

Together we change Romania and its buildings!

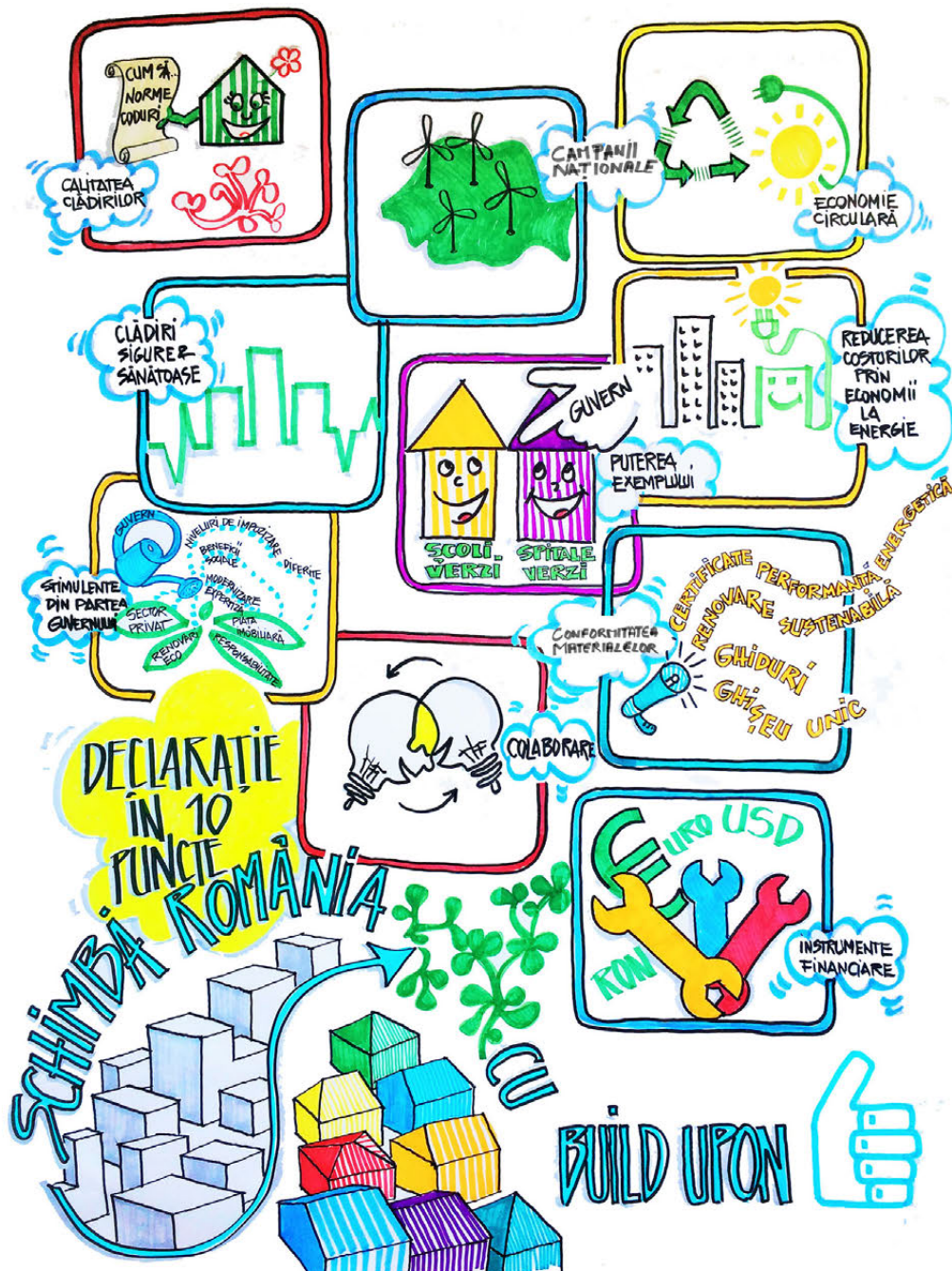
# Declaration in 10 points

for a better National Renovation Strategy and an efficient implementation plan

4000 km traveled sustainable, 7 cities, 6 regions, 10 public consultation sessions, over 350 participants.

Romania is a country with beautiful nature and beautiful people but today the people are often confronted with homes and other buildings that do not offer the safety, comfort, beauty, quality, health and value they deserve. Given the extensive and very personal interaction we have with our buildings each day - where we live, rest, study, work, play, heal, pray and more, spending more than 80% of our time - a significant improvement in our country's buildings can dramatically improve the quality of lives of people.

An ambitious yet practical National Renovation Strategy can inspire and create joint action by the national and local governments and the citizenry who demand and take responsibility to create the buildings and communities they deserve.



## The nationwide consultation process resulted in 10 recommendations on which the National Renovation Strategy must focus:



### 1. Safe and Healthy buildings with a long life

The strategy should address safety and health in buildings as main parameters of measuring the quality of life. Deep green renovations of buildings will eliminate people's exposure to toxic materials, improve fire safety and the air the occupants breathe.

In order to have healthier building we must respect comfort parameters regarding temperature, humidity, oxygen and CO2 quantities and the amount of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) released by the materials and the systems in the building.

Structural retrofits of buildings can require large investments and be significantly disruptive to the people and activities within the buildings. The size of the challenge, however, should not discourage the government and citizenry from addressing the issue with the utmost urgency it deserves. Solving this problem comprehensively will bring safety and quality of life to people, a massive increase in green jobs, and significantly increased value in our building stock.



### 2. Quality Buildings

The strategy should provide useful and actionable information from expert government agencies and organizations to explain the benefits of proper renovations and the "how to" of project execution. Defined legislation, stronger building codes and clear rules and precise criteria for energy efficient / green renovations is essential.

It should address also training on energy efficiency and green renovation concepts for public administration at the national and local level, and all building practitioners, train architects, train project managers, etc.

To ensure the high level of quality for the renovation works, the recommendation is to create an accreditation for firms, who would be selected on strict criteria, which have qualified personnel and the necessary and demonstrated expertise to execute quality projects.



### 3. Compliant Building Materials

Compliant materials are one of the main challenges of the renovation process, as well as for new buildings. The issue of the non-compliance with the technical specification sheets of the products is one of the main issues that influence the safety, quality, longevity, and energy efficiency.

It is necessary to ensure the quality of materials promised in the tender documents.

The problem of ensuring compliance should be achieved by the existence of a public, independent, non-political body to test products at random to ensure their compliance with the technical specification sheets and - in case of detection of serious non-compliance - to prohibit the sale of that product by the offending manufacturer.



#### 4. Costs reductions through energy, repair and health savings; especially for vulnerable citizens

Romania is listed in second place in the European Union for risk of fuel poverty and, adjusted for purchasing power, the country's citizens pay the highest price for energy as a percentage of income.

The strategy must address this issue and emphasize the importance of supporting high energy efficiency and quality in social housing in order to have very low ongoing utilities and repairs costs. An exemplary renovation with a long term perspective will reduce budgetary pressure and provide economic stimulus by transforming current and future energy subsidies toward funding for energy efficiency / green renovation. Better buildings also improve Romania's economic competitiveness by providing better spaces to live, work, study and undertake all of life's activities in more productive and enjoyable surroundings at a lower cost.

Regarding energy security we face a growing scarcity of natural resources and environmental concerns of fossil fuels, global population growth, problems with the feasibility of alternatives (such as shale gas), impending removal of energy subsidies for households, and significant concerns about the security of energy supplies in the near and long term. An ambitious renovation target will ensure the citizens of Romania will be protected from rising energy costs. More energy saved also means Romania could export its surplus energy to neighbors for further economic benefit.

Romania could achieve the EU target of 27% for energy efficiency with only measures addressing existing buildings and savings in gas consumption; extending the expected time for the depletion of these energy resources (currently 15 to 25 years) which would provide additional energy security to Romania. Furthermore, it will facilitate the transition toward an independent green economy.



#### 5. Incentives from the government

There is a strong business case for the private sector to pursue deep green renovations. Government can, however, take effective actions to accelerate market transformation that are justified from the numerous societal benefits provided including energy security, upgrading of workforce expertise and skills.

Further more, it would increase the tourism appeal and retention of critical professionals (e.g. healthcare workers, science and technology, etc.) and reduced future public health cost from safer and healthier buildings and communities.

The strategy should name concretely the incentives that the Government will give in the following 3 years along with an implementation scheme. These incentives should not be only under the form of State Aid but also require citizens to contribute to the process to greatly expand the number of beneficiaries reached and improve the feeling of ownership and responsibility of individual project outcomes.

Incentives should also recognize that all buildings are not created equal with respect to their positive or negative effects on people and communities. Modifying taxation levels to reward buildings that contribute to a better quality of life and communities is an effective use of funds while still allowing the private sector the flexibility to create the type and number of building projects the market needs.

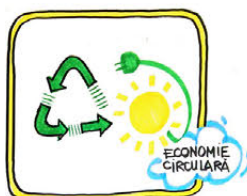


## 6. Innovative financial tools and mobilizing private funds

To address the massive scale of the challenge of our buildings, mobilizing private investment while providing targeted and effective government incentives is both necessary and a useful mechanism to create significant economic opportunity for the country.

Green loans and green mortgages providing preferential interest bring forward private investment at the beginning of building projects when it is most needed. Loans for financing green renovations and green homes are much less risky for the bank and the homeowner as the lower operational cost profile and greater valuations over time reduce the risk of mortgage non-payment. We need to build upon the existing initiatives like the Government guaranteed loan for renovations with CEC bank for single houses and block apartments and the initiatives of some private banks in order to create more attractive financial products for the citizens that want to renovate their homes at deep green and high energy efficiency levels.

The Government can accelerate the mobilization of private investment by offering free energy audits and support for exemplary retrofit projects for the innovators leading the market with deep green ambition for their projects. The “Prima Casa” (“First House”) program should require a greater level of green performance in eligible projects which will reward the government finances with better and less risky project outcomes. Also the development of the legislative framework for energy performance contracts should be a priority, encouraging partnerships with Energy Service Companies (ESCOs) that use energy savings to provide solutions without upfront investment required from the building owner. These initiatives should be supported with market awareness programs.



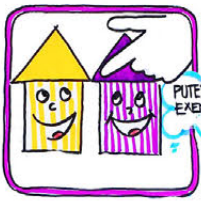
## 7. Circular Economy approach

The strategy must protect Romania’s fragile nature and natural resources through sustainable construction practices and introduction of “circular economy” approaches that disconnect economic growth from resource destruction and scarcity.

The strategy has to support and request an analysis over the entire building’s life cycle. The buildings have to be designed, built and renovated in a sustainable manner with an optimum quantity and type of materials that will generate a minimum quantity of waste and at the end of the utilization period facilitate the buildings reuse or deconstruction and effective reuse of materials.

Construction activity is one of the largest contributors to problematic waste going to landfill and illegal dumping. The Construction Industry can, however, also contribute to the Circular Economy by rethinking the concept of much of the waste as an economically viable input to future products and projects to its own and other industries.

Homes, buildings and communities that reconnect urban areas with the beauty of nature will bring joy and serve as an important reminder of why we need to protect our country.

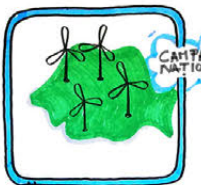


## 8. The power of example

The strategy should provide support for demonstration buildings that can inspire us. Government should stimulate exemplary projects and guarantee an efficient use of National and European money for creating examples of best practices that can be replicated.

Public money should be available only for excellence in buildings retrofit efforts not mediocrity.

Focusing on upgrading towards “green schools” and “green hospitals” unlocks proven benefits of greater education performance and health outcomes while helping to retain our most valuable teaching and healthcare professionals. The deep renovation of a building is also an optimal time to implement new solutions (such as fiber optic internet and smart building technology) to ensure our citizens have the world’s best technology to improve their capabilities and quality of life.



## 9. National and local campaigns of awareness

The strategy must support the organization of awareness campaigns in mass-media (including online, radio, TV, print, and outdoor) to raise the interest about deep green renovation of all stakeholders and especially the end-users. This should include offering guides to renovate buildings properly for each building typology.

Creating a “one stop shop” in each city to obtain planning permission for renovations will increase understanding of and respect for the law, decrease the bureaucracy and decrease the friction of citizens taking action to properly improve their buildings. Improving awareness of the benefits of Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) and building permit procedures and improving quality control of those procedures will improve confidence in these mechanisms as useful tools to benefit owners understanding of the expected performance of their homes and other buildings.

A transparent, online database of EPCs, which everyone interested in a real estate transaction can access in order to find information about the energy performance of a building, will be a useful tool for improving building quality and energy efficiency.



## 10. Collaboration and engagement

The process to define and implement the National Renovation Strategy must be transparent, ethical and inclusive to improve the lives of all citizens. It should approach the process from an inter-Ministerial, interdisciplinary and holistic approach to ensure maximum efficiency and effective outcomes.

Other government strategies, such as ones for Sustainable Development, Climate Change and the new National Energy Strategy of Romania must be aligned as an ambitious and well implemented National Renovation Strategy will contribute significantly to solving many of the challenges and create opportunities identified in these other strategies.

Safer buildings, more comfortable, healthier, more beautiful, more valuable with a lower energy consumption and a reduce CO2 footprint are a priority not only for Romania, but for the whole Europe. Thus, partnerships are essential at national level, but also on regional scale and inside the European Union.

## Change Romania with BUILD UPON!

Change Romania with BUILD UPON aims to co-create our National Renovation Strategy. Co-create is a key word because we need a strategy that is not only something we should do but it represents us. In Romania we started this campaign more than one year ago. After mapping the key stakeholders and identifying the main barriers to deep green renovation, we launched on 7 April 2016 a series of workshops – participative sessions of public consultation. During two months we met more than 350 persons in 7 cities of Romania, traveling more than 4000 km.

The scope was to improve the dialogue with all categories of stakeholders representing central and local government, business and academic environment, professionals associations, NGOs and civil society. Using the innovative format of “World Café” workshops participants developed ideas and identified solutions to the main barriers. The financial-economic barrier and awareness raising were considered by the majority of involved stakeholders as the two barriers on which we should focus our actions and that should be mainly addressed in the strategy.



The consultation process also resulted in the general acknowledgement that “Deep renovation” has to become Romania’s target. Romania should also assume a position on the renovation scenario that will follow. A deep market transformation was expressed as the unanimous desire and necessity.

*Romania needs a change and this change doesn't have to come only from the Government but from all of us. We need people who are not waiting for someone up there to do something but they do. “It is not only the responsibility of Government to do something but of everyone”, said recently the Prime-Minister Dacian Cioloș.*

We are all responsible for transforming our built environment in a better place to live and we must assume this responsibility. The Government can establish a path through the strategy but all others have to contribute to implement the strategy efficiently.

Romania’s strategy was assessed by Joint Research Center of European Union as a “best practice” in Europe being on the 3rd place for complying with the requirements of the European Commission. How can we improve it?

The feedback of the consulted community was that we need an effective implementation plan with concrete measures and actions to reach the deep renovation target. An ambitious engagement of the Government will catalyze the market transformation. This will support the transition to Net Zero Energy Buildings (NZEBS), energy security, energy poverty reduction, sustainable development, green and circular economy, job creation and well-being for all Romania’s citizens.

## TESTIMONIALS



### Cristiana Pașca Palmer, Minister, Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests

*"One of the priorities of the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forest is the green buildings sector. We are working together with Romania Green Building Council to push the market forward. With your help and involving all the stakeholders we are aiming to increase this sector of green buildings in Romania. We all want better, healthier buildings; that are more comfortable, safer, with low monthly energy bills and with a low impact on the environment."*

### Anca Ginavar, General Director, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration

*"The Ministry considers the Build Upon project and its results as being very important for our society and we hope that this partnership will become stronger. The Build Upon project is complementary with a series of actions that our Ministry has taken and we are looking forward developing them together."*

### Mihai Chirica, Mayor, Iași Municipality

*"Romania's National Renovation Strategy is helping to protect life and also increasing its quality. The Development Strategy of Iași. will have a component regarding the Environment which will specifically target the green buildings sector and how we can have a more sustainable development of the Municipality of Iași."*

To learn more about the Build Upon co-Creation process, download individual reports on each workshop, and learn how to get involved in this important initiative go to [www.BuildUpon.eu](http://www.BuildUpon.eu)



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## SIGN THIS DECLARATION to have better buildings

Organizations and people that sign this Declaration believe that we deserve better building and are promising to contribute and support the Romanian Government to elaborate and apply public policies to create such buildings and communities that can be a place of joy, innovation, and well-being to host happy and healthy inhabitants with a high standard of quality of life.

There are numerous success stories today of realized Romanian projects achieving dramatic energy savings with little to no additional costs or short payback periods that give us confidence that we are prepared for and will benefit from higher ambitions.

The Romania Green Building Council's analysis and experience confirms that Romania has already successfully executed various renovation projects that achieve the highest quality and green performance possible with a strong business case; demonstrating we have all the necessary expertise, systems, materials, technologies and strategies to achieve any ambitious plan we set for ourselves.

*Yours faithfully,*

Romania Green Building Council  
Dorin Beu, PhD.  
President

Monica Ardeleanu, PhD.  
Executive Director  
Campaign Leader "Change Romania with BUILD UPON!"



To add your name and support this declaration,  
please send us an email to [monica.ardeleanu@rogbc.org](mailto:monica.ardeleanu@rogbc.org)

