

LEVERAGING LEADERSHIP FOR RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN TERRITORIES

Task 5.3 - Good Practice in the Territory of Sofia, Bulgaria

Creating a long-term vision for the city: the policymaker perspective

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VISION FOR SOFIA 2050



Vision for Sofia 2050

General Description of the Good Practice/Success Story

- The good practice is the development of [Vision for Sofia 2050](#) - Strategy for the development of Sofia Municipality until 2050
- It is an example of a successful **multi-stakeholder** approach to policymaking, based on **research and science**, with the active **engagement** of over 10,000 participants – **citizens and stakeholder organizations**
- Practice developed by [Sofiaplan](#): a municipal enterprise responsible for the spatial and strategic planning for sustainable development in Sofia
- **General aim & vision of the case**
 - [Programme for Sofia](#): the new Integrated Municipal Development Plan 2021-2027 is based on *Vision for Sofia 2050* (all sectoral policies included)

Vision for Sofia 2050

Basic characteristics/elements of the Good Practice/Success Story

- Implemented by a stakeholder with high levels of influence on RRI in practice
- Initiated by Sofia Municipal Council
- Fieldwork, research, consultations in 2017-2018; final version of the *Vision* ready in 2019; submitted to municipal council in 2021
- Implemented by a [multidisciplinary team](#) of Sofiaplan: architects, urban planners, ecologists, economists, programmers, lawyers, sociologists and communication specialists

Vision for Sofia 2050

Integration of RRI Keys (*Public Engagement, Open Access, Gender, Science Education, Ethics*)

- **Public engagement:** cooperation with municipal bodies, researchers and universities, NGOs, industry and business organisations
 - Over 400 meetings with experts & citizens held; problem analysis, goal setting, formulation of actions & measures for implementation
 - Social media, direct e-mails, online surveys, public consultations in 24 city districts held
 - Outdoor advertising/billboards, presenting the *Vision* & inviting citizens to take part
 - Digital game survey, open air exhibitions, promo videos
 - [Forum „Sofia: 2050“](#) with a [live broadcast](#) and discussion of the final version

Vision for Sofia 2050

- ❑ **Open access** - access to all raw data, gathered during the development of *Vision for Sofia*; reports; action plans
- ❑ Visualization of data (maps, data lakes, reports)
 - [„Podcast for Sofia“](#) on topics linked to the *Vision*
- ❑ **Science education/research**: 50 experts from various fields have been selected through public procurement to contribute to the *Vision*
- ❑ [„Hackathon for Sofia“](#): a 2-day event with more than 60 participants held in Sofia Tech Park; 15 projects developed using data collected by the initiative; proposed for implementation in the final document

Vision for Sofia 2050

Integration of AIRR Dimensions (Anticipation, Inclusiveness, Reflexivity, Responsiveness)

- Anticipation:** Forward-looking scenarios are key elements of Sofiaplan's work and the *Vision*
- Evaluation/Reflection** is performed through regular meetings to discuss problems, brainstorm ideas and plan activities to improve the working process
 - Periodic public presentations of the work in progress
 - Meetings with Sofia Municipal Council and the city administration
 - 20 thematic meetings, attended by 178 participants (50 from the administration, 52 NGOs, 40 from business, 33 independent experts)
- Responsiveness:** addressing all relevant issues in the city development
- Inclusiveness:** *Vision* sections and measures target all social groups

Vision for Sofia 2050

Concluding Remarks

The practice supports the integration of RRI / AIRR principles in municipal policymaking through:

- Wide public engagement and cooperation with all stakeholders
- Use of scientific expertise and modern methods for territorial governance
- Long-term scenarios and inclusive programming for city development
- Excellent channels of communication to achieve the project objectives
- Building up the capacity of Sofiaplan and municipal departments to utilize RRI/AIRR related practices in policy making
- Creating a repository of data, data visualization, data sharing and data access.

Program *The Crisis as an Opportunity*

- Successful example of ***responsiveness, adaptability, inclusiveness*** to tackle the impact of Covid-19 on civil society organizations in the city
- Small grants program of Sofia Municipality in 2020-2021, to support NGOs in 2 priority areas:
 - Digital adaptation and organizational sustainability
 - Community development
 - 500,000 BGN (ca. 250,000 EUR) allocated from the municipal budget
- Results: 500 applications received, 31 projects funded

The Crisis as an Opportunity

Integration of RRI/AIRR:

- **Public engagement:** Information campaign and mentoring program for applicants & beneficiaries with over 270 participants
 - 50 mentoring sessions with experts
- **Gender & diversity:** projects of/for vulnerable groups financed
- **Inclusiveness:** the program is open to all NGOs operating on the territory of the city
- **Reflexivity, impact assessment and evaluation** of the program: beneficiary surveys, video messages, good practices featured on institutional websites & social media channels