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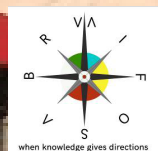
SPRING 2018



BAIA MARE

ROMANIA

STRATEGY FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE FRINGE IN SĂSAR NEIGHBOURHOOD



English summary of the Integrated Action Plan
in the framework of the URBACT network sub-urban, Reinventing the fringe.

Strategy of Baia Mare Municipality for the transformation of the fringe in Săsar Neighbourhood

English summary of the Integrated Action Plan

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1. INITIAL SITUATION

OVERVIEW ON BAIJA MARE CONTEXT

Baia Mare is the capital of Maramureş County, a medium-sized city with a population of around 136,000 inhabitants. The city is strategically located in the North - Western part of Romania, along Săsar River, close to the Hungarian and Ukrainian borders, as well as other important economic centres in the region (e.g. Cluj-Napoca, Oradea). During the communist times, the city's main economic and production activities were in the mining industry, which rapidly declined after 1989. This rapid shift from the mining massive industry to an economy based on small and medium-sized enterprises and services implied sudden territorial developments, often resulting in land management problems. Over the last three decades, Baia Mare has witnessed a demographic decrease (reaching its peak of about 150,000 inhabitants in 1992).

In the [baseline study](#) of sub>urban project, the fringe in general is characterised as follows:

- pragmatic land consumption and car-based space often missing a collective layer.
- a mono-functional area (lacking in a decent mix of housing, amenities, retail and work space), with inefficient public transport facilities, and underused space;
- an area lacking in a clear structure, good public space and a clear identity;
- public space only as a functional space of flows, still lacking in the human scale.

A successful and sustained transformation process of the urban fringe requires an **integral vision and a holistic approach** touching on many topics. It involves the **intensified use of existing structures, good and affordable housing solutions, proper amenities, job opportunities, efficient sustainable mobility, city branding and dealing with private and fragmented ownership.**

THE FRINGE OF BAIJA MARE

The urban fringe in Baia Mare used to be the edge of the city, subordinated to the historic city centre. Unlike the classical urban fringe definition, Săsar neighbourhood (which is part of the entire fringe of Baia Mare) is not defined by a logistics area characterised by oversized public space, many single-storey buildings, large parking lots and vacant buildings and land, intersected by major infrastructures linking the city centre to peripheries and other areas in the outer city, but more likely, a low-density dormitory neighbourhood (between 51-100 inhabitants/ hectare, according to the Integrated Urban Development Strategy for Baia Mare). Although it provides loads of opportunities (in terms of land use, green areas and underused public space, as well as transport infrastructures) between the low-density suburbs and the high-density city centre, the connectivity and identity of the urban fringe needs to be re-examined according to the following general challenges:

- reshaping new economic and residential areas in the context of urban regeneration, to incorporate business premises/ housing into a safe, sustainable, healthy environment;
- reconverting mono-functional areas built during the 1960s, 70s and 80s, into mixed liveable areas (by increasing the quality of urban public spaces and the life quality).



Evolution of Baia Mare urban pattern (from late 19th century to 2016)

RE-INVENTING THE FRINGE OF BAIA MARE

Transforming Baia Mare's urban fringe should start as an incremental process, aimed at mixing cultural and ethnic backgrounds, people of different ages, incomes and education levels, while providing multifunctional spaces to meet their needs and requirements. Consequently, the challenge equally lies in spreading the benefits of growth and regeneration, as well as providing affordable housing, jobs and facilities for all over the fringe. Intensifying and making a better use of the existent urban structures and public space, likewise vacant and underused buildings and land will contribute to achieve a more compact, accessible and attractive city.

AREA OF INTERVENTION

Săsar Neighbourhood was urbanized between 1960 - 1970 and it is one of the greenest and lowest densified neighbourhoods in the city. After 1990, several socio-economic factors led to the modification of the public space's character, as a result of the reclaimed properties after the fall of the communist regime, which generates nowadays issues with fragmented land ownership, low quality of existing dwellings, vacant lands or underused buildings. Transforming existing urban areas is more expensive and frequently implies dealing with private residents owning a single apartment to major owners that invest in commercial or office developments.

As the Municipality of Baia Mare does not own a lot of land and buildings, it is imperative to make the right decisions and negotiate agreements in the public interest when regenerating the neighbourhood. Choosing Săsar neighbourhood as a pilot area for reinventing the fringe was more a strategic decision, considering the on-going initiative for Săsar Zonal Urban Plan (a normative plan at district level). Therefore, experimenting URBACT co-design methodologies in parallel to national procedures for designing urban documents opened up new paths to improve the process of collaboration between public and private stakeholders to achieve the best possible quality through a transparent mechanism.

SĂSAR NEIGHBOURHOOD

Size (ha): 35,5ha

Nr. of current inhabitants: ~ 5360

Proximity (distance to centre): 2km

Location and Limits

Săsar neighbourhood is located in the North-West part of the city and it is limited by:

- North: Victor Babeş street | South: Independenței boulevard and Săsar River;
- West: I.L. Caragiale street | East: Iuliu Maniu street.



Map of morphological urban area within the pilot area (built environment in black)

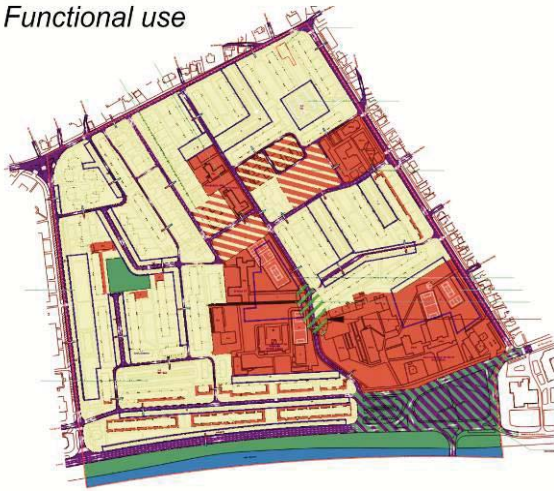
Functions, physical conditions and connections

Main current function: Dormitory neighbourhood composed of post-war collective housing assemblies (medium-height collective dwellings located in predominantly residential complexes) with few facilities of public interest, such as:

- Housing area – few privately-owned plots of low-height individual dwellings;
- Education facilities (university, general school and kindergarten);
- Health facilities (sports polyclinic), Social centre and proximity commercial spots.

In the context of a largely housing neighbourhood, the following functions are missing: public space facilities and leisure areas (including playground), community spaces, affordable students housing, effective public transportation, as well as collectively-organised parking lots.

Functional use



Green areas



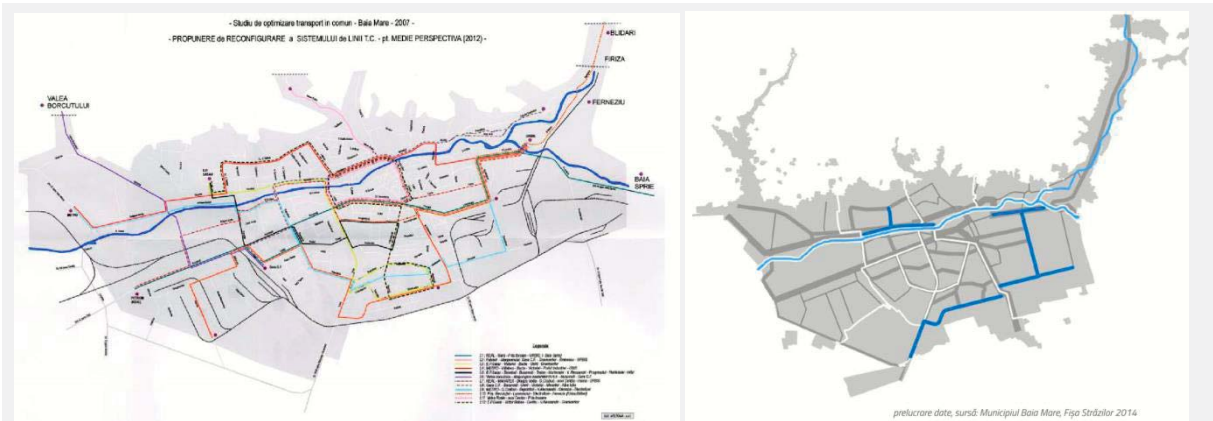
Map of land-use (left side) and green areas and public spaces (right side)

According to the General Urban Plan of Baia Mare city, Săsar neighbourhood should gather:

- Public equipment dispersed at the district level: Education facilities (university, general school, kindergarten), Health facilities (sports polyclinic), commercial services;
- Mixed-use area (housing and services) containing public institutions, services and equipment of general interest (managerial, technical, professional, social, collective and personal services, commerce, hotels, restaurants);
- Housing area – few privately-owned plots of low-height individual dwellings.

Connection of the site by public infrastructure or other means of sustainable transport:

- Poor connection by public transportation (only line 3/11 and line 4 in the proximity)
- Proximity to city centre (around 15-minutes by walking and 5 minutes by car).



Map of public transportation lines (left side) and bicycle lanes (right side)

Built environment and public space conditions

- Poor physical condition, materials and aesthetics of the buildings (thermal insulation programme for only approximately 5% of the housing stock)
- Inefficient use of space (vacant and underused urban plots), low quality of the urban public spaces aesthetics, poor green spaces maintenance;



The pilot area (collective housing, and private garages/ indoor parking lots)



The pilot area (private garages/ parking lots and public space)

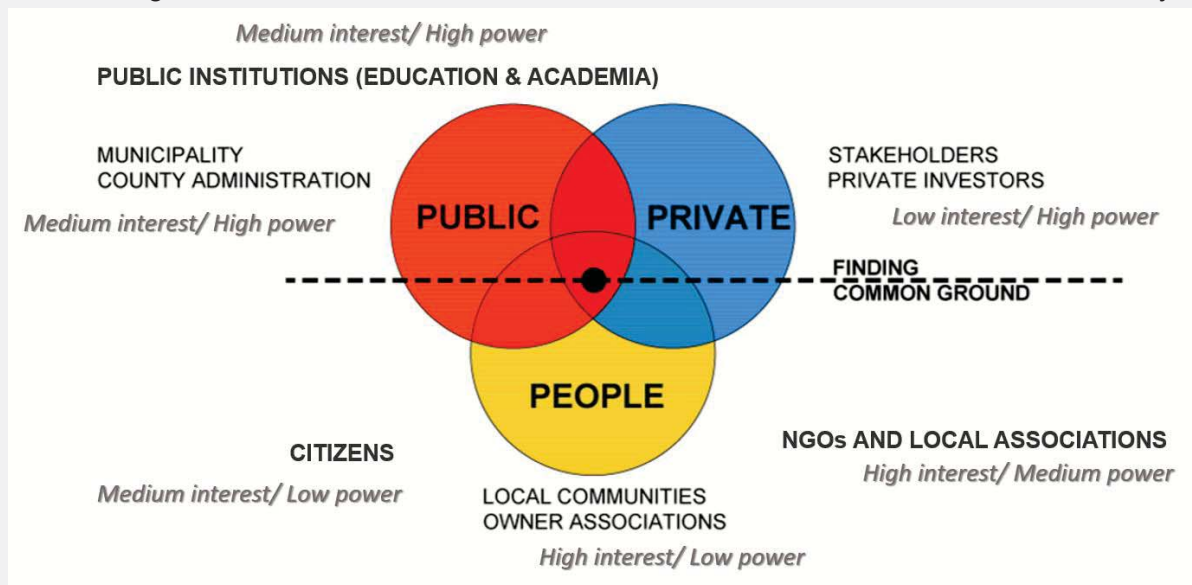
Land owner group(-s)

The main types of land owner groups are:

- Housing estate: Private and fragmented ownership;
- Commercial facilities and markets: Profi Supermarket and small business owners;
- Education facilities: Avram Iancu High-School, North University Centre (Faculty of Science and Humanities);
- Health facilities: Sport Polyclinic; Pharmacy: Nordpharm, Phytal;
- Cultural and religious facilities: Biruința Baptist Christian Church;
- Other facilities: PETROM gas station.

Main local stakeholders

- Public administration: Baia Mare Municipality, Urban planning Department and Chief Architect, Social Department, Investments, Programs and Projects Department, County Council Maramureş; Intercommunity Development Agency Baia Mare;
- Academia: Baia Mare North University Centre; Avram Iancu School, Pinteza Viteazul Students League Co;
- Youth sector and NGOs: cultural and environmental NGOs and associations: Neighbourhood Civic Council, Honoured Council, Cultural NGO, Youth NGO; Foundation Baia Mare 2021; Territorial Branch OAR – North-western;
- Private owners and investors: with their representatives (architects);
- Neighbourhood administrator, Owners' associations, Citizens and local community.



Stakeholders' map (including level of power and interest)

Challenges & Potentials

Identified needs and challenges:

- Large share of old housing stock (51.6% of dwellings have a 40 years-stake) in need of rehabilitation and modernisation;
- Underused spaces, land fragmentation caused by reclaimed properties after the end of the communist period, making it extremely difficult to redevelop existing areas;
- Change of the ground floor activity; mono-functional area built in 60s, 70s and 80s; in-adequate public space quality and design and high demand for quality public facilities (garages/ individual door parking lots between the collective buildings);
- Migration for professional and educational purposes which has results in aging population and demographic decline (especially after 1990);
- Segregated community due to the discrepancy between youth and elderly;
- Inactive citizenship and low level of community involvement.

Potentials and Drivers:

- Regional university centre – approx. 6,000 students annually + other education facilities => neighbourhood vocation as a strong education centre;
- Strong character and identity of a green 1960s post-war neighbourhood;
- The transformation of Săsar neighbourhood can contribute to the overall

development of Baia Mare, especially in terms of public facilities responding to the city's needs.

Particularity

The social discrepancy of the fringe area represents an excellent framework for improving the complex conditions in post-war urbanised landscapes (reconversion of unused and abandoned spaces, reshaping and reconverting mono-functional areas, etc). Although it is located quite close to the historical city centre (15 minutes by walking and 5 minutes by car), Săsar neighbourhood still presents the features of a *functional periphery*¹, even with some education facilities, which are still underdeveloped and underexploited.

¹ Functional periphery – an area which is not necessary peripherally located, but it is characterised predominantly by residential use, as well as by functional shortcomings and deficiencies (lack of public services and facilities, underused public space).

2. OBJECTIVES FOR THE TRANSFORMATION

The connectivity and identity of the urban fringe needs to be re-examined according to the identified needs and challenges, namely: large share of old housing stock, underused spaces caused by land fragmentation and private ownership, inadequate public space and high demand for quality public facilities, discrepancy between youth and elderly combined with a low level of civic involvement. From this perspective, the transformation of Săsar neighbourhood will be oriented towards a mixed liveable area with a safe, sustainable and healthy living environment.

REINVENTING THE FRINGE: STRATEGIC CONCEPT

The reinvention of Săsar neighbourhood aims to reinforce and valorise its current identity of a green post-war district. The transformation of Săsar neighbourhood is embedded in the overall 4 strategic objectives for the entire fringe of Baia Mare:

1. to provide affordable and qualitative housing (for all, including students);
2. to support economic development, creating new and maximizing existing profit sources;
3. to advance local policies based on public participation and active involvement;
4. to influence private investments and development through innovation and cooperation.

The vision for 2025 in relation to the urban fringe claims a process of reinventing Săsar neighbourhood which does not require major interventions and radical changes in its urban structure, but rather **punctual and integrated actions to mobilize the community & promote active citizenship and to valorise its identity** towards a mixed-use area with large housing offer, attractive and safe public spaces as well as multi-functional facilities and equipment.

The Integrated Action Plan for Săsar neighbourhood will mainly address the following subtopics identified at the sub>urban network level:

- 1) Transforming planning – through flexible planning (a switch from the normal top-down planning procedures to an incremental planning process, in which users and other stakeholders might gain more influence) and strategic choices for the pilot area (to become, on a zoomed-in scale, testing grounds based on an urban acupuncture approach as well as to influence and contribute to further planning on a larger scale). Both, flexible planning methods and strategic pilots provide the framework to test new strategies, partnerships, financial models, procedures, regulations and new building typologies for housing and amenities. Temporary use might be a good starting point of the step-by-step planning process.
- 2) Transforming for intensified use – this will be applied to the public space typical for 20th-century post-war developments with vast green and undefined open spaces, which offers nowadays new opportunities (in comparison to the historic city centre). Vacant and underused areas provide the opportunity of increased functional density for mixed-use facilities (which might include housing, commerce, services and underground parking functions). Temporary use plays an important role in taking the first step towards the regeneration of these sites and buildings.
- 3) Transforming private space – by dealing with fragmented ownership (as a result with the reclaimed properties after the fall of the communist regime, which generates nowadays issues with the quality of most existing dwellings, vacant lands or underused buildings due to the lack of motivation to make improvements or investments) and transparency issues (in negotiating public-private partnerships).

- 4) Transforming for social inclusion – by preventing social exclusion through affordable housing, job opportunities and mix-use offer to respond to various interests of the mixed cultural, educational and age backgrounds of people currently living there.

In this respect, the **overall mission** is to intensify the use of inefficiently used space, while increasing the quality and availability of houses and amenities and to find effective and transparent ways to deal with private and fragmented ownership to improve the quality of the existent functions and to provide new services for different typologies of residents.

OBJECTIVES & INTENDED ACHIEVEMENTS/ BENEFITS

The present Integrated Action Plan will address the following four specific objectives (SO):

- **SO1.** Activated and empowered local community and citizens (activating stakeholders as active and constructive participants to the decision-making process, transforming the typical planning approach);
- **SO2.** Increased (urban and functional) density through efficiently used space (vacant, underused/ improperly-used) for affordable housing with diversified activities and complementary functions, such as: sports and recreation, sports health, special students' residence, as well as attractive and safe public spaces (transforming for intensified use);
- **SO3.** Improved policy framework to support the transformation of fringe areas and the development of mono-functional areas (housing, industrial, etc);
- **SO4.** Boosted level of competences for employment (work with businesses and education providers to boost the level of competences for employment).

Sub>urban subthemes/ IAP objectives for Baia Mare	SO.1 Activated and empowered local community and citizens	SO2. Increased (urban and functional) density through efficiently used space	SO3. Improved policy framework to support the transformation of fringe area	SO.4 Boosted level of competences for employment
Transforming planning Expected results:	✓	✓	✓	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear vision for the identity of Săsar neighbourhood in the context of urban fringe (more related to post-war functional periphery, rather than to the ordinary peripheries); • a normative framework (due to the parallel process of designing a Zonal Urban Plan) with conditions to accommodate flexible offers for a good mix of services and facilities and creative solutions for efficient re-use or transformation of vacant urban spaces/ available land; • make a precedent of the flexible planning procedures and co-design methods for zonal urban planning (to encourage and contribute to further planning of different neighbourhoods and on a larger scale). 			
Transforming for intensified use Transforming for social inclusion Expected results:		✓	✓	✓
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased citizens' involvement and stakeholders' engagement in an incremental transformation process of the fringe area (starting from Săsar neighbourhood and up-scaled to the level of Baia Mare entire fringe); • new future functions for the neighbourhood (which will also be available to the entire city):, education-related facilities (urban gardens, university campus, urban living room for students – with sport/ education facilities, swimming pool); 		
Transforming private space Expected results:	✓	✓	✓	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased awareness on the possibilities for adaptively reusing vacant spaces and the benefits of developing the privately-owner areas within the transformation process of the fringe area (in Săsar neighbourhood); 			

Table 1 – Correlation between sub>urban subtopics and IAP objectives and expected results

3. ACTION PLAN & TRANSFORMATION TIMELINE

ACTION PLAN FOR SĂSAR NEIGHBOURHOOD

To make an impact, we must turn our words into actions. The actions presented in the current Integrated Action Plan are a set on diverse timeframe perspectives (from short-term to mid and long-term), where initial actions to be implemented are expected to pave the way for a successful improvement of the mono-functional (residential) urban fringe. Although the core focus of the Integrated Action Plan is the improvement of mono-functional residential neighbourhoods in the post-war (built during the 1960s, 70s and 80s) urban fringe, some of the actions identified in the planning process are not limited to the geographical area of Săsar Neighbourhood (which is the pilot area) and will form part of ampler actions that will need to be achieved at the entire city fringe level.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND CORRELATED DIRECTIONS/ LINES	PRIORITY	ST*	MT**	LT***2
SO1. Activated and empowered local community and citizens				
<i>Result: Active stakeholders as constructive participants to decision-making processes</i>				
1.1 Empower citizens to become more pro-active through participatory tools and workshops		✓		
1.2 Develop a constructive cooperation for youth involvement, awareness and informing			✓	
1.3 Investigate possibilities for community cooperation, for shared use of public space		✓		
SO2. Increased (urban and functional) density through efficiently used space				
<i>Result: Affordable housing offer and new complementary functions - sports and recreation, special residence for students, sports health, as well as attractive and safe public spaces</i>				
2.1 Intensify use and a good and balanced mix of services				✓
2.2 Increase the quality of public spaces				✓
2.3 Promote a local sports agenda, calibrated to cultural and traditions' book, which coordinates events and sports events of regional interest			✓	
SO3. Improved policy framework to support the transformation of fringe areas				
<i>Result: Transformation and improvement of mono-functional areas (housing, industrial, etc)</i>				
3.1 Explore ways of cooperation between public administration, private owners/ investors and local community				✓
3.2 Develop new tools and instruments to promote fringe transformation				✓
SO4. Boost the level of competences for employment				
<i>Result: Enhanced cooperation and relations between businesses and education providers to boost the level of competences for employment</i>				
4.1 Investigate ways to provide degree level courses in the neighbourhood in a flexible and affordable way				✓

Table 2 – Correlation between IAP objectives and time framework (short, medium, long-term)

² *ST – short-term (2-3 years, 2020 perspective)

** MT – mid-term (3-7 years, 2025 perspective)

*** LT – long-term (7-12 years, 2030 perspective)

MONITORING FRAMEWORK: RESULTS INDICATORS LINKED WITH OBJECTIVES

The main expected achievement in the pilot area is the improvement of the mono-functional residential neighbourhood, in the post – war urban fringe of Săsar neighbourhood, which is expected to become an example for best practices at local level and to be up-scaled and upgraded in the other fringe areas of Baia Mare. Specifically, intended results count:

SO1: ACTIVATED AND EMPOWERED LOCAL COMMUNITY AND CITIZENS

Active stakeholders as constructive participants to decision-making processes

The objective will empower citizens and young people to voice their opinions, provide inputs and elaborate ideas. As it is well known that most of the obstacles of participative processes are mainly connected with stakeholders' involvement issues rather than with technological and organizational constraints, an extraordinary effort will be dedicated during the project to stakeholders "motivation" activities. By empowering citizens to become more pro-active (through participatory tools and workshops), developing a constructive cooperation for youth involvement, awareness and informing and investigating possibilities for community cooperation, for shared-use of public space, the following end results will be pursued:

- Participatory actions organised in the fringe area of Baia Mare (starting from Săsar neighbourhood) for raising awareness on the importance of fringe areas;
- New civic movements and associations set up for stronger collaborations;
- Stronger partnerships between citizens, civil society, universities/ educational institutions and public authorities;
- New community places and *hotspots* developed for gathering communities;
- Partnerships set up for transforming individual privately-owned garages into community gardens, rooftop greenhouses or public spaces.

SO2: INCREASED (URBAN, FUNCTIONAL) DENSITY THROUGH EFFICIENTLY USED SPACE/ *Affordable housing offer and new complementary functions – sports, recreation, special residence for students, sports health, as well as attractive and safe public spaces*

The reinventing of the urban fringe is a key priority for the development of the area both in terms of the built environment and the economy. The improvement as a unique opportunity to put Baia Mare on the map and attract attention around its potential. It is therefore essential to communicate clearly and efficiently on the positive steps taken as part of the improvement to raise awareness of potential investors (i.e. private landowners) on the benefits of choosing fringe areas as suitable locations for investment. To achieve this, a comprehensive marketing and positioning campaign is required. Its strategic location gives Săsar Neighbourhood the potential to become an ideal urban fringe, for activities of almost all sizes. However, this can only be accomplished, if the location is flexible and economical enough to meet the needs of services and to allow them to grow. The neighbourhood will also need to provide a range of facilities and services companies, needed to run their activities efficiently to attract employees. The improvement of the mono-functional residential Săsar neighbourhood provides a significant opportunity to attract new services in the area, as well as offering flexible space for current functions to grow. Anticipating future occupation will help in developing a focused marketing campaign, as well as training and providing the local workforce with competences to meet the needs of these new employers. By intensifying use and offering a good and balanced mix of services, increasing the quality of public spaces and promoting a local sports agenda, calibrated to cultural and traditions' book, the following end results will be pursued:

- No. of identified vacant spaces and campaigns regarding the land use planning to raising awareness on the that vacant lots and other abandoned properties which represent a serious concern along the fringe;
- New public infrastructures, facilities and equipment (not only in Săsar neighbourhood, but in the entire fringe): sports, recreational areas, urban gardens and civic facilities to accommodate people of all ages (especially some dedicated to students) and abilities;
- Balanced connection between education, recreation and sports activities (supported by new services and facilities, as well as human-scaled, safe, attractive environment);
- Improved aesthetics of the urban public space (starting from Săsar riverfront) to balance the connection between nature and the community;
- No. of sports events and recreational activities;
- Human – scaled, safe and attractive environment (lighting, ground floor activity, street furniture and community's public art);
- Increased number of bicycle-users as well as bike and pedestrian connections.

SO3: IMPROVED POLICY FRAMEWORK TO SUPPORT THE TRANSFORMATION OF FRINGE AREAS / *Transformation and improvement of mono-functional areas*

A supporting policy framework for the transformation of fringe areas is an essential step along the entire process, but simultaneously a very time-consuming one. Legislative measures and local policies have to be set up as a result of several pilot actions which prove the efficiency and relevancy of some proposed measure. This objective aims to create new connections based on cooperation between citizens and legislative body favoured by new procedures to sustain a responsible involvement of the citizenship in setting down new policy at different level of government. By exploring ways of cooperation between public administration, private owners/ investors and local community, as well as developing new tools and instruments to promote fringe transformation, the following end results are expected:

- New public-private partnerships and fiscal procedures to intensify the use of space;
- Removed barriers for cooperation between local non-profit organizations, private and public landowners for the use of vacant/ underused/ improperly-used spaces;
- Fringe areas as catalyst for urban development and regional competitiveness.

SO4: BOOSTED LEVEL OF COMPETENCES FOR EMPLOYMENT ***Enhanced cooperation and relations between businesses and education providers to boost the level of competences for employment***

Understanding the required skills of local employers and having a clear and comprehensive picture of the local skills provision, it is essential to ensure that gaps in provision are addressed. Collecting evidence both, quantitative and qualitative, will support the dialogue between education and services and will provide the basis for the development of relevant training at local level. In addition, having the capacity to anticipate future skills need for the area, it will ensure that young people currently involved in the education system can make informed choices and decisions, while giving local employers an available workforce pool with relevant skills. In this respect, it is essential to develop a network gathering various knowledge transfer structures for training and technological services. Anticipating future occupation will help in developing a training module and program to provide local workforce with competences to meet the needs of these new employers. By investigating innovative

ways to provide degree level courses in the neighbourhood in a flexible and affordable way, the following end results will be pursued:

- Mapping the needed and required skills to influence skills provision;
- Innovative ways to provide citizens with non-academic skills and vocational training programs and further education encouraged through industry collaboration and developing neighbourhood amenities.

CRITICAL RISKS/ PITFALLS AND POTENTIAL MITIGATION ACTIONS

The following critical risks/ pitfalls and potential mitigation actions (related to the objectives and previously-mentioned activities) were identified:

CRITICAL RISK	IMPACT LEVEL	POTENTIAL MITIGATION ACTION
Low accomplishment with the proposed actions	High	Clear timeline for implementation with progress and mid-term checks and evaluation
Low awareness and poor communication	Low	Regular meetings with ULG members, wider group of stakeholders and local citizens
Delays in the implementation of the actions Unexpected delays (due to political reasons)	Medium	The various actions proposed involve not only public administration, but also private actors and NGOs, which may cause delays (especially in the case of potential public-private partnerships). The ULG should continue to closely follow-up and monitor the quality of implemented activities, as well as the political agenda for further activities to be implemented.
Difficulties in the engagement of a wider group of stakeholders	Medium	Engage the wider group of stakeholders from an early stage of the process to make them aware of the importance of their contribution to the project. Develop effective mechanisms and procedures for a participatory approach, as well as for offering stakeholders more power.
Low level of impact/ benefits generated by the Integrated Action Plan	High	The actions included in the current IAP are envisaged to generate synergic effects at local level (pilot area of Săsar) and to be up-scaled in different neighbourhoods/ wider scale. Though, the risk related to low level of stakeholders' engagement can also contribute to a low impact generated by the project at the city level. If a wider group of stakeholders will be involved from an early stage, the impact might increase.
Lack of financial resources	High	Look for additional funding opportunities and financial instruments to implement the actions.

Table 3 – Pre-identified risks and potential mitigation actions

DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT ULG STRUCTURE

As presented above, URBACT Local Group (ULG) numbers representatives from the following main local stakeholders groups:

- Public administration: Baia Mare Municipality (Urban planning Department, Social Department);
- Academia: Baia Mare North University Centre; Avram Iancu School, Pinteza Viteazul Students League Co;
- Youth sector and NGOs: cultural and environmental NGOs and associations: Neighbourhood Civic Council, Honoured Council, Cultural NGO, Youth NGO; Foundation Baia Mare 2021;
- Private owners and investors: with their representatives (architects);
- Neighbourhood administrator, Owners' associations;
- Citizens and local community.

As an initial step, the current Integrated Action Plan for Săsar neighbourhood will be officially signed and approved in the Local Council of Baia Mare (probably around beginning of summer 2018). As soon as formal actions are taken, the implementation phase should start by looking into budget requirements (also into additional funding opportunities). There will be a set-up of a committee of ULG members (around 5-7 persons, including the current ULG coordinator), who will be in charge of closely following the implementation of the action plan. Therefore, they will be responsible for a bi-annually monitoring process, giving recommendations for the current steps of the plan, as well as the next actions to be implemented. As thought, based on the achieved results, they will be able to make recommendations to update the Integrated Action Plan (by learning from the implemented actions and adapt the medium and long-term objectives, according to that). The governance structure is flexible as the ULG is opened for new members (from a wider group of stakeholders), as well as for the withdrawal of members who are not interested anymore. The ULG coordinator will continue to manage the group and to organise (at least once at every 3 months), to keep the record of the ULG members and to follow the implementation. Task and responsibilities of the stakeholders, as well as an organisation/ governance structure (i.e. organigram) will be provided in a future version of the Integrated Action Plan (by the end of January after the next ULG meeting).

One important step in the process continuity is the consolidation of the already existent ULG structure (with a clear definition of an ULG core group) and the enlargement of the current ULG with the involvement of new stakeholders (especially the ones relevant for projects encompassed in the Local Action Plan). The following new target groups will be considered:

- Representatives from different departments from Baia Mare Municipality (Financial Department, Investments Department, Programs and Projects Department,
- County Council Maramureş; Intercommunity Development Agency Baia Mare;
- Intercommunity Development Association for Baia Mare Metropolitan Area;
- Neighbourhood civic councils;
- The North-West territorial subsidiary of OAR (Romanian Order of Architects).

PROCESS CONTINUITY

After the time span of the sub>urban project, the intention (which has been highlighted during more ULG meetings and agreed between all stakeholders) is to keep sub>urban office (which is currently a meeting room owned by the Municipality and has been working as the official office for the project, the ULG meetings were held) as a space for working together with the community and bridging between stakeholders, to continue the process of fringe transformation (starting with the pilot area of Săsar neighbourhood) for the coordination of the implementation phase, as well as for co-designing strategic plans to continue the transformation process of the fringe in other areas in Baia Mare (in order to extend it to the entire city fringe).

Another important aspect to be highlighted is a clear correlation between the Integrated Action Plan and the complementary Urban Zonal Plan (for Săsar neighbourhood which started 4 years ago, ran for 1 year, paused for 2 years and now the process has been reactivated). In the following period (after sub>urban time span), several public debates will be organised also in relation to the new Urban Zonal Plan for Săsar neighbourhood. As soon as the Integrated Action Plan for Săsar neighbourhood will be approved within the Local Council of Baia Mare (which is, in fact, the next formal step), a short list of projects/ actions has to be prepared for a proper budgeting process (public money, private investments, other funding opportunities – EU programs, etc). The linkage and correlation with other complementary urban strategies and plans (such as: Baia Mare Mobility Plan, The General Urban Plan of Baia Mare, the Urbanistic Zonal Plan for Săsar neighbourhood) has to be done in order to implement coordinated actions. In addition, another URBACT project is currently running in Baia Mare in the framework of the Action Planning Network – BOOSTINO (main objective is to boost social innovation, ensuring the creation of the proposed “smart neighbourhoods” by active participation and co-creation of the city based on four pillars: 1) traditions, crafts and history, 2) youth and education, 3) entrepreneurship and 4) social). Several discussions have been held between the ULG coordinators of both projects to search for links (especially for the implementation phase of the two Integrated Action Plans).

Communication and dissemination plays an important role (also after the official end of sub>urban project) for keeping stakeholders active and engaged in the follow-up phase. In this respect, a communication strategy has been designed to prepare communication continuity – Baia Mare Municipality will be responsible to maintain a constant communication through social media: Facebook page as an interactive and open platform (online digital publications and content) and Twitter page (mostly addressed to transnational exchanges), but also through other means, such as: mailing list, telephone and local meetings organised together with the ULG members – public events, public debates and press releases (directed to the local media, in order to increase the visibility of the project and to raise the awareness in relation to the fringe).

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A monitoring and evaluation mechanism will be defined by the end of sub>urban project. A committee of ULG members (around 5-7 persons, including the current ULG coordinator) will be set up for following the implementation of the plan. Therefore, the committee will be responsible for a bi-annually monitoring process, aimed at providing evidence of implementation progress and giving recommendations for the current steps of the plan, as well as the next actions to be implemented (plus introduction of new projects, if necessary).

4. GENERAL IDEA DEALING WITH THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ENTIRE FRINGE IN THE FUTURE

TRANSFORMATION THE ENTIRE FRINGE IN BAIA MARE

The city of Baia Mare has chosen to focus the sub>urban project. Reinventing the fringe in the pilot area of Săsar neighbourhood, considering it a first important step in changing the mentality around the process of fringe transformation by showing concrete actions. Although fringe areas in Baia Mare differ one from another (in terms of land-use, different typologies of functions which are predominantly, such as: residential, industrial), which consequently results in a diversity of needs and challenges. However, the current Integrated Action Plan gathers actions oriented also towards the entire fringe area of Baia Mare, given some common issues and challenges (which can be found at the entire fringe level). The connectivity and identity of Baia Mare urban fringe needs to be re-examined according to the following general challenges:

- planning and/or reshaping new economic and residential areas in the larger context of urban regeneration, to incorporate business premises and housing into a safe, sustainable and healthy living environment;
- reconverting mono-functional areas built during the 1960s, 70s and 80s, into mixed liveable areas (by increasing the quality of urban public spaces and, finally, life quality).



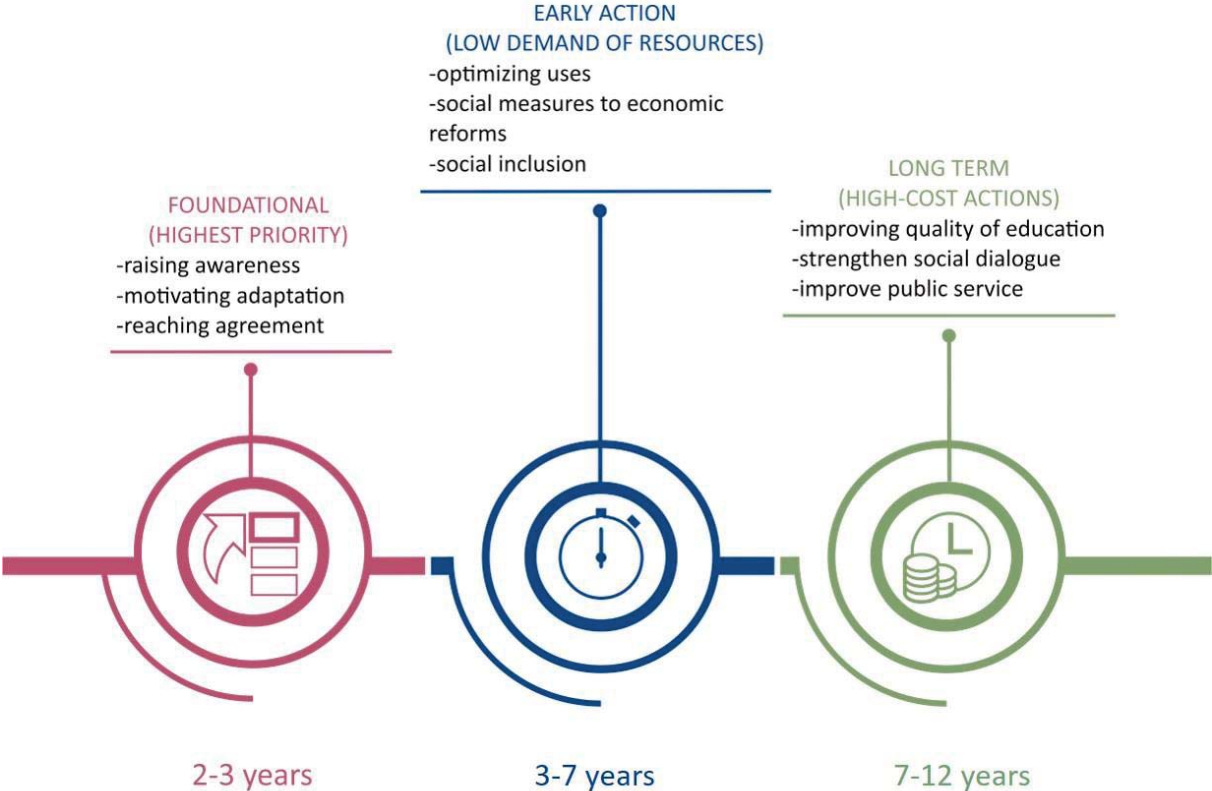
Dealing with the entire fringe based on Săsar pilot neighbourhood.

Thus, the city aims at combining the best of both worlds in the fringe by embracing its qualities and dealing with its insufficiencies. From this perspective, it is obvious that the fringe areas can be used more intensively. Instead of constructing new urban areas on green land outside the city, transforming the urban fringe would make better use of existing urban structures. For supporting fringe transformation, the current Integrated Action Plan foresees a specific objective which deals with the policy framework for the transformation of fringe areas, being specifically focused on: 1) exploring ways of cooperation between public administration, private owners/ investors and local community and 2) developing new tools and instruments to promote fringe transformation.

TRANSFORMATION TIMEPLAN AND PRIORITIZATION OF ACTIONS

The city of Baia Mare will focus the implementation of the Integrated Action Plan in Săsar neighbourhood, based on the following aspects: available resources, the potential level of impact and the urgency of opportunity or need. Although Săsar neighbourhood represents a pilot area, it is important to mention that several actions encompassed in the current Action Plan are addressing a fringe territory which is not limited only to the pilot area level. The aforementioned actions will be prioritized according to the following three broad categories:

1. **Foundational** – actions with the highest priority, the most urgent need and the highest impact (targeting not only the pilot area, but the entire city fringe level).
2. **Early/Mid-term** – actions with lower demand for (financial and human) resources, that should begin soon;
3. **Long-term** - higher-cost actions that require additional staffing, financial resources, or time to be implemented.



Time plan for dealing with the entire fringe.

The current Action Plan is partly encompassed in the complementary vision, objectives and actions framed within [Baia Mare Integrated Strategy for Urban Development](#), concretising a part of this strategy. The vision sets out the ambitions for the redevelopment of the city and it will be used as a benchmark to determine progress. Săsar River requires a comprehensive approach regarding the redesign of its banks (which is also an action supported by political will). Design a river promenade, and strengthening the riverbed and its banks are compelling, as the river is not only the oldest element of the city's identity, but also a natural element with a major influence on the local microclimate. Its East – West orientation has the potential to bring together public spaces from North to South, through an integrated network of urban public spaces. It is also intended to provide safe and attractive pedestrian paths, bicycle lanes bringing together major landmark in city spaces and linking them with parts of the entire fringe areas of Baia Mare.

FOUNDATIONAL (2-3 years)

The most urgent objectives for the urban fringe are those related to raising awareness, motivating adaptation and reaching agreement, upon which to build other sub objectives:

- Supporting efforts to influence policy co-design and strengthen partnerships;
- Inform, raise awareness and engage citizens (motivate stakeholders to take action and play an active role in the transformation of the area, provide a clear explanation of what reinventing the urban fringe means);
- Develop and reinforce the cooperation between different urban actors to gain synergies;

MID TERM (3-7 years)

The second most important strategies are those with lower costs and clearly definable outcomes. The city of Baia Mare will start to work on the following objectives:

- Fringe areas should firstly focus on optimizing uses, such as: new mixed-use activities, neighbourhood health, and education, to help in the attraction of youth;
- Accompanying social measures to economic reforms - strengthen social safety and ameliorate the social security system, improving their efficiency, targeting and coverage while progressively reducing subsidies and economic distortions;
- Involve in a dialogue on programmes and initiatives aimed at encouraging social inclusion and fight against discrimination, with attention to marginalised community.

LONG TERM (7-12 years)

Because the urban fringe is operating in a resources-constrained environment, some objectives should be focused on a later stage, once the identity has been reinforced:

- Establish and deploy flexible incentives – fringe areas will not be able to directly capitalize incentive programs until new revenue sources are identified;
- Develop reform and strategic plans aiming at improving the quality of education and vocational training and their relevance to the labour market;
- Strengthen social dialogue at all levels and implement market-driven strategies, involving social partners, to address unemployment and increase the participation of youth in the labour force;
- Improve public service delivery particularly in health and education and other social services with access for all, supported by public subsidies.

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