

## Citizen's Engagement - Good-Practice Example

### Participatory Budgeting in Cluj-Napoca (Romania)

**“We all want Cluj-Napoca to remain the first city in Romania in terms of innovation in energy efficiency and climate change mitigation. Therefore citizen engagement and awareness raising are important steps.”**

Mr. Emil Boc, Mayor of Cluj-Napoca



©Photo: Dorin Beu

Participatory budgeting is a process carried out by Cluj-Napoca City Hall, through which the ideas and initiatives of the Cluj community are expressed and turned into reality. It is an open, inclusive and transparent process through which members of the community are directly involved in formulating decisions on priorities for spending money from the local budget.

Citizens can express the problems they face and propose solutions to them. They are allowed to propose ideas and initiatives to make life better in their neighbourhood and city. In this way, citizens participate effectively in setting priorities for spending the local community's money. Citizens can also actively participate in the implementation and follow-up of projects.

Citizens who live, work or study in Cluj-Napoca and are at least 18 years old can participate in the participatory budgeting process. Those wishing to participate must register on the participatory budgeting platform [www.bugetareparticipativa.ro](http://www.bugetareparticipativa.ro). Proposals are submitted exclusively by individual citizens. Each proposal must have a total cost of no more than €150,000 (including VAT).

#### Areas

Proposals must fall within one of the following areas:

a. Alleys, sidewalks and pedestrian areas
b. Mobility, accessibility and traffic safety
c. Green spaces and playgrounds
d. Public spaces (street furniture, street lighting, Solar PV panels on roofs and parks etc.)
e. Educational and cultural infrastructure
f. Digital city

Even if the proposal can be divided into several areas, the applicant must opt for the area he/she considers most appropriate.

## Eligibility criteria

- a. The project must correspond to an objective of general interest.
- b. is or can be integrated into an investment within the area of competence of the Municipality of Cluj-Napoca and concerning a public space.
- c. They must not fall within the scope of other programmes of the Municipality of Cluj-Napoca, such as funding for NGOs, sports structures, etc.
- d. They must not be contrary or incompatible with plans or projects of the Municipality in progress.
- e. Not be of a commercial or advertising nature.
- f. Not be of a political or ethnic nature.
- g. Not generate significant operating costs (maintenance, royalty payments, etc.) after implementation.
- h. Be clearly delimited spatially and not too vague.
- i. Be within the maximum budget allocated to a project.

The Cluj-Napoca City Hall carries out a technical analysis of all proposals submitted by citizens. Following the analysis, the proposals put to the vote will keep the original idea, but they will be adapted by the services within the municipality, which will estimate more precisely the costs involved, the concrete possibilities of action and the time of execution.

If some proposals are found to be similar in content or spatial proximity, it may be justified to integrate them into a single project, with prior notification to the depositors.

Citizens who submit proposals that do not make it to the vote are entitled to receive, on request, an explanation of the reasons for this decision.

### Participatory workshops

Participatory workshops, which aim to stimulate public debate, listen to citizens' suggestions and provide clarification on participatory budgeting are held. They encourage participation by presenting and discussing citizens' proposals.

## Voting procedure

Voting takes place in two separate stages. In the first voting phase, each citizen registered on the participatory budgeting platform can choose six projects (one for each of the six established areas). In this phase, 30 projects will be selected (the first three projects ranked in order of the number of votes in each area will automatically enter the second voting phase and the rest according to the number of votes, regardless of the area they belong to).

In the second stage, each citizen can choose only one project out of the 30 projects decided in the first stage. A total of 15 projects will be selected. The most voted project in each field will be selected automatically and the rest will be selected according to the number of votes, regardless of the field they belong to.

Each participant can only vote once in each voting phase. Online voting requires pre-registration on the platform.

### Examples of projects

- Bicycle/pedestrian paths
- Solar PV panels on roofs and parks
- Road safety education for children
- Environmental education (e.g. recycling) for children
- Community centers in parks



The Skatepark Rozelor from Cluj-Napoca was finalized in 2021 based on a participatory budgeting from previous editions (Source <https://www.facebook.com/bugetareparticipativa/photos>)

#### For more information, please contact:

- Mrs. Mihaela Boc
- Mobile: +40721950324
- E-mail: [mihaela.boc@primariaclujnapoca.ro](mailto:mihaela.boc@primariaclujnapoca.ro)

Note: Within the H2020 EXCITE project, the status of citizen engagement in the pilot municipalities was assessed. The results of the assessment confirmed that citizen engagement is already an integral part of their activities shown by this example.