

Case Study // Round Table SDG 12: Successful approaches to delivering on Sustainable Consumption and Production by 2030

Mainstreaming sustainable consumption and production patterns into national policies to develop a Green Economy in Romania

Romania

Level: national

Summary

Romania has committed under the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy (BIG-E) to develop a National Action Plan on sustainable consumption and production (SCP). The first step included the development of an efficient institutional framework for sustainable development among all relevant public institutions and set up the coordination at the highest political level – Prime Minister Office; the mapping of existing policies and actions on SCP at national level; an effective input on relevant policies and strategies on SCP and green economy issues; and the engagement of relevant stakeholders on SCP.

The plan will be developed by national authorities with the engagement of relevant stakeholders in line with the objectives of the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), which is under review for the inclusion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs and to set SDG priorities at national level. The National Action Plan on SCP will follow the revised NSDS and its implementation will be supervised by the Department for Sustainable Development at the level of Prime-Minister Office. The objectives and actions will be targeted on specific ministries and institutions with close cooperation with private sector and other relevant stakeholders. The commitment will result in the eco-efficient management of resource consumption, the development of an attractive business environment, and the improvement of the quality of products and services. It will stimulate technological upgrade, encourage the renewal of processes and products, develop research and innovation activities and improve the capacity of both public authorities and companies.

Website: <http://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/big-e/romania-establish-national-sustainable-consumption-and-production-scp-strategies>

Situation

After the Batumi Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (June 2016) the development of a national plan on SCP was discussed within the Inter-Ministerial Committee, which works under the Government Decision 741/2011, with all relevant institutions and stakeholders, followed by a process of mapping relevant strategies and policies on SCP, being part of the complete mapping on all 17 SDGs. One of the topics of discussions was the non-financial reporting of the large companies under Directive 2014/95/EU. Also, in 2016, the implementation of the Law on Green Public Procurement (adopted in April 2016) commenced and consultations with all stakeholders (public institutions and private companies) took place on establishing the criteria for auctions for developing a national plan on green public procurement (GPP).



After the change of Government in 2017, a dedicated structure was established at the level of the Prime Minister's Office: the Department for Sustainable Development under the coordination of a State Counsellor reporting directly to the Prime Minister. Under this new coordination and in close cooperation with the Inter-Ministerial Committee lead by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Environment, in September 2017, it was decided to revise the NSDS to include the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs together with the development of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of Romania to be present at the High Level Political Forum in 2018, with SDG 12 being one of the goals under the review. The Inter-Ministerial Committee established an Open Working Group for drafting the VNR.

The core objectives are: the assessment of the consumption and production patterns for finding solutions to reduce the consumption of material resources and to decouple the dynamic of the gross domestic product (GDP) from the consumption of material and energy resources and its negative impact on the environment. Based on current NSDS (under review), the National Objective for 2020 is: *To decouple economic growth from environmental degradation by reversing the ratio between resource consumption and creation of value added; to move closer to the average performance levels of the EU in terms of SCP.* The National Objective for 2030 is: *To come close to the average level attained at that time by the other EU Member States in terms of SCP.* Estimates indicated that the application of adequate economic policy instruments could result in a 3–4 % annual increase in physical and energy resource productivity during the period 2008–2030. (A 2016 study by the Romanian Academy showed that the indicator *GDP/Domestic Material Consumption* has a negative trend on use of material resources in Romania for the period 2000–2007, whereas most EU countries recorded a significant positive trend, and for the period 2007–2014 Romania registered a slight increased trend on this indicator.)

Strategy

The approach to developing the National Action Plan on SCP was to identify the multi-layered nature of SCP among all policies, such as the development of the Strategy on Green Jobs (Ministry of Labour) having a direct impact on implementation of SCP practices in Romania. Other goals on mainstreaming SCP are to:

- Improve the capacity of public authorities to implement the legislation on GPP through clear commitments on eco-efficiency and environmental protection standards in all tender documents
- Expand gradually product labelling in accordance with EU norms to reflect the environmental performance of selling goods and services. We organized coherent information campaigns to inform consumers and to promote eco-efficient services and products, including those from organic farming
- Establish a diverse economic context in Romania by stimulating green investments in the context of promoting SCP, innovation, resource efficiency and energy efficiency
- Have close cooperation among and within various institutions, actors and clusters on SCP issues.

Results and impact

- **Implementation of GPP Law:** The Law on GPP provides for the development of a guide that includes minimum criteria for environmental protection for goods and services, the standard specifications and the need for a multi-annual action plan on GPP at the national level, with mandatory annual targets for green procurement for the public administration. The guide will be approved by a Joint Order by the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Environment and the President of the National Agency for Public Procurement. It is in the final stage of the consultation process. The next step is to draft the National Action Plan on GPP, including specific annual targets for GPP. Complementing the actions on



GPP, the Ministry of Environment is a beneficiary partner in the LIFE project GPPBest, in cooperation with Basilicata, Sardinia and Lazio Regions (Italy) and Ecosistemi Foundation. The project — best practice exchange and strategic tools for GPP — began in January 2015 and will end in June 2018. It represents a unique opportunity to learn more from the Italian partners in terms of GPP implementation and to share information regarding the environmental benefits of GPP in order to improve our skills for policy planning. The main goal of the project (for Romania) is to support the Ministry of Environment of Romania in fulfilment of GPP commitments.

- **Non-Financial Reporting** for large companies: 24 companies submitted Non-Financial Reports under EU Directive 2014/95; there are also 70 reports on the sustainability of companies (CSR).
- **Eco-labelling** — implementation of the EU Regulation on the EU Ecolabel in Romania: the categories of products and services that have been awarded the European Ecolabel are interior paint, printed paper, absorbent paper, textiles, lubricants, detergents, soaps and tourist accommodation services. One of the objectives of NSDS was the development of product labelling according to their ecological performance. 79 products and 3 services were eco-labelled between 2009 and 2017 and 27 licences were granted. In 2017, there were 19 eco-labelled products (for the rest of the products there was no renewal of the application for the European Ecolabel following the expiry of its validity).
- **EMAS (EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme)** — encouraging voluntary participation of organizations and economic operators in the frame of EMAS: from 2009 to 2017, 15 organizations were registered in EMAS, 10 of which were still registered in the EMAS National Registry in 2017. Four of the registered organizations have been discharged because of either non-compliance with the EMAS Regulation or requests from the organizations to reorganize their activities. One of the organizations has requested collective registration at the EU level.
- **Programmes financed from the Environment Fund** (under the coordination of the Ministry of Environment) that contribute to develop a green economy in Romania:
 - **“Rabla+” Programme** — to promote electric car purchase and development of electric infrastructure
 - The **Green House Programme** — launched in 2011 to improve air quality, water and soil by reducing pollution caused by the burning of wood and fossil fuels (used to produce heat and hot water) and encourage the use of clean, renewable energy sources
 - **Motor vehicles scrapping programme, “Rabla” (Jalopy) Programme** — National car fleet renewal programme — began in 2005 and has been implemented each year since. An eligible car had to be at least 12 years old in 2005–2008, 10 years old in 2009–2013 and 8 years old starting in 2014
 - The initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Environment to create a working group comprised of 20 national authorities, institutions and organizations to set up the National Action Plan to reduce food waste and develop the National Strategy for this goal.
- The Law on GPP aims to develop the internal market of green goods, services and works and encourages the development of clean and environmentally-friendly technologies. It promotes environmental protection, sustainable development and SCP and resource efficiency.
- Improvement of the capacity of both public authorities and companies, to implement the legislation on GPP and encourage the national and local public authorities to initiate, in cooperation with business associations, chambers of commerce and industry and universities, will also increase the level of social awareness and corporate responsibility regarding SCP.
- The achievement of the eco-efficient management of resource consumption will maximize resource efficiency by promoting a sustainable pattern of production and consumption.
- Increased resource efficiency will lead to a lower depletion rate of primary resources and thus reduce costs, improve competitiveness and achieve sustainable economic growth.

- Development of an attractive business environment that can enhance investment flows will stimulate technological upgrading and encourage continued renewal of processes and products. (In Romania, public procurement represents 20 % of GDP, compared with the EU average of 16 %.) The Romanian public administration can focus on choosing environmentally-friendly goods and services so reducing its impact, saving resources and contributing to the implementation of SDGs.
- The impact of products on the environment is considered throughout their life cycle, from design, manufacturing, assembly, marketing, distribution, sale and use down to recycling and disposal.
- Development of research and innovation activities will focus on the sectors where the expected effects are the most significant in terms of ecological progress and competitiveness: organic foodstuffs, water-management technology, energy efficiency, urban transport, construction, selective waste collection, recycling and disposal, biofuels, etc..

Challenges and lessons learned

- There is some progress in mainstreaming SCP in strategies and plans at the national level.
- Next, we will focus on approving the GPP criteria guide, develop the first National Action Plan on GPP and draft the National Action Plan on SCP as an operational tool of the reviewed NSDS.
- We must establish an integrated monitoring process to assess the progress made in the implementation of the adopted policy documents in order to provide regular feedback for revision of the ongoing actions and preparation of the new ones (e.g., establishing gradual targets for green procurements for public authorities, followed by the assessment of the impact on the environment).
- There would be the need to improve institutional cooperation and enhance engagement of the private sector and other relevant stakeholders.

Potential for replication

- Exchange of views and best practices on drafting the National Action Plan on SCP as follow up to the reviewed NSDS.
- Analysis of the opportunity to set up and launch a partnership for the implementation of transnational projects for food waste reduction.

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