-statutory plan (not stipulated by the national legislation), required by the Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013 for the cities to qualify for funding under ROP Priority Axis 1 – Sustainable Urban Development. The integrated urban development plans are expected to be implemented by portfolios of projects addressing the different challenges and opportunities identified in the growth poles areas. Such projects are expected to be funded both through the ROP allocation but also funds made available through other operational programs. The projects eligible for funding under ROP Axis 1 include:

² Government of Romania. **Ministry of Development, Public Works and Housing (2007)** "Regional Operational Programme. 2007-2013". retrieved from http://www.mdrl.ro/_documente/consultare_cadru/por_en.pdf

³ Government of Romania. **Ministry of Development, Public Works and Housing (2007)** "Regional Operational Programme. 2007-2013". retrieved from http://www.mdrl.ro/_documente/consultare_cadru/por_en.pdf



1. **Rehabilitation of the urban infrastructure and improvement of urban services, including urban transport:**
 - Physical regeneration of city centers and public spaces is particularly important for improving the inhabitant's quality of life and stimulating the establishment of new economic activity;
 - For the physical regeneration of deprived urban areas will be supported activities for the completion and/or renovation of obsolete buildings (and their preparation for new economic and social activities);
 - The rehabilitation of historical and cultural heritage;
 - The demolition of badly deteriorated buildings and/or structures, which do not belong to the national cultural heritage;
 - The development and/or rehabilitation of urban public infrastructure and utilities, namely rehabilitation of urban streets, including related infrastructures and renovation of public spaces and different type of urban infrastructure (pedestrian zones, pavements, public lighting, etc.);
 - Unused polluted sites (abandoned industrial sites, unused lands) will also be rehabilitated and prepared for new uses;
 - Investments in urban public transport friendly environmental as well as the use of alternative forms of transport like cycling, walking etc.

2. **Development of sustainable business environment:**
 - Support the development of entrepreneurship for stimulating economic activities and the creation of new jobs that will have an impact on increasing the competitiveness of deprived urban areas by the creation and / or rehabilitation of different business infrastructures.

3. **Rehabilitation of social infrastructure, including social housing and improvement of social services:**
 - Providing services that help residents combine their professional and family duties;
 - Rehabilitation of social infrastructure and improvement of social services will aim at the rehabilitation of social infrastructure (child-care centers, old people's homes, centers providing assistance to disabled persons, youth centers etc);
 - Acquisition of equipment for increasing security and preventing crimes (surveillance systems, etc).



The current report suggests an analysis on whether the projects proposed by each IDP transcend the simple „ticking” of eligible activities and reflect an engagement with the goals of integrated urban development, integration, and sustainable urban development. Consequently, projects in the IDP should be examined against the standard best practice in sustainable urban development.

Understandings and Best Practices of Sustainable Integrated Urban Development

The integrated approach was developed starting with the 1980s and is based on the premise that only capitalizing on the various synergies existing between the economic, the social and the spatial on the one hand, and between different stakeholders on the other hand, can lead to a territorial development that clearly reflects the potential of an area and efficiently answers to challenges. An integrated urban development policy would be an appropriate tool to promote functional urban areas, attenuate socio-spatial exclusion patterns and address challenges faced by deprived people and disadvantaged neighborhoods.

First integrated development initiatives under the EU framework included the **Urban Pilot Projects**. These represented a first attempt of the EC to see how structural funds could be best applied within urban areas reckoning that areas of poverty and decay existed even in most prosperous cities across the union. The first round was rolled between 1990 and 1996 and included 33 projects and was followed by a second round of 25 projects implemented up to 1999. The UPP have been perceived as an innovative approach to tackling problems of urban poverty and decay and lead to an important set of lessons learned.

The UPP experience was further considered in developing subsequent programming and financing instruments such as the URBAN Community Initiative. The **URBAN Community Initiative** was actually introduced in parallel with the UPP in 1994, running as first round up until 1999 (URBAN I) and second round until 2006 (URBAN II). Both rounds channeled EUR 1.63 billion EU funds to benefit of almost 200 cities across the Union.

Learning⁴ stemming from such programs included the testing and implementing of new forms of urban governance dealing with urban

⁴ *Urban Pilot Projects, Annual Report 1996, EC / DG Regional Policy and Cohesion, ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd.*



regeneration as well as developing a better understanding of the impact of integrated and spatially focused approach. Projects included a mix of activities, such as training and employment initiatives together with physical urban redevelopment, which were proven successful in addressing long term unemployment and social exclusion. Also, projects were targeted to a narrow and clearly set perimeter within city areas.

Further on, policy documents such as the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities and the Toledo Declaration, further articulated and promoted integrated planning and urban development principles to be considered by member states legislative and policy frameworks.

The Leipzig Charter was issued in 2007 at the initiative of the German EU Presidency and has been adopted in the meeting of the Council of Ministers in charge of urban policy. According to the German Institute for Urbanism⁵, the **Leipzig Charter** main issues include:

- Moving away from a strictly “top down” approach in favor of strengthening “bottom up” approaches and the interaction between the two;
- Orientation of the objectives, strategies, measures and projects in specific areas keeping in mind city-wide and (in some cases) regional approaches;
- A stronger focus of sectoral policies and action fields on problems and potentials which can be identified in urban areas, such as the problem of socio-spatial exclusion which affects all policy areas;
- An area-based approach: an area-based approach provides not only a basis for the identification of problems and potentials of individual urban areas (neighborhoods), but also for communication and cooperation between all actors involved. It is at the same time both the starting point and focus of integrated approaches to the urban (district) development. Only an area-based approach can provide the opportunity of overcoming target-group-related, and therefore limited, sectorial policies;
- Pooling resources: a prerequisite for the success of integrated urban (district) development is the multi-disciplinary collaboration of political and administrative control levels (EU, national, regional,

⁵ Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau und Stadtentwicklung and Institut für Deutsche Urbanistik (IfDU) (2007) *Integrated Urban Development as a Prerequisite of a Sustainable City*. Background Study on the „Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities” of the German



local). The integration of non-governmental resources – in particular of private companies and foundations – is increasingly playing an important role. Pooling resources also means improving cooperation content-wise between different authorities or administrative areas – by all means in the interaction of the different levels of the EU, national state, region and local authority;

- Activation and participation, empowerment: Equally important is the inclusion of local residents and entrepreneurs in urban (district) development. Not only are they experts of the situation on the ground, its problems and potentials, but their everyday life also creates their community's development. Tools supporting participatory processes therefore need to be continually refined and developed in order to meet the specific requirements of participation, particularly of children, teenagers and inhabitants with immigrant backgrounds as well as local entrepreneurs. The same is true for strategies and instruments supporting activation and empowerment. Furthermore, social institutions, associations and local initiatives should also be extensively involved at the neighborhood level to strengthen civil engagement.
- Network-oriented administration and organization: The administration and organization of an integrated urban (district) development should address both the problems' complexity and potentials on site. It is important to coordinate cross-departmental collaboration at the administrative level, facilitate communication with and within the local population, to create a network between administration and neighborhood entities as well as include (local) economic, education/training and other relevant agents in the planning and implementation of projects and activities;
- Integrated development concept: Ideally, the implementation of an integrated urban development should be based upon an integrated development concept which would include a presentation of the strengths and weaknesses of the whole city and neighborhoods, (attainable) goals for various areas, the possibility of using combined public and private financial resources as well as a network of policy areas and actors in the political and administrative realm ("planning from a single source") which also includes citizen, economic actors' and others' participation;
- Such an integrated urban development policy would be an appropriate tool to promote efficient urban areas, attenuate socio-spatial exclusion patterns and develop deprived people and



disadvantaged neighborhoods' potentials for social and spatial integration.

The Toledo Declaration (Toledo Reference Document on Integrated Urban Regeneration and its Strategic Potential for a Smarter, More Sustainable and Socially Inclusive Urban Development in Europe)⁶ was adopted in 2010 by the EU ministers of urban policy, being seen as a political acknowledgment and commitment to an integrated approach to urban development.

The **Toledo Declaration** proposes:

- a holistic approach, running through all relevant topics and policy areas;
- horizontal networking within the levels involved (EU, nation-state, region, local authority, neighborhood), vertical networking between these levels;
- strategic planning at citywide level by means of an integrated urban development concept;
- linking the integrated approach to an area-based approach / spatial perspective;
- linking the integrated approach to the aim of inclusion.

From the urban environment viewpoint:

A genuine 'green, ecological or environmental' regeneration of cities must be undertaken, including such key issues as:

- Reducing transport needs by the promotion of proximity and mixed-uses schemes;
- Stimulating a more sustainable mobility by prioritizing non-motorized ('walkable', 'cyclable' cities);
- Supporting affordable and efficient public transport;
- Improving the management of energy and material resources and flows in the city (urban metabolism), including the whole water cycle, waste, etc;
- Promoting renewable energies;

⁶ Gobierno de España, Ministerio de Vivienda (2010) *Integrated Urban Regeneration in the European Union. Toledo Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development. Annex List of the Countries Surveyed*. Toledo, June 2010.



- Boosting energy efficiency in existing buildings (by improving the thermal insulation of exterior walls, roofs and glazing, and the efficiency of heating and other installations);
- Recycling land by means of urban regeneration of abandoned, derelict or unused areas, etc;
- Protecting natural, landscape, forestry, water resources, agricultural areas, etc. around cities ‘re-greening’ the existing city, etc.

From the social viewpoint:

- Fostering employment, reducing the number of early school leavers and the reducing the poverty risk are the main social targets of the Europe 2020 strategy;
- Active inclusion policies should facilitate the integration into sustainable, quality employment of those who can work;
- Housing policies are particularly important: on the one hand, decent and affordable housing; while on the other hand, housing and building renovation, retrofitting and upgrading can provide tangible and considerable improvements in its inhabitants’ daily lives.

From the economic viewpoint:

- ‘regenerate the urban economy’, stimulating an economy of knowledge, creativity, excellence and innovation, strengthening endogenous development and diversifying local production systems;
- Building retrofitting, physical upgrading and the modernization of infrastructures are not only some of the essential requirements for the attractiveness of a city, but also fairly labor-intensive sectors, and therefore a potential new source of jobs.

From the viewpoint of governance:

- Good governance, based on the principles of openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness, coherence and subsidiarity, is required in order to assure the successful implementation of public policies, a more efficient and effective allocation of public resources and to increase citizen’s direct participation, involvement, engagement and empowerment.

In parallel with such programs, funding instruments specifically designed to integrated investments have been developed as well, such as **JESSICA**, the Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas, launched in 2007. According to JESSICA, integrated plans “comprise of a



system of interlinked actions which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental conditions of a city or an area within the city. The key to the process is “integration”, meaning that all policies, projects and proposals are considered in relation to one another. In this regard, the synergies between the elements of the plan should be such that the plan as a whole adds up to more than would the sum of the individual parts if implemented in isolation.”⁷

By mid-2011, 22 JESSICA operations were already in implementation, having committed 1.89 billion EUR⁸.

Applying the Integrated Approach in Romania – First Accomplishments

As seen above, the Integrated Development Plans of growth poles should aim to align to cohesion policy goals, ROP goals as well as integrated urban development goals.

Inter-correlation with other planning/strategic documents

In connection with other planning and strategic documents, IDPs are non-statutory documents, recommended to be thoroughly aligned to spatial and urban plans.

As reflected in the *Enhanced Spatial Planning as Precondition for Urban Development Report*, the strategic framework at local level can indeed be at times confusing and overlapping. The growth pole areas can be addressed by a wide array of regulatory and/or strategic documents including:

- the general urban plans and local development strategies of the TAU involved;
- strategic documents regarding the county level – the County Spatial Plan, the county development strategy and other county level

⁷ Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas –JESSICA, *Integrated plans for sustainable urban development in the context of JESSICA. Methodology and characteristics*

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/funds/2007/jjj/doc/pdf/jessica/20100325_integrateplans.pdf

⁸ EU Regional Policy, *JESSICA Implementation in the EU Member States – State of Play*, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/doc/instruments/jessica/20111019_jessica%20state_of_play.pdf



- strategies/programs with regard to water and waste management, s.o.;
- the Zonal Metropolitan Spatial Plan, provided of its existence. However few of the growth poles areas have elaborated such planning documents.

The framework law on spatial and urban planning (Law 350 / 2001) has introduced first mentions on integrated development planning through its latest amendment issued in 2011. These newly introduced articles (Art no. 43¹) stipulate the need to elaborate zonal territorial development strategies covering metropolitan areas. Such strategies are considered as integrated territorial planning documents meant to substantiate general urban plans. Integrated urban development is also associated with the zonal urban plans (Art. 47, Par. 1) which regard specifically designated areas within the territorial administrative units.

IDPs assessment

Analyzing the various perspectives, the report suggests a set of criteria that expresses how an ideal urban development plan should look like according to the current best practices. The analysis of individual IDPs was conducted using the set of criteria included as Annex 1. Having this lens in mind, the analysis of IDPs considers the extent to which:

- The IDP reflect the integration of urban development domains (sectorial integration) and
- The process of elaborating and implementing the IDP integrates different stakeholders and agencies (vertical and horizontal integration).

The IDPs have been, under no doubt, an important step forward in the practice of integrated urban planning in Romania. Their drafting may have also provided the first occasion to bring into discussion municipal cooperation, to build awareness on the functional area problems and issues as well as experience urban – peri-urban collaborative work. Some of the main positive aspects of IDPs elaborated so far include the following dimensions.

The plans have a standardized, clear structure in terms of their main chapters, facilitating cross-comparisons of different IDPs⁹:

- General description;
- Development strategy;

⁹ Full table of contents stipulated in the Solicitant Guide is presented as Annex 2.



- Spatial profile and intervention areas;
- Action plan;
- Implementation management.

IDPs typically include substantial, rich data, particularly under the general description section. This helps guide some of the strategic objectives and policy implications. Several sound principles are often cited as critical for an area's development, in line with global thinking on the subject. These include mobility, distance/connectivity to major European transport axes (typically a separate sub-section in each IDP), quality-of-life investments, which are usually included in IDP's strategic objectives.

Many IDPs show a genuine concern for integration and truly metropolitan-level planning. There are also exceptions to this rule where the central economic center monopolizes most projects, leaving surrounding localities with opportunities mostly limited to social assistance projects. It is unclear how those types of investments promote local economic growth in the absence of strong connections to the growth pole, decent education, healthcare, etc. Tools like SWOT analyses, when properly used by IDPs, shed light on pressing needs and opportunities in each respective growth pole.

Chapter II. In-depth Analysis of the Growth Poles Integrated Development Plans

This following section presents an overview of some of the key issues identified in each individual IDP, recognizing that, while local authorities had to follow the same structure when developing the IDPs, there are differences in individual outcomes and ways in which they devised the action plans.

The analysis is based on a set of criteria outlined in Annex 1, which is derived from the integration of the multiple perspectives presented in the previous chapters. Several aspects were further detailed in discussions with growth pole governance structure representatives.



Braşov

The Braşov growth pole area is comprised of the city of Braşov and 13 other settlements, accounting for a population of 403,867 inhabitants. Braşov plays the role of the growth pole for the Center Development Region.

Main best practices identified in the Brasov IDP:

- Public consultation including questionnaires for residents;
- Clear and effective representations of relationships between needs, objectives, policies, programs, policies and funding;
- Shows a good understanding of, and assumes its strategic position in the region;

Key issues raised for the reform of the POR:

- Some of the analysis in the IDP is redundant and does not contribute to the overall argument made in the plan;
- A number of normative statements are made, without necessarily having the data to back those statements up;
- Some of the projects discussed in the IDP have only a limited amount of detail, and their relevance to the development of the growth pole is not clear.

Content of the IDP: from analysis to urban development projects

A. Analysis

The overall analysis is comprehensive, covering all the required levels of analysis with relevant information. The level of detail in which data is presented is, however, unequal and shows that some sections have been prepared more carefully than others. The analytical sections suffer from



redundancy, with sections repeating the same information which contribute to a rather lengthy overall document (303 pages, without annexes). For instance, SWOT analysis are duplicated both at the end of each subchapter and in the diagnostic section. Same basic data such as demography tables are presented identically in several parts of the documents (p. 7, p. 14 and p.177).The chapter on territorial disparities (p.166) includes a great deal of overlap with previous sections as well as the section of spatial and functional profile (p.260). Introducing such a new chapter – relative to the recommended structure by ROP MA - is to be appreciated as focus of analysis, however analysis of disparities might have well been mainstreamed all throughout different sectoral parts of the document, thus avoiding duplication and contributing to an even lengthier document.

Another new section introduced in the Braşov IDP is the one referring to research and innovation which does a good job in presenting a snapshot on the Braşov existing RDI structures and potential (p.150).

The analysis suffers at times from the point of view of thoroughness and rigor, also containing contradictions and inconsistencies¹⁰. While the analysis provides a good understanding of the area, at times, normative statements appear in the analytical section, without any data backing. For instance, at p. 49, instead of analyzing the mobility problems, it is stated simply that “Overpasses and underpasses should be built”. Finally, as with most growth pole IDPs, the SWOT analyses are not done comprehensively, i.e. they are just a list of strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats, without going further to provide strategic scenarios which can lead to policies and projects.

Another good feature of the analysis is that each section is finalized with a short set of conclusions which help sum up and recap the main findings.

B. Strategy

The vision for the growth pole is “Brasov will become the model of sustainable development from the Center region, based on inter-territorial solidarity, economic competitiveness and social cohesion”. The Brasov IDP offers good examples for displaying connections between the analysis and the strategy, for instance the connection between the vision

¹⁰ For instance, at pp. 20-21, it is mentioned that there are 9400 Roma in Sacele according to 2002 census, but at the same time only 0.9 % Roma in Sacele according to 2002 census (pp. 20-21), while total population in Sacele was 31 043. Either the number or the proportion is wrong.



and the results of the SWOT analysis. There is a useful summary of strategic objectives (p.215-217), however, again, there is little prioritization between the five strategic objectives, which cover a lot of ground and potential projects.

C. Projects

There are a high number of projects included on the list, covering a wide array of concerns. The main section of the document contains a list of 300 projects, which had been identified in correlation with strategic objectives, programs, policies and funding sources. Nevertheless, the caveat is that it is not clear what some of these projects actually entail. No information is provided regarding value of the projects, beneficiaries, brief description, etc. A further issue with the Brasov IDP is that there is no information about priority projects (the selection methodology being also extremely vague).

The list of proposed projects is comprehensive and covers a wide array of topics, and a wide array of funding sources. However, there is a strong focus on the type of projects that are funded through EU Operational Programmes. As such, the IDP seems to be primarily geared towards attracting EU funds (ROP funds in particular), rather than being a comprehensive development strategy that EU funds could contribute to.

The projects are generally representative of the contemporary state of the art. One area for improvement would be the greening the economy, which does not receive as much attention in this PID as for other growth poles.

Projects Regarding the Urban Environment

The IDP includes a high number of projects dealing with improving accessibility and links throughout the metropolitan area. One significant project is the creation of an integrated metropolitan, multimodal transport system, yet there is no information about what this actually entails. In fact, there is a general lack of information about certain projects – e.g. the modernization of the public transport in Săcele.

With regards to alternative mobility projects, there is a project on bike sharing and the creation of bike lanes. Nevertheless, there are no projects which directly engage with improving walkability. While this becomes a by-product of projects aiming to improve the image of the historic centre for touristic purposes, there is no direct commitment to this form of mobility.

There is a high number of projects and programs regarding the preservation of Built Heritage and Baukultur (a concept brought forward



by EU documents, describing the culture and set of practices that shape a particular type of built environment). Going beyond the rehabilitation of listed buildings, the Brasov IDP proposes for instance vague and ambitious projects such as “the Rehabilitation of heritage buildings in the Metropolitan area”, without further details. Regarding public spaces, there are projects both in central areas and neighborhoods, including two projects outside of Brasov – a park in Halchiu and green areas in Predeal.

There is a project on closing waste facilities which do not correspond to standards, yet this does not discuss whether this land will be recycled. However, there is a project to rehabilitate the industrial site of the tractor factory Brasov in order to develop new functions – the Coresi urban regeneration project.

There are a high number of projects dealing with improving the management of energy and material resources and flows in the city (urban metabolism), including the whole water cycle, waste, etc., as well with boosting building energy efficiency. Furthermore, the IDP promotes renewable energies around Braşov, including projects on alternative fuel for thermic energy, efficient lighting in public buildings, photo-voltaic panels, wind farms etc.

The IDP also shows concerns with protecting natural, landscape, forestry, water resources, agricultural areas, etc. around cities ‘re-greening’ the existing city – the creation of a green belt in the metropolitan area and a new management system for protected areas.

Projects Regarding the Economy

The concern for regenerating the urban economy through strengthening endogenous development/entrepreneurial activities and diversifying local production systems is apparent in the high number of projects like multifunctional business centers in Brasov, the industrial park in Prejmer, projects for the diversification of the rural economy etc. Furthermore, there are numerous projects dealing with the development of tourism.

There are several projects on the development of educational infrastructure and research, showing a commitment for the support of knowledge, but not necessarily an economy based on it (with the exception of the software park).

Projects Regarding Social Aspects

There are a high number of projects dealing with fostering employment and job creation. The IDP includes the creation of a network of social support in urban areas and several projects dealing with inclusion. While there is also a high number of projects focused on enhancing social



infrastructure such as hospitals and schools, there is not enough engagement with the concept of community development.

The Braşov IDP also includes a number of projects and programs for training the staff.

Integration of content, process and context of the IDP

Sectorial Integration

While the IDP is comprised of a variety of policies, programs and projects, it does not engage fully with the concept of integrating across sectors. The latter occurs for a number of “integrated projects” in rural areas, which seem, however, more like a loose juxtaposition of projects (e.g.: a road, the renovation of the council building, gas in Halchiu) than a real, integrated project.

The IDP does not directly engage with the concepts of socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion, however, it proposes adequate projects for areas described as deprived (e.g. Tărlungeni).

Territorial integration

The IDP extends on the whole metropolitan scale. Projects cover a balanced geography, and they generally express well the need and potential of areas. It also includes specific projects for the development of rural areas.

The IDP includes projects which create links – particularly mobility – across the city and the metropolitan area.

Strategic integration

The Braşov IDP draws consistently on the strategic territorial outline of the County Spatial Plan (PATJ Braşov). The Braşov General Urban Plan has been drafted along the way, which allowed cross fertilization among the two.

Another positive aspect is the contextualization of the development of Braşov in the national and European context. The IDP brings into discussion the Strategic Concept of Spatial Planning as well as other analytical documents on the Braşov – Ploieşti – Bucharest functional area. It also brings into discussion, for alignment, different European level policy documents such as the Territorial Agenda or the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion.



Stakeholder integration

The IDP discusses mainly the public sector stakeholders, but they are quite varied and they might represent other stakeholders (for instance the Trade Chamber of Braşov might represent the entrepreneurs). Public stakeholders are included in the management and the implementation of the IDP.

The IDP does not include bottom up approaches for management and implementation, which engage the local communities and the stakeholders in the process. The elaboration of the IDP included public participation and consultation at key moments during the process. A number of meetings took place with the stakeholders. Residents' opinions were sampled through questionnaires.

Discussions with growth pole coordinators offices revealed that prior collaborations represented a key aspect for the engagement of a large number of actors. Given a large reliance on pre-existing governmental structures, the growth pole coordinator office and the Metropolitan Agency Braşov involved the NGOs which already had an established working relationship with either the county council and/or the city hall of Braşov. One of the caveats of such a practice is that certain domains will be more represented than others- for example social work more than mobility initiatives.

Moreover, the development of regional professional associations such as the Regional Support Association of the Business Environment for a Sustainable Development (ARMADA) contributed significantly towards streamlining the consultation process. Having as founding members the Transylvania University of Braşov, the Chamber of Trade and Industry Braşov and the Metropolitan Agency Braşov, ARMADA provided a propitious framework for stakeholder integration.

Operational issues. The management unit is administered by the Metropolitan Agency. The monitoring will be done by the Monitoring and Implementation Unit of the Metropolitan Agency. Monitoring and evaluation indicators and framework appear to be completely lacking. No indicators are provided in the document. The issue of maintenance and sustainability of projects is not directly addressed. Braşov Metropolitan Agency seems to be in charge of this (p. 292), but its exact attributions are very unclear in terms of monitoring progress and enforcing accountability. Project evaluation seems focused only on financial controls.

In practice, the growth pole coordinator office and the Metropolitan Agency for Sustainable Development Braşov worked closely throughout the implementation and monitoring of the IDP. Both entities



used a similar governance structure by assigning a certain number of projects in a clearly defined geographical area to their staff members. While such a structure allowed fast communication between the two entities and the beneficiaries, it also diffused the overview on the implementation of the IDP.

Status of implementation

While most projects featured in the IDP are currently in implementation, several actions have been completed, especially with funding outside the ROP and SOP axes. It is the case for most INTERREG and URBACT projects, as well as investments made by local authorities. Given the interlink between growth poles and the ROP axis 1, it is clear that particular attention was given towards projects pertaining to this source of funding.

Table 1 Status of the implementation of the IDP Braşov¹¹

	ROP		SOP		Other funding	
	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented
number	19	10	9	3	7	28
% of total projects	25,00	13,16	11,84	3,95	9,21	36,84

Source: Data processed from the “Trimestrial Report on the activity of growth pole coordinator office”, July- September 2013

Recommendations for the next cycle

Integration remains the crux of the IDP for the growth poles. The success of the next cycle of programming largely relies on transferring the lessons learned from the current implementation phase into practice. Thus, it is crucial to address aspects concerning the eligibility of rural areas that are part of the metropolitan area for the ROP axes, public procurement system, tenure rights and synchronizing implementation calendars from different financing lines (for example, ROP and SOP ENV).

The IDP approach proved successful for Braşov growth pole, several requests for joining the metropolitan area being recorded. The eligibility criteria for joining a metropolitan area should be further refined

¹¹ Total number of projects accounts for projects completed and in implementation, as of September 2013. SOP axes include SOP ENV, SOP HRD, SOP IEC, POST. Other funding may include INTERREG IV, URBACT local and private funds, FP7, PN II, OP ACD, cross-border cooperation programs, Phare.



to best illustrate the interdependencies and functional profile between the core city and the hinterland.

Preparation for the next cycle of the IDP Braşov has already commenced. Early consultation on future priority objectives identified mobility and social infrastructure as two key directions.



Constanța

The Integrated Development Plan for the Growth Pole Constanța is a document shaped for the metropolitan area of Constanța, comprised of the city of Constanța, of 5 towns and 8 communes. The total population of the metropolitan area is 487,000 inhabitants. The Constanța IDP is a document that facilitates access to funding from the EU Regional Operational Program, as well as other EU Operational Programs, including environment, competitiveness, rural development and agriculture, human resources. The IDP includes 112 priority projects, of which 71 to be financed through the ROP, Axis 1.

Main best practices identified in the Constanța IDP:

- The management of the consultation process can be considered, with amendments, an example of best practices for Romanian IDPs;
- There is a useful section on the relationships between working committees and stakeholders;
- Using the Pole Coordinator as a key actor in the IDP process.
- A comprehensive list of sources of funding is identified.

Key issues raised for the reform of the POR:

The regeneration of the historic centre of Constanța occurs in the context of a severe decay of the buildings in that area, mentioned by the IDP as a main problem. However, none of the projects deals with this issue. As the majority of the buildings are under private tenure, their rehabilitation cannot be included in the IDP, as currently, funds can be accessed only for buildings in public domain. Consequently, the regeneration based only on paving streets is not comprehensive. This challenge of dealing with buildings in private domain should be approached for the new IDPs, using



both international examples (e.g. Spain, where buildings in private property can be the subject of renovation through the creation of public-private partnerships) and national ones (e.g. Oradea, where the city hall has devised a mechanism of façade concession to the city hall for improvement works).

Content of the IDP: from analysis to urban development projects

A. Analysis

The overall analysis is comprehensive, covering all the required levels of analysis. There is an adequate amount of relevant information, however, there is also a significant amount of irrelevant data which makes the navigation through the document to get to the important points at times difficult (e.g.: from information about the countries neighboring Romania to descriptions of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania and discussions of Romania's budget deficit in 2009 etc). A positive aspect the fact that sub-sections end with short paragraphs on main problems identified, which helps the reader to go through the analysis, However this practice has not been mainstream equally throughout the entire document.

While some sections contain adequate and thorough analyses of data, there are others which are unsatisfactory, lacking depth. The section on challenges on tourism, for instance, appears as a shallow analysis of the problem, lacking data and critical points. In general, lots of data are presented, but few implications are drawn. Paragraphs that refer to data are highly descriptive, failing to go one step further and ask the "so what" question.

The SWOT analysis at the end of the section is adequate and contains a useful conclusion of the data presented beforehand. There are, however, some important missing points in the SWOT conclusions as well as throughout the analysis: for instance, when presenting weaknesses and threats of tourism in the area, there is no mention of the severe degradation of Constanța's peninsular area, the historic center, which has a strong impact on Constanța's performance as a touristic destination.

The territorial analysis is uneven. While data is presented for the level of administrative unit, and some good comments are made throughout the territorial profile section (e.g.: pp. 145-146), the diagnosis fails to identify specific areas across the metropolitan zone that have particular issues: the section dedicated to "problem areas and trends for spatial evolution" (Chapter 2, pp 142-144) fails in fact to mention any "problem area". It also mainly overlaps, in terms of information, with previous sections.



The variation in language and styles creates the impression at times of a document stitched together from previous studies and brochures. For instance, the section on culture has the tone of a tourist brochure, using a vocabulary abounding in adjectives such as “enchanting”, “splendid” tourist sights.

B. Strategy

The vision is clear – “Constanța will be a European metropolis, a tourist area in expansion, a high growth economy with a high life standard for all its inhabitants” and is well supported by the rest of the section. The strategic objectives are formulated neither like goals (invoking long term results) nor objectives (measurable, specific results). There are no specific objectives mentioned as such, but just an enumeration of issues under each strategic objective. Overall, this section would have benefitted from a greater degree of clarity.

Strategic Objective 1: Residents’ Constanța (i.e. life standards, attractiveness, quality infrastructure, housing and social services)

Strategic Objective 2: Tourists’ Constanța (i.e. an attractive and competitive sea tourism area for Romanian and international tourists)

Strategic Objective 3: Investors’ Constanța (growing competitiveness and investment, infrastructure and human resources development)

While being a well-articulated vision and set of objectives, this strategic overview on Constanța does not seem to really setting ambitions with regards to the position and role at the Black Sea macro-region.

C. Projects:

The IDP has a rich and diverse array of projects covering a wide array of domains. The strategic objectives are structured around policies and programs, in correlation with the funding sources - Regional Operational Program; Competitiveness OP; Development of Human Resources OP; Increasing Administrative Capacity OP. Therefore, the projects are listed according to the three main objectives, but also according to policies and programs. In addition, Annex no. 9 contains a list of priority projects, while Annex no. 4 is listing the projects financed under the ROP. This tends to create some confusion regarding what projects should be considered in connection to the objectives outlined in the document.

There are 112 projects with a total value: RON 8.2 billion. Most of the funds, RON 6.127 billion, are allotted for projects under strategic



objective “Constanța of residents”. Approx. RON 1.4 billion are directed towards projects aimed at exploiting tourist potential of the area, and RON 1.057 billion for those seeking to boost economic development and increase competitiveness.

Overall the Action Plan is a long list of potential projects, without much prioritization (unless order of the items is an indication of priority – unstated). For example, there is no substantiation of why roads need to be expanded, other than a purely qualitative observation that they are “crowded”. Interestingly, suggested indicators of success include: longer tourist vacations by 1.5 days; increasing profits of local businesses by 12%. Some of these indicators appear as unrealistic or impossible to attribute to any particular investment project.

The list of projects presented covers a wide area of topics and identifies a wide array of funding sources. The Constanța IDP identifies not only EU Operational Programmes as potential funding sources, but also the local and the state budget, and other sources of funds. The Constanța IDP is comprehensive in nature, and this approach should be kept for the 2014-2020 Programming Period.

Projects Regarding the Urban Environment

There is a significant number of projects dealing with improving accessibility and links throughout the metropolitan area. This includes the Constanța bypass, the Riviera Constanța – connection between Mamaia and Tomis touristic port, improving the access between the City of Constanța and Năvodari industrial platform through the widening and modernization of the Mamaia-Năvodari boulevard, rehabilitation of streets, construction of bridges, roundabouts and parking facilities. However, they all deal overwhelmingly with automobile infrastructure, with the exception of some public transport improvements and a rail project which does not have a direct impact on local mobility. There is no attempt to reduce transport needs by the promotion of proximity and mixed-uses schemes, nor any commitment shown to stimulating a more sustainable mobility by prioritizing non-motorized transportation (‘walkable’, ‘cyclable’ cities). Pedestrian areas are to be created/improved in the historic centre for tourist use mainly, so they do not influence citywide mobility.

With regards to built heritage, there are several projects of restoration of listed buildings, such as the restoration of the Greek Church Constanța, the Casino, or the rehabilitation of the cultural center in Năvodari. Nevertheless, the decay of the ensemble of historic buildings in



the peninsular area of Constanța (the historic centre of the city) is not addressed through any projects. It is only at the level of the public spaces in this area that the IDP intervenes: restoration and integrated redesign of the historic area of Constanța-Ovidiu square; integrated redesign of the pedestrian area of the historic centre of Constanța. This leaves, however, the problem of the built heritage un-tackled.

The IDP does well in the arena of public space improvement, including projects for the creation and rehabilitation of pedestrian areas and green spaces both for tourists and residents, in Constanța and several communes (Agigea, Cumpăna, Corbu, Lumina, Mihail Kogălniceanu) and towns (Ovidiu, Năvodari, Eforie Sud, Murfatlar).

With regards to recycling urban land, the IDP contains projects involving the recuperation of land: the rehabilitation and greening of former industrial platform Oil Terminal/Train Station Constanța, rehabilitation and greening of industrial platform Constanța Port, rehabilitation and greening of industrial platform Midia, rehabilitation and greening of industrial platform Dobromin- limestone quarry Murfatlar, etc. These projects all envision the reuse of land for greening purposes. Consequently, there are no projects relating to the densification and building up of these lands so that the expansion on green fields (urban sprawl) is prevented.

There are a high number of projects dealing with improving the management of energy and material resources and flows in the city (urban metabolism), including the whole water cycle, waste, etc. in Constanța and in the peri-urban/rural areas. Furthermore, the IDP includes projects dealing with the boosting of building energy efficiency, for instance projects on the efficiency for the heating and hot water networks of RADET Constanța, rehabilitation of 300 blocks of flats with thermic insulation Constanța, rehabilitation of 70 blocks of flats with thermal insulation Năvodari etc.

The IDP includes projects which promote renewable energies, such as replacing heating systems with regenerable source heating systems for the Nursing Home Constanța and the Carmen Silva School Eforie, the Photovoltaic parks Valu lui Traian and Năvodari as well as a wind park in Constanța port, etc.

There is also commitment shown for protecting natural, landscape, forestry, water resources, agricultural areas, etc. around cities, 're-greening' the existing city: consolidation of coastal area between Tomis Port and Pescarie area Constanța, Eforie, Tuzla, Agigea, the Green Boundary: the planting of a forest around the Constanța bypass, The forestation of degraded fields in the Metropolitan Area, Protection,



conservation and valorization of the protected natural area Siutghiol Lake, etc.

Projects Regarding the Economy

The IDP contains various projects that deal with the regeneration of the urban economy through strengthening endogenous development/entrepreneurial activities (e.g. Training for entrepreneurs in the Metropolitan Area, an array of projects on tourism development) and diversifying local production systems (Markets in rural localities, Food industry park Corbu - fish projects, Crafts center Ovidiu, etc.)

While it includes two projects like the creation of a Center of excellence in tourism and Creating cross border competitive clusters, the IDP could have done more to promote the economy of innovation and creativity. Also, a better emphasis on the role as international harbor at the Black Sea might have been realized. There is a project on installing photovoltaic cells, which is connected to a support of the green economy.

Projects Regarding Social Aspects

The IDP includes some projects and programs which deal with fostering employment/job creation, such as the European qualifications for rural areas program or the Skills perfection for development program (for Roma, disadvantaged youth, people working in subsistence agriculture, disabled people).

With regards to community development, there are solely physical interventions (cultural centers and youth centers in Năvodari, Murfatlar, Mihail Kogălniceanu), limited in scale (city of Constanța not involved)

The IDP enhances social infrastructure for various groups, including the elderly and the disabled. Moreover, there are a number of projects and programs dealing with supporting inclusion, like a social canteen and day center Năvodari, the social canteen Valu lui Traian, a skills improvement program (for Roma, disadvantaged youth, people working in subsistence agriculture, disabled people), 10 vocational counseling centers for vulnerable individuals, and programs against school dropouts.

The IDP comprises a number of social housing projects in a number of localities of the metropolitan area. Such projects are missing, however, for the city of Constanța itself. An issue is the specific designation of social housing for a specific ethnic group (project "Social housing for Roma in Eforie"), which is problematic as it leads to ethnic segregation instead of dealing with a social exclusion problem.



The IDP contains projects usually used in the country for “category-ticking”- e.g. The CCTV system (security cameras). Nevertheless, as there are a significant number of other projects dealing with social issues, and there is discussion of criminality in the analysis, this cannot be attributed to a “category ticking” strategy.

In the realm of mobility, the IDP does not promote projects that relate to the contemporary state of the art, but more anachronic projects centered on automobile mobility. One of the projects affiliated with the Objective 1, “Residents’ Constanța”, is to improve the access to the Năvodari industrial area from Constanța through the widening and modernization of the Mamaia boulevard. The widening of existing roads to improve mobility has been demonstrated, however, by international theory and practice as a wrong intervention. According to what is known as the axiom of urban transportation, widening roads leads to an increase in traffic inside cities and not the alleviation of traffic. Furthermore, this is in contrast to the objectives that Mamaia should be enhanced as a tourist area, as the road passes right through the center of the resort.

Another project that is reminiscent of unsustainable, anachronic practices is the Riviera highway, a coastal road connecting the Tomis touristic port with Mamaia. This reminds of the highly criticized recent coastal highway of north-east Turkey, vehemently opposed by the Chamber of Turkish Architects, which has severed the access of residents to the beach and cut the coastal cities from the sea, beyond its effects on landscape and the coastal environment.

Integration of content, process and context of the IDP

Sectorial Integration

While the IDP is comprised of a variety of policies, programs and projects, it rarely discusses the concept of integrating across sectors. There is no clear link established between investments in various sectors. Moreover, the IDP does not directly engage with the concepts of socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion.

Territorial integration

The IDP extends on the whole metropolitan scale. Projects cover a balanced geography, and they generally express well the need and potential of areas. The IDP includes projects which create physical links across the city and the metropolitan area – road infrastructure. The IDP does not describe nor list in the analysis areas that can be qualified as deprived.



Strategic integration

Unlike other similar documents, Constanța IDP makes very few references on integration with other strategic documents, be it local, regional/national or supra-national. This is of even more relevance as a distinctive feature of Constanța is its highly strategic position at the Black Sea, having an important role both for the Romanian economy as well as for the wider macro-region.

Stakeholder integration

The IDP is the result of cross-departmental cooperation, and the management will be done by a team from various departments from the city hall, as well as the other territorial units. The IDP describes a list of diverse stakeholders that were both consulted for the creation of the document and will be involved in the management and the implementation of the IDP. There is a committee of evaluation and monitoring, consisting of a partnership of stakeholders - the Metropolitan area council, the Prefect, an university, one NGO, the chamber of commerce.

The management of the consultation process is clearly presented in the document. The process appears as exemplary and can be considered, with amendments, an example of best practices for Romanian IDPs. The concerns of representation, diversity, transparency, communication, facilitation and post-consultation are well argued.

One caveat is that for ensuring transparency, there are two different sets of actions presented at different stages of the IDP. In the first section, actions presented consist of uploading the document on the website of the metropolitan area and a press release. These actions provide an incomplete level of transparency. In order to better reach the community, exhibits in public spaces and further questionnaires, for instance, could have been more beneficial for this goal. However, in other parts of the document (e.g. p. 331), these actions appear as part of the package of information and communication strategies. A more consistent presentation of information is therefore needed.

Discussions with the growth pole coordinator office revealed that the comprehensive process of stakeholder engagement for the preparation and implementation of the IDP, resulted in a stronger commitment of local authorities and other actors towards completing integrated investments. Recognizing the limited role of stakeholders in a consultation process, which often remains in the phase of delivering information on the status quo, a more active approach is now being



envisioned. Thus, there are plans of developing a new structure which is going to be informed by the CLLD methodology and include new members (such as the city of Mangalia, currently not a member of the IDA). CLLD methodology provides a bottom-up framework for strategic investments and allows a direct engagement of local authorities, business community, NGOs and community leaders in the process.

Operational issues

The implementation committee is a structure subordinated to the Committee for Evaluation and Monitoring and comprises of representatives of the executive of the Metropolitan Area Development Association, representatives of the local public authorities, and representative of de-concentrated institutions.

An “extremely important role” will be played by the Pole Coordinator (p.322), who will participate as a guest to the sessions of the Committee for Evaluation and Monitoring, and will act both a liaison between decision levels and as a support for the IDP, in identifying financial sources, promoting and informing about the IDP. After a detailed description of the implementation committee and the pole coordinator, the section ends with a sentence stating that the management of projects will be externalized and will be led by a consulting firm. There is no discussion at this point of how this firm will interact with the two mentioned above, however, there is a very useful separate section on the relationships between the committees and other actors. The decision of externalizing the project management resulted from an analysis conducted by the growth pole coordinator office on the administrative capacity of the IDA Constanța Metropolitan Area members. The analysis identified that a number of local authorities, especially in the rural areas, did not have any personnel assigned or with an adequate level of training to ensure an overview on large scale projects.

During the implementation of the IDA, the growth pole coordinator office collaborated closely with the Intercommunity Development Association Constanța Metropolitan Area. Addressing the conundrums of the eligibility of rural areas for the ROP axes, the two entities identified, lobbied and subsequently implemented a tailor-made solution: the IDA became the applicant for the projects concerning investments targeted specifically for rural areas. Thus, Constanța growth pole is the only pole where investments have been made through ROP axes for every member of the metropolitan area.



Status of implementation

The majority of projects are currently in the implementation phase, especially through the ROP axes. The robust number of projects that have either been completed, or are in progress, is also due to IDA’s capacity to act as a beneficiary for the investments targeting rural areas part of the metropolitan area. Moreover, there have been several completed projects from other sources of funding, especially the cross-border cooperation program and the national environmental fund.

Table 2 Status of the implementation of the IDP Constanța¹²

	ROP		SOP		Other	
	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented
number	33	11	7	8	1	10
% of total projects	47,14	15,71	10,00	11,43	1,43	14,29

Source: Data processed from the “Trimestrial Report on the activity of growth pole coordinators office”, July- September 2013

Recommendations for the next cycle

It is vital to transfer the lessons learned from the current implementation phase into practice. Although the approach of identifying and implementing solutions for the eligibility of all metropolitan area members for the ROP axes is highly laudable, the next cycle of programming should address and clarify such lacunae. Other challenges that should be carefully reviewed include the public procurement system, tenure rights, synchronizing implementation calendars from different financing lines (for example, ROP and SOP ENV) and time constraints connected with heritage documentation.

The roles of the growth pole coordinator office and the metropolitan area IDA should be better defined. One noteworthy aspect remains the financial independence of an entity such as the growth pole coordinator. As mentioned by the growth pole coordinator office, in order to ensure a high level of transparency and manage an effective facilitation

¹² Total number of projects accounts for projects completed and in implementation, as of September 2013. SOP axes include SOP ENV, SOP HRD, SOP IEC, POST. Other funding may include INTERREG IV, URBACT, local and private funds, FP7, PN II, OP ACD, cross-border cooperation programs, Phare.



process among stakeholders, it is crucial not to be dependent on the direct funding from members of the metropolitan area.



Craiova

The metropolitan area of Craiova is comprised of the city of Craiova and 6 neighboring rural communes. The total population of the metropolitan area is 316,730 inhabitants. As an overall observation, the IDP for the growth pole Craiova seems to be a collection of sections or abridged versions of other documents and strategies, rather than a material written as a single, coherent document with a goal to highlight the urban development of Craiova through an integrated list of projects.

Main best practices identified in the Craiova IDP:

- The list of identified projects is comprehensive and includes projects that will be funded from the local budget;
- The discussion of demographic trends and economic situation is very good;
- Steps have been taken to strengthen the metropolitan area in recent years. Overall metropolitan areas should not be viewed as being set in stone, but rather have the flexibility to change, taking on-going territorial dynamics into consideration.

Key issues raised for the reform of the POR:

- The way the metropolitan area was defined in the first phase of the project was anything but ideal. For the 2014-2020 Programming Period, metropolitan areas should not only be contiguous (a minimum criteria), but also be defined using sound functional criteria;
- The criteria used to prioritize projects are vague and hard to monitor;



- There is a strong focus on mobility and accessibility, which in itself is a very good thing. However, there seems to be a strong focus on developing private vehicle infrastructure (e.g. with funding allocated for a large over-pass and for an under-pass), with a reduced focus on non-motorized infrastructure (e.g. pedestrian paths and bike lanes).

Content of the IDP: from analysis to urban development projects

A. Analysis

The analysis is comprehensive, including a significant amount of information. Nevertheless, much of this information does not directly link with the purpose and the nature of this document or it is presented in a purely descriptive manner, lacking interpretation (e.g. housing data on pg. 91). Extensive descriptions of precipitation data or of medieval history make the analysis section overly descriptive and abundant in irrelevant information. Furthermore, the information is at times redundant: for instance, at the section on heritage, a description of climate and hydrography is made, bringing forward largely irrelevant information which has been anyway presented at length in other section. There are a number of sections where it is apparent that the information presented is not adapted to the purpose of this document, but seems to be borrowed from other, purely descriptive, materials.

While the IDP tends to throw in some irrelevant information, the discussion of demographic trends and of the economic situation is very sound, rigorous and appropriate. It provides a good analysis of the strengths, weaknesses and trends of the metropolitan area. Less well covered aspects include the energy sector (only number of users, but no data about consumption), transport (IDP provides information about the municipal fleet, but there is no data about number of passengers, kilometers traveled by passengers, fuel consumption, etc.) or gas distribution network and solid waste management (no figures on consumption, users, etc.).

The analysis generally contains data on all territorial units. While there is a focus on the city of Craiova, there is data on the rural communes as well.

Other issues are related to the spatial profile and governance of the growth pole and intervention areas. The Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj elaborated the study for defining Craiova's metropolitan area. This included a radius on 30km and 19 administrative units. In practice, only 8 out of 19 potential units accepted to be incorporated in the metropolitan area. Localities to the south of Craiova, with great economic potential, as



well as Isalnita to the north, refused to become part of the metropolitan area. Such situations should be prevented if the goal is to ensure a fully integrated metropolitan-level development. Decisions on whether to become part of these regional plans should not be at the whims of local politicians, as they affect all parties involved (both people within the area and people who are left outside the area).

The SWOT analysis is not finished and it includes wrong labels. For instance, comments of economic strengths are labeled under “demography”. There are no scenarios associated with the SWOT analysis, which makes it incomplete.

The material contains a number of mistakes. For instance, the distance to Sofia, the closest European capital to Craiova, is listed as 1,392 km, just following the distance to Berlin (1,437 km), when it is in fact 258 kilometers.

B. Strategy

The chapter on the development vision for the growth pole Craiova begins with an expose of how local development in Romania is in a stalemate and then continues with 25 pages of methodologies to develop a vision, discussions on urban and metropolitan management, strategic planning, the European and national context of spatial and social development. Rather abruptly, after this lengthy expose, a paragraph introduces the development vision for the growth pole: “Craiova – the metropolis of today, the Bania of yesterday – a European space, attractive and competitive”.

The IDP introduces 6 objectives:

Strategic objective 1: Improving the accessibility to and from the Growth Pole Craiova

Strategic objective 2: Higher economic competitiveness on long term and support for the development of the business environment of the Growth Pole Craiova.

Strategic objective 3: Developing the economic potential on the East-West of the Growth Pole Craiova through the rehabilitation of the public transport infrastructure

Strategic objective 4: Ensuring quality public services in the Metropolitan Area of Craiova through extending and rehabilitating water systems, sewage, collecting and recycling waste and public lighting.



Strategic objective 5: Growth of the attractiveness of the Growth Pole Craiova through capitalizing on the natural and touristic potential through the conservation and promotion of the local identity and its cultural-historic heritage.

Strategic objective 6: Improving the quality of life for the residents of the Growth Pole Craiova through ensuring educational, social and healthcare standards at European standards.

The needs presented seem at times to be written only to accommodate certain projects, and do not result from the analysis presented: For instance, “the improvement of traffic in the central area through the construction of two overpasses which will lead to solving the problems connected to the reduction of transit times in the central area” is problematic as it introduces the solution as part of the stated need.

C. Projects

The document was conceived to be aligned with the structural funds programs (ROP, Human Resource Development OP, etc.). In general, the projects are in line with the goals outlined in the plan. According to the plan, 72 projects have been identified (they are listed in “The Growth Pole Strategy Development” section) with a total budget of approx. RON 4.283 billion. The vast majority of projects focus on the city of Craiova

The criteria used for prioritization of projects are vague and hard to quantify:

- Development impact of the project;
- “Maturity” of the project (progress in EU financing documentation);
- Identified sources of financing;
- Compatibility with objectives and strategies of local, regional, and national development strategies.

The list of proposed projects, while primarily geared towards areas financed by EU Operational Programmes, also includes projects that are to be funded from the local budget. The sources of funding are not as varied as for the Constanța IDP, but this comprehensive approach should also be kept for the 2014-2020 Programming Period.



Urban Environment

There is a high number of projects dealing with improving accessibility and links throughout the metropolitan area, from rehabilitation of roads and ring roads to the construction of an overpass and an underground passage to alleviate traffic, to improvements in public transport, including the development of a trolleybus network. There are no projects which address the reduction of transport needs through the promotion of proximity and mixed-uses schemes. In terms of sustainable, non-motorized mobility, cyclist infrastructure is not addressed, while there is a project including 13 pedestrian links for tourist purposes, not connected directly to sustainable mobility, but with indirect benefic effects.

With regards to the preservation of built heritage and Baukultur, a concept supported by EU documents, describing the culture and set of practices that shape a particular type of built environment, there are several projects focusing on the restoration of heritage buildings, including museums and churches. There is one project of restoration and re-functionalization of a building (24 Brestei Str.). Moreover, there is a project for the revitalization of the historic centre of Craiova, yet this regeneration project includes only public spaces and does not approach the need for renovation of the buildings stock. While this is related to the property status of those buildings and the particular legal situation in Romania, the fact is that the project is incomplete in its aim to regenerate the historic centre.

Public space improvement, aside from the historic centre project, comes through a project on the creation of new parks and public gardens in Craiova. There is no public space improvement project in the other localities. There is no project on recycling urban land nor on supporting the adjustment of the density pattern.

There are a high number of projects, however, on improving the management of energy and material resources and flows in the city (urban metabolism), including the whole water cycle, sewage, waste management in Craiova and rural localities.

Economic aspects

From the point of view of regenerating the urban economy through strengthening endogenous development/entrepreneurial activities and diversifying local production systems, the IDP includes a Multifunctional Center project for Craiova, a technological and business incubator, and a program focused on promoting the entrepreneurial culture in Oltenia.



There is a project of a science and Technology Park, as well as one platform for multidisciplinary research on materials, as well as other research programs, showing support for an economy of knowledge, creativity, excellence and innovation.

Social

There are several projects and programs focused on fostering employment/job creation through skills development on technical and entrepreneurial directions.

The IDP includes two projects, which deal with social inclusion – a homeless shelter in Pielesti and a counseling service in Calinesti. There are no such projects, however, in the city of Craiova. Social infrastructure for various groups is supported by a limited number of projects, including medical and educational infrastructure for the city of Craiova, not tackling directly groups like the elderly nor the disabled, nor engaging with community development.

Projects generally emerge from the needs and potential identified in the analysis. There are, however, rather costly projects which emerge without a rigorous argumentation. For instance, the IDP states that as a part of improving mobility, an overpass and an underpass should be built in the city, and, correspondingly, there is one project in the IDP for each. The overpass and underpass are, however, not motivated by an analysis that would suggest that there is a need to improve mobility through such constructions in those specific locations. They rather seem to be ticking the need for one overpass and one underpass. Such costly projects which emerged without a clear argumentation of needs or problems solving undermine the coherence and consistency of the IDP.

Best practices versus anachronisms: The Craiova IDP engages with some current urban development paradigms – an economic development based on innovation – yet it fails to embrace current best practices in terms of sustainable practices, from supporting the greening of the economy to the reuse of brownfields and the prioritization of sustainable mobility.

An anachronic approach emerges in the treatment of mobility – the construction of an overpass in the main intersection of the city centre of Craiova is representative of the urban planning interventions of the 1950s-1960s in North American and West European cities, now considered unsustainable, through the effects on stimulating car traffic, segregating neighborhoods and shaping barriers in the city. This costly project is problematic as it does not emerge from demonstrated needs – Craiova completed its ring road and a number of other circular roads to



bypass its centre – and as it creates a problem of traffic and visual segregation in what is supposed to be the central intersection of the city.

Integration of content, process and context of the IDP

Sectorial Integration

While the IDP is comprised of a variety of policies, programs and projects, it rarely discusses the concept of integrating across sectors. The latter occurs for a number of “integrated projects” in rural areas, which seem, however, more like a loose juxtaposition of projects (e.g.: a road, a kindergarten, a community center) than a real, integrated project (e.g.: Integrated project in Breasta - creation of water and sewage system, the creation of an after school center, rehabilitation cultural center).

Territorial integration

The IDP extends on the whole metropolitan scale. Projects cover a balanced geography, and they generally express well the need and potential of areas. The IDP includes projects which are territorially defined and do not create sectorial links between different territories, with the exception of road projects.

Strategic integration

The IDP analyzes different national strategic documents such as the National Development Plan, the National Spatial Planning Act (Settlements Network) as well as the National Strategic Concept of Spatial Development, thus introducing Chapter 2 (pg 157) with an overview on existing overarching strategies.

Correlation is also realized with the County Development Strategy, whose vision and strategic lines are presented in detail. At the moment of drafting, the General Urban Plan of Craiova was planned to be updated, therefore the GUP was expected to further correlate with the IDP.

Stakeholder integration

The IDP engaged in various discussions an extensive list of stakeholders, organized in 8 work groups, formed initially in 2006 with the occasion of working on the strategy and reactivated for the IDP.

The elaboration of the IDP included public participation and consultation at key moments during the process, including the identification of needs and the selection of projects. A comprehensive list of stakeholders were involved, and the residents were consulted both through publishing information on the website and a representative



survey. The survey method, involving closed-ended questions, hinders however nuanced opinions and perspectives to emerge.

A comprehensive list of stakeholders is involved in the Coordinating Group for the management and implementation of the IDP. What is missing from the stakeholders, however, is the civil society, as well as the residents.

Operational issues

The IDP is the result of cross-departmental cooperation, and the management will be done by a team consisting of all territorial units, with cross-departmental and cross-disciplinary cooperation. The management units include both local and regional actors, like the RDA.

The management structure includes both the rural and the urban and seems complex. It comprises of a Metropolitan Council – the decision level – involving mayors, a Coordinating/Steering group, involving stakeholders, and a IDP management unit, involving specialists.

A monitoring mechanism and corresponding monitoring indicators are mentioned, but not described. The issues of maintenance and sustainability of projects are not directly addressed.

The growth pole coordinator office and the Intercommunity Development Association Craiova Metropolitan Area worked closely together for the implementation and monitoring of the IDP. Both entities assigned a certain number of projects to their staff members and facilitated common field visits and contact with beneficiaries.

Recognizing the limited financial resources provided for the newly established metropolitan agency, the growth pole coordinator office made use of funds obtained from the Operational Program of Technical Assistance to cover certain operational and incidental costs for both organizations.

Status of implementation

There is good progress in the implementation of projects of the ROP axes, which represent the majority of investments made within the IDP Craiova. Completed SOP projects generally envisage soft measures of training and capacity building. Due to the nature of investments, projects funded through SOP ENV are only in the implementation phase.

Table 3 Status of the implementation of the IDP Craiova¹³

¹³ Total number of projects accounts for projects completed and in implementation, as of September 2013. SOP axes include SOP ENV, SOP HRD, SOP



	ROP		SOP		Other funding	
	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented
number	23	16	3	8	5	9
% of total projects	35,94	25,00	4,69	12,50	7,81	14,06

Source: Data processed from the "Trimestrial Report on the activity of growth pole coordinators office", July- September 2013

Recommendations for the next cycle

A considerable number of recommendations for improving the implementation process of the IDP Craiova has accrued. Thus, it is vital for the next cycle of programming to address issues pertaining to public procurement system, tenure rights, synchronizing implementation calendars from different financing lines (for example, ROP and SOP ENV) and fostering the upgrade of databases of local authorities as well as growth pole agencies to use GIS technology.

Reflecting the relative importance of the city of Craiova in the proximity area, the IDP proved to be an attractive mechanism. In April 2013 the metropolitan area further developed to include 19 members. However, eligibility criteria for joining a metropolitan area should be carefully review to best reflect the socio-economic relationships between the core city and the hinterland.

IEC, POST. Other funding may include INTERREG IV, URBACT local and private funds, FP7, PN II, OP ACD, cross-border cooperation programs, Phare.



Cluj-Napoca

The metropolitan area of Cluj-Napoca is comprised of the city of Cluj-Napoca and its hinterland, consisting of 17 communes. The total population of the metropolitan area is 379,000. The Cluj-Napoca IDP is a document that facilitates obtaining funding from the ROP but also from other EU Operational Programs, including environment, competitiveness, rural development and agriculture, human resources.

Best practices identified in the Cluj-Napoca IDP:

- Discusses the strategic options for development related to how the NW region relates to the Cluj-Napoca as a growth pole (pp. 163-165);
- Comprehensive descriptions of the projects proposed;
- A rare IDP that includes social housing projects;
- One of the few IDPs that was not outsourced, but prepared by the local authorities, which ensured a great sense of ownership – although, primarily for the local authorities in Cluj-Napoca, and less so for the other localities in the metropolitan area;
- Coordinates with higher level plans, such as the County Spatial Plan, the Regional Spatial Plan, and the National Spatial Plan;
- Includes a wide array of funding sources for listed projects.

Key issues raised for the reform of the POR:

- Incomplete forms of consultation of residents which is based on city hall websites, therefore not engaging with the large mass of residents who do not consult this website on a regular basis.



Recommended actions to provide clearer frameworks of what makes an adequate consultation process.

- At one of the public consultations of stakeholders in Cluj, the County Council presented their worries that the growth pole IDP should have been concentrated on areas of the growth pole city itself and not the whole metropolitan area, citing various POR documents. The distinction between the nature and the methodology of IDPs for growth poles as opposed to any other IDP appears therefore confusing. Particularly the territorial approach focused on a discrete area within the city, which is recommended in the other IDPs, is not present in the methodology for the growth pole IDPs. The calibration of the metropolitan area scale and the territorial approach of integrated urban development should be carefully considered.
- The redundant set of information appearing in the territorial analysis section makes the role of such a separate section debatable.
- Because the IDP was developed by the Cluj-Napoca authorities, there is a strong focus on the center city, rather than on the metropolitan area as a whole.

Content of the IDP: from analysis to urban development projects

A. Analysis

The overall analysis is comprehensive, covering all the required levels of analysis with relevant information. It is also rigorous, presenting clearly and in depth data on all the levels of analysis required. It critically engages with the data – a great example is the economic analysis, where it carefully analyzes what at first glance might seem as a success story, unpacks it with regards to the context and the trends and finds weaknesses and threats.

The territorial audit chapter has useful information on: demographic data updated to 2008; public transport (fleet, passengers, local and county routes); communal and county roads; water supply system (network length, sewerage, but not data about consumption); thermal energy consumption (updated through 2006). Extensive information on electricity is also included (network distribution length, average residential daily consumption for Cluj and local communities of Metropolitan area) without any data on industrial consumption.



The metropolitan area is ~23% of the total area of Cluj County and includes 55% of the population. The IDP does not specify how the list of localities included in the Cluj metropolitan area was developed, but based on other reports it is safe to assume that localities within the 30km area joined through voluntary agreement.

The IDP correctly emphasizes the trend of sub-urbanization, as the population of localities like Floresti, Apahida, and Bonțida grew and the population of Cluj-Napoca was reduced by 2.7% (2008 vs. 2002 data).

The SWOT analysis presents in a very detailed way the same information as the text. Contrary to other IDPs, it is a complete SWOT analysis, as it discusses SO, WT, ST, WO options and makes a choice for the SO approach for Cluj.

B. Strategy

The vision is that “the Cluj metropolitan area will become a magnetic pole for services of research, development, innovation and IT, an appropriate environment for entrepreneurs, professionals and youth. The place where one can develop, achieve success and raise one’s children”.

There are three strategic objectives, each with a number of specific objectives, which can be easily traced back to the SO approach of the SWOT analysis:

Strategic objective 1: The development and the modernization of the Metropolitan area, increasing mobility and sustainable development.

Strategic objective 2: Increasing the economic competitiveness for the Cluj Metropolitan area.

Strategic objective 3: Development of social services in order to increase the quality of life of residents in the Cluj metropolitan area and the NW region.

The strategy section contains a series of policies and programs pertaining to the implementation of the strategic objectives outlined in the document. However, unlike other plans where policies and programs are clearly presented, in this case they are not very plainly indicated.

Most policies, programs and projects relate to the objectives. One concern, however, is that while the analysis section (including the SWOT) underlined the significant problem to mobility brought by the absence of ring roads and bypasses, there is no project relating to this, despite the breadth of mobility infrastructure projects outlined (from airport runways to bicycles).



C. Projects

The plan identified over 100 projects eligible for financing that meet the strategic objectives for the Metropolitan area. The total value of the projects is EUR 1.024 billion. 30 projects aim to receive funding from the Regional Operational Program (Axis 1).

The Cluj IDP is very good in presenting the priority projects chosen, as it reveals their rationale and aims, as well as their actual actions. The projects are well related to the results of the analysis and to the established objectives.

A wide array of funding sources is identified for key strategic projects, although there is a strong focus on the Regional Operational Programme.

Urban environment

There are projects to improve accessibility and links throughout the metropolitan area, including an integrated Metropolitan Area transport system and the modernization and extension of tram and trolley lines. Furthermore, the IDP includes projects that contribute to reducing the transport needs by the promotion of proximity and mixed-uses schemes, such as a network of self-service cycle rental and the creation of intermodal nodes at the airport and the train station.

From the point of view of sustainable mobility, while it directly supports cycling mobility, it does less well in promoting pedestrian activity at the scale of the city, the sole project being dedicated to the main central tourist area.

The IDP does less well with regards to the preservation of built heritage and Baukultur, a concept supported by EU documents, describing the culture and set of practices that shape a particular type of built environment. There are only three such projects, involving the casino and the Central park, a protestant church rehabilitation and the modernization of the museum of peasant architecture. Only the first one was chosen as a priority project. This is not enough for the scale and the challenges that built heritage have in the Cluj area, not to mention that this is limited only to the urban center.

Similarly, although there are public space interventions, these are rather limited in relationship to the scale of the metropolitan area, being reduced to certain areas around the city of Cluj-Napoca – the Central Park and two park creations.

While the Cluj IDP does not include a brownfield recycling project per se, it does have a project that prepares land for reuse, namely the



Rehabilitation of historically polluted sites in the Turda and Posta Rat areas.

Regarding urban metabolism, the IDP contains a project for an integrated system of waste management for the whole area (extended at the scale of the county), as well as an integrated project of water and sewage system provision for the Chinteni commune.

Economic aspects

The IDP aims to regenerate the urban economy through strengthening endogenous development and entrepreneurial activities, as well as diversifying local production systems through the creation of a Centre for Business Support in the metropolitan area, three industrial parks, including two located in the peri-urban area, as well as a programme for entrepreneurial training. Furthermore, there are a number of projects supporting the development of tourism, from the modernization of access paths to tourist sites in the center to a programme of promoting tourism in the metropolitan area.

Through the creation of the Regional Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries- “Northern Transylvania (sic) Creative Cluster”, as well as of a centre of advanced studies in the medical field, the IDP supports an economy of knowledge, creativity, excellence and innovation. Nevertheless, the IDP does not include any project that involves the support of a green economy.

Social aspects

There are several projects tackling inclusion and disadvantaged groups (youth in risk situations, Roma children in Pata Rât, homeless persons), as well as the improvement of medical, educational and social assistance infrastructure. However, less attention is given to neighborhood/local community development. There is a project called Integrated Social Housing for the Community that approaches the issue of social housing, generally neglected in Romanian growth pole IDPs.

Projects such as multifunctional business areas, community centers, new transport connections, or programs such as the training of staff can all act as catalysts for the socio-economic development of the area. Nevertheless, there could have been more commitment to promoting an integrated view with more projects having the potential to be catalysts.

The projects are representative of current best practices, from energy efficiency to innovative industries to multimodal transportation. It



is only in the realm of greening the economy where the IDP does not include significant projects.

Integration of content, process and context of the IDP

Sectorial Integration

While the IDP is comprised of a variety of policies, programs and projects, it rarely discusses the concept of integrating across sectors. The latter occurs for a number of “integrated projects” in rural areas, which seem, however, more like a loose juxtaposition of projects (e.g.: a road, a kindergarten, a community center) than a real, integrated project (eg. the Chinteni integrated project consists in road rehanilitation Chinteni – Măcicasu, water system in Feiurdeni, sewage system and water cleansing plant in Feiurdeni, counseling and information point in Chinteni, “Chinteni village sons!).

The IDP addresses the issue of socio-spatial exclusion, for instance of the Roma community at Pata Rât and there is one project targeting this. However, this touches just one aspect of socio-spatial deprivation (children’s education) and does not engage with other issues, such as mobility or socioeconomic integration.

Territorial integration

The IDP extends on the whole metropolitan scale. Projects cover a balanced geography, and they generally express well the need and potential of areas. A number of projects create links across the city and the metropolitan area, from mobility to economic reactivation projects. However, it does not address the need for a ring road that would alleviate the mobility problems in the area, as mentioned in the analysis.

The IDP describes in the analysis areas that can be qualified as deprived. They are not, however, the focus of projects. For instance, the deprived commune of Cojocna benefits from three projects, all related to mobility, while socio-economic development projects are ignored.

Stakeholder integration

The elaboration of the IDP included public participation and consultation of stakeholders at key moments during the process. While a comprehensive list of stakeholders were involved, for the overall resident population, the process was limited to publishing information on the website and expecting feedback.



The management and implementation of the IDP will be done by a team representing each territorial unit. There is no mention, however, of cross-departmental cooperation. Furthermore, no other stakeholders are involved.

Strategic issues

The Cluj Napoca IDP also contains a specific sub-section on the strategic context, whereby correlations with different national, regional and county level documents are being expressed. Most emphasis is given to the National Development Plan, the County Development Strategy as well as the Regional Spatial Plan. The analysis also includes a good highlight on national strategic projects (e.g.: on transport infrastructure) which are of relevance for the growth pole area and are proposed for funding under the SOP Transport.

Operational issues

For purposes of management of the IDP, the metropolitan area will create a new structure incorporating representatives from all territorial units. An issue is that the monitoring for projects in rural communes will be conducted at the local level, not the metropolitan area level, which raises the question of consistency and coherence of monitoring.

Monitoring and evaluation indicators do exist and are clearly specified. On the other hand, most indicators focus on quantity (not quality or cost efficiency): for example, number of additional tram track km vs. average duration of projects, costs, or maintenance required in the long term. However, the issues of maintenance and sustainability of projects are not directly addressed.

The growth pole coordination office had the key role for the overall implementation and monitoring of the IDP. In the absence of a functional Intercommunity Development Association Cluj Metropolitan Area, the Cluj-Napoca Municipality provided support for the coordination with the entities comprising the metropolitan area.

Discussions with growth pole coordinator office revealed the need of highly specialized staff members in order to accommodate the technical issues arising in the projects documentation. As a result, the Cluj-Napoca growth pole coordinator office specifically hired staff specialized in construction engineering in order to better assess the quality of the documentation submitted by the beneficiaries. Notwithstanding the laudable management approach, the mandate structure of the growth pole coordinator office remains frail, failing to be



able to impose better quality standards from the beneficiary in the pre-application stage.

Status of implementation

Most projects with funding from ROP axis 1 are currently in implementation. Completed projects from other sources of funding feature mostly investments made outside ROP axis 1 funding, prompting to the overall challenge of limited administrative capacity of Cluj-Napoca growth pole. In the absence of a functional Intercommunity Development Association Cluj Metropolitan Area, further delays can be expected in the implementation and preparation of future projects.

Table 4 Status of the implementation of the IDP Cluj-Napoca¹⁴

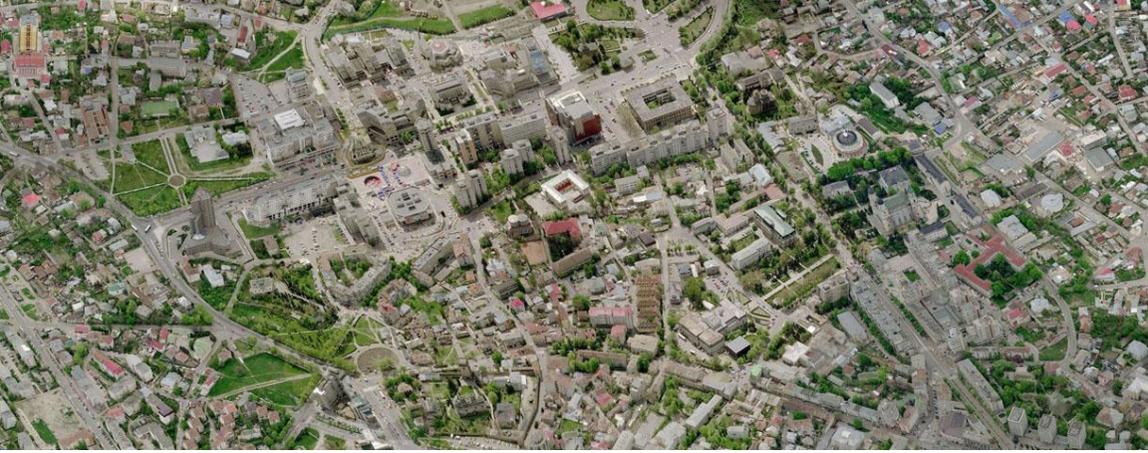
	ROP Axis 1		ROP and SOP		Other	
	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented
number	15	3	8	20	6	10
% of total projects	24,19	4,84	12,90	32,26	9,68	16,13

Source: Data processed from the “Trimestral Report on the activity of growth pole coordinators office”, July- September 2013

Recommendations for the next cycle

Widespread challenges encountered in the implementation phase of the current programming cycle should be addressed: stronger and straightforward mandates for the entities managing the growth poles IDPs, eligibility of rural areas that are part of the metropolitan area for the ROP axes, public procurement system, tenure rights and synchronizing implementation calendars from different financing lines (for example, ROP and SOP ENV).

¹⁴ Total number of projects accounts for projects completed and in implementation, as of September 2013. According to the report presented by the growth pole coordinator office, centralized data was only available for the following categories: ROP axis 1, ROP other axes and SOP and thirdly, other funding. Other funding may include INTERREG IV, URBACT, local and private funds, FP7, PN II, OP ACD, cross-border cooperation programs, Phare.



Iași

The Integrated Development Plan for the Growth Pole Iași is a document shaped in order to obtain EU funds for the Metropolitan Area of Iași from the Regional Operational Program Priority Axis 1: “Supporting the sustainable development of cities which act as main growth poles at the regional level on the basis of integrated plans for urban development”.

The program allocated the Metropolitan Area of Iași an estimated 114 million euros. Furthermore, the Iași IDP is a document that facilitates obtaining funding on other EU Operational Programs, including environment, competitiveness, rural development and agriculture, human resources. The IDP was launched on July 16th 2008 with the meeting of the Metropolitan Council and includes 85 priority projects.

Best practices identified

- The public consultation procedures, awarded by the civil society;
- The shaping of the Iași Metropolitan Area in 2004, through the GRASP program, is a good example of creating a complex ensemble of partnerships and of an engagement of public authorities with integrated territorial urban development. (p. 11-12);
- The IDP team is composed of City Hall employees rather than only external consultants, which brings local knowledge at the forefront and leads to capacity building;
- Good analysis of the larger regional context, and of the importance of large infrastructure investments for the economic performance of Iași[



- Identifies a wide array of funding sources, including private funding – something rather rare among the IDPs.

Kei issues raised for the reform of the ROP:

- The Iași IDP separates a section of analysis from another section on territorial disparities within the urban area. This results from the IDP model recommended by the ROP Solicitants' Guide, but proves to be problematic. Territorial differences and nuances are, therefore, not taken into proper consideration in the analysis, and consequently in the shaping of objectives, priorities, projects and programs. The recommendation is to provide a better explanation in the Guide as well as in the model that the analysis should better engage with the territorial dimension and not leave it to a separate section – the territorial profile.
- The failure to implement the urban regeneration project for the Cuza Vodă street reveals the challenges to work with heritage areas in private ownership within the current legislative framework. It is recommended that in the next POR documents and Guides, a toolkit for working for the improvement of such urban districts be included in order to avoid the failure of urban regeneration projects which in other EU cohesion funds recipient countries were significant parts of integrated urban development plans.

Content of the IDP: from analysis to urban development projects

A. Analysis

The analysis is very comprehensive, including detailed data, relevant for an understanding of the challenges and the potential of the area. Particularly the data presented on social and economic issues is strong (p.28-30; p. 46- 71). After a more descriptive coverage of each topic, the section culminates with a rich, comprehensive SWOT analysis. The analysis draws upon a number of sources and fully engages with other analysis and reports done by the city.

The separation of the section into a descriptive and analytical part leads, however, at a redundancy of information. Furthermore, the descriptive part of the analysis includes at times data which is not necessarily relevant to the purposes of the IDP, such as an extensive “classical” geographical description, including geomorphological, hydrological and biogeographical data, not directly revealing for urban development (p.14-16).



While data is comprehensive and detailed overall with regards to topics, the analysis is weaker in its territorial scope. While it contrasts the city of Iași with the other settlements of the metropolitan area, the analysis fails to engage with the disparities within the city of Iași itself, presenting it throughout the diagnosis section as a homogenous, monolithic unit. Only at the end of the section there is a short mention of territorial disparities (p. 139-140), but it still discusses rural-urban differences rather than within-city discrepancies. According to the model IDP presented by the POR for growth poles IDPs, this should happen at least in the third section of the document (the analysis itself being the first section). While maps in this third section do geographically place phenomena and disparities, the document still does not engage fully with territorial differences within the city level and their lack in the analysis section is problematic. This has a direct impact on the territorial span of projects and the issue of territorially – based integrated urban development and therefore acts as dysfunction of the IDP.

The arguments exposed in the analysis are logical and clear¹⁵. An issue appears at the discussion of crime in the metropolitan area, when the IDP highlights two categories: “settlements with a high crime level” and “settlements inhabited by several ethnicities (Roma especially) in which more prevention measures are needed”, inductively establishing a connection between ethnic diversity and crime (p.27), which is problematic.

While most topics of analysis are explored at length, there are some which are treated less comprehensively. One such lacking analysis is the one on tourism. While Iași’s role in pilgrimage tourism and business trips is examined, there is no discussion of other relevant types of urban tourism, such as “city-break” tourism, one of the most dynamic forms of the industry.

The methodology is diverse and includes an important component of public consultation. A more precise methodology for the analysis of traffic and urban planning could have helped the rigor of the document. Furthermore, the IDP team used questionnaires to collect public opinion and they were collected through Neighborhood Community Centres. The neighborhood specific data is however absent – it would have been relevant and helpful to see how residents in various neighborhoods

¹⁵ Only at times there are inconsistencies in the text, for instance at p. 10, it is stated that the rural population has been increasing within an interval of 10% (Tomesti) and 38% (Popricani), yet only a sentence away, the demographic increase of Barnova is described as being 54%, while Valea Lupului’s is 94%.



regard the problems and priorities for their area, which would have helped for a more territorially-sensitive strategy, objectives, programs and projects.

While public opinion was measured using questionnaires and an online forum on the City Hall site, these two methods have the shortcoming of being based on voluntary responses, which limits the actual representativeness. A more sophisticated and representative method which could have contributed to a better engagement with the public opinion is the focus group, in which representative samples of the population engage with issues in a more comprehensive and profound way.

B. Strategy

The vision for the growth pole development is “Iași - A Metropolis of Knowledge, Culture, Economic Competitiveness and Quality Services”.

The IDP highlights 6 general objectives (goals), each with a number of specific objectives:

- Goal 1. Increasing economic competitiveness through the creation and development of support structures for business, technological transfers and the promotion of new, creative industries;
- Goal 2. Developed territorial connectivity (ensured accessibility, improved mobility);
- Goal 3. Improved social services (health, education, social etc.);
- Goal 4. Harnessing historical-cultural and natural heritage;
- Goal 5. Ensuring the protection and quality of the environment;
- Goal 6. Territorial cooperation and partnership.

The vision and objectives, as well as the priorities identified, have a clear link to the diagnosis and the SWOT analysis. They are presented in such a way that they seem to naturally emerge from the analysis and not to be shaped just to accommodate a list of projects, like in the case of other IDPs.

C. Projects

Overall, the projects seem to follow the strategic objectives outlined in the plan. A number of 43 projects have been listed, with a total value of RON 2.7 billion. However, most projects focus more on Iași City rather than on the wider metropolitan area. In this context, there are few discrepancies between the objectives and their implementation.



However, if compared to other Integrated Development Plans, the Iași Metropolitan area has a smaller number of projects overall.

While projects and programs relate well to the analysis, there are conclusions of the analysis which are not reflected in the projects chosen. For instance, the analysis states that “an important issue for Iași is the severe lack of social housing”. Although the analysis also states that “the phenomenon is fought through the construction of some social housing in the Metalurgie area” (p. 28), the issue of social housing is not present at all in the objectives, priorities, projects and programs of the IDP.

The IDP identifies a wide arrange of sources of funding for the listed projects, including private funds. This is a rather unique feature among the IDPs. Nonetheless, the main thrust of the IDP is centered around the Regional Operational Programme.

Urban Environment

There are several projects focusing on improving accessibility and links throughout the metropolitan area, from ring roads, rehabilitation of village roads, intermodal transport nodes, the modernization of the International Airport in Iași, etc. There are no projects, however, stimulating a more sustainable mobility by prioritizing non-motorized (‘walkable’, ‘cyclable’ cities).

The preservation of built heritage is included in the IDP through projects of monument rehabilitation (Golia Monastery, the Palace of Culture etc), as well as through an urban regeneration project of the Cuza Voda, Tirgu Cucu, Bas Ceaus areas. However, the latter was not implemented because of tenure problems, with owners unwilling to collaborate with the city hall for the rehabilitation of their buildings. There are no other projects engaging with inclusive & quality public space.

There is one project on industrial area revitalization, however, there are no actual projects to reuse urban land. The IDP includes projects on integrated waste management, as well as sewage systems and water provision in the metropolitan area. There is one project on modernizing the heating system, as well as one introducing hydraulic systems for low-power wind farms and one on the optimization of intelligent energy systems for transport of water.

Economic

The IDP includes a limited number of projects on stimulating the economy, like the Iași Business and Technology Campus, the Regional Technological Center Iași, or an extensive market in Vulturi village.



Social

There are projects and programs to foster employment, like the creation of a Regional Center to develop entrepreneurial skills among youth, a program to stimulate insertion in the labor market for students and graduates, a managerial skills program, as well as a program to increase the adaptability of small and medium enterprises.

The IDP includes a limited number of projects fostering community development (the Vasile Alecsandri creativity and community support center), supporting inclusion, and enhancing social infrastructure for various groups, including the elderly and the abused. However, the IDP does not address other issues like social/affordable housing provision.

Projects such as the regional technological center, connectivity boosts, programs for the development and skills etc. can all act as catalysts for the socio-economic development of the area. There is, however, an urban bias in the project, limiting rural areas only to investment in physical infrastructure.

Best practices versus anachronisms: Traffic interventions do favor more the private car rather than alternative mobility options, which can be seen as anachronic in relationship to the practices across the EU. However, the IDP includes also best practices such as the economic projects centered on IT.

Integration of content, process and context of the IDP

Sectorial Integration

At times, the IDP clearly states that projects should be approached in a „complex and coordinated way“(p. 189) and reveals a direct engagement with the integrated approach.

Investments in one sector seem to be well related to other sectors, although this is not directly stated. A good example of integration is the Z1-M3-IS1 program, which leads both to the enhancement of IT and research in the city and the environmental improvement of the metropolitan area.

The IDP does not directly engage with the concepts of socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion. The only discussion of urban regeneration is more related to heritage upgrade for tourism rather than to social issues of the area.

Territorial integration

Projects cover the entire span of the Metropolitan area, albeit rural areas are only covered by infrastructure projects (alongside a market). The IDP



does not directly engage, not even attempting to define, with the most deprived areas of the metropolitan region.

While the IDP does address the issue of improving links at the local level (road improvement both in the city and in the communes), it does not address the creation or enhancement of links across the metropolitan area.

Strategic integration

The IDP does mention different national level strategies such as the National Development Plan, as well as metropolitan level documents such as the Metropolitan Spatial Plan. However, correlation with the latter is realized to the extent that different conceptual schemes of cartographic representations are used throughout the material. The General Urban Plan of Iași was, at the moment of IDP elaboration, in process of being upgraded.

Stakeholder integration

The IDP team identified and worked with a number of stakeholders, including public authorities, communities of the Metropolitan Area, academics and entrepreneurs. A Consultative Council of stakeholders is involved in the monitoring of the management and implementation of the IDP, but they just meet once a year.

IDP Iași was the recipient of the Civil Society Gala Award (annual award on behalf of Romanian NGOs) for the way it engaged with citizens and organized the public consultation process.

The municipality organized meetings with entrepreneurs, academics, NGOs, public institutions. Residents of the entire county could discuss ideas and projects on the site of the municipality, as well as at Neighborhood Centres in the City of Iași and at Commune Halls in the metropolitan area (4972 filled questionnaires at Neighborhood Centers).

The IDP team used questionnaires to collect public opinion and they were collected through Neighborhood Centers. The neighborhood specific data is however absent – it would have been relevant and helpful to see how residents in various neighborhoods envision the development of Iași and its metropolitan area.

While public opinion was measured using questionnaires and an online forum on the City Hall site, these two methods have the shortcoming of being based on voluntary responses, which limits the actual representativeness. However, focus groups have also been organized.



While the IDP was developed with a high public participation, it does not engage with bottom up approaches for management and implementation in which local communities and stakeholders are engaged in the process (for instance working directly in certain projects or programs).

Operational issues

The IDP is the result of cross-departmental cooperation, and the management will be done by a team from the metropolitan council, with assistance from various departments from the city hall.

Monitoring indicators are generally clear, however at times they do not reflect a thorough control of quality- for instance, to monitor the increase in the quality of social services, the indicator is the number of projects, without any regard to the actual quality of projects themselves. Furthermore, for the urban regeneration of the Cuza Voda area, there is no indicator proposed to measure it.

The issue of maintenance and sustainability of projects is not directly addressed.

Iași Metropolitan Area Association was already a consolidated structure when the IDP began to be implemented. Dating from 2004, the metropolitan agency had already established consultation and working procedures with various stakeholders. Thus, it was only natural to maintain and strengthen this role, while assigning the growth pole coordinators office mainly with the evaluation and reporting tasks.

Recognizing the disparities concerning the institutional capacity of local authorities of rural areas, Iași Metropolitan Area Association introduced two levels of membership: full members and observer members. One of the conditions for the upgrade of observing members is the correlation of their local development strategy with the vision and strategic objectives described in the IDP.

Status of implementation

Most projects with funding from ROP and SOP axes are currently in implementation. Completed projects from other sources of funding feature mostly investments made through the cross-border programs and local/national funds. Due to the nature of the technical documentation required for the SOP ENV and the challenges of correlating the implementation schedules with the ROP projects, large-scale investments financed through these two axes are still work in progress.



Table 5 Status of the implementation of the IDP Iași¹⁶

	ROP		SOP		Other funding	
	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented
number	15	3	6	5	6	18
% of total projects	28,30	5,66	11,32	9,43	11,32	33,96

Source: Data processed from the “Trimestrial Report on the activity of growth pole coordinators office”, July- September 2013

Recommendations for the next cycle

While the city of Iași remains a crucial polarization pole for the region, the IDP approach was hampered by poor correlation between the financing lines. Thus, with all IDP investments being completed only in Iași up until this moment, it proves difficult to promote cooperation and balanced development principles with the members of the metropolitan area. The reasons for the current situation are twofold. On one hand, the limitations of the current programming cycle which designated rural areas ineligible for the ROP axes, corroborated with an early allocation of funds through the NRDP¹⁷ before the actual start of the implementation of the IDP. On the other hand, local authorities have a modest institutional capacity for developing and implementing large-scale projects.

It is vital to address widespread challenges of the current programming cycle, which include but are not limited to public procurement system, tenure rights, synchronizing implementation calendars from different financing lines (for example, ROP and SOP ENV) and strengthening the governance structure of the metropolitan agencies and the growth pole coordinators.

In preparation of the next cycle of the IDP, Iași Metropolitan Area Association has begun an evaluation process of the current IDP, not only regarding the fulfillment of indicators, but also of the validity of its vision and objectives.

¹⁶ Total number of projects accounts for projects completed and in implementation, as of September 2013. SOP axes include SOP ENV, SOP HRD, SOP IEC, POST. Other funding may include INTERREG IV, URBACT, local and private funds, FP7, PN II, OP ACD, cross-border cooperation programs, Phare.

¹⁷ National Rural Development Plan 2007-2013





Ploiești

The metropolitan area of Ploiești is comprised of the city of Ploiești and its hinterland, consisting of 3 towns and 10 rural communes, joining 58 villages. The total population of the metropolitan area is 350,495. The IDP includes 70 projects for 2009-2025, of which 16 projects and 6 reserves for 2009-2015.

Best practices identified in the Ploiești IDP:

- Mapping, including maps representing data across the metropolitan area, with information for each territorial unit.
- The territorial dimension of the analysis is strong – annexes present data on each territorial unit, while the main document presents the data together in adequate cartographic representations.
- Identification and presentation of key management issues (table 31/p. 70)
- The way the vision is connected to the results of the SWOT analysis (p. 74)
- The contextualization of policies and programs with regards to the SWOT analysis, the ROP and the IDP objectives (p. 78).
- A good coordination with other strategies, plans, and spatial plans in the area.

Key issues raised for the reform of the POR:

- The issue of social-spatial inclusion, which is at the core of integrated urban development of the EU (see for instance The Toledo Declaration), is missing in the Romanian growth pole



IDPs. If the IDP is seen as an instrument to promote such EU documents, then the POR should make the commitment to such approaches more visible and possibly even mandatory.

- Similarly, the issue of social housing is absent from the IDP, in opposition with best practices at the EU level.
- The analysis is weak on the dynamics within the region, and the role played by București for Ploiești's economy.

Content of the IDP: from analysis to urban development projects

A. Analysis

The analysis is comprehensive, including detailed data, relevant for an understanding of the challenges and the potential of the area. It first introduces the area and the territorial units, it then discusses the location of the area in national framework. It presents demographic, economic, infrastructure and environmental data, generally also referring to programs that the city of Ploiesti or the metropolitan area implemented/are implemented with regards to that domain. Finally, the IDP includes an administrative audit analysis, comprised of an expose of experience with European projects of the city of Ploiesti, experience with international partnerships, and a short section on financial capacity.

With regards to social aspects, the IDP includes data on social infrastructure (e.g.: educational, healthcare and housing facilities) at the metropolitan level, as well as poverty data on the regional data, but it does not address social data, such as income levels, poverty or crime at the level of the metropolitan area and the territorial units.

The analysis has a strong territorial component, presenting data at the level of each territorial unit of the metropolitan area in a clear cartographic manner. Discrepancies between territorial units are made clear. The annex at the end presents a comprehensive set of data for each territorial unit.

An issue with the analysis is that it neglects the regional context and uses neither county nor regional data. Ploiesti, however, is the growth pole for the South-Muntenia region, and its IDP should be always seen within this regional framework. At times, the IDP introduces data at the regional or county level, but then the metropolitan area data is missing (e.g.: poverty data only at regional data p. 25; crime data only at county level p. 26).

After a more descriptive coverage of each topic, the section culminates with a SWOT analysis. In the body of the IDP, however, this transition is too fast, as what lacks is the analytical step between the



description of the sheer data and the SWOT conclusions, which would show how, for each segment of the analysis, problems and opportunities, are derived from data, and together will lead to the SWOT conclusions. This analytical link exists, but it is relegated to the annexes.

The SWOT analysis is thorough and properly done, embracing the SO (“strengths- opportunities”) model. The presentation of key management issues deriving from that is also clear and thorough.

B. Strategy

The vision for the growth pole is “Knowledge – a New Energy”. It is catchy, memorable, the steps in establishing it are clear. However, in the subsection dealing with the vision per se, the structuring of the argument can be clearer – i.e. at the moment, the dimensions of the vision are presented before the vision itself etc.

The objectives are generally clearly stated within the section:

Strategic Objective 1: Supporting an integrated sustainable economic development through new energies and technologies at the level of the Ploiesti Growth Pole.

Sectorial objective A1: Supporting investments in non-polluting technologies, in technological solutions of energy efficiency, alternative energy and adjacent infrastructure.

Sectorial objective A2: The active involvement of the research sector for new products and technologies.

Sectorial objective A3: Supporting the development of economic activities in the area of the Growth Pole.

Strategic objective B: Sustainable territorial development through the improvement of urban infrastructure and of functional relationships between urban-rural and economic-industrial areas within the Growth Pole Ploiesti Prahova.

Sectorial objective B1: Connecting with the European road network and the development of a modern access infrastructure to production facilities, industrial platforms and parks, as well as to other functional areas; the development of an efficient and non-polluting urban transportation system in the Growth Pole area.

Sectorial objective B2: The protection of the environment and of the health of the population through the provision of quality public services.

Sectorial objective B3: Capitalizing on the value of natural and traditional, cultural and historical heritage; the reshaping of



tourist areas; the support of environmental protection actions and those of green space area development.

Strategic objective C: Human Capital Development through ensuring equal access for all citizens of the Growth Pole

Sectorial objective C1: Growth of the quality of social infrastructure through investments in favor of disadvantaged groups

Sectorial objective C2: Development of Human Resources through the growth in quality for educational infrastructure

Sectorial objective C3: Development of healthcare infrastructure through ensuring a professional medical act in a modern, equipped space.

Sectorial objective C4: Growth of operational capacity of the administration through the management of knowledge and the usage of innovative technologies.

The connection between the vision and the results of the SWOT analysis is excellently presented. This is an example of best practices on how a vision can be derived and packaged.

Similarly, the policies and programs are derived in a clear manner from the SWOT analysis.

C. Projects

The projects reflect the strategic objectives outlined in the plan, especially with regard to the first two objectives: development of energy from renewable sources, and improvements in the urban and rural infrastructure in order to bring about economic development in the entire metropolitan area. The value of the projects that have been identified as fulfilling the development vision of growth pole Ploiești total RON 4.561 billion. 16 priority projects for the period 2009-2015 are to be financed through ROP. The largest share of projects, over RON 3.4 million, is related to improving energy efficiency and alternative energy technology solutions.

The IDP identifies a wide array of funding sources for the proposed projects, including the local budget and private funding. This approach should be continued for the 2014-2020 Programming Period.

Urban Environment

The Ploiesti IDP includes mobility projects such as roads and overpasses, tramline rehabilitation, public transport extensions at the level of the whole metropolitan area, as well as an intermodal terminal with parking



and cycle facilities in the County Hospital area. The project CATS (City Alternative Transport Systems) deals with sustainable mobility options. However, there are no projects dealing with increasing walkability of the city and hinterland.

While there are projects on creating parks in Ploiesti and other settlements, there is no engagement - bar one project, the restoration of the Museum of the Clock - with the preservation of Built Heritage and Baukultur, a concept supported by EU documents, describing the culture and set of practices that shape a particular type of built environment.

With regards to recycling urban lands, there is one project on the rehabilitation of the land polluted with oil products alongside the Eastern ring road. There are no projects aiming to adjust the density patterns by promoting infill and brownfield conversions as opposed to sprawl.

The IDP includes some projects on urban metabolism - an integrated waste management system in the Prahova County, as well as the rehabilitation and modernization of water and sewage systems in Prahova County.

There are a number of projects on renewable energy spread around the metropolitan area territory - solar energy, biomass, as well as the creation of a centre for research for alternative energy sources. Protecting natural, landscape, forestry, water resources, agricultural areas, etc. around cities' "re-greening" the existing city, etc.

Economic

The Ploiesti IDP contains a series of projects dealing with the regeneration of the urban economy, like the creation of two industrial parks and the creation of a multifunctional business centre Green Light. The W.D.P. Development Ro. SRL (part of Warehouse De Paw) is a park dedicated to non-polluting industries. Moreover, there are two projects on enhancing heritage tourism and circuits in the area, such as the Wine Route and the Princes Route.

Social

The IDP includes a number of projects dealing with enhancing social infrastructure for various groups, including youth, the elderly and the disabled. Nevertheless, there are no projects on community development, nor there are projects on the creation of affordable housing.

The projects are representative of current best practices, from energy efficiency to innovative industries to multimodal transportation. Mobility in the metropolitan area is approached however mostly from the perspective of improving infrastructure for private automotive



transportation, as opposed to more contemporary approaches on rail and public transport schemes.

Integration of content, process and context of the IDP

Sectorial Integration

While the IDP is comprised of a variety of policies, programs and projects, it rarely discusses the concept of integrating across sectors. The latter occurs for a number of “integrated projects” in rural areas, which seem, however, more like a loose juxtaposition of projects (e.g.: a road, a kindergarten, a community center) than a real, integrated project.

The IDP does not directly engage with the concepts of socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion.

Territorial integration

The IDP extends on the whole metropolitan scale. Projects cover a balanced geography, and they generally express well the need and potential of areas.

The IDP describes in the analysis areas that can be qualified as deprived. While they are not a focus of the IDP project, they do become the recipient of projects, which has more to do with the balanced territorial approach than to a certain attention given to such areas.

Strategic integration

The Ploiești IDP includes a specific subsection (pg. 106) which enumerates the statutory and strategic documents to which the IDP aligns to. While the section in itself does not give much detail on how this correlation is being done, it does show the effort and comprehensiveness in inventorying and reflecting all such documents, including very specific ones such as different studies or sectoral investment plans, Zonal Urban Plans etc.

Stakeholder integration

The IDP discusses mainly the public sector stakeholders, stating that a more in-depth analysis has been made for the Strategy of the City of Ploiesti. This, however, implies that the other administrative territorial units of the metropolitan area have not been under the same scrutiny with regards to the local stakeholders.

The elaboration of the IDP included public participation and consultation at key moments during the process: formulating the SWOT



analysis, formulating the vision and the objectives, selecting priority programmes and identifying projects for the current programming period.

Consultative working groups were comprised of the Management Unit for the IDP (created by the mayor of Ploiesti), representatives of directions and departments of the City Hall of Ploiesti, public services in the subordination of the City Hall and of the other territorial units of the Metropolitan Area. Consultation occurred also at the political level, consisting with meetings with the mayors of the administrative units, as well as the President of the County Council.

Other public institutions, as well as the population, have been “informed”, not “consulted” (p. 86), which renders them passive recipients of information rather than involved stakeholders in the process. Public institutions were informed through emails and fax messages, and were asked for feedback, which was discussed in the consultative work groups. Residents were informed through the local press and invited to take part in the political consultation meetings.

Operational issues

The IDP is the result of cross-departmental cooperation, and the management will be done by a team from various departments from the city hall, as well as the other territorial unit.

In June 2008, the Management Unit of the IDP was created, comprising representatives of a number of directions and departments.

The monitoring indicators refer to the bureaucratic steps of getting the IDP implemented rather than to the monitoring of the quality and the progress per se. The issue of maintenance and sustainability of projects is not directly addressed.

In practice, the growth pole coordinator office and Intercommunity Development Association “Ploiești-Prahova Growth Pole” did not collaborate throughout the implementation of the IDP. The growth pole coordinator office mentions issues with the technical capacity of the IDA for managing the overall IDP process, as well as governance ambiguities. In the absence of clear guidelines on the mandates and cooperation procedures between the growth pole coordinator office and the metropolitan area IDA, such situations become an implicit risk.

Status of implementation

Most ROP and SOP projects are currently under implementation. Completed projects from other sources of funding include investments made through national funding schemes (e.g. “Green House” programme), as well as private investments.



Table 6 Status of the implementation of the IDP Ploiești¹⁸

	ROP		SOP		Other funding	
	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented
number	13	5	9	9	3	18
% of total projects	22,81	8,77	15,79	15,79	5,26	31,58

Source: Data processed from the “Trimestrial Report on the activity of growth pole coordinators office”, July- September 2013

Recommendations for the next cycle

It is crucial to address widespread challenges of the current programming exercise, especially the public procurement procedures and the governance structure of the metropolitan agencies and the growth pole coordinators. Without a clear set of executive powers which would enable stronger interventions in the relationship with potential or current beneficiaries, the entities now involved remain simple NGOs of public utility and their activity has merely an advisory status.

In preparation of the next cycle of the IDP, Ploiești growth pole coordinator office has begun an evaluation process of the current IDP. Moreover, in an effort of streamlining future investments, it is following closely the progress made by Prahova county council with the development of their 2014-2020 strategy.

¹⁸ Total number of projects accounts for projects completed and in implementation, as of September 2013. SOP axes include SOP ENV, SOP HRD, SOP IEC, POST. Other funding may include INTERREG IV, URBACT local and private funds, FP7, PN II, OP ACD, cross-border cooperation programs, Phare.



Timișoara

The Regional Operational Program allocated the Metropolitan Area of Timișoara an estimated 70 million euros. The IDP was launched on July 16th 2008 with the meeting of the Metropolitan Council and includes 85 priority projects.

Best practices identified in the Timișoara IDP:

- A very good, if a bit academic and stuffy, argumentation for the determination of the area of action of the IDP (the metropolitan area) (Section 1.1.1)
- The IDP team is composed of City Hall employees rather than solely external consultants, which brings to the forefront local expertise and promotes capacity building.
- A nice mapping of projects, which brings forth more clearly the territorial component of the IDP investments.

Key issues raised for the reform of the POR:

- The SWOT analysis does not link to proposed strategies.
- The analysis does not capture the differences between individual constituent localities of the growth pole, the way the Ploiești IDP does.
- A strong focus on ITC, without an in-depth discussion of the needs of the large manufacturing base in the growth pole. Manufacturing is responsible for most of the revenues generated in the area.



Content of the IDP: from analysis to urban development projects

A. Analysis

The analytical section is very comprehensive, including very detailed data, relevant for an understanding of the challenges and the potential of the area, which corresponds to this being the largest in size IDP. The analysis is generally thorough and rigorous. The SWOT analysis is incomplete, presenting just strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats but without discussing strategies that would emerge from it (e.g. SO, WT etc).

There is a separate section on the territorial audit and on the diagnostic, the latter presenting to a certain degree the same information and thus suffering of redundancy. While data is comprehensive and detailed overall with regards to topics, the analysis is weaker in its territorial scope. First, it tends to discuss data in terms of the city and the “area of influence”, without presenting settlement-specific data. While it contrasts the city of Timișoara with the influence area, the analysis fails to engage with the disparities within the city of Timișoara itself, presenting it throughout most the diagnosis section as a homogenous, monolithic unit.

The rationale for the intervention areas is not presented in the Analysis section, but in the 3rd section - the territorial profile. The IDP states that the choice for intervention areas is motivated largely by the unexplored potential of a certain area (p. 214). Nevertheless, although easy to infer, there is no clear argumentation on why the central area has been chosen as a priority intervention area.

B. Strategy

The vision for the growth pole development is “Multicultural, integrative and avant-garde space, national pole of reference for IT, communications and creative services.” The document makes a clear case for each of the components of this vision statement.

The IDP highlights 4 objectives, each clearly described and argued for, and all well related to the mission. There is no separation of strategic and specific objectives.

Objective 1: Sustainable economic development on the basis of IT, communications and creative services

Objective 2: Development of a complex and flexible integrated technical infrastructure

Objective 3: Ensuring an intercultural social environment, cohesive and stable, favorable to progress

Objective 4: Shaping an ecological habitat, comfortable and attractive.



The strategy for the growth pole Timișoara is differentiated for the two areas - urban and rural.

- Urban area: Timișoara should become the engine for the development of the growth pole – public authorities and private agents involved in supplying public services should jointly support the social and economic development of the city.
- Rural area: the main objective is properly equipping the rural services and public utilities in order to improve the comfort provided to residents and attract investments, ensuring accessibility to all communities and increasing mobility to facilitate the integrated functioning of the growth pole.

Overall, the document is well organized and easy to read. The strategy is well structured and provides the necessary information to better understand the development objectives set for the Timișoara growth pole, and also includes recommendations on how to achieve these objectives through implementation of specific policies and programs. The vision and objectives are presented in such a way that they seem to naturally emerge from the analysis and not to be shaped just to accommodate a list of projects. The policies and programs are correlated with the objectives of the Regional Operational Program (see, for instance, the project description sheets).

C. Projects

Annex 10 lists 193 projects that are organized according to the strategic objectives, with a total value of approximately RON 9 billion. Integrated infrastructure development projects have the largest share (RON 6.1 billion for 64 projects). The projects aimed at improving economic development through high technology amount to a little over RON 2 billion. The plan identified 64 priority projects (RON 2.7 billion), which should be funded under ROP - Axis 1.

A wide array of funding sources is identified for the listed projects, including the local budget and the state budget.

Urban Environment

The IDP contains multiple projects dealing with improving accessibility and links throughout the metropolitan area. There are projects for road construction, the creation of a ring railroad, the rehabilitation of tram lines, the extension of trolley buses to outer settlements. An intermodal regional transport hub for goods, as well as the rehabilitation of the



infrastructure of the Bega channel, envisioning public transportation along the Bega. One dimension of sustainable mobility absent is the presence of non-motorized mobility projects, involving cycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

While there are projects concerning the restoration of a number of historical monuments in Timișoara and Dudeștii Vechi, there is no attempt to engage with the preservation of heritage throughout the city of Timișoara, neglecting the decay of entire ensembles of historic buildings. Public space improvement projects focus on representative public spaces for the city of Timișoara, not extending to socialist neighborhoods or the other territorial units of the metropolitan area.

There is no engagement with brownfield conversion (despite the abundance of such urban land), nor with supporting the adjustment of the density pattern. With regards to improving the management of energy and material resources and flows in the city (urban metabolism), including the whole water cycle, waste, there are projects on energy management, heating, water, sewage for the entire area, connected to county-wide projects.

Through the creation of a technological park for alternative energy, a county park for photovoltaic energy and a local one in Dudeștii noi, the IDP works to promote renewable energies.

Economic

The IDP contributes to regenerate the urban economy through strengthening endogenous development/ entrepreneurial activities and diversifying local production systems: a multifunctional centre for business support in Timișoara, a business incubator in Dumbrăvița, an integrated regional agro-logistical system, business and innovation regional infrastructure in the research field, a regional centre for development in the automotive sector, as well as the Mitke program- the management of industrial territories in the era of knowledge. The IDP therefore promotes an economy of innovation and creativity.

Through the Institute for Renewable Energy Research, and the alternative energy park in Timișoara, the IDP contributes to the greening of the economy.

Social

Projects like Solidar City – The Role and the Involvement of Local Authorities in the Growth of Employment contribute to the creation of jobs. While the IDP does not engage with community development, nor with the provision of affordable housing, it does so with inclusion and



enhancing social infrastructure for various groups, including the elderly and the disabled.

The IDP discusses how certain projects serve as catalysts – educational projects serve for the development of an attractive labor market, projects involving heritage are seen as a catalyst for urban development (p. 140).

Integration of content, process and context of the IDP

Sectorial Integration

The IDP argues for an integrated approach and promotes examples of integrated projects like the regeneration of the centre of Timișoara.

The IDP does not directly engage with the concepts of socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion. The only discussion of urban regeneration is more related to heritage upgrade for tourism rather than to social issues of the area.

Territorial integration

Projects cover the entire span of the Metropolitan area, yet there is a definite bias to the city of Timișoara, with the adjacent localities receiving less attention than in the case of other growth poles.

The IDP addresses the issue of improving links at the local level (road improvement both in the city and in the communes) and between the settlements. However, aside from mobility links, there is no integration of projects across a wider territory.

The IDP does not directly engage, not even attempting to define, with the most deprived areas of the metropolitan region.

Strategic integration

The Timișoara IDP contains very limited reference to national or local statutory or informal planning documents (spatial planning acts, foreseen territorial development, etc).

Stakeholders integration

The IDP team identified and worked with a number of stakeholders, including public authorities, communities of the Metropolitan Area, academics and entrepreneurs. The municipality organized meetings with entrepreneurs, academics, NGOs, public institutions. Public opinion has been measured, however, just using the website of the city hall.

Benefiting from prior experience of stakeholder engagement, Timișoara municipality reenacted the advisory board platform which was



established in 2000. Comprised by various business association and NGOs, the advisory board was able to offer a significant scale and continuity to the consultation process of the IDP. While a noteworthy approach, the caveat remains on solely relying on pre-existing structures and overlooking possible new stakeholders.

For the management and the implementation of IDP projects, only members of the IDA will be involved, without mentioning other stakeholders. While the IDP was developed with a high public participation, it does not engage with bottom up approaches for management and implementation in which local communities and stakeholders are engaged in the process.

Operational issues

The IDP is the result of cross-departmental cooperation, and the management will be done by a team from the metropolitan council, with assistance from various departments from the city hall. The issue of maintenance and sustainability of projects is not directly addressed.

The key role for the overall implementation and monitoring of the IDP has been taken by Timișoara Municipality, which has a dedicated office with this mandate. The office is in close collaboration with the growth pole coordinator office that keeps the overview of the operation. Unfortunately, the Intercommunity Development Association “Timișoara Growth Pole” has currently no staff members and is not functional.

Informed by the process of developing similar strategic plans such as the General Urban Plan or the Development Strategy for the city, the municipality team fostered a comprehensive process of defining the metropolitan area. While a laudable and welcomed approach for understanding the interplay between the core city and its area of influence, the process can be further improved with territorial-specific data for each entity identified as being part of the metropolitan area.

Status of implementation

While most projects featured in the IDP are currently in implementation, several actions have been completed, especially with other sources of funding. It is the case for most INTERREG projects, as well as investments made through cross-border cooperation programs. However, most investments are steered towards the ROP axes, reflecting the focus on projects falling under axis 1 objectives.



Table 7 Status of the implementation of the IDP Timișoara¹⁹

	ROP		SOP		Other funding	
	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented	IDP projects in implementation	IDP projects implemented
number	20	6	3	1	3	13
% of total projects	43,48	13,04	6,52	2,17	6,52	28,26

Source: Data processed from the “Trimestrial Report on the activity of growth pole coordinators office”, July- September 2013

Recommendations for the next cycle

The governance structure for the implementation of the IDP needs to be carefully reviewed and strengthened accordingly. As mentioned by the municipality staff, clustering too many roles within the same stakeholder (e.g. the municipality) might result in the core city imposing its vision and ambition on the hinterland.

It is vital to address the anachronic approaches of the current cycle of programming, such as the correlation between the ROP and SOP ENV axes.

¹⁹ Total number of projects accounts for projects completed and in implementation, as of September 2013. SOP axes include SOP ENV, SOP HRD, SOP IEC, POST. Other funding may include INTERREG IV, URBACT local and private funds, FP7, PN II, OP ACD, cross-border cooperation programs, Phare.



Comparative discussion

Based on the individual analysis presented above, some comparative discussion should be considered in order to better highlight the differences in approach, best practices and drawbacks. This section is also meant to support the improvement of the methodological guide for the next programming period.

Structure of IDPs

In general, the IDPs have strictly followed the structure proposed in the application guideline. However, some growth poles introduced new subchapters on issues considered uncovered. For instance the Braşov IDP includes a sub-section on research and innovation, which is useful to highlight the RDI ecosystem in place and substantiate the IDP vision based on knowledge – based society. The IDP of Ploieşti clearly defines a sub-section on coordination with other strategic and programmatic documents which helps showcase how the IDPs links to other regulatory and strategic endeavors.

On the other hand, some new chapters introduced (e.g. Braşov IDP introduced new chapter on territorial disparities) might have been mainstreamed into other sections of the IDP, so as to avoid overlap and keep structure simpler.

Most IDPs have unnecessarily expanded on each part /chapter, which led to very lengthy documents (400-600 pages each, including annexes), difficult to capture both in terms of detail and also overall perspective, by any member of the audience. Some have included short summaries/set of conclusions and key problems at the end of each section, which does help the reader to assimilate main findings (e.g. IDP Constanţa, IDP Braşov). Other IDPs developed very good visual representation of data, including spatial outlines and maps, as it is the case of IDP Ploieşti. Such practices should be encouraged for the next programming cycle as well.

All in all, there needs to be a better discussion on problems and challenges rather than descriptive presentation of data, with different degrees of relevance. For instance, mobility needs are rarely treated as such, as IDPs generally present situation of roads, existence and extent of public transport and bike lanes. Urban poverty aspects are also very poorly covered, with social and educational issues being largely treated by describing existing infrastructure endowments.



Sensitive sections

Most differences in terms of approach have been identified with regards to Part 3 – spatial profile and areas of intervention within the growth pole. This is also the only section which lacks methodological commentary in the guidelines, which may have contributed to the relative confusion with regards to this section role and envisioned content.

To start with, it seems unclear why such section should follow, rather than precede, the strategy formulation, as most IDPs just duplicate some of the diagnostic analysis done in previous sections, with only adding elements of intra-urban analysis. The territorial grain of analysis widely differs also, with some IDPs doing good work on in spatial analysis (and even targeted location of projects). Some attempted an analysis looking at functional areas (e.g. IDP Craiova), while others looked to neighborhood level (e.g. IDP Braşov) or urban vs. peri-urban area (e.g. IDP Cluj), leaving however IDPs (such as IDP Constanţa) with no capacity to integrate a fine territorial grain analysis all together. It is also important to note that in many cases the General Urban Plan of the core city was not being up to date, its upgrade being ongoing or planned. It is therefore expected that the next IDPs may be better positioned to assume a more in-depth territorial analysis.

The role of such a section is still unclear, as unlike integrated development planning on other ROP funding lines (e.g. urban centers) with a more clear territorial targeting, the growth poles funding line suggested metropolitan level impact and integration though, at the same time, asked for identification of problem areas and choice of priority areas of intervention.

Aim of document

As any strategic planning document, there are several aims one needs to have in mind while drafting methodological guidelines or the documents themselves. Strategic planning should lead to a commonly assumed vision and set of actions operationalizing it, which requires the mobilization of a large number of stakeholders. The communication and engagement should not be seen as a step preceding the document elaboration, but should be done throughout the process. Mobilizing people towards a common goal implies having awareness and ownership of the entire process. In this sense, more attention needs to be done to simple aspects from making such documents available and accessible to the public (e.g. easy-to-read summarizing brochures besides the lengthy documents), informing about status of implementation (up to date websites on status



of implementation, visibility in local media, status update meetings, etc.). Again, significant differences are noticed, with growth poles such as Iași having up to date news and annual reports while others lacking a website to start with (e.g. Cluj Napoca) or displaying un-accessible files/links and obsolete information (e.g. Timișoara).

IDPs are also meant to unleash the role of the selected metropolitan areas as growth engines for the regions where they are located and strengthen their role in the national economy. Having this in mind, IDPs have had different approaches with regards to articulating a growth vision in connection to the wider area to which they belong. Brașov IDP, for instance, extensively presented and assumed its position in the region and in relation to the wider functional area which they belong (Brașov – Ploiești – București). Other IDPs, though having a maybe even more pronounced strategic role seemed to have understated this perspective. For instance the Constanța IDP may have emphasized more its strategic position at the Black Sea and connect its vision and ambitions to macro-regional strategic endeavors (covering the Danube basin, the Black Sea region s.o.).

Last but not least, IDPs bring forward engagements of the local public authorities therefore they should reflect, first and foremost, their mandates and capacities. However, many IDPs refer to problems which exceed their powers and ask for national level policies and interventions. Education or enabling environments for SMEs, large infrastructure investments or funding to boost the innovation economy, are just a few of the needs expressed by IDPs which count more on central government than local initiatives. While the relevance of these needs is not doubted, they should be distinctively presented so that, on one hand, IDPs are feasible to implement by those having the mandate to do it, as well as inform the central authorities on what needs to be done to enhance the impact of IDPs.

Chapter III. Challenges for the next generation of IDPs in Romania

While IDPs will continue to serve as a key foundation for accessing EU structural funds for growth poles in the 2014-2020 programming period, the main challenge ahead lays in moving forward the practice and effectiveness of integrated development planning. A set of key elements are listed below, as main areas of improvement based on the analysis of existing integrated development plans as well as discussions and consultations with relevant stakeholders.

Evidence Based Policies and Planning

The growth poles IDPs have represented, in many aspects, a breakthrough in integrated development planning. On one hand, they brought forward the thinking and analysis on functional areas. On the other hand, they have arguably been the most elaborated systematic gathering of data and analysis of metropolitan area problems and issues level in Romania. Methodological guidelines and technical assistance offered to those involved made that comparability of such analytical exercises possible.

The role of evidence

Evidence is necessary and relevant to the extent it can help authorities (1) achieve a better understanding over needs and opportunities in an area (2) discern among options and take decisions with regards to budget allocation, territorial or thematic targeting of investments as well as (3) measure progress towards objectives and assess impact.

Choosing the right data

The IDPs review showed that data gathering exercises lead to exhaustive and tedious presentation of information, lengthy analysis making an unfriendly read. The impression is given that all available data is used, with a lot of information being presented in an unprocessed manner. Some of those relevant data remain at a purely descriptive level (i.e., no in-depth interpretation is provided) while other included information appears to be beyond the scope of IDPs (e.g., in-depth historical summaries, detailed climate elements such as river debits and average temperatures). Better evidence does not mean quantity but relevance for the IDP purpose, as strategic planning exercise. Evidence is meant to bring arguments and shed lights on current and future socio-economic dynamics. In some instances, pure nostalgia of the past can distort



investment decisions, such as tendency to promote the revamping of old representative industries of different growth poles, without a clear argument of its competitiveness in the current market dynamics. Other times, wishful planning may lead to strategies that are not necessarily anchored in reality. For example, hoping to develop a dynamic ICT center while ignoring the needs of a predominant manufacturing base, may lead to less-than-ideal outcomes.

Making sense of data requires a research plan sketched in advance and based on specific research questions: what are the decisions that the authorities need to make? Which are the problems and opportunities we need to explore? Where do we stand, as compared to national targets, other growth poles or other cities we see as competitors? And last but not least, how do growth poles contribute to the national economy as well as balancing the development of the country?

Understand what data is needed implies defining, amongst others, a specific set of indicators that can be recorded, as baseline value and evolution across time, both in the analyzed territory as well as other relevant territorial units, for comparability. Choosing the relevant time spans for the analysis is also important, as it gives the measure for evolution across time. Much of the data are snapshots at a single point in time. Trends across time are not always evident, despite the fact that they would be very useful in determining migration patterns, new economic activity, etc. In the perspective of growth poles policy, these are of utmost importance as one needs to assess the relevance of growth poles choice, the impact of such a national policy as well as decide to what extent new growth poles could be designated.

It is also important to identify not just project indicators but growth pole indicators. More specifically, it is important not only to see how a particular project has performed, but it is also important to see whether that project had the expected positive effect for the growth pole.

Reliability and availability of data

The territorial grain of statistical data is equally important and brings forward the challenge of data sources. As practice shows, spatial planning has rarely tapped into intra-urban statistical data with little uncover of areas of intervention and opportunity within large urban areas. Accessing statistical data at the locality level is a challenge within itself, with many aspects still left uncovered by the national statistical infrastructure. While the recent census of 2011 represents an enormous potential to help uncover disparities and areas of potential within Romanian cities, more



needs to be done to have these data made available and be processed at a fine territorial grain.

Moving to new data sets is also essential, in the wake of new planning challenges ahead. Dynamic, not just static data, on traffic, commuting and migration is essential for metropolitan areas to understand mobility challenges and tailor appropriate and effective solutions. Understanding business environment volatility, local productive systems and value chains implies a better integration – and access – to statistical sources held by institutions such as the Registry of Commerce or Ministry of Finance. The public nature of data does not seem to be a problem, since already the Ministry of Finance allows interrogation of detailed financial information for any economic agent in Romania. The challenge for planners is to access such data in open, editable datasets. Practice also shows that County Statistical Offices have different degrees of accessibility of data as well as different (discretionary) data tariffs. Last but not least, other information sources, such as public health or crime, have long been insufficiently integrated into planning decisions.

Statistical infrastructures need to be developed to cater for dynamic not just static data, better integrate other data sources, as well as design a set of metrics that could be recommended, if not imposed, for different planning exercises so as to rise to standards in terms of quality, relevance and appropriateness of data.

Capacity building is required for both data gathering as well as data processing institutions. In many aspects, the quality and reliability of data is a very sensitive issue and leads to skepticism and lack of trust in substantiation studies. More needs to be done to bring forward proper instruments and methods of gathering and processing.

Making sense of data

Much of the evidence presented in IDPs is useful but unexploited. IDPs are generally rich in terms of including lots of useful data – typically, an IDP includes information on the area's demographic profile, economic sectors and major companies, health, education, social assistance, water and sanitation, green areas, waste management etc. However, the links between the data presented in the introductory sections and the policy implications described in later chapters are not always clear. In several cases, the data are described (e.g., Constanța has the largest port on the Black Sea) but actual development implications are lacking. The structure of the report should clearly make the link between current needs – strategic choices/priorities – projects – implementation – governance/accountability framework – monitoring and evaluation and feedback



loops (lessons learned) – and then back to revised assessments of needs and priorities.

Last but not least, data visualization methods are, in many ways, the essential part of making sense of data. Mapping is not used enough, nor new technologies or instruments that are currently available. These are essential aspects when it comes to transparency – not in terms of having documents posted publicly but genuinely engage to help the public understand the meaning and implications of the analysis and decisions based on them.

Restating the scope, purpose and instruments of integrated urban development planning

The rationale and usefulness of IDPs should be emphasized beyond the perception of a mere instrument to access EU funds. Indeed, it has been a positive aspect that planning has been tied to funding and implementation and this whole process has been considered from start as such. However, this has also led to the planning part being done for ticking boxes. In this context, policy and methodological guidelines should not simply provide for basic process instructions but also emphasize more on the importance, role and utility of integrated planning. This may also include presenting successful models and best practices of Integrated Urban Development from Romania or abroad as well disseminate and promote the principles of integrated urban development. This has been actually expressed as need by different actors engaged in IDP elaboration, to have had concrete examples of IDPs or of the IUD concept.

The integrated approach has not been entirely assimilated in the current IDPs. Most IDPs include lists of projects which are not correlated to each other in an integrated manner but rather tick categories of activities eligible for EU funding. For instance, several IDPs include so-called “integrated projects” for the peri-urban localities within the growth pole areas. These include a series of projects including road improvements to kindergarten rehabilitation which fail to show a consistent integrated logic and appear more like a bulk of projects. There is a need for better sectorial integration and thinking across issues, better territorial integration and thinking across the territory of metropolitan areas (through projects which cover and generate linkages across the territory) and a more strategic integration with other documents. Methodologies



need to cover such aspects and highlight what integration of projects actually entails.

Territorial integration also needs improvement. IDP methodologies should make clear that growth pole IDPs should aim for territorial integration, operating at the scale of the metropolitan area and not according to predefined borders of urban-rural units, which are blind to actual functional links and needs. For instance the Timișoara IDP contains a project referring to a tourism masterplan for one of the peri-urban localities (Moșnița). A true territorial integration would have led to developing a masterplan for tourism across the metropolitan area or at least all areas with a tourism potential. Thus, IDPs should promote projects and programs which integrate areas across different local administrations to advance a territorially integrated development.

The purpose and scope of territorial integration needs to be carefully considered. IDPs for growth poles need to be harmonized with other integrated development plans which regards a specific clearly defined area within the city. The distinction between the nature and the methodology of IDPs for growth poles, which is supposed to cover the entire growth pole area, as opposed to any other IDP which is supposed to focus on a specific, well defined area within the city, has created confusions which emerged throughout the process (e.g. in the case of Cluj) . It is recommended that the local area-based territorial approach is included in growth pole IDPs, particularly for areas which experience socio-spatial deprivation. The growth poles IDPs can thus contain integrated projects regarding such specific areas, just as the IDPs dedicated to urban centers. This dual system can provide both the benefits of metropolitan synergic development and local-area based initiatives for the different neighborhoods.

IDPs must be seen in conjunction with other strategic planning documents, be it statutory or non-statutory documents, such as urban plans and development strategies regarding the same or broader territorial levels (i.e. regional, national etc). The multitude of such documents may be confusing and hinder accountability. The IDPs reviews have shown that correlation is addressed rather at declarative level, without mentioning concrete implications of planning documents towards the IDP and viceversa. As planning documents generally regard only those development aspects with a concrete territorial footprint, overarching strategic documents are necessary to ensure an integrative approach.



Alignment is required also in terms of funding mechanism. A frequent element noted in discussion with growth pole representatives refers to challenges in planning and implementing infrastructure projects funded via ROP with utilities (water, sewage etc.) funded through the SOP Environment. Proper sequencing such investments is necessary to avoid waste of resources (e.g. road rehabilitation should be done after finalizing all underground utilities pipelines), however, at times, it is very difficult to have such projects be approved and implemented one after another.

Addressing the challenges for urban regeneration requires instruments for involving built environment in private tenure

Negotiating public interest and private tenures is a sensitive yet very important matter affecting a wide array of development initiatives. For instance, regeneration of the historic centers of growth poles (e.g. Constanța) occurs in the context of a severe decay of privately-owned buildings in the respective areas. However, none of the projects deals with this large share of built environment (which is under private tenure), as currently money can be accessed only for buildings in public domain. Consequently, such regeneration interventions are missing an important dimension.

Similarly, the failure to implement the urban regeneration project in Iași reveals the challenges to work with heritage areas in private ownership within the current legislative framework. It is recommended that in the next ROP documents and guides should include toolkits for implementing projects improving such urban districts, so as to avoid the failure of urban regeneration projects. In other EU cohesion funds recipient countries (e.g. Spain), such projects represented significant parts of integrated urban development plans. Be it more radical solutions - extending the possibility to use funds for properties in private tenure - or toolkits adapted to the current situation, the new methodologies should definitely engage with this issue.

Improving guidelines and assistance to stakeholders engaged

Currently, the IDP guidelines are provided briefly in the Solicitants' guide (Axis 1, DMI 1.1) and consist of a table of contents and brief explanatory notes on each.



As a remark specific to the completeness and relevance of the structure presented, it is important to notice that the POR separates an analytical section from a territorial profile. In a majority of IDPs analyzed, territorial differences and nuances are not taken into proper consideration in the analysis, and consequently in the shaping of objectives, priorities, projects and programs. The recommendation is to provide a better explanation in the guidelines so that the analysis will better mainstream the territorial dimension and not leave it to a separate section (the territorial profile).

Models and examples of best practices in integrated urban development should be introduced in guidelines for the next programming period. Presenting such examples either stemming from the previous funding period (for instance, those suggested by the current report) or abroad would disseminate and promote the principles of integrated urban development as well as help the teams involved in the elaboration process.

Alignment to international principles and best practices in planning

Increased connectivity across metropolitan areas is a first dimension that should require more attention. IDPs for growth poles should improve connections between cities and their hinterlands to enhance the social and economic potential of the metropolitan areas. In particular, they should improve mobility links between cities and hinterlands focusing on sustainable means of transportation – integrated public transport systems, recovery of underutilized rail infrastructure, extensive bike lane systems, use of intermodal hubs/ park and ride facilities at the contact between the central city and the hinterland.

At the moment, high density rural areas around the central city are hindered by insufficient mobility links to the core. While IDPs for 2008-2013 have generally introduced projects on road infrastructure, there is a need to improve reliable public transport links across the metropolitan area to have an impact on a higher proportion of the population than just car-owners. Integrated transport systems in the metropolitan area make sense in the cases where densities are high in the settlements of the hinterland. This situation applies to Brasov, and increasingly to Timișoara, Cluj Napoca, Iași and Constanța, where significant increases in density of peri-urban settlements occurred from 1992 to 2012. Using the underutilized rail infrastructure can significantly improve mobility links,



particularly for Timișoara and Ploiesti, which are less than one hour away from a population of around 400,000.

Concentrating on increasing territorial connectivity across metropolitan areas is essential, particularly in those growth poles that have manifested sustained economic growth and therefore show potential for further economic and territorial integration between the central city and peri-urban areas. Cluj-Napoca or Timișoara would be such examples, where growth patterns in the last years ask for stronger emphasis on connective infrastructure to consolidate existing links and strengthen territorial synergies. For those growth poles that registered a slower growth rate, connectivity is still important but priority needs to be given to provision of basic utilities infrastructure and increasing quality of life.

In order to guard the commitment to sustainability of EU-sponsored integrated urban development, attention should be paid at the **mobility projects** which support and enhance automobile traffic in city centers. While bypasses and ring roads support improved mobility within metropolitan areas, projects like the central overpasses (e.g. in Craiova) may risk to generate issues rather than solve problems. They bring the practices of the 1960s, now considered obsolete in European contexts, of prioritizing car traffic to the detriment of alternative mobility, coherence and porosity of the urban and social tissue. Such interventions increase traffic in the center of cities and bring associated problems, which deem them incompatible to the goals of EU sustainable urban development.

It is recommended that methodologies highlight the potential pitfalls of such costly, anachronic approaches of mobility. Similarly, local authorities should take careful consideration of the opportunity to use significant sums for projects that appear successful and “visible” in the short term, but are unsustainable for the medium and long term

Brownfield reconversion, as adjustment to density patterns should also be considered with priority. After 1990, many Romanian cities, despite a shrinking population and a growing supply of now free industrial land within the limits of the city, expanded their built areas significantly. While the delineation of areas to be built is generally included in general urban plans (PUGs), the IDPs should engage more with the issue of adjusting the density pattern by providing engines and catalysts for this adjustment for a sustainable growth of cities.

Industrial areas cover significant tracts of land in Romanian cities. A majority of this land is not utilized and there are little prospects that it will be used for industrial uses in the future. In parallel, the cities are



extending outwards. Consequently, the growth pole metropolitan areas are not making an efficient use of territory. The reuse and recovery of former industrial lands (brownfields) should be an essential part of local development plans and strategies. It has been generally ignored in the IDPs of 2008-2014 but should be included in both methodologies, recommendations of the POR and therefore in the IDPs of the subsequent period.

IDPs should focus more on rising of the quality of life in the growth pole in order to attract and retain people

A good quality of life implies easy access to all areas of the city (a system of dense and efficient public transport brings mobility in the reach of the highest number of people, while being also sustainable; pedestrian walkways and bike lanes), attractive public spaces, including green areas and waterfront facilities, a vibrant cultural life (events, theaters, cinemas, etc.), community enhancement through events, supporting community centers etc.

On the other hand, projects that aim only to attract investors or improve infrastructure without an engagement with the quality of life of residents are undesirable. Another important aspect in this sense is encouraging convergence in living standards by aiming to reduce discrepancies between social amenities of various districts and territories of metropolitan areas, particularly aiming for the regeneration of deprived urban areas and the development of rural areas. IDPs should directly engage with social and spatial deprivation of areas within the growth pole metropolitan area. Actually, social-spatial inclusion is at the core of integrated urban development of the EU (see for instance The Toledo Declaration), which is currently affected by an insufficient territorial perspective of needs assessment within the IDPs. If the IDP is seen as a means to promote and align to such EU documents, then the funding authority could make such approaches more visible and possibly even mandatory.

Similarly, the issue of social housing is absent from most IDPs (with notable exceptions, such as Cluj), in opposition with best practices at the EU level. It is recommended that local authorities should target measures for marginalized groups and deprived areas to enhance their (re)integration as active parts of the local economy.



Legislative and Regulatory Framework

When it comes to enabling legal environment supporting the implementation of IDPs, and together with that, the development of growth poles in Romania, several aspects are relevant: the legal framework with regards to inter-municipal cooperation, the legal framework regulating public private partnerships, and with a more forward looking perspective, the laws with regards to decentralization and local fiscal powers.

Cooperation across administrative burdens is made possible, according to Law 215 on 2001 on local public administration which allows the formation of "cooperation structures, with own juridical personality, governed by private law, established by territorial administrative units for the joint execution of development projects of regional or local interest or joint provision of public services". Such so-called inter-communal development associations have been recommended for all metropolitan areas corresponding to growth poles, but not only. The tripartite agreements set forth by the Regional Development Agencies together with the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Regional Development, mention the president as the growth pole as the president of the IDAs gathering all administrative units within the growth pole areas.

However, the inter-municipal cooperation is still far from being able to capitalize on all its potential. For IDPs to be properly designed and implemented, a specially designed inter-municipal legal framework is required. This is further detailed and argued also in the subsequent World Bank Report "Growth Poles – The Next Phase", which brought forward several constraints of the current setting.

Increase the quality of projects through improved tender mechanisms

A significant problem regarding the quality of projects conducted by the public sector is the fact that many public administrations opt for the lowest cost in tenders, associated in many instances with low-quality projects. This can have negative impacts on both the quality of life of residents and on the attractiveness of one locality for investment, therefore affecting both goals of the ROP for IDPs. In projects dealing with the urban environment, the Chamber of Architects of Romania is advocating for competitions for solutions or for the projects that have the best relationship between quality and cost. The Ministry has the opportunity to introduce in the methodology recommendations/obligations for such alternative arrangements for IDP funds, in order to make sure that the quality of projects will be the highest



possible in relationship to reasonable costs and therefore to better contribute to the goal.

Governance and Stakeholder Engagement

The governance structure put in place to ensure the implementation of the IDPs is reliant on the legislative framework mentioned above. Metropolitan areas are based on voluntary agreement by all included localities. In theory, it is normal and preferable to have everyone buy into the idea and agree to be part of the new planning area. In practice, political motivations or other local competitive dynamics that influence voluntary agreements have affected the ability of metropolitan areas to include all relevant localities. This is a “lose-lose” situation.

Excluded localities are not integrated in overall development plans, while the growth center cannot gain as much economic mass as it would normally be able to accumulate just based on its gravitational pull. Solutions to address this situation could be top-down or bottom-up. Given the importance of coordination once an area is established, policymakers should ideally still try to get everyone to voluntarily sign up.

An in-depth assessment is needed to understand why certain localities decide to remain outside metropolitan areas despite clear mutual benefits. Causes might include:

- Exclusion from initial consultations, or lack of leverage in those discussions, leading to lack of ownership vis-à-vis the resulting IDP and its priority projects;
- Lack of leverage in the IDP’s governance structure, once a locality signs the voluntary agreement;
- Political dynamics and local competition;
- Poor communication of the benefits of integration and costs of exclusion, both at the level of local public officials of peri-urban localities and at the level of citizens (who, if persuaded of the benefits of joining, could further pressure their local representatives to join the metropolitan areas).
- Lack of co-financing capacity, which leads to the conclusions that potential benefits of entering such structure cannot be reached thus the effort is purposeless;

Actual governance structures appear to be very much dominated by representatives of the largest city (the main city mayor is usually the president of the inter-communal development association). It may be a good idea to standardize the organization of governance structures.



Implementation units appear to be understaffed and, in practice, may lack the political clout needed to unite local officials around common objectives and projects. Some units only have a staff of 3-5 people, which seems highly inadequate given their long list of responsibilities. The appointment of the “pole coordinator” appears to be centralized; he/she is a representative of the regional development agency and may not have any local leverage.

The section on communication is usually last in all IDPs and remains at a very vague level. In reality, IDPs require tremendous levels of coordination to be effective and actually implemented, which suggests that the communication aspect – *toward* and *among* both policymakers and citizens – is absolutely critical and should receive significantly more attention and resources. There are public consultations (at least before the IDP’s completion), but their effectiveness is to be determined and, in any case, they should be more frequent including during the IDPs’ implementation.

Improve transparency and public consultations

Incomplete forms of consultation which is based on city hall websites, therefore not engaging with the large mass of residents who do not consult this website on a regular basis. Recommended actions for the Ministry is to provide clearer frameworks of what makes an adequate consultation process. For the local authorities, a more meaningful public consultation process is necessary- see for instance examples of best practices in the analysis section of the growth pole cities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Sound monitoring starts with the design of monitoring instruments and responsibilities – to be included from start in strategic planning documents – as well as reflecting a certain level of maturity and engagement from the part of stakeholders involved. Without any doubt, monitoring is essential for policy makers to be able to understand the results of their investments and, provided that monitoring results are also assumed as learning material, to increase efficiency and effectiveness of future policy and programming exercises.



Prerequisites of monitoring systems

Monitoring and evaluation are one of the aspects which should be addressed with priority when planning improvements for the next generation of IDPs. Having a set of such strategic planning documents subsumed to a national policy implies two distinct aspects to consider. Which are the growth poles policy objectives that the implementation of IDPs should contribute to? And secondly, which are the specific aspirations and challenges of each individual growth poles (thus implying particular targets for each)? Setting national level performance targets as well as local level targets, tailored to each growth poles is a prerequisite for drafting a monitoring system for growth poles IDPs.

The review of IDPs showed that indicators are either entirely lacking or focus exclusively on output (e.g., number of km of new roads/tracks, etc.). This implies that the impact and effectiveness of IDPs will be difficult to assess. At the same time, comparability among performances of different IDPs based on reliable data will also be limited. Both these shortcomings will unfortunately lead to a waste of useful potential lessons learned for the next period as well as limited capacity to inform future decisions on resource allocation.

The challenge for the next generation of IDPs thus lays in defining a set realistic expectations in terms of national and growth pole level targets, accompanied by a set of indicators that will allow for a monitoring and evaluation of the IDPs. Outcome indicators should primarily be considered, not excluding the useful but insufficient output indicators.

Output vs. outcome

The preference for output indicators is linked to the view on IDPs as a mere collection of projects, each expected to materialize in a funding request, based on a specific budget and leading to – in most cases – a set of tangible results. However, such a perspective ignores the importance and potential impact of initiatives to be assumed by local authorities in their day to day activity in the form of improved procedures, increased transparency, type of approach towards third party organizations, etc. For instance, local economic development initiatives are almost exclusively linked to business support infrastructure. International practice as well as needs expressed by local business representatives show that other aspects are equally important as well, when aiming to position a certain city as a preferred investment location. To name just a few: quality and promptitude of local authority support in identifying suitable investor locations, level of bureaucracy and responsiveness in dealing with authorizations, proactive engagement of local leaders in different



business networking events to promote their location and seek for interested investors, etc. Such initiatives, if performed in a conscious systematic way, could indeed lead to increases in investor friendliness and attractiveness measured as outcome indicators, even though they are not necessarily objectified in a distinct project of an IDP portfolio. Indeed, the ROP was from the start designed to encourage, amongst others, business support infrastructures. However, for the next programming cycle, if there will be a stronger focus on policy targets and IDPs outcomes, than a more diverse conception over development initiatives may be allowed for and encouraged.

Monitoring responsibilities

The IDPs review also shows that accountability relationships are equally unclear. Sometimes, entire institutions are listed under actors responsible for monitoring. Formally the responsibility falls with the IDA and is shared with the growth pole coordinator's office. Arguably, both these bodies have a limited capacity to do so.

Responsibility should be definitely mixed. Setting out national targets and designing a coherent monitoring system to ensure comparability of growth poles performance should be something to be initiated and supported by the central authority. Transposing them into local level targets and responsibilities should be something to involve local stakeholders, mainly the IDA and the growth pole coordinator within the RDA.

Another major challenge that needs to be met lays in the capacity development for those engaged in the monitoring and evaluation process to, on one side, follow up with the designed system and, on the other side, be able to feed results back in the implementation and thus ensure that learning (and progress) is enabled. As it is right now, there are no apparent mechanisms to gather and communicate lessons learned – and adapt the IDP accordingly. Overall, feedback loops appear to be non-existent, which is particularly problematic when key adjustments are needed, as for the 2014-2020 period.

Last but not least, there are no perceived sanctions/rewards for incentivizing progress against targets set, nor clear responsibilities to measure and attribute IDP implementation success. Such measures may include soft activities such as showcasing progress and recognizing/promoting achievements, as well as hard measures such as considering absorption levels when allocating funds for the next programming period. A responsibility matrix would need to clearly



identify organizations and designated personnel, with a specific role and accountability in IDPs implementation.

Monitoring responsibilities, as engagement towards implementation

The lack of monitoring and evaluation systems makes way to elusiveness in terms of implementation and action plans. IDPs imply large collections of projects with criteria for “priority programs” and “project selection” being generally vague thus failing to specify a *clear, reasonable* set of high-priority projects. In many cases, the IDPs look like they include every single development project under consideration, without making clear strategic choices between sectors – for instance, focusing on becoming the best IT center as opposed to a good IT/manufacturing/tourism/etc. center.

Given the very long lists of potential projects, it is often unclear which of them would take priority and, given scarce resources, it would be best to concentrate investments in precisely those areas of comparative advantage for a particular metropolitan area

Programs link to the suggested areas of focus (e.g., infrastructure investments for improved connectivity) and several projects are included under each program. The program prioritization criteria represent the level of “impact” on the growth pole. However, this should be further specified and, ideally, attached to certain metrics for easy comparison and transparent selection.

Project selection criteria are equally vague, but usually similar across IDPs. They include: project impact; project “maturity” (progress toward securing EU funds); available sources of financing; alignment with current local, regional, and national development plans. Some of these criteria do not appear to be entirely sound: for instance, financing may be available for projects that are not really critical to the area’s development; however, if prioritized through the IDP, a project could probably find financing more easily. In some sense, these criteria reflect bias toward already existing strategies/projects, implying that the IDP is not necessarily bringing a new perspective for the whole metropolitan area.

Better monitoring and evaluation systems would imply more responsibility and accuracy in terms of decisions, choices and priorities set, as all these will be expected to be projected on a set of metrics to show progress and demand accountability.



Synergies with Other Strategic and Programmatic Endeavors

Many aspects which are essential for the socio-economic development of growth poles do not reside in the mandate and political decision of regional and local authorities involved in the governance of growth poles. Transport infrastructure, be it road, rail or air transport, is maybe the most relevant example. Education and energy policies are other important ones.

While IDPs can help coordinate efforts at metropolitan level and draw funds from a multitude of operational programs, most impactful projects may still lay outside their scope and mandate. It is thus important to note that the effectiveness of the growth poles policy, delivered partially through the IDPs is essentially reliant on the implementation of larger scale projects such as highway and high speed rail connectivity.

On a lower administrative level, the performance of IDPs is also dependent on the extent to which it manages to coordinate an entire plethora of local development strategies and urban plans of the administrative units involved.

Proposed IDP Improvements for 2014-2020

The Integrated Urban Development Plan is an operational plan type (see the WB study *2013-Enhanced Spatial Planning*). The plan should be perceived as different from the statutory plans used in Romania. However, the operational plan should be formulated in coordination with the statutory plan provision (General Urban Plan/Zonal Urban Plan) and strategy plan, the Local Development Strategy (LDS). The first is mandatory and produces juridical effects, the other guides the development without having a juridical effect.

Both mentioned documents, the GUP and the LDS provide territorial and multi-sectors data and information, guide the community development based on a vision and objectives and organize a package of multi-sectors policies/programs and projects presented under the action plan chapter. In addition the GUP provides the zoning regulation and assures the framework for buildings and infrastructure construction.

The GUP has a specific procedure for approval, including a technical and a political step. Public and private institutions have to approve the content of the GUP, which is then set forward to be voted by the City Council. The LDS does not have to comply formally with technical requirements, but should be approved by the City Council. From an administrative point of view, the GUP formulation and implementation is



under the responsibility of the City Architect, whose competence is recognized by the Public Servant Law. The LDS has no clear location within the City Hall structure and no clear policy for staffing. Most city halls that have created strategy development offices tend to have a limited capacity to co-ordinate the LDS formulation and projects implementation.

The IDP itself operates in a grey area between these two planning instruments. In order to make it effective, and avoid redundancies, the IDP should have a clear status and connection with both plans. Therefore the content of the plan should have a strong co-ordination characteristic, of various urban aspects which take place within administrative territorial units that make up the growth pole.

Ideally, the IDP should represent a comprehensive development strategy at the metropolitan level, with a clear vision and objectives, with a set of projects that could help achieve those objectives, and with varied sources of funding – not just EU funds, but also the local budget, county and state budgets, private funds, PPP arrangements, and other funding sources. This metropolitan development strategy should in turn have a corresponding metropolitan spatial plan. If true metropolitan planning and development is not possible, then the IDP should be correlated with individual local development strategies (those prepared by constituent localities), and should respect local, regional, and national spatial plans, while also informing the elaboration/update of these plans.

Moreover, since the implementation of the IDP covers more than four years, it is important to have broad political support during its formulation and implementation. As recommended in the *Growth Poles* report, it may pay to also consider institutional arrangements that limit political interference once the plan is adopted – e.g. by having metropolitan development agencies that are tasked to do planning and project development and implementation at the metropolitan level.

The new generation of IDP

The new IDPs should ideally have a clear status. The IDP is a 3-9 year multi-sectoral investment plan. The management approach becomes crucial to assure focus on real problems of the communities, and co-ordination and integration of the IDP content, especially in the implementation stage. Therefore its content should be designed accordingly. The recommendations for a new IDP are based on a comparative analysis between the existing IDP and what the new one should be.

From a structural point of view, the way IDPs are designed in the Applicant's Guide is a good approach. The chapters presented in *Model A*



of the Applicant's Guide are similar to any city strategic development plan used internationally. During the 2007-2013 Programming Period, the IDP was for many growth poles a de facto update of the existing local development strategy.

However, the key problem with the IDP is not the structure, but the focus and the methods and tools used. If the City Strategy is planned for 20-30 years, PIDU, as an operational and investment plan, should offer the political class instruments to respond to community needs and problems in maximum 9 years.

Nevertheless, the IDP itself cannot change the vision and the strategic objectives of the community. The IDP must coordinate and integrate the medium/long term vision and objectives which are built in the Local Development Strategy and target key management issues and trends in order to help prioritize programs and projects. It also should use proper methods to identify real problems. It should contain data collected from field interviews, dedicated questionnaires, study visits, focus group workshops, marketing analysis. A significant number of public meetings should be organized to consult the public.

The SWOT analysis is a powerful tool if it is designed publicly. The new generation of IDP should use a territorial SWOT to cover the whole territory in one unitary format and not in a sectoral fashion, as it was used in the 2007-2013 Programming Period. This will assure the formulation of a coherent integrated action plan which may tackle either the cohesion or competitive aspects of development.

The major aspect to tackle in the IDP is the investment plan based on projects cost and revenue and the financial capacity of the Beneficiaries to co-finance projects or to make the required advance payment for design and construction costs.

Recommendations for the new IDP

Basic Rules to follow in the design of the IDP as an operational plan:

- The Operational plan is a policy plan focusing on key management issues of an area.
- The Operational plan is a multi-sectoral investment plan and not a shopping list of projects.
- The Operational plan should be demand driven (users and locations), aiming to improve the existing situation in a specific period, with specific financial and institutional resources.
- The Operational plan is managed by public agencies which play a significant role in investment decisions and budget allocation.



- The Operational plan respects the zoning requirements approved by city council but is built on simplified and coordinated procedures.
- The Operational plan responds to scarce investment resources, and is therefore a highly political instrument.
- The Operational plan is built on trust and partnership, therefore the community should be engaged during the plan formulation process.

Reasons to use the IDP as an operational plan:

Operational plans should respond to problems encountered in statutory plans:

- Statutory plans take too long to prepare -> therefore, operational plans should be flexible and should adapt easily to key management issues within a city/area.
- Statutory plans seldom offer guidance and implementation phasing or techniques -> therefore, operational plans should be action oriented.
- Statutory plans seldom evaluate costs of the developments they proposed -> therefore, the operational plans should have a strong economic/financial component to evaluate costs and sources of funding.
- Statutory plans are seldom based on a realistic appraisal of the city's economic potential or likely population growth -> therefore, the operational plans should have an urban marketing component to identify the competitive factors of the city and to analyze the demand and supply for urban functions.
- Community leaders and implementing agencies are seldom meaningfully involved in the master planning process -> therefore, the operational plans should be based on solid stakeholders' analysis and an effective communication plan to keep planning momentum.



The IDP as a 3-9 years operational plan

In terms of process: (Process in 7 steps)

1. Step one: Establish an Inter-agency steering group and a Coordination body of the planning process and components;
2. Step two: Determine how users demand will be integrated into priority setting for the different components of the Plan;
3. Step three: Identify the investment priorities of the community through household surveys and interviews with infrastructure supply agencies (quantitative/qualitative, customer satisfaction);
4. Step four: Obtain information on investment activities already underway or about to be started;
5. Step five: Prepare the list of agencies' priority projects;
6. Step six: Carry out inter-sectoral priority setting and coordination;
7. Step seven: Plan for the revenue side of the budget (sustainability of the proposed projects).

In terms of content: (document components)

Component one: Situation analysis

The analysis is based on direct contact with existing issues/problems collected through questionnaires, interviews, various focus groups, thematic workshops. Recent relevant studies can be used or reviewed. Coordination with recent national and local policies is mandatory. It is also important to do a scan of regional dynamics, and focus on these things that have importance for the development of the growth pole (e.g. highway connecting the growth pole to large markets).

The territorial and sectoral diagnosis should focus on main problems and identify trends in the city development. The territorial diagnosis should determine the spatial area affected by problems in a specific sector.

Recommendations for policy actions should be built in this component. For plans funded through EU financial instruments, the coordination with thematic objectives is crucial.



Component two: Vision and development objectives

This component should be coordinated with the content of the recent City Development Strategy approved by city council. These are cardinal directions that cannot be changed by an operational plan.

Component three: SWOT analysis

The component should address two aspects. The first one is to identify strengths/weaknesses, and opportunities and threats at the metropolitan scale, which have a positive or negative impact on the implementation of the vision and the objectives at the level of the identified area.

The second aspect of the SWOT analysis is to support selecting the development scenarios, which can be based on capitalized opportunities to tackle the weaknesses, on strengths to avoid threats, on strengths to tackle the weaknesses, etc.

Component four: Policy plan

This component contains policy formulation plan for key management issues mentioned in the first component. The policy plan should focus on relevant problems of the city or area. The policy plan should be presented using the city map to understand the coordination between proposed policies and the affected/disadvantaged areas identified. This component should identify cohesion policies or competitive policies, in line with the type of scenario chosen, to support metropolitan development.

Component five: Investment plan

Component five identifies the programs and projects needed for the city/area improvement in coordination with the policy plan. The list of prioritized projects is analyzed on cost - revenue basis. This is an effective tool for project selection. The evaluation of financial capacity of the city hall is also part of this component.

Component six: Action plan

The component is designed in line with the Project Cycle Management framework (see EU guidelines).

Component seven: Communication plan

This component should present the toolkit for effective communication on various stages of the project formulation and implementation.



What should be financed through the 2014-2020 IDPs?

The financing of investments in growth poles should have two major aims: 1) on the one hand it should enable the growth poles to grow their demographic and economic mass (as was shown in the *Competitive Cities* report, this is key to a country's development); 2) on the other hand these investments should strengthen the polarizing effect of growth poles, by enabling a larger number of people to take advantage of the opportunities the growth poles offer.

Some of the investments that help achieve the two desiderates above cannot be limited to the boundaries of the growth pole – often these involve regional level developments that connect the growth pole to a wider area. Such investments are critical, and an IDP should take these into consideration, even if the investments per se cannot be done by the growth poles.

Nonetheless, there are several critical investments that can be done at the metropolitan level, and these fall within the scope of the priorities discussed in the *Competitive Cities* report. Thus, all growth poles should focus on the following types of investments to encourage positive growth and development dynamics:

- 1) Connective infrastructure (e.g. rehabilitation/upgrade of existing roads, development of new roads where called for, development of metropolitan public transport systems where needed).
- 2) Standard of life investments (e.g. rehabilitation, upgrade, and development of new schools, hospitals, and other social infrastructure).
- 3) Quality of life investments (e.g. rehabilitation of historic centers and public spaces, rehabilitation of apartment blocks, rehabilitation/upgrade/development of green spaces, pedestrian areas, bike paths, water fronts, cultural facilities).
- 4) Targeted measures at marginalized communities (e.g. potential CLLD approaches).

To a large extent, many of the investments listed above have already been captured as part of Axis 1 under the Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013. In addition to the type of investments listed above, the ROP 2007-2013 also includes a number of investments that are both needed (e.g. business infrastructure) and are forward thinking (e.g. brownfields redevelopment). These investments, and the current basic structure of Axis 1 can be kept as is for the next programming period. There needs however to be a better prioritization of investments from growth pole to



growth pole, as needs do tend to vary. For example, the development of business infrastructure may be more warranted in a growth pole with a dynamic local economy than in a growth pole with slower economic growth. Similarly, the redevelopment of brownfields may be more successful in a growth pole with a dynamic real estate market than in a growth pole with a sluggish real estate market.

Also, it is important to take into consideration investment types that have been less prominent in 2007-2013, but which are nonetheless critical. For example, there have been relatively few housing investments – only late in the programme was sub-axis 1.2 added, which enabled the thermal rehabilitation of Communist apartment blocks.

In 1990, around 85% of the built structures in Romania were built between 1945 and 1990 – by centralized planning systems. These buildings tend to be of low quality, have a poor energy efficiency performance, and have deteriorated significantly in recent years. In addition to the Communist apartment blocks themselves, there have been relatively few investments in spaces around apartment blocks – e.g. the development of new parking structures to relieve the public spaces which are now congested by cars.

The fact that investments in the thermal rehabilitation of buildings can have a high impact has already been proven by the thermal rehabilitation program undertaken by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, with public funds. For example, between 2009 and 2011, around a quarter of the apartments in Cluj-Napoca have been thermally rehabilitated. Of these, 3 in 4 have been rehabilitated with private funds. Basically, people got inspired by the first buildings rehabilitated with public funds (few projects of this sort have been undertaken before), and not wanting to wait to receive public funds, they have contracted thermal rehabilitation works on their own. The same can be done in other cities in Romania, with the caution that EU grants and public funds should primarily be targeted at poorer household associations, which cannot afford to pay for such works on their own.

To finance such investments, the MA-ROP can establish a revolving fund, which localities and household associations could draw on for individual rehabilitation projects. The advantages of such a revolving fund is that they could encourage absorption and dramatically reduce bureaucracy.

Similarly, investments in the rehabilitation of public spaces around apartment blocks could be done through CLLD programs, with distinct communities deciding what project they would want to see financed in their communities.



From the analysis the team has done for other projects for the MRDPA (e.g. *Competitive Cities*, *Enhanced Spatial Planning*, the *TRACE studies*) and from other studies in the field, it became clear that there are a number of investments that are needed in all growth poles. Such investments include:

- Housing rehabilitation;
- Urban transport investments;
- Rehabilitation of spaces around apartment blocks;
- Measures targeting marginalized communities;
- Investments in neighborhood public parking structures;
- Municipal buildings rehabilitation;
- Historic center rehabilitation;
- Rehabilitation/development of green spaces.

Other investments are needed in growth poles, but needs and priorities may vary from city to city. In what follows, we will discuss some of the priorities that should be included in the 2014-2020 Growth Poles IDPs, with an individual analysis done for every city. It has to be noted at this point that the list discussed below is neither exhaustive nor normative. It simply includes a number of guiding posts that local authorities could use when devising their new IDPs.

BRAȘOV:

- Development of a metropolitan public transport system. Brașov is one of the few growth poles which is surrounded by localities with a high enough density to encourage the profitable introduction of a bus transport system.
- Continue the investments in pedestrian areas and bike paths.
- Brownfield redevelopment of old industrial platforms.
- Street lighting timing program.
- Consider the rehabilitation of the district heating system. A careful cost-benefit analysis needs to be done in this respect. The fact that a large majority of people have already disconnected from the system may mean that future rehabilitation work will be nothing more than a wastage of public funds.

CLUJ-NAPOCA:

- Development of new access roads between Cluj-Napoca and Florești, one of the most congested areas in the country.



- Develop an integrated public transport system (bus lane, bike paths, pedestrian paths) between Cluj-Napoca, Florești, Apahida, Baci, and Jucu.
- Brownfield redevelopment of old industrial platforms.
- Investments in green spaces, public spaces, and pedestrian areas.
- Develop business infrastructure for creative industries, but carefully consider if private sector could not undertake such investments.
- Street lighting audit and retrofit, and timing program.

CONSTANȚA:

- Develop metropolitan public transport system, improving connections to seaside resorts to the north and the south of Constanța.
- Improve pedestrian areas and public spaces along the coast.
- Strengthen the city's brand and enable it to become an international tourist destination.
- Rehabilitate district heating network to reduce losses in the system.
- Street lighting timing program.

CRAIOVA:

- Extend public utilities infrastructure (water, sewage, gas) to the metropolitan area and enable a larger number of people access to basic life standards.
- Rehabilitate schools, hospitals, and other social infrastructure in the larger metropolitan area.
- Improve local public transport system (e.g. continue rehabilitation work on tram network and renew bus fleet).
- Improve pedestrian areas and public spaces.

IAȘI:

- Extend public utilities infrastructure (water, sewage, gas) to the metropolitan area and enable a larger number of people access to basic life standards.
- Rehabilitate schools, hospitals, and other social infrastructure in the larger metropolitan area.
- Rehabilitate district heating network, but carefully consider sustainability of investments undertaken.
- Improve local public transport system (e.g. continue rehabilitation work on tram network and renew bus fleet).
- Investments in green spaces, public spaces, and pedestrian areas.



- Develop business infrastructure for creative industries, but carefully consider if private sector could not undertake such investments.

PLOIEȘTI:

- Develop metropolitan transport infrastructure that will better integrate Ploiești within the București-Ploiești-Brașov growth corridor.
- Rehabilitate district heating network, but carefully consider sustainability of investments undertaken.
- Extend network of pedestrian areas and pedestrian paths.
- Improve local public transport system.

TIMIȘOARA:

- Develop metropolitan transport infrastructure that follows recent urban development patterns, as well as commuting patterns, allowing firms in the metropolitan area easier access to a larger labor pool.
- Develop business infrastructure to guide new business investments.
- Investments in green spaces, public spaces, bike paths, and pedestrian areas.
- Rehabilitate district heating network, but carefully consider sustainability of investments undertaken.
- Brownfield redevelopment of old industrial platforms.

Lastly, the discussion on what urban development investments the ROP 2014-2020 should finance are included in the *Project Selection Models* report, with a more in-depth analysis of the type of project local authorities in Romania have preferred so far.

Conclusions

The first generation of growth poles IDPs has been innovative in the sense that it moved forward the practice of integrated urban development planning, framed it under a national policy initiative as well as accompanied with adjacent funding. In so doing, this became a first exercise in post-socialist Romania where planning is accompanied by funding and institutional design and results into implementation.

The IDPs have aligned Romania's planning practice to the EU trends and recommendations with regards to integrated urban development and have brought forward a debate on how to better link strategic planning and institutional frameworks to functional areas rather than administrative territories.

As a new generation of IDPs is foreseen, under the next 2014-2020 programming period several lessons learned and recommendations need to be considered. Roles and responsibilities in pushing for improved integrated urban development planning lays both at central and local level, and should be considered in conjunction.

The role of central authorities is essential, even more so that it refers to a policy practice that is new and thus requires specific communication and capacities. Of the recommendations mentioned above, most urgent and easy to implement from the part of the MRDPA would consist of improved guidelines and assistance for stakeholders engaged in growth poles governance structures. The IDPs review revealed that better integration of projects as well as territorial integration are two main areas of improvement for the next programming cycle and these can only be achieved via guidance, showcasing examples and best practices.

General awareness and understanding of the growth poles and integrated urban development policies and practice is also essential and should be pushed forward by central authorities. Such efforts of educational nature will foster engagement of interested parties as rationale, benefits and means of action will be better understood.

Other recommendations to be assumed by central authorities have a more strategic and medium to long term nature and refer to creating an enabling environment for the practice of integrated urban development. These include legislative and regulatory frameworks with respect to metropolitan governance structures or statistical infrastructure (allowing, for instance, better collection of intra-urban or dynamic data). Complementary to these, actions that will help mainstream implementation are also necessary, such as better correlation of funding



instruments to help IDP implementation (e.g. ROP vs. SOP Environment, etc), improved tendering processes or designing instruments dealing with private tenure in urban regeneration initiatives.

Local authorities engaged in drafting a new generation of IDPs will benefit of the current experience and lessons learned from the 2007-2013 cycle. Efforts should be directed towards a better alignment of IDPs with principles and recommendations in integrated urban development practice in country or abroad. Connectivity with the hinterland, mobility within the metropolitan area, tackling socio-spatial inclusion or promoting green economy are just a few of these aspects promoted in policy frameworks or reports at EU level or beyond.

As cooperation and joint-up work improve with exercise, it is expected that growth pole governance structures will be better prepared for the next planning cycle. Governing bodies may be more aware of capacity requirements and could better accommodate and access adequate support, in form of technical assistance or other initiatives alike.

As for monitoring and evaluation, such recommendations should be jointly considered by both central and local authorities in accordance with assumed targets, at national level, and designated goals, for each growth pole level.

Careful consideration must be given to future developments in terms of territorial administrative reforms and decentralization. As mandates of different local public administrations will most probably evolve during the next few years, IDPs should comprise initiatives that may be assumed locally.

Annex 1: Set of Criteria Used for IDP Analysis

I. Content of the IDP: from analysis to urban development projects

1. **Evaluating the analysis conducted for the IDP:**
 - How comprehensive is the analysis? Does it cover all the required levels of analysis with relevant information?
 - How thorough is the analysis? Does it cover rigorously and in depth all the levels of analysis required? Is the methodology adequate? Does it avoid being just a list of facts and actually critically engages with data?
 - Does the IDP clearly present the logical link between the results of the multi-sectorial analysis and the stated needs and potential?

2. **Evaluating the consistency, coherence and strategic nature of the IDP:**
 - Is the vision of the IDP clearly stated?
 - Are the objectives and priorities clear?
 - Does the IDP make a convincing case on why the vision, objectives and priorities result from the needs and potential identified?
 - Do the vision, objectives and priorities correlate to the objective of the ROP Axis 1 “to increase the quality of life and to create new jobs in cities”?
 - Do the selected IDP projects clearly express the vision, objectives and priorities?

3. **Evaluation of the projects:**
 - **Comprehensiveness:** How much does the IDP support the achieving of sustainable urban development goals, as stated by EU documents on cohesion, integrated urban development and Romanian documents, including the ROP?



- Urban Environment
 - Improving accessibility and links throughout the metropolitan area
 - Reducing transport needs by the promotion of proximity and mixed-uses schemes
 - Stimulating a more sustainable mobility by prioritising non-motorised ('walkable', 'cyclable' cities)
 - Supporting affordable and efficient public transport
 - Preservation of Built Heritage and Baukultur
 - Inclusive & Quality Public Space
 - Recycling urban land (e.g. Brownfields)
 - Supporting the adjustment of the density pattern
 - Improving the management of energy and material resources and flows in the city (urban metabolism), including the whole water cycle, waste, etc.
 - Boosting building energy efficiency
 - Promoting renewable energies
 - Protecting natural, landscape, forestry, water resources, agricultural areas, etc. around cities 're-greening' the existing city, etc.

- Economic
 - Regenerating the urban economy through strengthening endogenous development/ entrepreneurial activities and diversifying local production systems
 - Support of building retrofitting, physical upgrading and the modernization of infrastructure in order to improve the attractiveness of a city and to create new jobs
 - Supporting an economy of knowledge, creativity, excellence and innovation
 - Supporting the development of tourism
 - Supporting a green economy

- Social
 - Fostering employment/job creation
 - Supporting inclusion
 - Providing affordable housing through supporting construction, as well as housing and building renovation, retrofitting and upgrading
 - Enhancing social infrastructure for various groups, including the elderly and the disabled



- Increasing security
- Do the proposed projects fall roughly in the 60% infrastructure 25% social infrastructure 15% business environment split for investments recommended by the ROP?
- Do projects in the IDP have the potential to be catalyzers for socio-economic development in the area/city?
- Do projects clearly result from the analysis or is there a potential for “category-ticking” projects?
- Are projects representative of current best practices in urban development or do they sponsor approaches that have been deemed unsustainable and are anachronisms ?

II. Integration of content, process and context of the IDP

Sectorial Integration

- How much do investments in one sector have the potential to benefit other sectors?
- How much does the IDP address socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion, which affects all policy areas (Leipzig)?

Territorial integration

- What is the expected impact of the IDP on a metropolitan scale?
- Is the scale of the IDP metropolitan? Do its projects cover a balanced geography, mitigated by need and potential of areas?
- What is the expected impact of the IDP on deprived areas?
 - a) How much does it cover the deprived areas of the city and metropolitan area through its projects?
 - b) Does it use an integrated area-based approach for these areas?
- How does the IDP contribute to linking areas across the city and the metropolitan area?
- Does the IDP create and enhance connections across areas either through improving accessibility or by increasing sectorial links?

Strategic integration

- How much does the IDP relate to other existing strategies:
 - At the national level
 - At the regional/county level, the County Spatial Plan



- At the local level (the development strategy , the General and Zonal Urban Plans relevant to the metropolitan area)
- Other documents
- Does the IDP engage with other ROP and SOP axis? Are projects in the IDP included in other ROP and SOP financial mechanisms?

Stakeholders integration

- How comprehensive is the list of stakeholders identified?
How comprehensive is the list of stakeholders to be involved for the management and the implementation of the IDP?
- Horizontal integration within levels (region, local authorities)
How well integrated is the IDP within levels? What is the degree of cross-departmental cooperation envisioned for the management of the IDP?
- Vertical integration across levels
How well integrated is the IDP across levels? What is the degree of across-level cooperation envisioned for the management of the IDP?
- How much does the IDP encourage bottom up approaches for management and implementation? (Leipzig)
- How rigorous were the public participation and consultation procedures? (Leipzig)
- How much does the IDP integrate stakeholders for the pooling of resources? Are there any public-public or public-private partnerships envisioned for the pooling of resources?

Operational issues

- How adequate is the management structure proposed in relationship to the complexity of the needs and potential identified?
- How adequate is the action plan proposed in relationship to the complexity of the plan and the time horizons proposed?
- How adequate is the monitoring mechanism proposed? How clear are the indicators?
- Does the city have the adequate institutional capacity or does it envision the creation of new structures to support the implementation of the IDP?

Annex 2: Integrated Development Plans – proposed content (as per application guidelines)

1. General characterization of the growth pole

- 1.1. General data (limits and component territorial administrative units, network of settlements, demography, brief history, associative structure etc);
- 1.2. Territorial audit (demography, profile and economic competitiveness, human resources, technical and transport infrastructure, social infrastructure and housing, cultural and natural heritage, tourism, quality of the environment etc.);
- 1.3. Administrative audit (organizational structure of local public administrations from the growth pole area and public management);
- 1.4. Diagnostic and SWOT analysis;

This first section of the integrated development plan covers the audit of the existing situation in the growth pole and consists of an inquiry in the development potential of its area of influence, from demographic, socio-economic, utilities, heritage and environmental point of view, with the purpose of identifying strengths, problems and dysfunctions, in order to substantiate, in correlation with external opportunities and threats, a development strategy and an action plan.

For the elaboration of this section, existing documents will be used, such as Regional Spatial Plans ("PATR"), County Spatial Plans ("PATJ"), General Urban Plans ("PUG"), regional development plans as well as data and statistical information from the County Statistical Offices, County Agencies for Employment, APRM, Registry of Commerce, Chamber of Commerce, Financial Administrations, local and county agencies for transport and utilities, local /zonal mobile phone and internet operators as well as specialized services within the city halls. The analysis will also comprise a SWOT of the growth pole, including the use, as much as possible, of quantifiable elements



and formula (i.e.: the unemployment levels in the city/municipality is three times higher than the county / region levels etc.).

Comparable data will be presented, to the extent possible. Most recent statistical data available will be utilized.

Attention! The analysis included in this section of the plan should substantiate the development strategy proposed in the next section.

2. The growth pole development strategy

- 2.1. Development vision
- 2.2. Strategic objectives
- 2.3. Policies and programs
- 2.4. Priority programs
- 2.5. Information and consultation

The development strategy of the growth pole comprises strategic objectives, policies, programs and priorities. The aim of this part is to structure, based on the audit included in the first section of the plan, the process of addressing the identified problems and/or of capitalizing on the identified opportunities in the respective area, through actions/projects which have as aim the elimination / reduction or limiting of such problems, or obtaining competitive advantages.

This section of the Plan is the result of a process which includes consultations with local partners. In this sense, this section will also comprise a short description of how the public information and consultation has been conducted with regards the Integrated Development Plan.

3. The spatial profile and intervention areas within the growth pole

- 3.1. The spatial and functional profile of the growth pole;
- 3.2. Problem areas and spatial development tendencies;
- 3.3. Areas of intervention;
- 3.4. The selection of priority intervention areas;



4. The action plan

- 4.1. Strategic and operational arguments;
- 4.2. Project portfolio (including budget estimation for implementing the integrated plan, based on funding sources (identified, to the extent possible), project durations);
- 4.3. Project fiches for the identified projects;
- 4.4. Implementation timeline;

The action plans states the way in which the objectives and priorities set in the strategy (2nd Part) will be touched (totally or partially), through a project portfolio closely identified and sufficiently mature in order to be implemented by 31st of July 2015 (in case these projects require funding under Axis 1 of ROP) or, depending on each case, up to the implementation deadline foreseen by other sources.

This section of the integrated plan constitutes the main work and control instrument of the implementation unit of the integrated plan. The action plan contains a portfolio of projects which lead to the implementation of the integrated plan and attaining the objectives identified in the strategy (Part 2), respectively addressing the needs identified in the analysis (Part 1). Defining this portfolio implies describing the manner in which these condition and correlate to one another, ensuring the integrative character of the plan. The projects which will be included in this package must contact activities eligible under Priority Axis 1 "Support for sustainable development of cities – urban growth poles" of the Regional Operational Program 2007 – 2013, as these are described in Section II.2.1.A.1 "Project eligibility", pct. 2, from the Solicitant Guide, in case funding is required for such projects under the above mentioned Axis.

5. Integrated plan implementation management

- 5.1. Management structure proposed
- 5.2. Operational relations

This section will present the approach to managing the integrated plan implementation, with the purpose of ensuring the proper conditions for the implementation of the projects included in the plan and the coordination among the plan content and planning documents, investment programs and available budgets. The



operational, technical and financial capacity of the beneficiary for implementing the Integrated Development Plan in the time and conditions set will be foreseen.