

Implementation of the Structural funds in Bulgaria

Monthly Brief, August 2015

Horizontal issues and legislative procedures

- The Law on the ESIF management was adopted by the Council of Ministers and submitted to the National Assembly for approval. During the month started the review of the law by the relevant parliamentary committees.
- Monthly update of the ExAC implementation status is carried out and a summarized Action plan for implementation of the ExAC that are not fulfilled is published at www.eufunds.bg.
- Ensuring the functioning of Working group “Regional policy and coordination of Structural instruments”:
 - Bulgarian representatives in SAWP, COESIF and EGESIF were provided with comments and instructions on the discussed documents after coordination with the relevant domestic institutions.
- Draft MoU and Template Agreement with the WB are ready to be officially signed on 1 September 2015.

Information and Publicity

- In August the Central Coordination Unit (CCU) temporary discontinued the media campaign in national TV and radio stations due to the summer period. The aim is to maintain the intensity of broadcasts in September with regards to the new information occasions to be communicated – forthcoming national campaign of the Network of district information points (DIPs), the events dedicated to the 25th anniversary of INRERREG and the common information activity of MAs for 2015.
- On 30-31 August a meeting of the National network of communication officers of MAs took place in Pravets. The main topic of discussion was the forthcoming information campaign of the Network of 28 information points, the events dedicated to the 25th anniversary of INRERREG and the common information activity of MAs.
- CCU also continued the regular update of the Single information web-portal with news, information and documents about 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming periods as well as with information about the activities of the DIPs for EU Cohesion Policy. The Facebook profile of Eufunds.bg has also been actively used to disseminate information about the operational programmes and the work of the DIPs.

Activities of DIPs:

- Based on the Monthly reports of DIPs, in August 2015 there were:
 - a total number of visitors in DIPs amounting to 1 212 (until now a total of 64 604)
 - a total of 1 411 requests for information received (until now a total of 61 548)
 - a total of 1 439 answers of requests of information were sent (until now a total of 61 161)
 - 253 publications in media (until now a total of 24 845)
 - 41 events with a total number of 1 038 people invited (until now a total of 4 749 events/191 180 people invited)

- 1 279 were present at organized by DIPs events (until now a total of 152 110).

Events, trainings, campaigns:

- Based on the participation of the DIPs in the information campaigns OPs the Network was focused on the organisation of local events for promotion of the open calls for proposals. In addition they continued to organize series of events dedicated to the work with the Unified Management and Information System for users in terms of compulsory e-submission of project proposals.

UMIS 2020

- In August 326 project applications were sent to the Managing authorities using the Unified Management Information System 2020, from which:
 - 193 project applications for the Call for proposals “Inactive youth” (OP “Human Resources Development 2014-2020”);
 - 95 project applications for the Call for proposals “New workplace 2015” (OP “Human Resources Development 2014-2020”);
 - 37 project applications for the Call for proposals “Improvement of the production capacity of SMEs” (OP “Innovation and Competitiveness 2014-2020”);
 - 1 project application for the Call for proposals “Employment and social assistance centers” (OP “Human Resources Development 2014-2020”).
- In September there are deadlines for 8 Calls for proposals.

Certifying Authority

- In August 2015 the Certifying Authority performed checks on Reports on Certification and Statements of Eligible Expenditure submitted by two Managing Authorities for “OP “Regional Development” and OP “Technical Assistance”.
- For both Operational Programmes - “Regional Development” and “Technical Assistance“ the Certifying Authority performed on-the-spot checks at the Managing Authorities in August 2015. The findings were sent to the Managing Authorities.
- In August 2015 the Certifying Authority performed three on-the-spot check at beneficiary level – two beneficiaries under OP “Environment” and one under OP “Regional Development”.
- The Certifying Authority submitted to the European Commission in August one Certificate for OP “Regional Development”.
- In August 2015, two payments from the EC were received as a result of submitted Applications for payment. Both tranches were under OP “Regional Development“ and the total amount received was 17 129 063 EUR.

OP / FUND	Certified expenditures up to 31.08.2015	Interim payments received from EC as per 31.08.2015
<i>ERDF</i>	3 153 695 625 €	2 137 856 481 €
1.OP Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy	1 345 849 006 €	763 209 598 €
2. OP Regional Development	1 092 398 041 €	862 160 702 €
3. OP Technical Assistance	40 902 918 €	34 767 481 €
4. OP Transport	392 289 709 €	276 560 674 €
5. OP Environment	282 255 951 €	201 158 026 €
<i>CF</i>	1 843 083 892 €	1 389 459 871 €
1. OP Environment	738 034 652 €	558 308 595 €
2. OP Transport	1 105 049 240 €	831 151 276 €
<i>ESF</i>	1 208 925 943 €	998 835 572 €
1. OP Human Resources Development	1 077 740 824 €	887 338 659 €
2. OP Administrative Capacity	131 185 119 €	111 496 913 €
<i>Total 2007-2013 SCF</i>	6 205 705 460 €	4 526 151 924 €
<i>Total IPA Cross-border Programmes</i>	53 481 431 €	45 365 822 €

Operational programmes 2007 -2013:

OP “Environment”

- On 05.08.2015 was held the official opening ceremony of the new regional waste management system in Vidin. The total investment is over MEUR10. The facility will serve about 100,000 residents in 11 municipalities and will create new working places. The waste management system has a capacity of 309,600 tons and plants for composting and recycling of construction waste.

OP “Transport”

- On August 21, 2015 was presented the project “Improvement of navigation and topohydrographic measurements along the Danube”, implemented by the Executive Agency “Exploration and Maintenance of the Danube River”. Under the project were built nine new automatic stations in the Bulgarian part of the river, which take into account water temperature, wind speed, air pressure, visibility etc. under the project were delivered 160 floating lighted buoys, 980 not illuminated signs and 20 headlights with a monitoring system. This activity will improve and modernize the navigation system in the Bulgarian section of the river.
- In August was also put into operation the system for geodesic surveys, which is also part of the project. The measurements are with high accuracy and will be used for the creation of hydrographic maps and the update of existing electronic navigational charts. The network is connected with the European geodesic reference system.
- On August 21, 2015 National Company Strategic Infrastructure Projects and Mott MacDonald Limited, Great Britain signed a contract based on a tender procedure via public invitation conveyed with subject: „Road safety audit of the preliminary design for

completion of Hemus Motorway, Stage 1“. The price for the services of the contractor is BGN 3 000 excluding VAT and the time for completion is 77 days.

- On August 28, 2015 started the rehabilitation of sections of the railway infrastructure along Plovdiv-Burgas line - reconstruction, repair and modernization of power substations Stara Zagora and Nova Zagora and building a system for remote control of power substations, sectional positions and sectional disconnecting switches from the central dispatch center in Plovdiv. The construction is part of the project “Renewal of railway sections along the Plovdiv-Burgas railway line”.

OP “Development of the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy”

- Gas Interconnector Project Bulgaria-Serbia. Organizational and management activities of the project.

On August 31, 2015 in the premises of "Bulgartransgaz" EAD was held a meeting between representatives of the Minister of Economy, “SRBIJAGAS” and “Bulgartransgaz” EAD for discussing the technical parameters of the Gas Interconnector.

A roadmap for project implementation coordinated with the Serbian side was submitted for consideration by the Central and South Eastern Europe Gas Connectivity (CESEC). The meeting will be held in Brussels, in order to discuss financing the Gas Interconnector Project of Serbian territory.

Programming period 2014-2020:

OP Regions in Growth

- On 14.08.2015 the MA organized training with regard to the creation of the Intermediate Bodies under PA1 Sustainable Urban Development. Representatives of the 39 municipalities designated as IBs discussed in details with the team of the MA the Instructions for structuring the IBs.
- On 14.08.2015 was announced the grant procedure BG16RFOP001-8.002 "Budget line MA of OPRD 2014-2020". The purpose of this procedure is to assist the Managing Authority of Operational Programme "Regions in growth" (OPRD) 2014-2020 for the implementation of management functions and program implementation. Beneficiary under the procedure is the Managing Authority of Operational Programme "Regions for Growth" 2014-2020.
- By written procedure the Monitoring Committee of OPRG approved Methodology and criteria for selecting the operations under Priority Axis 2 “Support for energy efficiency support centers in peripheral areas” procedure: BG16RFOP001-2.001 “Energy Efficiency in outlying areas””. The scheme was announced end of August 2015. The purpose of the procedure is to improve the energy efficiency of public infrastructure and housing in the 28 small municipalities - fourth level core centers of national polycentric system in line with the National Spatial Development Concept of Bulgaria for the period 2013-2025. Total budget - 207 MBGN. The deadline for submitting proposals is 31.05.2016.

OP Environment

- On 06.08.2015 the Draft “Guidelines for the integration of environmental policy and policy on climate change in ESIF- phase II- Implementation of Partnership Agreement and OPs in 2014 – 2020” was published for public consultation on the website of MOEW in the portal for public consultation. The second phase aims to ensure implementation of the mandatory legislative requirements in the field of environment and to encourage the selection of projects contributing to the greatest possible degree of environmental protection and sustainable development.
- The document has drawn general and specific criteria for evaluation of project proposals by different sectors and environmental policy. The general criteria are applicable to any program financed by ESIF. The specific criteria are in accordance with each program. The second part of the Guidelines will be approved by the Council of Ministers. The deadline for consultations is 15.09.2015.
- On 08.14.2015 official opening ceremony of water cycle in Montana was held. Total investment is MEUR 27.

OP Transport and Transport Infrastructure

- On August 28, 2015 National Company “Strategic Infrastructure Projects” launched a public invitation for participation in the procedure with subject: „Road safety audit of the preliminary design of Struma Motorway Lot 3.1 Tunnel Zheleznitsa“. The estimated value of the services is BGN 10 000 excluding VAT and the time for completion is 56 days.

Operational Program “Innovations and Competitiveness” (OPIC)

- During the reported period were held 2 meetings of the Thematic Working Group for support for the development of Methodology and criteria for selection of operations for procedure “Support for innovation in enterprises” under Priority Axis 1 „Technological development and Innovation” of OPIC. The Methodology and criteria are in process of finalization as the procedure is envisaged to be launched in September in accordance with the Annual Indicative Working Program for 2015.
The objective of the procedure is provision of investment support of increasing innovation activity of enterprises in the thematic areas identified in Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization.

OP Human Resources Development

- OPHRD MA launched procedure for direct awarding BG05M9OP001-1.007 “Increasing the effectiveness of the employment policy”. The objective is to decrease imbalances at the labor market and to support the economic growth through identification of the needs for qualified employees in certain economic sectors and professions, as well as to prepare forecasts of the developments of the labor market in Bulgaria, incl. evaluation of the active labor market policy. The target long term effect is to improve the processes of planning, implementation and evaluation of labor market policies and services. The direct beneficiary is the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy through “Labor market policy and labor mobility” Directorate. The budget is 1 mln.leva, the deadline for submission of application is 30.09.2015. Only e-application is foreseen.

- OPHRD MA launched procedure for direct awarding BG05M9OP001-2.003 “Fostering care 2015”. The objective is to support the deinstitutionalization policy through continuation and further develop the model for development of fostering care for children in institutions, children at risk and with disabilities, as well as to develop new models for work and services for children at risk and their parents. The direct beneficiary is the Social Assistance Agency and potential partners are the Bulgarian Municipalities. The budget is 51,6 mln.leva, the deadline for submission of application is 01.09.2015. Only e-application is foreseen.
- OPHRD MA launched procedure for direct awarding BG05M9OP001-3.004 “Optimization and innovations in the General Labor Inspectorate”. The objective is to optimize work processes in the Agency through improvement of the planning of the inspection activities with new database for the control objects and system for planning with risk assessment. Further to these is planned introduction of innovations in the training of the inspectors. The budget is 4,855 mln.leva, the deadline for submission of applications is 13.08.2015. Only e-application is foreseen.

OP Science and Education for Smart Growth

- On 11 August, the Ministry of Education and Science published for public discussion draft Guidelines for applicants for the first two planned schemes to be launched under OPSESG – “Educational integration for students from ethnic minorities and/or for looking or received international protection” and “Support for preschool education and preparation of vulnerable children”. The period for comments expired on 26 August and the Managing Authority is in a process of launching the respective operations.
- In the course of the month, continued the intensive dialogue with the Commission on the criteria and operations under the Priority axis for research and technological development. These are in a process of finalization and in September it is expected that operations will be submitted for approval by the Monitoring Committee.

OP Good Governance

- On 20 August, the Managing Authority launched public discussion on the preparation of the Indicative Working Programme for 2016. Comments and proposals will be expected until 10 September.
- On 27 August OPGG MA conducted the first information day under the Programme related to the launched procedure under the Operational Programme “Structuring of data and analytical activities in implementation of the strategic document for development of the state administration, e-government and introducing e-government in the judiciary”.

OP under the Fund for European Aid to the most deprived 2014-2020:

- All procedures related to providing food to the most deprived persons are currently in progress.
- 83 contracts amounting to EUR 1 167 397 have been signed so far with the municipalities for granting support to 108 soup kitchens. Warm meal is provided to 8210 users.
- The purchase of food products will be realized by a tendering procedure, in compliance with the Public Procurement Act. The tender for purchasing includes 21 different types of foods.

The deadline for applications was 03 August 2015. On 04.08.2015 was held public opening of the received 42 offers. Currently the offers are under evaluation.

- Bulgarian Red Cross was chosen as partner organization, responsible for the delivery and distribution of food packages.
- Individual packages with food products for 2015 will be granted to:
 - 255 000 individuals and families who have been supported by targeted assistance for heating for winter season 2014/2015;
 - 10 000 individuals and families affected by accidental disaster (force majeure), who have received one-time assistance in accordance with art. 16 of the Social Assistance Act, based on established individual level of material deprivation.

First packages are expected to be delivered by the end of the year.

Data on OPs financial progress is attached.

OP Implementation as of 31.08.2015

EURO

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	Programme budget *			Contracted		Payments		Received payments from EC	
	Total	EU Funding	National co-funding	Total as of 31.08.2015	% implementation	Total as of 31.08.2015	% implementation	Received payments from the EC (EU part) as of 31.08.2015	% implementation
OP Transport	2 003 481 166 €	1 624 479 623 €	379 001 543 €	2 039 573 394 €	101,80%	1 580 685 729 €	78,90%	1 272 750 164 €	78,35%
OP Environment	1 717 164 786 €	1 395 379 676 €	321 785 110 €	2 144 856 902 €	124,91%	1 635 683 973 €	95,25%	906 855 408 €	64,99%
OP Regional Development	1 601 274 759 €	1 361 083 545 €	240 191 214 €	1 671 168 641 €	104,36%	1 362 283 309 €	85,07%	984 658 221 €	72,34%
OP Competitiveness	1 162 215 551 €	987 883 218 €	174 332 333 €	1 185 413 409 €	102,00%	1 033 046 723 €	88,89%	852 119 088 €	86,26%
OP Technical Assistance	54 658 454 €	46 459 686 €	8 198 768 €	58 717 729 €	107,43%	50 253 108 €	91,94%	39 114 167 €	84,19%
OP Human Resource Development	1 213 869 575 €	1 031 789 139 €	182 080 436 €	1 261 095 252 €	103,89%	1 119 599 176 €	92,23%	980 199 682 €	95,00%
OP Administrative Capacity	174 057 556 €	147 948 923 €	26 108 633 €	194 094 687 €	111,51%	155 851 565 €	89,54%	125 327 278 €	84,71%
TOTAL SCF	7 926 721 847 €	6 595 023 810 €	1 331 698 037 €	8 554 920 013 €	107,93%	6 937 403 583 €	87,52%	5 161 024 008 €	78,26%
Rural Development	3 167 857 378 €	2 551 518 762 €	616 338 616 €	3 248 279 006 €	102,54%	2 512 291 707 €	79,31%	2 107 460 398 €	82,60%
OP Fisheries	83 710 891 €	62 783 168 €	20 927 723 €	98 794 747 €	118,02%	62 772 792 €	74,99%	47 274 559 €	75,30%
TOTAL AGRICULTURAL FUNDS	3 251 568 269 €	2 614 301 930 €	637 266 339 €	3 347 073 753 €	102,94%	2 575 064 499 €	79,19%	2 154 734 957 €	82,42%
TOTAL	11 178 290 115 €	9 209 325 740 €	1 968 964 375 €	11 901 993 767 €	106,47%	9 512 468 082 €	85,10%	7 315 758 965 €	79,44%

* The budgets of OPE, OPTA, OPAC, RDP and OPF are decreased with the amounts of decommitments for 2013 and 2014