

Integrating Circular Economy in National Policy: Assessing the Impacts of Romania’s Revised 2023 Action Plan

Andreea A. Weisner

Doctoral School of Economics, West University of Timisoara, Romania

andrea_weisner@yahoo.de

Cristina Mihaela Nagy

“Tibiscus” University of Timișoara, Faculty of Economics, Romania

c.nagy@tibiscus.ro

Abstract

This article explores the integration of Circular Economy (CE) principles into Romania's national policy, mainly through its Revised 2023 Action Plan. It begins by setting the stage for the importance of sustainable development, which necessitates innovative policies that prioritize both environmental conservation and economic resilience. Romania's embrace of CE principles, aiming to redefine resource utilization, minimize waste, and bolster environmental preservation, serves as the focal point of this study.

Key findings reveal significant advancements in waste management and infrastructural enhancements that foster CE adoption despite facing challenges in policy implementation. The Revised 2023 Action Plan marks a critical step in Romania's journey towards sustainable development, showcasing the potential for increased employment, resource efficiency, and environmental stewardship.

This article makes a vital contribution to the field by charting Romania's progress towards its circularity ambitions and suggesting avenues for policy refinement.

Key words: circular economy, action plan, national strategy, resource efficiency, policy framework

J.E.L. classification: H23, O21, O33, Q53, Q56, R11

1. Introduction

The national policy integration of circular economy principles has emerged as an area of notable focus within the realm of sustainable development, especially considering Romania's updated 2023 Action Plan. The main concept underpinning the circular economy pertains to detaching economic growth from resource usage, thereby fostering sustainability and mitigating environmental repercussions. As Romania endeavors to comply with EU directives and better its waste management methodologies, embedding circular economy principles into national policy exhibits considerable promise for both economic growth and environmental safeguarding. By emulating effective strategies from other European nations and engaging a variety of stakeholders, Romania may overcome obstacles and cultivate a more sustainable economic framework. The shift towards a circular economy is critical for realizing extended sustainability objectives, and Romania's methodical alignment with circular economy paradigms is anticipated to yield advantageous outcomes across different sectors.

Incorporation of principles of circular economy into frameworks of national policy assumes a pivotal role in shaping strategies for sustainable development and promoting stewardship of the environment. In Revised 2023 Action Plan of Romania's context, the emphasis upon inclusion of circular economy initiatives mirrors a progressive path towards optimizing resources and managing waste. By aligning policies nationally with objectives of circular economy, the potential for economic growth, creation of jobs, and innovation may be harnessed within a frame of environmental accountability (Bauer et al., 2020-12-21). This alignment strategically not only enhances efficiency

in resource utilization but also aids in achieving broader sustainability targets by reducing dependence on finite resources and minimizing environmental impacts (European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use, 2022). Through adoption of policies that are comprehensive and prioritize practices of circularity, a precedent for sustainable development can be set by Romania within the context of Europe, placing itself as a leader in transition towards a model of circular economy.

With regards to the endeavours by Romania to amplify its circular economy structure, the Revised 2023 Action Plan manifests as a cardinal paper delineating tactical routes for enduring resource regulation and economic sturdiness. The scheme accentuates a detailed methodology incorporating domains including agriculture, automotive, construction, consumer products, and textiles, synchronizing with the nation's National Strategy for the Circular Economy. By stressing the stimulation of accountable production routines, inventive answers, and collaborator coordination, the Action Plan delineates a course for attaining ecological aims while propelling economic proliferation. Understandings from the European Topic Centre on Circular Economy and Resource Use elucidate Romania's headway in litter governance and infrastructure advancement, signifying a preparedness to adopt circular economy doctrines. As Romania traverses towards a more enduring economic model, the amalgamation of circular stratagems poses prospects for employment fabrication, resource productivity, and ecological guardianship (Rizos et al., 2018).

In dissection of the investigative pursuits and targets within this scrutiny on amalgamating the circular economy into Romania's national policy, the chief aspiration is to gauge the repercussions of the altered 2023 Action Plan on sustainability and fiscal performance. The paramount ambition targets examining the efficacy of circular economy initiatives within Romania concerning accomplishes in resource efficiency, decrement of waste, and safeguarding the environment. In a specific schema, the inquiry endeavors to scrutinize the adoption of cardinal stratagems depicted in the National Circular Economy Strategy, appraising their impetus on transitioning towards a more sustainable economic configuration congruent with EU ordinances. By probing sector-dedicated measures in agriculture, automotive, construction, consumer goods, and textiles (Can et al., 2023), the examination gears to furnish perspicacity into the prospects and hindrances Romania encounters in propelling its circular economy blueprint. Through an extensive disquisition of policy implications alongside tangible outcomes, the investigational purposes encompass pinpointing obstacles to execution, assessing advancements towards circularity milestones, and prescribing advisements for forthcoming refinements in national policy constructs to efficaciously nurture a circular economy metamorphosis.

In devising structuring of research for evaluating the consequences of Revised 2023 Action Plan of Romania on integrating circular economy principles, the meticulous examination of sources (Traversa et al., 2021) assumes instrumental significance. The fusion of regional, state, and municipal endeavors in refraining resilient strategies, as underscored in (2022), accentuates the relevance of cooperative governance in furthering sustainable policies. Furthermore, the idea of "green VAT" suggested in (Traversa et al., 2021) furnishes perceptivity into likely fiscal mechanisms to undergird circular economy ambitions within the national policy frameworks. Building upon these discernments, research structuration shall initiate by delineating the pivotal stakeholders in circular economy execution, scrutinizing the regulatory frameworks and financial mechanisms put forth in the Revised Action Plan, and culminating with an appraisal of prognosticated outcomes and hurdles in synchronizing Romania's policies with circular economy principles. By amalgamating these assorted viewpoints, the research aspires to deliver an exhaustive assessment of Romania's undertakings towards sustainable development via circular economy integration.

2. Literature review

Principles of the circular economy encompass a comprehensive approach to the resources managing plus the economic system, with the aim of minimizing waste, promote efficient resource, and keep the value in products and materials within the cycle of production and consumption. The basic idea in the circular economy includes a move away from a linear "take-make-dispose" model to a regenerative system where resources reused, remanufactured, recycled to form a closed-loop system. This alters requires a paradigm shift in how resources are used, how products are designed,

and how waste is managed, emphasizing the significance sustainable practices, cutting-edge tech, and cooperation between stakeholders in sundry sectors (Zamparas et al., 2023). By adopting a circular economy framework, country like Romania can shift their economies towards enduring sustainability, green economic growth, and resilience to environmental problems, aiding in a future more sustainable for society and the environment.

Assessing Romania's movement toward adopting circular economy principles reveals a strategic shift aimed at sustainability and efficient use of resources. The nation's dedication to the National Strategy for the Circular Economy marks the significance of aligning with European Union objectives and boosting environmental protection (European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use, 2022). Including circular economy approaches in national plans can not only encourage economic growth but also protect the environment via better waste management and development of infrastructure (European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use, 2022). By prioritizing innovative practices, cross-sector collaboration, and international cooperation, Romania seeks to hasten its shift to a circular economy framework, nurturing a more sustainable economic environment (European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use, 2022). The emphasis on integrating corporate social responsibility (CSR) principles in reporting indicates a comprehensive method, stressing openness and alignment with European sustainability goals for a more circular and robust economy (European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use, 2022).

It is observable that Romania, in its endeavor to incorporate principles affiliated with the circular economy within the realms of national policies, has exhibited progress deemed substantial, with the aim directed at augmenting sustainability alongside resource efficiency across assorted sectors. The nation's distillation of a National Strategy for the Circular Economy accentuates a staunch resolve to transition towards an economic paradigm of increased sustainability, in concordance with objectives set forth by the European Union. Illustrations of initiatives such as the Circular Economy Action Plan, anticipated for deployment by the year 2023, underscore Romania's preemptive disposition vis-à-vis the curtailment of resource utilization as well as the attenuation of deleterious environmental repercussions. Maneuvers to ameliorate waste management protocols, institute de minimis aid frameworks, and endorse responsible production principles through entities like the Circular Economy Coalition signify the national determination to promulgate circular methodologies. Nevertheless, impediments manifest in the form of infrastructural inadequacies and consumer behavioral trends, presenting a gamut of challenges necessitating remediation to unlock the full spectrum of advantages inherent in the integration of circular economy precepts within national policy matrices. The impending Circular Economy Action Plan holds potential as a catalyst to spur Romania towards an envisioned sustainable trajectory by the year 2030.

Within the scope of discerning the structural attributes of policy frameworks concerning the integration of circular economy principles into national protocols, a meticulous scrutiny of the efficacy and coherency of Romania's Revised 2023 Action Plan assumes paramount importance. The manifold metrics and projects delineated in the plan, as expounded in (Bătușaru et al., 2023), accentuate Romania's forward-looking disposition in harmonizing with EU mandates and nurturing sustainability via tangible policy enactments. Additionally, the framework delineated by (Ghisellini et al., 2023), which encompasses environmental and energy performance metrics aimed at overseeing the Common Agricultural Policy within the EU, delivers instrumental perspectives into the appraisal of circular economy measure application within select sectors. By embracing a holistic paradigm that coalesces these frameworks into the examination of Romania's policy ventures, a profound comprehension of the nation's strides and impediments in the propagation of circular economy doctrines can be realized, thereby informing prospective strategic undertakings and policy refinements.

Investigative efforts into philosophical standpoints on the repercussions evaluation linked to policy within the scenario of merging the circular economy into nationwide strategies involves the vital contemplation of diverse frameworks and paradigms capable of proficient assessment of outcomes and ramifications tied to such policy enactments. Repercussion evaluation of policy embodies a pivotal function in ascertaining the triumph and competency of policy tactics, predominantly in multifaceted domains like sustainable progression and ecological administration. Utilization of philosophical structures for instance the Institutional Scrutiny and Advancement model and the Schema of Change can render beneficial elucidations regarding the procedures by which

policy-mediated actions sway societal conduct, financial mechanics, and ecological consequences. Through recourse to these philosophical standpoints, decision-makers can acquire a comprehensive comprehension of the conceivable influence of circular economy strategies on resource productivity, refuse governance, and sustainable fabrication methodologies, thereby steering well-informed judgment-making and meticulous strategizing towards an ecologically conscientious and financially sustainable future. (Ghosh, 2019)

3. Research methodology

Romania's policy landscape now shows strategic change toward sustainability and circular economy principles, shown by National Strategy for the Circular Economy adoption. This strategic design highlights the need for resource efficiency, waste reducing, and sustainable production practices. The country is active in aligning policy frameworks with EU directives and global sustainability aims to push a more eco-friendly economic model. Important initiatives involve bettering waste management infrastructure, setting transparent reporting ways, and pushing forward innovation in circular economy areas (Bauer et al., 2020). By bringing circular economy principles into national policies and frameworks, Romania aims to boost economic growth, shield the environment, and match the needs of a fast-changing global field. Joint efforts across sectors, with a focus on innovation and education, are vital for pushing Romania's shift toward a more sustainable and circular economy.

The Romania's Circular Economy targets and initiatives, these do themselves showcase a strategic commitment supposedly to sustainable economic actions of development. The National Strategy for this Circular Economy does be pinpointing key industries such as agriculture, automotive, construction, and also textiles as the main targets for switching to circular ways. By placing an emphasis on bettering resources efficiency, waste managing, and creating policy frameworks that are so matched with sustainability goals of the EU, Romania endeavors to boost environmental protections while promoting economic growth (Kovacic et al., 2019). The country's measures include things like de minimis aid schemes and return guarantee systems for the packaging of products to hurry up the transition. Yet, obstacles do remain, like the need to improve infrastructures for waste collecting and tackling barriers from consumer behaviors. Creating an all-encompassing Circular Economy Action Plan by the year of 2023 stands as critical for Romania in achieving its sustainable development goals and properly integrating circular principles within national policies (European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use, 2022).

In the scope of weaving circular economy notions into nationwide policy, the part that stakeholder engagement and teamwork take is key to propelling sustainable and meaningful change. Interacting with a varied cluster of stakeholders, this entails government branches, industry figureheads, nonprofit groups, and the average citizenry is pivotal to make sure the revised 2023 Action Plan in Romania is put into effect properly. By encouraging open conversations, dispersing information, and utilizing pooled expertise, stakeholders could give useful thoughts, standpoints, and tools towards pushing forward circular economy efforts. Team endeavors ease the match-up of interests, the spotting of creative fixes, and build strong regulatory frameworks to back the shift to a circular economy structure. Via involved engagement and teamwork, Romania might tap into the united power of various stakeholders to tackle hurdles, push systematic change, and reach enduring results that profit both the environment and the market (Ghosh, 2019).

Upon scrutinizing the implementation intricacies and advantageous prospects inherent in Romania's amended 2023 Action Plan aimed at weaving circular economy doctrines into national stratagems, a multitude of pivotal elements manifest. In spite of noticeable strides in synchronizing with EU mandates and cultivating sustainability ventures, hinderances persist in morphing policy aspirations into concrete results. The infrastructural constraints, notably within the domain of waste disposal frameworks, emerge as a formidable impediment to the efficacious deployment of circular economy methodologies on a broad scale (European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use, 2022). Furthermore, the imperative to modify consumer behavior tendencies and bolster stakeholder participation remains critical for catalyzing the shift towards a more circular economic paradigm (Kovacic et al., 2019). Opportunities abound in sectors like innovation, employment generation, and superior resource utilization, unveiling substantial prospects for both economic

advancement and ecological safeguarding. Through the prioritization of lucid reporting systems in alignment with EU sustainability benchmarks and the harnessing of global collaborations, Romania stands a chance to surmount these encumbrances and harness the merits of a circular economy structure successfully.

An analysis comparatively of the revised that Romania's Action Plan 2023 with policies of the EU Circular Economy unveils essential areas both of alignment and divergence. Although strategy Romania's aims at promoting efficiency resource and sustainability, examination required it must be via the lens of EU directives along with practices best to ensure harmonization overarching with goals sustainability European. Assessing the principles core of Package EU Circular Economy can provide benchmark a for evaluating comprehensiveness and effectiveness the of efforts Romania's in transitioning circularity towards. By comparing specific policy measures, goals, and implementation strategies (Delbeke et al., 2015) nuanced understanding of progress Romania's in adopting practices economy circular within framework EU be gained can. This analysis comparative foundational serves as step evaluating strategic the implications and potential the outcomes of Romania's initiatives economy circular in broader context European.

4. Findings

The method to unify the ideals of circular economy into national legislative structures can impact the economy importantly, especially when considering the updated 2023 Initiative by Romania. As the nation shifts to adopt a model of economy that sustains more, it likely enhances how efficiently resources are used, propels creation of innovative ideas, and causes creation of employment opportunities in significant industries such as farming, cars, and building sectors. Following the EU regulations tied to sustainability targets will lead not only to better ecosystem safeguarding but also lead to growth of economy by use of less resources and productivity increases (Salomone et al., 2020). Yet, obstacles such as poorly managed waste procedures and upgrading infrastructure necessity must be confronted to realize circular economy's total possible economic benefits. Encouraging multi-sector cooperation, prioritizing idea generation, and highlighting open communication in reporting systems, Romania can surmount these difficulties and gain economically from the circular economic shift.

Pertaining to Romania's 2023 Revised Action Plan and its assimilation of circular economy ideologies, evaluating the environmental ramifications and sustainability yield stands crucial for discerning the plan's efficacy in advancing towards a more sustainable economic structure. Scrutinizing the environmental repercussions triggered by the posited policies and initiatives, including their bearings on resource utilization efficiency, waste governance, and emissions diminution, academics can approximate the plan's hypothesized contributions to environmental safeguarding and sustainable progression. Besides, an all-encompassing evaluation of the sustainability yields from the Action Plan is pivotal to ascertain its conformity with national and EU sustainability aims, along with its aptitude to incite affirmative socio-environmental transitions and endorse a circular economy framework in Romania. Such scrutiny not only bids revelations into the plan's possible advantages but also illuminates domains warranting additional amelioration and strategic emphasis to amplify its environmental and social sustainability consequences.

When look at what Romania's Revised 2023 Action Plan do for putting circular economy ideas into the country's rules, you must think about social and cultural stuff that make such plans work well. Social acceptance and cultural norms really matter for how policy gets taken up and used in a place. Fixing social gaps, getting people involved, and pushing for green thinking are key things for moving to a circular economy model (European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use, 2022). Plus, getting what people do, their green beliefs, and how culture affects use of resources is crucial for making policy work right (Rizos et al., 2023). Pushing education, awareness pushing, and working together on stuff that fits with local people can boost how much circular economy practices get used and help a lasting societal shift (Kovacic et al., 2019). By putting social and cultural ideas into the policy rules, Romania can make its circular economy actions work better and include more folks, leading to a tougher and more green society.

In the evaluation of how much national policies impact integrating circular economy ideas, concerns for efficiency and effectiveness are very important, with specific focus on Romania's revised 2023 Action Plan. Policy effectiveness is very important for arriving at the wanted results of moving to a more sustainable economic model, while policy efficiency makes sure there is optimal use of resources and the most output. By checking the strategies for implementation, the mechanisms for stakeholder engagement, and the rules given in the Action Plan, one can measure how effective policy actions are in promoting practices of circular economy. Further, checking how efficient policy actions are in terms of economic practicality, environmental gains, and social effects is very important for making sure the used resources achieve the intended results on Romania's switch to a circular economy. Making stronger the connection between policy goals, strategies for implementation, and results is a key point for encouraging sustainable development and achieving the circular economy aims stated in the national strategy.

In the course of looking into future prospects along with recommendations for introducing a circular economy into the national policy of Romania, manifest is the necessity for concerted efforts to conquer current challenges and realize economic growth that is sustainable. Clearly described in the examination, Romania contends with barriers in managing infrastructure for waste, regulatory frameworks and collaboration among stakeholders. Policymakers, to handle these problems effectively, ought to consider leveraging successful initiatives related to circular economy from various other countries, while bolstering educational and training initiatives on sustainable methodologies (Nyagadza et al., 2024). Besides, escalating transparency and accountability via better non-financial reporting systems can nurture a culture of responsibility in addition to innovation within businesses, which facilitates advancement toward a more circular and efficient economy resource-wise. Suggested recommendations equally involve synchronizing national strategies with EU directives, alongside fostering international collaborations to back Romania's transition towards an economic model that is sustainably more robust. Priority on innovation, stakeholder involvement, coupled with policy consistency, allows Romania to potentially position as a forerunner in sustainable development practices and circular economy strategies.

5. Conclusions

With regard to Romania's Revised 2023 Action Plan vis-a-vis integrating the circular economy into national policymaking, emergent key findings are noteworthy—highlighting the nation's advancements and encountered difficulties. The analysis illuminates substantial concentration on sectors including, but not limited to, agriculture, automotive, construction, consumer goods, and textiles as embodied within the National Strategy for the Circular Economy. Noteworthy initiatives, for instance, the inception of *de minimis* aid schemes and return guarantee frameworks for product packaging, are admirable; nevertheless, Romania experiences hindrances pertaining to waste management infrastructure and consumer compliance. Furthermore, notwithstanding the nation's aspiration for a Circular Economy Action Plan by 2023, impediments to its execution include an exigency for enhanced waste collection frameworks to efficaciously cultivate sustainable practices. Collaborative engagements with bodies such as the Circular Economy Coalition are indispensable in fostering data transparency and encouraging accountable production to consummate a more sustainable economy by 2030 (Economic Commission for Europe, 2021).

With emerging focus concentrating circular economy principles amongst national policy frameworks, Romania's Revised 2023 Action Plan presents significant opportunity enhancing sustainability practice, resource management included. Policy implications continuing from this revised plan, multifaceted as they are, hold crucial importance, promoting environmentally conscious economically sustainable future. Aligning with EU directives and emphasizing sectors agriculture, automotive, construction, Romania can foster innovation, job creation added, greener practices shift observed. Recommendations from assessment call for collaborative approach involving stakeholder various sectors grouped, innovation prioritized, education supportive Romania's transition circular economy viewed. Furthermore, non-financial reporting enhancing, aligning with EU sustainability objectives, transparency fostering, are essential steps to achieve an effective circular strategy.

Within reach of circular economy study, boffins made big yields by empiric observances, theoretical maps, and policy meditations. Probing manifold particulars of circular economy putting-through, scholars nosed into fields like resource shining, trash direction plans, and bearable trade types (Cobîrzan et al., 2023-10-03). By spying on the money, green, and group sizes of round-usage, brains swelled knowing in what manner round economy rules can be effectually put in state policy schemas. Further, probings showed big need for stakeholder wrangling, know-how spread, and rule machineries in smoothing the change to a round economy setup. Through mixed-field tie-ups and fact-proven study, schooldom stood as a big force in crafting plans for lasting resource use, boosting eco-minded fresh ideas, and crying for full changes to build a stouter and health-giving economy.

In engaging in the contemplation of the amalgamation of circular economy doctrines within Romania's Revised 2023 Action Plan, a plethora of hindrances and trajectories for ensuing scholarly inquiry come to the fore. While the scheme delineates strategic endeavors aimed at fostering sustainability alongside resource efficiency, obstacles in actualization are manifest, notably in the form of underperforming waste management infrastructure and lagging shifts in consumer behavior patterns. To remedy these impediments, future investigative efforts ought to concentrate on scrutinizing the efficacy of the Action Plan's pivotal priority strategies, evaluating stakeholder cooperation and participation, and surveilling advancements towards circular economy objectives. Moreover, delving into the repercussions of statutory modifications, financial provisions, and administrative frameworks on the prosperous enactment of circular economy protocols in Romania appears imperative. Future discourses might delve into the influence of educational initiatives and public consciousness campaigns in propelling sustainable behavioral transformations and perpetuating the circular economy narrative. Appraisal of the mutable European milieu and international sustainability movements will also be pivotal in molding prospective research trajectories and fortifying Romania's circular economy evolution (Wulansari et al., 2023; Bătușaru et al., 2023). This meticulous examination of the Action Plan's shortcomings coupled with emergent research vectors will impart substantive contributions to the progression of sustainable methodologies and circular economy tactics within Romania's national legislative corpus.

To conclude, the study about Romania's Revised 2023 Action Plan shows noticeable progresses in embedding circular economy principles into the national policy agenda. The nation's dedication to sustainability alongside resource efficacy stands apparent through the enforcement of focused initiatives in primary economic domains such as agriculture, the automotive sector, construction, as well as textiles. Despite facing obstacles in waste management systems and consumer behavior patterns, Romania's endeavors to comply with EU regulations and augment environmental safeguards exhibit a forward-thinking stance towards transitioning to a circular economy. Looking ahead, it's critical for Romania to carry on encouraging collaboration between stakeholders, pushing for innovation, and emphasizing education about circular economy methodologies. Through forming a solid Circular Economy Action Plan backed by clear reporting methods coupled with severe environmental legislations, Romania may straightforwardly progress towards a more sustainable and circular economic structure by 2030.

6. References

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