

AGENTS OF CO-EXISTENCE

Integrated Action Plan
Iasi Metropolitan Area



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Section 1

Context, needs and vision

Overall theme

The main challenge of the "Agents of Co-Existence and Open Government" network is to create a functioning and inclusive civic participation system by improving the skills and capabilities of municipal staff and developing new participatory structures within local governance. The goal is to increase transparency, build trust, and actively engage citizens in decision-making processes.

Through this approach, civil servants will be better equipped to facilitate participation, and local governments will be more open to integrating citizen input into policymaking. As a result, a culture of co-creation will emerge, ensuring that participatory democracy becomes a standard practice, not an exception.

During the Activation Stage, the AoCE partnership agreed to focus on four key themes:

1. **Working together with citizens** – Developing more effective methods of civic engagement and consultation.
2. **Innovators coming into government** – Encouraging public institutions to be open to citizen-driven innovation.
3. **Building internal capacities** – Strengthening the communication and facilitation skills of municipal staff.
4. **New working methods and rethinking the rules** – Reforming governance structures to make participation a permanent and meaningful process.

Although several cities in the AoCE network have experimented with participation tools, integrating these into daily governance remains a challenge. In the Iași Metropolitan Area, IMAA aims to bridge this gap by developing structured participatory frameworks that make civic engagement a consistent and impactful part of decision-making.

A common difficulty is that public administrations often lack the mechanisms to track and integrate citizen input, leading to frustration and decreased civic trust.

In the **Iași Metropolitan Area**, these challenges are even more pronounced, due to:

- **Low participation rates in public consultations** – Few consultations are held, and those that do take place often see minimal citizen engagement.
- **A lack of structured feedback mechanisms** – Citizens rarely see how their input is used in decision-making.
- **A need for mindset change within the public administration** – Many civil servants lack training in participatory processes and struggle to incorporate citizen-led ideas.

To address these issues, the **Iași Metropolitan Area Association (IMAA) Integrated Action Plan (IAP)** focuses on **strengthening participatory governance**, improving the capacities of civil servants, and creating clearer and more transparent consultation mechanisms. By implementing these changes, IMAA aims to **move beyond isolated participation initiatives** and establish a **systematic approach** to open governance across the metropolitan area.

Current situation

General Overview

The **Iași Metropolitan Area** is currently undergoing a period of transition and transformation, consolidating its role as an **economic and cultural hub** in the **Northeast region of Romania**. The metropolitan area consists of the City of Iași and 26 neighboring communes, covering 1,489.58 km² and serving a population of approximately 610,000 residents (2023 data).

The Iasi Metropolitan Area Association (IMAA) was established to coordinate regional development initiatives, including business growth, housing expansion, investment attraction, and environmental projects. However, achieving sustainable and inclusive governance requires not only infrastructure and economic development but also strong civic participation mechanisms that involve citizens in decision-making.

Currently, public participation in governance remains limited, with low engagement in consultations and a lack of structured mechanisms for feedback and co-creation. Strengthening civic involvement is crucial for addressing key urban challenges and ensuring more inclusive metropolitan governance.

Administrative and Institutional Framework

Founded on **April 8, 2004**, the **Iași Metropolitan Area Association (IMAA)** operates as a collaborative structure between **the Iași County Council, the Municipality of Iași, and 26 surrounding communes**. It was established under multiple legal frameworks, including:

- **Law 350/2001** on territorial planning and urbanism,
- **Law 351/2001** on the National Territorial Planning Plan,
- **Ordinance 26/2000** on associations and foundations.

The **Iași Metropolitan Council**, composed of **mayors from all associated municipalities**, acts as the legislative body of the association, ensuring regional coordination in **urban development, infrastructure, and environmental policies**.

Despite this institutional framework, there is **no dedicated structure for civic participation** within IMAA. The absence of a **Participation Office or Officer** makes it challenging to establish **systematic public engagement practices**, limiting the ability of citizens to influence metropolitan policies.

Strategic Partnerships for Urban and Civic Development

Iași Metropolitan Area Association (IMAA) is actively involved in several local, national, and international partnerships, supporting urban development, cultural initiatives, and environmental sustainability. Key collaborations include:

- **CIVINET Romania** – promoting **sustainable urban mobility** and facilitating best-practice exchanges through the **CIVITAS initiative**.
- **METREX (Metropolitan Exchange Network)** – supporting regional governance strategies and knowledge-sharing among European metropolitan areas.
- **European Metropolitan Authorities (EMA)** – engaging in policy dialogue at the European level on urban governance and metropolitan cooperation.
- **National Museum of Romanian Literature Partnership** – promoting cultural identity through initiatives like the **Museums Caravan** across IMAA member municipalities.

While these partnerships enhance regional development, there is limited integration of civic participation tools within their scope. IMAA has the opportunity to leverage these networks to develop participatory frameworks that involve citizens more directly in metropolitan governance.

Key challenges in Metropolitan Governance

Despite its economic and strategic potential, the **Iași Metropolitan Area faces several social, environmental, and governance challenges** that impact its long-term sustainability:

A. Weak civic participation mechanisms

- Low citizen engagement in decision-making due to a lack of structured consultation processes.
- Limited awareness and accessibility of public participation opportunities.
- No formal mechanism for tracking and integrating citizen feedback into policies.

B. Administrative barriers to participation

- Limited capacity among civil servants to facilitate participatory processes.
- Lack of cross-departmental collaboration on civic engagement initiatives.
- No designated structure for participation within IMAA.

C. Social and Economic disparities

- Uneven socio-economic development across the metropolitan area, with rural areas facing higher unemployment and limited access to services.
- Educational gaps that limit active citizenship and community engagement.

D. Environmental sustainability concerns

- High CO2 emissions and air pollution due to increased urbanization and traffic congestion.
- Insufficient promotion of sustainable mobility and eco-friendly urban planning solutions.

To overcome these challenges, IMAA must integrate civic participation strategies into metropolitan governance, ensuring that citizen voices are heard and reflected in policy decisions.

Towards a participatory and sustainable Metropolitan Area

Achieving sustainable development in the Iași Metropolitan Area requires a shift towards inclusive governance. This means:

- ♦ **Strengthening participatory structures** by introducing formal consultation and feedback mechanisms.
- ♦ **Developing civil servants' capacities** to engage with citizens more effectively.
- ♦ **Encouraging public-private-civic collaboration** to co-create urban solutions.

All activities carried out by IMAA should align with the goal of **long-term, sustainable, and participatory development**, ensuring that the voices of residents shape the future of the metropolitan area.

Relevant existing strategies and policies

A well-structured urban and metropolitan governance framework is essential for ensuring sustainable development in the Iași Metropolitan Area. Various strategic plans and policies shape the region's growth, emphasizing economic resilience, environmental sustainability, and improved quality of life.

However, while these strategies highlight the importance of public participation, existing civic engagement mechanisms remain underdeveloped and fragmented. The Integrated Action Plan (IAP) seeks to bridge this gap by strengthening participatory governance structures, ensuring that citizen input is systematically integrated into decision-making processes.

Alignment with European and National development priorities

The Iași Metropolitan Area Association is committed to aligning its policies and initiatives with European and national strategic objectives, contributing to:

- ◆ **A more competitive and intelligent Europe** – by fostering economic and social innovation.
- ◆ **A more inclusive society** – by improving governance transparency and public participation.
- ◆ **A low-carbon economy** – by integrating sustainable urban mobility solutions.
- ◆ **A more connected and resilient infrastructure** – by prioritizing investments in transport and digitalization.

Through its Integrated Action Plan (IAP), IMAA seeks to enhance participatory governance, ensuring that metropolitan development is shaped not only by policymakers but also by citizens, civil society, and local stakeholders.

Strategic Framework supporting civic participation

Several existing strategies and policies provide a foundation for strengthening citizen engagement in metropolitan governance:

A. Integrated Urban Development Strategy (SIDU) 2021-2030

- **What it is:** The SIDU defines priority projects and investment directions for the sustainable development of Iași and the metropolitan area. It includes **331 projects totaling €6.7 billion**, covering areas such as transport, environment, economy, and social development.

Relevance to IAP:

- ✓ SIDU promotes a participatory approach to urban planning, emphasizing the role of public consultations.
- ✓ IAP aligns with this objective by creating structured mechanisms to involve citizens in project prioritization.
- ✓ The governance model outlined in SIDU encourages multi-stakeholder dialogue, reinforcing the need for open decision-making processes.

B. Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (PMUD)

- **What it is:** A comprehensive strategy designed to improve public transport and reduce environmental impact in the Iași Metropolitan Area.

Relevance to IAP:

- ✓ PMUD emphasizes inclusive mobility planning, which requires citizen input to be fully effective.
- ✓ IAP supports this by proposing structured engagement tools, ensuring that residents' mobility needs are reflected in policy decisions.

C. Open Governance and Participatory Planning

The **City of Iași** and IMAA have committed to a **transparent and participatory approach** to urban governance.

This includes:

- Public consultations to involve stakeholders in strategic decision-making.
- Collaboration with NGOs, the private sector, and local communities to shape policies based on real needs.
- Strengthening digital tools for participation, ensuring wider accessibility to decision-making processes.

Despite these commitments, current participatory mechanisms remain underdeveloped. While SIDU and PMUD emphasize civic engagement, their implementation often lacks clear frameworks for structured feedback and co-creation. The IAP directly addresses this gap by establishing new participation mechanisms and fostering a governance culture where citizen input translates into concrete policies.

Towards a more inclusive Metropolitan Governance

Ensuring the sustainable development of the **Iași Metropolitan Area** requires not just financial investments and infrastructure projects, but also stronger civic engagement structures.

✓ **IAP contributes to this transformation** by operationalizing participation principles outlined in SIDU and PMUD.

✓ **By fostering open governance**, IAP strengthens the connection between decision-makers and citizens, ensuring that urban policies reflect community-driven priorities.

To fully integrate **participatory governance** into the metropolitan development process, IMAA must:

- Create dedicated participation structures that work alongside SIDU and PMUD implementation teams.
- Develop continuous feedback loops so that citizen input is not only collected but also acted upon.
- Enhance local government capacity to facilitate and sustain open and inclusive urban planning processes.

By embedding these principles into existing metropolitan strategies, the IAP ensures that citizen participation becomes a core element of urban development, not just a procedural requirement.

Problem identification

Effective and inclusive metropolitan governance relies on strong civic participation structures, ensuring that decision-making processes reflect the real needs of communities. However, the Iași Metropolitan Area faces significant barriers to citizen engagement, limiting the effectiveness of participatory governance.

To better understand these challenges, the Urban Local Group (ULG) of Iași, composed of 43 stakeholders from public institutions, civil society, academia, and the private sector, conducted a SWOT analysis assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to participatory governance in the metropolitan area.

This chapter outlines the key issues identified, highlighting the main barriers to citizen participation, institutional challenges, and trust deficits that need to be addressed. By pinpointing these problems, the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) can strategically respond to the most pressing gaps, ensuring a transparent, participatory, and community-driven governance model.

The Urban Local Group (ULG)

The Urban Local Group (ULG) of Iași consists of 43 stakeholders representing local government, civil society, cultural and environmental organizations, academia, and the private sector. This multi-sector collaboration reflects a shared commitment to addressing urban governance challenges and fostering sustainable development.

Key ULG members include:

- **Public authorities:** Iași County Council, Municipality of Iași, town halls of Miroslava, Prisăcani, Aroneanu, Lețcani, and Scânteia.
- **Environmental and cultural organizations:** Prut-Bârlad Water Basin Administration, National Museum of Romanian Literature, and the Metropolitan Association for Public Transport in Iași.
- **Civil society:** Alliance for the Promotion of Alternative Transport, Save Our Paws Association, Association for the Integration of the Visually Impaired in Romania.
- **Academia:** Alexandru Ioan Cuza University.
- **Private sector:** Ulysse PR SRL, ICONIC – The New Media Cluster Iași.

While this broad stakeholder engagement is a strength, the main challenge is ensuring that citizen voices are effectively integrated into decision-making processes, beyond institutional-level discussions.

SWOT Analysis and Key problems identified

Following the first ULG meeting, a **SWOT analysis** was conducted to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats **in relation to participatory governance** in the Iași Metropolitan Area.

“Agents of co-existence and open government”

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
• <i>Organizational Leadership (NGO's);</i> • <i>Communication;</i> • <i>Safety provided by the collaboration with public administration;</i> • <i>The existence of trained staff and skills in local administration;</i> • <i>Availability of human resources, especially in the youth sector;</i> • <i>Existence of funding and legal frame;</i> • <i>Mature civil society;</i> • <i>Dynamic economic environment;</i> • <i>Strong potential from the local NGO's to make major changes;</i> • <i>Original and new ideas from the NGO's for public administration;</i> • <i>Easier implementation of projects with the help of the public administration;</i>	• <i>Lack of specialized staff -NGO facilitator from the administration;</i> • <i>Lack of involvement, will or interest from citizens; (2)</i> • <i>Lack of accountability from citizens and public administration;</i> • <i>Urgent problems vs. limited time;</i> • <i>Lack of transparency;</i> • <i>Bureaucracy; (2)</i> • <i>Deficient or weak communication; (2)</i> • <i>Dedicated staff or department only for civil participation;</i> • <i>Short staffed administration for public society related issues; (2)</i> • <i>Weak digitalization; (2)</i> • <i>Not understanding the decision mechanism;</i> • <i>Not enough local data for taking decisions (mobility, demographics, migration, etc.);</i> • <i>Budgetary and legislation constraints;</i>	• <i>Improving transparency;</i> • <i>Openness for collaboration;</i> • <i>Programs and projects for NGO's;</i> • <i>Strategy implementation;</i> • <i>Fund raising opportunities;</i> • <i>Collaboration with public administration can provide advantages (logistics, visibility, financial support, etc.); (3)</i> • <i>Networking;</i> • <i>Volunteers;</i> • <i>Decentralization;</i> • <i>Directives and European funding;</i> • <i>Young human capital;</i> • <i>Collaboration between civil society (NGO's) and public administration leads to solving challenges and implementing projects; (3)</i> • <i>Formal or informal meetings for informational purposes;</i>	• <i>Changes in legislation and policy;(2)</i> • <i>Lack of resources;</i> • <i>Discouraged civil society;</i> • <i>Old and unrevised methodology about public participation in the administration;</i> • <i>Corruption;</i> • <i>Political environment; (2)</i> • <i>Deficient participative culture;</i> • <i>Discrepancy between the rural and urban environment;</i> • <i>Deficient civic education;</i> • <i>Management changes in public administration;</i> • <i>Public administration doesn't understand how ONG's function;</i>

While the SWOT analysis highlights several assets (such as a strong academic presence and active civil society), it also reveals critical weaknesses that need to be addressed:

Key problems identified:

◇ **Weak civic participation structures**

- Public consultations are rare and poorly attended, indicating a lack of citizen engagement culture.
- There are no structured feedback mechanisms, so citizens do not see how their input is used in decision-making.
- Limited digital tools to facilitate participation, making the process less accessible.

◇ **Institutional barriers to participation**

- Public authorities lack a dedicated civic participation unit, making it difficult to coordinate and implement engagement initiatives.
- Civil servants lack training in participatory processes and facilitation skills.
- Collaboration between different municipal departments is weak, leading to fragmented approaches to participation.

◇ **Lack of trust in local administration**

- Citizens perceive decision-making as non-transparent, contributing to low engagement levels.
- There is a disconnect between municipal authorities and local communities, particularly in suburban and rural areas of the metropolitan zone.

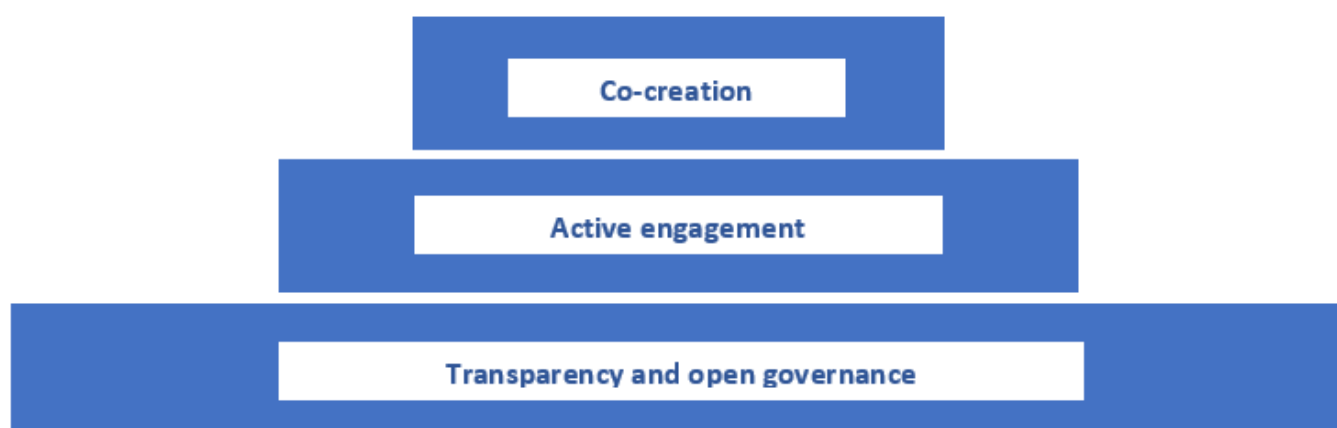
◇ **Limited opportunities for youth participation**

- Young people are underrepresented in governance discussions, and there are few initiatives to encourage their involvement in decision-making.

Vision

A transparent, open, and participatory Iași Metropolitan Area, where citizens and stakeholders are actively engaged in decision-making, and where public policies are co-created through inclusive and structured processes.

Vision for the Iași Metropolitan Area



Main integration challenge(s)

Effective civic participation requires a well-integrated governance framework, where stakeholders collaborate across sectors and levels of government. However, in the Iași Metropolitan Area, participation remains fragmented, with limited coordination between public institutions, civil society, and citizens.

This chapter evaluates the main integration challenges, analyzing the current situation and the potential improvements that can be achieved through the Integrated Action Plan (IAP). By addressing these gaps, the IAP aims to strengthen participatory governance, enhance cross-sectoral collaboration, and ensure that citizen input translates into real policy changes.

1. Stakeholder involvement in planning

Current situation: The Iași Metropolitan Area Association (IMAA) has an engaged network of stakeholders, including public institutions, NGOs, academia, and private actors. However, participatory processes remain fragmented, and there is no structured framework to systematically integrate citizen input into decision-making.

Possible progress: The IAP will build on existing collaboration efforts by introducing structured consultation mechanisms, expanding digital participation tools, and strengthening cross-sector dialogue to ensure more inclusive planning processes.

2. Coherence with existing strategies

Current situation: Strategic documents like SIDU 2021-2030 and PMUD emphasize civic engagement, and various sectoral policies reflect a commitment to participatory governance. However, implementation mechanisms remain underdeveloped, and public involvement in strategic planning is inconsistent.

Possible progress: The IAP will ensure better alignment between participatory initiatives and existing strategies, embedding structured citizen engagement mechanisms into policy review and urban development planning.

3. Sustainable urban development

Current situation: Sustainability policies exist, particularly in mobility and environmental planning, and there is growing awareness of green initiatives. However, structured public involvement in shaping these policies remains limited, and many sustainability efforts are institutionally driven rather than community-led.

Possible progress: The IAP will promote citizen-driven sustainability initiatives, encourage community-led projects, and support collaborative policymaking that integrates economic, social, and environmental objectives.

4. Integration over time

Current situation: Participation efforts are often project-based and short-term, rather than part of a long-term strategy for civic engagement. While various participatory events have been conducted, they lack continuity, and there is no structured framework for tracking progress over time.

Possible progress: The IAP will establish a roadmap for participatory governance, defining clear milestones and monitoring indicators, ensuring that citizen involvement becomes a systematic and ongoing process.

5. Stakeholder involvement in implementation

Current situation: While NGOs and community groups contribute to early planning stages, they are less involved in implementation. There is no structured monitoring system to ensure that citizen engagement translates into concrete actions.

Possible progress: The IAP will introduce a structured monitoring framework, encourage private sector contributions, and support community-driven action plans that include citizens in project execution and follow-up.

Optional aspects of integration

6. Sectoral Integration

Current situation: The metropolitan area has strong sectoral policies in urban mobility, cultural development, and social programs, but participatory initiatives remain mainly focused on specific projects, with less cross-sectoral cooperation.

Possible progress: The IAP will expand participatory approaches across various policy sectors, fostering stronger coordination between mobility, housing, culture, and digital transformation initiatives.

7. Territorial Integration

Current situation: Collaboration between municipalities in the metropolitan area exists but is not structured, and rural areas are less engaged in participatory processes compared to the urban core.

Possible progress: The IAP will strengthen inter-municipal consultation mechanisms, ensuring balanced citizen participation across urban and rural areas.

8. Digital, gender, and green integration

Current situation: Digital governance is developing, but digital participation tools are not widely used for civic engagement. Gender-sensitive decision-making is not systematically integrated, and environmental initiatives lack formal citizen engagement frameworks.

Possible progress: The IAP will support digital tools for participation, introduce gender-responsive civic policies, and strengthen community involvement in sustainability programs.

Section 2

Overall logic and integrated approach

Strategic objectives

The Integrated Action Plan (IAP) of the Iași Metropolitan Area is designed to establish a transparent, open, and participatory governance model, where citizens and stakeholders are actively engaged in decision-making. To achieve this vision, the following four strategic objectives have been defined:

SO1. Strengthening the relationship between civil society and public administration

Currently, citizen engagement in governance is low, with limited consultation mechanisms and low trust in public institutions. A structured approach is needed to create permanent channels for dialogue, consultation, and collaboration.

Specific objectives:

- ◇ Establish consultation mechanisms between local authorities and civil society.
- ◇ Develop capacity-building programs for public servants on participatory governance.
- ◇ Increase transparency in decision-making by improving access to public information.

SO2. Fostering active youth participation

Young people in the Iași Metropolitan Area are underrepresented in decision-making processes and lack dedicated spaces for civic engagement. Ensuring their participation is essential for a sustainable and inclusive governance model.

Specific objectives:

- ◇ Create and develop dedicated spaces for youth engagement (e.g., youth centers).
- ◇ Promote educational and civic programs to encourage youth participation.
- ◇ Facilitate direct interaction between young residents and local decision-makers.

SO 3. Enhancing social and cultural cohesion

The metropolitan area faces growing social disparities, and community engagement remains fragmented. There is a need for inclusive initiatives that connect different social groups and encourage active citizenship.

Specific objectives:

- ◇ Organize cultural and social initiatives that bring together diverse communities.
- ◇ Strengthen volunteering networks and community-based activities.
- ◇ Support initiatives that promote inclusivity and solidarity.

SO4. Promoting civic education and engagement

Public participation is often limited due to a lack of civic education and awareness. Many residents do not fully understand their rights and responsibilities or how they can engage in governance.

Specific objectives:

- ◇ Implement educational programs on civic rights and responsibilities.
- ◇ Organize public awareness campaigns about the importance of participation.
- ◇ Support participatory budgeting and citizen-led policy proposals.

Actions

The Integrated Action Plan (IAP) of the Iași Metropolitan Area defines a set of intervention areas and associated actions aimed at increasing civic participation and improving governance transparency. These actions are logically structured to align with the strategic objectives defined in Section 1. Each intervention area groups together actions that contribute directly to the same objective, ensuring a coherent and integrated approach.

In this section, each action is presented with a brief description and its expected impact. The detailed implementation framework, including responsibilities, resources, and execution phases, will be elaborated in Section 3.

SO 1: Strengthening the relationship between civil society and public administration

Area of intervention: Public administration & civic engagement

Action 1: Civic Toolbox – Building new skills for participatory governance

This action aims to strengthen the capacities of local civil servants and ULG members in designing and implementing participatory governance processes. It includes hands-on training, peer exchange sessions, and local piloting of innovative civic engagement tools, in line with the AoCE Framework discussed at network level.

The goal is to build a shared language and method for collaboration between citizens and institutions and to support municipal staff in adopting new approaches to public consultation, co-creation, and community dialogue.

◆ **Key activities:**

- Organizing 2 peer-learning workshops with civil servants and civic actors on participatory methods and tools.
- Testing one pilot format for citizen engagement (thematic roundtable).
- Developing a short internal guide or “toolbox” based on lessons learned, to be shared within the municipality and ULG.

◆ **Expected results:**

- Strengthened skills of civil servants and stakeholders in co-design and facilitation.
- Increased institutional openness and responsiveness to citizen input.
- Creation of a replicable participatory format and a reference toolkit.

◆ **Sources of inspiration:**

- Banská Bystrica’s “breakfast meetings” for internal learning and reflection.
- Experiences from AoCE Transnational Meetings.
- The Civic Engagement Framework discussed within the AoCE network.

◆ **Challenges & solutions:**

- Institutional resistance or overload → Engage motivated staff from the beginning and keep activities lightweight.
- Low replication after project ends → Embed the tools into ULG routines and municipal communications practices.

Action 2: Organizing biannual meetings between ulg and the vice mayor for direct dialogue

To strengthen the relationship between citizens and the administration, biannual meetings will be organized between ULG members and the Vice Mayor of Iași, providing a structured communication and feedback channel.

◆ **Key activities:**

- Establishing a fixed calendar of biannual meetings between ULG and the Vice Mayor of Iași.
- Facilitating a process for collecting topics of interest from citizens before each meeting.
- Drafting a report of conclusions after each meeting, which will be sent to the administration and relevant stakeholders.

◆ **Expected results:**

- Improved communication between the administration and citizens.
- Increased citizen trust in local government decisions.
- Creation of a sustainable mechanism for periodic consultation.

◆ **Sources of inspiration:**

- Experiences of cities in the AoCE network that have implemented similar mechanisms of dialogue between citizens and administration.

◆ **Challenges & solutions:**

- Possible lack of time from the Vice Mayor → Establishing an efficient and concise meeting format, with clearly defined topics in advance.
- Lack of concrete impact from discussions → Monitoring actions taken following the meetings and reporting progress to citizens.

SO 2: Fostering active youth participation

Area of intervention: Youth engagement & spaces for dialogue

Action 1: Civic activation through participatory events at the ATI Youth Center

This action aims to promote civic education and active youth engagement through the organization of a participatory event hosted at the ATI Youth Center, in partnership with the Iași Youth Association (ATI). The initiative was selected as one of the Small Scale Actions following a voting session during ULG Meeting 4.

The one-day event, titled „*ATI Active – Participation through Dialogue and Co-Creation*”, will bring together young people from the metropolitan area, civil society actors, and local authorities in an interactive setting. Through workshops, dialogue sessions, and teamwork, participants will explore mechanisms of local governance, civic rights, and community action.

◆ **Key activities:**

- Co-designing and delivering a 6-hour civic education event with approx. 30 participants.
- Facilitating dialogue between youth and representatives of local administration.
- Using creative and interactive tools (simulations, group work) to build civic competencies.

◆ **Expected results:**

- Increased motivation among youth to participate in public life.
- Strengthened connections between youth, NGOs, and local authorities.
- A replicable model of civic engagement activity for other communities in the metropolitan area.

◆ **Sources of inspiration:**

- URBACT network practices on civic co-creation.
- European initiatives on youth participation and dialogue-based learning.

♦ **Challenges & solutions:**

- Lack of continuous youth interest → Working with trusted peer ambassadors (ULG members, local youth leaders).
- Limited institutional engagement → Invite open-minded representatives and communicate clearly the value of listening to youth voices.

♦ **Funding note:** The action is funded through the Small Scale Actions mechanism (€2,500), which will cover external services such as facilitation, logistics, visual materials, coffee break, and photo/video documentation.

Action 2: Practical workshops on public administration for youth

To support youth understanding of public administration and provide them with an active engagement framework, biannual workshops on local governance, decision-making, and active citizenship will be organized. These sessions will be interactive, allowing young people to learn directly from experts and simulate decision-making processes.

♦ **Key activities:**

- Interactive sessions with experts from public administration (e.g., local councilors, ULG members with governance experience).
- Simulations of decision-making processes (e.g., how a public budget is created, how a policy proposal is written).
- Public debate with government representatives, where young people can ask questions and propose solutions for local issues.

♦ **Expected results:**

- Increased knowledge among young people about public administration and local governance.
- Encouraging young people to participate in public consultations and civic initiatives.
- Creating a bridge of communication between youth and local decision-makers.

♦ **Sources of inspiration:**

- European initiatives on civic education and youth involvement.
- Examples from the URBACT network on innovative education methods for public participation.

♦ **Challenges & solutions:**

- Difficulty in attracting experts willing to participate → Creating partnerships with universities and NGOs in the public administration field.
- Low interest from young people → Organizing interactive and practical sessions, not just theoretical discussions.

SO 3: Enhancing social and cultural cohesion

Area of intervention: Community Development & Social Inclusion

Action 1: “Help Me to Help” – Immersive Civic Experience on Homelessness and Inclusion

This action aims to raise awareness and promote solidarity around homelessness and social exclusion through a civic event organized in partnership with the Emmaus Association and members of the URBACT Local Group (ULG). The initiative was selected as one of the Small Scale Actions during ULG Meeting 4 and is supported with a budget of €2,500.

The event will take the form of a **guided study visit and storytelling workshop** within the Emmaus community in Iași, bringing together citizens, local authorities, and beneficiaries in a safe, respectful, and participatory format. Participants will have the opportunity to engage directly with

people experiencing homelessness, learn about their challenges, and co-reflect on community-based solutions.

◆ **Key activities:**

- Co-designing a civic event in partnership with Emmaus and ULG volunteers.
- Organizing a 6-hour experience that includes a guided visit and facilitated storytelling sessions.
- Engaging participants in discussions and reflections around inclusion, dignity, and community responsibility.
- Documenting and promoting the outcomes through visual and digital media.

◆ **Expected results:**

- Increased public awareness and empathy around homelessness issues.
- Strengthened ties between NGOs, citizens, and local authorities.
- A replicable example of how storytelling and direct experience can foster social cohesion.

◆ **Sources of inspiration:**

- Good practices from URBACT cities working on inclusion and participation.
- Community-based education models that use immersion and real-life contact.

◆ **Challenges & solutions:**

- Possible discomfort among participants → Careful preparation and moderation to ensure safe space and mutual respect.
- Logistic complexity of hosting a public event in a social setting → Close coordination with Emmaus team and simplified set-up.

◆ **Funding note:** This action is funded through the URBACT Small Scale Actions mechanism (€2,500), and the funds will be used exclusively for organizing services (facilitation, catering, visibility materials, and documentation).

SO 4: Promoting civic education and engagement

Area of Intervention: Public Awareness & Citizen Education

Action 1: Civic Lab – Community Ideas for Civic Events

This action supports civic education and participation by organizing two participatory events based on ideas proposed by citizens or NGOs. The goal is to encourage grassroots involvement in public life and promote values such as active citizenship, dialogue, and community-driven solutions.

Selected through a voting process involving ULG members, the winning ideas will be co-designed and implemented as civic events (workshops, debates, interactive storytelling sessions, etc.) coordinated by IMAA. Each event will last approximately 6 hours and involve around 30 participants.

◆ **Key activities:**

- Launching a call for ideas within the URBACT Local Group and extended civic network.
- Organizing a transparent selection and voting process based on relevance, clarity, and alignment with IAP objectives.
- Collaboratively developing two community events to be delivered in 2025 with a budget of €2,500 per action.
- Promoting outcomes and community stories through URBACT and local platforms.

◆ **Expected results:**

- Implementation of two high-impact civic education events co-created with local actors.
- Increased citizen awareness and engagement on key local issues.

- A stronger culture of co-creation and civic dialogue in the metropolitan area.
- ♦ **Sources of inspiration:**
 - The successful model tested in the 2024 Small Scale Actions cycle (ATI & Emmaus).
 - URBACT methodologies on participatory event design and active citizenship.
- ♦ **Challenges & solutions:**
 - Low participation in the idea call → Enhanced promotion and simplified application form.
 - Logistical complexity → IMAA will fully manage contracting and implementation of services (facilitation, logistics, visibility).
- ♦ **Funding note:** Each event will be funded through the URBACT Small Scale Actions mechanism (€2,500 per action), covering only services related to event organization.

SECTION 3

Action Planning details

SO 1: Strengthening the relationship between civil society and public administration

Area of Intervention: Public Administration & Civic Engagement

Action title: Civic Toolbox – Building new skills for participatory governance		Action Owner: Iași Metropolitan Area Association	
Action summary: This action supports the development of participatory skills and working methods within the municipality and among ULG members. It includes peer-learning workshops, testing of a participatory format, and the creation of a simple internal toolbox based on the AoCE Framework. The goal is to strengthen institutional capacity for citizen engagement in a practical and replicable way.	Stakeholders: IMAA, municipal staff, ULG members, civic facilitators/trainers, AoCE network partners.	Source of inspiration: Best practices from AoCE cities with structured consultation mechanisms (e.g., participatory advisory boards).	Finance and resources: Utilization of existing IMAA resources
		Links to strategy: Aligns with SIDU (urban governance) and PMUD (public engagement) objectives.	Challenges-Mitigation: Low stakeholder participation → Awareness campaigns & digital platforms for engagement.
Action steps	Related activities	Timeframe	Outputs
1. Planning and coordination	Identify civil servants and ULG participants, define needs and methods	Q1 2026	Work plan and calendar
2. Organizing peer-learning workshops	2 interactive training sessions on civic tools and facilitation	Q2 2026	2 workshops delivered; 15 participants.
3. Pilot a participatory format	Test a new engagement method: roundtable	Q2 2026	1 participatory event piloted
4. Toolbox development	Summarize lessons and tools into a simple internal guide	Q3 2026	1 civic engagement toolbox (short version)
5. Dissemination and integration	Share outcomes in ULG, URBACT network, and municipal channel	Q3 2026	Dissemination note; presentation to ULG

Action title: Organizing biannual meetings between ULG and the Vice Mayor for direct dialogue		Action Owner: Iași Metropolitan Area Association	
Action summary: To strengthen the relationship between citizens and the administration, biannual meetings will be organized between ULG members and the Vice Mayor of Iași, providing a structured communication and feedback channel.	Stakeholders: Vice Mayor of Iași, ULG members, IDA IMA, local NGOs, representatives from civil society.	Source of inspiration: Experiences of cities in the AoCE network that have implemented similar mechanisms of dialogue between citizens and administration.	Finance and resources: Utilization of existing IMMA resources, No significant financial costs; requires administrative coordination and meeting logistics.
		Links to strategy: Supports participatory governance policies in PMUD and aligns with SIDU objectives on community engagement.	Challenges-Mitigation: - Possible lack of time from the Vice Mayor → Establishing an efficient and concise meeting format, with clearly defined topics in advance. - Lack of concrete impact from discussions → Monitoring actions taken following the meetings and reporting progress to citizens.
Action steps	Related activities	Timeframe	Outputs
1. Establish a fixed schedule for biannual meetings.	Coordination with the Vice Mayor's office to agree on meeting dates.	Q3 2025	- Officially agreed calendar for meetings.
2. Define meeting agenda and key topics	Collecting inputs from ULG members and civil society organizations.	Q3 2025	- At least 2 structured meetings per year with documented discussions.
3. Organize the first biannual meeting.	Facilitating discussions between ULG members and the Vice Mayor.	Q1 2026	- At least 15 participants per meeting , representing different sectors of civil society.
4. Publish a report summarizing key outcomes and decisions	Uploading reports on IMAA website and sharing with stakeholders.	Q1 2026	- Public reports published after each meeting summarizing key conclusions.
5. Organize the second biannual meeting and ensure follow-up on previous discussions	Reviewing progress on previous commitments and setting new objectives.	Q4 2026	- Increased transparency and engagement between local authorities and citizens.

SO 2: Fostering active youth participation

Area of Intervention: Youth engagement & spaces for dialogue

Action title: ATI Active – Civic Dialogue and Youth Participation Event		Action Owner: Iași Metropolitan Area Association ATI - Iași Youth Association	
Action summary: Organizing a one-day civic education and dialogue event (<i>ATI Active – Participation through Dialogue and Co-Creation</i>) at the ATI Youth Center, involving youth, NGOs, and local authorities. The event is co-designed with the Iași Youth Association and will include workshops, interactive sessions, and group reflection.	Stakeholders: IMAA, Iași Youth Association (ATI), ULG members, facilitators, youth from the metropolitan area.	Source of inspiration: - Models of youth hubs from the URBACT network. - European programs for non-formal education and youth involvement in the community.	Finance and resources: SSA budget (€2,500) to be used for services related to facilitation, coffee break, visual materials, and event documentation. No equipment or infrastructure will be financed.
		Links to strategy: Supports youth engagement policies in SIDU, aligns with participatory governance goals in PMUD.	Challenges-Mitigation: - Lack of constant interest from young people → Engaging local ambassadors (ULG members) to promote activities. - Limited resources for event organization → Partnerships with NGOs and institutions that can provide pro bono experts.
Action steps	Related activities	Timeframe	Outputs
1. Launch of preparatory meetings with ATI and ULG	Define event objectives, themes, and session structure	Q3 2025	Agreed agenda and event format
2. Acquisition of external services	Procurement of facilitation, catering, visibility, and documentation services	Q3 2025	Signed service contracts
3. Participant recruitment and promotion	Youth outreach through ATI, schools, NGOs; visual campaign	Q3 2025	30 participants registered; promotional materials
4. Event implementation.	One-day civic event: workshops, group dialogue, co-creation session	Q3 2025	Civic education event delivered (6h); photo-video documentation
5. Dissemination and feedback	Post-event summary, media sharing, lessons learned with ULG	Q4 2025	Report, visual outputs, 1 social media campaign

Action title: Practical Workshops on public administration for youth		Action Owner: Iași Metropolitan Area Association ATI - Iași Youth Association	
Action summary: To support youth understanding of public administration and provide them with an active engagement framework, biannual workshops on local governance, decision-making, and active citizenship will be organized. These sessions will be interactive, allowing young people to learn directly from experts and simulate decision-making processes.	Stakeholders: NGOs focused on youth empowerment, ULG members, public administration representatives.	Source of inspiration: - European initiatives on civic education and youth involvement.	Finance and resources: - Potential partnerships with universities and NGOs to provide expert speakers.
		Links to strategy: Supports civic education policies in SIDU, aligns with participatory governance goals in PMUD.	Challenges-Mitigation: - Difficulty in attracting experts willing to participate → Creating partnerships with universities and NGOs in the public administration field. - Low interest from young people → Organizing interactive and practical sessions, not just theoretical discussions.
Action steps	Related activities	Timeframe	Outputs
1. Identify key topics and speakers for workshop	Engaging with local experts, ULG members, and universities.	Q1 2026	List of confirmed speakers and key topics for workshops.
2. Develop interactive content and materials	Preparing case studies, decision-making simulations, and practical exercises.	Q2 2026	Workshop curriculum and materials finalized, including simulations and case studies.
3. Promote the workshops through schools, universities, and social media	Ensuring youth participation through targeted outreach.	Q2 2026	At least 20 students reached through promotional activities.
4. Organize and deliver the workshops in the renovated ATI Youth Center	Hosting two workshops per year	Q2 – Q3 2026	Two interactive workshops successfully conducted, with 20 participants each.
5. Collect feedback and refine future sessions	Using participant input to improve future editions.	Q2 – Q3 2026	At least 70% of participants report increased understanding of governance topics.

SO 3: Enhancing social and cultural cohesion

Area of Intervention: Community development & social inclusion

Action title: Help Me to Help – Storytelling and civic awareness event in the Emmaus community		Action Owner: Iași Metropolitan Area Association Emmaus Association	
Action summary: This action promotes civic awareness, empathy, and social inclusion through a participatory event held in the Emmaus community in Iași. The event will combine a guided study visit with storytelling sessions to raise public understanding of homelessness and to create a meaningful dialogue between citizens, local authorities, and vulnerable individuals. The activity will be implemented by IMAA in partnership with the Emmaus Association and ULG members, with the support of the URBACT Small Scale Actions mechanism (€2,500).	Stakeholders: Emmaus Association, IMAA, ULG members, Municipality of Iași, local NGOs, volunteers.	Source of inspiration: - Similar community-led social support initiatives implemented	Finance and resources: €2,500 from the URBACT Small Scale Actions mechanism, covering only service contracts (facilitation, visual materials, catering, documentation).
		Links to strategy: - Aligns with social inclusion and community support goals in SIDU. - Supports participatory governance objectives by mobilizing community resources.	Challenges-Mitigation: - Low community participation → Promote the campaign by sharing real stories from beneficiaries. - Limited resources → Partner with additional NGOs and donors to increase impact.
Action steps	Related activities	Timeframe	Outputs
1. Initial coordination with Emmaus team and ULG	Define objectives, tour route, key messages, session roles	Q3 2025	Draft agenda and responsibilities shared
2. Procurement of services	Facilitation, visual materials, catering, photo/video	Q3 2025	Signed contracts for services
3. Logistics & community preparation	Prepare beneficiaries and spaces (Baia Publică, Emmaus community site)	Q3 2025	Ready spaces, informed team
4. Event implementation	6-hour civic event: guided visit + storytelling + reflection session	Q3 2025	Event delivered, 30 participants, documentation
5. Visibility and follow-up	Produce visual materials, gather feedback, promote online	Q4 2025	Report, media posts, video/photo summary

SO 4: Promoting civic education and engagement

Area of Intervention: Public awareness & citizen education

Action title: Civic Lab – Co-created community events for civic awareness		Action Owner: Iași Metropolitan Area Association	
Action summary: This action supports the organization of two participatory civic education events based on ideas proposed by local actors. Selected through a transparent ULG voting process, the events will address public awareness, citizen engagement, and co-creation. They will be implemented by IMAA through external services funded via the URBACT Small Scale Actions mechanism (€2,500 per action). Expected change Citizens become more engaged in public life and develop a deeper understanding of local governance and community issues through participatory civic events.	Stakeholders: □ IMAA (lead and coordinator) □ Municipality of Iași (supporting partner) □ ULG members (selection, mentoring, and monitoring) □ Local NGOs (project applicants and implementers) □ Educational institutions (partners in civic education) □ Local businesses (potential sponsors and partners)	Source of inspiration: Previous experience of IMAA in organizing the 2024 Small Scale Actions competition.	Finance and resources: Total of €5,000 (2 x €2,500) from the Small Scale Actions mechanism. Funds will be used for service contracts: facilitation, materials, promotion, and event documentation.
		Links to strategy: Aligns with SIDU in fostering civic engagement and participatory governance. Supports PMUD goals by encouraging community-driven decision-making.	Challenges-Mitigation: Limited community interest → Strong promotion of the competition and mentoring for applicants. Difficulty in project implementation → Provide technical support and monitoring throughout the process.
Action steps	Related activities	Timeframe	Outputs
1. Launch of idea call within ULG	Presentation of criteria and themes aligned with SO4.	Q3 2025	ideas submitted
2. Selection and voting process	ULG members assess and vote on proposals	Q3 2025	2 winning ideas selected
3. Co-design and planning of events	Work sessions with proposers, define format and objectives	Q3 2025	Draft event agendas and responsibilities
4. Service procurement and logistics	Facilitation, visibility, catering, documentation	Q4 2025	Contracts signed; logistics ready.
5. Event delivery	2 participatory civic education events (30 pers. each, 6h)	Q4 2025	2 events completed, documented
6. Dissemination	Share lessons learned and outcomes in URBACT & local networks	Q4 2025	2 photo/video reports; 1 blog post or article

SECTION 4

Implementation Framework

Governance Structure

The implementation of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for the Iași Metropolitan Area is coordinated by the **Iași Metropolitan Area Association (IMAA)** through a dedicated internal structure established by the decision of the General Director with support of the IAP Implementation Unit and the Urbact Local Group (ULG).

Institutional Governance Framework

The overall governance framework ensures both strategic oversight and operational coordination, as well as participatory monitoring through the URBACT Local Group (ULG).

It consists of the following levels:

1. President of Iași Metropolitan Area Association (IMAA)

The President acts as the legal representative of the Association and approves all strategic decisions related to the IAP implementation. He ensures institutional and political support for the delivery of the plan and signs official documents and reports addressed to external stakeholders.

2. General Director of Iași Metropolitan Area Association (IMAA)

The General Director provides strategic supervision of the IAP implementation process, aligns it with other ongoing metropolitan projects and strategies, and approves any operational adjustments proposed by the implementation team.

The General Director receives and validates the IAP progress reports prepared by the implementation unit twice a year and submits an annual consolidated report to the General Assembly (AGA).

3. IAP Implementation Unit

The operational implementation of the plan is ensured by the **IAP Implementation Unit**, an internal team formally established by decision of the General Director.

The unit is composed of three members with distinct roles and responsibilities:

- **IAP Coordinator** – oversees the general implementation of the plan, plans and monitors actions, coordinates with partners and the ULG, and prepares the biannual progress reports.
- **Action Implementation Officer** – coordinates the organization and logistics of actions, follows the delivery schedule, and maintains communication with stakeholders involved in each activity.
- **Financial & Resources Officer** – manages the budget allocated to IAP actions, identifies potential funding opportunities, ensures financial documentation, and prepares the financial sections of the reports.

Decision-Making and Reporting Mechanism

Actor / Level	Role	Decision-making	Reporting Frequency	Responsibility Level
... President (IMAA)	Legal representation and strategic approval	Approves strategic decisions	–	Accountable
🕒 General Director (IMAA)	Strategic supervision	Approves operational adjustments	Every 6 months	Responsible
⚙️ IAP Implementation Unit (IMAA)	Coordinates daily implementation	Delivers actions and prepares reports	Every 6 months	Responsible
🏛️ General Assembly (AGM)	Approves annual budget and IAP progress report	Validates resource allocation	Annual	Accountable
🗣️ URBACT Local Group (ULG)	Provides consultation and feedback	Participates in thematic actions	Every 6 months	Consulted

Principles of Governance

- The IAP Implementation Unit operates based on an internal decision of the General Director of IMAA.
- All major adjustments to the IAP (budget changes, calendar updates, or strategic re-prioritization) are approved by the General Director, with information provided to the President and the General Assembly.
- Regular reporting ensures transparency and accountability at all levels: operational, managerial, and strategic.
- Participatory governance is maintained throughout the implementation through continuous collaboration with the ULG.

Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

Ensuring the continuity of participatory governance beyond the planning phase is a key commitment of the Iași Metropolitan Area Association (IMAA) within the URBACT “Agents of Coexistence and Open Government” network.

The involvement of the Urban Local Group (ULG) will remain an essential element of the IAP implementation, ensuring that actions continue to be co-designed and community-oriented.

ULG continuity and composition

The Urban Local Group will continue to operate during the implementation phase, maintaining approximately 30 active members who have already contributed to the co-creation of the IAP.

Its composition reflects the diversity of local governance actors, including representatives from public institutions, NGOs, educational institutions, and civic organizations.

To strengthen the academic dimension of the plan, several university professors will be invited to join the group, particularly to support the transfer of knowledge and the extension of activities in universities.

The IAP Coordinator will serve as the contact person and secretary of the ULG, facilitating communication, invitations, and the follow-up of discussions.

Meeting frequency and format

The ULG will meet twice a year to follow up on the implementation progress and discuss specific thematic priorities linked to the ongoing actions.

Meetings will be organized mainly in person, complemented by online sessions when this facilitates broader participation.

Each meeting will focus on the most relevant topics corresponding to the stage of implementation (for example, civic education, youth participation, or social inclusion).

In addition, an annual public meeting will be organized in December, serving as a “year-end forum” to share results, lessons learned, and plans for the following year with the wider community.

Role of the ULG in the implementation phase

During implementation, the ULG will continue to act as an active partner and co-implementer rather than a purely consultative body.

Members will:

- Participate directly in the organization and delivery of certain actions (for example, teachers in civic education workshops, NGOs in social inclusion activities, or youth organizations in participatory events).

- Provide feedback and propose improvements or adjustments to ongoing actions. Although the group will not be responsible for monitoring indicators or evaluating progress reports, it will play a key role in maintaining openness, inclusiveness, and innovation throughout the implementation of the IAP.

Communication and information channels

All official communications, invitations and documents will be sent via email to ensure proper documentation and traceability.

Fast communication with ULG members will be ensured through a dedicated WhatsApp group created during the URBACT project, which will remain active for operational coordination and updates.

Information about the IAP implementation, meetings and key events will be periodically published on the URBACT section of the IMAA website, ensuring transparency and visibility for the local community. This also provides an opportunity for additional stakeholders, who may learn about our initiative at a later stage, to join the actions and contribute to the process.

Relevant summaries or press releases will be prepared following public meetings or major actions. These materials will be disseminated to media outlets and online platforms to ensure wide public visibility and to keep the community informed about the progress and outcomes of the initiative.

Diversity of stakeholder involvement

Thematic participation of ULG members will continue according to the specific focus of each action:

- Youth participation – involvement of teachers and high schools engaged in previous URBACT activities.
- Social inclusion – partnership with Emmaus Association and other social NGOs to support vulnerable groups.
- Civic education – collaboration with local NGOs, volunteers, and educators for interactive sessions in schools and communities.
- Public consultation and governance – participation of municipal representatives, local councilors, and community leaders in dialogue activities.

This thematic approach ensures that each IAP action benefits from relevant expertise and community input.

Evaluation of stakeholder engagement

To ensure the quality and sustainability of participatory practices, the IAP Implementation Unit will prepare an annual Participation Review Report.

This report will summarize the level of engagement, number of participants, and feedback collected from ULG members, highlighting examples of collaboration and lessons learned.

The review will also help identify new needs or actors to be involved in future actions, supporting the long-term participatory culture within the Iași Metropolitan Area.

Type of Engagement	Frequency	Format	Main Purpose	Lead Actor
Thematic ULG Meetings	Twice per year	Physical & online	Discuss ongoing actions, share feedback	IAP Coordinator
Annual Public Forum	December	Physical event	Present results to community	General Director + ULG
Communication Updates	Continuous	WhatsApp + Email	Maintain transparency & coordination	IAP Coordinator
Participation Review	Annual	Online survey & report	Evaluate engagement level	Implementation Unit

Funding Strategy

The implementation of the Iași Integrated Action Plan (IAP) will rely on a balanced combination of internal resources, in-kind contributions from partners, and external funding opportunities. This mixed approach reflects the collaborative nature of the plan and ensures that the proposed actions remain feasible and sustainable in the medium term.

Internal resources

The Iași Metropolitan Area Association (IMAA) will cover the operational costs associated with the implementation of the IAP through its regular budget.

Internal resources will primarily support:

- Salaries of the IAP Implementation Unit staff (Coordinator, Action Officer, Financial Officer);
- Costs related to consultations, workshops, and working meetings;
- Light logistics and administrative expenses for action delivery;
- Information and publicity materials for events and dissemination purposes.

These resources demonstrate the institutional commitment of IMAA to ensuring the continuity of participatory governance beyond the URBACT network phase.

In-kind and partnership contributions

Several local partners will provide in-kind support and complementary resources to the implementation of specific actions. These partnerships reduce financial pressure while strengthening the participatory ecosystem of the metropolitan area.

- Emmaus Association – volunteers and premises for social inclusion activities;
- ATI Youth Center – space and facilitation for youth meetings and co-creation workshops;
- Schools and high schools – access to classrooms and involvement of teachers for civic education sessions;
- Municipality of Iași – logistical and communication support for public consultations and awareness campaigns.

External funding opportunities

To sustain and expand the IAP actions, IMAA will actively seek synergies with European, national, and local funding programmes. Every semester, for each objective, an extensive search will be carried out for open and ongoing funding calls, as well as potential partnerships that address the relevant thematic areas. This process will be conducted in collaboration with experts in accessing European and national funds, as well as with national contact points.

Potential programmes and sources include:

- Interreg NEXT Romania–Republic of Moldova, for cross-border cooperation and civic innovation;
- Interreg Europe, for thematic exchanges and policy improvements in governance and participation;
- Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programme, for civic engagement and inclusion activities;
- Education and Employment Programme (PEO), for digital and civic training initiatives;
- Local funding schemes of the Municipality of Iași, including annual grants for NGOs;
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives from private companies in the region.
- Erasmus+ Programme – relevant for civic education, youth participation, digital skills development, and professional training for civil servants through KA1 and KA2 mobility and cooperation projects.

Additionally, the Iași Metropolitan Area Association intends to continue its learning journey on civic participation, open governance and participatory methods by applying to **future URBACT networks**. This will ensure continuity, peer-to-peer exchange, and further development of staff capacities beyond the duration of the current plan.

These funding channels will be explored by the Financial and Resources Officer of the IAP Implementation Unit, in collaboration with IMAA's project development team.

Long-term learning and sustainability

To ensure continuity and ongoing professional growth, IMAA will continue to engage in European learning networks and plans to apply for participation in future URBACT networks. This will strengthen institutional capacities, support peer-to-peer exchange, and help scale successful participatory practices across the metropolitan area.

Financial outlook per category of actions

Category of Actions	Examples	Estimated Cost Level	Potential Sources
Small-scale civic actions	Awareness campaigns, community dialogues	Low	IMAA internal budget, volunteer time, URBACT small learning activities
Workshops and training sessions	Youth education, civic participation, consultations	Medium	PEO Programme, CERV, Municipality grants, Erasmus+
Partnership and inclusion initiatives	Social inclusion, interinstitutional partnerships	High	Interreg NEXT, Interreg Europe, CSR contributions, Erasmus+

Through this diversified funding strategy, IMAA ensures that the IAP actions can be implemented progressively, combining institutional resources with strategic project development and strong partnerships.

The Financial and Resources Officer will update this strategy annually, aligning it with available funding calls and the evolving needs of the local stakeholders.

Implementation Timeline (Gantt)

Strategic Objective / Action	Lead actor	2025	2026	2027
SO1. Strengthening the relationship between civil society and public administration	IMAA			
Civic Toolbox – participatory governance	IAP Implementation Unit		 (Q1–Q3)	 (Q2)
Biannual meetings with the Vice Mayor	IMAA / City Hall		  (Q1–Q4)	  (Q1–Q4)
SO2. Foster Active Youth Participation	IMAA / ATI			
ATI Active – Civic Dialogue Event	IMAA + ATI volunteers	 (Q4)	 (Q2)	 (Q3)
Practical workshops on public administration for youth	ATI / Teachers / NGOs	 (Q4)	  (Q1–Q4)	  (Q1–Q4)
SO3. Enhance Social and Cultural Cohesion	IMAA / Emmaus			
“Help me to help” – Bridges to Normality campaign	IMAA + Emmaus	 (Q4)	  (Q1–Q4)	  (Q1–Q4)
“Stories of Inclusion” events	IMAA + NGOs		  (Q2–Q3)	  (Q2–Q4)
SO4. Promote Civic Education and Engagement	IMAA / Schools			
Civic Lab – SSA Events – Fake vs Fact	IMAA + Teachers	 (Q4)	  (Q3–Q4)	  (Q3–Q4)
Civic Lab – SSA Events – Decide Wisley	IMAA / Community groups	 (Q4)	  (Q3–Q4)	  (Q1–Q2)

 = Launch / pilot (2025)

 = Continuation / scaling (2026)

 = Consolidation / sustainability (2027)

Risks & Mitigation

The successful implementation of the Iași Integrated Action Plan depends on a stable institutional environment, adequate resources, and the sustained engagement of local stakeholders. Given the complexity of governance, civic participation and youth engagement actions, IMAA has carried out a structured risk assessment process to identify factors that may hinder progress and to define mitigation strategies that ensure resilience and continuity.

The assessment combines institutional experience, lessons learned from the URBACT network, feedback from ULG members, and insights from previous metropolitan initiatives.

This approach ensures that risks are understood not only as threats, but also as opportunities to strengthen internal capacity and improve the robustness of the IAP.

Risk Typology

Risks were grouped into six categories:

1. **Institutional risks** – governance shifts, political changes, staff turnover
2. **Financial risks** – lack of resources, delays in funding, underestimation of costs
3. **Operational risks** – procurement delays, limited administrative capacity
4. **Engagement risks** – low participation of youth, schools, NGOs or citizens
5. **Partnership risks** – misalignment of agendas or availability among partner institutions
6. **External risks** – legislative changes, economic instability, unforeseen crises

This typology enables a holistic understanding of possible vulnerabilities and their interdependencies.

	Low Impact	Medium Impact	High Impact
Low Probability	Monitor	Monitor	Mitigate
Medium Probability	Monitor	Mitigate	Act Immediately
High Probability	Mitigate	Act Immediately	Critical

Most risks identified for the Iași IAP fall into the medium probability – medium/high impact zone, which requires planned, proactive mitigation rather than emergency action.

Risk	Probability	Impact	Detailed Mitigation Strategy	Responsible Actor
1. Limited availability of civil servants or partners	Medium	High	Multi-month planning calendar; invitations sent at least 30 days before events; alternative representatives designated by each institution; partnership agreements renewed annually.	IAP Coordinator
2. Insufficient financial resources for scaling actions	Medium	High	Diversification of funding sources (Interreg NEXT, PEO, CERV, grants from Iași Municipality, CSR); integrating actions into new project proposals; documenting costs early to prevent underestimation.	Financial & Resources Officer

3. Low engagement of youth or community stakeholders	Medium	Medium	Partnership with ATI, schools and teachers to institutionalise invitations; youth-friendly formats (interactive workshops, simulations, real-case exercises); visibility campaigns on social media; short incentives (certificates, recognition).	Action Implementation Officer
4. Staff turnover in IMAA or partner institutions	Medium	Medium	Clear roles and documentation; onboarding guidelines; shared ownership across team; backup plan ensuring continuity if one position becomes vacant; mentoring by senior staff.	General Director
5. Delays in procurement or administrative procedures	Medium	Medium–High	Predefined procurement templates; buffer times in Gantt; coordination meetings with financial staff; using framework agreements where possible; early preparation of terms of reference.	IAP Coordinator
6. Political or institutional changes	Low–Medium	High	Build cross-political support; ensure continuity through documented processes; communicate progress regularly to leadership; strengthen civil society involvement through ULG to protect actions from political cycles.	President + General Director
7. Legislative, economic or crisis-related disruptions	Low	Medium	Flexibility in timeline; shift to online formats when needed; prioritise low-cost and high-impact actions; adapt scope without losing strategic direction.	IAP Implementation Unit
8. Overload of IMAA staff due to many parallel projects	Medium	Medium	Realistic planning; monthly internal coordination meetings; prioritisation of tasks; possible outsourcing of minor services; ensuring health/stress management balance.	General Director
9. Inconsistent support from schools / teachers in civic education actions	Medium	Medium	Early planning with schools; formal partnerships; aligning activities with the school calendar; involving university volunteers as backup support.	Action Implementation Officer

Roles in Risk Management

- IAP Coordinator: day-to-day risk monitoring, early detection, escalation
- Financial & Resources Officer: financial risks, budgeting, funding opportunities
- General Director: institutional coordination, approval of mitigation adaptations
- President of IMAA: ensuring political/institutional continuity
- ULG Members: community-level feedback and early warning signals

Monitoring and Review Process

Risk monitoring will be carried out twice a year by the IAP Implementation Unit, aligned with the internal reporting cycle.

A short “Risk Update Note” will be prepared and discussed with the General Director.

Adjustments to mitigation strategies will be introduced whenever necessary, and major risks will be shared with the ULG during their biannual meetings.

This structured and dynamic approach to risk management ensures that the IAP remains adaptable, realistic and resilient throughout its implementation.

By anticipating challenges and preparing mitigation strategies in advance, IMAA strengthens its capacity to deliver meaningful and sustainable results for the Iași Metropolitan Area.

Monitoring & Reporting Framework

Effective monitoring and reporting are essential to ensure that the Iași Integrated Action Plan progresses according to schedule and delivers measurable results.

The monitoring framework combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches, enabling IMAA to assess the performance of actions, stakeholder engagement, resources used, and alignment with strategic objectives.

The framework is designed to be simple, realistic and integrated into the existing internal reporting procedures of IMAA, while also maintaining transparency toward the ULG and local community.

1. Monitoring Structure

Monitoring is carried out at three levels:

1. Internal Monitoring (Operational Level)

Performed by the **IAP Implementation Unit**, focusing on:

- progress of each action in the timeline
- resource use (human and financial)
- risks and mitigation status
- stakeholder involvement
- alignment with objectives

Frequency: **every 6 months**.

2. Management-Level Monitoring

Conducted by the **General Director**, who receives:

- a concise **Progress Report**
- updates on risks, indicators, and deviations from timeline
- recommendations for adjustments

Frequency: **twice per year** (aligned with internal monitoring).

3. Strategic-Level Monitoring

The **General Assembly (AGA)** reviews:

- annual achievements
- indicators reached
- integration of results into the broader metropolitan strategy

Frequency: **annually**.

The **ULG** is informed semestrial through:

- progress updates
- involvement opportunities
- feedback collection

2. Reporting Mechanism

Reporting tools include:

- **Semi-annual Progress Report** (prepared by IAP Unit)
- **Annual Summary Report** (validated by General Director; presented to AGA)
- **Risk Update Note** (every 6 months, together with the monitoring cycle)
- **Stakeholder Feedback Form** (after each major action)
- **Participation Review Report** (annual review of ULG involvement)

Channels:

- internal meetings
- email sharing
- URBACT Local Group meetings
- updates in dedicated section on IMAA website

Archiving:

All monitoring and reporting documents are archived digitally within IMAA's internal system and can be accessed for audit or evaluation purposes.

3. Indicators and Targets (by Strategic Objective)

Strategic objective (so)	Indicator	Type	Target by 2027
So1 – strengthening the relationship between civil society and public administration	Number of consultation events	Quantitative	4 events
	Number of participants from civil society	Quantitative	100 participants
	Citizen satisfaction level regarding consultation processes (collected through feedback forms)	Qualitative	80% positive
	Perceived improvement in trust between citizens and local administration (measured through short surveys after events)	Qualitative	Measured improvement year-on-year (based on annual feedback surveys)
So2 – foster active youth participation	Number of youth participants in workshops	Quantitative	100 young people
	Number of schools/universities engaged	Quantitative	15 institutions
	Youth satisfaction level (feedback forms)	Qualitative	85% positive

So3 – social and cultural cohesion	Number of social inclusion events	Quantitative	4 events
	Number of vulnerable people reached	Quantitative	60 beneficiaries
	Participant perception of increased social empathy and cohesion	Qualitative	Positive trend (annual review)
	Feedback from partner NGO'S regarding collaboration quality	Qualitative	Consistently positive
So4 – civic education and engagement	Number of civic education workshops	Quantitative	4 workshops
	Number of teachers involved	Quantitative	8 teachers
	Visibility and audience reach on social media	Quantitative	2000 persons
	Citizen perception of usefulness of civic education activities (measured through short surveys after events)	Qualitative	80% positive

4. Data Collection Methods

IMAA will use a combination of tools:

- **Attendance sheets** (for events, workshops, consultations)
- **Feedback questionnaires** (digital or paper)
- **Short interviews with partners (Emmaus, ATI, schools)**
- **Internal activity sheets and meeting minutes**
- **Photo/video documentation of events**
- **Online analytics** (e.g., social media reach, website views)

Data will be collected by the IAP Unit immediately after each activity.

5. Annual Review and Adjustment Mechanism

Once per year, the IAP Unit will conduct a **Full Annual Review**, which includes:

- Indicator achievement status
- Budget execution
- Stakeholder participation quality
- Risks and mitigation effectiveness
- Adjustments needed for upcoming year
- Recommendations for 2027 sustainability phase

The Annual Review Report will be validated by the General Director and presented to Annual General Meeting.

Conclusion

The monitoring and reporting framework ensures transparency, accountability and continuous learning throughout the implementation of the IAP. By combining regular monitoring cycles, measurable indicators and active stakeholder involvement, IMAA reinforces its capacity to deliver a robust and sustainable Action Plan for the Iași Metropolitan Area. Moreover, the earlier risks are anticipated and addressed, the greater the predictability and long-term sustainability of the actions, ensuring a more resilient and effective implementation process.

Conclusions and Next Steps

The Iași Integrated Action Plan represents a collective commitment of local institutions, civil society organisations, youth groups and community actors to strengthen cooperation, participation and social cohesion in the metropolitan area.

Through a collaborative design process supported by the URBACT methodology and the active contribution of the Local Group, the Plan provides a realistic, actionable and future-oriented roadmap for improving civic participation and inclusive governance in Iași.

The implementation framework developed in this chapter — governance structure, stakeholder engagement model, funding strategy, timeline, risk mitigation and monitoring system — ensures that the IAP is not only visionary, but also fully operational.

Each mechanism has been tailored to the institutional capacity of Iași Metropolitan Area Association (IMAA) and to the dynamics of local partnerships, allowing the Plan to be implemented coherently and transparently.

Next steps will focus on the practical start of implementation, through:

1. Approval and internal operationalisation

- Formal adoption of the IAP within IMAA;
- Creation (through internal decision) of the IAP Implementation Unit;
- Communication of roles and responsibilities to all involved teams.

2. Planning the first cycle of actions (2025–2026)

- Initial coordination meeting with partners (ATI, Emmaus, schools, NGOs);
- Launch of the 2026 institutional strengthening cycle.

3. Strengthening partnerships and visibility

- Regular communication with ULG members;
- Inclusion of universities, teachers and community actors in implementation;
- Ensuring transparency through annual public updates and accessible information.

4. Securing sustainability and scaling

Starting from 2027, the focus shifts toward:

- integrating results into local and metropolitan policies;
- securing external financial resources for scaling (Interreg, PEO, CERV, local grants);
- transforming successful actions into recurring annual programmes.

Through these next steps, the Iași IAP becomes not just a plan on paper, but a living and evolving instrument, capable of generating meaningful change and building stronger, more connected communities across the metropolitan area.

The commitment demonstrated throughout the co-creation process — from youth to decision-makers — is the foundation for a long-term, inclusive and participatory metropolitan development.

The implementation of this Plan represents a decisive step toward consolidating a metropolitan governance model based on trust, cooperation and shared responsibility.

Iași Integrated Action Plan – URBACT IV AoCE Network
Building a more inclusive, participatory and connected metropolitan community
2025

