

SMART DEVELOPMENT OF BRAILA COUNTY BY SUPPORTING RESEARCH- DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATION AND DIGITALIZATION

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Abstract: *Through the article "Smart development of Braila County by supporting research - development, innovation and digitalization", I will try to capture all the absolute measures and directions of action necessary to achieve the strategic objective regarding intelligent development by supporting research, development, digitalization and increasing economic competitiveness and entrepreneurship in Brăila County. Brăila is the gateway to Europe, an important economic, medical and educational pole, supported by a modern and continuously modernizing infrastructure and a developed partnership environment, with a sustainable economy developed through innovation, tradition and resource utilization, attractive for investors, cultural center and touristic, modern and with a democratic multi-ethnic community. The European Commission encourages the development of national/regional research and innovation strategies for intelligent specialization as a means of directing the use of public funds towards strategic, integrated investments, in order to capitalize on the potential of intelligent growth and the knowledge economy in all Union territories. Taking into account the National Strategy for Research, Innovation and Intelligent Specialization 2022-2027, Brăila County has approved its own development strategy, putting in the foreground as a strategic objective: intelligent development by supporting research, development and innovation, digitization and increasing economic competitiveness and entrepreneurship. The article includes in detail two priorities: that of developing the research, development, innovation capacity of Brăila County and the adoption of appropriate technologies, with the two directions of action: that of increasing the digitization capacity of institutions and companies for the benefit of citizens with the eight directions of action. The evidence of the actions undertaken are highlighted in the article with the awards obtained due to the implementation of the strategic objective and the implementation of the e-governance concept at the local level based on the platforms: ghiseul.ro, town planning certificates, operating permits, GIS.*

Keywords: *strategy, research, innovation, investments, strategic objective, digitization, competitiveness.*

JEL Classification: *G21.*

1. Introduction

Brăila is the gateway to Europe, an important economic, medical and educational pole, supported by a modern and continuously modernizing infrastructure and a developed partnership environment, with a sustainable economy developed through innovation, tradition and resource utilization, attractive for investors, cultural center and touristic, modern and with a democratic multi-ethnic community.

Four pillars are necessary to put the county back on the map of Europe because it deserves it:

1. Involvement: The administration's relationship with the community must be redefined and resettled on new foundations with the citizen at the center, the administration thus becoming more open, more transparent and proactive, and the citizens with more civic spirit;

2. Vision: it is necessary for Brăila to redefine its vision of development and to get out of a stage of stagnation;

3. Development: the administration must identify fast and reasonable ways from a budgetary point of view to think and implement in feasible terms impact projects on the local community, from infrastructure, to heritage protection and to social aspects;

4. People: the local community of Brăila, with its specific social structure, is the one that will benefit from the smart development strategy of the County by supporting research-development, innovation and digitization.

2. Development vision

The mission of this vision is to ensure:

- the balance between the socio-economic systems and the natural potential with special emphasis on the exploitation of the tourist and ecotourism potential based on non-polluting and traditional resources;
- there is a highly qualified workforce, for which a sufficient number of jobs are ensured to ensure the increase of competitiveness, by capitalizing on the existing economic sectors;
- capitalizing on the natural and cultural-historical heritage
- permanent improvement of people's quality of life and ensuring equal access to utilities and public services;
- the active involvement of the institutions for the balanced economic and social development of the county with permanent consultation of the community, social partners and the business environment in the decision-making process.

3. Strategic objective: Smart Development of Braila County

The European Commission encourages the development of national/regional research and innovation strategies for intelligent specialization as a means of directing the use of public funds towards strategic, integrated investments, in order to capitalize on the potential of intelligent growth and the knowledge economy in all Union territories.

Taking into account the National Strategy for Research, Innovation and Intelligent Specialization 2022-2027, Brăila County approved its own development strategy, putting on the forefront as a strategic objective the development of intelligence by supporting research, development and innovation, digitization and increasing economic competitiveness and entrepreneurship.

The measures and directions of action to achieve this objective include several priorities, each with well-established measures and directions of action.

1. The priority regarding the development of the capacity for research, development, innovation and the adoption of appropriate technologies develops two measures:

The first: that of developing the capacity for research, development, innovation, with investments in the infrastructures of CDI/SME organizations as directions of action; creation, participation in structures, partnerships, collaboration programs of organizations and SMEs; preparation and implementation of projects within international CDI programs.

The second measure consists in supporting innovation activities in SMEs through SME investments in equipment and services for carrying out innovative research; applied research activities and technological development; investments in fields of intelligence specialization; implementing the certification process of products, services or different specific processes.

Two trophies obtained by Brăila could play an important role in attracting investors in the near future. Although it may seem hard to believe for some, our city received the title of Capital of Romanian Entrepreneurship at the Gala of the Association of Municipalities in Romania (AMR). The trophy came from the National Council of Small and Medium Private Enterprises in Romania. Also, also during the event, the Municipality of Braila received the award for excellence in supporting entrepreneurship, this time from AMR. A victory that

could weigh a lot in the relationship with future possible investors and not only that, precisely their activity contributed to winning the two trophies. For the award of excellence, Brăila competed in the last instant with the municipalities of Constanta and Suceava. The gala organized by AMR took place under the patronage of the President of Romania, the collaboration of the National Council of Rectors and the National Council of Small and Medium-sized Private Enterprises in Romania, the titles received will count in the future in the development of the economic sector, as they can become contractual partners with the construction of the Bridge over the Danube.

2. The second priority of Brăila County refers to increasing the digitization capacity of institutions and companies for the benefit of citizens through:

- the measure of digitization in education with the implementation of the online educational process as action directions; ensuring internet access in all pre-university schools and ensuring wireless infrastructure; equipping schools and educational institutions with digital equipment; digitization in the university and pre-university environment through the creation and development of digital platforms, databases and virtual libraries for pupils, students, live streaming, projection and video mapping equipment and infrastructure. In this sense, we can exemplify the rehabilitation of schools and kindergartens in Brăila Municipality with European funds, which led to their digitization.

- the measure of digitization in culture has as action directions the acquisition of modern facilities for cultural activity (equipment and infrastructure, databases, software, digital platform, integrated systems, ICT means, 3D digital models, IT infrastructures and cloud solutions, exploitation digitized; the creation of a complete and updated database regarding the state of the Brăila County through the use of ICT means (3D scanning, legal regime). The proof of the implementation of this measure is the creation of a virtual library and an online catalog within the County Library.

- the third measure refers to digitization in health with the following directions of action: investments in equipment and specific infrastructure - hardware, software, digital platforms, implementation of solutions for tele-consultations, continuous monitoring and management of patients, integrated development of health solutions (electronic archiving). An implementation of these measures, even if partially, has already been achieved at the Psychiatric Hospital, which completed a project with European funds.

- a fourth measure refers to ensuring cyber security by improving the security of networks and IT systems within local public authorities, ensuring an adequate level of cyber security for public and private entities by using solutions that use artificial intelligence, creating specific infrastructure for cyber protection .

- regarding the sixth measure regarding digitization in companies through the adoption of ICT technologies and digital tools that lead to the innovation of the business model for SMEs and their digital transformation, through the implementation of integrated IT systems, electronic applications business management, e-commerce solutions at the level of businesses in the county and the creation, development of digital innovation hubs, these are the responsibility of all economic agents that carry out their activity in Brăila County.

- measure of interoperability of the databases used by the public administration aims at the implementation of the functionalities for the migration and integration into the existing data structures of all the data necessary for the real-time provision of public services.

- the measure aimed at digitization in local public administration has many and complex directions of action, namely the provision of digital equipment, the development and

implementation of IT software solutions for the digitization of activities, investments in specific infrastructure equipment - hardware, software, digital platforms, for the implementation of the concept of e-government for citizens, digitization of local public services; creation, significant development of platforms for the management of official documents issued by authorities, tax collection, project management, electronic archiving; the development of integrated "smart streets" type intelligent video surveillance systems with lot sensors, smart urban furniture, smart lighting; developing the use of intelligent video technologies for the management of the selective waste collection stage; creation, development of integrated intelligent telemanagement systems for public lighting. At the beginning of February, 2017, it was announced in the local press that the installation of LED lighting fixtures had begun in the municipality, and in the next two years 12,800 will be installed." Brăila 02/07/2017 - The first day (or night) with lighting on LEDs !!! 12,659 LED lighting fixtures (street and pedestrian) will be installed in Brăila, 79 electrical panels, installation period - 2 years. Today, 40 lighting fixtures were installed on Calea Călărășilor from Strada Milcov (bus end, 4) to Barriere. We have the first 700 LED lighting fixtures of different light intensities" in the "Romania Association Gala", which took place at the Romanian Academy, in Bucharest rewarded with the Award for Excellence in Public Lighting. "Gala of the Association of Municipalities in Romania, 06.11.2017 - "Brăila - Award for Excellence in Public Lighting !!!" We are increasingly talking about environmental protection, modern projects with a low impact on the environment. At Brăila, words turn into deeds. Remote management, dimming, 8,300 LED lighting fixtures installed out of 12,800, installation in 2 years, payment in 10 years in equal installments without interest. More light, more ecological and cheaper". That these measures are being implemented is also proven by the video camera system administered by the Local Police, made with European funds, the GIS system at the level of the Brăila City Hall, the software implemented for filing documents necessary for the issuance of the Operating Authorizations of the economic agents operating within the Brăila Municipality, but also for the Town Planning Certificates. And the examples can go on. Digitalizarea la nivelul Municipiului Brăila a început timid cu platformă GHIȘEUL.RO și continuă încă până la implementarea unui soft integrat accesibil și ușor de folosit atât pentru salariați, cetățeni dar și de organele de control intern și extern.

- the last measure of priority number two is represented by the increase in broadband internet connection speed with increased capacity, with the following directions of action: modernization of current broadband networks, cabling of buildings for access to broadband networks, investments in the development of wireless networks .

Smart specializations represent priorities designed to constitute a competitive advantage by developing and correlating the strengths of research and innovation with the needs of the business environment in order to address emerging opportunities and market developments in a coherent way, having at the same time the duplication and fragmentation of efforts. These are identified through a process of entrepreneurial discovery, a process that, starting from evidence, involves the interactive dialogue of actors from the business environment, research, public institutions and civil society.

4. Resources

The resources needed for implementation involve: human, technical and financial resources. Although the last one as the financial resource is a priority, being about public but also private funds like this:

- local budget: own revenues of the county, donations and sponsorships, subsidies, financial operations, revenues for investments;
- national programs;
- European structural instruments: operational programs for 2021-2027 (POR, POEO, PODD, POCIDIF, POS, POT, POIDS, PAC, etc.);
- financing programs of the European Commission;
- other financing instruments;
- loans: credits from commercial banks or European institutions: EBRD, EIB;
- public-private partnerships.

5. Conclusions

At the end of the time period of the strategy, Brăila county will be characterized by:

- easy accessibility for citizens, tourists and businessmen, a county with fast, safe and sustainable internal transport links, connected to the main flows of people, goods and information in Central and Eastern Europe;
- non-discriminatory access of the population to quality public services, utilities and telecommunications, education, health, social assistance, public safety, culture and leisure, which will contribute to reducing the phenomenon of internal and external migration;
- important tourist destination that capitalizes on the authenticity of architecture, well-preserved local crafts and traditions, gastronomy, museums, contemporary cultural production, but also the uniqueness of landscapes, the diversity of natural resources or the historical heritage of the county.
- a green county, with a clean environment, green spaces, attractive opportunities for spending free time and practicing sports, capable of conserving nature, landscapes, the generous flora and fauna it enjoys, attractive for housing, tourism and ecological agriculture ;
- a dynamic business environment, characterized by attracting investments, local entrepreneurship and innovation, but also by permanent collaboration with local authorities and the university environment, capable of generating well-paid jobs and well-being for citizens;
- community of educated, innovative, confident, hospitable, tolerant, hardworking, honest people, open to new things but also with respect for traditions and history, involved in public life;
- proactive, efficient public administration and permanently interested in reducing bureaucracy, bringing its citizen services closer to the business environment, as well as its involvement in making strategic development decisions of the county.

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