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Operational Programme
Regional Development
2007-2013



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Elaborated under project: BG161PO001/5-01/2008/056
Production and distribution of informational materials for the Operational Programme
"Regional Development" 2007-2013 (OPRD)
Priority axis 5: "Technical assistance" OPRD. The project is financed by the European
Regional Development Fund and state budget of the Republic of Bulgaria.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE:

To improve the quality of living and working environment with better access to basic services and new opportunities for improved regional competitiveness and sustainable development.



**Programme budget: BGN
3 131 821 212**



OPRD is financed by the European Regional Development Fund and state budget of the Republic of Bulgaria

Priority axis 1: Sustainable and integrated urban development

Budget: BGN 1 680 190 914

Beneficiaries: Municipalities on the territory of 86 urban agglomeration areas, European Investment Bank (in the capacity of a JESSICA Holding Fund), Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Health, Social Assistance Agency, Employment Agency, Ministry of Interior /Directorate General "Fire Safety and Protection of Population Service", Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, "Housing Policy" Directorate in MRDPW, Housing Renovation Fund, non-governmental organizations and universities, when acting as non-profit operators for provision of health, social, educational and cultural services.

Priority axis 2: Regional and local accessibility

Budget: BGN 782 955 301

Beneficiaries: Road Infrastructure Agency, 86 municipalities situated within urban agglomeration areas, Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism, Executive Agency "Electronic Communication Networks and Information Systems".

Priority axis 3: Sustainable tourism development

Budget: BGN 387 437 451

Beneficiaries: Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism, Council of Ministers, 264 municipalities, including in partnership with associations of municipalities, local, regional and national tourism organizations registered in the National Tourism Register, public authorities managing immovable cultural valuables of national and world significance.

Priority axis 4: Local development and cooperation

Budget: BGN 175 381 989

Beneficiaries: District administrations, 178 municipalities outside urban agglomeration areas, non-governmental organizations in partnership with municipalities or district administrations

Priority axis 5: Technical assistance

Budget: BGN 105 855 557

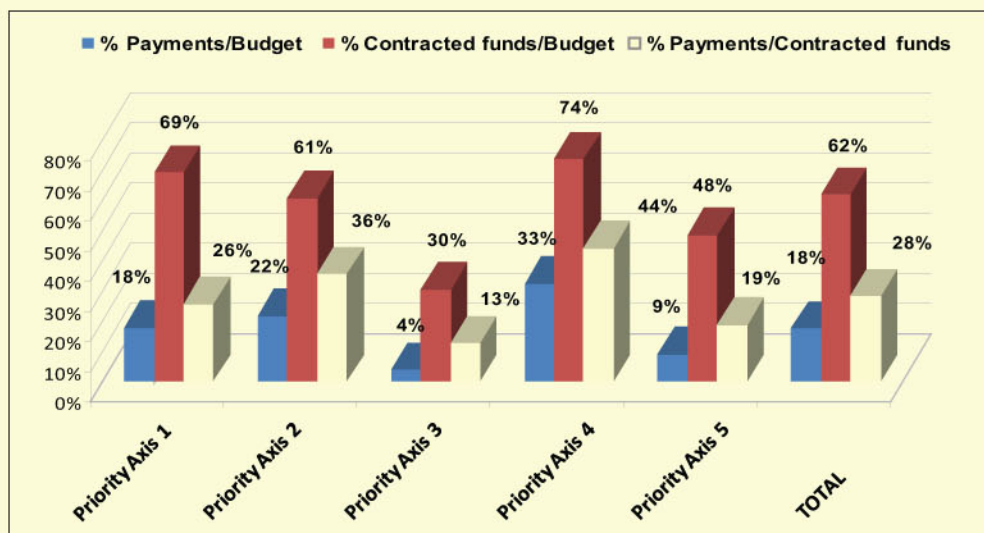
Beneficiaries: The Managing Authority of OPRD, "Housing Policy" Directorate and "Internal Audit" Directorate at the MRDPW, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism, Ministry of Interior, Road Infrastructure Agency, Social Assistance Agency, Employment Agency, Executive Agency "Electronic Communication Networks and Information Systems".



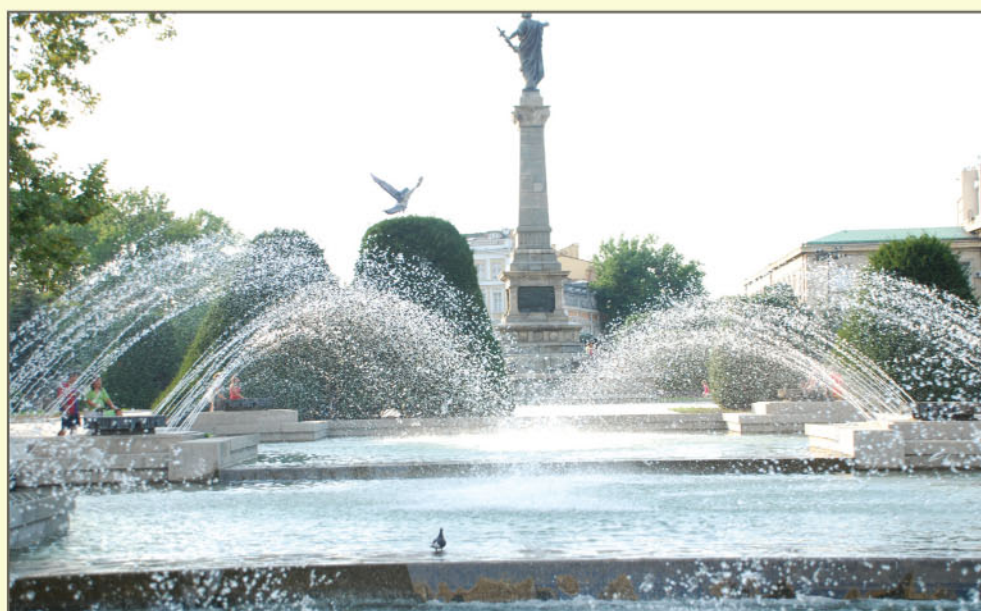
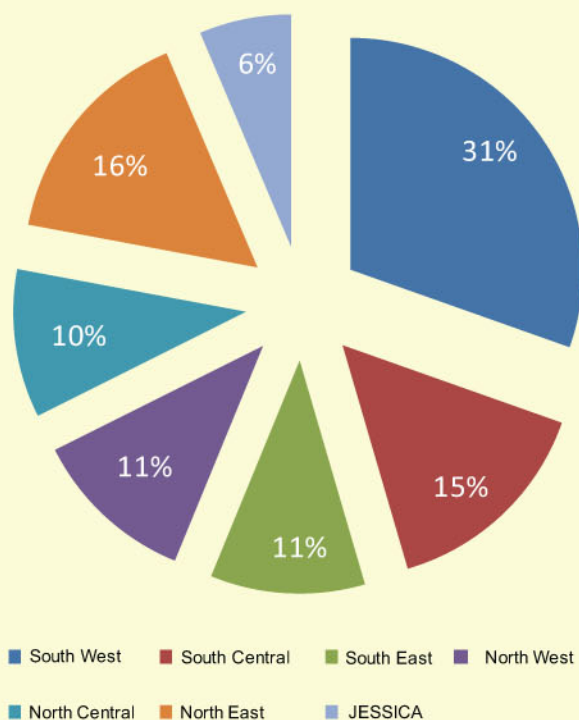
Indicators of the overall progress of OPRD implementation

- Published are **44 grant schemes** for a total of **3,053 billion** or over **97%** of OPRD funding.
- In **2012** the last available resources under the programme will be allocated to the third consecutive **scheme for improvement of the urban environment** – “**Green and accessible urban environment**”.
- Under the programme are **submitted a total of 1652 project proposals** and signed **675 contracts to a total amount** of grant – **1,936 billion** or **62%** of the programme’s budget.
- The total amount of payments as of 31.10.2011 ads up to **549 million** or **28% of contracted funds** and **18% of OPRD budget**. The total amount of certified funds is **246 million**.

With these indicators OPRD finds its place among the most successful programmes in Bulgaria. Through supported activities we reach every region of the country, demonstrating visible results and contributing for improved quality of living and working environment of each Bulgarian citizen through **better access to basic services and new opportunities for increased regional competitiveness and sustainable development**.



*% paid funds by regions at NUTS 2 level for the
01.01.2007 – 31.10.2011 period*



Key projects under Operational Programme Regional Development 2007-2013

1. Deinstitutionalization of children in the Republic of Bulgaria

Within the framework of Operation 1.1 "Social infrastructure" a grant scheme **"Support for deinstitutionalization of social institutions providing services to children at risk"** is in implementation with a budget of **107 million**. Specific beneficiaries are 62 municipalities in urban agglomerations. The scheme aims to **support construction/ reconstruction/ renovation of an adequate infrastructure on the territory of urban agglomerations**, to replace institutional care and provide new opportunities to children with disabilities and their families to receive assistance within the community and in their natural environment. **To be established are 133 ACFT (Accommodation Centers of Family Type) and 27 Protected Homes.**

The Ministry of Health is provided with a grant of **BGN 10 million** for restructuring of 8 pilot Children's Medical and Social Care Homes in order to provide innovative and integrated deinstitutionalization services and prevent abandonment of children aged 0-3.



2. Support for reconstruction, renovation and equipping of medical and healthcare institutions – state and municipal

Provided are **BGN 131 million** as a grant to the Ministry of Health for reconstruction and renovation of **13 state medical institutions**. Also envisaged are **BGN 140 million** for reconstruction and renovation of **municipal** medical facilities (2 grant schemes under Priority axis 1 and Priority axis 4).

3. Reconstruction and rehabilitation of second- and third-class roads

Main objective of the scheme is to encourage accessibility, interconnectivity and cohesion within regions through improvement and rehabilitation of regional and local roads. Beneficiary is the Road Infrastructure Agency. The total amount of funds is **BGN 501 million**. Rehabilitated / reconstructed will be approximately **820 km of road sections** on the territory of the country. As of 31.10.2011 are rehabilitated and put into exploitation a total of **227 km road sections**. Under the scheme is being implemented the project for widening of Sofia ring-road near Mladost Quarter (BGN 33,9 million).



4. Support for urban transport in the big cities

Within Priority axis 1: "Sustainable and integrated urban development", Operation 1.5 "Sustainable urban transport systems" under Operational Programme Regional Development are provided grants to the amount of BGN 411 million for development of integrated urban transport in the 7 big cities of the country – Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas, Pleven, Russe and Stara Zagora. The operation will focus mainly on creating more effective and speedy urban transport with less energy consumption, construction of more accessible secondary infrastructure of public transport networks and introduction of environmentally friendly modes of public transport. In the Managing Authority of OPRD is **established a Unit** for management of projects for integrated urban transport

● ***Integrated urban transport project of Burgas Municipality***

The "Integrated urban transport in Burgas" project is the **first major project** within the meaning of Article 39 of Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 in line of OPRD. The total amount of the project adds up to BGN 131 million, of which the grant amount under OPRD is BGN 101 million and BGN 30 million is the contribution by Burgas Municipality. The grant contract is signed on 26 November 2010 and will be implemented for 36 months. The project is approved by the European Commission on 16 August 2011.

The project provides **a set of measures for modernization of public transport and encouragement of transportation in alternative ways** (on foot or by bicycle), as well as **studies for further investments** to build on the results achieved.



- ***Integrated urban transport project of Sofia Municipality***

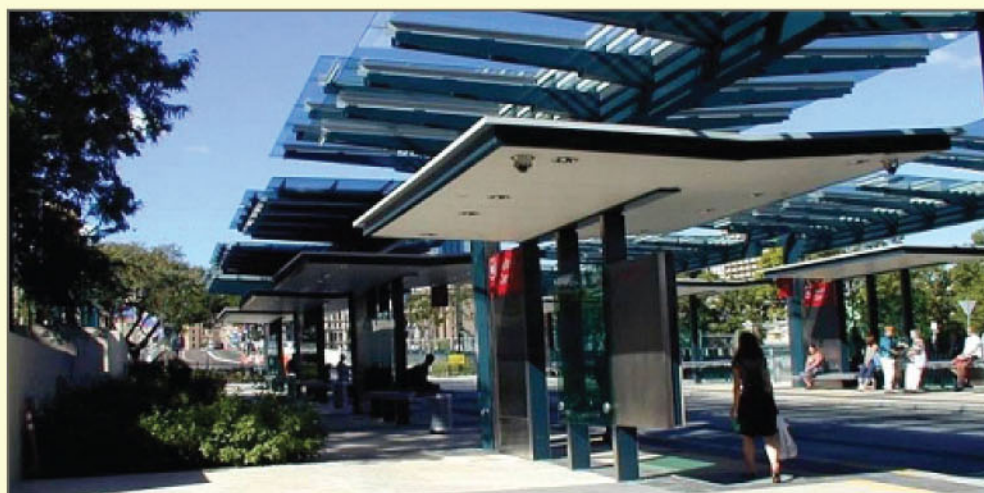
The **“Support for integrated urban transport in Sofia Municipality”** project is the **second major project** within the meaning of Article 39 of Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 in line of OPRD. The total amount of the project adds up to BGN 122 million, of which the grant amount under OPRD is BGN 98 million and BGN 24 million is the contribution by Sofia Municipality. The grant contract is signed on 23 August 2011 and will be implemented for 36 months.

The project envisages **a set of measures for improving the quality of public transport and encouraging environmentally friendly urban transport.**

- ***Preparation of projects for the other five big cities – BGN 204 million***

For implementation of projects for urban transport modernization in the other five big cities in Bulgaria under OPRD are envisaged funds to the amount of **BGN 204 million**. They are allocated between the five cities based on number of residents, population using public transport and tourist flow.

In relation to the projects for modernization of the urban transport, high quality feasibility studies should be elaborated for each of the cities. In relation to the preparation of projects for modernization of urban transport, under Priority axis 5: “Technical assistance” of the operational programme is being implemented the **“Elaboration of documentary package for modernization and development of sustainable urban transport in the five big cities (Plovdiv, Stara Zagora, Varna, Russe and Pleven)”** project.



Components of the urban transport projects:

- Planning of transport for transition from personal vehicles to public transport, bicycles or walking;
- Traffic management information systems;
- E-ticketing systems environment friendly rolling stock of buses/trolley buses;
- Improvement and development of the urban transport infrastructure;
- Configuration of routes for the purpose of ensuring special lanes with right of way priority.



5. Support for housing policy

- **Support for energy efficiency in multifamily residential buildings**

Operational Programme Regional Development supports implementation of energy efficiency measures through scheme BG161PO001/1.2-01/2011 **"Support for energy efficiency in multifamily residential buildings"** in 36 urban centers. The scheme is published on 18.07.2011 and is an integral part of the National Housing Strategy. The total amount of grant comes up to **BGN 50 million**. Specific beneficiary is "Housing Policy" Directorate within the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, responsible for implementing housing policy in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Energy efficiency measures in multifamily residential buildings will be implemented in 36 urban centers, including energy efficiency audits and introduction of energy efficiency measures in multifamily residential buildings (insulation, replacement of woodwork, local installations and/or connections to gas and heating systems).

- **Support for establishment of a financial engineering instrument Housing Renovation Fund – BGN 13 million.**

The objective is to establish an instrument for financial engineering to provide loans / bank guarantees for housing policy.



6. Support for social homes of vulnerable groups

A scheme launched on 30.08.2011 is with a budget of **BGN 16 million**. It is aiming to provide contemporary social homes for accommodation of vulnerable groups is under implementation through renovation and modification of the function of existing buildings, property of public authorities or non-profit organizations. The scheme is contributing to social inclusion of vulnerable people through improving their living standard and overall improvement of the quality of housing in urban communities.

7. Joint European Initiative JESSICA

Total amount of **BGN 65 million**. The JESSICA initiative aims to support sustainable and integrated urban development. In Bulgaria this initiative is implemented through OPRD by means of a Holding Fund managed by the European Investment Bank and two Urban Development Funds (UDF) supporting investment projects on the territory of Sofia and the six major cities. **UDF Sofia** is funded with a capital of BGN 24,48 million and provides low interest loans and equity for sustainable projects on the territory of Sofia City. **UDF Regional** is funded with a capital of BGN 36,72 million and provides low interest loans and equity for projects on the territory of each of the six big cities in Bulgaria after the capital – Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas, Russe, Stara Zagora and Pleven.



8. Development of cultural infrastructure – key projects of the Ministry of Culture

The Ministry of Culture is implementing **14 contracts** to a grant total of **BGN 20,4 million** for reconstruction and renovation of cultural sites of national significance as "Sveta Sofia" Basilica, Bulgaria Hall; "Aleko Konstantinov" Satirical Theatre-Sofia, Russe Opera, etc.

Provided are **BGN 33,3 million** under 10 contracts supporting development of immovable cultural valuables of national and world significance such as Ancient Cultural Communication Complex "Serdika" (so-called Largo), the National Historical and Archaeological Reserve (NHAR) "Pliska", the Historical Reserve (HR) "Trapezitsa" in Veliko Tarnovo, "Sv. Georgi" (St. George) Church in Arbanassi village, Eski Mosque and establishment of Museum of Religions, Stara Zagora, etc.

The Ministry of Culture is also implementing 6 contracts to a total amount of **BGN 5,5 million** for organization of events with regional and national scope and impact, contributing to development of sustainable cultural tourism, diversification of tourism supply and an increase of tourism benefits – festivals, outdoor activities, varied cultural events, etc.



9. Support for development of tourist attractions in municipalities

Within the framework of 2 OPRD schemes are supported 61 projects aiming to improve the condition of cultural valuables and natural landmarks on the territory of municipalities through a complex of measures for development of an integrated tourism product – a combination of infrastructure, marketing and conservation activities. The approved projects are to a total grant amount of **BGN 202 million**. Support is provided to some of the key landmarks of the country, and OPRD funding will contribute for improving their attractiveness:

- the Ancient City of Nessebar;
- the Madara Rider and Shumen Fortress – Shumen Municipality;
- the Archaeological Complex Perperikon – Kardjali Municipality;
- the Ancient Bulgarian capital Veliki Preslav – Veliki Preslav Municipality;
- the Belogradchik Fortress – Belogradchik Municipality;
- the “Assenovata krepost” Fortress – Assenovgrad Municipality;
- the “Sveta Anastasia” Island – Burgas Municipality;
- the Architectural and Ethnographic Complex “Etara” and Architectural and Historical Reserve in Bojentsi village – Gabrovo Municipality;
- the Sofia Museum with active presence of mineral water – Sofia Municipality;
- the “Ledenika” Cave – Vratsa Municipality;
- the Archaeological Reserve of Hissar City.



Support will be provided for development of new attractions with significant potential to attract tourists and increase tourism benefits.

Challenges before the Managing Authority of OPRD for the next programming period are related to active participation in discussions on defining the new strategic objectives and priorities of Cohesion Policy at European level, elaboration of the programming policy for development of the Republic of Bulgaria until 2020, effective coordination and cooperation in strategic planning, programming of state regional development after 2014. Operational Programme Regional Development for the 2014-2020 period will be focused on territorial cohesion considering specific territorial features of development, practical application of an integrated approach in cities and urban areas and reinforced use of the leverage effect of the financial engineering instrument JESSICA.

The Managing Authority of OPRD has already commenced the process of elaboration of a detailed social and economic analysis for the purpose of Operational Regional Development Programme's for 2014-2020. It aims to identify strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats for development of Bulgarian regions, priority areas for intervention and overcoming development inconsistencies, utilization of possibilities for accelerated and sustainable social and economic development and territorial cohesion.

Next steps of the programming process include the set up of a working group to develop the programme, elaboration of a national concept for spatial development for the needs of OPRD 2014-2020, practical application of the geographic information system for, definition of priorities, indicators and financial allocation of funds, active participation in working groups at national and European level for defending positions and defining new strategic objectives and priorities.

The Managing Authority of Operational Programme Regional Development 2007-2013 cooperates actively with the Central Coordination Unit of the Council of Ministers in preparation of state positions for the next programming period and participates actively in the activities of working groups for preparation of the National Reform Programme, National Development Programme, sub-committee with the "Territorial cohesion and urban issues" committee for coordination of funds, Working group of Member States "Urban development", etc.

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