A HUMAN-CENTERED SMART CITY APPROACH TROUGH VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL COORDINATION IN ROMANIA[1]

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Abstract:
This study investigates the implementation of the Smart City concept in Romania through the lens of vertical and horizontal intergovernmental coordination, emphasizing a human-centered governance model. The main objective is to assess the systemic and procedural limitations that hinder effective policy integration, citizen participation, and sustainable digital transformation at local and regional levels. The research employs a qualitative, analytical method, grounded in legal, policy, and institutional frameworks, supported by comparative insights and empirical data from public reports and academic literature.
The results reveal that while Romania has formal structures for coordination and access to substantial EU funding, the effectiveness of smart governance is constrained by weak administrative capacity, procedural formalism, digital illiteracy, and low citizen engagement. There is a visible mismatch between strategic ambitions and operational realities, with fragmented digital services, limited intersectoral collaboration, and political-centralism undermining local autonomy.
The study highlights the urgent need for cohesive planning, inclusive consultation mechanisms, and genuine citizen empowerment. It underscores that smart city development is not merely technological but fundamentally social and institutional. The findings have implications for policy reform, advocating for a culture of coordination, transparency, and digital competence as prerequisites for sustainable and citizen-oriented urban innovation.
Keywords: *smart governance, intergovernmental coordination, sustainable development, digital transformation, smart governance, public policy implementation, citizen-centricity*
***JEL Clasification**: K4, H7, R5*

INTRODUCTION

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Transforming our world adopted at the UN Summit on Sustainable Development (New York, 25-27 September 2015) targets 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that quantify 169 global targets that

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refer to key areas, such as poverty, human rights, food security, health, sustainable consumption and production, economic growth, employment, infrastructure, sustainable management of natural resources, oceans, climate change and gender equality.

The implementation of measures for a sustainable development led to the emergence of the “smart city” concept, followed by others, such as, “smart region” and “smart village”.

The smart city concept has evolved over time. At first it *focused on ICT* (Information Communications Technology) integreted systems, as Hall defined smart city [1] as “urban center of the future, made safe, secure environmentally green, and efficient because all structures - whether for power, water, transportation, etc. are designed, constructed, and maintained making use of advanced, integrated materials, sensors, electronics, and networks which are interfaced with computerized systems comprised of databases, tracking, and decision-making algorithms”, and Mohanty et al [2] as “a place where traditional networks and services are made more flexible, efficient, and sustainable with the use of information, digital and telecommunication technologies, to improve its operations for the benefit of its inhabitants”.

In another vision [3], ***the smart city is centered on citizen*** and is a one “well performing in 6 characteristics, built on the ‘smart’ combination of endowments and activities of self-decisive, independent and aware citizens.” From this perspective the municipalities must to advance in six key strategic action fields: Smart Economy (competitiveness), Smart People (Social and Human Capital), Smart Governance (Participation), Smart Mobility (Transport and ICT), Smart Environment (Natural Resources) and Smart Living (Quality of life).

Csukas and Szabo (2021) classified smart cities in 4 categories: ”*The Green City* – in which years of activities, cities are focusing on environmentally related objectives; *The App City* – in which years of activities, cities are focusing on developing and rolling out platforms and ICT applications to provide Quality of Life improvements directly for citizens; *The Socially Sensitive City* - in which years of socially sensitive activities are prominent; *The Participatory City* – in which years of activities citizen engagement is in focus.”

Regardless of how smart city development strategies are implemented, we should consider whether the occupants of these cities have the education needed to enable them develop, manage and live in these cities.

Now, there are two co-determiners that generate innovation and progress in cities, communities, societies: technological change and social and cultural change. ”The core element in both determinants is the *human factor* and this is what filters any external interventions in the process of self-conceptualization and self-construction, and then it replicates, in the larger context, all the results of this processing, preparation and refinement of change” [4].

§1. SMART GOVERNANCE

The Smart governance is identified as a “good thing” characterized trought: the participation of citizens in decision-making, public and social services that integrate technology in their operation, government transparency and a set of specific political strategies and perspectives [5].

In Romania, the public policies coordination system focused more on procedural dimension of public policy formulation.

The consultation procedure and policy advice are formal rather than practical [6] and the recommendations are taken into consideration mainly if they come from powerful employers’ associations or important unions [7] .

The concept of “governance” is based on the achievement of *common objectives in partnership*, which usually involve both governmental and non-governmental organizations. “The governance of a smart city requires that different stakeholders, including citizens, should take part in the planning and decision-making processes, share control over the development of initiatives, collaboratively address problems, and set priorities to build commitment and ownership of the final planning outcomes” [8].

The 12 *Principles* that are enshrined in *the Strategy on Innovation and Good Governance at local level* [9] (The Council of Europe, 2011) for a good governance are:

- *Fair Conduct of Elections, Representation and Participation*, with one of activities, citizens are at the centre of public activity and they are involved in clearly defined ways in public life at local level;

- *Responsiveness* - complaints over service provision are handled in a professional manner by the municipality;
- *Efficiency and Effectiveness* - people in this municipality are quite satisfied with the services offered by the municipality;
- *Openness and Transparency*, meaning that the municipality does a good job in informing citizens about issues on the local political agenda;
- *Rule of Law*, in order to common interests of all residents prevail, not the special interests;
- *Ethical Conduct*;
- *Competence and Capacity* - from the (most) elected officials in this municipality;
- *Innovation and Openness to Change* - in this type of municipality there are good procedures for handling citizen suggestions to improve public service delivery;
- *Sustainability and Long Term Orientation;*
- *Sound Financial Management* - municipality is doing a good job in informing citizens about what taxpayers get for their money;
- Human Rights, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion;
- *Accountability* – involves that municipality elected officials are good at explaining their decisions to residents.

But the municipality is a part of the state government and the effective role of governments in the governance of smart cities is essential, they can play the role of coordinator, funder, and regulator by bringing different interests and stakeholders together, providing funding for infrastructure and demonstrator projects, and ensuring that common standards and regulations are in place [8].

First, the government is “an institution of the state, political authority of the state, which represents, selects and implements state policy.” [10] The Government is based on centralization and control, whose relationships with other units of the policy network are asymmetric. [11]

Many schoolars revel the advantages of the administrative decentralization process – based on the principle of subsidiarity-, that brings government decision makers "***closer to citizens***", with positive consequences for democratic governance and accountability.

The administrative decentralization has three forms: deconcentration, delegation, and devolution and each of them have different characteristics.

If we consider the decentralization's disadvantages, we can bring to light the Condorcet's paradox that demonstrates it is impossible to construct any method that will faithfully discover the will of a group, with any type of democratic voting system, so, *it is not possible to design a perfect democratic governance system [12]*.

Smart governance is based on decentralization. But decentralization can take partial, blocked or hybrid forms, both among and within countries [13] and that is why ***a specific approach of decentralization in Romania is necessary.***

According to Romanian Administrative Code [14] the *decentralization* is "the transfer of administrative and financial powers from the level of the central public administration to the level of the public administration of the administrative-territorial units, together with the financial resources necessary for their exercise".

The consultation in solving local problems of special interest is seen as a way through which citizens can express themselves on how to be solved some of their problems through meetings between them and the autonomous authorities, submission of projects for public debate participation in the meetings of deliberative bodies, reporting by those citizens and other such means [15].

Some schoolars argued that "descentralization without coordination hampers response to crisis" [16].

§2. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION (IC)

Charles Lindblom [17] defined coordination as: "a set of decisions is coordinated if adjustments have been made in it such that the adverse consequences of any one decision for other decisions in the set are to a degree and in some frequency avoided, reduced, counter balanced, or outweighed" [18]. From this perspective, *coordination is a way to harmonize individual interests in order to prioritize the general common interest*.

IC is the degree to which governments at different or identical levels effectively cooperate.

Romanian local governance is organized in a two-tier non-hierarchical administrative system, both directly elected bodies*: the local council and the mayor* and *the county*

council at upper-level. The county council includes a central government representative (i.e. the prefect), tasked with overseeing both local self-government authorities and deconcentrated public services [19].

The prefect is the appointed local representative of the central government, acting as a liaison with local self-government. Prefects oversee the conduct of local self-government and head the decentralized bodies of public administration. While there is no subordination between prefects and local authorities (article 123 para. 4) of the Constitution], this principle had been arguably undermined by the initial dependency of local authorities on central funding [20] but in the last years the situation seems to have improved [21].

In Romania, as central public administration bodies, are established autonomous administrative authorities.They operate independently in view of exercising their executive powers that have as main object the law enforcement operations, ensuring the proper functioning of certain public services, in this case there is no scenario involving the existence of any designated bodies or state authorities with higher status and command, having their own governing bodies and special responsibilities that are separated from other central administrative bodies. (e.g. On the basis of Romanian Constitution the Ombudsman (art. 58-60), the Legislative Council (art. 79), the Supreme Council of National Defence (art. 119), the Superior Council of Magistracy (art. 133-134), the Court of Auditors (art. 140), the Economic and Social Council (art. 141) or by organic laws, the Competitiveness Council, the National Audiovisual Council, the National Integrity Agency, National News Agency AGERPRES, the National Supervisory Authority for Personal Data Processing, The Permanent Electoral Authority, Private Pension System Supervisory Commission, The National Council for the Study of the Security Archives, National Council to Prevent Discrimination, The Romanian Intelligence Service).

The autonomy of these bodies does not exclude the existence of the judicial control on the administrative acts they issue and the specific parliamentary control (such as, appointment and dismissal of management of the body). ”Also, the Government’s decisions, by virtue of its function of exercising the general conduct of public

administration are also binding for the autonomous administrative authorities, having a greater judicial force than the normative acts issued by these authorities." [22]

The mayor has an executive role and is directly involved in the activity of the local council, with the former preparing and then implementing the decisions adopted by the latter.

A institution regards the function of *public administrator (known as the city manager*), inspired by the model existing in the Anglo-Saxon system, was created was created by a normative act in 2006 and subsequently preserved in all legislation regulating local public administration [23] [52].

According to article 244 paragraph 3 of the Administrative Code, the appointment of the public administrator is made by the decision of the mayor, respectively the president of the county council, as the case may be, which has as an annex a management contract in compliance with specified requirements that meets the rigors of an administrative contract [24].

The public administrator at the level of a commune, city, municipality or county is appointed to the position based on a competition.

Metropolitan areas in Romania are regulated by a special law [25], with the specification that a locality can be part of a single metropolitan area, as follows:

- Bucharest can be associated, in principle, with the localities of Ilfov county;
- county seat municipalities can associate with neighboring localities with which they have common borders - the first two urban crowns (but without exceeding the limit of the county of which the municipality is a part);
- municipalities that are not the seat of a county can only associate with localities in the first urban crown (but without exceeding the limit of the county of which the municipality is a part) [26].

In order to ensure a balanced regional development and to make the best use of social and economic potential, based on free associations of neighbouring counties, as per Law no.151/1998 (replaced by Law 315/2004 [27]), 8 development regions have been established that are not territorial administrative units and do not have legal personality.

In each region there is a *Regional Development Agency* (executive authority) and a Council of Regional Development (deliberative authority). Regional development policy is

managed at national level by the National Regional Development Council with deliberative function and the Ministry of European Investments and Projects.

The Council for Regional Development is made up of the presidents of the county councils and one representative of each category of local municipal, city and communal councils from each county of the region. This council elects a president and a vice-president, who cannot be representatives of the same county.

Political actors play an integral part in fostering or hindering the success of intergovernmental coordination [28]. Ideally, such coordination allows governmental actors to increase both the effectiveness and legitimacy of public decisions.

A good and coherent coordination of public policies is important because: it is possible to avoid duplication of some actions that can increase budget costs; harmonizing contradictions in the content of some programs or avoid blocking the actions of a public authority under the impact of measures taken by another authority, increase the political credibility and legitimacy, etc [29].

§3. SMART CITY COORDINATION IN ROMANIA

The local government has the key role in coordinating the implementation of smart city (or smart village, smart region etc.).

The term “local governments” is a widely used generic expression comprising a broad range of institutions whose denominations vary from country to country. (Zapata Garesché, 2007, p.19)

In Romania, “local governments” are structured as follows:

1. *Municipalities* and cities, regardless of their size, (urban or rural environment), with their distinct socioeconomic realities – Mayor and local council and in some municipalities the public administrator which becomes the executive chief officer;

2. *Counties* – 41 counties and the Municipality of Bucharest - President of the county council, County Council and the Prefect;

3. *Metropolitan areas* - each metropolitan area has its own governing bodies - the general assembly (in which the mayors represent the associated localities), the board of directors (the one that implements the decisions of the general assembly) and the board of censors (consisting of at least one chartered accountant or an expert accountant). The

association of localities in metropolitan area is done on a voluntary basis, but they are qualified as associative forms with legal personality. The association process in a metropolitan area does not lead to the emergence of a new administrative-territorial unit. The component localities, through the administrative authorities, delegate or transfer, in compliance with the legal conditions, part of the attributions, in order to jointly manage some services or run some activities and projects dedicated to the members of the local communities that make up the metropolitan area [30].

4. *Regions* – Romanian Development Regions are not administrative-territorial units and do not have legal personality, they have a Starting with the programming period 2021-2027, at the level of the 8 development regions of Romania, the Regional Development Agencies perform the function of Management Authorities for Regional Programs.

Many scholars agree that governance, which is based on negotiation and collaborative rationality, is fundamental to the design and implementation of smart city initiatives. When it comes to enhancing the legitimacy of the regulatory standards issued by the European Union (EU), political decision makers increasingly turn to network-based forms of governance, building on the horizontal interactions between public and private policy actors. Even though the European Commission has branded its funding programs for creating smart cities with a dedicated governance focus, it is not clear how a smart city should govern itself so that the sum of its human development becomes more sustainable in the long term [31].

The smart city coordination is based on an *intersectoral coordination* (it refers to policies and programs reconciliation in different sectors).

While all actors in principle agree that it is important that recipient governments manage external assistance and thus should be responsible for aid coordination, most of the poorer countries lack the technical and administrative capacity and skills to handle this efficiently. A more serious shortcoming may be their lack of political credibility and legitimacy, however, which is a dimension that requires more attention [32].

Even if Romania is a member of EU, has some technical and administrative capacity issues [33].

Successful *aid coordination* implies structural changes to resource flows – in particular that central agencies like ministries of finance take on a coordinating and thus a stronger role. This may often generate resistance from those within the local administration that feel they will lose out, such as aid-favored units in line ministries – a problem that should not be underestimated. Understanding the politics of aid coordination is therefore as important as understanding the economics of it [32].

”The number of such coordination activities has grown rapidly over the last years without clarity as to what the outcomes of them have been.”[32].

In the 2022 Report of Smart City Scan in Romania: Moving to building new urban spaces in Romania: smart city in the hidden city, Cornel Barbuț, CEO of Vegacomp Consulting mentioned that “*the current stage of the Smart City concept in Romania has gone beyond the pilot projects phase, going backwards and forwards at the same time, without advancing to consistent Smart City projects due, first of all, to the lack of competent staff in the local and central public administration. Without people in town halls, specially delegated for Smart City projects and with City Managers suffocated by administrative tasks, we have all kinds of funds available for nothing. This is why we stress, once again, the need to allocate resources for project management and IT&C (IT and connectivity)*” [34].

One of the major problems related to coordination in the Romanian system aims at the real efficient and effective collaboration of both, public actors, in vertical dimension [35] and between these and stakeholders at the local level, on horizontal coordination [36] because “coordination is about setting and implementing priorities as well as about merely getting organizations to work together smoothly and effectively” [37] .

There is no doubt that the governance of a smart city requires that different stakeholders, including citizens, should take part in the planning and decision-making processes, share control over the development of initiatives, collaboratively address problems, and set priorities to build commitment and ownership of the final planning outcomes.

Even though the people of smart cities are declared key stakeholders, they are often treated as peripheral [38] in Romania.

Information at the local level is deficient, citizens are not informed of the start and progress of some projects or certain decisions that meet the reluctance of citizens for justifiable reasons, they are not consulted and the necessity and opportunity of some projects are not explained to them. Posting information on the website or at the town hall headquarter is not a sufficient way of informing citizens, it is only a perspective by which the criterion of decision-making transparency is considered fulfilled.

According to Matei and Dogaru the concept of public policy coordination is ”the ability to take public policy decisions with strategic characteristics and to ensure the unity feature of how public policies are formulated (procedural perspective).

If we approach **the Romanian intergovernmental** coordination from an organizational point of view, there are a *procedural coordination* revealed before – local administrative organization – but ***substantive coordination*** **has failed** because it should concern itself with the content of the organization's activities, their interrelationships and how they are really managed. The lack of ”*practical character*” of public policies coordination system was mentioned in other studies, too [39].

The Government at both national and local levels has taken measures to improve transparency and accountability and open the administration through the adoption of open government principles and initiatives.

But, participatory budgeting, as implemented, can be a real tool only for digitally literate citizens. Unfortunately, the population that has minimal digital knowledge and is also actively involved in the life of local communities is quite limited. (e.g. Regarding Constanta City, based on the first edition of participatory budgeting in 2022, 10 projects that obtained the highest number of votes were approved for implementation, overall, 2,145 votes were registered, less than 1% of the municipality's population over 18 years of age.)

An analysis of the indicators shows ***a deterioration in the access to government information through the unwillingness of the authorities to publish exhaustive materials regarding their activities[7]***.

According [36]”public organizations did not learn the ability to learn, and strategic management at the level of public institutions remained anchored in the discrepancy

between the provisions of the legal framework and informal practices that limited the change and modernization of public administration".

Romania is highly centralised, as the share of the central government expenditure (70.4% in 2023*) is three times greater than the local government share* (22.9%).
In this way, the central government controls the local government. If one party is in charge at the central level and another party is in charge at local level, in most cases the local level does not get the amount of money it needs for full development in that local area [7].

Table no. 1. Evolution of Romanian government expenditure
Source: Author based on EUROSTAT database

ROMANIA	2015	2020	2023
Total expenditures (in % GDP)	36	41.8	40.2
Central government share (% in total)	73.7%	70.5%	70.4%
Local government share (% in total)	27.4%	22.9%	22.9%

A more serious shortcoming is ***the lack of political credibility and legitimacy in the Romanian public system***. In a recent study of IRES [40] around 60% of the Romanian believe that the corruption of Romanian politicians has not decreased after EU integration. ***In*** both, ***central and local public administration is a high degree of corruption [7] [33] [41]***. It can be argued that perception is a subjective representation of reality, with which it is not necessarily congruent, but it is relevant because it shapes and determines the action of individuals [42].

Romania rankes in 2022 and 2023 46 on the corruption perception index score (CPI) - 100 indicates that no corruption is perceived in the respective country. This score made Romania be the country with the third highest CPI in the European Union, after Bulgaria and Hungary, the average level for EU is 64. (Transparency International Romania, 2024)

It is important for countries to coordinate their public investments to find synergies between investments and deliver public services that are seamless from the perspective of citizens [3]. ***It is more important that the public service provided to be tailored on the real needs of the citizen.***

External planning, that includes visits to other cities and systematical search for new knowledge, must be a step in the right direction of a a good Smart City Strategy [43], but the application of good practices from senders localities is not always welcome for the citizens of the receiving community.

We underlined another still unsolved problem of the public administration: ***bureaucracy***. Also, bureaucratic procedures have diluted the law enforcement in Romania [7].

According to the DESI 2022 Connectivity Index, Romania ranks 27th out of 27, above the EU average. In the latest data calculated by Eurostat, the percentage of people with at least basic general digital skills was 28%, almost twice as low as the EU average (54%). The digital interaction between public authorities and the general public is low as well, as only 17% of internet users are using e-government services [44].

Some issues concerning the implementation of electronic one-stop shops for the decongestion of operative compartments "loaded" with a large volume of work and direct relations services with the public consist on: the lack of digital literacy for a part of the population, insufficient information of citizens, problems in operating the systems, the weak connection between institutions that require face-to-face actions that could be replaced by remote actions and so on.

Regarding the projects carried out in ***public-private partnerships*** (PPP), the number of these increased in the last few years, due also of the Government Emergency Ordinance no. 39/2018 on public-private partnerships that it is widely considered to be a clear improvement over the previous attempts and generally compliant with international best practice, although ***the legislative and institutional context in Romania*** (quality of government, level of corrruption, week informal institutions) is not very favorable yet to this type of initiatives [45] despite of the last legislative attempt [46].

Since 2016 is established in Romania the Romanian Smart City Association (ARSC) with over 350 members (in may 2024): town hall, county councils, universities, and

companies. In 2019, the ARSC launched the “Romania 2030 Charter”, which aims to encourage local administration on the road to the digitization and adoption of new technologies. The “Romania 2030 Charter” principles are:

- A creative-intelligent city puts the citizen at the center of its actions - around it builds and develops a holistic Smart City project, while technology will be put at the service of the inhabitants using the latest available discoveries;
- A fair Smart City project will respect all the principles of tolerance, equal opportunities, social inclusion, access to education and health, respect for all fundamental human rights, the Romanian Constitution, the international treaties to which it joined, but also preserving the identity and cultural heritage of the communities;
- Smart City projects will be developed on sustainable principles, respecting the 17 sustainable development objectives assumed by Romania;
- Development of educational projects in the community, alongside the academic and pre-university environment;
- Creating the necessary climate for the development of the entrepreneurial culture and environment, of start-ups and innovative initiatives [47].

Another key document on Romanian’s Smart Cities situation is the “Smart City Scan in Romania”, a report produced and presented annually by the consulting firm Vegacomp Consulting. Vegacomp Consulting was founded in 2004 and publishes an annual report on smart city projects in Romania.

The last Raport of Vegacomp Consulting (2022), reveals 1001 SC Projects in 144 cities of Romania (with only 470 implemented projects and 288 in ongoing phase).

As sources of financing for Smart City projects are mentioned: European funds (235 projects), local budget (101 projects), central budget (34 projects), external financing with, both, local and central budget participantion (23 projects), private financing (22) and PPP (20 projects) [48].

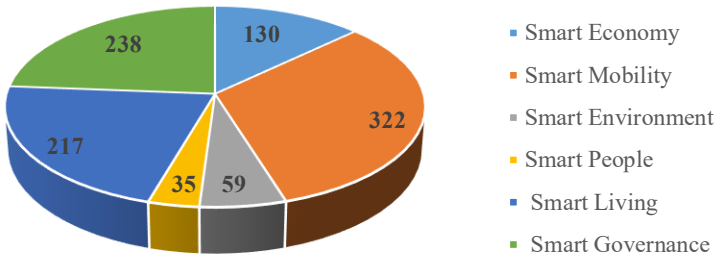

Figure no. 1. Distribution of projects on the pillars of the smart city

Source: Author based on Vegacomp Consulting Report, 2022

Private sector implication in Smart City projects is very low, and one issue is, according to the World Bank, Romania's policy unpredictability and lack of continuity that "limit the appetite of companies to invest and expand, add costs and discourage long-term business planning" [49].

Cluj Napoca is the city in Romania with the largest number of projects - 63, if we do not cumulatively take into account all 7 city halls of Bucharest - 115 Projects, climbing on the first position, followed by Iași with 56 projects [48].

From Figure 1 we notice that most SC projects aim at urban mobility (32.17%), gouvernance (23.78%) and living conditions (21.68%). The concern for the education of citizens in order to be capable of intelligently participating in smart urban life and adapting to new technologies that provide creative solutions, innovation and diversity in their communities is very low, only 35 projects. (Figure 1)

Romania, as other countries (Poland, Hungary or Greece), received more money from EU budget than it gaved to the European Union. Romanian Ministry of Finance, based on Net Financial Balance at 31 December 2024, reveals a positive balance of flows between Romanian an EU budgets 66,684.91 mil euro in period 2007- 2024. Romania received 99,288.33 mil.euro from EU between 2007-2024 and paid contributions of 31,953.48 mil.euro. (Table 2)

Table 2. Financial flows between Romania and the EU, 2007-2024

Source: Romanian Ministry of Finance data

(mil.euro)

ROMANIA	2007-2024 execution on 31.12.2024
Amounts received from the EU budget	**99,288.33**
Amounts received from the EU budget from the Multiannual Financial Framework 2007-2013	36,685.40
Amounts received from the EU budget from the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020	51,065.39
Amounts received from the EU budget from the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027	5,634.79
NextGenerationEU 2021-2023	5,902.75
Amounts paid to the EU budget	32,603.42
Romania's contribution to the EU budget	31,953.48
Other contributions	649.94
Net Financial Balance at 31 December 2024	**66,684.91**

The pandemic time delayed the start of the 2021-2027 programming period. Thus, Romania obtained the approval of the 16 operational programs of her (of which 8 regional programms) only at the end of 2022, and the first calls for projects were launched in 2023.

CONCLUSION

Strategic planning is commonly used as a managerial tool by local public authorities in Romania, due to the fulfillment of the legal requirement to access EU funds (more than 87% of authorities adopted a strategic plan in 2015) with a vulnerable point related to the evaluation and monitoring the entire process.[50]

The initiation of projects for the development of smart cities is primarily influenced by the informal interactions of external actors or in the shadow of the actors' formal positions and relationships. Such initiatives may never enter the political agenda or policy field without the informal interactions of actors (see the Study Case on three Norwegian

cities by Gohary et all, 2020; and *implemented based on intergovernmental coordination of a local strategy* documented (by both, internal and external planning) but only with ”specific components for each city” [43]

”The literature on the creative class has argued that the creative mind is greatly stimulated by the presence and enjoyment of cultural capital in a city, ranging from a rich historico-cultural ambiance to the abundant presence and enjoyment of cultural and artistic performance opportunities.” [51].

The educated citizen is a self-determined, independent and conscious citizen who is actively involved in the activity of the community. He will become a key factor for a smart city through his creativity and a culture built on knowledge and technology.

Digitization brings with it many opportunities for the development of society. The emergence of new technologies and the improvement of those already existing on the market allows the government to cut red tape, increase both, labor productivity and competition, and encourages innovation. Also, it contribute to the rapid exchange of information and increasing their level of accessibility, respectively reducing the time allocated to carrying out professional or personal activities.

Some steps in the digitalization of administrative system were made by Romanian government, but it is necessary to implement systems with a friendly interface, easy to use and connected between institutions so that the bureaucracy can be truly reduced. But, the digitization of activities can only be done with digitally literate users, and this is a week point in the Romanian current situation.

A better coordination between Romanian authorities imposes conditions as:

- an administrative culture which promotes horizontal cooperation, the good practice of a city in implementing a project can be the start for implementing similar projects;
- the consultation procedure and political advice become a real practice and not just a check-off procedure, based on a systematic dialogue between the actors;
- a strategic framework for public policies vertically coordinated so that the achievement of the objectives has the support of the necessary resources;
- mechanisms for mediation and solving the conflicts or the divergences between actors involved;
- a solid consultation with stakeholders.

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