

Implementation of the Structural funds in Bulgaria

Monthly Brief, June 2015

Horizontal issues and legislative procedures

- On 3 June 2015 an amendment of CoM Decision No 792/2013 for determining the authorities, responsible for management, control, coordination and auditing of ESIF and other instruments and initiatives of the European Union for 2014 – 2020 was adopted. The amendment determines the Intermediate Bodies under Priority 1 "Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development" Operational Program "Regions in Growth" 2014 -2020 and also the Managing Authority of OP Initiative for SMEs 2014 -2020.
- On 18 June in Brussels was held regular meeting of DG Regio Evaluation Network with Member States. The main topic of the discussions were the ex-post evaluations for the period 2007-2013; evaluation plans of the OPs 2014-2020 and the Commission template for assessment of the quality of the plans; the quality and respective Commission questionnaire on usefulness and effectiveness of the ex-ante evaluations of the OPs 2014-2020
- On 22 June 2015 a coordination meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Education and Science was held. Subject of the discussion were: the terms of implementation of the Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization's Action Plan, results of the Entrepreneurial discovery process and regional meetings, held by the Ministry of Education and Science, the organizational structure for the ISSS management and activities and functions of the Council for Smart Growth.
- On 24 June 2015 an amendment of CoM Decree No 118/2014, which regulates the rules on selection of contractors by beneficiaries governed by private law was adopted. The Decree provides for the optimization and simplification of the procedure for selection of contractors by private bodies in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of EU funds spending.
- The draft amendments in the CoM Decree № 79/2014 for establishment and functioning of Monitoring Committees of PA and ESIF programmes for the 2014-2020 period were published on the public consultation portal www.strategy.bg. The official inter-service consultation of the draft was also launched. The draft CoM Decree stipulates that the 2014-2020 Monitoring Committees will also perform the functions of the relevant Committees for the 2007-2013 period.
- Monthly update of the ExAC implementation status is carried out and a summarized Action plan for implementation of the ExAC, that are not fulfilled were published at www.eufunds.bg.
- Meetings with ministries, responsible for certain ExACs were held and outcomes are reviewed.
- Ensuring the functioning of "Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments" Working Group:
 - Bulgarian representatives in SAWP, COESIF and EGESIF were provided with comments and instructions on the discussed documents after coordination with the relevant domestic institutions.

- Preparation and coordination of the Bulgarian position for participation in the informal meeting of ministers responsible for cohesion policy in Riga, held on 09.06.2015;
- Preparation of an input to the Bulgarian position on the General Affairs Council on 23.06.15.
- Draft MoU and Template Agreement with the WB were completed in coordination with the Bank. The documents were sent for interministerial consultations with a draft CoM Decision for their approval.
- Draft MoU and Template Agreement with the EIB were completed in coordination with the Bank. The documents were sent for interministerial consultations with a draft CoM Decision for their approval.
- Draft MoU and Template Agreement with the EBRD were reviewed and sent to the Bank for coordination of the texts.
- Preparation in cooperation with the Commission and the national stakeholders of the first workshop under the Peer-to-Peer Initiative, dedicated to the management of financial instruments, held on 30.06.2015 in Bulgaria.

Information and Publicity

- In June 2015 the Central Coordination Unit (CCU) continued the media campaign in national TV and radio stations. Within the reported period more than 260 spots - were broadcasted in 2 national radio stations and 4 TV channels (220 in radio stations, 45 in TV channels). The intensity of the campaign is slowly decreasing due to the summer period.
- Within the reported period a meeting of INIO network took place on the 4 and 5 June in Helsinki, Finland. Representatives of CCU and Operational Programme “Administrative capacity” attended the meeting.
- On 8-12 June training “Government: Image and communication” was conducted in London, UK. Two representatives of Operational Programme "Science and education for smart growth" 2014-2020, two of Operational Programme "Innovation and competitiveness" 2014-2020 and two of Operational Programme "Transport and Transport Infrastructure" 2014-2020 attended the seminar.
- On 15-19 June training “Crisis communication” took place in London, UK. Two representatives of the National network of information and communication experts, one of Operational Programme “Technical assistance” and one of Operational Programme "Environment" 2014-2020 took part in the course.
- A meeting of INFORM network was conducted on 23 and 24 June in Lille, France. Representatives of CCU and Operational Programme "Transport and Transport Infrastructure" 2014-2020 took part in the forum.
- 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 June 2015 there were:
 - a total number of visitors in DIPs amounting to 1 342 (until now a total of 62 221)
 - a total of 1 132 requests for information received (until now a total of 58 788)
 - a total of 1 191 answers of requests of information were sent (until now a total of 58 357)
 - 448 publications in media (until now a total of 24 186)
 - 99 events with a total number of 3 013 people invited (until now a total of 4 636 events / 186 099 people invited)
 - 2 979 were present at organized by DIPs events (until now a total of 149 214).

Events, trainings, campaigns:

- Training “The new operational programmes” took place on 24-26 June in Sofia. Total of 26 representatives of DIPs separated in 2 groups took part in the seminar. This was the first edition of the training dedicated to 5 of all 9 programmes implemented in Bulgaria until 2020. The second edition is scheduled for 1-3 July in Sofia.
- During the reported period the Network of 28 DIPs took part in the information campaign of Operational Programme "Science and education for smart growth" 2014-2020. The campaign covered 6 big cities in the country. The experts of the DIPs in those cities provided logistical support for the events. All the rest of them were invited to attend the nearest information day aiming to prolong the campaign in all municipalities.
- Based on the participation of the DIPs in the information campaign OP “Innovation and Competitiveness” conducted in May, in June the Network was focused on the organisation of local events for promotion of open call for proposals for SMEs under OP “Innovation and Competitiveness”. In addition they organized 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.

Certifying Authority

- In June 2015 the Certifying Authority finalized six checks on Reports on Certification and Statements of Eligible Expenditure submitted by the Managing Authorities for three Operational Programmes: OP “Regional Development”, OP “Human Resources Development“ and OP “Administrative Capacity” and for the three IPA Cross-Border Programmes.
- In June 2015 the Certifying Authority performed two on-the-spot checks at the Managing Authorities for two Operational Programmes under SCF - OP “Administrative Capacity” and OP “Human Resources Development” and one on-the spot at the level of the Holding Fund and Financial Intermediaries for Financial Engineering Instruments under OP “Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy” . The findings were sent to the Managing Authorities.

- In June 2015 the Certifying Authority performed one on-the-spot check at beneficiary level under OP “Transport”.
- The Certifying Authority submitted to the European Commission ten Certificates, as follows: one for OP “Human Resources Development”, one for OP “Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy”, one for OP “Administrative Capacity”, two for OP “Regional Development”, two for OP “Environment” and three for IPA Cross-Border Programmes.
- In June 2015, two payments from the EC were received as a result of submitted Applications for payment: one tranche under OP “Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy” amounting to 11 153 550 EUR and one tranche under OP “Human Resources “ amounting to 21 674 399 EUR.

OP / FUND	Certified expenditures up to 30.06.2015	Interim payments received from EC as per 30.06.2015
<i>ERDF</i>	2 955 859 600 €	2 086 196 952 €
1.OP Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy	1 252 481 148 €	751 279 745 €
2. OP Regional Development	1 033 529 324 €	845 031 639 €
3. OP Technical Assistance	40 902 918 €	33 164 252 €
4. OP Transport	392 289 709 €	276 560 674 €
5. OP Environment	236 656 501 €	180 160 642 €
<i>CF</i>	1 803 685 406 €	1 378 928 476 €
1. OP Environment	698 636 166 €	547 777 200 €
2. OP Transport	1 105 049 240 €	831 151 276 €
<i>ESF</i>	1 162 742 242 €	979 656 989 €
1. OP Human Resources Development	1 031 557 122 €	870 060 490 €
2. OP Administrative Capacity	131 185 119 €	109 596 500 €
<i>Total 2007-2013 SCF</i>	5 922 287 248 €	4 444 782 417 €
<i>Total IPA Cross-border Programmes</i>	53 481 431 €	40 900 309 €

Operational programmes 2007 -2013:

OP “Environment”

- On 9 June 2015 was held an official ceremony, at which the Minister of Environment and Water handed symbolically the keys for 67 firefighting and 6 SUVs fire trucks with monitoring equipment for the needs of the “Fire Safety and Population Protection” General Directorate within the Ministry of Interior. The specialized equipment was supplied under the project with a budget of MEUR 49.
- During the reporting period official opening ceremonies were held for objects, constructed by projects, funded under the program, as follows:
 - On 10 June: WWTP in Tryavna, realized under a project with a total budget MEUR 6.6.

- On 06 June: Waste water and sewerage network and WWTP in Stamboliyski. The project worth MEUR 21.
- On 12 June – the Visitors` center in Vratsa Balkan park, built and equipped under the project for implementation of planning and management of activities in Vratsa Balkan park. The total project amount is MEUR 16.
- On 23 June – the reconstructed WWTP in Blagoevgrad. The total project amount is MEUR 3.38.
- On 26 June – WWTP in Kubrat. The total project amount is MEUR 3.3.
- On 30 June – WWTPs in Panagyurishte, Mezdra and Nessebar.

OP “Transport”

- On June 2, 2015 was held the eighteenth meeting of the Monitoring Committee of Operational Programme “Transport” 2007-2013. At the meeting the Managing authority presented an action plan for the completion of the programme. The Managing authority also presented the approved by The Council of Ministers decision to increase the co-financing percentage from the Cohesion Fund and the corresponding reduction of the national co-financing rate with 5%.
- On June 19, 2015 began the “Construction of intermodal terminal in South Central Planning Region in Bulgaria – Plovdiv”. The terminal is expected to be put into operation in the beginning of 2016.
- On June 24, 2015, in Rouse, was presented the project “Technical assistance for the construction of an intermodal terminal in the North Central Planning Region in Bulgaria – Ruse”. The project is expected to be finalized at the end of 2015.

OP “Technical Assistance”

- On June 12, 2015 was held the sixteenth meeting of the Monitoring Committee of Operational Programme “Technical Assistance” 2007-2013. At the meeting the Managing authority presented the progress of the Programme and approved the presented Annual Report for 2014.

OP “Development of the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy”

- On 12th June, 2015, in Sofia Hotel Balkan was held the sixteenth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee for the Operational Programme "Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy" 2007-2013. At the meeting the Managing authority presented the general progress of the Programme, as well as information on conducted audits, the respective results, conclusions and recommendations made. The members of MC approved the presented Annual Report for 2014 and the proposed amendment of the Programme in connection with reallocation of financial resources to priority axes 1 from the other priority axes.

OP “Human Resources Development”

- On 17 June was held XVII official meeting of OPHRD Monitoring Committee. There was presented the general progress of the Programme, as well as information on conducted audits and management verification by audit authorities and Certification Authority. The member of MC approved amendments in 4 criteria for selection of ongoing operations under PA6, related to extensions of the periods for implementation and relocation of savings.

Further to these, was approved the Annual Progress Report for 2014. The AIR for 2014 was officially submitted to the European Commission through SFC2007 on 30 June.

OP Administrative Capacity

- On 26 June was held XVI meeting of OPAC Monitoring Committee. There was presented the general progress of the Programme, as well as information on conducted audits and management verification by audit authorities and Certification Authority. The progress in the OPAC financial implementation was presented and discussed, as a risk of decommitment at the amount of 4,5 mln.euro is identified based on the analysis of the Managing Authority. The respective portfolio of projects at risk is under close monitoring. The members of MC approved the Annual Progress Report for 2014. The AIR for 2013 was officially submitted to the European Commission through SFC2007 on 29 June.

Programming period 2014-2020:

OP Regions in Growth

- The second Monitoring Committee on OP “Regions in Growth” 2014-2020 took place on June 05, 2015. The members of the Monitoring Committee were informed about the major changes in the last version of the Operational Programme “Regions in Growth“ 2014-2020 and the progress made on negotiation process with the EC services related to the approval of the programme. The members of the Monitoring Committee received information about the forthcoming schemes to be announced until the end of 2015 in compliance with the Indicative Annual Working Programme for OPRG 2014-2020, as well as the Guidelines for the application to Priority Axis 1 “Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development”. The selection procedure on Priority Axis 7 “Regional Tourism” was also presented.
- The EC services approved the Operational Programme “Regions in Growth” 2014-2020 on June 16, 2015. The total budget of the approved Operational Programme is 1,5 billion Euro including EU and national funding and is expected to play a crucial role for the sustainable and balanced regional development of Bulgaria until 2023.
- The Managing Authority of the Operational Programme “Regions in Growth“ 2014-2020 signed Agreements for delegating the functions to Intermediate Bodies for selection and evaluation of projects to be funded under Priority Axis 1 of the Operational Programme with 39 municipalities identified as direct beneficiaries under this Priority Axis.
- In June 2015 the inter-institutional discussions on the Instructions for the establishment of the structure and membership of the Intermediate Bodies on Procedure BG16RFO001-1.001-039 “Implementation of Integrated Plans for Urban Regeneration and Development” have started.

OP Transport and Transport Infrastructure 2014-2020

- On June 3, 2015 was held the second meeting of the Monitoring Committee of Operational Programme “Transport and Transport Infrastructure” 2014-2020. The members of the Monitoring Committee adopted the methodology and criteria for evaluation and selection of projects. The Committee approved the National Communication Strategy and Annual Action Plan for information and publicity.

Operational Program “Innovations and Competitiveness” (OPIC)

- On 11th June, 2015 in the Council of Ministers was held the 1st official Meeting of the Monitoring Committee for the Operational Program “Innovations and Competitiveness”

2014-2020 (OPIC). At the meeting the proposed amendments in the Annual Working Programme were approved by the members of the MC.

- On 22nd June, 2015 at the premises of the Ministry of Economy was held the extraordinary Meeting of the Monitoring Committee for the Operational Program “Innovations and Competitiveness” 2014-2020 (OPIC). The meeting was chaired by Mr. Filip Kirev, Head of the Political Cabinet of the Minister of Economy and Deputy Chairman of the Monitoring Committee.

At the meeting was presented more detailed information regarding development of the new Operational Program “Initiative for Small and Medium Enterprises” 2014-2020. (OP ISME) and the proposals made by the Managing Authority for amending the OPIC in this regard. Following the discussion, the Monitoring Committee approved the proposed amendments of the OPIC 2014-2020.

OP Human Resources Development

- On 18 June was held II official meeting of OPHRD Monitoring Committee. Main topics of the discussions were the amended Annual Working Programme of the Managing Authority for 2015 which includes operations that are newly approved or proposed for approval by the MC. 8 new operations under all priority axes were proposed for approval by the MC members, related to employment for vulnerable groups; enhancement of the qualification of employed; development and improvement of the quality of social services; support for the social economy; support for the General Labour Inspectorate; transnationality (incl. measures under Danube Strategy). OPHRD MA presented to the MC the progress in fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionalities, applicable to the Programme, as well as the indicative annual budget for the activities under the National Communication Strategy related to OPHRD.
- On 15 June was held the first meeting of the Sub-Committee to OPHRD MC in the area of Roma integrations. The Sub-Committee approved its internal rules as well as a concept for operation “Socio-economic integration of vulnerable groups”. Additional comments and proposal on the concept are expected by the end of the month.
- OPHRD MA launched call for proposals “Active”. The objectives are activation and integration in employment of youths up to 29 years of age who are not in education, training or employment, as well as who are not registered as unemployed in the Employment Agency. The budget is 26 mln.leva, the deadline for submission of applications is 31.08.2015. Only e-application is foreseen. Information days in five Bulgarian towns will be conducted in the period 01-13 July.
- OPHRD MA launched call for proposals “New working place 2015”. The objectives are to create conditions for sustainable employment for unemployed and inactive people through mix of measures for training (incl. at work) and stimulation of the employers for creation of new jobs. The operation is focused on the most vulnerable groups at the labour market. The budget is 40 mln.leva, the deadline for submission of applications is 14.09.2015. Only e-application is foreseen. Information days in five Bulgarian towns will be conducted in the period 01-13 July.

OP Science and Education for Smart Growth

- In the course of the month, the Ministry of Education and Science launched information campaign on the opportunities for financing under the OP. Together with experts form the OPSESG Managing Authority, in the campaign participate experts form the Ministry of Economy for presentation of the priority for technological development and innovations under OPIC, in line with the synergies between the two OPs in the light of the Smart Specialization Strategy. In June information days were conducted in four Bulgarian cities – Ruse (18.06.); Plovdiv (23.06); Sofia (24.06); Pleven (25.06).

OP Good Governance

- On 26 June was held I official meeting of OPGG Monitoring Committee. Main topics of the discussions were the proposed Annual Working Programme of the Managing Authority for 2015 and the respective operations. According to the decisions taken, by the end of the year will be launched 7 operations with total budget of 361 mln.leva. Procedures are oriented exclusively to direct beneficiaries from the state administration and the judiciary, and are in the areas of e-government, policy making and impact assessment of policies, trainings. Further to these, were approved also OPGG Indicators' Manual, the methodology for assessment of projects and budget lines for direct beneficiaries, the annual communication plan of OPGG for 2015.

Data on OPs financial progress is attached.

OP Implementation as of 30.06.2015

EURO

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	Programme budget			Contracted		Payments		Received payments from EC	
	Total	EU Funding	National co-funding	Total as of 30.06.2015	% implementation	Total as of 30.06.2015	% implementation	Received payments from the EC (EU part) as of 30.06.2015	% implementation
OP Transport	2 003 481 166 €	1 624 479 623 €	379 001 543 €	2 040 049 475 €	101.83%	1 531 441 066 €	76.44%	1 272 750 164 €	78,35%
OP Environment	1 800 748 085 €	1 466 425 481 €	334 322 604 €	2 661 817 052 €	147.82%	1 542 913 697 €	85.68%	875 326 629 €	59,69%
OP Regional Development	1 601 274 759 €	1 361 083 545 €	240 191 214 €	1 630 046 580 €	101.80%	1 325 985 186 €	82.81%	967 529 157 €	71,09%
OP Competitiveness	1 162 215 551 €	987 883 218 €	174 332 333 €	1 195 135 833 €	102.83%	1 009 531 377 €	86.86%	840 189 235 €	85,05%
OP Technical Assistance	56 819 427 €	48 296 513 €	8 522 914 €	57 908 494 €	101.92%	49 014 092 €	86.26%	37 510 938 €	77,67%
OP Human Resource Development	1 213 869 575 €	1 031 789 139 €	182 080 436 €	1 280 387 647 €	105.48%	1 098 460 006 €	90.49%	962 921 513 €	93,33%
OP Administrative Capacity	180 789 087 €	153 670 724 €	27 118 363 €	195 750 420 €	108.28%	149 973 831 €	82.96%	123 426 865 €	80,32%
TOTAL SCF	8 019 197 650 €	6 673 628 243 €	1 345 569 407 €	9 061 095 500 €	112.99%	6 707 319 255 €	83.64%	5 079 654 501 €	76,12%
Rural Development	3 167 917 267 €	2 552 259 588 €	615 657 679 €	3 275 452 736 €	103,39%	2 470 959 142 €	78,00%	2 106 969 573 €	82,55%
OP Fisheries	96 410 995 €	72 308 246 €	24 102 749 €	101 647 487 €	105,43%	61 415 376 €	63,70%	47 274 559 €	65,38%
TOTAL AGRICULTURAL FUNDS	3 264 328 261 €	2 624 567 834 €	639 760 428 €	3 377 100 222 €	103,45%	2 532 374 518 €	77,58%	2 154 244 132 €	82,08%
TOTAL	11 283 525 911 €	9 298 196 077 €	1 985 329 835 €	12 438 195 723 €	110,23%	9 239 693 773 €	81,89%	7 233 898 633 €	77,80%