

SYNTHESIS REPORT

ACROSS PROJECT



Author: Kata Bunyevácz
BURST Nonprofit Ltd.



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Introduction

The European Green Deal aims to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. Many actors are key players to reach sustainability targets at EU level, such as cities and enterprises. Local authorities are facing the challenges of climate change and make huge efforts in adaptation and mitigation, and in preservation of nature values, ecosystem services and biodiversity. Decision makers are committed to reach the ambitious goals of the EU, setting significant objectives in the field of sustainability, as well as interventions and measures accordingly in the urban development policies. The ecological crisis has turned the attention to the need for greater socially responsible behaviour from the private and the public sector. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a concept whereby enterprises integrate social and environmental concerns into their mainstream business operations on a voluntary basis. The main objective of the ACROSS project is to align public and corporate sustainability goals and establish a strategic, long-term cooperation between economic actors and local authorities of participating regions, inspired by an efficient interregional knowledge exchange process.

ACROSS partners have completed the first stage of the project — the analysis phase — by developing their Local Analysis Reports. Based on these reports, the advisory partner, BURST, has prepared this Synthesis Report outlining the project's key focus areas. Seven focus areas have been identified.

The knowledge exchange methodology proposed in the Synthesis Report aims to address all seven focus areas and tackle the challenges identified within each area during the project's knowledge exchange phase. The Annex of the Synthesis Report contains a collection of good practices from project partners, serving as the primary knowledge source for the learning process outlined in the methodology.

FOCUS AREAS

Within the overarching theme of the ACROSS project — Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) — the partners have identified seven specific focus areas, each of which is outlined in this chapter. For each focus area, the partnership has compiled a list of related challenges, questions, and issues. During the one-year knowledge exchange phase, the goal is to address these challenges and questions, ultimately leading to improvements in the targeted policy instruments.

Focus area 1: POLICY FRAMEWORK for Public-Private Collaboration/Partnerships

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fosters collaboration between municipalities, businesses, and civil society to address social and environmental challenges. However, without a structured policy (legal framework and strategy), CSR initiatives remain fragmented, limiting their impact. A clear legal and financial framework is essential to encourage private sector participation and ensure long-term sustainability.

Key Challenges

- Unclear financial and legal aspects hinder CSR adoption.
- Regulatory changes may increase compliance burdens.
- Fragmented initiatives prevent synergy and broader impact.
- Lack of coordination leaves businesses unsure how to contribute.

The Way Forward

Formalizing CSR practices can strengthen regional partnerships and align corporate contributions with urban goals. A transparent legal and financial framework is crucial for supporting local actions. Despite bureaucratic and resource challenges, a structured CSR strategy will enhance corporate engagement, drive meaningful community impact, and support sustainable urban development.

Focus area 2: ENGAGEMENT INSIDE THE ORGANIZATION

To effectively implement the CSR/public-private collaboration/partnership policy, partners must address internal distrust and lack of awareness about CSR initiatives within their organizations. Overcoming these challenges is crucial for successful adoption and long-term impact.

Key challenges

- Overcoming skepticism – Political distrust makes it difficult to gain buy-in. How can political engagement be strengthened?
- Lack of political priority – Politicians often do not see the added value of CSR.
- Risk of political exploitation – CSR initiatives may be used as election campaign tools rather than for long-term impact
- Resistance to change – Organizations may be reluctant to integrate new practices like CSR.
- Additional workload for civil servants – Initiating CSR initiatives requires extra effort, which can be a barrier.
- Knowledge gap – CSR is a new concept for many politicians, and implementing it properly may seem overwhelming.

The way forward

- **Use data-driven results** – Monitor and measure CSR outcomes to demonstrate their value, build trust, and show transparency in resource allocation.
- **Leverage EU policies and regulations** – Strict EU frameworks can compel politicians to integrate CSR into their agendas.
- **Align CSR with political interests** – Design actions that allow politicians to visibly engage with citizens and showcase their commitment.
- **Foster cross-sectoral collaboration** – Build networks with local companies and engage consultancy agencies (e.g., EDC) to act as bridges between the private and public sectors, ensuring transparency.
- **Start small** – Implement CSR initiatives gradually to reduce resistance and demonstrate early successes.
- **Create a clear CSR portfolio** – Define clear goals and present concrete proposals to politicians rather than open-ended questions like, "Can we implement it?" or "Is this okay?"

Focus area 3: CSR PLATFORM

To ensure the effective implementation of CSR initiatives in alignment with the rules and objectives outlined in the policy framework, the project partner organizations recognized the need to establish a dedicated CSR platform which can tackle a list of challenges:

Key challenges

- Lack of a Dedicated Contact Point – There is no single designated entity within the Municipality to receive and manage external collaboration proposals.
- Mismatch Between CSR Initiatives and Local Needs – Limited space and capacity to align corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives with municipal priorities. The absence of a structured communication platform (CSR menu) prevents businesses from effectively identifying how they can contribute to environmental and community needs. As a result, CSR actions are often ad hoc rather than strategically integrated.
- Absence of a CSR Knowledge-Sharing Platform – Businesses lack access to a dedicated platform for sharing CSR-related knowledge, learning about best practices, and exploring case studies from other regions to support effective CSR implementation.
- Transparency Issues – Ensuring accountability and transparency in CSR initiatives remains a challenge.
- Fragmented Information – The absence of a centralized "one-stop shop" leads to scattered and inconsistent CSR-related information.
- Limited Public Awareness and Communication – Insufficient communication about CSR efforts can result in public skepticism and reduced trust in corporate initiatives.
- Lack of feedback, recognition from the municipality towards the companies who do CSR, lack of saying thank you to them
- Lack of cooperation with universities, NGOs

The way forward

A **CSR platform** should be established as a centralized hub to connect businesses, municipalities, and community stakeholders, facilitating collaboration and aligning CSR initiatives with local needs. This platform would serve as a "**one-stop shop**" for receiving external collaboration proposals, matching corporate efforts with municipal priorities, and providing transparent information on ongoing CSR activities.

To ensure its effectiveness, the municipality should designate a **dedicated contact point** responsible for managing the platform, coordinating partnerships, and fostering engagement. The platform should also include a **knowledge-sharing section**, where businesses can access case studies, best practices, and resources to enhance their CSR strategies. Finally, a strong **communication strategy** should be developed for the platform to promote CSR efforts, increasing public awareness and trust while encouraging broader participation.

Focus area 4: KNOWLEDGE and AWARENESS RAISING

Knowledge and awareness raising have already been identified as a key activity in strengthening CSR initiatives. While partners have some ad hoc experience in establishing and implementing CSR actions, they all recognize the need for greater knowledge and awareness among all participants involved in a potential CSR initiative. This includes understanding the opportunities, benefits, and best practices associated with CSR engagement.

Key challenges

- Insufficient knowledge about the importance of CSR among both local administrations and companies.
- Lack of understanding of how to effectively implement CSR initiatives.
- Limited experience in motivating local entrepreneurs to adopt low-carbon business models and sustaining their commitment.
- Lack of awareness of potential quick wins that can generate short-term benefits while contributing to long-term impact.
- Uncertainty about how to foster trust and transparency in government-business relations.
- Knowledge gaps on CSR among stakeholders, leading to inconsistent practices.

The way forward

The way forward involves **targeted knowledge-sharing** and **awareness-raising activities** to bridge existing gaps and enhance CSR implementation. **Organizing training** sessions, **workshops**, and **peer-learning exchanges** will help stakeholders understand the benefits of CSR and practical steps for implementation. **Showcasing successful case studies** and **quick-win opportunities** can motivate local entrepreneurs to adopt low-carbon business models.

Strengthening collaboration between local administrations and businesses through dialogue and **trust-building initiatives** will ensure more transparent and effective CSR efforts.

Finally, **developing practical guidelines** and **toolkits** will provide stakeholders with structured support to sustain CSR actions in the long run.

Focus area 5: SME involvement

Another key challenge identified by partners is the involvement of SMEs in CSR initiatives. While large companies in partner regions are experienced and actively engaged in CSR, SMEs often lack the necessary knowledge and awareness of the opportunities and benefits CSR can bring to their businesses. As a result, they are less likely to implement CSR practices effectively. SMEs require targeted support, including capacity-building activities, tailored guidance, and practical tools to integrate CSR into their operations. Providing this support will help them successfully contribute to sustainability goals and benefit from CSR initiatives.

Key challenges

- Resource limitations continue to be a significant barrier to SME participation in CSR initiatives.
- Uncertainty about the benefits of CSR for businesses, including its potential for positive publicity.
- SMEs are not fully leveraging EU regulations and community interests to strengthen their CSR efforts.

The way forward

The way forward involves strengthening **knowledge-sharing** and **capacity-building initiatives tailored to SMEs**, helping them understand the tangible benefits of CSR. Providing **practical guidance on leveraging EU regulations** and community interests will empower SMEs to integrate CSR into their business strategies effectively. Creating partnerships between SMEs, large companies, and local governments can facilitate **mentorship** and collaborative CSR actions. Finally, **promoting successful SME-led CSR initiatives** through case studies and **public recognition** can inspire broader engagement and long-term commitment.

Focus area 6: MEASURING and SUSTAINING CSR INITIATIVES

Partners also recognized the importance of measuring the results and actual impact of CSR actions, as this provides evidence of their relevance and serves as motivation for a more systematic CSR approach.

Measuring and sharing CSR outcomes also help sustain CSR initiatives by keeping companies engaged in the long run and attracting new businesses to collaborate with public authorities.

Key challenges

- Absence of a structured system to measure the impact of CSR, making it difficult to assess its real benefits and effectiveness.
- Lack of a standardized measurement framework.
- Challenges in assessing and effectively communicating the impact of CSR projects to stakeholders.
- Ensuring the long-term sustainability and lasting impact of CSR activities

The way forward

The way forward could involve developing a **standardized measurement framework** by establishing **clear indicators** and **methodologies** to assess the impact of CSR initiatives, ensuring consistency and comparability.

Enhancing data collection and reporting is essential for the successful operation of this framework. Therefore, new tools and processes should be introduced to systematically track CSR outcomes, making it easier to evaluate their effectiveness. Furthermore, the previously mentioned **CSR policy should incorporate this measurement framework**. When establishing a public-private collaboration/partnership, the involved parties should also agree on the approach for measuring the results of their joint CSR initiative.

Focus area 7: FINANCIAL MECHANISM: CSR FUND – PROCUREMENT

Finally, partners are interested in exploring the idea of establishing an internal CSR fund within their organizations. Additionally, some partners already have experience in leveraging public procurement as a strategic tool to achieve sustainability goals.

SYNTHESIS OF THE POLICY IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES

In addition to identifying a range of challenges, questions, and issues consolidated under the seven focus areas, the project partners conducted an in-depth analysis of their respective policy instruments within their Local Analyses Reports and formulated preliminary objectives for policy improvement.

The table below summarizes partners' **policy improvement objectives**, detailing the policy instruments they aim to target and the specific improvements they seek to achieve within ACROSS.

Most partners focus on **local (city-level) policies**, where they have significant influence, allowing them to implement **structural changes** such as adding new chapters, objectives, measures, or indicator frameworks to existing policies. Some partners also plan to introduce new **management tools** to enhance policy implementation, including **CSR platforms, engagement tools like business newsletters, or amended public procurement rules**.

Interestingly, the most common type of policy change — **new projects** — is only relevant for **Kekava**. This reflects the recognition that advancing CSR within public authorities requires deeper **policy, organizational, and capacity-building changes** rather than isolated, project-based interventions. Instead of relying on **short-term, ad hoc initiatives**, partners are committed to establishing **structural reforms and sustainable public-private collaboration** that **mobilize private sector resources** to support public sustainability goals.

In addition to the above-mentioned policy objectives, partners are considering the development of a new policy instrument: a **CSR policy framework** or a **public-private collaboration policy framework**. Their initial plan is to jointly develop a methodology for designing this policy. Using this approach, each partner can create their own CSR policy framework by the end of the project.

If opportunities arise for a pilot action, partners intend to test the policy in practice, allowing them to refine its content based on real-world results and feedback.

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Partners	Policy Instrument	Type1: new type of project	Type1I: change in the management of the policy instrument (improved governance)	Type1II: A revision of the policy instrument addressed (structural change)
LP	Integrated Urban Development Strategy of Alba Iulia Municipality 2021-2030			An improved strategy will emphasise CSR activities by aligning urban development with sustainability objectives and CSR activities, we will mitigate the negative effects of urbanisation and build resilient and sustainable cities for future generations. innovative thinking. Therefore, having a distinct chapter in the strategy on this type of cooperation and CSR activities will ensure an organisational framework that will lead to the achievement of the strategy objectives.
EDC	Sustainable Urban Development Strategy of Debrecen 2021-2027			New approaches and aspects can be integrated into the Strategy, thanks to the lessons learned from other regions. introduce improvements in the existing PI, refining objectives, interventions, and measures to support a more focused approach towards net zero ambitions.
	Action Plan towards carbon neutrality		One of the measures is setting up a city-wide carbon-neutral and CSR collaboration platform	
Kekava	Kekava Municipality Development Program 2021-2027	New projects will be included in the investment plan of the Development Program.		
DAN	Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP)			The improvement of the indicator system for better monitoring and evaluation. Lessons from ACROSS, such as best practices in corporate sustainability, stakeholder engagement, and impact measurement, can be applied to enhance the SECAP indicators.
Milan	Air and Climate Plan		Making Private / Public Partnerships more transparent and accessible for private stakeholders by launching a new engagement tool: the Milano Collabora business newsletter	
Hannut-ULiege	Programme Strategic Transversal (PST) (Strategic Transversal Plan)		Improving sustainability collaboration through public procurement	The city of Hannut will need to define a new TSP for 2024-2030. In this respect, we aim to include a framework for evaluating sustainability objectives in that programme that is common to the city and local businesses so that we can move forward together in the implementation of projects.

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE METHODOLOGY

1) Main features and logic of the knowledge exchange phase

Stage 2 of the ACROSS project's core phase—the knowledge exchange phase—will run from April 2025 to March 2026. While partners have already been learning from each other since the project's inception through the online Thematic Expert Team meetings and interregional partner meetings in Alba Iulia and Debrecen, the upcoming phase will introduce a more structured learning process. This structured approach is based on the key findings from the Local Analysis Reports drafted by each partner, as well as the discussions and agreements reached during the Debrecen meeting.

The backbone of the knowledge exchange process is formed by the **seven focus areas** outlined in the first chapter of this Synthesis Report. Within each focus area, partners have identified key challenges. The primary goal of the knowledge exchange phase is to **share and develop solutions for all these challenges**.

During **in-person interregional meetings**, partners will focus on challenges that align with the **experience and expertise of the host partners**. Meanwhile, focus areas where partners **lack internal knowledge** will be primarily addressed through online **Thematic Expert Team (TET) meetings**, where external speakers from other cities, regions, or knowledge provider organizations will be invited to contribute insights and best practices.

Our ambition is to **thoroughly address all seven focus areas** by the end of the knowledge exchange phase, ensuring that partners receive sufficient input to determine **which lessons learned they will adapt in their region and how**.

More specifically, partners should be able to **define their policy improvement objectives** and outline **how they plan to implement them by the end of the core phase**. While partners have already drafted their **preliminary objectives** in their Local Analysis Reports, their **finalized and concrete plans** will be developed in the form of a **Policy Improvement Roadmap** by April 2027.

Even though the final year of the core phase (April 2027 – March 2028) is dedicated to **implementing the Policy Improvement Roadmap**, partners will continue to **learn from each other** through online **TET meetings** and **in-person interregional meetings**.

At the start of this final year, the **advisory partner will reassess the knowledge exchange approach** used in Stage 2, evaluating its effectiveness and identifying **any remaining knowledge gaps**. This will allow for targeted support, ensuring that partners receive **the specific expertise needed** to successfully implement their policy improvements.

2) Good practices and knowledge needs (focus areas) matrix

In addition to exploring potential cooperation with private companies on various issues in the form of CSR good practices, the **transferable elements** of these practices are the **methodologies** used to engage politicians, the **platforms** created for collaboration, the **awareness-raising campaigns**, the techniques used to involve SMEs in the initiative, and the **methods employed to measure** the success of the initiative. Therefore, ACROSS partners will exchange knowledge on these methods, tools, and practices by sharing successful public-private/CSR initiatives.

The table below outlines which good practices from each partner offer relevant methods, tools, or practices related to the seven focus areas. The purpose of this table is to assess how effectively the identified challenges within each focus area can be addressed using the knowledge available within the partnership. It helps determine whether the good practices provide applicable solutions to tackle one or more of the challenges in each focus area.

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FOCUS AREAS	GOOD PRACTICES	POLICY FRAMEWORK for Public-Private Partnerships/collaboration	ENGAGEMENT INSIDE THE ORGANIZATION	CSR PLATFORM	KNOWLEDGE and AWARENESS RAISING	SME involvement	MEASURING and SUSTAINING CSR INITIATIVES	FINANCIAL MECHANISM: CSR FUND – PROCUREMENT
LP	Smart City Public-Private Partnership	ADR Centru Regional Development Agency: Example for a Contract/agreement between the city, companies and institutions		Dedicated contact point website with all the smart city initiatives	website with all the smart city initiatives	Chamber of Commerce	Indicator system of the smart city initiative	
	"Blauer Stern" Kindergarten in Sebeș: Sustainable German-Language Education							
	"Your Professional Partner" program for vocational and dual education in Alba County							
EDC	World Clean Up Day in Debrecen	Example for a legal document: Written agreement with the companies who give materials, tools, food, drinks for the day	Example for a public organization which coordinate CSR actions: EDC as a separate organization of the Municipality who dedicate extra capacity for CSR initiatives while enhancing sustainability initiatives is one of their official organizational tasks.	CSR menu is available on the city's website – but no dedicated website	Communication materials: videos, leaflets, posters etc. Workshops	Practices/communication applied to involve SMES in the World Clean Up Day Practices/communication applied to involve SMES in the Bike Breakfast campaign	Method of data collection, evaluation and communication of the results of the Clean Up Day	
	Bike Breakfast CSR in Debrecen	Example for a legal document: Written agreement with the companies who give breakfast for bikers					Method of data collection, evaluation and communication of the results of the Bike Breakfast campaign	
	Implementation of the "Water is our common treasure" awareness-raising campaign	Example for a legal document: Written agreement with the companies who give material and with the residents who received the barrels					Method of data collection, evaluation and communication of the results	
Kekava	Eco days in Kekava Municipality	CSR is mentioned in the Municipality's Development Program			Communication materials: videos, leaflets, posters etc	Practices/communication applied to involve SMES in the Eco Days and National Cleanup Day	Kekava Foods (poultry factory), expert Iveta Bivse: Method of data collection, evaluation and communication of the results	
	National Cleanup Day			Example for a national CSR platform : www.csrlatvia.lv			Method of data collection, evaluation and communication of the results	
	Silmachy			Example for an SME who is active in CSR		SME-public cooperation from		

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						the perspective of an SME		
DAN	Green Wave - a wave of inspiration and education		Example for a public organization which implement and coordinate CSR actions: DAN		Communication materials: videos, leaflets, posters etc			
	Skill-based volunteering						Method of data collection, evaluation and communication of the results	
	Joint public procurement as a tool for making financial and human resources more efficient							The principals and practices of this joint public procurement.
Milan	Distributing food aids while raising awareness on food waste	Example for a city level CSR legal CSR framework: Wademecum on CSR					Method of data collection, evaluation and communication of the results	
	Laptops and tablets circular supply chain						Method of data collection, evaluation and communication of the results	
Hannut- ULiege	SDG's coaching for municipalities	Speaker proposed, who developed the policy for the SDG's coaching: Marie Bourgeois SPW	Amélie Debrouse- director general Amélie Dabompré - eco-advisor	web toolbox	outsider coach who explained SDG and mobilize the stakeholder group	The whole good practice is relevant in this focus area Marie Bourgeois SPW	meetings to share success of differences; face-to-face exchanges; annual evaluation on progresses; visiting the organizations PST include indicator system	
	The Ride & Buy app	Strategic Transversal Plan includes CSR actions	Sophie Grenier		communication campaign of the application	Practices/communi- cation applied to involve SMEs in the voucher system of the Ride & Buy campaign	Method of data collection, evaluation and communication of the results	
Chisinau		Speaker proposed: Alina Procopciuc who led the civil budget campaign	Olga Ursu - economy deputy mayor	Corneliu Iatco head of IT- civil budget	Vasile Chirilescu - head of communication, Transparency portal	Petru Gurgurov head of CMDA Social Economic Forum		

3) How to use the matrix? The schedule of the learning process

The good practices and knowledge needs matrix gives an idea which partners and experts could be invited to contribute to the online and in-person meetings' Thematic Expert Team workshops/meetings. Each TET online meeting and workshop is dedicated to a specific topic, aligned with one of the seven focus areas derived from the Local Analysis Reports. These focus areas are outlined in the first chapter of this Synthesis Report.

TET online meeting – 15 April, 2025

- **CSR POLICY/FRAMEWORK** focus area is addressed:

Partners contribution:

- ULiege will lead a workshop where we can **discuss and clarify key terms like sustainability, CSR, and ESG**. The need for a shared understanding of these concepts was highlighted by many of the partners in Debrecen.
- Milan will present a **legal framework for implementing CSR/PPP initiatives**, developed for the city of Milan. This will be an opportunity to start exploring existing CSR policies and frameworks before partners begin developing their own. Since many partners highlighted the need for such a policy in their LAR, this presentation should be particularly relevant.

External expertise applied: no external expert invited

- **Policy Improvement tables** (explained in the next chapter) presented by each PP summarizing the lessons learnt from the Debrecen interregional partner meeting.

IE meeting Milan – 1-2 July, 2025

- **CSR POLICY/FRAMEWORK** focus area is addressed during the Thematic Expert Team workshop:

Partners contribution:

- LP: give a presentation about the Contract/agreement between the city, companies and institutions applied in their good practices: Smart City Public-Private Partnership, "Blauer Stern" Kindergarten in Sebeş, "Your Professional Partner" program. -The main content, main point of agreements, legal considerations, principals of the contracts should be explained highlighting the transferable elements of these agreements in terms of developing a CSR policy framework.

- EDC: give a presentation about the Contract/agreement between the city, companies and institutions applied in their good practices: World Clean Up Day in Debrecen - Written agreement with the companies who give materials, tools, food, drinks for the day; Bike Breakfast CSR in Debrecen- Written agreement with the companies who give breakfast for bikers; Water is our common treasure-Written agreement with the companies who give material and with the residents who received the barrels
- Hannut: give a presentation about the Contract/agreement between the city and organizations applied in their SDG's coaching good practice. Proposed speaker is Marie Bourgeois, who could join the meeting in person or only online.
- BURST: following the presentations, a BURST organizes a workshop where partners brainstorm how to *design a CSR policy framework* trying to jointly answer for the following questions:
 - What is the goal of a CSR policy framework/strategy? (to provide clear legal framework for CSR actions and implement CSR actions along a strategy instead of an ad hoc and fragmented way)
 - What should be the content of the framework to be able to reach its goals? What are the list of elements which should be fixed in this document (for example: sustainability goals of the city which they can reach only by the support of companies; specific CSR actions/initiatives/events where they need the contribution of companies; standardized system for measuring the impact of CSR actions; a time plan for CSR initiatives; the resources and the amount of a CSR fund etc.)

External expertise applied: Inviting an expert or a representative of a public administration who presents a good example for a public authority's CSR policy framework or CSR strategy. For instance, the city of Nantes could be invited has a well-developed CSR strategy. They were the Lead Partner of the Citis4CSR Urbact III project.

Following the meeting, BURST are going to fine-tune the outcome of the presentations and the workshop, which provides the knowledge base for the ACROSS project output: Lessons Learned & Ambitions Plan.

TET online meeting – September 2025

- **ENGAGEMENT INSIDE THE ORGANIZATION and the CSR PLATFORM** focus areas are addressed:

Partners' contribution:

- EDC as a more “flexible” organization and the city of Milan as a more bureaucratic organization gives a presentation about their practices/solutions

they developed and applied in order to ensure the engagement of politicians and civil servants of the municipality implementing CSR initiatives.

Their presentation is structured around the challenges identified under the 2nd focus area: engagement inside the organization and 3rd focus area: CSR platform.

- **BURST**: organizes a workshop where all the partners can submit their ideas for solutions tackling the challenges of focus area 2 and 3. (It can possibly be implemented in Mentimeter)
- **BURST** also give a presentation showing and comparing different CSR websites such as Latvia's national CSR platform: www.csrlatvia.lv, the LP's smart city website, and Debrecen city's website, which publishes the CSR actions, and other examples.

External expertise applied: A good practice presentation about the **CSR Platform of the city of Budaörs**, Hungary. The CSR Platform of Budaörs was established as part of the Cities4CSR Urbact project to foster collaboration between businesses and local social initiatives. This platform brings together major companies operating in Budaörs, including IKEA, Intersport, Terrapark creating a structured network for corporate social responsibility (CSR) engagement. Through the platform, these large companies maintain direct contact with the Municipality of Budaörs, which serves as a liaison between businesses and local NGOs. The municipality's representatives act as facilitators, connecting corporate stakeholders with various social and community initiatives. This structured approach ensures that companies can effectively support and contribute to meaningful local projects, strengthening community engagement and corporate responsibility efforts in the city.

- Following the meeting, BURST are going to finetune the outcome of the presentations and the workshop which provides the knowledge base for the ACROSS project output: Lessons Learned & Ambitions Plan.
- **Policy Improvement tables** presented by each PP summarizing the lessons learnt from the Milan interregional partner meeting.



IE meeting Hannut – 3 – 4 December 2025

- **KNOWLEDGE and AWARENESS RAISING and SME INVOLVEMENT** focus area is addressed during the Thematic Expert Team workshop:

Partners contribution:

All partners are invited to bring good examples of tools for raising knowledge and awareness, such as offline and online communication materials (e.g. websites, leaflets, videos, posters), guidelines, training materials, workshops, meetings, and conferences. These tools may address CSR in general or focus on specific CSR actions

related to issues such as water retention, waste collection, or cycling. The SDG's coaching good practice of the host partner, Hannut, is especially analysed as this is exactly a good practice for knowledge and awareness raising and also for SME involvement.

The tools will be explored in a workshop setting, where partners will work in mixed groups to present and discuss their examples. Each group will identify a list of adaptable tools that can be used for knowledge and awareness raising, both within their public organizations and externally, targeting companies (including SMEs) and the general public.

The final output of the workshop will be a consolidated collection of these tools. Following the meeting, BURST are going to finetune the outcome of the presentations and the workshop which provides the knowledge base for the ACROSS project output: Lessons Learned & Ambitions Plan.

External expertise applied: It is recommended for partners to bring such SME stakeholders to the Hannut meeting who regularly participate in CSR actions such as Silmachy from Kekava. Alternatively, some partners could invite speakers from SMEs to join to the meeting online and give a presentation about their experiences in CSR: their motivation or fears to cooperate with public sector in CSR actions, typical fields they like to cooperate, financial issues they face etc.

The host partner Hannut and ULiege could also invite local SMEs to the meeting who are active in CSR. It is suggested that after the good practice presentations of day 1, 30-40 minutes workshop is organized where participants (representative of project partners from the public sector) and stakeholders (representative of the SME sector) jointly develop solutions for increasing SME involvement in CSR actions. BURST can integrate these solutions into ACROSS project output: Lessons Learned & Ambitions Plan.

- **POLICY IMPROVEMENT:** Joint Guidance for the upcoming Policy Improvement process including a template for the Policy Improvement Roadmap is presented by BURST.

TET online meeting – January 2026

- **MEASURING/MONITORING and SUSTAINING CSR INITIATIVES** focus area is addressed:

Partners contribution: All partners are invited to bring good examples of tools and methods for measuring and monitoring CSR initiatives such as data collection and visualization methods, indicator systems. The examples are primarily derived from the good practices of partners. The tools will be explored in a workshop setting, where partners will work in mixed groups to present and discuss their examples.

Each group will identify a list of adaptable tools and methods that can be used for setting up and operating a measuring and monitoring framework.

External expertise applied: expert invited who present data collection, visualization, analysis methods and methods for setting up and operating indicator and monitoring frameworks. Good examples can be highlighted from the Urbact Toolbox.

- The final output of the workshop will be a consolidated collection of these tools and methods, which can then be integrated into the CSR policy framework methodology developed during the TET workshop in Milan, which provides the knowledge base for the ACROSS project output: Lessons Learned & Ambitions Plan.
- **Policy Improvement tables** presented by each PP summarizing the lessons learnt from the Hannut interregional partner meeting.

IE meeting Varazdin – March 2026

- **FINANCIAL MECHANISM: CSR FUND, PROCUREMENT** focus area is addressed:

Partners contribution: DAN explains in detail the good practice of a Joint public procurement as a tool for making financial and human resources more efficient.

BURST will organize a workshop where partners will discuss the concept and practical application of a CSR fund. The discussion will cover key questions such as: What is meant by a CSR fund? What are its objectives? What types of activities can it support? What are the conditions for its establishment, and what obstacles and opportunities exist for setting up such a fund within partner organizations?

External expertise applied: expert invited who present green procurement principles and practices.

- BURST document the outcomes of the presentations and the workshop and channelize them into ACROSS project output: Lessons Learned & Ambitions Plan.
- **POLICY IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP:** Each partner will present the main ideas for their Policy Improvement Roadmap. BURST will provide feedback and guidance on each partner's proposed policy improvements. Following the meeting, partners are expected to finalize their Policy Improvement Roadmaps and submit them to the Lead Partner and BURST by the end of April 2026.
- **EVALUATION OF THE KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE STAGE:** BURST also organizes a session where partners jointly **reassess the knowledge exchange approach** used in Stage 2, evaluating its effectiveness and identifying **any remaining knowledge gaps**. This will allow for targeted support, ensuring that partners receive **the specific expertise needed** to successfully implement their policy improvements.

 TET online meeting – Spring 2026

- Policy Improvement tables presented by each PP summarizing the lessons learnt from the Varazdin interregional partner meeting. These learnings need to be embedded also into the Policy Improvement Roadmaps.

4) Follow-up of the knowledge exchange process

The **Policy Improvement Table** is a tool designed by the advisory partner (BURST) to help partners develop enhancements to their targeted policy instruments based on lessons learned from **interregional partner meetings**. After each in-person meeting, partners are required to complete at least one **Policy Improvement Table**, outlining how they could adapt the insights gained to their local context to improve their policy instrument.

Partners must also **consult with their stakeholders** on their proposed improvements and present their tables during the **online Thematic Expert Team (TET) meeting** that follows each in-person interregional meeting. This process ensures that key takeaways from every meeting are systematically captured and applied.

By the end of the knowledge exchange phase, all partners will have compiled a **set of Policy Improvement Tables**, forming a comprehensive collection of policy improvement ideas. These serve as a foundation for drafting their **Policy Improvement Roadmap** and initiating the implementation of planned improvements.

Importantly, the **Policy Improvement Tables** are **working documents**—their content is flexible, evolving throughout the exchange process. They do not require approval from elected bodies or decision-makers during this phase, allowing partners to explore and refine their ideas freely.

POLICY IMPROVEMENT TABLE

Title: Give a title for your policy improvement action	Person/Organization responsible for implementation: Include the persons or organizations who are responsible for the implementation of this policy improvement Stakeholders: List those stakeholders who contribute to the implementation of this action	
Summary: Give 1000-character summary about this policy improvement action. - First describe in 2-3 sentences how would you adapt the transferable elements or the whole GP to your local context. - Then describe the policy improvement you plan to implement by adapting the good practice or the policy improvement(s) which are needed in order to adapt the good practice in your region.	Source of inspiration: -First briefly introduce those Good Practice(s) which inspired you most and want to adapt in your region (clear reference to owner PP nr., title of GP, content of the GP in 5 sentences) -Then describe what do you find as transferable element(s) of this practice?	Budget and resources: Give an indicative number for the cost of implementing the action and the source of the fund
	Name of the PI addressed: Indicate the name of the policy instrument which you plan to improve by this action adapting a good practice in your region.	Challenges-Mitigation: List the challenges you anticipate implementing this action and suggest mitigation measures (how you plan to overcome the challenges)
Action steps List the steps of implementing this action by the end of the 6th semester	Timeframe	Outputs

Annex: COLLECTION OF GOOD PRACTICES

ALBA IULIA'S SMART CITY PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

GOOD PRACTICE OWNER: ALBA IULIA MUNICIPALITY



About the Good Practice

The Smart City Alba Iulia initiative was launched to address inefficiencies in urban management, such as high energy consumption, traffic congestion, and outdated waste management systems. Given the city's status as a historical and cultural hub, modernization efforts had to balance innovation with heritage preservation. The city partnered with tech companies like Orange, Microsoft, and Siemens to implement smart city solutions that address these challenges.

The initiative involves deploying intelligent street lighting, optimising waste collection through sensor technology, and enhancing tourism with digital platforms and augmented reality. These measures have improved service delivery, reduced costs, and boosted environmental sustainability. The municipality's facilitation role involved providing pilot zones for testing and data collection while ensuring community engagement through information campaigns and workshops.

Main Stakeholders and Beneficiaries:

- Municipality of Alba Iulia: Project oversight and facilitation
- Tech Partners (e.g., Orange, Microsoft): Solution implementation and co-investment
- Residents and Local Businesses: Primary beneficiaries of improved urban services
- Tourists and Cultural Organisations: Enhanced cultural experiences and tourism management



Resources needed

- **Financial Resources:** Approximately €6 million in total, combining EU structural funds and private investment
- **Human Resources:** A core team of municipal officials, project managers, and tech company staff, supported by university researchers for data analysis

Evidence of success

- **Energy Savings:** Smart street lighting reduced energy consumption by 40%
- **Operational Efficiency:** Waste management costs decreased by 20% through optimised collection routes
- **Community Engagement:** Surveys show an 85% approval rate for the improvements in public services

Potential for learning or transfer

This practice showcases effective collaboration between public and private sectors, making it a transferable model for cities seeking digital transformation. The key success factors include strong stakeholder commitment, co-funding mechanisms, and adaptability to local contexts. However, challenges such as initial resistance to change and the need for ongoing digital literacy efforts may hamper transfer. Cities like Valencia, Spain, have already expressed interest in adopting similar smart solutions, demonstrating the model's potential for widespread application.

Further information: on [YouTube](#)





"YOUR PROFESSIONAL PARTNER" PROGRAM FOR VOCATIONAL AND DUAL EDUCATION IN ALBA COUNTY

GOOD PRACTICE OWNER: ALBA COUNTY COUNCIL

About the Good Practice

In Alba County, vocational education has traditionally been undervalued, leading to a shortage of skilled workers in key industries such as automotive, manufacturing, and agribusiness. To address this, the Alba County Council and Alba County School Inspectorate launched Your Professional Partner in 2019, following the Alba County Strategy for Education and Vocational Training (VET) 2018. The initiative builds on the establishment of the Dual Vocational School in Alba Iulia in 2013, making the county a leader in vocational education.

Objectives and Implementation:

- Strengthen school-business collaboration
- Increase enrolment in vocational and dual education
- Provide hands-on experience through internships and apprenticeships
- Improve youth employability

The programme includes:

- Career guidance sessions in schools for students in the final two years of lower secondary education
- Industry visits and job shadowing to familiarise students with workplaces
- Apprenticeships and internships
- Educational fairs and open days
- Parent-teacher engagement sessions

Main Stakeholders and Beneficiaries:

- VET Working Group
- Public Authorities
- Educational Institutions: The Alba County School Inspectorate, CJRAE Alba, 1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia; Vocational Schools (Alba Iulia, Abrud, Baia de Arieș, Blaj, Cugir, Ocna Mureș, Sebeș)
- Economic Sectors: Automotive, Food Industry; Ceramics; Construction, Paper Manufacturing, Wood Processing, Metal Constructions, Defence Industry.

Resources needed

- Approx €300,000 annually, funded by Alba County Council and local business contributions
- Human Resources: Teams of educators, career counsellors, business mentors, and industry professionals provide career guidance, organise internships, and facilitate industry partnerships.

Evidence of success

Between 2021 and 2025, student enrolment in dual education increased by 46% in Alba County. Over 500 students annually participated in career guidance sessions/company visits. Employers report improved job readiness and practical skills, with a high employability rate among graduates. The success of vocational education initiatives in Alba County contributed to securing €26 million in funding through PNRR for the development of the Crescendo Dual Education Campus

Potential for learning or transfer

The Your Professional Partner initiative provides a scalable model for regions seeking to bridge the gap between education and employment through vocational and dual education and can be adapted by regions aiming to enhance youth employability, reduce skills mismatches, and strengthen industry readiness through targeted vocational training.

Key Success Factors:

Strong collaboration between local authorities, schools, and businesses to align education with labour market needs; Awareness campaigns targeting students and parents to change perceptions of vocational training; Practical learning opportunities, including apprenticeships and internships, to ensure hands-on skill development; Career counselling and industry visits to help students make informed career choices.

Further information: on the [website](#)



"BLAUER STERN" KINDERGARTEN IN SEBEȘ: SUSTAINABLE GERMAN-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

GOOD PRACTICE OWNER: UAT MUNICIPIUL SEBEȘ

About the Good Practice

Sebeș, Romania, has faced a shortage of early childhood education facilities, particularly institutions offering instruction in German, which is essential for the local German-speaking community. This gap has limited access to quality bilingual education and created challenges for families seeking culturally relevant early learning opportunities. Additionally, the increasing demand for modern, sustainable educational infrastructure has called for new solutions.

Recognizing the importance of early childhood education and cultural preservation, the "Blauer Stern" Public Kindergarten and Nursery was initiated as a public-private partnership, ensuring access to high-quality education to 97 children while incorporating environmental sustainability into its design and operations.

Key Features of the Facility:

- Educational Spaces
- Sustainable Infrastructure
- Flexible Learning Areas
- Extended Program Hours
- Health & Safety

Main Stakeholders and Beneficiaries

- Star Assembly SRL – The primary financier, supporting the initiative as part of its corporate social responsibility strategy.
- Municipality of Sebeș – Provided the land and facilitated administrative approvals to ensure smooth implementation.
- German High School Sebeș – Oversees the educational program, ensuring curriculum alignment with linguistic and cultural needs.
- Local Community

Resources needed

Financial Resources:

Fully funded by Star Assembly, covering construction, equipment, and operational setup costs.

Human Resources:

- 12 educators proficient in German-language early childhood education.
- 10 support staff (administrative, maintenance, and medical personnel).

Evidence of success

Although the project is still under construction, its success is already evident through:

- Strong collaboration between corporate, municipal, and educational partners, ensuring a sustainable model.
- High anticipation from the local community, with strong demand for early enrollment.
- Implementation of eco-friendly, energy-efficient building solutions, setting a new standard for sustainable early education in Romania.

Potential for learning or transfer

The "Blauer Stern" project serves as a model public-private partnership that can be replicated in other regions facing educational gaps, particularly in bilingual or minority-language communities.

Key Success Factors for Replication:

1. Cross-Sector Collaboration – Engaging local government, private companies, and educational institutions in joint efforts.
2. Sustainability & Green Architecture – Integrating renewable energy solutions and smart infrastructure into school designs.
3. Cultural Relevance in Education – Ensuring early education aligns with local linguistic and cultural needs.
4. Other regions interested in enhancing early childhood education and sustainability in public-private initiatives can adapt this model to their specific needs.

Further information: on the website



ECO DAYS IN ĶEKAVA MUNICIPALITY

GOOD PRACTICE OWNER: SIA "CLEANR"

About the Good Practice

The purpose of the Eco Days is to reduce the amount of illegal waste in the environment, support citizens to clean up their properties and increase recycling of the waste.

The Eco Days are organized twice a year - 2 days in spring and 2 days in autumn when households can dispose non-standard waste free of charge. The categories of waste which can be disposed during these days have changed over the years, but typically they include electrical household appliances, textiles, bulky household waste (pieces of furniture, carpets, chandeliers, prams etc), glass packaging, used car tyres.

The households should inform the waste collecting company if they plan to dispose any of the eligible waste and put the items on the designated day next to their regular waste containers. The eligible waste is collected, transported and disposed free of charge.

When dates of Eco Days are announced, citizens are also reminded of the categories which are not eligible for this campaign, such as toxic waste, construction waste, pipes, sanitary engineering items etc.

The Eco Days are organized by the waste management company CleanR in cooperation with the company "Zaļā josta" (Green Belt) and the local government of Ķekava Municipality.

Clean R and "Zaļā josta" ensure not only collection of the waste but also its recycling.

Main beneficiaries - households.

Resources needed

Transportation and disposal of collected waste - financed by Ķekava Municipality local government (ca 12 000 - 20 000 EUR/each Eco Days event).

The municipality also provides publicity of the events through its webpage, social media accounts, newsletter.

Evidence of success

- Steady public support and willingness of citizens to participate every year
- Collected volumes of waste per each event can be characterized by collected volumes e.g. during Eco Days Autumns 2024 - Electric appliances 28,34 t, bulky waste 77,78 t, textile 2,98 t, glass packaging 13,50 t, car tyres 10,38 t

Potential for learning or transfer

Eco Days are organized also in other municipalities of Latvia. It suggests that such campaigns might be of interest also for other countries and regions as well to reduce the amount of illegal waste in the environment, and increase recycling of the waste.

However, habits of customers and different waste management systems might influence the applicability of this practice in other countries.



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[Further information: on the website](#)

NATIONAL CLEANUP DAY

GOOD PRACTICE OWNER: BIEDRĪBA "PĒDAS LV"



About the Good Practice

In 2008 the Cleanup Day started as a joint effort to deal with the challenge of illegally disposed waste all over Latvia. The idea came from Estonia, who organised their first nationwide clean-up on 3 May 2008. In 2008, all three Baltic States invited people to give a gift to Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia on their 90th anniversaries by cleaning up their land.

Gradually the concept of the cleanup was broadened - in addition to the physical collection and disposal of the illegal waste, education and informative activities as well as landscaping and improvement activities have been implemented (tree planting, flower planting, bird feeding places, park benches etc.).

To prepare for the cleanup, everyone can report polluted sites on the Cleanup Day website www.talkas.lv - it is a useful tool for planning clean-up activities. One month before the clean-up day every potential participant can register their chosen clean-up site on the clean-up map. The national coordinator of the movement is the civic association "Pēdas LV". It is based on vast involvement of society - local governments, ministries, state institutions and companies, schools, private businesses, mass media, diaspora abroad etc. Over the past 15 years, the Cleanup Day in Latvia has involved around 500 000 participants, also Latvians in other countries. Like all local governments, also Ķekava Municipality is a regular and active participant of the Cleanup Day.

Resources needed

Human resources for organization - association "Pēdas.LV", local governments, national media, cooperation partners

Garbage collection bags (sponsored by supporters)

Transportation and disposal of collected waste - financed by local governments (Ķekava municipality - ca 5000-10000 EUR annually)

Evidence of success

- The annual amount of collected garbage nationally has decreased by more than half compared to 2008 - i.e. the amount of illegal waste has decreased in the result of cleanup activities;
- The collected and disposed waste in territory of Ķekava Municipality: in 2023 - 11,27 t, in 2024 - 6,7 t
- Steady public support and willingness of citizens to participate every year

Potential for learning or transfer

The first nationwide clean-ups and the overwhelming public support for the idea in the Baltic States in 2008 has already become truly global initiative. It launched "Let's Do it world! - an international movement coordinated by Estonian NGOs, which organised the first World Cleanup Day on 15 September 2018 with 18 million participants from 158 countries. Since 2018, World Cleanup Day has become the biggest civic movement in human history, uniting 211 countries and territories - which includes 95% of UN-listed countries - across the world, and 91 million volunteers, equal to 1.1% of global population - all striving to create a cleaner planet.



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[Further information: on the website](#)

DISTRIBUTING FOOD AIDS WHILE RAISING AWARENESS ON FOOD WASTE

GOOD PRACTICE OWNER: COMUNE DI MILANO



About the Good Practice

The Social and Welfare department and the Food Policy department of the Municipality of Milan set up a food aid project for families and elderly in need fuelled by public/private partnerships. The objective was to deliver food aid to people in need and to do so in a sustainable way, while contrasting food waste in Milan. This specific project has been planned not as structural help, but rather as a temporary relief. Beneficiaries thus changed every month.

During the Covid-19 emergency this project has been adapted to help families and individuals who were home hospitalized and/or quarantined. Milan raised awareness on and limited food waste by preparing packages responding to the receiver's needs (e.g. no pork meat for Muslim families, low sugar and calories food for elderly and so forth).

The main stakeholders involved in this project and their roles were:

- the Social and Welfare department and the Food Policy department of the Municipality of Milan: mapping people in need, their dietary requirements and planning deliveries at their homes.
- a energy provider private company: mobilizing its employees through corporate volunteering activities, e.g. picking up food from the Food Bank, assembling customized packages, delivering packages to beneficiaries using electric vehicles.
- neighborhoods' associations: coordinating the exchange of information between the Municipality and the Company while helping corporate volunteers and/or to further help beneficiaries.

Resources needed

This whole CSR project did not involve any money, only coordination among different stakeholders and a clear division of tasks. Human resources needed from the Municipality of Milan have been: 1 project coordinator working part time.

Evidence of success

This project put together complementary needs from the private and public sector resulting in an efficient and sustainable way to support people in need. All stakeholders and beneficiaries were happy and satisfied with their role and results. Around 40 different families and individuals have been helped every month with enough food and house supplies for a month: the idea was to offer a temporary relief, not full support (for which some other official policies and aids are in place).

Potential for learning or transfer

This approach has proven to be successful because companies need activities to support their corporate volunteering policies and Milan always welcomes projects on social inclusion and sustainability. Public and private needs were aligned and actions followed easily and smoothly.

This multistakeholders CSR project was implemented following principles of sustainability and social inclusion and whereas the Municipality of Milan did not communicate the results very openly, private stakeholders have used this opportunity to promote their CSR activities.

An important lesson learnt has been that when using in-kind donations and collaborations in between the private and no profit sector using the PA as a facilitator, projects can be implemented much faster and efficiently.



LAPTOPS AND TABLETS CIRCULAR SUPPLY CHAIN

GOOD PRACTICE OWNER: COMUNE DI MILANO



About the Good Practice

Laptops and tablets donations to underprivileged minors and associations was a CSR project that Milan carried within the Covid19 emergency: pupils and associations dealing with youngsters raised the urgent need of having laptops or tablets available for pupils to follow online classes and keep in touch with their peers.

In this respect the Municipality approached a range of companies proposing to donate their used laptops and set up a supply chain: computers were donated and prepared by private companies (that were dismissing/renewing them anyway), collected by the Municipality and distributed through no profit organizations to families and associations in need.

This approach was proven very successful since companies needed to get rid of used computers and the Municipality needed second-hand high-quality computers to allow pupils to follow online classes: needs were aligned and actions followed easily and smoothly.

This multistakeholders CSR project followed principles of circular economy and social inclusion and whereas the Municipality of Milan did not communicate the results openly, companies promoted their CSR activities on newsletters and social media.

An important lesson learnt has been that in-kind donations and collaborations in between private and no profit sector using the PA as a facilitator projects are much faster and efficient. Around 1000 devices in 2 years have been delivered, producing tangible and intangible effects that resonate till today.

Resources needed

This whole CSR project didn't involve any money, only in-kind donations from companies e.g. Deloitte, Intesa S.Paolo, KPMG.

Human resources needed from the Municipality of Milan have been: 1 project coordinator and 1 project assistant (part time). From the Private sector: 1 sustainability manager

Evidence of success

This good practice put together complementary needs from the private, public and social sector resulting in a perfect circular economy for social inclusion project.

All stakeholders and beneficiaries were happy and satisfied with their role and results. Around 1000 families and minors have been empowered and provided with the right devices and connectivity to carry on their studies and activities in a time of emergency and need. Companies included this project in their sustainability report.

Potential for learning or transfer

This project can be easily replicated and adapted to different countries, cities and contexts since it does not require any specific budget nor resources either than a good coordination and engagement/project manager.

Aligning needs and opportunities from different sectors can result in efficient projects, saving financial and material resources that can be then re allocated to different needs and priorities.

Since the whole project did not involve any financial donations, the process of donating devices went very quickly and smoothly, making cities and citizens more resilient and responsive in times of crisis.





GREEN WAVE - A WAVE OF INSPIRATION AND EDUCATION

GOOD PRACTICE OWNER: ATLANTIC GRUPA

About the Good Practice

Atlantic Grupa (AG) is a large international company based in Croatia, engaged in production and distribution of a wide range of products (food industry, pharmaceuticals, personal care products, products in sports and wellness segment). "Green Wave" is educational program organized by AG, focusing on sustainability and environmental responsibility and includes various forms of education (seminars and workshops to engaging employees and community). Program is promoting sustainable development, environmental protection and raising awareness about ecological issues. Education within this program covers various aspects of environmental protection, such as recycling, waste reduction, energy savings, eco-friendly production, etc.

By integrating ESG standards into every facet of its operations, Atlantic Grupa adheres to both national laws and international guidelines, which are articulated through CSRD legislation and ESRS standards. Company has structured its sustainability programs to include extensive training for employees in various departments—procurement, marketing, R&D, finance, and operations—ensuring that ESG principles permeate the organizational culture. This initiative is designed to foster an environment where sustainability becomes a daily operational norm. Atlantic Grupa's approach highlights the role of public authorities (local, regional, national) in shaping corporate practices through regulatory frameworks that encourage companies to operate responsibly and sustainably.

Resources needed

Budget for 2024 - €10.000 /
Budget for 2025 - €20.000
Human resources - project team
of 11 employees from different
sectors (CQM, marketing, R&D,
procurement, corporate
communications, P&C)

Evidence of success

For company/institution/organization to become sustainable, its employees must understand essence of sustainability goals, which are implemented at operational level on daily basis. Through their awareness and actions, employees should contribute to achieving these goals. Defined ESG goals for each year are measurable through Sustainability INDEX and can only be achieved if all employees are aware of their significance and overall benefit, which aim to accomplish through this type of education

Potential for learning or transfer

Atlantic Grupa's sustainability training initiative offers a model that can be replicated by other organizations seeking to enhance their operational sustainability. By embedding ESG standards into employee training, the company not only enhances internal awareness and compliance but also sets a benchmark for industry-wide practices. This approach fosters a sustainable business culture that extends its benefits to the wider community, promoting eco-friendly solutions, enhancing public awareness through educational campaigns, and investing in green infrastructure, thereby contributing to a more sustainable future. This practice demonstrates a successful integration of corporate responsibility into core business functions, providing a valuable blueprint for other entities aiming to enhance their sustainability efforts.



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[Further information: on the website](#)



SKILL-BASED VOLUNTEERING

GOOD PRACTICE OWNER: SPAN D.D.

About the Good Practice

Span is an international IT firm-service provider which also implements Skill-Based Volunteering. It is a form of volunteering that utilizes expertise of employees to help nonprofit organizations/associations develop effective and sustainable solutions in daily operations. Through their analysis, Span identified opportunity to assist in optimizing IT operations of individual association with its expertise. Since each association managed its business in outdated IT programs, which became unwieldy and hard to maintain over time, Span proposed developing application through another platform, to completely replace existing one. Application is user-friendly and intuitive and stores upgraded data, eliminating the need for generating and saving outdated information. To facilitate daily operations, faster information sharing and better planning, training for usage of new platform was conducted. Key lessons which make this good practice feasible and diffusive: connecting experts with social organizations; supporting nonprofit organizations; creating sustainable solutions for community; education and mentorship for citizens while engaging local/regional public actors; technological transformation and digitalization. Public authorities play crucial role by facilitating identification and selection of nonprofits that align with local sustainability and development goals, ensuring effective implementation. This collaboration exemplifies how public-private partnerships can propel community-focused projects.

Resources needed

- 19.100 EUR
- Span's resources: Project Manager, Consultant, Sales Consultant Team Leader, and Technical Consultant, with funding sourced from Span's ESG budget.

Evidence of success

The practice of skill-based corporate volunteering has proven successful, as the application not only accelerated daily operations but also provides an overview of all essential information in one place. It allows for easy and quick access to necessary data and serves as a digital database. Utilizing Microsoft tools improves communication with clients, facilitates better self-organization, planning, and execution of business tasks, ultimately boosting employee productivity.

Potential for learning or transfer

Project implementation improved:

- Productivity and Efficiency-by automating routine tasks and reducing manual data entry,application saves time/resources and enhance productivity and operational efficiency.
- Employee Satisfaction-digital tools that simplify processes increase employee satisfaction and optimizing processes to faster,higher-quality services.
- Data Quality/ Business Insights-application collects accurate data,enabling analysis that supports informed decision-making and quicker responses to business changes.

Project illustrates volunteering value to enhance public and nonprofit sector capabilities,offering replicable model for similar initiatives.It aligns corporate resources with public sustainability goals,promoting holistic approach to community service improvements.This strategy boosts organizational efficiency and supports societal sustainability objectives,making it valuable practice for regions seeking to integrate corporate skills into public service enhancement.



Further information: on the website

JOINT PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AS A TOOL FOR MAKING FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES MORE EFFICIENT

GOOD PRACTICE OWNER: REGIONAL ENERGY AGENCY NORTH

About the Good Practice

36 power plants with a total power of over 1.5 MW were purchased through joint public procurement (JPP) of PV plants. One procurement procedure joined 21 partners (public bodies) in total. Through procedure, a significantly lower price of equipment and works was obtained, but there was also a significant saving of human resources in process of carrying out only 1 procurement instead 21 of them. This approach was crucial in overcoming challenges such as surging prices and supply chain disruptions. Public authorities played a pivotal role in facilitating this collaboration, ensuring that the project aligned with broader sustainability goals and efficiently utilized resources.

Main challenge was preparation/implementation of JPP procedure. Surging prices, problems in supply chains, lack of installation companies, payment terms were all considered during market research phase. Insight into market conditions proved to be crucial in process of preparation of JPP documentation, not only from the perspective of suppliers, but also from the partners. In addition to financial savings, standardization has proven to be a major advantage and added value in implementation process, simplify project monitoring and reduce risks in implementation process.

Implemented JPP is considered CSR initiative since it is joining many of entities to work together on long term, to gain sustainable solutions (PVs) and to make human resources more efficient given that each partner doesn't have to do individual procurement.

Resources needed

- 1,740,000 EUR (85 % was financed through EEA Grants)
- Project team (including staff for public procurement procedure): project manager, project coordinator, head of department for finance and general affairs, finance and general affairs expert

Evidence of success

A total of 36 power plants with a total power of over 1.5 MW were installed on the roofs of public buildings such as hospitals, kindergartens, schools, faculties, utilities, sports, and cultural heritage buildings in 17 Croatian municipalities and cities.

Through these projects a collaboration between public sector and academic community in Norway was also established facilitating the knowledge and experience exchange in harnessing the solar energy in the North and the South of Europe.

Potential for learning or transfer

The project exemplifies a scalable and replicable approach to joint public procurement that can be adapted across Europe, offering a strategic model for efficiently acquiring technology and services while achieving substantial financial and resource savings. By standardizing procurement documentation and processes, this initiative provides a practical template for future projects, promoting inter-regional and international cooperation in sustainability efforts. The successful implementation offers valuable insights into managing complex procurement challenges, making it an ideal learning model for other public entities looking to enhance their operational efficiency and sustainability practices.

Further information: on the website



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WORLD CLEAN UP DAY IN DEBRECEN

**GOOD PRACTICE OWNER: EDC DEBRECEN
URBAN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

About the Good Practice

Illegal waste in the forests of Eastern Debrecen is a serious problem that area maintainers are constantly trying to address. Volunteers can assist in collecting illegal waste through social work initiatives. The WCUD program is an excellent opportunity for employees of local firms to participate in this action, thereby enhancing their corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts in the area of environmental protection.

The event is organized by EDC Debrecen Nonprofit Ltd. with support from various stakeholders. It involves the participation of approximately 10 to 15 local companies. Waste collection takes place in the eastern part of Debrecen, where around 70 m³ of waste is gathered in just 2 to 3 hours, thanks to the efforts of volunteers.

As a result of the action, two objectives are accomplished: the area's forests are cleared of litter, and local businesses can showcase their contributions to the local environment.

Main stakeholders:

EDC Debrecen Nonprofit Ltd.; Municipality of Debrecen; Nyírerdő Nyírségi Erdészeti Ltd. (Local Forestry Company); Reformed Church in Debrecen (Community of Nagycsere-Haláp); Zrínyi Miklós Hunting Club; Debrecen Public Space Inspectorate; Civil Guard of Haláp and Nagycsere; Kortárs Szalon „Cultural Foundation”; Local companies (10-15 entities)

Resources needed

- volunteers (100-200 persons)
- team leaders with site knowledge (10-15 persons)
- garbage collection equipment (gloves, trash bags)
- garbage containers
- food and water for the participants
- vehicles for garbage collection
- communication materials
- The organisation costs ~1.5-2M HUF (~3800-5000 EUR)

Evidence of success

1. The amount of 70 m³ collected garbage
2. More than 10 companies involved (over 100 volunteers)
3. Local stakeholders are involved (NGO, civil guard, local hunting club etc.)
4. The participating companies have also joined other local initiatives
5. Satisfaction of companies

Potential for learning or transfer

Garbage collection is regularly organized in many areas, but this initiative stands out for two reasons: (1) it involves collaboration between public and private sectors, and (2) it is a city-wide effort with over 10 participating companies.

The practice is highly adaptable for several reasons:

1. It can be implemented in various locations, regardless of geography, demographics, or economics.
2. It requires minimal resources—financial, human, or land.
3. The benefits are clear, making it easy to gain political support and public engagement.

The key to success lies in maintaining strong relationships with stakeholders, which is an advantage for EDC due to significant effort. Establishing partnerships with local companies and connecting civic initiatives with corporate goals is essential, albeit time-consuming and risky. Furthermore, creating a similar stakeholder group to support local action can be easily adapted as a transferable method.

Further information: on the website



CITIZENS

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BIKE BREAKFAST CSR IN DEBRECEN

**GOOD PRACTICE OWNER: EDC DEBRECEN
URBAN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

About the Good Practice

Conceived by the Hungarian Cycling Club (HCC) in 2009, this nationwide movement aims to dispel the main misconceptions about cycling and encourage more people to choose bikes for everyday transport. The long-term goal of the event is to reduce car-centric commuting. EDC took up the role of co-organizer of the event in Debrecen in 2022 with the unique idea of incorporating CSR features by encouraging the active promotion of cycling among local economic actors. Participating companies provide breakfast at their own expense for colleagues coming to work. EDC coordinates and links the civic initiative with the corporate line. The event was originally held only in the city centre in Debrecen, the event now covers the whole city. There is an increasing number of autonomous open-to-public events as a joint effort of companies. Participants provide additional services (bike service, rest corners) and extra features (city tour by bike) as well. Companies taking part in this movement are more willing to join other initiatives, like Bike to Work campaign, a nationwide competition promoting sustainable commuting.

Key actors, stakeholders:

- Organizers: HCC, EDC
- Supporters: local bakers and coffee shops offering coffee and pastries, SMEs with cycling profile providing on-site event management and bike service, municipality (free use of public space)
- Participants: municipality, local companies (large enterprises and SMEs)
- Beneficiaries: citizens; employees of participant organisations.

Resources needed

- Central event: sponsored by HCC (300 portions) and local bakeries, coffeeshops (Starbucks: 150 p., gluten-free bakery: 50 p.), local SMEs (bike repair service, event management)
- EDC: breakfast, bike repair service, additional features (cca. 400 euro)
- Participating companies: own budget

Evidence of success

After the pilot action in 2022, which was carried out with the participation of 15 companies, the event has become a demand among companies. In 2024 there were already 20 bike breakfast locations in the city. Even a committed core of companies started independently organising the bike breakfast, opening them up also to the public, enhancing the environmental and social benefits of the event. We consider this a much bigger success than the steady increase in the number of participating companies.

Potential for learning or transfer

This practice is easily transferable in terms of adaptability due to the following factors:

1. It can be implemented in practically any location regardless of the geographical, demographic and economic conditions.
2. Does not require significant resources, either financial, human or land use.
3. No special skills are needed to make it happen, the key is commitment and enthusiasm.
4. Benefits are easy to understand and communicate, facilitating political engagement and public support.

The most important key success factor is the close relationship with the stakeholders detailed above, which is an existing advantage for EDC with a lot of effort behind. Building stable and supportive partnership with local companies and creating bridge between civic initiatives and corporate goals is the most time-consuming and risky part of successful implementation. The practice of setting up a similar stakeholder group to support local action can also be translated into a readily transferable method.



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE “WATER IS OUR COMMON TREASURE” AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGN

GOOD PRACTICE OWNER: EDC DEBRECEN URBAN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER



About the Good Practice

Debrecen faces many climate change effects such as droughts, heavy and periodic rainfalls, heat-island effects, and preserving green spaces. When there is heavy rain, streets are flooded because drainage stacks cannot dispose of increased water levels. Owners have to face damage to their properties, citizens cannot use the streets for transporting, use of public transportation is also difficult, and gardens will be flooded. Meanwhile, green fields in public areas are dried out in summer because of a lack of precipitate. Furthermore, urban stormwater and wastewater drainage systems are not always separate, but often combined. It's important to minimize combined wastewater and stormwater systems in the city and raise awareness about rainwater retention. Local water company experts identified high-impact areas with illegal urban stormwater connections.

As a result of this process, the implementation site where barrel distribution will take place is the southern part of the city. The project used a multi-sectoral approach. Municipality Green Area Department Eco-manager and Debrecen Waterworks company are also involved in regular meetings and discussions. EDC Debrecen Ltd. was the coordinator of the collaboration and was responsible for CSR implementation. Local businesses, political leaders, and representatives were involved in preparation and implementation. Citizens were the focus of awareness efforts and the beneficiaries of the practice.

Resources needed

- Budget: 29 000 EUR (17 800 EUR Municipality, 11 200 EUR companies)
- Project team: 1 eco-manager, 2 communication experts, 2 project managers, 2 experts from Waterworks Company, 2 technical experts (outsiders)

Evidence of success

In 2023, 300 rainwater barrels were distributed by the municipality, and companies distributed 185 barrels. As a multi-actor story, it created a new chance to work and involve local experts and local companies through CSR. Plus, the project is easily replicable for any city. As proof of the success of the extension, a neighboring town replicated the barrel distribution in 2024 and in the same year a newer 5500 barrels were distributed to citizens in Debrecen as well.

Potential for learning or transfer

The main success factors for this project include:

Low-budget approach: This makes it easier to obtain financial support.

Diversified financial support: Having two alternatives for funding - if one doesn't work, there must be another alternative: municipality and local businesses. This helps minimize financial risks.

Multi-actor involvement is important to support project goals.

Focus on residential areas: It's essential to ensure wider acceptance.

Businesses can support the project with barrels instead of cash to increase willingness to participate. Additionally, businesses can offer support to locals at their headquarters site to increase engagement.

Raising awareness: Using communication materials, like brochures, posters, stickers on barrels, and media platforms such as press releases, online publications, and videos, helps gain citizens' support.

Finally, it's recommended to start small at first.



CITIZENS

Apr 2024
Jun 2028€
1.33 M
EU FUNDING

Further information: on the website



SDG'S COACHING FOR MUNICIPALITIES

GOOD PRACTICE OWNER: SPW ARNE

About the Good Practice

The regional public administration of Wallonia (sustainability unit) received requests for advice and coaching on CSR for public and private actors. To implement this, the regional administration has worked with a pool of around 10 coaches and organized regular methodological exchanges between them. At academic level, the project was sponsored by the Louvain School of Management. Between 2020 and 2023, annual calls were launched. Winning organisations have each set up a sustainability team including representatives of their various departments. Each organisation could benefit for free from the guidance of a sustainability coach who would lead them through at least five participatory sessions:

1. Awareness-raising on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the role that the organisation can play in achieving them;
2. Assessment of the organisation's impact on sustainable development (in relation to the SDGs and their targets);
3. Consultation with stakeholders, leading to a materiality matrix;
4. SDG roadmap defining the ambition (quantified targets) and means (action plan);
5. Communication and implementation advice.

The most recent edition of the coaching service also takes into account new obligations such as the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive. In total, 130 public and private organisations have been coached. For those who have completed the exercise, the SDG roadmap is made publicly available.

Resources needed

The support scheme represented a budget of 1,006,870 € (incl. VAT) to support 130 organisations and 9 departments of the regional administration of Wallonia. This represents an average cost 7,243 € per organisation. The coordination of the scheme by the regional administration is 1/2 FTE.

Evidence of success

Almost all the participating organisations have an SDG roadmap as an output of the coaching, which is their sustainability strategy. Some still have to finalise it and get the necessary approval for publication. Beneficiaries were able to evaluate the programme based on several features of the programme:

Learnings; Improved structuring; Involvement of stakeholders; Roadmap; Ambition

It is interesting to note that the most popular actions were related to SDG12 (436), SDG11 (369).

Potential for learning or transfer

The French speaking community of Belgium has recently also implemented this programme. We are not aware of other transfers. The programme is not particularly difficult to transfer, but it needs the necessary funding to hire the coaches. The main difficulty is to ensure that the SDG roadmaps are being implemented after the coaching. Ideally, this needs a follow-up by the programme coordinator, which can be time consuming. Up to know, several actions have been taken to trigger the follow-up:

- Invite organisations to present their successes and difficulties at regular webinars designed for the programme community;
- Invite organisations at face-to-face peer exchanges for half a day in small groups (around three organisations of the same type), based upon group intelligence;
- Ask organisations annually to fill in an evaluation form on their progresses;
- Visit the organisations to make a balance of the progresses and encourage the update of the SDG roadmap.

[Further information: on the website](#)





THE RIDE & BUY APP

GOOD PRACTICE OWNER: CITY OF HANNUT

About the Good Practice

The development of active mobility, and especially bike use, is a priority for the municipality of Hannut. However, beyond infrastructure, it is not always easy to stimulate the use of bikes.

In 2019, the municipality of Hannut won a call for funding from the Walloon Digital Agency for innovative sustainable projects with an app called "Ride & Buy". The objective is both to stimulate the use of soft mobility (especially bikes) and the spendings in local shops

Operational since september 2021, the app encourages citizens to travel by bike or on foot by: raising awareness of safe routes; showing how much CO2 is saved; rewarding virtuous behaviour with points that can be cumulated; encouraging local businesses as those points can be exchanges as money and spent locally.

In practices, users gain 10 points (0,1€) per km ridden. At 1000 points (100km), they get a 10€ voucher to local shops.

In terms of project management, through public procurement, the municipality chose to work with Contraste Digital, a specialised web agency. The project has been co developed with students from local high school as students were a particular targeted public for the municipalities. AGILE management methodology was used. The geographic zone covers 90% of students.

Resources needed

The total cost to initiate this project were 221.032€ (119.818€ covered by the regional subsidies), of which 101.016,87 € were staff costs. It is complicated to estimate the amount of FTE as many different employees were involved with their specific expertise and skills.

Evidence of success

From a quantitative point of view, in 2023: 39,227.82 kilometres were travelled, 5179 kilos of CO2 were saved and 272 €10 vouchers were distributed.

As a factor of success, it has won several prizes and awards such as the best app of the year by Feweb (2022) and the Prix Ardent (2021).

Potential for learning or transfer

This best practice could easily be transferred to other semi-rural and rural territories that both wants to stimulate local businesses and improve soft mobility. It can also be applied to cities that struggle to connect with outskirt neighbourhoods.

It is easily transferable because it has been developed to be open and interoperable. Potential developers in other territories would then not need to reinvent the wheel.

However, here are a few considerations. First, local agents need to be trained. Second, human resources needed in calls for fundings should not be underestimated. Third, AGILE management is not compatible to public procurement. Fourth, consider differences in Iphone/Android exploitations



Further information: on the website

