



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

NATIONAL STRATEGIC REFERENCE FRAMEWORK



PROGRAMMING PERIOD 2007-2013

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Glossary of Acronyms

AA	Audit Authority
AEAF	Agency for Economic Analyses and Forecasts
CA	Certifying Authority
CCU	Central Coordination Unit
CSF	Community Support Framework
CSG	Community Strategic Guidelines
EDIS	Extended Decentralised Implementation System
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EC	European Commission
EFF	European Fishery Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
IA	Implementing Agency
IB	Intermediate Bodies
IAU	Internal Audit Unit
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Monitoring Committee
MEE	Ministry of Economy and Energy
MEUFD	Management of EU Funds Directorate
MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
MoEW	Ministry of Environment and Water
MF	Ministry of Finance
MRDPW	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works
MSAAR	Ministry of State Administration and Administrative Reform
MT	Ministry of Transport
NAMRB	National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria
NDP	National Development Plan
NFD	National Fund Directorate
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRP	National Reform Programme
NSI	National Statistical Institute
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
OP	Operational Programme
OPTA	Operational Programme Technical Assistance
SCF	Structural and Cohesion Funds
SEP	Socio-Economic Partners
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
TA	Technical Assistance
UMIS	Unified Management Information System

1. INTRODUCTION

Brief Description of the NSRF Document

The National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) has been prepared in line with Article 27-28 of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund. It is a mid to long-term strategic document, describing the role of the Structural Funds during the period 2007-2013 in support of the wider development strategy of Bulgaria. The NSRF provides the major integrated policy objectives formulated with awareness that the concrete results should be gradually realized further in the implementation process and with the accumulation of financial and non-financial resources.

The document is based on a thorough socio-economic analysis and key aspects of national strategies adopted and implemented in Bulgaria. The NSRF strategy objectives closely fit within the framework of the Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion, the Lisbon agenda and the sustainability principles expressed in the Göteborg Council Conclusions. The main purpose of the strategic interventions to be funded by the EU in Bulgaria is to support the investments necessary for the economic development, by investing in the necessary infrastructures, human potential and supporting favourable business environment and social inclusion. It puts a strong emphasis on the need to prioritise investments directed towards the development of a knowledge based economy to sustain Europe's growth in a more competitive world market.

The NSRF describes Bulgaria's strategy to support actions in the following thematic areas for increasing competitiveness: human resources, infrastructure, governance and effective state administration and services and territorial cohesion, their inter-linkages, and the contribution of the Structural and Cohesion Funds will play within this strategy. The national strategy is in line with Community Strategic Guidelines of the European Union and contributes to achieving their objectives. Each strategic priority will be supported in an integrated manner by actions of one or more Operational Programmes. The NSRF also includes description of the administrative structures and mechanisms for the successful implementation of the Cohesion policy of the EU in Bulgaria.

The NSRF is divided into the following main parts: Analysis of development disparities, weaknesses and potential, Strategy of interventions covered by NSRF, List of OPs, and mechanisms for coordination and complementarity of all EU financial instruments. Indicative annual allocations, ex-ante verification of additionality principle and additionality tables are also integral parts of the NSRF.

The Partnership Principle in the Preparation of the NSRF Document

The preparation of NSRF 2007-2013 started in September 2005. An early draft was published on the web-site of the Agency for Economic Analysis and Forecasting (AEAF) for public consultation. Subsequently, the draft document was further elaborated jointly by MEUF Directorate in the Ministry of Finance and AEAF and was distributed to OP MAs for comments. In December 2005, following the established coordination mechanism, the Council of Ministers approved draft National Development Plan of Bulgaria for the period 2007-2013 and the draft Operational Programmes. The National Development Plan (NDP)

served as a basis for the elaboration of the NSRF. The preliminary NDP ex-ante evaluation has been performed and the recommendations provided have been integrated into the document. A Working Group on the NDP/NSRF was established and met regularly to review the progress of the Bulgarian programming documents with respect to the Structural and Cohesion Funds preparation.

The Bulgarian Authorities are strictly following the partnership principle in the preparation of the strategic documents (NDP, NSRF and OPs). The relevant socio-economic and other partners following Article 11 of the General Regulation, such as nationally representative workers and employers associations, non-governmental organisations, and consultative bodies, are participating in the NDP/NSRF and OP Working Groups are being actively involved in the elaboration of the documents.

The NDP/NSRF working group is composed by experts, not only of the central administration (Ministries), the Agency for Economic Analysis and Forecasts, the State Agency of Youth and Sports and the National Statistical Institute, but also of the National Association of Municipalities of the Republic of Bulgaria, Employers Association of Bulgaria, Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bulgarian International Business Association, Union of the Private Bulgarian Entrepreneurs “Vazrajdane”, Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association, Bulgarian Industrial Association, Union for Economic Initiative, Confederation of Labour “Podkrepa” and Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria, Bulgarian Regional Development Association, National Council for People with Disabilities, Bulgarian Association of the Social Enterprises.

The key employers’ and employee organizations are listed in the Labour Law. Thus they are well-known and sufficiently experienced in dealing with government policy. The relevant NGO sector is defined in the coordination mechanism – as part of the NDP/NSRF Working Group and within the OP Working Groups. Established and active environmental NGOs are included, as well as minority representatives¹.

Public discussions were launched in February 2006 and held continuously since to support all the stages of programming process. NSRF discussions also took place at the Economic and Social Council in February 2006. The ex-ante evaluation of the NSRF was carried out, and the comments received, led to improvements to the draft NSRF during the period May-June 2006 and August-September 2006. A public awareness seminar for NSRF was organised in April 2006, followed by continuous specific training sessions for regional, district and local authorities and the social-economic partners. The draft NSRF was discussed by the Coordination Council of NDP and NSRF in April 2006 and September 2006 and finally approved in December 2006. The draft NSRF was discussed also by the Council of Ministers in August 2006 and subsequently agreed on 21 December 2006.

¹ See Section 9, Annex 8 and Annex 17; also annexes to OP Environment and OP Human Resources.

2. ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT DISPARITIES, WEAKNESSES AND POTENTIAL

Bulgaria is a small open economy located in South-eastern Europe surrounded by five countries (Romania, Greece, Turkey, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and the Black Sea. It has an area of 110 910 sq. km and population of 7.7 million. Bulgaria launched a process of economy restructuring in 1989 which was rather slow in the first half of the 90's. During the 90s Bulgaria suffered from the political instability in the Western Balkans region, which resulted in closure of the country's trade routes to Western Europe. These internal and external factors caused severe underinvestment in infrastructures, loss of human potential by emigration or labour market inefficiencies and resulted in one of the lowest GDP per capita in Europe. The transition towards functioning market economy accelerated after 1997 following the introduction of the Currency Board arrangements. Bulgaria is now a stable and rapidly catching-up functioning market economy, but to sustain this growth large investment in infrastructure, human capital and business development are necessary.



2.1. Socio-Economic Development

2.1.1. Macroeconomic Stability and Growth

Economic policy in Bulgaria experienced a structural shift with the introduction of the currency board arrangement in July 1997. The overall economic policy implemented since 1997 is targeted at maintaining macroeconomic stability as a prerequisite for strong economic growth. Macroeconomic stability in Bulgaria is based on: fixed exchange rate safeguarded by the currency board arrangement and the soundness of the banking system; prudent fiscal policy targeted at close to a balance budget; deep restructuring of economic fundamentals based on the sustained efforts to promote structural reforms and the associated efficiency

gains. Market liberalisation, privatisation and restructuring of state-owned companies and the process of deregulation of natural monopolies allowed **the country to establish a functioning market economy**².

Table: Bulgaria and EU-25, selected economic indicators (2005), in %

	Bulgaria	EU 25
GDP per capita (BG/EU)	32.1	100
Real GDP growth rate	5.5	1.6
Gross fixed capital formation (% of GDP)	23.5	19.9
FDI (% of GDP)	8.8	0.6
Inflation	5.0	2.9 ²
Budget balance (% of GDP)	3.1	- 3.0 ³
Gross government dept (% of GDP)	32.4	60 ²
Labour productivity per person (BG/EU)	32.9	100
ICT expenditure (% of GDP, 2004)	8.6	6.4
R&D expenditure (% of GDP)	0.51	1.9
Share of internet users with broadband access	4	10.6
Internet use by households (2004)	10	42
Internet use by enterprises (2004)	61.8	90
Employment rate (15-64)	55.8	63.8
Activity rate (15-64)	62.1	70.2
Unemployment rate	10.1	8.7
Female unemployment rate	9.8	9.8
Youth unemployment rate	22.4	18.5
Long-term unemployment rate	6.0	3.9
Early school leavers ⁴	20	14.9

Source: NSI, BNB, MoF, Eurostat

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) registered a steady increasing growth rate since 1997 regaining 6.6 percentage points in per capita GDP compared to the average EU level. The average rate of convergence (the differential to EU-25 growth) for the last eight years has been 2.9% on an annual basis displaying some variability - the growth differential peaked at 5.8% in 2001 and has averaged a 4.2% in 2003-2005. However, the average **GDP per capita in Bulgaria still accounts for only 32.1% of the EU-25**⁵.

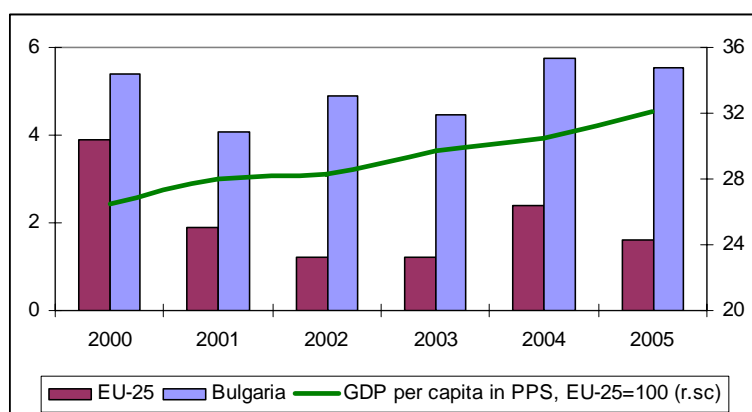
² European Commission concluded that Bulgaria has a functioning market economy in its 2002 Regular report on Bulgaria's progress towards accession

³ Nominal Convergence Threshold

⁴ Percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at only lower than secondary education and not in further education or training

⁵ GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS), (EU-25 = 100), EUROSTAT

Figure: GDP growth rates in Bulgaria and EU-25, GDP per capita in PPS (EU-25=100)



Source: NSI, Eurostat, AEAF estimations

Domestic demand is the major contributor to GDP growth in the last five years with fixed capital formation being its most dynamic component. The share of investments to GDP increased from 15.7% in 2000 to 23.8% in 2005, compared to 19.9% in EU-25. Capital inflows (greenfield investment, retained profits and new private debt) play important roles in the formation of Bulgaria's capital stock in the period 2000-2005. The macroeconomic stability, the progress in structural reforms and the high rate of returns raised the country's attractiveness to foreign investors, and Bulgaria recorded 9.4 bln. euro FDI inflow in 2000-2005, an average of 8.8% to GDP on an annual basis⁶.

A tentative growth accounting estimation shows that the leading factor for growth is total factor productivity. Capital formation also plays an important role in sustaining a high growth rate both directly and through its positive impact on total factor productivity. It is expected that the role of the elaborated two factors for growth will be preserved in the future, especially at the background of unfavourable demographic trends (decrease and ageing of the population). The labour contribution to growth in the future will be limited and therefore the policy efforts should accentuate on enhancing the quality characteristics of the labour force, supporting labour productivity developments, and maintaining an attractive environment for investment and business activity.

The deepening of structural reforms has had a positive impact on the overall economic efficiency but in the short-run it was complemented by a higher inflation rate⁷ and a deterioration of the trade balance⁸. At the background of the free movement of goods and services and price-setting based on demand and supply considerations, the most prominent factor affecting the domestic price level dynamics has been the adjustment of administered prices (basically these are prices of natural monopolies in the infrastructure sectors) to reach a cost recovery level⁹. Net exports contribute negatively to growth since 2003. Despite the

⁶ See Annex 7

⁷ The average annual inflation exceeded 5% y/y in 2000-2005 period

⁸ The current account deficit expanded to 13.9% of GDP in 2005, as compared with 9.4% in 2000

⁹ Two other factors contributed to the inflation rate in Bulgaria – the increase of a number of excise duties targeted at reaching the minimum EU required level and the volatility of international prices of energy resources

strong exports growth at above 10% annually in real terms, imports expanded faster boosted by imports of investment goods. In euro terms, imports of raw materials and energy resources increased at a higher rate due to rising international prices of important commodities.¹⁰

Still, some structural weaknesses in the economy remain. The low level of productivity, especially in agriculture, textile and wood industries, as well as in trade and hotels and restaurants, hampers the faster economy expansion and convergence with the EU. Moreover, the predominance of low-value added productions and the high share of goods for intermediate consumption and metals within the country's exports indicate the need for restructuring within the industrial sector.

The most rapidly developing sector in Bulgaria is industry growing at real rate of 7.3% in 2005¹¹. Its development is driven both by external demand and by enhanced domestic demand, with industrial sales on the home market rising rapidly. On the domestic market along with sectors servicing the construction, a steady increase is recorded by the sales of food and beverages and the manufacture of electrical machines and apparatus. The export industry sales are mainly driven by the increase of manufacture of basic metals. Other sectors with substantial contribution for the industrial export growth are the manufacture of machinery and equipment, manufacture of chemicals and chemical products, the manufacture of food products and beverages and the manufacture of electrical machines and apparatus. Nevertheless, due to the differing demand and supply profiles, import grows fast. Imported raw materials and energy resources covered 31 per cent of intermediate consumption in 2005. Amid enhanced industrial activity, this relatively high share pushed up imports of intermediate products. Energy consumption of industry¹² is twice then EU-25 average placing Bulgaria first in energy intensity (Eurostat). Among the biggest energy consumers are most of the main exporting industries such as the chemical industry, ferrous metallurgy, and production of goods from non-metallic minerals. In addition Bulgaria has no other significant primary energy sources than low quality lignite and imports about 70% of its primary energy resources.

Labour productivity growth is prominent in the industrial sector. The decline of unit labour costs, especially in manufacturing, contributes to the competitiveness of the sector. However, the level of productivity remains quite low compared to EU average which indicates that further efforts to improve efficiency and strengthen competitiveness are necessary.

The services sector has been developing quite dynamically, driven by the private sector expansion in areas like communications, finance, trade and tourism. The sector's development was mainly triggered by the deregulation of the services' market. In the period 2000-2005 tourism underwent a process of fast privatisation leading to high investment rate and growth rates (revenues increased by 65.4% in the period 2000-2005).

The development of agriculture has been volatile. Its share in gross value added has been decreasing from 13.9% in 2000 to 10.8% in 2004. The drop of agriculture's share in the GVA

¹⁰ See Annex 7

¹¹ Among the main factors for the recent solid expansion of the sector are the favourable conjuncture on the international markets (the high metal prices) and the increased construction activity on the domestic market.

¹² Defined as primary energy use per unit of GDP (tons of oil equivalent per 1,000 euros)

is explained by the slow and uneven growth of the sector and the faster growth of the national economy. The gross value added/gross output (GVA/GO) ratio in the agricultural sector is 40.7% compared to above 50% in the EU member states.

Bulgaria faces the challenges of achieving sustained real convergence through high economic growth based on investment, substantial productivity gains and improved competitiveness. To address the risks, which may impede the high and sustainable growth rates, economic policy should focus on improving the quality of the basic infrastructure (enhancing connectivity and accessibility), investing in human capital and raising the standards in education and health care to maintain the quality of the labour force, removing administrative and market inefficiencies to promote entrepreneurship and investment, support a balanced territorial development.

2.1.2. Basic Infrastructure

This section of the analysis deals with the main challenges confronting the developments in basic infrastructure and its importance for maintaining the high and sustainable growth. It comprises of (i) transport, (ii) environment, (iii) disasters, accidents and crisis protection, (iv) information and telecommunication technologies (ICT), and (v) energy infrastructure.

In the past 15 years, due to financial constraints, investments in basic infrastructure have been inadequate compared to the needs of the business and the citizens. As a result the firms suffer from the costs imposed on them by the outdated and poor quality basic infrastructure, while the public is deprived from access to a number of fundamental services of adequate quality.

2.1.2.1. Transport

A well developed and high quality transport network represents a vital factor for development and growth of the Bulgarian economy since:

- (i) the development of Bulgaria as a small open economy depends to a large extent on the expansion of its international trade;
- (ii) EU member states are the main trading partners of Bulgaria. As far as exports comprise predominantly raw materials and semi-processed goods, sensitive to transportation costs, it is of great importance to build up good transport links between Bulgaria and the EU. Given the largely inland location of Bulgaria's economic activities, road and rail transport modes are the most commonly used;
- (iii) internally the economic activity is located in a number of fast developing large towns while many small settlements with a potential for growth (where a large proportion of the population lives) are isolated and remain underdeveloped because of a poor transportation network;
- (iv) the accessibility of the social and administrative services is highly dependent on transport.

The territory of the Republic of Bulgaria is a crossroad in terms of the geo-strategic position of the country, which imposes additional requirements to the quality of the Bulgarian transport network. Its development will contribute to the functioning of the Common European Market by offering an effective transport links and facilitates the access to other

countries and markets. Bulgaria provides efficient connection for trade between North and South of Europe as well as between Western Europe and countries in the Caspian Sea region and the Middle East Asia.

In 2003 The High Level Group I, chaired by Karel Van Miert, defined two major European transport axes to pass through the territory of Republic of Bulgaria: **Vidin – Sofia - Kulata** and **the Danube River**. The Decision 884/2004/EC states the European priority projects for the development of the Trans-European Transport Network. The following projects are identified as priority for development of the Trans-European transport network:

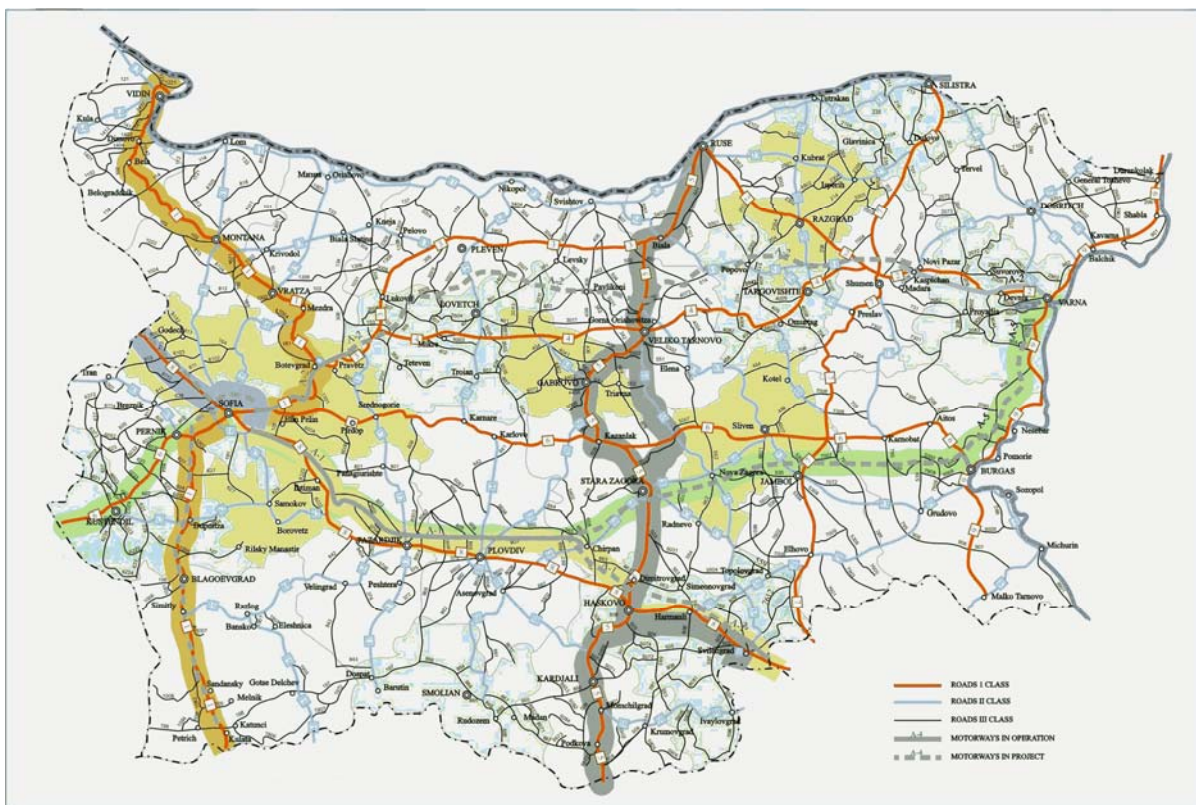
- Modernisation of the railway line Vidin – Sofia – Kulata;
- Improving the navigation along the Danube River;
- Construction of the “Struma” Motorway.

At the end of 2005 the High Level Group II chaired by Ms Loyola de Palacio presented the report on the extension of the major Trans-European transport axes to the neighbouring countries and regions. One of the five transport axes identified in the report passes through the territory of Bulgaria - South Eastern Axis, which links the EU through the Balkans and Turkey to the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea, as well as to Egypt and the Red Sea. Access links to Albania and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iran, Iraq and Persian Gulf are also foreseen. The main multimodal connections including important TEN-T projects on the territory of our country are:

- Belgrade – Nis – Sofia, and then via Plovdiv to Istanbul – TRACECA;
- The Italian ports Bari/Brindisi and passing through Durres/Vlora – Tirana – Skopje – Sofia – Bourgas/Varna;
- The Danube River – The Sava River.

The construction of these transport connections will maximise the contribution to the development of Bulgaria. Considering the fact that the EC will focus its funds on the development of the major axes, Bulgaria must focus its investment policy on the preparation and implementation of projects situated along those major axes. Considering the geographical location of Bulgaria, improved transport infrastructure and services will increase its potential for transit passenger and freight transportation. However, if the implementation of the main transport projects is substantially delayed, there is a risk that the main traffic is rerouted through the neighbouring countries with the resulting loss of income, investment opportunities and accessibility.

An improvement and better coordination between different transport modes are needed, in order to provide the efficient internal and external connectivity of the country. In this respect further development of the main transit transport routes, namely Rouse – Svilengrad and Dragoman – Svilengrad, as well as the routes Vidin – Sofia – Kulata and the Danube River is very important. The improvement of the link between Sofia and the main sea ports of the country, Bourgas and Varna, is crucial to meet the expected traffic increase. In addition, the improvement of the connection between Varna and the main inland waterway port, Rouse, will have key regional significance.



Concerning the **road transport** infrastructure, in 2005 the total length of the road network in Bulgaria amounts to 37,300 km¹³, including more than 19,275 km of state roads. The road transport services are about 88% of the national cargo. The road system in Bulgaria is not supportive of long distance international traffic and is in poor condition, at the same time it is overloaded compared to other modes of transport. According to a recent World Bank field survey¹⁴, bottlenecks are starting to emerge along road segments which carry international traffic. Furthermore, due to the lack of by-passes, the road system for international traffic passes through many small towns and villages, which raises potential conflicts between long distance international and local traffic. In addition, the country has 23 road cross-border check points, with only 7 of them being on I-class roads, which is not sufficient and impedes foreign trade. However, recent activities to improve CBCP capacity has been done under cross-border cooperation programme “Bulgaria – Greece” and “Bulgaria – Romania” using national and PHARE financing.

In 2005 the road traffic in the country amounts to nearly 493 million passengers per km. The most loaded destinations include Sofia – Bourgas, Sofia – Kulata, Varna - Bourgas, Rouse – Svilengrad, Rouse – Yablanica, Plovdiv – Haskovo – Kyrdzhali, Montana – Botevgrad. In this respect in comparison to 2005 it is expected that traffic on “Trakia” Motorway connecting Sofia and Bourgas will increase with close to 20% in 2010 and with 34% and 44% at the end of the programming period and in 2015 respectively. The traffic on “Struma” Motorway is also expected to rise by 15% in 2010 and 27% in 2013. “Maritza” Motorway will have traffic

¹³ The statistical data in the Transport section is provided by the OP “Transport”.

¹⁴ For more details see World Bank (2005), Country Economic Memorandum “Bulgaria: The Road to Successful EU Integration. The Policy Agenda”

growth of 15% and 32% for 2010 and 2015 respectively. In comparison to 2005 the traffic on “Hemus” Motorway in 2015, when certain parts of it are completed, will increase by some 32% and in 2020 by 55%. In addition, the amount of traffic through E-79 in the segment between Vraca and Botevgrad is expected to increase by some 40% in 2015 when its improvement is completed. The expectation is that in comparison to 2005 the traffic will double by 2025. For the segment between Montana and Vraca as well as for some segments of the direction Rouse – Svilengrad the forecasted traffic rise amounts to 38% and 98% respectively. Also, it is believed that the traffic between Kardjali and Podkova will rise by 15% and 35% in 2010 and 2015 respectively.

The Bulgarian transport network consists mostly of lower class roads. The motorway coverage in Bulgaria is insufficient. Nearly 30% of the existing 331.2 km of motorways and nearly 50% of the existing 2,960.6 km of I-class roads in the country are not in good condition and need rehabilitations and reconstruction. The need for building and improvement of the existing road network is especially evident for the Trans-European Transport Corridors due to the expectations for traffic increase. Also, in order to correspond to the EU standard requirements, the loading capacity of the road pavement has to be improved.

With regard to the lower class roads, **nearly 63% of II-class and more then 70% of III-class roads need reconstruction and rehabilitation.** The connectivity between many small towns and villages with the big cities is hampered by the poor quality of the roads, which cannot serve the traffic demands. As a result, the poorly connected communities will be further isolated and their potential for economic revival will be severely impeded. It has to be noted that construction and maintenance of the municipal roads (covering over 55%¹⁵ of the total length of the road network in the country) is obstructed by insufficient financing from the municipalities.

The main reason for unsatisfactory condition of the road system in the country is the constant delay of the necessary repair work and the insufficient financing for maintenance of the road surface. The Bulgarian authorities have stated that the average annual expenditure in the transport sector will increase substantially after the accession of the country in the EU. In order to ensure that new investments are properly maintained in the future responsibility for it is delegated to the recently formed Republican Road Infrastructure Fund towards the Minister of Finance. The control of different projects is exercised by both the Regional Directorates “Road Administrations” and the National Road Infrastructure Fund through experts in charge for the individual contracts.

In relation to the road safety, poor quality of the road infrastructure and outdated motor fleet are among the main problems for the transport authorities. However, according to the number of fatalities per million inhabitants Bulgaria have an index of 127 (2004) and 119 (2005)¹⁶. This data places the country at the same level as Hungary, Estonia and Portugal¹⁷, and better than most the other new EU member states. Currently the country is significantly behind EU members like Holland, the UK, Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Finland which have much better index for 2004 (in the range 50-72).

¹⁵ Data from National Association of Bulgarian Municipalities

¹⁶ NSI data

¹⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/transport/roadsafety/road_safety_observatory/profiles_en.htm

Furthermore, **urban transport** needs improvement, particularly in relation to the road pavement, traffic congestions in the big cities, limited number of parking spaces, safety provision and signalling, technical equipment for the execution of effective control, and enforcement of the traffic regulation rules¹⁸. The intensive internal traffic in the big cities brings the need for developing the ring roads as an important part of the national road network. Meanwhile, the main problems of interurban bus transport include travel safety, lack of fixed arrival times, unsatisfactory passenger services at the bus stations, and insufficient links with other transport modes at the arrival point.

The total **railway line** length is 4,316 km, of which 67% are electrified. Though the density of the existing railway lines is sufficient, the capacity of the railway network is low due to the operational and technical condition of the railway infrastructure. During the last 10 years 806 km of the railway network have been renewed and mid-range repair works of 831 km have been done. However, nearly 60% of the national railway network has not been renovated in that period. Currently, the railway lines in the country are suitable for speed of up to 100 km/h, while the required speed in the EU is 160km/h. In addition, some 80% of the locomotives, 70% of the passenger carriages and the main part of safety, telecommunication, and the electric power supply facilities are older than 20 years.

The railway network in the country is of a “closed” type due to the fact that there are only 6 cross-border check points with the neighbouring countries¹⁹. The railway connection with Romania along the Trans-European Corridor IV is not completed at the Vidin–Kalafat section. As a result, there are limitations for developing business activities with the neighbouring countries and particularly for cross-border cooperation.

The maintenance of the infrastructure is ensured by restructuring of the railway transport system in compliance with the EU standards. The Bulgarian State Railways National Company was divided into the National Railway Infrastructure Company, which is responsible for the management of the infrastructure, and the Bulgarian State Railways, which is the operator. The privatization of the railway operator and concession of some railway infrastructure elements are priorities aiming at better utilization of the planned investments and repair and maintenance of infrastructure.

Railway transport is one of the most environmentally friendly transport modes however, Bulgarian railways passengers' traffic has decreased nearly 3 times, and the number of passengers' trains has reduced by more than 40%, over the last 15 years. The main reasons for the big decline are the low attractiveness of the railway transport due to the poor condition of the railway infrastructure, the old rolling stock and the increased number of alternative transport opportunities. However, at the end of the programming period increase of 18.5%²⁰ in the traffic of passengers is expected compared to 2005. As a result of the closure of heavy industry enterprises and the shift of freight from rail to road, the railway freight transport has also registered a significant decline. It is expected that in 2013 the goods carried will increase

¹⁸ The country has adopted all the social and technical requirements of the EU related to safety and security of the road transport.

¹⁹ Recently the cross-border point Kulata – Promahonas between Bulgaria and Greece was upgraded by electrification of the existing tracks. The track Dragoman – Kalotina – Dimitrovgrad Yug (Serbia) – the cross-border point Between Bulgaria and Serbia was also electrified.

²⁰ Data provided by Bulgarian State Railways EAD.

by 13.3% in comparison to 2005. In addition, the planned amount of passenger traffic for 2008 is 27.7 ml. train-km is expected to increase up to 32.9 ml. train-km in 2013. The planned freight transportation in 2008 and 2013 is 14.4 and 17.1 ml. train-km respectively. In broad terms, the traffic scenario is to achieve the following target: 2008 – 42 ml. train-km and 50 ml. for 2013 in total.

The passenger interurban and international traffic have good potential for development, which to a large extent depends on the improvement of the railway network and the implementation of a renewed strategy to seize the opportunities of the market. The tendency is towards an increase of 15% per year for the international freight transport via the border stations, 2-3% of transportation via ports and retaining of transportation along national destinations. In 2005 the most loaded destinations include Sofia – Dragoman and Sofia – Mezdra – Varna with goods carried of nearly 3.2 and 3.0 billion tons²¹ respectively. For the period 2007-2013 the growth of goods carried through the main destinations will amount to 3-4% annually²². Bulgarian railways have also the potential for handling the container transportation but, the available infrastructure does not meet the requirements for performing modern freight transportation with only 8 container terminals situated in some of the main railway stations.

The current condition of the railway infrastructure is determined by the inadequate level of financial resources for the accomplishment of the necessary repair work. This resulted in serious speed restriction of nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the rail network in the country, increase of the necessary time for the repair works leading to a decline in its technical conditions, and restriction in the overall capacity of the railway infrastructure. Currently, the government is attempting to reduce the shortage of financing by using national financing as well as sources such as ISPA, EIB, World Bank.

The main tool used by the Bulgarian authorities for the rail transport in order to compete better with the increasing competition of the road transport is to improve its status through improvement in transport services and speed as well as the overall quality and safety standards of travelling in order to attract higher volumes of passengers and goods. The aim is to reach this target with the existing low rail fares.

Overall, with regard to national transport policy some key priority corridors are suffering from traffic congestion and are expected to provide traffic growth in the near future. These priority corridors cover the following directions:

- Sofia-Vidin-Kulata-Thessaloniki /Athens in Greece;
- Sofia-Plovdiv-Istanbul in Turkey;
- Bucharest-Rousse-Gorna Oriahovitsa-Stara Zagora;
- Sofia-Plovdiv-Burgas-Varna;
- Danube River.

The main reason for the present poor condition of the transport infrastructure, and especially regarding the railway infrastructure, is related to the considerable shortage of funds for the maintenance and repairing. During the last years the government plays significant role for reducing the considerable shortage of funds necessary for the maintenance and repairing of the railway infrastructure by providing State Budget cash flows according to the annual forecast

²¹ Data provided by Bulgarian State Railways EAD.

²² Data provided by Bulgarian State Railways EAD.

and according to the State Budget law for the current year. In parallel, Bulgaria is using the opportunity to implement some major transport investment projects which are planned to be co-financed by the Cohesion Fund and ERDF using modern technologies and materials in order to decrease maintenance costs along the major Trans-European and national transport axes. Moreover, options for PPP projects for road, railway and combined transport are also envisaged. The elaboration of strategic business development plan for the railway transport is a crucial point for providing a service strategy on a number of core market segments (for both passenger and freight transport) for which railways can develop sustainable competitive advantages in the medium to long term. And last but not least, the strengthening of the administrative capacity of all bodies related to the transport sector and further restructuring of some of them needs to continue more intensively in order to response adequately to the challenges of the EU membership.

The **maritime and inland waterway transport** provides opportunity for good quality, cheap and environment friendly transport services, which define the waterborne transport as a serious alternative to road transport. The main seaports of Varna and Bourgas, have sufficient capacity for general cargo, solid and liquid bulk cargo, containers, heavy parcels and RO-RO units handling. They have relatively well-developed transport infrastructure connecting them with the state's road and rail network. There are 3 container terminals at the Black Sea coast.

The biggest Bulgarian river port is the Port of Rousse. It is an important trade, industrial and transport centre. However, **the fundamental and transshipment mechanical facilities are outdated**. Most of the Bulgarian ports are built for multifunctional purposes, which has negative effect on their technical condition. Moreover, the navigational channel on the main inland waterway, the Danube River, does not comply with the internationally accepted design standards as issued by the Danube Commission.

At present, the **combined transport** in Bulgaria is underdeveloped. There is a limited flow of road transit containers and also a limited number of containers on rail. The Bulgarian inter-modal system needs to be technically improved to take advantage of all the opportunities of the growth of transport demand in Balkan area and participate to the building of a more sustainable transport system.

The following Bulgarian railways lines are included in the European Agreement of Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related installations (AGTC):

- Rousse-Gorna Oriahovitz-Dubovo-Dimitrovgrad (310 km)
- Sofia-Mezdra-Gorna Oriahovitz-Kaspitchan-Varna (543 km)
- Dragoman-Sofia-Plovdiv-Dimitrovgrad-Svilengrad (382 km)
- Plovdiv-Zimnitsa-Karnobat-Bourgas (294 km)
- Vidin-Sofia (279 km)
- Sofia-Kulata (210 km)

The basic facilities for the national and international container freights transport have been established during the 1970's and 1980's. Due to the existing outdated infrastructure the terminals are not maintained and used in a proper way.

Although in general the status of the infrastructure does not meet the requirements for performing of modern freight transportation, in part of the terminals the equipment is good enough to be put into exploitation with a certain investment. There is no direct operational/logistic connection between the railway and maritime transport. The terminals

should be provided with specialized equipment (cranes, storehouses, truck freight loading platforms, truck chains, etc).

In relation to **air transport** there are five civil airports that currently operate in the country. **The conditions of the passenger and freight terminals in some of the airports do not correspond to the international standards.** In order to use the opportunity for landing of bigger and heavier airplanes, used by the charter air companies, the Bulgarian airports need extensions of the runways, development of the taxiways and new coverings. Significant investments for the achievement of the required standards of the Sofia Airport are accomplished using financing from ISPA (2000/BG/16/P/PT/002). Although there were significant delays in the terminal's construction, the project has been successfully completed and on 20.11.2006 a Permit for use was issued by the competent Bulgarian Authorities. The newly constructed Airport Terminal will ensure a higher standard of passenger handling and landing of wide-bodied aircrafts. It will contribute to raise the capacity to 2.6 million passengers and 26 000 tonnes cargo freight per annum. The implementation of the project will decrease the harmful effect to the environment and will improve the safety and the security of the flights. Also, the necessary improvements for the airports in Varna and Bourgas will be accomplished via concessions. At present the link between the main airport facilities and the other modes of transport is not developed.

The overall state of the transport infrastructure in the country is in poor condition. The existing roads, railway lines and the navigation channel of the Danube River need significant investment to improve safety and fully comply with the standards of the EU. The transport infrastructure along with the major transport axes of national and EU importance need further investment to become fully compliant with the European standards. The road system in Bulgaria is not supportive of long distance international traffic and is in poor condition. The loading capacity of the road pavement, along the main international transport destinations, has to be improved. The overall state of the railway infrastructure is also in unsatisfactory condition and is constantly worsening. This, along with the "closed" type rail transport network resulted in transfer of the significant amount of traffic to roads. The railway transport network of the country is a "closed" type due to the small number of cross-border check points with the neighbouring countries. The intensive internal traffic in the big cities generates the need for developing ring roads as important parts of the national road network. The greater part of small towns and villages are not well connected with the main transport system and the big cities. The combined transport infrastructure and service delivery are underdeveloped and require modernisation for better interactions between the different modes of transport.

2.1.2.2. Environmental Protection Infrastructure

The environmental infrastructure of the country is essential for both the quality of life and for public health. With strong linkages to the economic resources management, this sector is strategic for the future development of the country. The infrastructure for the protection of the environment and also for the protection of the human health comprises the following components: water management; waste management; ambient air quality management, nature protection; rehabilitation of the inherited contaminated sites; and the reduction of environmental risks.

In general, the **water quality** in the country is at satisfactory level. Bulgaria has a well developed **water supply system** that covers 5031 settlements with 98.8% of the population (2004). However, approximately 21.6% of the population suffers from regimes in the water supply due to internal losses in the distribution networks and a lack of water reservoirs (51.6% in 2004). The overall **water consumption** in the country is comparatively low, but the volume of the extracted water is nearly twice larger in comparison with other countries. To a great extent this is caused by the amortization of the water supply network, which at some places requires complete rehabilitation. With regards to the **sewerage network** and **waste water treatment facilities**, the country is lagging behind in comparison with the EU standards for water supply networks. Approximately 70.5% of the towns in the country have sewerage networks constructed, but with regard to the villages this percentage hardly reaches 2.1%. In 2004 only 69.2% of the population is connected to the sewage system. In the same year only 39.9% of the population is connected to a waste water treatment plants (WWTP). Therefore significant efforts are still needed in order to provide for mitigating and possibly eliminating the discharges of harmful substances in the water as well as decrease possible environmental and public health concerns.

A significant improvement has been achieved in the field of managing the **industrial and household waste streams**. In 2004 the waste collection system covered 84.2% of the population of the country, which included mainly the inhabitants in the big cities. However, in rural areas there are no organised services for waste management. The system for separated waste collection has been introduced in the country mainly with regards to packaging waste, but also for some groups of specific hazardous waste streams such as luminescent tubes, batteries, and small chemical waste. Special attention has been paid to the environmental **damage caused by previous state enterprises** prior to their privatisation, such as the activities on mining research, extraction and primary treatment of ore, coals and raw materials. Sixteen state programmes consisting of 55 individual projects were implemented before the end of 2004. In order to reduce the state budget burden, a number of IFIs have been supporting the state efforts by financing activities carried out in this area. Further efforts are needed with regards to the large number of municipal landfills that still do not comply with the national and EU legislative requirements and represent a threat for the public health and for the environment. The complete development of an adequate system of infrastructure facilities for **municipal waste management**, to comply with EU and national legislative requirements and environmental standards, still remain a challenge. These require the implementation of new solutions with regards to the waste management. The further improvement of the environmental conditions also requires continuing the investments with regards to the industrial and hazardous waste processing.

The emissions of **main pollutants to the atmosphere** covered by Directive 2001/81/EC for national ceilings of the emissions of certain substances (SO₂, NO_x, CO₂, N₂O and NH₃) have decreased as compared to the levels from the beginning and the late nineties. A decrease of 10% is achieved in the SO₂ emissions due to the introduction of facilities for SO₂ removal in some of the thermal power plants. All these achievements enabled a radical improvement of the quality of the atmosphere in the industrial areas. With the current development trends, and launching new environmentally friendly large production facilities and introducing new abatement technologies, Bulgaria is expecting to fulfil its commitments under the Gothenburg Protocol on limitation of the national annual emissions and under the Convention on long-range trans-boundary air pollution by 2010. However, there are still urgent measures to be

implemented for reduction of the emissions of certain pollutants in the atmosphere air from large combustion plants and achievement of better environment.

In the area of **emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG)** the country currently complies with the limits set by the Kyoto Protocol. The levels of emissions of GHG show a tendency of decrease. This is due to the reduced emissions of GHG from sectors “Energy”, “Industrial processes” and “Waste”. The forecasts for future GHG emissions (in case of continuing implementation of the Action Plan on Climate Change) show that there is a national capacity reserve to fulfil the country’s commitments. With the accession to the EU, Bulgaria will participate in the European Emissions Trade Scheme.

The unsatisfactory status of the infrastructure sewage, waste water treatment and air pollution abatement, as well as the overall condition of the water supply system does not provide for the necessary quality of the respective services. The same is valid for the existing systems for waste management, which are also with insufficient quality and coverage. This situation needs actions for improvement in order to protect public health and to comply with the national and EU legislation in force. In addition it is also important to secure that investments increase the economic attractiveness to investors and visitors as well as provide adequate quality of life for communities in these areas.

2.1.2.3. Disaster, Accident and Risk Prevention and Protection

The heavy rainfalls and the floods that occurred in Bulgaria between May and August 2005 caused devastating consequences on the infrastructure and on the regional and local economies. Human lives were put in danger, 10 people died, more than 2 000 000 directly suffered from the floods. The rainfalls caused extensive flooding and material damages. The analyses show that most of the affected areas have received over 300 litres/sq.m. of fall. Crisis situation was officially declared by municipal and district authorities in Shoumen, Stara Zagora, Targovishte, Veliko Tarnovo, Lovech, Pleven, Pernik, Vratza, Pazardjik, Plovdiv, Smolian and Sofia districts. As a result of the floods a great majority of the above mentioned municipalities are suffering from difficulties with the electricity and adequate water supply and lack communications.

The analysis carried out shows that more than 10 000 private and public buildings were flooded and partially or completely destroyed, part of the local population have been evacuated and left without proper housing conditions and amenities, 63 river bridges along the roads and 42 railway bridges have been damaged, 5736 km of roads and highways were affected and 124 km of railway tracks have been destroyed, including also several railway stations. 52 km of water protection dykes have been completely destroyed. 42 hospitals and health-care establishments have been flooded and 435 schools, kindergartens and other educational facilities were damaged. Calculations have estimated that the total damages from the floods in 2005 caused to the affected areas amount to 891 786 241 leva (at about 456 mln. euro). The damage from the high water is having and will continue to have a significant impact on the local and regional economy in these areas, especially on agriculture, transport and tourism sectors.

Conclusions of independent experts

In the period 25-29 July 2005 a team of independent experts conducted a mission in Bulgaria for assessment of the damages caused by the floods in a prompt response to the request of the Bulgarian Authorities for launching EU financial support to overcome the consequences from the disaster. The final report from the mission based on the experts' investigations and discussions with representatives of the district and local authorities recognized a number of key issues that need improvement:

- The provision of a centralised Emergency Fund with procedures in place that would effect a quick release of financial assistance in the event that a flood emergency;
- A lack of resources at the central level has been identified. The provision of resources to improve flood risk management should be improved. A greater emphasis must be placed on creating and maintaining, i.e. Maintenance Management Plans for technical structures (river beds, dikes, dams) and the removal of vegetation (river clearance programs) to ensure that the current flood assets are operating efficiently and effectively prior to and during flood events;
- The significant financial effects on the economy of the losses to private manufacturing and agricultural enterprises (Bulgarian Public Limited Company) should be recognized by the authorities. Damage Inventories should more clearly identify the effects of flood damage to the manufacturing and agricultural industries. A loss compensation program should be developed;
- On this occasion, flood warning seems to have worked remarkably well although there is no centralized flood forecasting infrastructure.

Following the lessons learned from the floods during 2005, Bulgaria has undertaken strong measures on policy and legal level for improving the protection of the population, landscape and wild life from natural disasters and emergency situations like inundation.

The first major step of the Bulgarian Government in terms of improvement of the inter-service coordination and development of efficient national system for crisis prevention and management was **the establishment of Ministry of State Policy for Disasters and Accidents (MSPDA)** headed by a Deputy Prime Minister (MSPDA was established with a National Assembly decision from August 2005). The second step of the Government included a strong position for conducting concrete policy aiming effective crisis management in **its Governmental Program**, followed by a **Policy Concept paper of the Ministry** was elaborated and adopted by the Council of Ministers.

Moreover, the Organic Rule of the Ministry of State Policy for Disasters and Accidents has been ratified, by means of which **structural changes** have been made and the former State Agency of Civil Protection has been closed as an Agency, passing under the authority of the Ministry, which has become its rights inheritor.

Also, on the basis of lessons learned from the floods during 2005 **two legal bills** were drafted and adopted by the Council of Ministries – one is for drafting an amendment and additions to the Crisis Management Law and the other is a brand new Disaster Protection Law.

2.1.2.4. ICT

The renewed Lisbon strategy stated that it is essential to build a fully inclusive information society, based on the widespread use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in

public services, SMEs and households. In June 2005 The European Commission launched the initiative **i2010 – European Information Society 2010** as a key element of the renewed Lisbon partnership for growth and jobs. It promotes an open and competitive digital economy and emphasises ICT as a driver of economic growth inclusion and quality of life.

The wide deployment and use of ICTs is essential for enhancing the economic performance of enterprises, developing electronic trade and electronic business, improving transparency and openness of government relations with citizens, and providing more and better services for the society and will contribute to Bulgaria's active participation in the future global digital economy.

The well developed information and communication infrastructure and particularly broadband infrastructure is the most important prerequisite for the provision of access to and use of high-speed Internet, electronic services and rich digital content.

Bulgaria has a high level of fixed telephone density by households (74 % by the end of 2005²³), but compared to EU – 25 the country is lagging behind on the indicator digitalization of the fixed telephone lines.²⁴ Considerable intra-regional disparities exist in the digitalization of the fixed telephone network.²⁵ The density of mobile services penetration is approaching the EU-25 levels²⁶ largely due to the liberalisation of the fast moving market and the growth in the ICT sector. In 2005 the licensing of a third GSM operator led to substantial drop in the prices of mobile services. However, over 50 % of subscribers consider them as too high²⁷.

The access to Internet is improving continuously, mostly by cable connections (LAN and cable TV). By the end of 2005 about 23%²⁸ of Bulgarians over 15 years old had an access to Internet (at home, at the work place, at school, at public access points, etc.) compared to 16.3% at the beginning of the year.

The physical access to computer and Internet, preferably broadband is essential, but not sufficient prerequisite for the wide penetration of ICTs. The ICTs penetration can be described by more complex indicators as use of computers and Internet that take into account a set of important factors: ICT skills, financial affordability, facilities for disabled, etc.

With regard to financial affordability for example, the average price of about BGN 30-35 for ADSL access is considered high, especially for households and small companies in small towns and economically underdeveloped regions. In Bulgaria there is a lack of municipal and district broadband networks which provide cheaper alternatives for economically deprived regions and rural areas where market fails.

²³ According to the Communications Regulation Commission

²⁴ According to Bulgarian Telecommunications Company (BTC) the level of digitalization has reach 46% as of April 2006, with the level of digitalization in Sofia and other main town reaching over 80%.

²⁵ According to to BTC the level of digitalization has reached 46% as of April 2006 with the level of digitalization in Sofia and other main towns reaching over 80%.

²⁶ 80% as of 31.12.2005 against 91% average mobile penetration in EU-25

²⁷ According to a survey of the Communications Regulation Commission

²⁸ Vitosha Research, 2006

Despite the positive tendency of the ICT penetration in recent years and the rapid increase of the level of investments, the overall level remains insufficient²⁹. In the first half of 2006 31% of population aged over 18 had an access to computer³⁰. The use of Internet by households in 2006 is 19.8%³¹, as compared with 42% in EU-25. Considerable intra-regional disparities exist in the digitalisation of the telephone lines, the use of PCs and Internet. Best rates of these indicators are observed in the South-West region³² where almost half of the subscribers in the country are concentrated. The worst rates are registered in the North-West region³³. The low penetration rate of these services can be explained by the limited market and respectively low investments.

In 2005 10.6%³⁴ of the population used broadband Internet compared to 10.8 % for the EU-25. However, broadband users are concentrated predominantly in Sofia region and in the Black Sea coastal regions. There are specific groups which are nearly excluded from the use of computers and Internet, such as ethnic minorities, pensioners, and people living in rural areas³⁵. Among the major barriers for the use are the lagging behind in digitalisation of the fixed telecommunications network, the territorial disparities in broadband penetration, the insufficient ICT skills and the still high price of access³⁶ and low purchasing power of Bulgarian households, the impeded access for the disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities. For 25.4% of the Internet users there remain language barriers.

Underdeveloped broadband infrastructure, low usage of computers and Internet, low purchasing power of households and digital divide of disadvantaged groups are some of the problems in this area. Assistance from public funds is becoming essential for decreasing territorial imbalances in developing the broadband infrastructure for access to high speed Internet, and respectively to high quality electronic services for the business and citizens. Interventions should be focused predominantly in regions with limited market and even market failure. The communications infrastructure of public administration at district and municipal level shall be developed as an alternative for provision of cheaper broadband access based on most advanced technologies (DSL, ADSL, wireless). In addition, measures should be taken to boost the use of computers and high speed Internet – building public access points to Internet, ICT training, “digital inclusion” of ethnical minorities, jobless and low income people, people in rural areas, elderly and disabled, helping SMEs to adopt and use ICT.

2.1.2.5. Energy Infrastructure

The key problem facing the Bulgarian energy market remains the considerable import dependency of energy resources – around 70% (given 40% EU average), which also come from one supplier, the Russian Federation. The single significant local energy source is the low-calorific lignite with high sulphur content.

²⁹ In 2004 the ICT expenditure in Bulgaria accounted to 8.6% of GDP against 6.4% for EU-25, Eurostat

³⁰ Vitosha Research, 2006

³¹ Vitosha Research 2006

³² With 45% of the home PCs and 45% of the Internet users, NSI

³³ With 3% of the home PCs and 3% of the Internet users, NSI

³⁴ Vitosha Research, 2006

³⁵ According to Vitosha Research in 2006 only 5% of the Roma people, 7% of Turkish and 1-2% of pensioners used Internet.

³⁶ According to e-Europe+ 10% of the households do not use Internet because of limited financial resources

In order to constrain the energy import dependency serious efforts are exerted in the directions:

- reduction of energy intensity (energy consumption per GDP unit) of the economy;
- optimal use of local conventional and renewable energy sources;
- guarantee of the security of energy supplies through diversification of the sources and routes.

The high energy intensity of the economy could present a substantial problem for achieving long-term sustainable development. The Bulgarian economy consumes about 2 times higher energy for production per euro of GDP compared to the EU, taking into account purchasing power parity (PPP). In real terms, however, the Bulgarian economy has consumed about 8 times higher energy for production per 1000 euro of GDP compared to the EU in the year 2004³⁷. The greatest share within the gross energy intensity is industry with 39% of the total energy consumption and around 26% of GDP. Above 40% from electricity supplied to industry is consumed by SMEs, which are relatively energy intensive. In addition, the amortized physical environment and housing stock also do not comply with key requirements of energy efficiency.

The construction of appropriate infrastructure for production of energy from renewable energy sources (RES), including integration with the transmission and distribution networks, is directly connected with the pre-accession commitment of Bulgaria to reach an indicative 11% RES electricity share in the gross internal electricity consumption until 2010. Currently, the RES electricity is generated mainly from hydro power stations and relatively lower share of wind generators. The share of hydro electricity in the total electricity generation forecast for the period 2005-2015 (without substantial additional effort) is around 5.5% on average. In 2005 4.6 GWh of energy were produced from wind power, which is under 1% of the total RES electricity generated in the country. Approximately 116 GWh (10 ktoe) electricity is produced by biomass and more precisely by black lye in the cellulose and paper factories.

In order to achieve the indicative target, it is necessary that the electricity production from RES grows up to 4.61 TWh in 2010, which is connected to utilization of biomass in all its forms by constructing capacities for combined electricity and heat generation, utilization of existing possibilities for new hydro powers, as well as use of wind energy in the zones with wind potential.

At the same time, Bulgaria seriously lags behind in terms of gas-distribution network development and in household gasification not only compared to EU, but also to neighbouring South-Eastern European countries. Below 1% of the households are gasified compared to 50% in the EU. The real natural gas supply is conducted on the territory of 35-40 municipalities, which is about 15% of the municipalities in Bulgaria, while in the EU the percentage exceeds 80%. Throughout the country 49% of the municipalities are licensed for gas supply, but the actual gasification has hardly started in most of them. The fact that only market forces did not bring about sufficient investment interest in building gas supply networks in those regions, suggests the existence of a market failure. For overcoming this failure public funds contribution is required to ensure the connections between the national gas network and the regions with under-developed gas supply.

³⁷ Eurostat, Energy intensity of the economy

The requirements in the field of reduction of emissions from the large combustion plants (Directive 2001/80/EC) also need effort. The energy industry is the biggest source of sulphur dioxide and one of the main sources of nitrogen oxides, whilst the environmental concerns are priority in the sectoral development.

Detailed information about the energy policy of the country is provided in Annex 7 of the NSRF.

The main problematic areas for energy policy are related to the relatively high energy intensity of the Bulgarian economy, the considerable energy dependency from imported resources, the underutilization of local renewable energy sources, the reduction of the negative impacts of energy production and activities on the environment, as well as the catching up with the development of gas supply networks and household gasification. Support through public funds for investments in these areas constitutes a necessary element in achieving the priorities of improving productivity and competitiveness, increasing environmental protection, guaranteeing security and diversification of energy supplies, contributing to Lisbon and to the NSRF vision for high quality of life in Bulgaria.

2.1.3. Human Resource Development

The development of the human capital has a key role for achieving a competitive economy and modern and inclusive society, based on knowledge. A number of factors determine the quality of the human capital: demographic trends, labour market institutions and developments, education and health status, as well as equal access to services (health and social services, social security and assistance, transport services, housing and etc.).

2.1.3.1. Demographic Development

In the period from 1989 the population of Bulgaria has been continuously decreasing. At the end of year 2005 the number of people permanently living in Bulgaria was 7 718 750. According to forecasts of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, in 2013 the population will be around 7 348 077 people, or about 4.8 % less. The main parameters of the demographic crises in Bulgaria are connected with continuous reduction of the birth-rate in the country, demographic ageing of the population, relatively high natural death-rates including infants and children and the high emigration of people in active age. These factors lead to deterioration of the age structure of the population and a decrease in number of the potential labour force.

Special attention should be given to the problems connected to the average duration of life in good health. The index for Bulgaria for year 2000 is 61 years of age for men and 65.8 years of age for women, according to appraisals from the World Health Organization. In the European countries according to the same source, the values of this index are with 5 to 9 years higher.

According to the last official census from 2001 the ethnic structure of the Bulgarian society is as follows: 83.9 % Bulgarians, 9.4 % Turks, and 4.8 % Roma (equal to 370,908). Studies

however exist which suggest that the Roma figures might be underestimated with up to 30%.³⁸

The percentage of the population in active age is growing from 58.3% in year 2000 to 62.4% in year 2005. There is a permanent tendency of a decreasing percentage of the population in under active age from 16.8 % in year 2000 to 14.8 % in year 2005, as well as the population of over active age from 24.9 % in year 2000 to 22.2 % in year 2005.

The dependency ratio (number of retired people / 100 social insured people) is expected to decrease from 97.5 % in the year 2003 to 81.2 % in the year 2020, which will be the result of the introduction of stricter requirements for pension rights and an increase in the number of socially insured people. The level would remain under 90 % until 2038 and after that it is expected to grow by at most one percentage point every year because of the increase of the life expectancy reaching the level of 100% of the above mentioned ratio in 2050³⁹.

Age dependency ratio (number of people over 65 years old / people between 15 – 64 years old) is growing from 23.8 % in year 2000 to 29 % in year 2015 (Eurostat). The average levels for EU-25 are respectively 23.4 % and 28.9 %. In the framework of the programming period the situation in Bulgaria is not different from the average European level. The expected long term development (till 2050) shows worsening of the factor by 8.1 percentage points compared to the level of EU-25.

The demographic policy of the country is formulated in the National Strategy for Demographic Development 2006-2020, coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and National annual plans for its implementation.

The demographic development of the country is considered by the Bulgarian government as a national and social issue of great importance. It requires maximum efforts, as well as full coordination of the actions of the authorised bodies, institutions and structures of the civil society on central, regional and local level to overcome the negative demographic trends.

The future development of the labour force is affected by the processes of ageing and reduction in absolute terms of the population. The number of people retiring after 2006 will exceed the number of the young people entering the labour force, and expenditures for pensions will grow. The labour force is characterised by low productivity and the rigidity in professional and geographic mobility. The decline of the active population and the process of ageing, as well as the requirements for maintaining the competitiveness of the economy after EU accession, require full inclusion and utilisation of the potential of the available labour resources and improvement of their quality and structure to comply with the needs of the business development.

³⁸ The discrepancy in numbers is often explained with self-identification of Roma in Bulgaria as Turks, Bulgarians or Romanians at official census. See e.g. Elena Marushakova and Veselin Popov, *Tziganite v Bulgaria* (Gypsies in Bulgaria) (Sofia, Klub'90, 1993), p.93; Jean-Pierre Liegeois, *Roma, Gypsies, Travellers* (Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 1994), p.32-34; UNDP, *Avoiding the Dependency Trap – a Human Development Report on the Roma Minority in Central and Eastern Europe* (2002), p.24-25; Dena Ringold, Mitchell A.Orenstein, and Erika Wilkens, *Roma in an Expanding Europe: Breaking the Poverty Cycle* (Washington, D.C, the World Bank, 2005), p.3-4.

³⁹ NSSI

2.1.3.2. Labour Market

The quality of the labour force is a crucial factor for the economic growth. The basic labour market indicators demonstrate the difference between Bulgaria and the EU and represent one of the main challenges for the economy.

Table: Employment and unemployment in 2005

		Employment	Activity rate	Unemployment	Young unemployment	Long term unemployment
Bulgaria	%	55.8	62.1	10.1	22.4	6.0
EU-25	%	63.8	70.2	8.7	18.5	3.9

Source: Eurostat

The number of employed increased by 6.5% in 2000-2005 due to the higher labour demand by private sector but still, **the employment rate in the country stands at 55.8% in 2005 versus 63.8% in EU-25**. One important factor affecting the low employment level is the low participation rate. It reached 62.1% in 2005, while EU average participation rate was 70.2% in the same year.

In the period of 2000-2005 the level of unemployment dropped by 6.3pps to reach 10.1% in 2005. Among the main factors for the observed improvement was the witnessed “deshadowvisation” of the economy. The decreased tax burden and some changes in the registration of the labour legislation resulted in declining share of the grey economy, which according to NSI assessments is about 12-15% of GDP. Though the overall unemployment is already close to the EU average of 8.7%, **the long term unemployment remains the main problem of the labour market** in the country, as it decreases the quality of human capital in terms of skills, qualification and reduces labour supply. Although long term unemployment has dropped from 8.3% in 2000 to 6% in 2005⁴⁰, it accounts for more than a half (55.9%) of the total unemployment. The situation is especially sharp among the low educated and low qualified people, where the indicator reaches values of 70.8% and 72.7% respectively. Due to the inadequate educational and vocational qualification structure of the labour force there is a risk of shortage of labour in high value added branches, and associated with it. **The youth unemployment rate remains high** - 22.4% in 2005, as compared with 18.5% in the EU-25. The share of young unemployed without professional qualification is 73.6%⁴¹ and those with primary education - 65.6%. Meanwhile, the number of unemployed people over 50 years of age is 28.1%. About 60% of these people are long term unemployed. In 2005, five out of 100 registered unemployed are people with disabilities.

The high youth unemployment rate of recent graduates shows that the skills provided at school, especially vocational skills, are inadequate for the needs of the labour market. A World Bank survey indicates that foreign investors are experiencing considerable difficulties in finding workers with the skills they require. The skills gap applies to technical specialists,

⁴⁰ as compared with the 4.1% in the EU-25

⁴¹ official data from the Employment Agency. Non-governmental studies show that the youth unemployment is of serious concern among disadvantaged groups such as the Roma. See e.g. Lilia Dimova et al., *Romite: drugoto izmerenie na promenite* (Roma: the Other Dimension of the Changes), Sofia: Partners Bulgaria Foundation, 2004, p.31-32.

qualified business managers, and others needed to operate modern competitive businesses⁴². As a result of the skills mismatch, firms must incur high costs to train new recruits, which, in the case of software companies and other high-tech companies, could include three to six months of no productive input from these workers. Improving the quality of education especially in ICT and foreign languages knowledge and introducing modern training systems are prerequisites for labour force able to cope with the challenges on the labour market.

The **labour market flexibility is much lower than EU average**. In 2005 only 2.5% were part-time employees while in the EU the share of part-time employees was 18.4%.

Agriculture is the main source of income in many rural areas. According to Labour Force Survey (LFS), the agricultural sector accounts for nearly 8.9% (2005) of the overall employment. However, the sector's participation in overall employment in LFS is underestimated and according to NSI employment statistics, **the agricultural sector accounts for about 24.9% (2004) of the overall employment^[1]**. The huge difference between rural and urban areas in terms of employment and activity rates indicates the need for diversification of income sources in rural areas: tourism, services, etc.

Table: Labour force, Employed and Unemployed by Place or Residence in 2005 (average annual data)

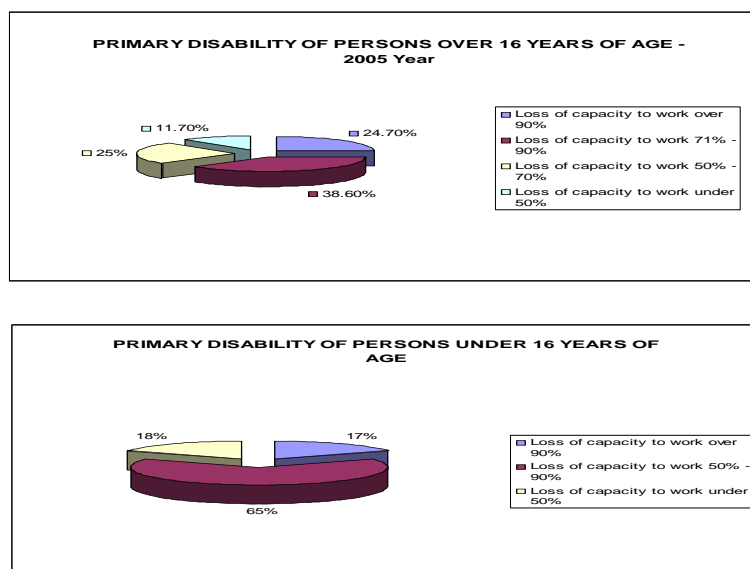
Place of residence	Labour force, thous.			Persons not in labour force, thous.	Activity rate, %	Employment rate, %	Unemployment rate, %
	Total	Employed	Unemployed				
Urban	2,512.3	2,286.4	225.9	1,360.2	64.9	59.0	9.0
Rural	766.7	658.9	107.8	643.7	54.4	46.7	14.1
Total	3,279.0	2,945.3	333.7	2,003.9	62.1	55.8	10.2

Source: NSI Labour Force Survey, AEAF calculations

Meanwhile, one of the main objectives of the Government is to strengthen the capacity of institutions on the labour market. The ongoing reform in the Employment Agency, as a main mediator between the employers and the unemployed people, aims to transform it into a modern public employment service. Currently 28 Labour Offices Directorates (LOD) have introduced the 'one-stop shop' principle.

The **state of the occupational safety and health** is determined to a great extent by the industrial relations dynamics and the resulting investments in labour. The developments of the economy, technologies, the level of education and qualification of the workforce, and the public health, etc. have a significant influence. The safety and health at work and the working organisation are the criteria for quality of labour and for the state of the particular companies.

⁴² see World Bank (2005), Country Economic Memorandum "Bulgaria: The Road to Successful EU Integration. The Policy Agenda"



Data source: Ministry of Health, National Centre of Health Informatics, 2005

In line with the EU acquis actions for the improvement of the occupational, safety and health within the enterprises have been taken. The number of the enterprises meeting the occupational safety and health legislative requirements in 2005 has increased with about 24 % compared with the ones in 2003. Nevertheless, working conditions in Bulgaria still do not correspond to the EU average.

The share of the fatal work related accidents and of the work related accidents, leading to permanent disability is relatively high. According to latest data there has been a decrease in the total number of work related accidents in the country – from 6391 in 2000 to 4405 in 2004.

Table: Accidents at work (Source: Eurostat)

	Serious accidents at work		Fatal accidents at work	
	1998	2003	1998	2003
Bulgaria	100	83	100	83
EU-25	100	83	100	77

Serious accidents at work - The index shows the evolution of the incidence rate of serious accidents at work in comparison to 1998 (= 100). The indices in Bulgaria and EU 25 show similar developments.

Fatal accidents at work - The index shows the evolution of the incidence rate of fatal accidents at work in comparison to 1998 (= 100). Although there is a decrease in both indices, the situation in Bulgaria is worse by 6 points in comparison to EU 25.

Table: Lost of working days due to sickness 1995-2005 (Source: Ministry of Health)

	1995	2000	2005
Number of days off work due to sickness	21,450,927	10,616,357	15,533,356
Number of days in sickness leave to an employee	6.93	4.94	6.70

Long-term unemployment and low activity rate are the challenges for the economy for the period 2007-2013. There is a discrepancy between the skills acquired in schools, technical institutes and universities and the skills required by business, particularly by those that need to compete on the external markets. Moreover, the youth unemployment rate remains high as compared with the EU-25. The labour market flexibility is much lower than EU average. Sustaining and increasing the level of investments by business operators to improve occupational safety and health and to reduce the number of accidents remain a challenge.

2.1.3.4. Education

The overall picture of Bulgarian education does not show great differences from that in the EU countries. Bulgaria spends around 4.2 % of GDP on education. The educational structure of population is close to the EU 25 average - 50 % of population has secondary education, 22 % have higher education and another 5 % acquire college degree⁴³. However several facts indicate the need for a reform in the educational sector.

In regard to the primary and secondary education, the “National Programme for the Development of School Education (2006-2015)” identifies the following main problematic issues:

- the educational system is more oriented towards memorising and reproduction instead of development of analytical thinking, self-dependence, enterprise and practical skills;
- there is no national system for external assessment of education quality, while the internal one is of low quality;
- the high share of the early school leavers;
- the teacher’s profession is with low social statute and insufficient authority;
- the schools network is un-optimised, which is illustrated by the low (in comparison with the average values for EU) students to teacher ratio⁴⁴
- the public expenditures on education are ineffective with about two-thirds of total public expenditures on education going to relatively low wages and salaries for staff, which do not motivate the teachers to enhance their qualification;

The results of several international studies (TIMMS; PISA) clearly demonstrate a decrease in the quality of educational results of Bulgarian school children and the quality of education in Bulgaria⁴⁵.

The **vocational education** in Bulgaria is also a very important factor for ensuring capable experts for the labour market. Nearly half of Bulgaria’s secondary students⁴⁶ have a degree

⁴³ “Education in the Republic of Bulgaria”, NSI, 2005

⁴⁴ on average 2.9 % less children per year are born, while the number of teachers remains almost the same

⁴⁵ The general educational situation in Bulgaria is affected by the high drop-out rate, especially among minority children. the Roma children in the first grade are 20.6 %, in the fifth grade – 12.5 %, in the ninth grade – 2.6 %, and in the 13th grade – 1%. , according to data Plamen Makariev (ed.), Strategii na obrazovatelna i nauchnata politika: Obrazovatelna politika i kulturni razlichia (Strategies for Policies in Science and Education: Educational Policy and Cultural Differences), special issue, vol. 10, Sofia, Ministry of Education and Science, 2002, p.143

from a vocational school. These schools (designed under the planned economy times) are not providing students with the skills needed in today's dynamic economy. The system of vocational schools currently under MES' needs actions directed at revising curricula, restructuring and the introduction of external quality assessment.

Net enrolment rates in **higher education** are constantly increasing during recent years - from 23 % (2000-2001) to 25.8 % (2004-2005). People with higher education find jobs easier – the unemployment rate among them is the lowest, but 42 % of the young people with higher education do not work in the field they have specialised in the university and they often work in a position that requires a lower education level.⁴⁷

The participation in **lifelong learning** of the active population as a whole is significantly lower compared to the average for the EU Member States. According to the Eurostat data in 2005 the share of people aged 25-64, participating in at least one form of training (formal, informal and non-formal) is only 1.1 %, which is four times below the EU average. It questions the adaptability of the human potential in Bulgaria and its ability to face the challenges of changing economic and social environment.

The introduction of the ICTs in the education system is ongoing. In 2006 all Bulgarian schools are equipped with computers and related software, but the development of digital content is still in initial stage. Bulgarian universities are practically on-line. Many of them offer e-learning courses. In 2006 the national research and education network was upgraded. Now it provides connectivity of 50 Mb/s for the 20 biggest universities and all research institutes of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, while for smaller universities the connectivity is still 10 Mb/s.

The demographic situation challenges the development of education in the country. The educational sector in Bulgaria faces the challenges of ensuring equal access to education for all, improving teachers' qualification, quality and relevance of skills, participation rates in upper secondary education and optimal resource use. The higher education system needs establishment of proper financial management system to stimulate competition, effectiveness and development. The participation in lifelong learning of the active population as a whole is significantly lower compared to the EU average.

2.1.3.5. Health

The demographic situation and socio-economic development of Bulgaria influence the trends in healthcare. A mortality rate (14.6 ‰), high child mortality (10.4 ‰ – almost twice higher than EU average), lower life expectancy (72.6 years as compared with 79 years for the EU countries)⁴⁸ and ageing population, are some of the problems of Bulgaria's society.

Bulgaria spends 4.3 % of GDP on health – significantly lower than EU average (8.8 %). The country has the lowest year budget spent for health in respect to the other EU member states –

⁴⁶ NSI data.

⁴⁷ "Young people and labour market". 2003, Alpha research Ltd.

⁴⁸ Data taken from National Statistical Institute "Population", 2005.

only 146 euro per capita per year.⁴⁹ The National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) is the main collector of funds and payer in the system. Its stability depends upon the correct fulfilment of the responsibilities on behalf of the insurees, the NHIF and the providers of healthcare services. It is considered as necessary to improve the control mechanisms over the expenditures and the provision of health services. It is necessary, as well to improve the control over the quality of the healthcare services.

The **access to health services** is guaranteed by law. Mechanisms for ensuring access to quality healthcare for low income-individuals and members of vulnerable groups have been developed in legislative terms and practical implementation follows⁵⁰. However, there are rural-urban differences in access to health services. There is a need for implementation of more focused measures for health education, promotion of healthy lifestyles and behaviour and prevention of diseases.

Poor **management**⁵¹ and governance of the healthcare system are the other weak points in the effective use of resources in the sector. Additional capacity building in this field will be needed for improving the effective performance of the system. The patients' participation in the process of decision making, financial expenditure and quality control is guaranteed by law. However, the negotiations on the National Framework Contract for provision of healthcare services conducted between NHIF and the professional organisation of the doctors on Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Medical Union, leaves the patient a outside of the decision-making process. The Ministry of Health and the NHIF have the responsibility for guarding patients' rights, but this mixes control, administration and financing functions in the system. The balance is shifted from ensuring quality care for patients to merely financing health expenses.

Health promotion, in accordance with the EU strategy for development of health care in the EU, is a priority. There are two main targets in the area of health promotion and disease prevention activities:

- to provide to all Bulgarian people the necessary support for choices of healthy lifestyles and behaviours, development of the system for dissemination of health knowledge and health education, acquiring healthy behaviour and habits, creating real conditions for a better health;
- to eliminate, manage and control the factors causing diseases, complications and reduced working ability and social activity of the population, increasing the effectiveness of the State Health Control, prevention of epidemic diseases, implementation of national, regional (and inter-regional) and municipal disease prevention programmes.

It should be pointed out that health promotion and disease prevention activities are a target on a national scale, vitally important to the nation. An important role in the attainment of this target is attributed to state bodies and municipal authorities, the educational system, the labour

⁴⁹ To compare Holland is spending 2600 euro per person per year, Malta – 1300 euro per person per year and Slovakia – 700 euro per person per year - “Hospitals in the 25 countries of the European Union”, Dexia, 2005.

⁵⁰ Access to health care is still problematic for certain groups in Bulgarian society, such as the persons below the poverty line, and other disadvantaged persons not covered by the health insurance system. That is why for example in 2005 National Health Strategy for Vulnerable People Belonging to Ethnic Minorities and its Action Plan 2005-2007, developed by the Ministry of Health, were approved by the Council of Ministers.

⁵¹ “Financing and management of healthcare”, 2005, MoF

safety and social policy bodies, the employers, the trade union, as well as the professional associations of physicians, dentists and nurses.

As investing in health is expected to improve the quality of labour force and by that to boost the economy of the country, investments are needed to enhance the healthcare system in Bulgaria. Improvement of the existing health infrastructure, modernising the outdated technical facilities, the development of modern medical information systems, the introduction of electronic health services, and the development of higher level of both preventive activities and post-treatment services or rehabilitation are needed.⁵²

The main challenges for the Bulgarian healthcare system are to increase the financial stability, efficiency and effectiveness of health expenditure as well as improve access to healthcare, the governance of the system and management of the processes. Healthcare services cover mainly treatment activities, while the promotion, prevention, and rehabilitation are underdeveloped. Modernisation of the facilities and information services are open issues.

2.1.3.6. Vulnerable Groups, Social Exclusion and Poverty

The vulnerable groups in the Bulgarian society include people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and especially Roma minority group, children and families at risk, people dependent on social assistance benefits, people living in specialised institutions, elderly people, long-term unemployed, victims of trafficking, drug addicts, homeless people. The main obstacles for them are related to the limited access to education and health, the labour market and the basic services.

Though, there is a decreasing trend of poverty rate among the population, the risk of poverty remains high for some of the vulnerable groups (especially the persons outside the labour market – the economically inactive people and the unemployed). The average poverty rate for the country is 14.2% in 2005, while the poverty risk for children up to 15 years is 17.8%, for youths (15-24) is 16.4%, and for elderly people above 65 years is 17.5%⁵³. The persons from these categories amount to 55% of the poor in the country. The poverty risk among unemployed is even higher (34.7% in 2005) and they represented 27% of the poor population in the year.

The structure and the size of the household are of particular importance on the poverty risk. In 2005 the poverty among the alone parents with one child was by 11pps higher than the average rate for the country. Moreover, the families with three or more children were characterised with much higher poverty risk (31.5%) as compared with those with 1 (9.8%) or 2 (16.7%) children.

Among the most vulnerable groups are the people with disabilities and vulnerable ethnic minorities. They are facing multidimensional problems and obstacles for their social inclusion. Despite all the measures taken for the integration of people with disabilities in the

⁵² According to data from Ministry of Health 77% of the GPs in Bulgaria and 35% of the specialized medical staff reports electronically to the National Health Insurance Institute. Internet access is relatively low and the information system for documenting activity has only partially been implemented.

⁵³ NSI data

resent years, and the progress of the established programmes under the National Strategy on Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities, problems in this area are still remaining. People with disabilities in Bulgaria are subject to attitudes and practices inherited from the past when most of them were isolated, protected and taken care of by their families or the state. The result from the last census in 2001 reveal that people with acknowledged disability (over 50%) in the country numbered 265 353 in the official data of the NSI. According to the NSSI, the number of people receiving social pension for invalidity (with rate of disability between 71 and 100%) is 244 929 and the number receiving pensions for invalidity (with rate of disability between 50 and 71%) - 84 756, that is to say the total number of people with disabilities is at least 400 000.

On 30 December 2005, according to the NSSI, the number of people receiving social pension for invalidity on degree of decreased capacity to work is 852 370. 730 000 of them are people with more than 71% of decreased capacity to work. For 2005, according to the Agency for Social Assistance, a social assessment was made for 487 283 people with permanent disabilities.

Despite all the measures and programmes initiated by the Government in recent years, Bulgaria is still at the beginning of process for a long term approach to addressing the issues of vulnerable ethnic minority groups, especially the Roma. The ethnic composition of the population in Bulgaria is as follows: Bulgarians – 83.9%, Turkish – 9.4%, Roma ethnic group – 4.8%.

The biggest problems faced by minority groups are those of poverty and unemployment. According to the World Bank Poverty Assessment for 2001 the poverty level for ethnic Bulgarians is 5.6% while for the Roma it is 61.8%. Another survey undertaken by the Agency for Social Analyses entitled “Roma on the labour market and in the social assistance system: The New Challenges 2003”, indicates that currently 42.8% of Bulgarians have regular paid employment but only 19.5% of Roma do. Unemployment levels are 17.3% of Bulgarians and 52.9% of Roma (the reminder up to 100% for each group are retired, students, people with disabilities and not responding (less than 1%). The inequality of Roma on the labour market is related mainly to their comparatively lower level of education and qualifications. The last census data show that among the population aged 25-64 in the large ethnic groups, Bulgarians received the best education; 23.5% have tertiary education, 53.0% – secondary, 20.75 – basic and 0.45 are illiterate. Among Roma only 7.2% attended tertiary or secondary education, 44.9% – have basic, 27.4% – primary, 7.8% are without any educational degree, and 12.7% are illiterate. The share of illiterate Roma adults in the period between the last two censuses (1992-2001) has grown by approximately 50%.

Further problems include the housing conditions of Roma which are considerably worse than for the rest of the population. Inadequate dwellings – without sanitary facilities, electricity, water supply, sewage system and waste removal – still exist. The lack of infrastructure in Roma neighbourhoods poses serious problems and there are many illegal constructions with illegal connections to water, electrical and sewage installations.

All these issues lead to health problems among vulnerable groups – children and mother mortality rates, the spread of tuberculosis, low life expectancy, and increased levels of sexually transmitted diseases. The situation deteriorates because many of the vulnerable groups, especially Roma have problems paying their health insurance contributions; they either do not evaluate the need, or do not have a clear idea of the health insurance procedures.

On 8 April 2005 the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 started nation-wide. In the National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion measures have been envisaged in for

meeting the four basic priorities of the decade: education, healthcare, employment, and better housing conditions. The following specific priorities for Bulgaria included: culture, protection against discrimination and ensuring of equal opportunities.

The project “**Promoting sustained social inclusion suggests an inter-generational approach, and giving people the same life chances requires investments in early childhood development (ECD) interventions**” for social inclusion is funded by World Bank loan amounting at 40 mln. euro. Providing opportunities of social mobility to the excluded and raising their human capital requires counterbalancing disadvantages created by family background. This logically means starting at birth by ensuring access to health and education, in order to let people acquire the skills, confidence and stamina needed to make their own life choices. Social inclusion policies, therefore, need to concentrate on the early years, from 0-6, to permit the most effective leverage to policies aimed at social inclusion. There is strong international evidence that investments in ECD interventions, including health and educational programmes, have a substantial impact on subsequent education outcomes in primary and secondary schooling and yield greater returns than later investments.

In order to prevent and reduce school drop-out the HRD OP supports measures to promote school readiness with a long-term impact in fostering the inclusion of children from marginalized backgrounds, in particular Roma, as well as children with special needs in the mainstream education system and breaking the inter-generational poverty trap resulting from early school drop-outs and special and segregated schooling. Such preventive services are expected to contribute to the ongoing de-institutionalization process by reducing the flow of new children into residential institutions – typically children deprived of parental care and children with special needs.

The measures envisage:

- integrating poor as well as disabled children into mainstream pre-school and kindergarten education,
- shaping the delivery of relevant services around beneficiary needs, i.e. integrating pre-school education, child health services and social services for children and parents,
- actively reaching out to and incentivizing benefiting parents, and
- enabling local governments to deliver and manage these services.

The school readiness activities include the following:

Programs for parents of children aged 0-3 target parents from the moment of conception, and include parent and family-focused social services by trained service providers sub-contracted by the municipality.

Programs for children aged 3-6 cover a menu of options for municipalities to enhance access to formal kindergarten or child care services for children from marginalized backgrounds and special needs, including additional health services and measures to increase the number of childcare places. It also includes measures to support demand (low income parents to seek child care) and supply (municipalities to promote access of low income children to child care).

Training for service providers and kindergarten staff is an essential precondition to effective social and child care service provision. Separate for each category of trainees, training will be provided before services start and would include refreshers and handholding.

Local government capacity building is necessary for effective implementation of school readiness measures require targeted capacity building for municipal staff and social workers working at the municipal level.

The challenges for the effective implementation of policy on Roma inclusion are as follows:

- better coordination and cooperation between the engaged institutions and the civil society,
- strengthening the administrative capacity of the authorities implementing the policy on Roma,
- active involvement of Roma community in policy implementation aimed at their social integration,
- increasing the sensitivity of the Bulgarian society with regard to Roma's problems,
- use of all possible sources for funding Roma inclusion, etc.

Despite the progress of the conducted programmes, vulnerable groups in Bulgaria continue to face obstacles for benefiting from basic services such as education and health, limited access to the labour market and the resources of the society, difficulties in overcoming poverty, social isolation and attitudes inherited from the past. Inadequate social infrastructure and severe housing problem in Roma neighbourhoods lead to health problems among Roma population and low life expectancy.

Policy coordination, monitoring, evaluation as well as further involvement of all stakeholders need to be improved.

2.1.4. Entrepreneurship and Good Governance

2.1.4.1. Business Environment

The favourable business environment is a prerequisite for the expansion of the entrepreneurs' activity and thus for economic growth. Although the government has made considerable progress in recent years in the area of simplifying the institutional environment in which the enterprises operate, the various studies in this area show that **there is still an overregulation in the country** in comparison to the EU-25 member states. A number of regulatory and legal reforms have been implemented in this area since 2002, but challenges still remain in improving the quality of the provided administrative services, as well as in the introduction of a contemporary legislation regarding the simplifying of bankruptcy procedures and the procedures for contract reinforcing. Strengthening the capacity for implementation of the legislative basis and improving the efficiency of court also remains a challenge.

Progress in improving the **investment climate** in the country has already been made by the introduction of the one-stop-shop service. At the end of 2005 71% of the central administration, 100% of the district and 68% of the municipal administration were providing services in one place. However, the state administration is not using all possibilities and mechanisms for services delivery optimisation, including quality assessment and feedback systems.

Bulgarian enterprises still face considerable obstacles for doing business in the country. According to the World Bank, Bulgaria ranks on 62nd place on the "ease of doing business" indicator among 155 countries (followed by only 3 EU countries). The companies face predominantly problems by starting business (80th place) and dealing with licences (118th place). Bulgarian legislation poses the highest minimum capital requirements for starting a business (5000 lv.) as a share of per capita income compared to the EU-25 preventing poorer

entrepreneurs from creating a new firm. The number of procedures and the duration to open a business (11) also needs to be optimised.

Significant challenges remain also in the conditions for exit of firms from the market.

The process is still far more time consuming than in other EU countries (3.3 years on average). The new amendments to the commercial law aim at simplifying the bankruptcy procedures. Nevertheless, the progress of the legislative reform in the area of closing business may still be considered as confined. The process of enforcing a contract is complex compared to other EU countries (34 procedures required) and presents a considerable obstacle for the entrepreneurs. In addition, the inefficiencies of court functioning multiply the difficulties of enforcing contracts.

The condition of the sector for consultancy and information services is of essential importance for the competitiveness of the existing and the start-up of new, viable enterprises. The **access to knowledge, information and expert assistance** is impeded significantly for the SMEs which puts them in a disadvantageous position compared to big companies. The sector of information and consultancy business services is overall fragmented and uncoordinated which leads to the ineffective use of resources, expert potential as well as existing material and technological base. The consultancy sector is considerably lagging behind in terms of development of business services, which comes as a result of the limited access, poor dissemination and poor quality of this type of services. At the present moment, business centres of the different NGOs act without good coordination, which very often lead to duplication of the efforts in big cities, weak or missing representation in the small towns, weak connection between real needs of enterprises and offered services and limit the possibilities for quick reaction and introduction of new services.

The major efforts for improving the sector are directed to introducing the European practices in Bulgaria. Eight centres, six of which in the frame of the BCCI, have been integrated in the network of the European Information Centres for business support - part of B2Europe Initiative. The biggest coordinated state initiative in the field of business services is the JOBS Project with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, supported by UNDP. Since 2000 the network of 39 business centres, including 10 incubators takes care for the development and stabilization of micro and small business in the regions of country with high level of unemployment.

Despite these and other state funded projects, the capacity of existing number and type of organisations and their territorial coverage is insufficient to serve the needs of business. Their actions are also poorly coordinated which leads to inefficiencies in provision of services which often do not correspond to the specific needs of the beneficiaries. Nevertheless, the capacity of such type of organisations and their territorial coverage is insufficient to cover the needs of the business. Their actions are also poorly coordinated which leads to inefficiencies in provision of services which often do not correspond to the specific needs of the beneficiaries.

The main obstacles that hamper improvement of business environment are:

- overregulation in comparison to the EU-25 member states;
- time-consuming and costly procedures for starting business and obtaining licenses;
- difficult exit from the market.

- underdeveloped system for business information and consultancy services for enterprises.

2.1.4.2. Reforming the Administration of Bodies of the Executive Power

Efficient and accountable state administration is a fundamental factor for socio-economic growth. As per the Bulgarian legislation the “**state administration**” consists of:

- the administration of bodies of the executive power:
 - central administration (Council of Ministers; ministries; state agencies; state commissions; executive agencies; administrative structures, created by a legislative act, which have functions in connection with the implementation of the executive power)
 - district administration
 - local administration
- the administration of the other bodies of state power envisaged in the Constitution: the bodies of the judiciary and legislative powers.

The administrative reform initiatives are targeted at all these levels of the state administration. The reform gained momentum in the last years as efficient and transparent administration was set as a government priority. The latest EC Monitoring Report from autumn 2006 has acknowledged the progress achieved in this field. The initiatives should be moved forward in order to keep the momentum.

Major legislative changes have been launched in the last years with notable move forward in the last year⁵⁴. The amendments were related to the priorities of the Government with respect to the administrative reform and with the recommendations made in 2005 Comprehensive Monitoring Report. With the new amendments to the Law on administration a clear distinction between the political and administrative level is made, the policy making process is regulated. An effective internal control on the performance of the administration was set up by strengthening the role of the Inspectorates as internal administrative units for control and prevention of corruption and other legislative violations.

The key issues in the adopted amendments in the Civil Servants’ Act (CSA) are:

- Achievement of economic effectiveness in conducting of competitions for civil servants, including centralised competitions for junior experts
- Improvement of the training system as a key factor for improvement of the administrative capacity
- Introduction of options for mobility of the civil servants
- Assuring overall and specialised control for compliance with the CSA. The control is carried out by the Minister of State Administration and Administrative Reform supported by the Inspectorate of the State Administration Directorate in MSAAR.

With the latest amendments to the Law on Administration the Administrative Registry was created as one of the forms for ensuring transparency of the administration through informing the citizens and business. The Law for Access to Public Information settles the delivery of

⁵⁴ The Laws on the Supplement and Amendment (LSA) of the Law on Administration and of the Civil Servants Act (CSA) were adopted by the National Assembly on 08/03/2006 (State Gazette no. 30/11.04.2006).

information thus opening the administration to the citizens and business. Nevertheless, still the implementation of the legislation in that field needs to be speeded up.

One of the key issues in the process of social and economic growth of Bulgaria, which needs more attention, is the fight against corruption. According to Transparency International, Bulgaria is ranked on 55th place – behind all EU-25 member states, but Poland (at 70th place). A Program for transparency in the activity of the state administration and the persons, occupying senior state positions was endorsed. The program proposes concrete measures, which will help overcoming the bad practices and strengthening the partnership between the state institutions, the civil society and the media.

An **anti-corruption** campaign has also started. It involves activities, such as: introduction of mailboxes and “hot” fixed lines for corruption cases signals in the state administration, large-scale anticorruption training for all civil servants. More efforts are still needed for the implementation of the Programme.

Progress in improving the investment climate in the country is linked directly to administrative service delivery and satisfaction of citizens and business from the administration. The one-stop-shop principle was already introduced in most of the administrative bodies. At the end of 2005, 71% of the central administration, 100% of the district and 68% of the municipal administration were providing services in one place. However, the services delivery optimisation is needed. The concept of quality management systems is not enough explored. The feedback systems are considered as formal source of information without going further in analyzing them and taking actions accordingly.

The introduction of **e-government** is part of the administrative reform for greater transparency and anticorruption. It calls for less administrative burden, better service delivery and sustainable development – main goals of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas. At the end of 2005 the realisation of the 20 e-services envisaged for introduction was implemented at 56.8% in comparison to 84% for EU-25.

In 2005 the Action plan for the introduction of complex e-services, based on the E-Government Strategy from 2002, has been launched. A considerably high increase of the total amount of documents signed electronically by the administration is accounted – more than 330 500 by the end of December 2005. However, there are still no unified rules among the Bulgarian administration for the provision of e-services. A national model for the e-document flow is also lacking.

The implementation of the policy making process is a key area in the administrative reform. Although there is a good framework for it, a large part of the administrative structures have weak mechanisms for internal and interdepartmental coordination. This leads to duplication of efforts and low efficiency.

Social and economic partners and NGOs are also involved in the administrative reform initiatives. However, their representatives are not always effectively included in the elaboration and adoption of policies. Improvement of their skills for policy making and implementation, acquis enforcement, dialogue and effective partnership is needed to enable these organisations to benefit at the utmost from their interaction with the administration.

An efficient state administration is linked and dependent on the **human resources quality** and competences. According to the latest Report on the Status of the Administration for 2005 the total number of the civil servants is 92 837. The civil servants with university degree represent 64.6% and 85.3% out of that having master degree. However, according to a research by the “Institute for marketing and social studies MBMD”, 79% of the civil servants state they need additional improvement of their skills. Only a part of municipal civil servants have received training. Less than half of the employees in the district administrations have had specialized training. There is a major need for training in European policy and legislation, EU funds project management and implementation. Similar interest is shown toward IT skills, language skills, financial management, legal framework and organisation of the administration. The *Strategy for Training the State Administration Employees* adopted with CoM Decision from 2002 and updated with CoM Decision from March 16th 2006 is directed at the enhancement of the professional skills and qualification development of the employees in the administration at all levels.

The establishment of the *Institute of Public Administration and European Integration (IPA EI)* as an executive agency within the Minister of State Administration.⁵⁵ It is the biggest organisation for qualification and prequalification of civil servants that offers training for professional and career development and provides compulsory and specialised training. From its start in 2000 until now, 25,000 persons had passed through training prepared by the Institute. Its tasks grew up and new aims have been given such as increase in the education on information technologies and language skills. It is an increasing challenge for IPA EI to ensure that the different types of training are delivered in a standard and qualitative way in line with the modern teaching methods.

A Human Resources Management in the State Administration Strategy was approved by the Council of Ministers in July 2006. This Strategy is a long-term and comprehensive programme, which sets out the scope of activities in the field of human resources management in the state administration in the Republic of Bulgaria.

The administrative reform has main focus on district and local level administration. A Strategy for Decentralisation 2006-2015 and an Action Plan for its implementation, 2006-2009 was adopted in June 2006 by the Council of Ministers. The Strategy gives the ground of the national policy toward improvement of the territorial governance. It determines the guidelines for responsibilities distribution and financial resources allocation between the central, regional and municipal level with the aim of more efficient and high quality service delivery to the citizens. The National Association of the Municipalities in Republic of Bulgaria is a main partner in the administrative reform at local level.

The launched administrative reform is a step forward contributing to the improvement of the investment climate, social and economic growth. Despite the undertaken initiatives, more efforts are needed for achieving a streamlined, transparent, competent and customer-orientated state administration. Strengthened capacity of the social and economic partners for better cooperation with the administration will lead to improved policy formulation process.

⁵⁵ stipulated in the Civil Servants' Act

2.1.4.3. Reforming the Judiciary System

The judiciary defends the rights and the legal interests of the people, the legal entities and the state, and is the main jurisdiction authority in the Republic of Bulgaria. The judiciary system comprises of the Court, the Prosecutor's Office and the crime investigation departments. The bodies of the judiciary power according to the Law for Judicial System are the Supreme Judiciary Council, The Supreme Court of Cassation, the Supreme Administrative Court, the Prosecutor General, the Supreme Prosecutor's Office of Cassation, the Supreme Administrative Prosecutor's Office, the National Investigation Office, the courts, the prosecutors' offices, and the crime investigation departments.

Despite the progress achieved by the **judiciary reform** and the adoption of the Law for the Trade Registry⁵⁶, the Law for the Mediation⁵⁷, the Law for Amendment and Supplement to the Trade Law⁵⁸, and the amendments of the Law for Judicial System, yet certain issues remain to be addressed: the random distribution of cases and the installation of the necessary IT system need to be effectively implemented in national scale; a unified mechanism with well defined criteria for assessing the quality of the magistrates needs to be applied; the practice of out-of-court settlements is not used, there is a lack of specialized trade courts and accelerated procedures for automatically putting into effect; the administrative courts are not established; the statistical system of the courts does not provide objective and transparent assessment of the judges' work.

The judiciary reforms, the large scope of the specialised legal framework, as well as the *acquis communautaire* require enhancement of the professional qualification of the judges, as well as continuous training in newly adopted legislation. The administrative staff in the courts, as well as experts and assessors, should be given the opportunity to attend specialised training courses. Such topics include cooperation between the national courts and the Court of Justice of the EC, fight against fraud affecting the European Community financial interests, and fight against organised crime.

Following the amendments to the Law for Judicial System (July 2003), the Magistrate Training Centre was transformed into a National Institute for Justice (NIJ), under the financial and organisational management of the SJC. The NIJ organises and carries out trainings for Bulgarian magistrates and court officials. The Institute is involved in the preparation and distribution of educational materials, documentation and literature amongst a large part of the magistrates and court officials.

The judiciary reform requires active policy and practical steps in order to provide two fundamental elements:

- effective and timely functioning of the judiciary system;
- motivated, independent and competent judges, magistrates and other court officials.

⁵⁶ The Law for the Trade Registry (State Gazette no. 34, 25.04.2006).

⁵⁷ The Law for Mediation (State Gazette no. 110, 17.12.2004).

⁵⁸ The Trade Law (State Gazette no. 59, 21.07.2006).

2.1.4.4. SME⁵⁹

During the transition period the SMEs have gradually established themselves as an important factor in the Bulgarian economy. In 2004 they generate 77.9%⁶⁰ of the employment provided by the private non-financial enterprises in sectors from C to K of the National Classification of Economic Activities, compared to 76% in 2002. The contribution of SMEs to the gross value added (58.4% of the GVA, created by the private non-financial enterprises in sectors from C to K in 2004) is also steadily increasing. According to estimations the real input of private SMEs in this sectors is about 22.2% of GVA of the economy and about 19.2% of GDP. The sectors where SMEs operate predominantly are the processing industry and trade.

Despite the positive development in last years **domestic SMEs are still lagging behind the EU-25 SMEs in terms of labour productivity.**⁶¹ On the one side this is a result of the use of outdated technologies in production, leading also to high energy intensity of the produced output. 45% of the companies work with equipment more than ten years old and close to three-fourths (72.8%) have equipment that is more than 5 years old. SMEs declare that they need serious investment funding, but the allocations for investments in new technologies are insufficient - the average annual share (in total company revenues) of the funds allocated by the SMEs for technological renovation in the past three years amounts to 18.04%⁶².

On the other hand the low quality of management strategies and the low level of introduction of innovations in the production process also influence negatively this indicator - only 18.5% of the managers believe their competitive advantage comes from technological innovation. To 60% of small businesses competition is essentially price-related.

In 2006⁶³ practically all enterprises in Bulgaria are computerised; 75-80% have access to internet allowing around 27% of employed to have access to internet at their workplaces and 24% of the enterprises have web-pages⁶⁴. In 60% of enterprises computers are used mainly to facilitate office and accounting activities. Only 10% of enterprises use management information systems, production automation systems or client relation management systems. Only 6.6% of the enterprises use electronic resource planning systems. This is due to the domination of traditional industries and the specialization in low technology segments of the technology sectors in Bulgaria⁶⁵.

⁵⁹ SMEs are private non-financial enterprises in specialized sectors from C to K of the National Classifier of Economic Activities (NACE.BG 2003): micro enterprises (1-9 employees), small enterprises (10-49 employees) and medium-sized enterprises (50-249 employees).

⁶⁰ Annual report on the condition and development of SMEs in Bulgaria, 2006", Ministry of Economy and Energy

⁶¹ Bulgarian SMEs produced in 2003 18.3 times less value added per one employee compared to Europe – 19. Europe 19 includes EU-15 + Norway, Lichtenstein, Island and Switzerland.

⁶² National survey of the Ministry of Economy and Energy "Bulgarian SMEs and their preparedness to participate in EU Structural Funds' absorption" – June-July 2006, conducted by "Vitosha Research".

⁶³ Vitosha research, 2006

⁶⁴ In comparison 90% of the enterprises in EU-25 were connected to the Internet and 58% had websites in 2004, The 2005 Information society benchmarking report, European Commission, 2006

⁶⁵ Bulgaria 2010: Economic Challenges. Report of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, C., 2005.

Currently 1.2% of the enterprises use Internet for electronic trade (2.1% for EU-25). However, the development of electronic trade and electronic business in the country is growing, and the framework for e-trade development has been improved by the adoption of the Law on e-Trade. It settled the information society service providers' obligations and the rules of the e-trade announcements via Internet.

The participation of Bulgarian SMEs in the international trade is also relatively low, which is an indication of their low labour productivity. In 2003 only 20% of the revenues of the medium enterprises and respectively 7.8% and 5.8% of the revenues of the small and micro enterprises come from an export activity. A major barrier for the SMEs intending to enter the external markets is **the lack of certification of the production**. Until 2003 only 842 enterprises have received ISO 9001:2000 quality management systems certificates and only 17 enterprises ISO 14001 environment management systems certificates.

The major source of financing for the SMEs is the banking sector as **the alternative forms of financing are still underdeveloped**. During the last few years the conditions for receiving credit for well established on the market SME have improved with both interest rates and collateral requirements having decreased. Still, **the start-ups face considerable problems in obtaining the resources necessary to launch businesses**. The underdeveloped market for alternative forms of financing is one of the main reasons for the difficulties of the newly created enterprises. Most of the banks require a history of at least 3 months of economic activity from the firm in order to grant credit. On the other side, according to a survey of the World Bank, Bulgaria is ranking just at 80th place in the world on the indicator for starting businesses. The major difficulty presents the required minimum initial capital for starting business amounting to 104.2% of the per capita income in the country (49.1% in Europe and Central Asia).

The SMEs in Bulgaria are still characterised by low labour productivity and are considerably lagging behind EU-25 in this respect. Their development is mainly hindered by:

- Outdated technologies in production, leading also to high share of energy in the production costs;
- Low introduction and use of ICT;
- Low level of certification of SMEs production, which impedes their exports capability;
- Difficult access to finance for start-ups; underdeveloped alternative forms of financing;
- Insufficient coverage and quality of consultancy and information services, as a characteristic of the overall business environment.

2.1.4.5. Innovation

The low level of enterprises' innovation activity is among the main reasons for their low labour productivity. The Bulgarian companies participate far less in the financing of research and development activities (their share accounts for 28.2% of the total expenditures for research and development for 2004), while the EU-25 average is 54.9%.⁶⁶ The low innovation activity is especially acute among the SMEs. The share of SMEs introducing innovations accounts for only 9.4%, while this indicator is ranging from 12.5 to 29.8% in the new EU member states. The share of SMEs carrying out R&D activities and working in the

⁶⁶ Eurostat

field of computer science, architecture and engineering sciences represents 30.1% of the total number of innovative enterprises or 3.4% of the total number of enterprises, which is considerably lower than in the EU-25 countries. The investments in new products, technologies and their implementation, associated with a higher risk and **the lack of financial instruments like guarantee and venture capital funds for innovation activities, are considerable barriers for the enterprises**. Most of the entrepreneurs do not regard the introduction of innovations as a source of increased competitiveness.

A strong link between all participants in the innovation system is a prerequisite for an efficient transformation of research into new products. In Bulgaria **the cooperation among business, science and other institutions in innovative projects is relatively weak**. Only 10.1% of the innovative enterprises cooperate with universities and research institutes. Also, 5.4% of the innovative enterprises interact with research and technological centres, 9.5% rely on government support, 8.9% on external consultants and 15.5% collaborate with trade associations. Bulgarian innovative SMEs also rarely cooperate with other SMEs for implementation of R&D projects.

Furthermore, the **available pro-innovative infrastructure in the country is insufficient**. There are a few structures supporting the link between the business and research entities. The National Science Fund operated by the MES allocates funds to scientific institutions, academia representatives, or consortiums of those with business representatives on competitive basis. The funds are granted for various research projects and case studies, designed to add value to the existing studies or solve problems of competitiveness in Bulgarian enterprises. The National Innovation Fund operated by the Ministry of Economy and Energy and the BSMEPA finances research and development activities with the ultimate goal of introduction of innovations in the economy and thus it further develops the achievements of the National Science Fund.

The non-government sector is also involved in innovation-related activities. The European Innovative Centre, created with the support of EU and Foundation “GIS Transfer Centre” provides information, skills and various resources to SMEs during EU accession process. The Foundation “GIS Transfer Centre” works on projects with the Bulgarian Academy of Science (BAS) and the SMEs. Currently it has experimentally introduced 18 technological centres (6 of them within BAS and 12 outside the structures of BAS (2 of them outside Sofia).

The Innovation Relay Centre enhances technology and know-how transfer for Bulgarian enterprises, as well as information on European R&D programs. The Applied Research and Communication Fund is a very well established organization in the field of preparing and disseminating analyses related to numerous innovation, technology transfer and administrative simplification matters.

The solution to the above stated problems is the task of the Innovation Strategy developed by the Ministry of Economy. The Strategy outlines the frames for future actions in the process of strengthening the links between science and business with the aim to achieve wider application of modern scientific solutions in the real economy. The most important measures which should be undertaken in Bulgaria are systematised in 4 directions:

1. Strengthening the institutions, companies and organisations operating in the field of development, transfer and application of new technologies (know-how) which form the national innovation system;

2. Encouraging the cooperation between the R&D sector and the real business and their cooperation with the Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Education and Science;
3. Establishing a well-functioning mechanism to coordinate the implementation of the Innovation Strategy;
4. Ensuring the financing for executing the measures from the Innovation Strategy.

The low labour productivity of the Bulgarian enterprises is among other factors influenced by the low innovation activity, which is a result of:

- Poor cooperation between business, science and other institutions in innovative projects;
- Insufficient pro-innovative infrastructure in the country;
- Lack of financial instruments for innovation activities.

2.1.5. Territorial Development

2.1.5.1 Inter-regional Disparities

The Bulgarian Government established six planning regions in 2004 to conform to EU regional policy requirements, modified in 2006 to reflect country developments and in accordance with the provisions of EC Regulation No. 1059/2003. The six planning regions are the basis of planning, programming, implementation, and monitoring of the Structural Funds:

Figure: Eligible statistical regions (NUTS II)

1. North-western planning region;
2. North-central planning region;
3. North-eastern planning region;
4. South-western planning region;
5. South-central planning region;
6. South-eastern planning region.



All Bulgarian NUTS II regions have a per capita Gross Domestic Product (“GDP”) of less than 75% of the Community average. Therefore, they are all eligible for funding from the Structural Funds, under the “Convergence” objective, as specified in Council Regulation 1083/2006.

The statistics indicate that Bulgaria has relatively low regional disparities as compared to the other EU member-states and the other candidate states. Despite the different dynamics in the development of the regions during the individual years of that period one can clearly distinguish the higher growth rate of the South Western Planning Region (including the capital, the city of Sofia), as well as that the disparities among the rest of the regions are considerably smaller (Table 1). Interregional disparities in absolute terms are relatively small

compared to the EU average. In relative terms however, they are at levels comparable with those in Czech Republic, Slovakia, Belgium and France.

Table: Key regional development indicators in Bulgaria

NUTS 2 regions	Area 2005 thous. km ²	Population 2005		Arable land 2005 (dca / capita)	GDP 2004		GDP per capita 2004		Unemployment rate 2005	FDI per capita USD	Number of districts	Number of municipalities
		persons	% of the national total		mln. lv.	% of the national total	lv.	% of the national average				
Bulgaria	111.0	7718750	100.0%	6.45	38275	100%	4959	100.0%	11.46%	905	28	264
North Western	19.1	957947	12.4%	11.38	3729	9.7%	3893	78.5%	17.65%	250	5	51
North Central	14.8	949401	12.3%	8.98	3772	9.9%	3973	80.1%	13.70%	357	5	36
North Eastern	14.6	996831	12.9%	8.58	4360	11.4%	4374	88.2%	13.71%	669	4	35
South Eastern	19.8	1134741	14.7%	8.06	5061	13.2%	4460	89.9%	10.87%	647	4	33
South Central	22.4	1560975	20.2%	4.73	5986	15.6%	3835	77.3%	12.25%	320	5	57
South Western	20.3	2118855	27.5%	2.49	15367	40.1%	7252	146.3%	6.34%	2125	5	52

The major growth-carrier therefore is the South Western Planning Region, which runs ahead of the national average growth rates. The main factor for the higher GDP level of the region is the capital city Sofia, in which a significant part of the national economy is concentrated. The rest of the planning regions demonstrate approximately equal growth rates, which are about 1% below the national average.

The processes of population ageing and population drop continue and aggravate in all the planning regions. The most unfavourable development of the demographic processes has been noted for the North Western Region and the North Central Region. Only in the South Western Region a certain increase by an average of 0.17% has been noted during the period 2001-2005, due mainly to the increase of the population of the capital city. The natural population growth since 1990 has been negative in all the planning regions. The highest negative values has been sustained in the North Western Region (-11.1‰ – 2005), which is almost two times higher than the national average (-5.4‰), followed by the North Central Region (-7.7‰). As compared to the EU member-states, Bulgaria manifests definitely negative values in terms of the indicator population growth, matching those of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Hungary.

Significant disparities in the employment and unemployment rate have been noted at regional level, especially at the lower territorial levels. As regards employment, a trend of smooth increase has been observed in recent years. The employment level is the lowest in the North Western Region and the highest in the South Western Region. In all the regions, with the exception of the South Western Region, the share of employment in agriculture is the highest which is typical for the still underdeveloped regional economies. The employment level in Bulgaria ranks among the lowest as compared to the rest of the EU member-states despite the increase in the employment rates in the recent 2-3 years. The processes of social development and cohesion demonstrate the strongest disparities in terms of unemployment rates.

Comparisons with the European regions will identify Bulgarian regions, with the exception of the South Western Region, as having the most unfavourable indicators for total, long-term, women's and youth unemployment. The North Western Planning Region has the worst deteriorated indicators in this respect with unemployment level that is 1.5 times above the national average (2005).

Dispersion of investments in fixed assets by regions is extremely uneven. The South Western region can be distinguished with the highest investment expenditures – almost half of the national total, which to a certain extent is because of the fact that a large number of companies operating in the industrial and services sectors are clustered within the capital area. Investments in the rest of the regions are relatively low and do not create conditions necessary for economic growth and employment. About 60% of the foreign investments in the country are concentrated in the South Western planning region, including about 50% in the capital city, which demonstrates the tendency of foreign investors' preferences for areas, which were been strongly urbanized, with well-developed infrastructure, qualified human resources and easy access to services and manufacturing facilities.

There are significant regional disparities in terms of road infrastructure development. According to the National regional development strategy North-West and South-Central planning regions are below national average in terms of quality and quantity of roads. As a result of the uneven distribution of roads the East-West direction is much better developed than South-North which makes mobility from East to West easier. Uneven road distribution undermines transport accessibility of the population to services, provided by centres (health care, education, culture, etc.). In the Southern part of Bulgaria more than 80% of the population has access to these services within 90 minutes while this indicator for the Northern part of the country is 60%.

The water supply infrastructure is of low quality and needs high levels of investment to reduce leakage that amounts to more than 60%. 21.6% of the population is subject to water rationing. The situation is critical in the North-West region where 45.5% of population do not have regular water supply.

The North-West planning region is lagging behind the other five planning regions in terms of economic activity and quality of infrastructure. The South-West region ranks first. The leading position is mainly due to the capital city of Sofia, concentrating the main part of economic activity, schools and universities, and government administration. Excluding Sofia from South-West region leads to relatively small inter-regional disparities. The intra-regional disparities in Bulgaria remain much more definitive of economic development.

2.1.5.2. Urban and Rural Territorial Dimensions

Urban development and economic growth are sustainable when they go hand in hand with efforts to reduce poverty, overcome social exclusion and tackle environmental problems. In Bulgaria cities encompass significant disparities in economic and social opportunities between different groups of citizens. This situation damages the attractiveness, competitiveness, social inclusiveness and safety of cities.

With some minor exceptions the population in almost all settlements in the country is diminishing and not only in the villages, but also in the cities, including the large cities. This

is an indication for a general drop in urbanisation in both quantitative and qualitative respect. The few exceptions deserve a more detailed analysis and additional support through the instruments of targeted state policy.

The existence of large cities in certain areas is an opportunity to make use of their potential and to spread their positive impact over their hinterlands. In the peripheral areas, in the absence of large cities, promotion of the existing medium-size and small cities is necessary through a targeted state policy in order to help them compensate the absence of large cities through their own accelerated development.

The state of repair of the networks of technical infrastructure and public works does not meet adequately the urban requirements and obstructs the functioning of the cities. The physical environment and residential buildings are heavily depreciated. Concerted efforts on a large scale in this field are urgently needed by Bulgarian cities in general. At the same time suburban areas and inner-city neighbourhoods with poor quality of community housing need up to date cadastre mapping with accurate property registration and targeted policies for improving the living conditions of the residing population⁶⁷.

Industrial locations in the cities occupy huge areas. However, they often lack public works and feature obsolete and unattractive buildings, which would be difficult to upgrade and be re-used. Unless they are made more attractive, the potential localisation of future production facilities with improved technologies will be sought somewhere else, which will not only leave large areas in a depraved state, but also would negatively affect the growth of areas in the proximity. The problems can be resolved by either restructuring and renewing the manufacturing areas in the cities to provide space for up-to-date production facilities, or cleaning up these spaces to allow for neglected urban needs, such as green areas and public services, on which the policy of urban development should focus.

The state of repair of the public buildings for culture, education, health care is lamentable. Unfinished construction of cultural facilities (museums, libraries, scientific centres) in the cities is a grave problem for municipalities who fail to expose and present the cultural assets properly. Possibilities should be sought for completion of unfinished municipal sites in line with the current needs of the cities. In addition, deprived and isolated neighbourhoods, especially those populated with Roma minorities, appear as an obstacle for urban development and generate problems related with the housing policy and the urban safety. The multi-family buildings constructed in the 70s and 80s of the last century are obsolete and need sanitation. These are important issues to be tackled in order to sustain development and promote social inclusion.

Development of the transport system is essential for generating sustainability conditions and linkages between cities and transformation into regional crossroad centres. Mobility within and between urban centres is of vital significance for life and work and its quality, accessibility, and efficiency is a determinant of economic competitiveness. In particular, the

⁶⁷ In this area, for example, with respect to minority integration in March 2006 the Bulgarian government adopted a National Program for Improving the Living Conditions of Roma in the Republic of Bulgaria (2005 – 2015).

connectivity between urban centres and their hinterlands remains one of the most practical ways in which to offer opportunities to these areas.

Although the interregional disparities in the country are not that pronounced, there are **significant intraregional disparities especially with regard to urban-rural dimension**. According to the OECD definition, there are 20 predominantly rural NUTS 3 regions, seven - intermediary rural regions and only one predominantly urban region - the capital Sofia⁶⁸. Thus, predominantly and intermediary rural regions cover 98.8% of the territory and account for 84.3% of the population of Bulgaria⁶⁹. The national definition for rural areas, used under SAPARD plan and to be used in the next planning period for the NSPRD, defines rural areas as municipalities, in which no settlement has a population over 30 thousand people. According to this definition, 231 municipalities in Bulgaria are classified as rural. The rural areas represent 81% of the Bulgarian territory and 42% of the population.

GDP per capita in the predominately and intermediate rural areas is 2.2 times lower than in the predominantly urban areas. At the same time, the economy in the rural areas is much more dependent on agriculture as a main source of income in comparison with the other parts of the country.

Development of the rural areas is hindered by the negative demographic tendencies which are much sharper as compared with the urban areas. In 2004, the registered rate of rural population decline was -10.4‰ compared to -1.5‰ of urban. The major contributor of population decline in rural areas is the negative natural growth (-7.5‰ in 2004) caused by the significantly higher death rate of rural population, while the birth rates are similar. It should be noted that the registered rate of infant mortality in rural areas is 14.6‰ versus to 8.9‰ in urban caused by the low living conditions and limited access to specialised health care services in rural areas. The migration from rural to urban areas contributed to 2.9‰ decrease of the rural population in 2004. Moreover, only 57% of the population in the rural areas is in working age, while in urban areas the indicator reaches value of 65%.

Indicators	2001			2005		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
Age dependency ratio - %	46.8	39.8	65.8	44.5	37.5	64.0
Crude birth rate - ‰	8.6	8.9	8.1	9.2	9.6	8.1
Total fertility rate	1.24	1.15	1.55	1.31	1.24	1.56
Crude death rate - ‰	14.2	11.5	20.4	14.6	12.0	20.8
Infant mortality - ‰	14.4	12.9	18.2	10.4	8.9	14.6
Life expectancy (years)	71.8 ⁷⁰	72.1	70.8	72.6 ⁷¹	72.9	71.6

Source: NSI-Population statistics 2005

⁶⁸ In order to achieve compatibility with the CMEF data, the population density in 2000 is used for the designation of the NUTS 3 regions. If 2004 data is used, the number of predominantly rural NUTS 3 regions is 21.

⁶⁹ The analysis below is based on 2004 NSI regional statistical data (MAF calculations), unless stated differently.

⁷⁰ Data are for the period 1999 - 2001

⁷¹ Data are for the period 2003 - 2005

The educational status of rural population is significantly lower than that of urban, which impedes faster development of the rural regions. The illiteracy rate in rural municipalities is two times higher than in urban areas and stands at 1.7% of the population between 25 and 64 years of age. Almost half of the population in rural areas have no secondary education, compared to 20% in urban areas. Only 5.5% of the inhabitants of the rural areas have university education, while some 20.6% of the population in urban areas have such.

The lower educational status of the rural population, along with the limited alternative forms of economic activity, predetermines the higher unemployment rate and lesser activity rate. In 2004, the jobless rate in the rural areas reached 19% as compared with almost 10% in the urban areas, while the activity rate stood at 42%, i.e. far below the national average.

The poor condition of the basic infrastructure in the country is especially pronounced in the rural areas, thus also limiting the development possibilities in them. A special problem is the poor quality of third- and fourth-class roads, and inner roads. The Rural Development Needs Survey, conducted by the World Bank in 2004, indicates that nearly two-thirds of the rural residents express discontent with the quality of inter- and intra-municipal settlements roads and half of them are not satisfied with the quality of roads to agricultural fields. Moreover, some of the main problems of the settlements in rural areas are associated with the systems for sewerage treatment and waste collection, which are missing in 70% of the settlements.

According to the first specialised statistical survey on using of ICT in Bulgarian households, conducted in July 2003, the Internet access and usage in Bulgaria is still very low. The relative share of the Bulgarian households which have access to Internet is 5.2%. There is a significant intraregional disparity in terms of the Internet access in urban and rural areas - 7.2 % of the households in urban areas compared to 0.8% in rural areas.

This brings the need for assisting the development of IT communications through public financing in order to decrease the territorial differences in respect to access of e-services.

Households' answers	Total Structure (%)	Urban residence Structure (%)	Rural residence Structure (%)
Yes	5.2	7.2	0.8
No	92.2	90.6	95.7
I don't know	2.6	2.2	3.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NSI-Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Bulgarian Households, 2003

There is well developed network of kindergartens and schools in rural areas. The main problems are related to the lack of financial sources for rehabilitation and maintenance of buildings of rural kindergartens and schools. In addition, equipments and facilities especially in general schools and secondary vocational schools in rural areas are poor/outdated and significant investments are needed to establish modern teaching methods and technologies which will allow improving the quality of education in rural areas. The access to health care services in rural areas is good. However, the majority of population living in rural areas has a limited access to specialised health care services which are available in municipal towns. The problem is significant especially for the chronically ill patients and for older people. The opportunities for leisure, recreation, culture and sports in rural areas are significantly limited,

which also impede development of human capital and retention of young population in rural areas.

In almost all regions and districts in the country the typical “centre-periphery” contrasts are observed. Border territories are most seriously affected as well as the disconnected rural areas. The public utilities, housing and technical infrastructure does not meet adequately urban requirements and obstructs the functioning of the cities, while significant disparities in economic and social opportunities between different groups of citizens, especially minority groups, additionally damages the attractiveness of urban and suburban areas. Industrial locations in the cities occupy huge areas, although they often lack public works and feature obsolete and unattractive buildings, which would be difficult to upgrade and be re-used. The condition of public buildings for education, healthcare and culture is lamentable. GDP per capita in the rural areas is much lower than in the urban areas. There are significant disparities between rural and urban areas in terms of demographic trends, economic activity, access to healthcare and education.

2.1.5.3 Local Growth Potentials⁷²

Bulgaria is one of the richest countries in Europe with regards to the biodiversity consisting of about 3600 varieties of higher plants, more than 3660 varieties of lower plants, 3500 varieties of mushrooms, 709 varieties of lichens, 700 types of spinal animals, more than 400 types of birds, 94 types of mammals, about 27 000 types of invertebrates. The endemic species consist 5% of the plants represented, 8.8% of the invertebrates, and 4.3% of the insects.

The rich biodiversity is a result of both favourable natural conditions and different, in comparison with other EU countries, impact of the human management (imbalanced industrialization and urbanization of the country, preservation of traditional extensive farming in many areas, large and historically permanent forests). At present the number of protected areas in Bulgaria is 858 by the end of 2004, with a total surface of 544 394.9 ha.

In 2003 Bulgaria started the development of the NATURA 2000 network and the designation of the sites. This process is almost finalised at present. For both special protected areas (SPA – Birds directive) and for the sites of Community importance (SCI – Habitat directive) the necessary inventarization process is completed and the necessary maps and standard descriptions are prepared. With regards to the SPA initial proposal was already subject of discussion within the National Council on Biodiversity, on the basis of which it was proposed to the Minister of Environment and Water to present for approval (by the Council of Ministers) a total of 121 SPA covering about 21% of the country’s territory, out of which 109 SPA, covering 16% of the state territory, are not subject to further discussions. With regards to the SCI, the initial proposal includes 281 SCI (36% of the country). It is expected that the National Council on Biodiversity shall optimise the spread of the SCI through bringing the total area of about 25% of the country’s territory.

⁷² The heading ‘Local Growth Potentials’ refers to the complementary aspects at the local level to more strictly speaking urban or rural policy and excluding connectivity. These indeed include nature protection and provide the basis for natural and cultural tourism.

Bulgaria has underdeveloped eco-tourism infrastructure in the nature areas specially protected to preserve biodiversity. In order to protect this heritage, actions are needed for preservation of the natural habitats of rare species in the long-term perspective; increase of the protected areas and establishment of mechanisms for their management (Management Plans); formulation, approval, and implementation of Action Plans in order to protect certain species that are extremely endangered from extinction, especially endangered species of European/global significance; establishment and development of protected zones NATURA 2000 network and environmental public awareness campaigns.

In addition to the rich natural heritage Bulgaria also has an attractive network of cultural-historic resources. The considerable tourism potential is demonstrated by the nine sites included in the UNESCO World Heritage list – seven cultural and two natural, more than 600 mineral springs, thousands of local cultural and traditional attractions, more than 5% of the national territory in protected area status, over 30,000 historic monuments, 36 culture reserves, 160 monasteries, 330 museums and galleries. The country has 102 officially declared balneology, mud-healing and climatic mountain resorts as well as 33 seaside resorts. Moreover this diversity is concentrated in relatively limited space making many areas accessible within short periods of time.

The above described rich cultural-historic and natural tourism potential allow the development of specialized types of tourism using the local regional potentials and strengths. Development of such forms of tourism (rural, cultural, spa/balneology and eco) could diversify regional economy and provide additional sources of income especially in underdeveloped areas which are characterised with lower quality of living conditions compared to urbanized areas due to lack of alternative sources of income, poor quality of basic infrastructure and public services. In addition, development of specialized forms of tourism should allow utilising the rich natural and cultural heritage thus ensuring sustainable growth and development of the regions.

Bulgaria has a rich cultural and natural heritage that needs to be preserved and protected as it represents a valuable asset that can be adapted and utilized to increase the economic potential of the country and its specific areas. The development of specialized forms of tourism (rural, cultural, balneology/spa, eco,) could diversify regional economies and provide additional sources of income for many underdeveloped areas.

2.1.6. Lessons Learned from the Pre-Accession Period

Bulgaria has been a beneficiary of three major pre-accession instruments – Phare, ISPA and SAPARD, as well as of most Community Programmes and Initiatives.

The process of utilisation of funds under the pre-accession instruments has outlined few main conclusions:

- Need for legal changes to guarantee: - better internal coordination; - clear separation of responsibilities; - clearer, faster and undisputable process of land acquisition for construction of big infrastructure projects; - stability of qualified staff;
- Need for administrative changes - setting up new administrative structures at central, district and local level, entirely involved in the management of EU funds;

- Need for strengthening institutional and administrative capacity - develop human resource management policies and provide relevant training for civil servants and judges through the Institute for Public Administration and European Integration and the school for magistrates; - organise and conduct wide public information campaigns both about the possibilities and about the outcome of EU funded projects.

Phare Experience

Although a serious progress has been achieved in capacity building, contracting of substantial funds in the last month of the contracting period is still a fact. Efforts should be focused in overwhelming the weaknesses in the following areas:

- Improvement of project design;
- Avoidance of preconditions related to the adoption of legal acts or establishment of administrative structures that could not be met by the start of the project implementation;
- Strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries to elaborate good quality technical specifications and tender documentation and to provide co-financing.

ISPA Experience

The most important common problems, covering all areas, were caused by insufficient staff on the one hand or lack of experience or skills with the employed staff on the other hand in the implementing agencies and in other relevant institutions. Staff levels and competencies have a large effect on project performance. In the programming phase, the sufficiency of competent and skilled officers to prepare sound preparation documents is a primary consideration and an important risk factor for implementation of ISPA (and future Cohesion Fund) projects. The acquired experience of the NAC/NIC Services and National Fund should be utilized whilst these bodies perform the functions of CCU and CA respectively, although extensive and area specific knowledge, strategic finance approach and competences are required for the management of a much larger quantity of funds.

- In this respect the strategy of developing many projects should be contrasted with the alternative of developing fewer projects but concentrating resources in order to have all activities and documents completed to the highest standard and on time;
- In addition, this should be combined with applying quality assurance principles in all stages of project cycle management from preparation until implementation.

Delays in procurement were observed due to problems in preparation of tender documents and selection of the contractor as well as problems connected with land acquisition. Delays were further exacerbated by problems with financial and physical progress reporting and monitoring.

- Avoiding delays could only be realized by concentrating efforts on key projects and by increased efforts in planning and effective management;
- Efficient and effective reporting and monitoring can only be achieved through the successful functioning of Management and Monitoring Information Systems (confirmed by the experience with the introduction of ISPA MIS and Phare MIS)

Problems in the enforcement of contracts (regarding the specific responsibilities of the implementing agency, the supervising engineer and the contractor) continue to affect the use of EU assistance.

- Contract enforcement depends on the legal system. However, it is crucial that there are legal experts in the project management teams and that FIDIC expertise is employed.

2.2. SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p><u>General macroeconomic environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable macroeconomic environment • Reliable banking system and access to banking credit • High real investments growth rate 	<p><u>General macroeconomic environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low GDP per capita • Low level of labour productivity • High energy intensity of the economy • Limited local primary energy resources and import dependency • Underinvestment in infrastructure
<p><u>Basic infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High density of transport network • Relatively high degree of compliance of Bulgarian transport regulations with those of the European Union • Low level of water pollution, good territorial coverage of water supply infrastructure • Emissions of greenhouse gases are lower than the allowance of the Kyoto Protocol • Advanced stage of energy sector reform and restructuring 	<p><u>Basic infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor condition of the transport infrastructure • Relatively closed transport system with insufficient transport links with neighbouring countries • An important share of environmental infrastructure is incompliant with EU requirements (waste management, sewage and waste water treatment) • High level of leakage in water supply networks • Inadequate systems for waste management and large number of polluted terrains • Low level of digitalisation of the fixed telephone lines • Low share of use renewable energy resources in gross energy consumption • Insufficient coverage of gas supply network and household gasification
<p><u>Human resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steady growth of employment ratio • Ongoing reform of the social protection system (including increasing the retirement ages) and improved coordination of the employment and social protection policies • Good territorial coverage of the social infrastructure • Good level of educational background 	<p><u>Human resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfavourable demographic tendencies (ageing, depopulation) • Discrepancy between qualifications of the labour force and labour market needs • High long-term unemployment rate; low economic activity rate • Low level of participation in life long learning • High unemployment among vulnerable groups • Outdated and obsolete technical equipment of educational, health, and other social infrastructure • High dropout rate from educational system, especially among vulnerable groups • Underdeveloped structures for preventive treatments and rehabilitation in the health sector • Low level of investments for ensuring occupational safety and health • Insufficient level of access to health and long-term care services • Inadequacy of the infrastructure for the needs

	of disabled people
<u>Entrepreneurship and good governance</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing contribution of SMEs to GDP growth and employment Ongoing reform of the state administration and judiciary system Advanced establishment of central and district-level structures for the EU funds management Good level of educational background within the state administration 	<u>Entrepreneurship and good governance</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of administrative procedures impeding the possibilities for doing business Underdeveloped mechanisms for support of the SMEs Use of outdated technologies and low adoption of ICT by the SMEs Weak intra- and inter-departmental coordination in the administration Lack of standards and performance control in delivering services in the administration and in the judiciary system Weak enforcement of the legislation Underdeveloped e-government Low efficiency in the human resources management in the state administration
<u>Regional development</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserved natural environment with rich biodiversity, cultural and historical heritage Relatively balanced network/ spatial distribution of urban and rural areas 	<u>Regional development</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant intra-regional disparities Underdeveloped regional and local infrastructure networks Low quality of working and living conditions, basic infrastructure and public services High dependency on agriculture in rural areas and lack of alternative sources of income Deteriorated state of residential buildings in big cities Obsolete educational, healthcare, social and cultural facilities Partially developed national environment network of protected areas

Opportunities	Threats
<u>General macroeconomic environment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modernization of the production technologies based on steady growth of investments Increased investments in high value added productions Increase of trade with the EU Decreasing of energy intensity of the economy, improvement of the energy effectiveness and use of alternative sources 	<u>General macroeconomic environment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exporters will face increased external competition Low absorption of EU Funds
<u>Basic infrastructure</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient participation in the Common European Market for transport services Efficient use of support from the EU for modernisation and construction of the transport and environment infrastructure after the EU accession Accelerated economic growth based on well developed transport system Increased transit transport flows utilising favourable geographical location Improved efficiency and management of the water sector Excellent natural gas transit location in SEE 	<u>Basic infrastructure</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delay in the implementation of big transport, energy and environment projects Local resistance to the building of equipment for waste treatment Deterioration of basic infrastructure due to floods and natural disasters

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective participation in the common energy market and the Energy Community • Potential growth of renewable energy resources leading to reduced energy dependency and environmental protection 	
<u>Human resources</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better qualification of the human resources through development of life-long learning and vocational training • Matching skills and demand on the labour market • Improvement of human resource mobility and adaptability • Strengthening the link between education and business • Introduction of modern HR management practices 	<u>Human resources</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emigration of young and highly qualified working force • Marginalisation of vulnerable groups • Underinvestment in human resource development as well as in development of inclusive society
<u>Entrepreneurship and good governance</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase of SMEs' efficiency • Building a strong link between the business, science, education and the non-governmental sector to boost the R&D and innovation activity • Application of good European practices in the process of policy-making and evaluation of existing policies and legislation • Better administrative services • Development of public-private partnerships • Improving the cooperation between state administration and socio-economic partners 	<u>Entrepreneurship and good governance</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability of large number of enterprises to meet the EU Common market obligatory requirements • Inability of Bulgarian enterprises to integrate in global e-business networks • Weakening of the state administration due to "brain drain" and high turnover • Delay in the judicial and administrative reform, including e-government
<u>Regional development</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boosting regional development by European cross-border, trans-national, and trans-regional cooperation • Utilisation of natural, historical, and cultural heritage for stable growth and development of the regions • Creation of employment outside the agricultural sector in the rural areas 	<u>Regional development</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delay in the process of decentralisation at district and municipal levels. • Underdeveloped institutional partnership and inter-municipal cooperation • Inadequate capacity (institutional, financial and technical) of district and municipal administration and local actors to prepare and implement development projects

3. STRATEGY OF OPERATIONS AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES

VISION

The strategy of the Bulgarian NSRF sets the major policy objectives and priorities of development during the programming period 2007-2013. The vision of the strategy is based on an extensive analysis of the country's development disparities, as identified in the National Development Plan 2007-2013 and in the National Reform Programme. The Bulgarian vision for development as an EU member state is:

BY 2015 BULGARIA TO BECOME A COMPETITIVE EU COUNTRY WITH HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, INCOMES AND SOCIAL AWARENESS

The principles of sustainable development and the key EU objectives for development and cohesion as defined in the EU Council Conclusions of March 2005 form the basis and focus the intervention activities of Bulgaria in 2007-2013 planning period:

“Europe must renew the basis of its competitiveness, increase its growth potential and its productivity and strengthen social cohesion, placing the main emphasis on knowledge, innovation and the optimisation of human capital.

To achieve these objectives, the Union must mobilise all appropriate national and Community resources – including the cohesion policy – in the Strategy's three dimensions (economic, social and environmental) so as better to tap into their synergies in a general context of sustainable development”⁷³

The long term vision for Bulgaria combines two specific medium-term **goals** for the duration of the 2007-2013 programming period. These have been developed, based on the EU priorities and are in line with the Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG)⁷⁴:

- Strengthen the competitiveness of the economy to achieve high and sustainable growth;
- Develop human capital to ensure higher employment, income and social integration.

The **first goal** targets successful real convergence by reducing the gap between the level of GDP per capita in the EU and Bulgaria. At the same time it aims at ensuring that the benefits of growth are spread across the whole territory and all the regions of Bulgaria and that income growth is not at the expense of the environment and social conditions. The focus is to enhance the necessary base for the development of a competitive economy, increasing the capacity both to innovate and to use new technology. The Bulgarian policy emphasises as key factors for sustainable development the need to develop the necessary basic infrastructure, to modernise and restructure the industrial and public services sectors not only in terms of technology, but also in terms of quality and efficient management of resources. Special attention will be given to ICT, such as the broadband based communication technologies, which will help stimulate growth within the more detached communities and reduce the population drift towards the major cities, as well as investment in environmentally friendly

⁷³ Presidency conclusions, European Council, March 2005.

⁷⁴ COM(2005) 299, published on 15 July 2005.

technologies. Innovation is an important factor for improving competitiveness on the foreign goods, service, and capital markets as well as a way to improve the environment in the country. In addition, creating a “smart” administration is a fundamental requirement for economic growth and better jobs. This calls for further improvements in legislation enforcement, policy design and implementation with all relevant stakeholders, increased transparency, simplified regulatory environment for businesses and efficient public services delivery.

The delivery of the first goal requires the improvement of the image of the country and its regions as an attractive place to invest and work, ensuring the accessibility of an efficient and safe transport infrastructure and targeting the funds at the environmental infrastructure in order to enhance the synergies between the environmental protection and the economic growth.

The **second goal** aims at increasing employment and productivity, quality and competitiveness of the labour force, raising the employment rate, reducing unemployment levels, increasing living and health standards, improving the social inclusion of the disadvantaged, minorities and vulnerable groups. In addition, the growth strategy implies the need for investment in education, training, acceleration the transfer of new technologies and building links between the scientific, educational and productive sectors. The country’s policy will be orientated towards guaranteeing the adaptability and mobility of the work force.

Achieving the policy objectives that are defined in the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005-2008) as well as the sustainability principles requires continuous commitment to human capital development, including science and innovation, as well as to social inclusion and equal access to and quality of social infrastructure, as it complements the single market and improves the standard of living.

The combined actions by the Government, with the assistance of the EU Cohesion Policy, should translate into the following aggregate target levels by 2013.

Objective-level indicators:

Annual average GDP growth rate for the period	5.73%
GDP per capita as per EU average	51.2%
Employment rate (% population aged 15-64)	64%
Unemployment rate (% labour force 15+)	7%

THE TWO GOALS: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT

The Structural Funds can provide a significant contribution to growth and thus to the rate of convergence of the Bulgarian economy to the EU average in GDP per capita, but are not a sufficient prerequisite to the achievement of the vision of Bulgaria as a more attractive place to live, work and invest. The EU investments have to be coordinated, targeted and concentrated on the main bottlenecks identified in the field of infrastructure, business, human capital and territorial development. The combined national reforms (as developed in the

National Reform Programme), national investments and actions of the Structural Funds and IFIs have to be designed to maximise the national development potential.

Increasing the speed of convergence to the EU average GDP per capita level requires improving Bulgaria's present growth performance – an average rate for the period 2000-2005 at the level of 5%). The objective for the programming period is to achieve an average real growth rate of 5.8%. The design of the actions should nevertheless take into account the regional and environmental disparities of the country and ensure the socio-economic sustainability of this growth process.

Bulgaria is a small open economy directly exposed to competitive pressures at international level. This implies as a highest priority to work for increasing the competitiveness of the economy through targeted public investments and structural changes. To this end, the NSRF strategy has a strong **Lisbon agenda** component aimed at increasing the productivity levels and value added of Bulgarian goods and services. The improved competitiveness of the economy is in turn expected to increase the average annual export of goods from 9,451 billion € in 2005 to over 19 billion € in 2007-2013.⁷⁵ The competitive position of any member state strongly relies on the skills, flexibility and the productivity levels of its labour force.

NATIONAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Bulgaria undertakes an integrated approach to sustainable growth and development. Investments are concentrated in the two factors of growth – physical and human capital. Nevertheless, in order for these investments to bring about the expected impacts, the rule of law and efficiently functioning judicial and administrative systems are overarching basic preconditions. There is a need to improve the overall business environment, as described in the analysis, as well as in the Commission's Monitoring Reports and in the Pre-accession Economic Programme. Simultaneously, the growth requires accompanying territorial policies to achieve both territorial cohesion and equal treatment of citizens irrespective of location.

To achieve the overall medium term goals Bulgaria needs to focus on **four strategic priorities** – three thematic and one territorial:

- Improving basic infrastructure;
- Increasing quality of human capital with a focus on employment;
- Fostering entrepreneurship, favourable business environment and good governance;
- Supporting balanced territorial development

Insufficient investment in basic infrastructure in the last 15 years has resulted in its current poor condition. The *first priority* foresees support for better quality transport infrastructures, ICT infrastructure and links, and investments in environmental protection infrastructure. Taking into account the limited EU and national resources, the investments will be prioritised and coordinated. This will be the main contributor to the attractiveness of the country to invest and work, in line with the first objective of the CSG and the National Strategy for

⁷⁵ AEAF forecast

Integrated Development of the Infrastructure in Bulgaria and Action Plan for the period 2006-2015.

The *second priority* supports adequate human resources in both the public and private sectors. Investment in modern education, training and lifelong learning as well as good health is expected to increase the level and quality of employment and support reintegration and inclusion into the labour market.

The *third priority* is focused on setting up an effective business support framework by improving the regulatory environment, encouraging entrepreneurship, innovation and developing efficient and transparent state administration. The partnership between Government at all levels and the civil society will be strengthened by supporting effective policy design and implementation. The aim will be at increasing transparency in the public sector and public control on policy implementation. Additionally, the state administration reform should ensure stable systems for interdepartmental coordination and dialogue between public and private bodies. Main focus will be enhancement of capacity with regard to legislation enforcement.

The *fourth priority* has territorial dimension and targets balanced growth through assisting the regions of Bulgaria to develop their growth potential. Bulgaria also strives to provide its citizens, regardless of location, with equal access to public services basic infrastructures and employment opportunities. Preserving the environment and biodiversity, conservation of natural and cultural heritage, adequate spatial and urban planning are integral parts of the Bulgarian national strategy for the period.

The following sections describe actions by strategic priority to address the problems pinpointed by the socio-economic analysis of Bulgaria the actions and objectives envisaged, the synergy between those actions under different priorities and the role of the Structural Funds within them and how they relate to and comply with the Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion.

CONVERGENCE	NATIONAL GOALS	EMPLOYMENT	COMMUNITY STRATEGIC GUIDELINES		NSRF PRIORITIES
			Making Europe and its regions more attractive places to invest and work <ul style="list-style-type: none">Expand and improve transport infrastructuresTo strengthen the synergies between environmental protection and growthAddress Europe’s intensive use of traditional energy sources		Improving Basic Infrastructure
			Improving knowledge and innovation for growth <ul style="list-style-type: none">Increase and improve investment in RTDFacilitate innovation and promote entrepreneurshipAccess to finance		Increasing Quality of Human Capital with a Focus on Employment
			More and better jobs <ul style="list-style-type: none">Attract and retain more people in employment and modernise social protectionImprove adaptability of workers and enterprises and flexibility of labour marketIncrease investment in human capital through better education and skillsHelp maintain a healthy labour forceAdministrative capacity		Fostering Entrepreneurship, Favourable Business Environment and Good Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Business Development- Good Governance
		HIGH AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH	Taking account of the territorial dimension of cohesion policy <ul style="list-style-type: none">The contribution of cities to growth and jobsSupporting the economic diversification of rural areasCooperation (Cross-border, Transnational, Inter-regional)		Supporting Balanced Territorial Development

3.1. Priority 1 “Improving Basic Infrastructure”

Infrastructures for a Growing Economy

Investments in infrastructure are one of the most critical areas that facilitate the reduction of disparities between the regions lagging behind in terms of socio-economic development. The infrastructure is the backbone of the economy and the society, and the strength of this foundation determines the opportunities to ensure rapid, sustainable and balanced development. This is fully recognized by the government of Bulgaria as a national priority and is reflected in the National Strategy for Integrated Development of the Infrastructure in Bulgaria and Action Plan for the period 2006-2015, approved in 2006 by the Council for coordination, control and implementation of infrastructure projects of national importance, which is at ministerial level and chaired by the Prime Minister.

Transport not only provides access to places which concentrate income-generating activities, or key public goods and services (including education and health care), but also supports the growth of production of goods and services, especially by decreasing costs. In addition, the growth of the transport-related construction sector contributes to the total growth of the economy. The **investments in transport** focus on the improvement of the infrastructure along the major European transport axes crossing the territory of Bulgaria. In order to overcome the main bottlenecks in the whole national transport system, public-private schemes will be used in regards to ports, airports and some motorways. The strategy follows the principles and findings of the Mid-Term Review of the European Commission’s 2001 Transport White Paper. It is based on connection of the development of the transport sector to the European sustainable growth and competitiveness and recognises anticipated faster growth of international transport demand. In this respect the basic target for the Bulgarian Strategy in the transport sector is the development of the European Transport Corridors in the territory of the country. More precisely, it relies on the most appropriate development of all modes of transport in order to accommodate the constantly growing demand most efficiently, and at the same time aiming at the removal of infrastructural bottlenecks, encouraging technological development, and removing barriers between modes, locations, and markets.

As the analysis of the country’s development disparities, weaknesses and potentials reveal, the existing transport links cannot cope with the present and expected demand. This results in reduced opportunities for growth, especially of business activities and tourism. Transport investments focus on connecting the country at three basic levels – **external** (whereby EU connections determine the major investments), **national** (which supports the major economic growth), and **regional** (contributing to the balanced territorial approach of the economic development). The foreseen interventions are prioritised in order to maximise the combined effect on growth and employment opportunities a transport network can provide, taking into account also the level of resources available: improvement of the major links between urban centres, creating efficient transport axes, and subsequently the links of those to smaller but important settlements with economic potential, because of their cultural or environmental endowments.

In relation to rail transport the priority is given to projects with bigger traffic prospects, along the Trans-European Transport Corridors, or with cross border importance. The following directions are defined as priority railway infrastructure projects:

- Vidin – Sofia - Kulata;
- Cross border point Bulgaria/Serbia – Sofia – Plovdiv – Cross border point Bulgaria/Greece, Bulgaria/Turkey;

- Sofia – Plovdiv – Burgas/Varna;
- Sofia – Gorna Oryahovitsa – Varna;
- Sofia – Karlovo – Burgas/Varna.

The main priorities of the strategy for development of the national railways transport system remains the rehabilitation (adjustment to the design parameters) and modernization of the railway infrastructure which shall contribute to the quality improvement of offered services and decrease of transport costs. Higher speed shall contribute to increased competitiveness of the railways compared to the other modes of transport. The proper use of the planned investments in the railway transport will be ensured by the management of the National Railway Infrastructure Company and the Bulgarian State Railways (railway infrastructure operator). In relation to the road transport the responsibility of maintenance of the road infrastructure is delegated to the recently formed Republican Road Infrastructure Fund towards the Minister of Finance.

With regard to the key links in road and rail transport along national and European priority axes, Bulgaria plans several major projects. In rail those include modernisation of the railway line Vidin – Sofia (on the axis Vidin – Kulata); Sofia – Plovdiv; Plovdiv – Bourgas; Sofia – Pernik – Radomir; Sofia – Dragoman and Mezdra – Gorna Oriahoviza, in addition to the lines Svilengrad – Turkish border and Parvomai – Yabalkovo. In road transport those include construction of a key road section along the axis Vidin – Kulata, i.e. Vratza – Botevgrad, Vidin – Montana, Struma motorway, and ring-roads of Montana, Vratza and Gabrovo as TEN-T cities, as well as rehabilitation and modernization of more than 300 km roads along TEN-T /transit roads IV/, Kurdjali – Podkova in the direction of the Greek border.

Bulgaria aims at reducing the environmental and traffic congestion and safety risks of the expected increase in transport needs by an economically efficient balance of investment in road quality and in modernisation of the major rail links for passenger and freight, including the investments in safety measures, logistics, and signalling in line with the EU Directives.

In addition to the major links, regional and rural road improvements will focus on linking cities and major municipalities between them and the main transport axes. This is crucial to avoid a loss in growth potential due to weak transport connectivity. The location of businesses and economic activities are strongly influenced by accessibility, while labour mobility and the provision of labour opportunities across the country will increasingly be dependent on the ability to commute from peripheral to economic centres.

The investments in key rail and road linkages will be combined with investments in transport intermodality and improved conditions for navigation along inland water-ways, including the efficient functioning of Vessel Traffic Management and Information System on the River Danube.

ICT Provision

ICT coverage is crucial, not only for the development of a knowledge-based economy, but to foster balanced growth. Transport improvements, together with ICT provision have already contributed to a shift in economic activities from urban to peripheral and rural areas in a number of member states. To broaden the base of development of the regions, increase employment opportunities across the country, and attract investment in non urban centres,

transport and broadband coverage are essential. The Structural Funds are going to play an important role in co-financing the Government's efforts to manage this essential infrastructure coverage for business. The foreseen actions in this field include building of broadband connections to urban surroundings and poorly urbanised territories (e.g. ADSL, cable, satellite, wireless communications networks); establishing digital connections and capacity, building public internet access points, development of public information systems.

Bulgaria will continue its efforts in acceleration of information society development in line with the launched by the EC initiative i2010 – European Information Society 2010 as a key element of the renewed Lisbon partnership for growth and jobs. The foreseen measures in this field are summarised in the State Policy for Accelerated Information Society Development and the National Programme for Accelerated Information Society Development.

Environmental Protection Infrastructures for a Growing Economy and Better Quality of Life

Improved growth conditions require integrated policy in the field of environment in order to ensure the positive effect on the quality of life. The National Strategy for Environment, approved by the Council of Ministers in 2005, and its Action Plan cover the period 2005 - 2014. According to the strategy, the long-term general strategic objective of the country in the sector of environment is: "Improving the quality of life of the country's population by ensuring healthy and favourable environment and by preserving the rich natural heritage based on sustainable management of the environment". In this programming period, Bulgaria will concentrate its limited resources into those pressing areas because waste collection and treatment problems increase in intensity as the economy grows. As identified in the socio-economic analysis, existing problems include the underdeveloped networks for **solid waste collection and treatment** and the insufficient and depreciated infrastructure for the **collection and treatment of waste water**.

The National Strategy for Integrated Development of the Infrastructure in Bulgaria and the Action Plan for the period 2006-2015 defines the priority operations in the waste and water sectors of the environment. The measures include improvement of the water quality and water supply in considerable number of settlements in order to reach compliance with the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and Directive 91/271/EC on urban waste water treatment. Furthermore, investments in waste treatment facilities are envisaged in order to establish the system that will be in compliance with the national and EU legislation in the waste sector, primarily Directive 75/442/EEC on waste and Directive 1999/31/EC on landfilling of waste.

In order to improve **waste water infrastructure**, efforts will be targeted at extension, reconstruction and modernisation of existing, as well as construction of new sewerage systems including urban waste water treatment plants in the settlements. Whenever justified and proven as necessary these interventions shall also be complemented with measures for improving the water supply system. Therefore the implementation of integrated projects in the water sector will be supported (as single projects or applying the phased approach projects covered by one OP). Other activities, which will be supported are those related to the supply of equipment for the detection and measurement of leakages, the development and updating of river basins management plans, and the development of investment projects for subsequent financing. The logic of OP Environment thus supports the implementation of integrated water projects.

With regard to the **waste management**, the planned interventions will follow the integrated waste management approach for the establishment of a sustainable waste management policy in line with the Community Strategy for Waste Management. The hierarchy of waste management shall be implemented, i.e. prevention, reuse, recycling, recovery and final disposal by means of landfilling or incineration of residual waste. The main issues identified are related to building up the needed waste treatment infrastructure, reduction of the municipal waste generation, the introduction of the separate collection and implementation of activities directed to reuse of the generated waste. Interventions in this area will support activities such as: construction of waste recycling centres, installations for the recovery of the emitted gas emissions (methane) from the municipal waste landfills for the production of electricity, completion of the construction of regional landfills, facilities for pre-treatment including composting, sorting, and separation of waste⁷⁶. Further actions will be taken with regards to consequent closure of existing municipal landfills that do not comply with the requirements of the legislation and the modern technical standards. Support will be also provided for the preparation or update of regional waste management plans and for the development of investment projects for subsequent financing.

Disaster Management

The basic goal of the Ministry of State Policy for Disasters and Accidents is the creation of an effective, efficient, technically adequate and materially integrated system for prevention, preparation, facing, management and recovery in case of crises and disasters. The mechanisms for attaining this main goal are incorporated in the above mentioned political documents and legal acts.

For achieving its goal the Ministry of State Policy for Disasters and Accidents gives central attention to the formulation and implementation of the following strategic prevention related policies:

- 1) Development of administrative capacity on central, district and local level for prevention, management, reaction and recovery from disasters and accidents;
- 2) Establishment of a Forecasting and Early Warning System, including Space Monitoring Centre;
- 3) Establishment of Crises Management Centres comprised within an Integrated National System;
- 4) Establishment of modern fully equipped information and communication systems in compliance with contemporary EU requirements;
- 5) Provision of the necessary supply component to the special equipment for search and rescue operations;
- 6) Improvement of the national, district and municipal plans for protection of the population;
- 7) Risk assessment and development of mechanisms for critical infrastructure rehabilitation and renovation;
- 8) Establishment of a system of volunteers;
- 9) Development of standards, methodologies, guidelines, instructions and others for every step of the prevention, preparedness, management, reaction and recovery from disasters and accidents aiming at different target groups;

⁷⁶ See Annex 10

10) Public awareness campaigns and elaboration of a national training program for different target groups.

The Ministry is currently working on the implementation of its prevention policies. These policies are realized both by means of using sources from the national budget as well as by international support. The Ministry of State Policy for Disasters and Accidents carries out the following projects related to the prevention:

- 1) “Response to sudden crises”, financed by UNDP (already finished);
- 2) Project “Post-Flood Reconstruction of the Social Infrastructure” amounting to 2.2.mln. euro grants per year in 2005 and in 2006, of which specific component is dedicated to increasing the capacity of the authorities and administration at local and district level to plan for, react, manage and recover from crisis. The project is funded through the MFA in the Netherlands and the Ministry of Finance in Bulgaria;
- 3) Phare Project BG 2005/017-684-02 “Support to Sustainable Crisis Management at Central and local Level”;
- 4) “Prevention of natural disasters and accidents through the secondary education system in Bulgaria”, co-financed by UNDP;
- 5) A four-stage campaign “Four calamities – water, air, fire, earth”, financed according to the Working Program for 2006 of the Communication Strategy of Bulgaria;
- 6) A pilot project for the building of a National System 112;
- 7) Feasibility Study for Integrated National System for Crises Management, financed by USTDA.

The Ministry realizes its prevention policy also on an international level through active participation in the international organizations e.g. Europe Union (EU) – Civil Protection Mechanism Community; NATO – Civil Protection Committee (CPC), Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee (SCEPS); Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC); Civil-Military Emergency Planning (CMEP); Disaster Preparedness Prevention Initiative (DPPI); EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA); United Nations – Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA).

Investments in the Energy Sector for Sustainable Development

The main priorities of the Bulgarian energy policy are fully in line with the EU energy policy for development of competitive energy markets protecting the environment and guaranteeing the security of energy supplies, and encompass the six priority areas of the new Green Book of the European Commission of 08 March 2006 – effective functioning of the competitive energy markets, diversification of energy resources, solidarity among member-states for achieving secure energy supplies, sustainable development, innovation and overall coordinated energy policy.

Supporting the energy production from Renewable energy sources (RES), including the integration to transmission and distribution networks, follows the objective to achieve up to 11% RES electricity share in gross internal electricity consumption by 2010. The technical-economic analyses show that this production can be reached by construction of new power plants using hydro resources water, wind power, and biomass. In addition, the implementation of the envisaged measures to increase the energy efficiency will contribute to the decrease of the high energy intensity of the Bulgarian economy and will create better conditions to attain long-term sustainable development.

Using RES and increasing the energy efficiency will have a positive impact on the reduction of the dependency on import of energy resources as well as on the environment protection.

The general support to gasification and construction of gas-distribution networks (for gasification of municipalities which don't have issued licenses and are not included in the gas-distribution regions) will contribute to overcoming the Bulgarian lagging behind in the development of gas-distribution network and domestic gasification not only in comparison to the EU countries but also to neighbouring countries, and on the other hand support municipalities development, will increase quality of life and competitiveness of the local economy, while at the same time create conditions to attract more investments.

3.2. Priority 2 “Increasing the Quality of Human Capital with a Focus on Employment”

The main challenges concerning the human capital which Bulgaria faces are related to the negative demographic tendencies, the low economic participation, the persisting unemployment, the low employment rate, the high unemployment among the youth and low-educated people and the low adaptability of the labour force as a whole. The insufficient integration of the vulnerable groups and the unsatisfactory quality of the education and vocational training systems could impede the unfolding of full country's potential in achieving and maintaining high rates of growth and employment, which are required in the convergence process.

This priority aims at developing the human capital of Bulgaria for realising the growth potential and increasing the competitive of economy as well as to increase employment and thereby promote social inclusion. Developing a skilled and adaptable labour force will support a sustainable increase in labour productivity and incomes. In view of demographic trends and aging labour force developing the employability and skills of unemployed and economically inactive people will be supported.

The Republic of Bulgaria makes continuous efforts in order to reduce the loss of the labour market of people due to sickness and disability including premature retirement on grounds of ill health. For the years 2005 and 2006 were paid respectively 17,4 and 17.1 mln. working days as compensation for sickness, home and work accidents, professional diseases and taking care of ill family member. Thus, a person with a social insurance has lost 7,5 working days in 2005 and 7 working days in 2006 by average.

NSRF's priority 2 “Increasing the Quality of Human Capital with a Focus on Employment” is elaborated fully in line with the Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013 and the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005-2008). The sustainability principles expressed in the Gothenburg European Council agreement are addressed, as well as the main problems in the human resources area identified in the Joint Assessment of Employment Priorities in Bulgaria.

Development of Inclusive Labour Market and Employment Promotion

A special focus will be given on strengthening of **active and preventive labour market measures** to overcome obstacles to entering or remaining in the labour market and to promote mobility for job seekers, the unemployed and inactive, older workers as well as those at risk of becoming unemployed. Action will stress on the provision of individualised services, including job search assistance, training and job placement. The potential for self-

employment and business creation, ICT skills and digital literacy will be fully taken into account. Special attention will be paid to access to employment for young people, by facilitating the transition from education to work, including through assistance in completing education, access to appropriate training and apprenticeships, career guidance, entrepreneurship development. Among the measures which will also support the Youth Pact are programmes for early vocational guidance in school as well as centres for career development in universities will be created. It should be created favourable conditions for young people to set up their own businesses and get engaged in entrepreneurship. This could be achieved through special grants that will increase incentives for young entrepreneurs.

Another important priority is to ensure **inclusive labour markets for people at disadvantage or at risk of social exclusion**, such as early school-leavers, the long-term unemployed and people with disabilities. The aim is to improve their employability by enhancing their participation in vocational education and training, rehabilitation and appropriate human resources management. Implementation of a multi-faceted approach for promotion of employment of the vulnerable groups on the labour market and inactive people, according to their specifics and needs will be supported including employment incentives measures, direct job creation start-up incentives, etc.

Capacity development of **labour market institutions** will be supported, notably delivery of effective public employment services to job seekers, unemployed and disadvantaged people. These institutions have a pivotal role to play in implementing Active Labour Market Policy and providing services on individual basis with a view to promoting occupational and geographical mobility and matching labour supply and demand, including at local level. Labour market institution will support the anticipation of shortages and bottlenecks in the labour market and occupational and skills requirements.

Developing Skilled and Adaptable Labour Force

This priority will stress on the adaptability and mobility of workers and the flexibility of the labour market. The main focus will be on actions to promote **investment in human capital** both from enterprises, and workers through the provision of lifelong learning strategies as well as systems which equip employees, in particular low-skilled and older workers, with the necessary skills to adapt to the knowledge-based economy and to prolong their working life.

In order to increase **labour market flexibility** attention should be paid to development and dissemination of knowledge on innovative and adaptable forms of work organization to take advantage of new technologies – including teleworking, improving health and safety at work, increasing productivity and promoting better reconciliation of work and family life. The encouragement of professional and geographical mobility, along with the intended actions for combining the professional with the private life, will result in ensuring smooth transition between the different stages of the working life as well as between different working places.

Support for development of the social dialogue and strengthening of the socio-economic partners capabilities will be provided, especially at district and local level, aiming at effective planning, implementation and monitoring of the actions, to be financed under the Structural funds.

Occupational Safety and Health

The policy in the field of occupational safety and health is fulfilled according to the Guidelines for occupational safety and health activity development in the period up to 2006, approved by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria in 2002. Simultaneous actions are envisaged in all directions: employers' competitiveness, good quality of the living and working conditions, training and prevention culture. The issue has recently received specific attention after the successful contracting and implementation of the Phare Project Project BG2003/004-937.05.01 "Implementation of pre-accession commitments of Republic of Bulgaria in the area of occupational safety and health".

Following the guidelines and the principles of the European Commission on the occupational safety and health provision, the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria will approve a new Strategy and will continue its work on providing "well-being at work", considering the changes in the world of work and the emerging new risks. A combination of legislative, organizational, economic, social, technical and healthcare activities are to be accomplished and these measures are going to be oriented towards ensuring the average physical, moral and social well-being of the workers. Furthermore, measures focused on building a preventive culture of the workers and measures aimed at further development of the system for prevention of professional and health risks at the workplace, as well as measures aimed at setting conditions for effective, safe and healthy work, are to be created.

An element of the policy providing occupational safety and health is also the improvement of the training system, consultations and giving information to all participants in labour, as well as development of the forms of the fulfilled social dialogue. One of the conditions necessary for carrying out an active policy on the permanent improvement of the working conditions and guaranteeing a long and productive life of the working people is also the implementation of measures for increasing the quality and the scope of the monitoring made in terms of observing the labour legislation.

Education

The Government's strategy for reforming primary and secondary education ("National Programme for the Development of School Education (2006-2015)") sets two main strategic goals:

- **Equal access to education** by: ensuring access to all children to qualitative education, especially for those who do not have equal starting positions (children with special educational needs); laying special attention for their adequate participation in the education process.
- **Qualitative education**, which assumes continuous building of knowledge and skills for full development of every child's potential and possibility for social realisation.

The achievement of these objectives is ensured by system of measures, with the each measure effectiveness determined by the child's interests and its contribution to the two national goals.

The main priorities in the area of **school education** are as follows:

- Pre-orientation towards provocation of thinking and self-dependence, formation of practical skills and personality development, among others by modernisation of the school programmes, intensifying the usage of ICTs and foreign language education, introduction of new teaching methods and techniques.

- Elaboration of effective system for evaluation (both external and internal), which to measure objectively the students' achievements and teachers' performance.
- Increasing the teachers' prestige and social status by establishing a dynamic model for career development, introduction of a system for differentiated payments, based on achieved results and active measures for increasing the teachers' qualification.
- Decreasing the number of the early school leavers by broadening the system of social services, supporting the vulnerable groups inclusion, creation of a proper environment and methodical support for the children with special educational needs, active measures for aiding the education of children from the ethnic minorities.
- Optimisation of the school network for ensuring qualitative education and cost efficiency, while guarantying the equal access.

In the area of the **higher education**⁷⁷, the main challenges will be the response to the global tendencies, namely: popularisation of the higher education (i.e. broadening the access to higher education and decreasing the average schooling period), life-long learning, strengthening of the links between the universities and the business. The efforts are targeted at creating proper model for financing the higher education system, to stimulate its development and internal competition; to enforce the responsibilities in universities management and create conditions for external control; to optimise the universities structure; to be introduced hopeful systems for assessment of the higher education quality; to be increased lecturers motivation; the universities to strengthen their positions as main science centre; to be raised the mobility of teachers and students.

Regarding the area of scientific research, special accent will be put on stimulating the applied-oriented research, while the project financing approach will be used.

Persons with Specific Educational Needs

Special attention will be paid to ensure equal access to quality education for persons with special educational needs in order to contribute to a modern and fair educational system, to achieve higher educational results, to acquire higher education levels and professional qualifications for the labour force.

Contribution to the achievement of a better integration and social integration of persons and pupils with special educational needs, and of persons belonging to ethnic minorities, will be targeted with financing from ESF respecting cultural and ethnic diversity. The actions are in compliance with the Joint Inclusion Memorandum, signed between the Government of Bulgaria and EC.

Training

⁷⁷ Higher education is largely independent and thus not directly influenced by state policy, although the incentives created under OP Human Resources and OP Competitiveness should provide a motor of change towards innovation, quality teaching and gradually a knowledge-based society. Nonetheless, Bulgaria is in process of elaborating and negotiating a long-term Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in the country.

Based on the current state of the labour market as outlined in the analysis and the need to increase the growth potential, the National Strategy for Employment 2004-2010 puts a strong emphasis on the longer term needs, i.e. training and life-long learning. It is in line with the needs of building a knowledge-based economy. A main emphasis is put on the provision of skill-oriented training, responding to the needs of business and the importance of increasing the use of ICT as well as fostering innovation. Bulgaria can still rely on a high level of under-utilised human capital potential and has to build rapidly upon it, through ensuring adequate training.

The investments in training and in consultancy for SMEs managerial and skill development will be an important element in ensuring increasing productivity to overcome the presently large gap with the average performance of EU members. These actions complement the investment aid provided for setting up SMEs, improve research and development activities and the innovative performance of businesses. This is in line with the Lisbon strategy and the CSG emphasis on increasing productivity and competitiveness, but it will also complement the establishment of an education and training system in Bulgaria that would best meet the new requirements of the dynamic global economy and of the challenges of the highly competitive EU labour market.

Policy in the Field of Social Protection and Social Inclusion

In the recent years Bulgaria has achieved some progress in poverty and social exclusion reduction through pursuing a new approach – linkage of social policy with the all other state policies which contributed to transition from passive to active social protection. It is targeted on creation of human, physical and social capital, including active involving of vulnerable groups in increasing their own social welfare. The focus is not exclusively on the consequences, but mainly on the causes for the negative trends in the society, and in particular for poverty and social exclusion.

The fight against social exclusion is considered in the context of the Lisbon strategic goals for growth and jobs, and greater social cohesion. Equal opportunities for all and non-discrimination principles are the main pillars of the social inclusion activities. The main challenges identified in the Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion and the National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion of the Republic of Bulgaria 2006 – 2008 are sufficiently addressed. Social inclusion dimension in the NSRF covers the following aspects: active labour market participation, qualification and training in the context of life long learning, equal access to education and reducing the dropout from schools rates, increasing the life standard, equal access to services notably to social and healthcare services, promotion of social entrepreneurship, strengthening the capacity of the professionals and etc.

The policy priorities in relation to tackling poverty and social exclusion will continue to be:

- to promote a wide range of active labour market policy programmes, to improve the level of qualifications of those excluded from the labour market, to ensure that the social protection system and labour market policies are closely linked, and to remove disincentives to taking up jobs and ensure that taking up work pays and lifts people out of poverty and social exclusion;

- to overcome educational disadvantage by bringing education and lifelong learning in line with the needs of the labour market, promoting equal access to mainstream education for everyone, preventing early school leaving, paying special attention to children with special educational needs;
- to implement measures aimed at providing high quality social services for the most disadvantaged groups, improving the health status of the population and facilitating the access of the poor and vulnerable population to healthcare services;
- to reduce poverty and social exclusion of vulnerable ethnic minorities, especially the Roma community, and to promote their inclusion in mainstream society, by way of programmes designed to tackle their problems regarding housing and infrastructure development, education, retraining and employment.

Most of the areas where measures targeted at social inclusion of vulnerable groups are to be implemented are already mentioned above in the framework of employment, education and training policies. Two aspects of the social inclusion policy however need to be stressed here – access to social and health services and their efficient provision. The access to social and health services is linked with prevention of the risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Social Services

Legislative amendments have been introduced in Bulgaria to offer possibilities for: decentralised management of the social services, fostering of private entrepreneurships, introduction of a registration regime for the providers of social services instead of licensing; introduction of criteria and standards for provision of social services, and a more effective and more efficient control in the field of social services, widening of the sources of financing, strengthening of the civil control. The responsibilities are divided into activities under state responsibility and activities under municipal responsibility. The activities under state responsibility are financed entirely from the state budget, but are only managed by municipalities. These are the specialised institutions for provision of social services, the day-care centres, the centres for social rehabilitation and integration, sheltered homes.

The insufficient network of social services providers hampers the access to quality care for most of the vulnerable groups. Moreover, the available services are of poor quality and the personnel is unskilled. The deinstitutionalisation of people with disabilities and children needs particular attention.

Healthcare

The goal and strategic priorities of the health reform in Bulgaria are oriented at improving the health of the nation. This aim will be achieved through:

- increasing the effectiveness of the health system through institutional and structural changes in the delivery of health care services;
- strengthening the functions and structures of public health care;
- raising the quality of medical care; changing finance of the national health system;
- adapting human resources in the health sector to the new economic conditions;
- institutional and structural changes in health care.

The priority, aimed at improving health status, includes health programmes, projects and interventions for key target groups:

- health of pregnant women,
- newborn infants, children, adolescents and young people;
- rehabilitation of those with physical disabilities;
- restriction of habits hazardous to health;
- reduction of premature mortality;
- reduction of incidence and severity of diabetes mellitus,
- bronchial obstructive conditions and mental disorders;
- reduction of incidence and mortality from infectious diseases,
- guarantee of safe blood and blood products.

Over the next years, the health policy actions will be orientated mainly towards health promotion and disease prevention. Efforts are focused on combating cardio-vascular diseases, introducing regular cancer screening, preventive care, early diagnostic and treatment of tuberculosis, prevention of hereditary diseases, diathesis and inborn abnormalities, prevention of infectious diseases, immunisations and preventive vaccinations.

Health reforms are heavily dependent upon investment in the health and medical establishment's network and the upgrade of their diagnostic and therapeutic equipment. That process requires financing of activities for restructuring and equipping of emergency, out-patient and inpatient healthcare establishments in accordance with the National Health Map, as well as in improvement of the conditions in the facilities for long term care of the elderly people and children.

Strengthening the social protection system will be achieved through:

- bringing closer the social services to the users;
- individual approach in the provision of social and health services,
- opening of social services to the NGO sector, and the presence of criteria and standards for provision of social services.

Special emphasis will be placed on the difficult access of groups at risk to health services and also on the activities aiming at health promotion, prevention, rehabilitation, etc. Additional actions will be taken to improve preventive culture of the employees as well as public health protection services dealing with occupational and health hazard on the workplace.

The successful implementation of these measures seriously depends upon the improved condition of social, health and educational infrastructure, especially at local level. The human development policy will be implemented by establishing successful partnership with the stakeholders.

In addition to measures foreseen under NSRF, investments under priority axis 3 of Rural Development Programme will focus on the special needs in rural areas where specialized healthcare services are limited. The problem is significant especially for the chronically ill patients and for older people. In order to address these problems the interventions under EAFRD will support the access to healthcare prevention activities, promotion of health information in rural areas.

3.3. Priority 3 “Fostering Entrepreneurship, Favourable Business Environment and Good Governance”

Bulgaria will apply specific efforts to foster entrepreneurship and support the competitiveness of enterprises, including stimulating companies to introduce new technologies and to improve their innovation activity. The development of more efficient and transparent administration will not only raise productivity levels, but also stimulate favourable business and investment climate. Policies at all levels will target effective administrative framework for business development and entrepreneurship, good policy design and implementation, better lawmaking, impact assessment of policy proposals and transparent public procurement system. These actions will be complementary to the investment interventions envisaged under Priority 1 and Priority 2 and based upon the main conclusions of the socio-economic analysis and the disparities identified.

Sub-Priority 3.1. Business Development

Business, Innovation and SMEs

In line with the Lisbon strategy and CSG, Bulgaria aims to reduce its dependence on the traditional lower value added sectors. National policies and the programmes for the Structural Funds focus on improving the productivity and value of the Bulgarian enterprises through a combined approach of targeted support for investments in the introduction of innovation and ICTs, improving management systems, lifelong training and also in improving production processes through modernisation of technologies, including energy-saving and environment-friendly investments.

In order to establish a knowledge-based economy and to expand the competitiveness of the regions, it is necessary to extend the innovation capacity organisationally and spatially, to make innovation wide-spread, to channel the information, technologies and other innovative market knowledge directly to the players of the economy.

Newly established, highly innovative micro enterprises, as well as SMEs have the biggest development potential in the area of knowledge-based economy due to their flexibility. In this respect, SMEs will be specially targeted and relied upon for the transition to a knowledge-based economy. According to the National Innovation Strategy Bulgaria will:

- stimulate the RTD&I for the industry and the cooperation between the R&D departments, universities and companies;
- increase the financing for innovation through establishing mechanisms for attracting private investments;
- encourage companies to introduce new technologies and to improve their innovation activity; will encourage the establishment of clusters in traditional sectors;
- support start-ups and well-functioning companies with the aim to increase their innovative potential.

The Innovation Strategy is mainly implemented by the activities of the National Innovation fund, which finances research and development activities with the ultimate goal of introduction of innovations in the economy and thus it further develops the achievements of the National Science Fund.

Bulgaria aims to diversify its economy and broaden its capacity to produce higher value products. The strategy seeks reinforcement of the innovative capacity of universities and research institutes and increase in the level of applied research, as well as linking business and research centres and universities. This will result in:

- sustaining the supply of research and technology development for the companies;
- developing of new competencies for SMEs, including absorption of innovation
- increasing awareness of enterprises of RTD&I needs through mediators;
- increasing networking, transfer of scientific research into marketable products, technology transfer, diffusion of new advanced services and best practices;
- increasing investments in RTD&I through innovative and diverse financial instruments (seed capital for innovative firms, risk capital);
- increasing the level of competencies and IT knowledge in businesses.

Efforts will need to be directed towards interventions inducing long-term effects on the enterprises and their capability to compete in fast changing competitive environment. The strategy aims at increasing the potential of the SMEs for managing projects involving the introduction of new technologies, and in developing and marketing of new products. This will be achieved through direct investment support, and the provision of tailor-made training of the personnel related to the specific needs of the business and consultations. Such interventions are recognised as best practices in the area. The ultimate aim is to increase the productivity and efficiency of the SME sector. The expected effect is in increasing the production volume and in finding new export markets as a result of the increased competitiveness.

The analysis pinpoints that, while credit provision is expanding, it is weak for start-ups and smaller enterprises which will be overcome by a mechanism of new guarantee, venture capital and micro credit funds provision and grant schemes for SMEs start ups for modernisation of their production and management systems.

Special emphasis will be put on projects aiming at achieving conformity with EU requirements and where the investments aim at adaptation of the technologies and products to the requirements of the EU Directives and especially to harmonised standards. Priority will also be given to projects aiming to achieve compliance with internationally recognised market standards for SMEs – introduction of management systems (including IT based management systems), quality management systems etc. All these interventions aim at increasing the export activity of Bulgarian enterprises. In seeking to achieve a maximum positive effect it will be accompanied by actions for international trade promotion. Beneficiary will be the Bulgarian SME Agency, which is the institution for providing the policy for support of SMEs and international trade encouragement.

Business cooperation and development of the public-private partnership will be fostered through the creation of business networks and support for cluster initiatives. The National Cluster Strategy attempts to place a systematic approach to industry modernisation, SME intervention and market development for sectors, sub-sectors and clusters within both an EU and global context. The aim of the strategy was also to identify prospective sectors, and particularly sub-sectors for their cluster potential. The strategy recognizes the enhanced cooperation between the large enterprises, SMEs, the research entities and universities and other key players in the enterprises' development as successful approach for better

management, increased innovation activity and the qualification of the labour force. As a result this will lead to improved competitiveness and international trade orientation of the production.

Finally, the competitiveness of enterprises is also strongly related to costs. Costs, such as energy consumption are very important as Bulgaria is very energy inefficient. Not only this is environmentally damaging, but it erodes the comparative advantages of Bulgarian economy. In order to overcome these disparities, the introduction of energy saving technologies and increasing the use of renewable energy sources will be supported.

Enterprise development will depend highly upon the available quality of human capital and the quality of basic infrastructures, such as transport and ICTs. Policies aimed at market relevant education and training will be crucial, and this is a national concern expressed in the second Priority of the NSRF.

As part of creating business friendly environment, in order to become successful on the single market, it is of primary importance to improve the general operating conditions of enterprises, and their knowledge through provision of high quality and comprehensive consultancy and other business services.

The strategy recognizes large enterprises as an important factor for economic growth and innovations, generating employment and accelerating the development processes not only in separate SMEs and large enterprises in both productive and service sector, but also on the regional level.

Sub-Priority 3.2. Good Governance

Efficient State Administration and Services

In line with the Community Strategic Guidelines, strengthening administrative and institutional capacity and good governance are defined as a priority for the new programming period. These are key elements for the economic development and creation of new jobs. The acceleration of the reforms in the state administration through increased transparency will lead also to improved confidence of citizens and business. Bulgaria will realise a number of activities for promoting an efficient state administration such as: streamlining of administrative structures, better coordination between and within the administrative bodies, involvement of all stakeholders in the process of policy formulation, better regulation, increased transparency in the administration activities, improved human resources development and effective service delivery for citizens and business.

Effectiveness and efficiency in state administration are related to the establishment of adequate and stable structures. Actions will be taken for improvement of the administration organizational development such as optimization of administrative structures and constant performance assessment. Partnership and coordination are key issues for effective policy formulation and decision making. Capacity for effective policy implementation will be reinforced through: implementation of impact assessment on newly proposed laws and rules, systems for monitoring over the implementation of policies and strategies, involvement of stakeholders in the policy formulation, consultative mechanisms for coordination between the central, district and local administration. Further to this, the capacity of the socio-economic

partners and NGOs for effective contribution in the policy formulation and implementation will be improved through trainings according to their specific needs.

The improved transparency and less corruption would generate better investment climate, higher labour input and quality services. The following activities are envisaged: updating and improvement of the Administrative Registry; continuation of the anticorruption initiatives with all the administrations involvement; regulation of mechanisms of civil control, strengthening the inspectorates' role; enforcement of the civil servants Code of Conduct.

Administrative service delivery will be further improved by the integration of services taking into account the customers' needs. The "one stop shop" model will be promoted at all levels of the administration. The government will promote the systems for quality management in the state administration, standardization of the appeal and feedback systems. New approaches for servicing as call-centres for providing information to the citizens and business, self-service points will be launched. An important step towards the increase of the citizens' and business' satisfaction is the introduction of a service delivery policy in the administration. Civil servants need to be trained in the customer relationship practices.

The development of efficient administration is related to the introduction of modern information technologies. The intensive introduction of ICT and e-government in the administration contributes to significant anti-corruption effect, cutting the red tape and streamlining the procedures. Unified system for electronic data exchange within the state administration will be set-up and will allow e-document flow. The provision of electronic services will be compatible with the European framework. Training of staff on e-government principles and policy and on the use of the e-government services and centralized system will be provided.

The awareness on available services will be improved. Printed and on-line information about services will be delivered and regularly updated. Information materials in foreign languages, as well as in suitable format for disadvantage groups will be available ensuring wider access to administrative services.

Human Resources in the State Administration

The enhancement of **human resources management (HRM)** is an important part of the implementation of the administrative reform and ensuring sustainable development of the country in the political, economic and social life. Human resources management in the state administration consists in finding, providing opportunities for development and keeping the most appropriate people to work in the state administration in favour of the public interest and to promote the prestige of the civil service. Activities that will contribute to achievement of this goal will be: introduction of performance-based payment schemes; enhancement of the efficiency and effectiveness of the systems for recruitment, selection, appointment and dismissal of employees; creation of possibilities for centralized recruitment of various positions in the administration; development of employees' mobility; setting up an efficient and transparent system for career management; improvement of the evaluation system; introduction of standards related to the HRM units within the state administration.

Differentiated training approach based on specific training needs will be applied for improvement of civil servants competences. Multi-annual training plans will be elaborated

applying modern techniques for training. Life-long learning will be linked to career development. Interventions will support the human resource skills development, especially by training in efficient financial management, project management, EU regulations and policies, foreign languages, computer fluency and negotiation skills. The trainings will be driven by the needs and specifics of each administration level: central, district and local.

Senior civil servants will be main focus group in specialized training programme according to their needs. Training in foreign language and IT training, use of modern management tools and models, assessment process will be provided. A standard competence framework and “fast track” have to be introduced in the process of senior civil servants’ selection and career development. The quality of training will be guaranteed by coordination of activities among different training institutions. The capacity of the Institute for Public Administration and European Integration (IPAEI) for ensuring standard and high quality trainings will be strengthened. Universities will be involved in the process of civil servants competences improvement.

Judiciary System Reform

Bulgaria has to make still significant efforts in the field of judiciary system reform which seriously affects the investment climate. The insufficient transparency in the functioning of the judiciary system leads to a low level of confidence of the citizens and business. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen the capacity of the judiciary system for applying the good governance principles.

The actions for prevention and combating corruption are an important part of the judicial system reform. Activities for identifying the sources of corruption and elaborating mechanisms for their prevention have been identified. This will be the basis for further legal and organizational changes. The main tasks in the combat of corruption will be:

- stability in the jurisdiction;
- improving the public confidence in the judicial system;
- improving the public approval for the efficiency of the judicial authorities;
- ensuring the environment for transparency of the jurisdiction authorities;
- development of working control mechanisms for detection and penalizing of abuse of power and other forms of corruption practices of the magistrates;
- development of intolerance of the public towards corruption practices in the judiciary and favourable conditions for its active involvement in their prevention

For the purpose of combating corruption the capacity of the Commission for Combating Corruption will be strengthened.

Main activities will target at improvement of the existing legal acts and their implementation.. Improving the organization of the activities of the Supreme Judicial Council and the specialized courts is an important prerequisite for accelerating the jurisdiction. It is of utmost importance to identify the problems related to the functioning and coordination of the judiciary and mainly its administration. Actions for solving these problems will be taken based on detailed analyses

An important step in that direction is the transformation of the activities of the courts into administrative services.

The speeding up of the case completion process will improve the quality of justice administration. This will be done through analysis and proposals for changes in the legal framework of disciplinary proceedings, case-law, and adoption of practices for determining

the disciplinary responsibility of magistrates; elaboration of an integrated system for implementation and accountability in the functioning of the magistrates; strengthening the administrative capacity of the SJC; development of new ethical standards and establishing European rules in the functioning of the magistrates. A progress must be made in the neutral distribution of cases and introducing a system to monitor the work of judges. The National Institute of Justice will play major role for relevant and standard trainings thus ensuring competent judiciary system able to meet the EU membership requirements. ICT introduction in the judiciary system will aim at improving efficiency through the interoperability of the different institutions' systems.

The analysis of the situation of the judicial system and the accepted strategic documents for the accelerated judicial reform impose the formulation of a few main activities, the implementation of which will improve the work organization of the courts, will accelerate the examination of cases and will increase the efficiency of dissemination of justice, namely:

- Ensuring adequate asset base for the needs of dissemination of justice and improvement of the asset conditions for work of the magistrates which includes: construction of new courts; upkeep, and renovation of existing judicial buildings; equipping and furnishing of the judicial buildings;
- Training of the magistrates and the judicial employees in a few ways: for the implementation of the newly accepted and ongoing legislation/Criminal procedural code. Administrative procedural code. Civil-procedural code, Family code, etc.; for the implementation of acts of the European union; language training in connection with the implementation of the international legislative cooperation;
- Computerization of the legislative system, development of new and improvement of the existing registries which includes: development of Data center and Disaster recovery data center for the needs of the information systems in the judicial authority; development of unified communication environment for connectivity of the information systems; integration of the existing Information systems as well as integration and connectivity with the analogical systems in EC; finalization of the system for electronic governance; introduction of paperless flow of information between the prosecutors office the courts and the Ministry of justice, etc.; introduction of information technologies for distance testimonies with an aim to protect the witnesses; Introduction of audio and video technologies in the court room; Finishing of Unified Information System for Prevention of Crime in the context of the scope of exchange of information for the criminal cases in EC.

The reform in the judicial system in the last few years has been implemented with the support of the active financial support of international programmes and institutions. The main efforts were towards its development and modernization. The support will continue with the resources of the Transition facility until 2010. The financing of the SF will complement the process of the development of the judicial system achieved with the Transition Facility and it will be an upgrade based on the complementarity principle. In Annex 22 are listed the projects that will be financed by the Transition Facility until 2010. The activities in these projects will not be co-financed by the SF.

The OPAC activities will be based on the policies and purposes for the reform of the judicial system. They will be in the areas of improving the professional capacity and accountability of the judges, prosecutors and magistrates; improving the institutional development and increasing the efficiency of the judicial system.

Effective mechanisms for coordinating the efforts in the area will be developed with reference to implementing the OPAC activities in the judicial system. A special work group “Activities in the area of the judicial reform” will be established to the MC of OPAC. Additionally, representatives of the judicial authorities will be evaluating project proposals submitted under the operation related to the judicial reform.

Local Level Public Services

The development of effective local administration is an important condition for stimulating a favourable business and investment environment in the regions of the country. Interventions should be focused on activities such as: promotion of environmental management systems (ISO 1400, EMAS), development of innovative methodologies and tools (such as comparative risk assessment), training in sustainable development and utility management regarding water supply, risk prevention programmes and plans. Local authorities will be key focus of the administrative reform initiatives. The capacity building of municipalities will be supported with reference to improving the public resources management, service delivery and quality management systems introduction, partnership with the local civil society, coordination with regional and central administration. Strengthening the capacity of the local authorities for strategic planning, policy-making and stimulating the public-private partnership are part of the activities that will be performed.

Other types of activities which will contribute to the improvement of the quality of the public goods and services at local and district level are: provision of internet access in educational institutions, improvement of facilities for accommodation of elderly people and relating to childcare, providing accommodation for homeless children and other disadvantaged groups, improvement of access to public buildings and outdoor street mobility for disabled and disadvantaged people. Another significant development disparity, indicated in the analysis, is the underdeveloped broadband infrastructure and as a result, difficult access to public electronic services, especially in some economically underdeveloped and sparsely populated regions. In order to manage this shortcoming and to provide broadband access to on-line services in the context of transition to information society, developments of public information systems are necessary. This is considered a prerequisite for the development of e-government services. Activities in this area include free connection and establishment of public information access points to electronic services for social and economic needs, including services for disabled people; provision of on-line services for public sector institutions.

A further weakness identified in the analysis, is the significant disparities at district and municipal level. A crucial step in overcoming this problem is to improve the institutional and technical capacity to support regional and local investment planning and programming, based on partnership between municipalities and districts. Such activities include exchange of experience and good practices, networking, provision of technical support, consultancies.

3.4. Priority 4 “Supporting Balanced Territorial Development”

The territorial dimension of regional policy needs to focus on removing the structural barriers to development and mobilising endogenous growth potential across the country territory. All big cities are contributing to economic growth and competitiveness by playing the role of growth poles. The Regional Development Plans 2007-2013 are strategic documents at NUTS II level, which describe the specific investment needs as well as the chosen development

strategy at regional level. They were prepared in accordance with Article 11 of the Law on Regional Development and adopted at regional level by the Regional Development Councils of the six planning regions.

Though the socio-economic analysis reveals that the inter-regional disparities in Bulgaria are not significant, it clearly shows that considerable intra-regional differences among the districts, municipalities and localities exist. In almost all regions and districts in the country the typical “centre-periphery” contrasts are observed. Specially affected in this regard are the border territories, many of the rural areas, as well as places with high concentration of minorities.

The Role of Cities

The urbanisation issues are of increasing importance for the next programming period both from European and national perspective – Cohesion Policy and Cities: the Urban Contribution to Growth and Jobs in the Regions⁷⁸ and the National Regional Development Strategy of Bulgaria for the period 2005-2015.

Development of major cities will contribute and advance their capacity to foster development across the regions integrating the surrounding territories and less urbanised areas and accelerating their economic, social, spatial and environmental potential. Processes of urban concentration are to be managed with a view to ensure satisfactory territorial outcomes, overall regional competitiveness and cohesion. Urban centres are to be enhanced, rendered more cohesive, offering opportunities to those who inhabit them, those who inhabit near to them and, where possible, to those more distant. They are to be places where people want to live, work, invest and visit. They are to be connected to each other, the bigger of them to the wider European Union and territory, to surrounding areas so that the advantages given to those who inhabit urban centres are also open to those who do not.

Urban development and economic growth are sustainable when they go hand in hand with efforts to reduce poverty, overcome social exclusion, fight marginalization in big cities and tackle environmental problems. In Bulgaria cities encompass significant disparities in economic and social opportunities between different groups of citizens. This situation damages the attractiveness, competitiveness, social inclusiveness and safety of cities.

The existence of large cities in certain areas is an opportunity to make use of their potential and to spread their positive impact over their hinterlands. In the peripheral areas in the absence of large cities promotion of the existing medium-size and small cities is necessary through a targeted state policy in order to help them compensate the absence of large cities through their own accelerated development.

The state of repair of the networks of technical infrastructure and public works does not meet adequately urban requirements and obstructs the functioning of the cities. The physical environment and the building stock are heavily depreciated. Concerted efforts on a large scale in this field are urgently needed by Bulgarian cities in general.

⁷⁸ Brussels, 13.7.2006, COM(2006) 385 final.

Industrial locations in the cities occupy huge areas. However, they often lack public works and feature obsolete and unattractive buildings, which can hardly be upgraded and re-used. Most probably, the potential localization of future production facilities with improved technologies will be sought somewhere beyond the boundaries of these areas, on a “green field”. This, however, does not resolve the problem of restructuring and renewal of the manufacturing areas in the cities, including evacuation of some of the production facilities to provide space for other, so far neglected urban needs, such as green areas and public services, on which the policy of urban development should focus.

The state of repair of the public buildings for culture, education, health care is lamentable. Unfinished construction of cultural facilities (museums, libraries, scientific centres) in the cities is a grave problem for municipalities for exposing and presenting the cultural assets properly. Possibilities should be sought for completion of unfinished municipal sites in line with the current needs of the cities. In addition, measures should be undertaken to improve the quality of life, including housing and safety, in deprived and isolated neighbourhoods, such as those populated with Roma minority. These are important issues to be tackled in order to support sustainable development and promote social inclusion.

The urban systems of transport will need particular attention in order to encourage a fully integrated and multi-modal approach as appropriate particularly in larger towns. It should also make particular provision for groups with particular mobility problems, which reinforce their disadvantage or exclusion.

Connectivity

As identified in the socio-economic analysis, the basic infrastructure and services are underdeveloped and in an inadequate state for access, use, support and provision of linkages. The interventions will focus on support for the development and improvement of the infrastructure, as well as the regional and local transport and communication links as a prerequisite for setting up conditions for boosting development across all regions and increasing their attractiveness for investments. Regional and local infrastructure is an important factor for the promotion of business and economic convergence and is therefore eligible for financing under ERDF in Bulgaria. The district and local authorities focus their development plans on the improvement of the social infrastructure – educational and healthcare, as well as for ensuring equal access to social services as a prerequisite for an overall improvement of living and working environment in the Bulgarian cities and regions. Particular efforts at national level will be made for the development of a broadband infrastructure for access to public e-services, as a key factor for competitive economy development.

In a perspective of a sustainable environment, the mobility issue needs to be tackled in an integrated manner. Mobility needs to be promoted through a judicious balance between the use of private and public transport, and between road transport and other more environmentally friendly modes. Three are the key factors: well-designed basic infrastructure network, proper management of the traffic system and public transportation.

Development of the transport system is essential for generating sustainability conditions and linkages between cities and transformation into regional crossroad centres. Mobility within and between urban centres is of vital significance for life and work and its quality, accessibility, and efficiency is a determinant of economic competitiveness. In particular, the connectivity between urban centres and their hinterlands remains one of the most practical ways in which to offer opportunities to these areas.

Interregional and inter-city cooperation allows non-contiguous regions to enter into contact and to build up relationships, leading to exchanges of experience and networking which will assist the balanced, harmonious and sustainable development of the European Union and of third countries. The participation of district, city and other public authorities in this way will create a more stable structure for cooperation, leading to more and higher quality joint projects, synergies, exchange of best practices and experience actions in the mainstream structural funds programmes to an integrated and coherent approach to urban development will promote cohesion and strengthen regional competitiveness.

Stimulating inter-municipal cooperation and project development is a key issue of high priority and a catalyst for regional development processes. Therefore, appropriate methodological approach combined with related investments is needed for activation of development processes and exchange of best practices and experience with European regions. With some minor exceptions the population in almost all settlements in the country is diminishing and that not only in the villages, but also in the cities, and even in the large cities. This is an indication for a general drop in urbanization in both quantitative and qualitative respect. The few exceptions deserve a more detailed analysis and additional support through the instruments of targeted state policy.

Rural Areas

The government policy for rural development, as defined in the National Strategy Plan for Rural Development (NSPRD), is an integral part of the national strategy for fostering country's and regional development. The main interventions foreseen tackle the issues of the low competitiveness in the agriculture and forestry, the unfavourable business environment, and the absence of alternative sources of income. In their integrity, the planned measures and actions within the Programme for Rural Development under NSPRD aim at increasing the quality of life and working conditions in rural areas and overcoming the negative demographic tendencies. In addition, the cohesion policy will promote sustainable rural development by investments in human and physical capital, as well as basic infrastructure in rural areas, thus complementing the NSPRD interventions.

Engines of Regional and Local Development⁷⁹

The specific objectives of the regional development policy complement and expand the actions to be undertaken in the framework of the other policies, and above all in the field of

⁷⁹ The heading 'Engines of Regional and Local Development' goes back to the concept of 'Local Growth Potentials' and refers to the complementary aspects at the local level to more strictly speaking urban or rural policy and excluding connectivity. These indeed include a mixed group of topics such as nature protection and natural and cultural tourism, but these are core and indelible elements at the local level.

education and labour market in conformity with the specific local demands. Structural Funds interventions in the country, in order to increase the leverage effect of direct regional investments, will address promotion of foreign language learning and the acquisition of skills for work in foreign language and the information environment. This will be done through:

- organising and conducting qualification courses for teachers and lecturers;
- elaboration and implementation of innovative forms of foreign languages and ICT training in all education grades;
- development of a modern information and communication education environment.

As part of the labour force adaptability and mobility, interventions will promote the participation of the employed persons in all forms of life-long learning, introducing new measures and incentives to encourage every individual to participate in continuous vocational training, intensive foreign language and ICT training. Large numbers of these activities are incorporated in NSRF Priority 2.

Territorial development is highly dependent upon the regional and local business development, especially the entrepreneurship, the number and quality of start-ups, the efficiency of enterprises and the favourable business environment. These are all key aspects of the interventions envisaged under Priority 3 of the NSRF. Territorial development is inter-linked with the administrative capacity at district and local level, especially with respect to service delivery to business and citizens, as well as to the partnership.

Tourism is perceived as one of the priority sectors of the Bulgarian economy and its potential is demonstrated by its contribution to GDP, export and revenues in foreign currency as well as job creation. For the period 2004-2008 Bulgaria has a National Strategy for Ecotourism. The State Agency for Tourism has initiated the process of preparing an integrated long-term National Tourism Strategy to be finalized in 2007. The basis of the Strategy is a draft document prepared under Phare BG2003/004-937.02.02 "Technical Assistance to the Bulgarian State Tourism Agency".

The stimulation of individual initiative of the local population for building, reconstruction and improvement of guest houses, family hotels, larger-capacity hotels, food and entertainment establishments, appears as a catalyst also for other economic activities within these areas. Infrastructure investments improve the quality of urban environment and expand the spectrum of services offered, whilst creating prerequisites for more intensified exchange. Opening of unique settlements as tourist attractions stimulate the local population to a greater attention and care in preservation and development of crafts and folklore traditions. Encouraging the regional dimension for developing the tourist product appears as one of the most important factors for diversification of the complex tourist services offered.

Regional development is dependent upon the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, and these are values with their own merit and are subject of the Bulgarian Law on the Protection and Development of Culture. Investments in human capital, social cohesion and protection of the natural and cultural heritage in the regions will contribute to make them attractive and improve the quality of life, closely related to the need to combine the environmental and cultural value of the regions, which is part of the CSG.

Interventions need to focus on the effective employment of regional competitive advantages related to human potential, quality of nature and cultural environment in improving the quality of life within the regions. Cultural tourism is an area of key importance to development and attractiveness of the regions. The cultural heritage is one of few authentic resources and has considerable potential to contribute to the economic growth and job creation (in compliance with the Lisbon Agenda and Governmental Programme of the Republic of Bulgaria). Its utilisation would lead to enterprise creation and development and could be used for reversing the process of depopulation in relatively less developed areas with high tourist potential. It could be used as a tool for diversification of the economic activities and surmounting the intraregional and urban-rural disparities.

With regard to regional development the strategy envisages actions for the revival of natural attractions of tourists' interest. Activities related to the construction and reconstruction of the infrastructure in the areas of tourists' attractions, not included in the National Environmental Network NATURA 2000, will be also implemented.

Finally, territoriality and regional development contains the logical requirement of territorial cooperation. Out of 28 NUTS III regions in Bulgaria 18 are border regions having the specific needs in order to avoid isolation, prevent and reduce unemployment and stop depopulation. The aim therefore of the Cross-Border Programmes, financed under Objective 3, is to make the border regions more accessible, thus contributing to give a new impulse to the economy of the area. Besides strengthening social and cultural ties and improving the quality of life, upgrading public utilities and local infrastructure can favour the establishment of closer business relations and the expansion of trade and investments to the region. The programmes should also endeavour to make the most of the rich cultural and historical heritage of the border regions. Tourism is seen as a sector with good potential for growth and for cross-border co-operation.

3.5. Horizontal Policies

The compliance with the EU policies of sustainable development and equal opportunities and non-discrimination is ensured at all stages of Structural Funds programming – planning, implementation, financing, monitoring and evaluation of the financial aid. Sustainable development is explicitly a part of the NSRF vision and objectives.

The four priorities, as outlined above, therefore already contain the horizontal issues within their planning and implementation schemes. However, the issues deserve the all-encompassing approach to be briefly described:

Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination

In the area of protection against discrimination a law has been adopted, which is compliant to the *acquis communautaire*. The Protection against the Discrimination Act was adopted by the Parliament in 2003 and entered into force in 2004. The approach used under this Law covers the possible criteria on the basis of which the discrimination is defined. The law prohibits all direct or indirect discrimination based on gender, race, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

By virtue of Article 16 of Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006, the gender equality principle

as well as the protection against discrimination, will be adhered to during all stages of programming and implementation of the Operational Programmes.

In 2005 a Commission on Prevention of Discrimination was established as an independent body, which applies the Law and imposes sanctions in cases of discrimination. The Law also foresees three sub-commissions, which will deal with the following issues – ethnic and racial equality, equal opportunities for men and women and prevention of discrimination on other grounds such as religion, age or disability.

The equality of men and women is firmly embedded in the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria (Article 6) and the national legislation, which is in conformity with a set of international documents on equal treatment. One of the purposes of the Protection against Discrimination Act is to ensure that women have equal opportunities for participation in all spheres of social life – the prohibition of discrimination, as provided by law, refers to different areas of life, like employment, education and training, health, housing, social protection, submission of goods and access to social services and agencies, performing economic activities, etc.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is in charge of the development, coordination, implementation and control of the government policy for equal opportunities of men and women. The structure is responsible for the implementation of a system for gender equality in the bodies in charge of EU Structural funds absorption by the creation of a methodology, introducing directly and indirectly, the gender mainstreaming concept. National Council for Gender Equality with the Council of Ministers has been established in charge of the consultation, partnership and coordination among the government authorities and the non-government organisations by the elaboration and implementation of the national policy regarding the gender equality.

The equal opportunities and non-discrimination issue will be ensured at all stages of programming and implementation of the National Strategic Reference Framework. It is included in the criteria for project selection. In all project implementation reports information for the participation of men and women and socially-disadvantaged groups has to be included. The various organisations for equal opportunities, including the non-government sector as well as the Commission for the Protection against Discrimination, have to be consulted during the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all envisaged activities.

The participation of Commission for the Protection against Discrimination in OP Monitoring Committees is provided for in Article 8, paragraph 3(2) of the Council of Ministers Decree No. 182 from 21.07.2006. Similarly, based upon Article 8, paragraph 10, non-governmental sector organizations are included in the OP Monitoring Committees.

To prevent discrimination, all participants in future public tendering should respect the principle of equal treatment at the work place and demonstrate they have not been subject to sanctions on the basis of the Law on Protection against Discrimination.

Sustainable Development, including Energy Efficiency

Sustainable development is a fundamental goal of the EU, which requires interrelated and coherent economic, social and environmental policies. The NSRF presents the entire strategy

for developing sustainable territorial communities, which is to be realised through the Operational Programmes⁸⁰. Sustainable development of territorial communities presumes the achievement of stable economic growth, in conjunction with social welfare and full possibilities for social inclusion.

Environmental protection as a horizontal priority is associated with sustainable development, which will be promoted through the integration of environmental issues at all stages of programming and implementation of the NSRF. The OP Managing Authorities will maintain operational links with the bodies having specific responsibilities in terms of environmental protection. It is legally ensured that plans and programmes, which are in the process of elaboration and/or approval from the central and district authorities, the local authorities and the National Assembly, undergo environmental assessment in accordance with national law and EU Directives.

The Law on Biodiversity fully transposes into the Bulgarian legislation the requirements of the Bird Directive and Habitat Directive. The Act sets out the criteria for identification and evaluation of the zones of European importance (article 7), which are identical with those, set out in Attachment III of the Habitats Directive. On the basis of the completed evaluation, within 4 years of the adoption of the Act, a national list of the zones of European importance in Bulgaria, including birds, should be prepared. Articles 31–34 of the Act fully transpose the provisions of article 6 (2), (3), and (4) of the Habitats Directive concerning the requirements and the assessment of plans and projects which might have a negative impact on the protected zones.

It is provided that the plans, programs and investment projects which are not directly related to the management of protected zones or are not needed for this purpose, but which, separately, or in conjunction with other plans and projects, may have a significant negative impact on protected zones, shall be subject to environmental assessment (for plans and programs), or to environmental impact assessment – for investment projects, included in Annexes No 1 and 2 of the Environmental Protection Act, under the procedure provided for in the same Act.

Within the Bulgarian context the application of sustainable development as a horizontal policy across programmes and projects includes energy efficiency. In fact, the Bulgarian economy consumes about 8 times higher energy for production per euro of GDP compared to the EU-average in real terms (not PPP) according to Eurostat in 2004. Aiming at energy efficiency should therefore, as a matter of principle, be treated as a horizontal priority across programmes and projects, especially taking into account the Law on Energy Efficiency in Bulgaria, the amendment and supplement of which is in process of finalization. The Law embodies the state policy with respect to energy efficiency and supply of energy efficient services through a coordinated system of measures and activities at national, sectoral, district and municipal level with the purpose of increasing competitiveness, security of energy supplies and environmental protection.

4. OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMES

⁸⁰ Bulgaria is in process of elaborating and negotiating with partners a long-term National Strategy for Sustainable Development coordinated by Ministry of Economy and Energy.

The interventions in the above mentioned three sectoral and one territorial priorities are envisaged under the financial assistance of Structural and Cohesion Funds (SCF) in order to achieve the goals identified. At the same time, the interventions under European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development /EAFRD/ and European Fisheries Fund /EFF/ as formulated in the National Strategy Plan for Rural Development and National Strategic Plan for Fisheries and Aquaculture, respectively, will complement the actions foreseen under SCF

These interventions are organised, presented, and formulated in **7 Operational Programmes:**

1. Transport
2. Environment
3. Human Resources Development
4. Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy
5. Administrative capacity
6. Regional Development
7. Technical Assistance

The OPs have been elaborated following the partnership principle, providing conditions for an efficient implementation of the NSRF by ensuring public awareness and consideration of all stakeholders' interests. The structure of the OPs has been organised internally in accordance with the institutions in Bulgaria, who are responsible also for the national policies in the relevant areas in order to provide adequate sectoral coordination. OP Regional Development and the Objective 3 "European Territorial Cooperation" programming documents are managed by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works to ensure a synchronised approach and complementarity. Annex 21 describes all the operational programmes, with their priority axes (priorities) and operations.

The following diagram presents the contribution of the Structural and Cohesion Funds (as per OP priorities) to the realisation of the three thematic and one territorial priorities as identified in the country's vision for development for the period 2007-2013 in accordance with the horizontal policies:

VISION:

by 2015 Bulgaria should become a competitive EU country
with high quality of life, incomes and social awareness

NSRF GOAL 1:
Strengthen the competitiveness of the economy to achieve high and sustainable growth

NSRF GOAL 2:
Develop human capital to ensure higher employment, income and social integration

NSRF Priority 1:
Improving basic infrastructure

Maritime and inland-waterway navigation

Waste water infrastructure

Waste treatment infrastructure

Railway transport along national and Trans-European transport axes

Inter-modality

Road along national and Trans-European transport axes

Regional and local accessibility

NSRF Priority 2:
Increasing the quality of human capital with a focus on employment

Regional and local networking

Access to education and training

Raising the productivity and adaptability of the employed persons

Social inclusion and promotion of social economy

Efficiency of the labour market institutions, of the social and healthcare services

Sustainable tourism

Quality of education/training

Job creation and inclusive labour market

NSRF Priority 3:
Fostering entrepreneurship, favourable business environment and good governance

3.1. Business Development

3.2. Administrative Reform and Good Governance

International market positions

Efficiency of enterprises/supportive business environment

Good governance

Regional and local accessibility

Knowledge-based economy and innovation activities

Administrative service delivery and e-government

Financial resources (FREDE)

Human resources management in administration and civil society

OPTA

NSRF Priority 4:
Supporting Balanced Territorial Development

Regional and local accessibility

Biodiversity

Sustainable and integrated urban development

Sustainable tourism

Regional and local networking

Objective 3

Sustainable Development, including Energy Efficiency

Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination

4.1. Operational Programme “Transport”

The Operational Programme “Transport” includes interventions as required under Priority 1 of the NSRF “Improving Basic Infrastructure”. It aims at ensuring a balanced and sustainable national transport system through the development and modernisation of key transport infrastructure links of nation-wide, cross-border and EU importance. The programme also focuses on the full integration of the national transport system into the EU transport network and the improvement of the quality and safety of transport services. The completion of the trans-European transport network is essential to improve territorial cohesion and boost the competitiveness and growth potential of Bulgaria and of the enlarged European Union.

The Operational Programme “Transport” concentrates the allocated funding along four priorities aside technical assistance. More than 80% cover the key needs of development of road and railway infrastructure along the major national and Trans-European transport axes, as shown in the above diagram. The third OP priority refers to the improvement of inter-modality for passengers and freight. The fourth OP priority complements the sectoral development by providing support to the improvement of the maritime and inland-waterway navigation.

4.2. Operational Programme “Environment”

The contribution of the OP Environment to the NSRF is two-fold: the development of the environmental infrastructure in support of NSRF Priority 1 “Improving Basic Infrastructure”; and the improvement, preservation and recovery of the natural environment and biodiversity to contribute to NSRF Priority 4 “Balanced Territorial Development”. In formulating the specific objectives of the programme, the Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion policy have been considered as well as the main EU priorities concerning employment, growth and sustainability (Lisbon, Gothenburg). In order to ensure complementarity with the other EU policies and based on the analysis of the sector, the policy is focused on the preservation and improvement of the state of water resources; enhancement of the waste management and protection of soils; preservation and restoration of biodiversity, including selected activities for nature protection.

4.3. Operational Programme “Human resource development”

The overall goal of HRD OP is to improve the quality of life through employment promotion, access to high quality education and health, as well as lifelong learning and social inclusion. This goal is corresponding to the NSRF Priority 2. The OP priorities are in conformity with the priorities of the European Employment Strategy, Joint Assessment of Employment Priorities in Bulgaria (JAP), Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM) and Community Strategic Guidelines for 2007-2013 programming period allowing for a strong competitive, adaptable and increasingly mobile labour force.

The HRD OP includes health, education and social services as elements of the social policy in Bulgaria, but complements them with active labour market development and activities oriented towards competitiveness, flexibility and adaptability. The HRD OP thus concentrates on the following seven priority axes:

- Promotion of job creation and development of inclusive labour market;
- Raising the productivity and adaptability of the employed persons;
- Improving the quality of education and training in correspondence with the labour market needs for building knowledge-based economy;

- Improving the access to education and training;
- Social inclusion and promotion of the social economy;
- Improving the efficiency of the labour market institutions and of social and healthcare services;
- Transnational and interregional cooperation.

During its implementation the programme shall take advantage of the good practices and leading principles of EQUAL Community Initiative – gender equality and non-discrimination based on gender, race, ethnic origin, religion of beliefs, disabilities, age or sexual orientation; innovations, mainstreaming, partnership, transnational and interregional cooperation, sound programme and project management.

4.4. Operational Programme “Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy”

The general purpose of the Operational Programme “Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy” is the development of a dynamic economy, competitive at the European and world markets, in fulfilment of the activities required by NSRF Priority 3 “Fostering Entrepreneurship, favourable business environment and good governance”, sub-priority 3.1. “Business Development”. The two specific purposes of the OP – encouraging innovations and increasing the effectiveness of enterprises, as well as improving business environment, in which they operate, shall contribute to the improved overall competitiveness of the economy.

The encouragement of a knowledge-based economy and the innovation activities is a separate priority in the OP which will strengthen the relationship between science and business and will increase the enterprise’s expenditures on research and development and the value added of the produced services and goods. Decreasing the consumption of energy and resources, modernising the equipment, the technologies and the production processes, will contribute to increasing the productivity of labour and the efficiency of production as a whole.

Increasing efficiency of enterprises and promoting a supportive business environment is the OP priority which concentrates the highest share of the funding and encompasses the activities expected to bring about the leverage effect required to fulfil the general and specific purposes of the OP “Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy”. The other two priorities of the Operational Programme are organized around providing financial resources for developing enterprises and overall strengthening of the international market positions of Bulgarian economy.

4.5. Operational Programme “Administrative capacity”

The Operational Programme “Administrative capacity” contains interventions as envisaged under Priority 3 of the NSRF “Fostering Entrepreneurship, favourable business environment and good governance”, sub-priority 3.2. “Good Governance”.

The aim of the OP is to create an efficient and competent administration, capable of developing and implementing the national and European policies while meeting the citizens’ and the business sector’s expectations for better service delivery and ethics. It will also provide support for efficient judicial system.

The specific objectives of the Programme are: introduction of good governance principle and enhancing the confidence of the Bulgarian citizens and the business sector in the administration; modern human resources management in the state administration and judiciary; enhancing the quality of service delivery and using information technologies

opportunities. The Operational Programme “Administrative Capacity” also includes a component pertaining to the human capital in civil society, especially in building partnerships with the administration and contributing to effective policy formulation process.

On the basis of the outlined specific goals four main Priority axes are identified within OPAC:

Priority axis “Good Governance” will introduce the good governance principles in the activity of the administration and the judicial system. It aims at increasing the efficiency of the administration and judiciary activities by optimisation of structures, functions and processes. Effective coordination and partnership between all stakeholders in the process of elaboration and implementation of policies will be achieved. The interaction between the bodies of the judiciary power, and the transparency of their activity will also be improved by this Priority axis.

Priority axis “Human Resources Management in the State Administration, the Judicial System and Civil Society Structures” covers activities for improvement of human resources management in the administration and the judicial system. Trainings for the administration shall be conducted taking account of the different needs horizontally and vertically. By enhancing the qualification of the magistrates and the judicial employees, the functioning of the judicial system will also be improved. One of the identified operations within this Priority Axis is focused on civil society structures training for effective partnership with the administration, for participation in the policy-making process and monitoring of the activity of the administration.

Priority axis “Quality Administrative Service Delivery and E-governance development” aims at introducing integrated administrative services, developing information technologies and e-governance, ensuring standard and interoperable information and communication environment for better administrative service delivery to the citizens and the business; improving the effectiveness and transparency of the functioning of the judicial system by developing information technologies.

Priority axes “Technical Assistance” is focused on improving the capacity for effective and efficient management and implementation of the OPAC. It will also ensure the publicity for the OP in order to inform the general public and the beneficiaries for the possibilities and the results of OPAC.

All the above-mentioned Priority axes have special operations targeted to the transnational cooperation in the field of administration, judicial system and civil society.

4.6. Operational Programme “Regional development”

The OP “Regional development” is oriented towards the practical implementation of NSRF Priority 4 “Balanced Territorial Development”. The overall logic of interventions takes into account the importance of urban centres, determining the need for their development, as well as the development of their neighbouring and periphery areas. Thus, the key OP Regional Development priority **Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development** comprises interventions, including building the attractiveness of cities, reinforcing the role of cities as poles of growth, sustainable transport, promoting economic activity, whilst ensuring housing and social infrastructures to decrease disparities between social groups, in line with the

principles of the Communication “Cohesion Policy and cities: the urban contribution to growth and jobs in the regions”⁸¹. This set of activities will be complemented by other interventions, aimed at improving territorial, internal, and external connectivity, as well as to support the small municipalities with lower technical and institutional capacity by encouraging cooperation between municipalities for integrated development. Support will be provided to territories with tourism potential favourable for economic diversification outside the overdeveloped mass tourism territories. In doing so the cultural and natural resources will be valorised, and the marketing of the tourist destinations will be supported.

In addition, OP Regional Development due to its territorial character contains:

- two priorities, **Regional and Local Networking, Cooperation and Capacity and Sustainable Tourism Development**, which directly contribute to NSRF Priority 2 “Increasing the quality of human capital with a focus on employment” by increasing employment levels locally;
- one priority, **Regional and Local Accessibility**, especially development of ICT infrastructure, completing the NSRF Priority 1 “Improving basic infrastructure” and ensuring the pre-conditions for the wider use of E-Government (encouraged under NSRF Priority 3 “Fostering Entrepreneurship, favourable business environment and good governance”.

4.7. Operational Programme “Technical Assistance”

The Operational programme Technical Assistance contributes to the successful implementation of the NSRF by providing the necessary logistical and material support to the Central Coordination Unit, Certifying Authority and Audit Authority. It has been set up to ensure coordination and implementation of the cohesion policy, the necessary reliable management as well as the introduction of a single Management Information System for all OPs, the supply of appropriate communication to the general public about the EU interventions and to raise the quality of the financial control and audit systems. As users of the unified MIS, the Managing Authorities shall also benefit from this OP.

The Operational programme Technical Assistance therefore identifies three priority axes:

- Support to the implementation of the activities, performed by the Central Coordination Unit, Certifying Authority and Audit Authority, OPTA Managing Authority, NSRF Monitoring Committee and OPTA Monitoring Committee;
- Further development and support for the functioning of the Unified Management Information System;
- Promotion of European Cohesion Policy in Bulgaria and Ensuring the Provision of General and Statistical Information.

4.8. Objective 3 “European Territorial Cooperation”

European Territorial Cooperation financed under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is designed to support the harmonious and balanced integration of the territory of the European Union (EU) through assisting the cooperation in fields of importance to the Community at cross-border, transnational and inter-regional level.

⁸¹ Communication from the Commission to the Council and Parliament COM (2006) 385 final, 13.07.2006.

The Republic of Bulgaria sets in its National Strategy for Regional Development 2005-2015 the territorial cooperation as separate priority with three specific objectives:

- development of cross-border cooperation,
- development of trans-national cooperation,
- networking and exchange of experience with the European regions.

Bulgaria actively participates in the preparation of five bilateral cross-border cooperation programmes with Romania, Greece, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (fYRoM) and Turkey. These programmes cover about 2/3 of the country's territory.

The Operational Programmes for Cross-border Cooperation can be grouped by:

- Internal borders of the European Union: Bulgaria-Greece and Bulgaria-Romania financed under ERDF. These programmes include respectively 4 and 9 districts (administrative units) on the territory of Bulgaria at NUTS III level;
- External borders of the European Union: Bulgaria-Turkey (including 3 districts on the territory of Bulgaria at NUTS III level), Bulgaria-fYRoM (including 2 districts on the territory of Bulgaria at NUTS III level), Bulgaria-Serbia (including 5 districts on the territory of Bulgaria at NUTS III level). These three programmes will be financed under both ERDF and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) of the EU;
- Sea Basin Programme in the Black Sea including the two NUTS II regions – Bourgas and Varna, financed under both ERDF and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI);

Within the framework of Objective 3 – European Territorial Cooperation, Bulgaria will develop cross-border cooperation in the following summarized fields:

- encouraging economic activity, in particular the development of SMEs, tourism, culture, and cross-border trade;
- encouraging and improving the joint protection and management of natural and cultural resources, as well as prevention of natural and technological risks;
- supporting links between urban and rural areas;
- reducing isolation through improved access to transport, information and communication networks and services, and cross-border water, waste and energy systems and facilities;
- developing collaboration, capacity and joint use of infrastructures, in particular in sectors such as health, culture, tourism and education;
- promoting the development of cross-border labour markets, local employment initiatives, gender equality and equal opportunities, training and social inclusion;
- developing the institutional and administrative capacity at district and local level and providing technical assistance for the preparation of new projects.

Within the framework of ERDF, Bulgaria participates in the South-East European Space for transnational cooperation and in the INTERREG IV C programme for inter-regional cooperation, as well as in Urbact II, Interact II, ESPON. The inter-regional cooperation is included as an operation in Priority Axis 4 “Regional and local networking, cooperation and absorption capacity” under Operational Programme Regional development 2007-2013 to be financed under ERDF supporting the more explicit connection between Objective 1 and Objective 3 of the new Cohesion Policy with an aim to also contribute to the European Commission Initiative “*Regions for Economic Change*”. The Ministry of Regional

Development and Public Works is the contact point for Urbact II, ESPON and Interact II programmes.

4.9. National Strategy Plan for Rural Development and National Strategic Plan for Fisheries and Aquaculture

The investments envisaged under National Strategy Plan for Rural Development and National Strategic Plan for Fishery and Aquaculture are coordinated with the investments in human and basic capital which will be financed by EU Structural Funds. This section presents the strategies of rural development and fisheries and aquaculture. The main aim is to demonstrate consistency and compliance between NSRF and the two strategic plans.

National Strategy Plan for Rural Development defines the following overall objectives for the 2007-2013 programming period:

- 1. To develop a competitive and innovation based agriculture, forestry sector and food-processing sector.**
- 2. To protect the natural resources and environment of rural areas.**
- 3. To improve the quality of life and diversify job opportunities in rural areas.**

All objectives of the National Strategy Plan aim at improving the economic and social conditions in rural areas and complement each other. The objectives compliment and will contribute to the achievement of the strategic goals of the NSRF for the 2007-2013 period.

The first objective of the National Strategy Plan is to be achieved through interventions, supporting modernisation and restructuring of the agri-food chain, the forestry and primary wood-processing activities. The overall strategic approach is to boost productivity and competitiveness of agriculture, food and forestry sectors through support for:

- Up-grading technologies, improving plant and animal stock, introducing modern land and water management practices;
- Promoting innovations in the agri-food chain for production of new high value added products and technologies
- Diversification within agriculture;
- Raising skills level and knowledge of the labour force;
- Improving the environmental performance of farms and forestry;
- Adjustment of farming structures and land ownership structures;

The second objective targets the preservation of natural resources and the improvement of countryside. Better land management and protection of environment will secure sustainable and integrated development of the countryside, conservation of biodiversity and local breeds. It will also help for the preservation of traditional land practices and will contribute to the diversification of rural economy through the creation of alternative sources of income. The second objective will be focused on:

- conservation and restoration of important habitats and natural systems in accordance with national objectives and EU's goal for halting biodiversity loss by 2010;
- improvement water quality and prevention from contamination from agricultural sources in accordance with EU environmental obligations, including the Nitrate and Water framework directives;
- prevention of soil degradation processes and preservation of soil diversity and fertility;
- sustainable management of forests and forest land;
- developing renewable energy potential in order to meet national/EU targets.

The third strategic objective aims at promoting diversification of job opportunities and improving the quality of life in rural areas. The strategy aims at supporting the development of rural areas by creating better living environment and creation of new employment opportunities. Considerable investment support will be given for the improvements of infrastructure and provision of services to rural population. Business development and entrepreneurship in rural areas will be promoted by support to investments in non-agricultural activities of farming households and wider rural population. The support will be given to job creation in businesses, based on local resources – rural tourism, culture and crafts. Special promotion and support will be given to creation of innovation driven businesses, using new technologies, use of renewable energy sources and better management of the biomass, knowledge-based business opportunities.

National Strategic Plan for Fisheries and Aquaculture defines the following objectives for the 2007-2013 programming period:

1 Adaptation of the fishing fleet

The adjustment of the fishing effort in compliance with the principles of the CFP and the Fishing fleet adjustment plan, drafted by NAFA⁸² is a practical measure for implementation of the national policy for protection and conservation of the living marine resources with the view of establishing adequate conditions for development of sustainable fishing activities in a friendly manner regarding the optimum relations of biomass and the environment with the following sub-objectives: modernization of the Fishing fleet, environmental friendly fishing gear and methods, small scale coastal fishing and socio-economic measures, socio-economic measures and vocational training.

2. Development of aquaculture, processing and marketing

The measures under this objective aim at increasing the fish resources from aquaculture production for supplying the market thus compensating the exhausting of the marine resources. The objective aims at enhancement of the quality of the production and the technological level, application of the good production practices, system for monitoring of quality and the sanitary and hygiene measures. The sub-objectives are: support the sustainable development of Bulgarian aquaculture producing wider range of valuable fish species and bigger production for the market and as raw material for processing, as well as re-enforcement the efficiency of the fish processing industry in respect of European Union standards and high quality level of marketing services.

3. Promotion of actions of common interest

Measures of common interest can include initiatives to protect and develop the aquatic environment, initiatives to develop common facilities, pilot projects, promotion and development of new markets and other collective actions with wider benefit. The main interventions will be related to modernization of fishing ports, landing sites and shelters, development of new markets and promotional campaigns, capacity building and support of common actions for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development and resource management.

4. Sustainable development of fisheries areas

The objective aims at developing the areas with significant level of employment in the fisheries sector via accomplishment of fisheries development actions, based on a bottom-up approach.

⁸² National Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Bulgarian NSRF
18/04/2007

4.10. Coordination and complementarity among the Operational Programmes

The implementation of the operational programmes contributes to increasing the competitiveness of the economy and at the same time addresses the social aspects of the development: healthcare, education, social inclusion.

The support for innovation activities and investments in SMEs in the OP Development of the Competitiveness of Bulgarian Economy is supplemented by investment in human capital via the OP Human resource development and better service delivery in the OP Administrative Capacity. OP Human Resource Development is complemented by OP Regional Development in the social infrastructure investments. Innovation activity, higher quality of education and life-long training are an indispensable condition for transition to a knowledge economy. Both are developed in the OP Human Resource Development and OP Administrative Capacity.

The promotion of entrepreneurship and start-ups is essential for development of competitive economy thus it is supported in two OPs: OP “Human Resources Development” and OP “Competitiveness”. OP “Human Resources Development” is aimed at improving the quality of the labour force and the labour conditions in enterprises, focusing on creation of possibilities for economic realization of unemployed and inactive people, including self-employment. OP “Competitiveness” complements the measures by supporting only start-ups is for creation of technological start-ups with high innovative potential. This is a specialized type of support for a specific target group aiming at stimulation of creation of innovations.

Fostering partnership between the academic institutions, the business and the administration is aimed at promotion of relevant business and administration skills. These interventions are complemented in three of the OPs: OP Development of the Competitiveness of Bulgarian Economy, OP Administrative Capacity and OP Human Resource Development. Special attention is paid in the capacity building of economic and social partners and relevant non-government organisations in the OP Administrative Capacity and OP Human Resource Development. Their commitment to strengthening economic and social cohesion by improving employment and job opportunities is essential. Successful partnerships between social and economic partners, regional associations, local and district authorities is elaborated under OP Regional Development. Fostering partnership between NGOs (with special focus on organizations representing the major target and beneficiary groups) and the administration should be deliberately searched and monitored at all levels: from design of projects and documents to their implementation.

Improved business environment is essential for higher economic growth. OP Administrative Capacity provides for better regulation, increased transparency in the state administration and the judiciary system. The improved administrative framework and the reinforced competitiveness and enterprise development (OP Development of the Competitiveness of Bulgarian Economy) end up with improved investment climate.

Investment in infrastructure (OP Transport and OP Environment) will intensify the business links and sustainable development. ICT network broadening will be used for improving access to the administrative services at all levels (OP Regional Development and OP Administrative Capacity), innovation activities in SMEs (OP Development of the Competitiveness of Bulgarian Economy) and for reducing regional disparities (OP Regional Development).

The OP Regional Development makes a significant contribution to mobilising the local growth factors through improving the: quality of life and work in urban centres, connecting centre-periphery and between centres themselves. The same OP will stimulate inter-municipal co-operation in the process of realisation of investment projects in the local infrastructure. OP

Regional Development will complement OP Administrative Capacity in the improvement of administrative service delivery at district and local level.

4.11. Coordination and complementarity between Objective 1 and Objective 3

The Territorial Cooperation Programmes for the period 2007 – 2013 root their actions in the bilateral and multilateral experience accumulated in the course of implementation of preceding Phare CBC and Neighbourhood programmes / INTERREG IIIB CADSES / INTERREG IIIC Community initiatives. In parallel, however, they draw inspiration from the present challenges at the regional and local level, but are inscribed in the larger European policies and strategies, such as the 1999 European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) and the new “Regions for Economic Change” platform.

The cross-border, transnational and inter-regional cooperation programmes seek to provide a specific and targeted territorial dimension to Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies by looking at geographical distribution of growth, innovation and employment processes in the eligible cross-border, transnational area or EU-wide and by offering an integrated and truly joint sustainable development actions between the countries concerned.

Although the priorities of these programmes may correspond to relevant national or EU sectoral policies, as opposed to the sectoral programmes the territorial cooperation programmes promote actions of a qualitatively different type. Projects selected are conducive to integrated territorial development using a multi-stakeholder approach (engagement of various sectors and authority levels) and obligatory meet at least two of the following criteria:

- joint development
- joint implementation
- joint staffing
- joint financing.

The Objective 3 programmes are not intended to finance large-cost and durable infrastructural investments (like Objective 1 programmes), but mainly soft, small-scale and people-to-people activities. The projects must have a clear impact beyond the national borders and include aspects (e.g. territorial coverage, poly-sectoral approach, level of stakeholder involvement) which are ineligible or impossible to cover within the sectoral operational programmes.

4.12. Lisbon Earmarking

Although Bulgaria is not legally required to undertake the ‘earmarking’ exercise, the country has decided to facilitate the verification of the progress on the Lisbon agenda by quantification of Lisbon-related activities as per the allocations of OP priorities.

The following table shows indicative list of Lisbon-related OP priorities, with the non-compulsory target of 60% of the funding.

OP	OP Priority
OP Administrative Capacity	Quality of administrative service delivery and e-government development
OP Administrative Capacity	Human resources management in the state administration, judicial system and civil society structures
OP Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy”	Development of a knowledge-based economy and innovation activities
OP Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy”	Increasing efficiency of enterprises and promoting a supportive business environment

OP Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy”	Financial Resources for Developing Enterprises (FREDE)
OP Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy”	Strengthening the international market positions of Bulgarian economy
OP Human Resources Development	Promotion of job creation and development of inclusive labour market
OP Human Resources Development	Raising the productivity and adaptability of the employed persons
OP Human Resources Development	Improving the quality of education and training in correspondence with the labour market needs for building knowledge-based economy
OP Human Resources Development	Improving the access to education and training
OP Human Resources Development	Social inclusion and promotion of social economy
OP Human Resources Development	Improving the efficiency of the labour market institutions and of social and healthcare services
OP Human Resources Development	Transnational and interregional cooperation
OP Regional Development	Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development
OP Regional Development	Regional and Local Accessibility
OP Transport	Development of railway infrastructure along the Trans-European and major national transport axes
OP Transport	Development of road infrastructure along the Trans-European and major national transport axes
OP Transport	Improvement of inter-modality for passengers and freight
OP Transport	Improvement of the maritime and inland-waterway navigation

The detailed classification of the expenditures at the level OP priorities and operations as per Annex IV of the Regulation 1083/2006 and in view of the respective Commission Implementing Regulation will be provided annually and consulted with the Commission.

The classification of the expenditures is coordinated with the Additionality Table:

Annual average 2004-05					Annual average 2007-13				
Total	Of which public enterprises	CSF**	Not EU co-financed	Total	Total	Of which public enterprises	NSRF	Not EU co-financed	Total

			EU	National					EU	National		
	Nat. + EU	Nat. + EU	EU	Nat.	Nat.	Nat.	Nat + EU	Nat + EU	EU	Nat	Nat	Nat
1	2=4+5+6	3	4	5	6	7=5+6=2-4	8=10+11+12	9	10	11	12	13=11+12=8-10
1. Basic infrastructure	649 776 752	154 017 500	157 047 068	45 712 226	447 017 458	492 729 684	668 155 113	185 482 298	122 563 408	80 195 787	465 395 925	545 591 708
Transport	238 915 091	27 127 500	83 131 612	21 687 972	134 095 507	155 783 479	226 470 932	32 669 476	65 377 960	43 749 109	117 343 863	161 092 972
Tele-communications	21 872 976	0	148 426	53 339	21 671 211	21 724 550	14 513 090	0	5 165 921	911 633	8 435 536	9 347 169
Energy	152 953 619	126 890 000	18 822 073	6 112 743	128 018 803	134 131 546	162 084 081	152 812 821	5 235 731	923 952	155 924 398	156 848 350
Environment	190 806 150	0	54 190 364	17 612 809	119 002 977	136 615 786	208 857 108	0	44 137 779	34 144 147	130 575 182	164 719 329
Water	45 228 915	0	754 592	245 363	44 228 960	44 474 323	56 229 902	0	2 646 014	466 943	53 116 945	53 583 888
Health												
2. Human Resources	152 946 271	0	58 871 377	19 127 659	74 947 235	94 074 894	228 245 851	0	105 523 073	18 621 719	104 101 063	122 722 779
Education	63 125 255	0	17 621 691	5 728 697	39 774 867	45 503 564	102 839 604	0	38 102 614	6 723 990	58 013 000	64 736 990
Training	57 485 114	0	19 709 565	6 400 778	31 374 771	37 775 549	105 168 428	0	55 260 050	9 751 773	40 156 605	49 908 378
RTD	32 335 902	0	21 540 121	6 998 184	3 797 597	10 795 781	20 237 819	0	12 160 408	2 145 954	5 931 457	8 077 411
3. Productive Environment	160 488 746	0	23 267 392	7 563 586	129 657 768	137 221 354	399 570 307	0	209 988 866	37 056 859	152 524 588	189 581 443
Industry	7 377 702	0	4 493 775	1 461 511	1 422 416	2 883 927	100 187 844	0	83 978 881	14 819 802	1 389 161	16 208 963
Services	143 166 496	0	11 661 095	3 787 127	127 718 274	131 505 401	266 413 242	0	99 482 277	17 555 695	149 375 270	166 930 965
Tourism	9 944 548	0	7 112 522	2 314 948	517 078	2 832 026	32 969 221	0	26 527 706	4 681 359	1 760 156	6 441 515
4. Others	101 342 394	0	43 615 768	14 177 725	43 548 901	57 726 626	73 118 777	0	11 955 483	2 109 791	59 053 503	61 163 294
TOTAL	1 064 554 162	154 017 500	282 801 604	86 581 196	695 171 362	781 752 558	1 369 090 048	185 482 297	450 030 824	137 984 148	781 075 076	919 059 224

5. INDICATIVE FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS

This section of the NSRF presents the indicative financial allocations of investments envisaged under Operational Programmes. In the common NSRF budget for 2007-2009 the EU allocation of funds for Bulgaria is in compliance with the Accession Treaty.

In the distribution of the resources from EU SF and Cohesion Fund for 2007-2013 the latest changes in programming of EU SF and Cohesion Fund are taken into account (Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999, the Accession Treaty with Bulgaria (signed 25/04/2005) and the adopted EU Financial Perspectives for 2007-2013 period).

The financial allocations, presented in the table, are elaborated as a result of extensive interactive process, which combines the elements of the so called “top-down” and “bottom-up” approach. As a starting point in the process of allocation of the resources from the national budget and the Structural Funds under the Operational Programmes for the period 2007-2013, a proposal has been elaborated, based on the formal rules, defined by EC and the experience of the new EU member states, taking into account the specific character of each country and the driving forces and development tendencies for the country.

The Bulgarian authorities consider that the building of the main roads and major transport corridors (and respectively the improvement of the existing ones) will have the highest value added from the use of Cohesion Policy, thus having the potential of becoming the stronger driving force for economy development not only in the mid-term, but in the long-term as well. The improved road infrastructure and accessibility will undoubtedly allow for an increase of the transported goods and passengers, boosting also the related services. The logic focuses on the support for the pre-conditions of all sectors and types of productions and industries, including the export oriented ones, since this is the first programming period of Cohesion Policy in Bulgaria. The currently growing sectors might need to be tested by the EU competition and the forces of the internal market. The more sectoral investments are planned in the second programming period 2014-2020 for Bulgaria, allowing streamlining on the basis of growth potential. Moreover, the enhanced connectivity for 2007-2013 will create more favourable conditions for attracting foreign and domestic investments, thus will directly contribute to acceleration of the economic expansion without skewing the underlying market tendencies.

The labour market has a huge underutilised potential having in mind not only the number of the unemployed persons but also the low level of the participation rate. At the same time, a modern economy requires a qualified labour force in support of competitiveness and sustainability. Therefore, the activation policy accompanied by the policy of increasing the qualitative characteristics of the labour force could become among the main driving forces for fast economic development. By the intended measures and actions in this regard, the increased employment will generate additional gross domestic product, while the enhanced quality of the labour force will boost the labour productivity and therefore will trigger overall economy development.

Innovations and research and development are also considered crucial for business and scientific development and the supported investments in this field are expected to allow for sustainable long-term increase of the technological level, the related total factor productivity

and eventually economic development. The increased production, especially in export-oriented industries will contribute to the overcoming of the foreign trade imbalances and narrowing of the current account gap. The provided support for SME development and the improved business environment will enable the economy to grow faster.

The valorisation of the country's rich cultural heritage and varied biodiversity is also considered as major opportunity for growth and local development. By realising its tourism development potential, Bulgaria will not only increase revenues from foreign visitors, but will be able to diversify the economy in the rural areas and consequently decrease the urban-rural disparities.

Subsequently the OP working groups developed the OP financial tables. The OP financing is based on the identified driving forces and development tendencies above, and subsequently adjusted to the national level measures, the budget possibilities for co-financing of the Structural and Cohesion Funds and sectoral absorption capacity analyses.

Table: Financial Table for the NSRF
Indicative annual allocation by Fund and Programme (euro, current prices)

Convergence			Community participation (in euro)						
OP	Fund	Total	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
ERDF and CF									
OP "Competitiveness"	ERDF	987 883 219	71 844 538	105 171 139	143 202 668	150 898 409	161 551 329	172 263 692	182 951 444
OP "Regional Development"	ERDF	1 361 083 545	98 985 808	144 902 458	197 301 454	207 904 474	222 581 831	237 341 086	252 066 434
OP "Transport"	ERDF+CF	1 624 479 623	121 123 105	174 427 370	235 241 207	247 655 257	264 790 351	282 023 049	299 219 284
	ERDF	368 809 733	26 821 961	39 263 892	53 462 329	56 335 405	60 312 495	64 311 779	68 301 872
	CF	1 255 669 890	94 301 144	135 163 478	181 778 878	191 319 852	204 477 856	217 711 270	230 917 412
OP "Environment"	ERDF+CF	1 466 425 481	109 086 387	157 331 029	212 373 803	223 600 383	239 100 655	254 689 043	270 244 181
	ERDF	439 059 208	31 930 906	46 742 728	63 645 630	67 065 959	71 800 591	76 561 641	81 311 753
	CF	1 027 366 273	77 155 481	110 588 301	148 728 173	156 534 424	167 300 064	178 127 402	188 932 428
OP "Technical assistance"	ERDF	48 296 513	3 512 400	5 141 700	7 001 019	7 377 256	7 898 065	8 421 780	8 944 293
ESF									
OP "Human Resources"	ESF	1 031 789 139	75 037 629	109 845 411	149 567 231	157 605 005	168 731 388	179 919 856	191 082 619
OP "Administrative capacity"	ESF	153 670 724	11 175 817	16 359 955	22 275 971	23 473 086	25 130 207	26 796 574	28 459 114
TOTAL all funds NSRF 2007-2013		6 673 628 244	490 765 684	713 179 062	966 963 353	1 018 513 870	1 089 783 826	1 161 455 080	1 232 967 369
Total ERDF		3 205 132 218	233 095 613	341 221 917	464 613 100	489 581 503	524 144 311	558 899 978	593 575 796
Total CF		2 283 036 163	171 456 625	245 751 779	330 507 051	347 854 276	371 777 920	395 838 672	419 849 840
Total ESF		1 185 459 863	86 213 446	126 205 366	171 843 202	181 078 091	193 861 595	206 716 430	219 541 733
EAFRD		2 609 098 596	244 055 793	337 144 772	437 343 751	399 098 664	398 058 913	397 696 922	395 699 781
EFF		80 009 708	5 818 765	8 517 922	11 598 136	12 221 422	13 084 212	13 951 819	14 817 432

Note: The additional amount of 179,227,177 euro from ERDF are allocated additionally for Objective 3 programmes distributed as follows:

Paragraph 21 Annex II	1 711 766	1 556 810	1 564 632	1 614 381	1 665 494	1 711 607	1 758 897	11 583 587
Transfer to ENPI	282 563	482 759	527 693	538 247	549 012	559 992	571 192	3 511 458
Transfer to IPA	3 079 781	5 261 804	5 751 546	5 866 576	5 983 908	6 103 586	6 225 658	38 272 859
Transnational	4 266 307	3 880 108	3 899 596	4 023 591	4 150 985	4 265 910	4 383 773	28 870 270
TOTAL	23 672 981	24 216 606	24 844 075	25 559 955	26 294 534	26 972 322	27 666 704	179 227 177

EIB

Since 1990 the European Investment Bank (EIB) has provided loans to Bulgaria in excess of 1 bln. euro across a large variety of sectors. The Bank has co-financed many ISPA and PHARE supported projects in the country contributing to a leverage effect of EU grants. Recently, the EIB group, in close cooperation the European Commission and other financial institutions, has developed a number of new initiatives JASPERS, JEREMIE and JESSICA – in support of cohesion targets including project preparation for the forthcoming programming period 2007-2013.

In line with its role, the EIB is ready to offer co-financing of the Structural and Cohesion Funds during the forthcoming period. EIB may also assist the Bulgarian authorities and private sector entities who may benefit from EU grant assistance under the NSRF in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of projects and programmes. Such assistance is open to both public and private promoters, as well as to structures involving both (PPPs). Finally, it should be recalled that EIB loans may also cover projects or programmes pertaining to sectors or priority axes beyond the NSRF.

6. HORIZONTAL ISSUES

Public Procurement and Concessions

According to the Bulgarian legislation the public procurement is regulated by the Public Procurement Law (PPL), in force since 1st October 2004, amended with the Law for amendments to the Public Procurement Law (PPL), in force since 1st of July 2006. Additional secondary legislation of high importance are the Rules for the implementation of the Public Procurement Law⁸³, the Ordinance for the award of small Public Procurement contracts and the Ordinance for the terms and conditions for the award of special Public Procurement contracts. Concession granting is regulated by the new Concessions Act and the Rules for its Application, effective as of 1 July 2006.

The state policy in the field of public procurement is carried out by the Minister of Economy and Energy. A separate administrative structure is established with the Minister of Economy and Energy – the Public Procurements Agency⁸⁴, which is responsible for ensuring efficiency of the public procurements system in Bulgaria, taking into account the principles of publicity and transparency; free and loyal competition; equality of all applicants. The state policy in the field of concessions is carried out by the Council of Ministers, which represents the State as a party to the concession contracts for state concessions, and by the Municipal Councils as party to the concession contracts for municipal concessions.

Any contracting authority and any tenderer in a public award procedure may offer the conclusion of an arbitration agreement for hearing disputes between them over the conclusion of a public contract or a framework agreement. In this regard, a court of Arbitration is established within the Agency, which is an out-of-court institution for review and resolution of public procurement-related disputes.

Every decision, action or lack of action on the part of the contracting entities in the public award procedure prior to the conclusion of the public contract or the framework agreement shall be subject to legal review before the Commission for the Protection of Competition. The decision of the Commission for the Protection of Competition shall be subject to review before a three-member committee of the Supreme Administrative Court.

Every participant / candidate in a public procurement or concession granting procedure has the right to appeal every decision, action or lack of action by the contracting authority or the body representing the grantor, before the Commission on the Protection of the Competition and the Supreme Administrative Court.

A public register of public procurements has been established, which includes the decisions for the opening of procedures for the assignment of public procurements, the announcements, intended for entry in the register, the information as to assigned public procurements and other information set out in the Rules for the implementation of the Act. A National Concessions Register has been established, which includes all notices related to the opening of concession granting procedures, data on signed contracts, and data on the implementation of signed contracts.

⁸³ In effect as of 01.10.2004

⁸⁴ The Public Procurement Agency is established with a Council of Ministers Ordinance No. 56 of 13.03.2004

In November 2005 the Council of Ministers approved a national strategy in the field of public procurement and concessions. The strategy envisages improvement of the legal framework to bring it in line with the *acquis communautaire* in the field of public procurement and concessions and ensuring conditions for the application of the legislation. Publicity, transparency and equal treatment of all participants in the process of public procurement and concession contracts award will be ensured.

According to the National Strategy for Transparent Government, Prevention of and Fight against Corruption for the period 2006-2008 (January 2006), public procurement and concessions are the main source for directing public funds towards the private sector. On the other hand, they are an easy target for administrative corruption in the attempts to receive unauthorised access to public resources and an instrument for political influence in order to receive or having received financial support from business. In order to restrict the corruption, the government has committed itself to improve the transparency in the management of the public procurement and concessions by the means of:

- multi-annual budgeting of expenditure;
- improved appeal system;
- strengthened specialised and public control procedures;
- increased quality of the Public Procurement Register;
- prevention of additional norms and regulations modification throughout an ongoing procedure;
- strengthened capacity of the PPA;
- improved financial control in the whole public service.

All those activities are aimed at transparent and efficient administration.

State Aid

In accordance with Article 54 (4) of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, for State aid to enterprises within the meaning of Article 87 of the EC Treaty, public aid granted under operational programmes shall observe the ceilings on State aid.

Thus any public support under this programme must comply with the procedural and material State aid rules applicable at the point of time when the public support is granted.

There is no formal definition of state aid; however there are four general tests, all of which must be met for support to be classed as state aid. The tests derive from Article 87 (1) of the EC Treaty, which states that:

“Save as otherwise provided in this Treaty, any aid granted by a Member State or through State resources in any form whatsoever which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods shall, in so far as it affects trade between Member States, be incompatible with the common market.”

The four tests that are used to determine whether assistance is State aid are the following (the aid has to):

- Be granted by a Member State or through state resources;
- Favour certain undertakings or the production of certain goods;
- Distort or threaten to distort competition;
- Affect trade between Member States.

If these four tests are met, then the proposed support is defined as a state aid that must be assessed for its compliance with the State aid rules. The MA, in cooperation with the Bulgarian State Aid Department in the Ministry of Finance (website: www.stateaid-bg.org) must ensure that any State aid is lawful, i.e. that it complies with the procedural and material State aid rules applicable at the point of time when the public support is granted. Further, according to its authority, the Minister of Finance has published an Ordinance on the Set of Rules for the Supervising and Ensuring the State Aid Transparency. The monitoring and transparency of state aids at national, district and municipal level is ensured by the Minister of Finance. The Ministry of Finance establishes and maintains a register of state aids, where all data both for granted state aid and the proposals to grant state aids at national, district and municipal levels are entered. The Ministry of Finance submits to the Commission the information for the state aids entered in the register every six months, as well as upon request from the Commission. The Minister of Finance prepares a consolidated annual report on state aid in Bulgaria. It is submitted to the National Assembly, the Council of Ministers, the European Commission and published.

7. INDICATORS

The following table contains an indicative system of relevant indicators for the Strategic Objectives and Priorities of the NSRF. Detailed quantified indicators can be found in the relevant Operational Programme:

Strategic Objectives	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Sources and method
1. Develop a competitive economy to achieve high and sustainable growth	1. GDP per capita (in PPS) as share of EU average; 2. GDP growth (yearly average period); 3. Exports/GDP ratio	32,1 % (2005) 5% 2000 – 2006 60.8% (2005)	51.2% (2013) 5.73% (2007-2013) 89.77% (2013)	AEAF Estimation Working Group NSRF verification with Macroeconomic model AEAF
2. Develop human capital to ensure high employment, income and social integration	1. Rate of Employment; 2. Rate of Unemployment; 3. At risk of poverty	55.8% (2005) 10.1% (2005) 14.2% (2005)	64% (2013) 7% (2013) 13% (2013)	MLSP/AEAF NSI
Strategic Priorities	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Sources and method
1. Improving basic infrastructure	1. Increased economic growth due to improved transport connectivity and reduced transport costs 2. Time savings, million of hours 3. Increased attractiveness of selected regions and localities* due to higher ecologic quality of life 4. Population connected to WWTP	0 0 (rails) 0 (highways) 0 40.5% (2004)	2.3 (2013) -rails 1.3 (2013)-highways 66.46% (2013)	AEAF based on contribution of transport sector to GDP growth and relative share of transport expenditure in business total cost OP Transport OP Transport AEAF and MoEW based on investment attracted and reduction of outer migration trends NSI, OP Environment
2. Increasing the quality of human capital with a focus on employment	1. Participation rate – aged 15-64; 2. Percentage of the adult population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training 3. Percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training	62.1% (2005) 1.3% (2005) 18% (2005)	68.5% (2013) 5% (2013) 16% (2013)	MLSP; MES
3. Fostering entrepreneurship, favourable business environment and good governance	1. Labour productivity 2. FDI inflow; 2. Maximum N of days for registering a new enterprise 3. Maximum N of procedures for registering a new enterprise	3.5% (2005) 11.7mn EUR (2000-2006) 32 (2006) 9 (2006)	5% annual average 21.7mn EUR (2007-2013) 1 (2013) 1 (2013)	MLSP; AEAF AEAF WB WB
4. Supporting balanced territorial development	1. Increased income and employment in less developed and peripheral areas due to Cohesion Policy interventions	0%		NSI, MLSP

* based upon the additional population served by waste and waste water facilities

8. COORDINATION MECHANISM

8.1. High Level Coordination

There are two institutionalized high-level coordination for the efficient preparation and effective management of the structural funds activities before accession.

Firstly, each week a meeting among the respective **deputy ministers and directors** (heads of Managing Authorities of the Operational programmes) continue to take place. Preparatory activities, deadlines, budgets, external commitments are discussed allowing not only direct involvement of the deputy ministers in the day-to-day work in programming and institutional developments, but also an early warning system in cases of difficulties, possible overlaps, desirable synchronization.

Secondly, there is an initiative at the level of **ministers**, which formalizes the contacts and agreements at the highest level and contributes to the timely preparation of the country. A Council for coordination of the preparation of the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013 and Operational Programmes is established as a legal entity by a Prime Ministerial Decree (No. P-57 of 14 July 2006). Monthly meetings of the 6 ministers responsible for the management of the SCF Operational Programmes, as well as the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Minister of the European Affairs and the Minister of Finance as Chairman, guarantee highest level commitment and information exchange, as well as problem solving in cases of legal doubt or where a unified governmental position has to be prepared.

Detailed procedure for coordination of the NSRF is presented in Section 8.

8.2. Complementarity of the Activities financed from the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, European Agricultural Fund for the Rural Development and the European Fisheries Fund

According to the Strategic Guidelines for rural development and the Cohesion Policy of the Community, it is necessary to ensure complementarity and coordination among the activities, which will be financed by the Structural funds (namely: the European Regional Development Fund- ERDF; the European Social Fund – ESF; the Cohesion Fund) on one hand, and the European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Fishery Fund (EFF) on the other. Because of that, guiding principles have been adopted at national level, to put the demarcation line between the aid for rural development, the measures supporting Fishery and Aquaculture, and the activities to be financed by the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund on two levels – strategic (at the level of NSP and NSRF) and at the program level.

The coordination at strategic level is of high importance for achieving complementarity among the different objectives and thus optimal impact on the socioeconomic development of the country.

The main principles of demarcation are depending on the following types for different policies, measures and activities:

- by type of territories concerned (geographical demarcation);
- by the size of local administration;
- by type of beneficiaries;
- by type and/or the size of actions selected under each policy;

- by establishment of co-ordination administrative mechanism on program level to ensure consistency.

8.3. Coordination Mechanism in Programming

In Bulgaria there is an established coordinating mechanism with an aim to properly distribute the aid from the Structural Funds, European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development, European Fisheries Fund, European Investment Bank and other financial instruments and institutions. Apart from the high level coordination at **ministerial level**, each week a meeting among the respective **deputy ministers and directors** (Heads of Managing Authorities of the Operational Programmes) continue to take place. Preparatory activities, deadlines, budgets, external commitments are discussed allowing not only direct involvement of the deputy ministers in the day-to-day work in programming and institutional developments, but also an early warning system in cases of difficulties, possible overlaps, desirable synchronization.

With an aim to ensure coordination while preparing of the strategic programming documents with Decree No. 71 of the Council of Ministers from 02.08.2002 was established the Coordination Council for the National Development Plan and the National Strategic Reference Framework for the period 2007-2013, chaired by the Minister of Finance. The members of the council are deputy ministers of all ministries, responsible for the management of the financial assistance from the EC. The council coordinates the activities of the working groups for the preparation of the strategic planning documents under SF, CF, EAFRD and EFF. The council is also responsible for avoiding overlaps between them.

The “Management of EU Funds” Directorate within the Ministry of Finance plays the role of Central Coordination Unit. The Directorate is responsible for the operational coordination between national strategic documents for the period 2007-2013 and between the Operational Programmes and the assistance from EAFRD and the EFF. The Coordination Council approves the drafts of the National Strategic Reference Framework, the National Strategy Plan for Rural Development and the National Strategic Plan for Fisheries. With a decision of the Coordination Council during 2004-2005 were established inter-ministerial working groups to prepare the strategic documents and Operational Programmes. Working group to prepare the NDP and the NSRF was established in the MF and is headed by the Agency for Economic Analysis and Forecasting. The working group for the preparation of the NSPRD is headed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, while the working group for the NSPF is headed by the Implementing Agency for Fisheries and Aquacultures in the MAF. In the working group are included representatives of the socio-economic partners.

Representatives of “Management of EU funds” Directorate and of the OP Managing Authorities are members of the working groups preparing the National Strategic Plan and the Programme for Rural Development, along with the sub-groups for the development of the measures. On the other hand, representatives of MAF participate in the development of all other strategic documents and Operational Programmes. The principles of establishment and representation mechanism of the Monitoring Committees for the different Operational Programmes, along with the ones related to the Programme for fisheries and rural development have been set with a decree of the Council of Ministers. It is envisaged that the NSRF Monitoring Committee, chaired by the Minister of Finance, will be composed of deputy ministers of all ministries and departments, which are responsible for Operational Programmes under the structural and cohesion funds, including the Programme for Rural Development and the OP for Fisheries and Aquacultures.

During the preparation of the strategic documents four public forums were conducted under the leadership of the Ministry of Finance for the introduction and coordination of the strategic documents.

Administrative mechanism for coordinating and avoiding overlapping during implementation of the programmes includes the following steps:

- for the measures with possible overlapping or in order to comply with the requirements of the de minimis rule, the beneficiaries are required to submit a declaration that this project is not receiving financing under any other program;
- for measures, eligible for funding under more than one programme and addressing common target groups, ad hoc working groups between MAs will be set up to synchronise measures' formulation and implementation
- projects selection mechanism with cross participation of MAs under each programme will be established;
- all approved projects are included in a single system for management and monitoring at national level, which is maintained by the "Management of EU Funds" Directorate in the Ministry of Finance.

Detailed information on the coordination and demarcation issues is given in Annex 15.

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9. INFORMATION ON THE KEY PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS OF NSRF AND OPs

The Bulgarian strategic programming documents for the implementation of the Structural Funds for the new programming period 2007-2013 are being prepared with the active involvement of wide range socio-economic partners, district and local authorities and the society. The National Development Plan, the National Strategic Reference Framework and the Operational Programmes were subject of discussion on a number of public activities, as listed in the table below:

DATE	EVENT	PARTICIPANTS
12th February 2006	Discussion on the main issues of the National Development Plan and the Operational Programmes	Representatives of the State administration (Ministry of Finance, Agency for Economic Analysis and Forecasting) Members of the Institute of Economics and International Relations, Centre for Economic Development (CED), Centre for Liberal Strategies (CLS), Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD), European Institute, Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development (FED), Open Society Institute, Institute of Economics (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), Balkan Institute for Labour and Social Policy, Economic Policy Institute, Institute for Market Economics.
21th February 2006	Discussion on some aspects of the National Development Plan and the Operational Programmes	Representatives of the State administration (Ministry of Finance, Agency for Economic Analysis and Forecasting) Economic and Social Committee (representatives of the employers, syndicates and civil organizations).
26th February 2006	Discussion between the authors of the NDP/NSRF and independent experts: "National Development Plan- an inside-outside look"	Representatives of the State Administration (Ministry of Finance, Agency for Economic Analysis and Forecasting) Institute of Economics and International Relations, Centre for Economic Development (CED), Centre for Liberal Strategies (CLS), Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD), European Institute, Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development (FED), Open Society Institute, Institute of Economics (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), Balkan Institute for Labour and Social Policy, Economic Policy Institute, Institute for Market Economics.
26th April 2006	Public Awareness Forum "National Strategic Reference Framework"	Representatives of the State Administration (Ministry of Finance, MAs) Official representatives from the Delegation of EC Representatives of the employers (Association of the Organizations of Bulgarian Employers), syndicates (Confederation of Labour "Podkrepa"; Confederation of Independent Trade

		Unions in Bulgaria)and civil organizations (Economic and Social Committee, Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD), National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria and others)
31st August 2006 01st September 2006	NSPDRR, OP Fisheries and National Strategic Reference Framework”	Ministry of Finance, Agency for Economic Analysis and Forecasting, Managing Authorities, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries UNDP
13 October 2006	Meeting with Roma leaders on the National Strategic Reference Framework	Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, representatives of Roma organizations
31 October 2006	Meeting with Roma representatives concerning the National Strategic Reference Framework	Ministry of Finance, representatives of Roma organizations

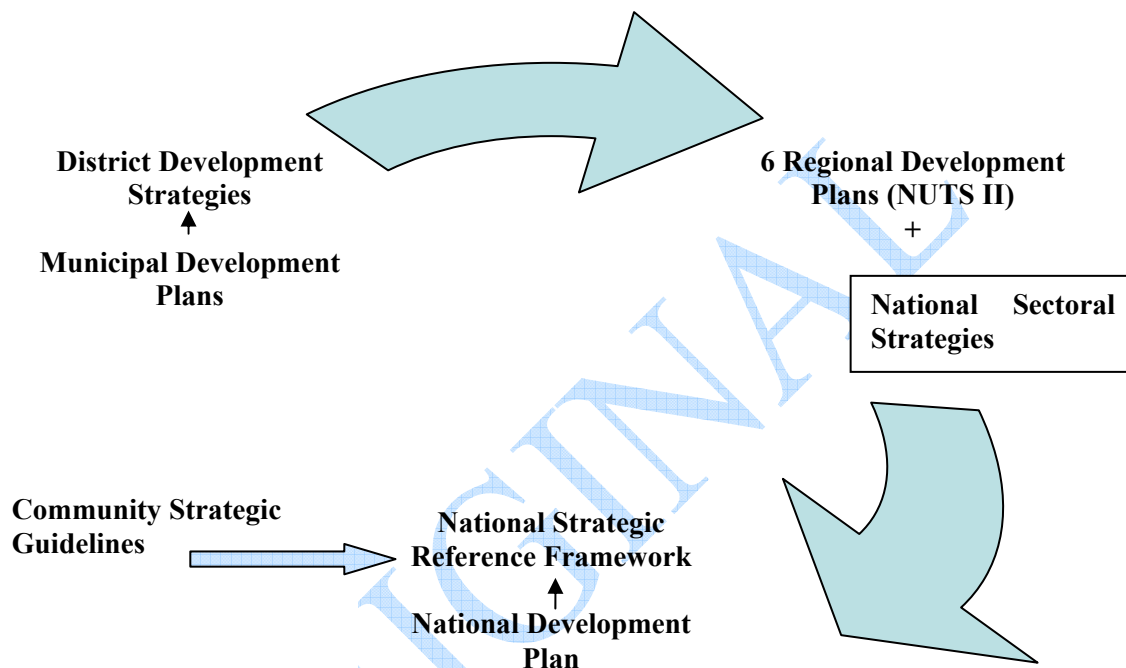
ORIGINAL

10. PROCEDURE FOR COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

Coordination Mechanisms

Coordination of Central, Regional, District and Local Levels

The public authorities in Bulgaria interact in the processes of EU project and programme identification, development and implementation.



At central level a Coordination Council for the National Development Plan (NDP) and the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) was established. It is chaired by the Minister of Finance and the members are deputy ministers from the Bulgarian ministries. The Council's work is supported by a Working Group organised following the partnership principle. On the basis of recommendations from the Chair of the NDP/NSRF Working Group and the Central Coordination Unit in the Ministry of Finance, the Council examines and adopts:

- The NDP and NSRF, including the socio-economic analysis and objectives and priorities;
- Revisions to the NDP and NSRF;
- Draft Operational Programmes;
- Manuals and Rules of Procedure relating to Structural Funds implementation;
- Measures to ensure that there is no duplication of measures financed by the OPs;
- Decisions on difficult issues referred to it for advice.

The coordination at strategic level is a crucial element in order to achieve synergy between different policies and consequently to maximise the impact of the socio-economic

development of the country. That is why an additional Council, chaired by the Minister of Finance, was established with special orders issued by the Prime Minister. It consists of the Minister of Economy and Energy, Minister of Environment and Water, Minister of Transport, Minister of Regional Developments and Public Works, Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Minister of State Administration and Administrative Reform, and the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. The purpose is to ensure the coordination process and the integrated approach in the preparation of the NSRF. The Council convenes every month, but each Minister can initiate additional meeting. The Council will work until official approval of the NSFR. The final decisions and approval of the NSRF are taken by the Coordination Council, composed by the line deputy Ministers.

The central level, although sensitive to regional and local needs, is responsible for ensuring an integrated approach towards EU funding with respect to planning and implementation.

The Regional Development Plans were approved by the respective six Regional Development Councils (RDCs) which currently support the EU Cohesion Policy planning within the territory of Bulgaria at NUTS II level. The Councils are presided over by one of the district governors on a rotation basis. The Deputy Chairman is a municipality representative. Members of the Council are the district governors from the regions, included in the relevant planning region, one municipal representative from each region, included in the planning region, determined by the Regional Development Council, one representative from the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Environment and Water, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Economy and Energy and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of State Administration and Administrative Reform, as determined by the relevant ministers.

The Regional Development Councils:

- discuss and co-ordinate projects at regional level and the progress of the respective Regional Development Plan;
- discuss and submit opinions on the measures that should be implemented at the regional level with respect to the NSRF and the OPs;
- assist in the evaluation of a pipeline of projects for NSRF and OPs;
- submit opinions on the annual reports and on the final report concerning OPs;
- participate in the NSRF and OPs Monitoring Committees through appointed representatives;
- interact with Municipalities and their Associations, District Development Councils and with the central administration.

The functions of the RDCs are continuously strengthened along with the technical directorates which exist to fully support the working and policy continuity of the RDCs. This policy of adding capacity to the RDCs and their supporting structures follows the increasing role they are expected to play in the process of regional coordination of the Cohesion Policy in Bulgaria and is in line with EC recommendations.

As part of the EU accession process, Bulgaria has reached an agreement on the necessary activities for building up an adequate administrative and financial capacity at local level. Special Directorates have been set up in 20 % of the municipalities (big- and medium-sized) to work with European projects. Units have been established in 37% of the municipalities

(medium), comprising of more than two experts, responsible for management of European projects. In the rest 43% of the municipalities (small) civil servants are appointed, responsible for European projects, and who perform other duties as well. In compliance with the partnership principle and with the commitments, that have been undertaken according to the Official Memorandum of Understanding, signed by the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (NAMRB) and the Council of Ministers in October 2005, three priority areas have been determined, as follows:

- “Development of the decentralisation in management and financing”;
- “Expanding the capacity and improving the status and management of municipal property and infrastructure”;
- “Preparation of the municipalities for Bulgarian membership in the European Union”.

Coordination of Partnership

The Bulgarian public authorities recognise that the partnership principle is a necessary element in the process of preparation, approval and implementation of the NSRF and OPs.

The NDP/NSRR working group, the OP working groups and subsequently the NSRF and OP Monitoring Committees are composed by experts not only of the central administration (Ministries), the Agency for Economic Analysis and Forecasts, the State Agency of Youth and Sports and the National Statistical Institute, but also of the National Association of Municipalities of the Republic of Bulgaria, Employers Association of Bulgaria, Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bulgarian International Business Association, Union of the Private Bulgarian Entrepreneurs “Vazrajdane”, Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association, Bulgarian Industrial Association, Union for Economic Initiative, Confederation of Labour “Podkrepa” and Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria, Bulgarian Regional Development Association, National Council for People with Disabilities, Bulgarian Association of the Social Enterprises.

As a result all parties have supported the conclusion that the state administration is not in competition with the business and socio-economic partners regarding the absorption of the EU Structural funds. An effectively functioning administration is a prerequisite for development of favourable economic environment and the integration of Bulgaria to EU as a whole. In compliance with EU regulations the principles of transparency and publicity will be strictly respected to guarantee the complete involvement of socio-economic partners and civil society organizations in the process of absorption of EU assistance.

Coordination of Functions

The structures responsible for the management of the structural instruments in Bulgaria have been defined – Central Coordination Unit, the Managing Authorities of the Operational Programs and the Intermediate Bodies (Council of Ministers Decision No 965/16.12.2005).

The Certifying Authority and Body responsible for receiving funds from the EU has been designated – the National Fund Directorate in the Ministry of Finance (Council of Ministers Decision No 988/27.12.2005).

Audit authority for structural instruments has been established in the Ministry of Finance with Council of Ministers Decree No 300/29.12.2005.

Internal Audit Directorate is established with Council of Ministers Decree No 300/29.12.2005, directly subordinated to the Minister of Finance. Internal audit units within all MAs and IBs in the line ministries are established.

Internal Control Directorate in the Ministry of Finance also functions (Council of Ministers Decree No 198/12.09.2005, amending the Organic Rule of the Ministry of Finance). The Directorate has undertaken all the functions related to coordination, harmonization and methodology of financial management and control and internal audit.

Central Coordination Unit

The Central Coordination Unit (CCU) in the Ministry of Finance takes the lead at central level in co-ordinating the operations of the Structural and Cohesion Funds.

The main responsibilities of the Unit are to:

- Ensuring the quality of the NSRF in order to negotiate it with the European Commission;
- Act as a central focal point for contact with the European Commission;
- Ensure the application of key Structural Funds principles including partnership and additionality;
- Ensure that operations financed by the Funds comply with EU policies;
- Ensure co-ordination between the OPs and the assistance from the EAFRD, the EFF, the EIB and other financial instruments;
- Prepare and submit Reports to the Commission as required by the Regulations
- Develop and operate the Management Information System;
- Coordinate the submission of applications for major projects by Managing Authorities to the Commission;
- Chair and act as a secretariat for the NSRF Monitoring Committee;
- Participate in all OP Monitoring Committees.

Certifying Authority

The National Fund Directorate in the Ministry of Finance is the Certifying Authority (CA) and also executes functions of a competent Body for receiving all payments of ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund resources, as well as under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) for the Operational Programmes for Cross-border Cooperation on the External borders of the EU made by the European Commission.

CA is responsible in particular for drawing up and submitting to the EC certified statements of expenditure and applications for payment and for certifying that the:

- Statement of expenditure is accurate, results from reliable accounting systems and is based on verifiable supporting documents;

- Expenditure declared complies with applicable Community and national rules and has been incurred in respect of operations selected for funding in accordance with the criteria applicable to the programme and complying with Community and national rules.

CA certifies expenditure listed in the Claims for Reimbursement submitted to the Commission, provided that the MA and IBs which report to the MA and are responsible for Programme implementation have met the conditions laid down in the EU regulations and the national legislation.

CA is also responsible for ensuring that it has received adequate information from the MA on the procedures and verifications carried out in relation to expenditure included in statements of expenditure and for taking account, for the purposes of certification, of the results of all audits carried out by or under the responsibility of the Audit Authority.

It maintains accounting records in computerised form of expenditure declared to the EC and keeps an account of amounts recoverable and of amounts withdrawn following cancellation of all or part of the contribution for an operation.

CA submits annual forecasts of expenditure to the European Commission.

It ensures that the beneficiaries/contractors receive payment from the Structural and Cohesion Funds on the basis of requests for funds submitted by the MAs.

CA is responsible for reporting to the EC any irregularities which have been the subject of initial administrative or judicial investigation, and informing the Commission, with reference back to any previous reports, of the procedures instituted following all irregularities previously notified and of important changes resulting there from.

Audit Authority

The Audit of European Union Funds Directorate within the Ministry of Finance performs all functions of the Audit Authority, e.g. audits on appropriate base aiming to ensure that the management and control systems of the operational programmes function effectively. Two types of audits shall be performed by the Audit Authority: systems audits and audits of operations.

From 2008 on the Audit Authority shall issue an annual control report and an audit opinion for the legality and regularity of the transactions, subject to audit.

Managing Authorities

A Council of Ministers decree (Decree 965/16.12.2005) officially nominated the names and location of the MAs and the respective IBs, which were established during the chapter 21 negotiations. The institutional arrangements diagram describes the nominated MAs and IBs. The CCU gives the MAs guidance based on the requirements of the General Regulation on how to prepare the OPs to be ready within the scope of the NSRF. Subsequently, each MA is responsible for managing and implementing their OP in accordance with the principles of sound financial management.

As defined in Article 60 of the General Regulation the MA shall be responsible for managing and implementing the OP in accordance with the principle of sound financial management and in particular for:

- (a) ensuring that operations are selected for funding in accordance with the criteria applicable to the OP and that they comply with applicable Community and national rules;
- (b) verifying that the co-financed products and services are delivered and that the expenditure declared by the beneficiaries for operations has actually been incurred and complies with Community and national rules;
- (c) ensuring that there is a system for recording and storing in computerised form accounting records for each operation under the OP and that the data on implementation necessary for financial management, monitoring, verifications, audits and evaluation are collected;
- (d) ensuring that beneficiaries and other bodies involved in the implementation of operations maintain either a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code for all transactions relating to the operation without prejudice to national accounting rules;
- (e) ensuring that the required evaluations of operational programmes;
- (f) setting up procedures to ensure that all documents regarding expenditure and audits required to ensure an adequate audit trail are held in accordance with the requirements of Article 90;
- (g) ensuring that the certifying authority receives all necessary information on the procedures and verifications carried out in relation to expenditure for the purpose of certification;
- (h) guiding the work of the monitoring committee and providing it with the documents required to permit the quality of the implementation of the operational programme to be monitored in the light of its specific goals;
- (i) drawing up and, after approval by the monitoring committee, submitting to EC the annual and final reports on implementation;
- (j) ensuring compliance with the information and publicity requirements;
- (k) providing EC with information to allow it to appraise major projects.

Monitoring Committees

NSRF Monitoring Committee

A NSRF Monitoring Committee will be established to:

- Review progress towards achieving NSRF objectives;
- Consider results of OP implementation through Reports and evaluations;
- Consider and approve Annual Implementation Reports;
- Propose actions to improve the implementation of the operations under the Funds;
- Approve the NSRF Reports required by the Regulation.

OP Monitoring Committees

Each OP Monitoring Committee will be established as the highest decision making body for the relevant OP. Representatives from the CCU will be members of each OP Monitoring Committee. Its responsibilities shall include:

- Review and approval of the criteria for selecting the operations to be financed;
- Review progress and results made towards achieving the specific targets of the OP;
- Review and approval of the annual and final reports on implementation;

- Proposals to the MA for any revision of the OP likely to make possible the attainment of the Funds' objectives or to improve its management, including its financial management.

For the purpose of the OP Monitoring Committees and for securing the effective observance of the partnership principle, the following three groups of partners can be distinguished:

- employers organisation and unions (including industrial and trade chambers, business and entrepreneurship associations);⁸⁵
- trade unions and other working alliances;⁸⁶
- civil society (including the nongovernmental sector (NGOs), academic communities, consumer associations, ecological and other thematic organisations).

Detailed descriptions of institutional, operational, financial and other relevant arrangements are provided in Section 8 and in the:

- the General Guidance Manual for SCF in Bulgaria;
- the Procedures Manual of the CCU and OP MAs;
- the Manual describing the cash-flows and the responsibilities of CA;
- the Internal Rules of Procedure for NSRF Monitoring Committee and OP Monitoring Committees.

Systems and Tools

Experience and Training

The Ministry of Finance has extensive experience with pre-accession assistance. The established CCU carries the know-how and experience of the National Aid Coordinator and National ISPA Coordinator services. The Certifying Authority is the National Fund Directorate which as National Authorising Officer services is in charge of the overall financial management of the pre-accession funds and corresponding national co-financing, acts as a Competent Authority under SAPARD programme, certifies the expenditure under SAPARD and ISPA funds, processes all the financial data and conducts payments to all Phare and ISPA Implementing Agencies and to the SAPARD Agency.

All OP MAs have elaborated Organisational Development Strategies (ODSs).

The ODSs provide detailed information on functions and responsibilities of OP MAs a share of which could be delegated to the IBs on the basis of written agreements. Human resource development plans (HRDP) are elaborated as integral part of the ODSs. In order to strengthen the administrative capacity of the respective structure, training needs analyses have been carried out and based on the results training plans are available.

⁸⁵ Bulgarian Industrial Association (BIA), Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association, Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), Union of Private Economic Enterprise (UPEE), Bulgarian Union of Private Entrepreneurs "Vazrazhdane", Employers Association of Bulgaria (EABG).

⁸⁶ Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB), Confederation of Labour Podkrepa.

For the improvement of the human resources qualification and in order to build additional capacity for absorption of funds, a comprehensive Training programme on Structural and Cohesion Funds for the period July-December 2006 has been established. It covers all programme and project managers and beneficiaries of the Operational Programmes, including representatives from the central, regional, district and local state administration as well as socio-economic partners, non-governmental organisations, research institutes, academic circles. The aim of the training programme is to build sufficient capacity at all levels for absorption of Structural Funds at the earliest possible stage. The additional added value of the comprehensive training, predominately conducted by the directly involved state administration, is the provision of networking and partnership opportunities.

The programme has been elaborated in response of the undertaken commitment from the Bulgarian government, according to Chapter 21 “Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments” and the recommendations from the EC Monitoring report from May 2006. The overall training covers general topics, such as: Introduction to and Management of EU Structural funds; Bulgarian programming documents: National Strategic Reference Framework and Operational Programmes for the period 2007-2013; Project cycle management; Project selection criteria; Major projects; Implementation of the legislation in the field of Public procurement, grant schemes, gender equality, environmental impact assessment and others. Specialised training is also provided on some of the core areas to be effectively dealt with in the process of SCF implementation: State aids and other horizontal policies; Information and Publicity; Financial management, financial control and audit; Unified Management Information Pilot System; Monitoring and evaluation; Procedure Manuals; Monitoring Committees and some specific issues to each Operational Programme.

Guidelines and Manuals

The following documents will be circulated to fully support the process of preparation and implementation of Structural and Cohesion Funds programmes:

- Guidance Manual for Implementation and Administration of EU Structural and Cohesion Funds in Bulgaria;
- Guidelines for Elaboration of Procedures Manual of OP Managing Authority;
- 6 Procedures Manual of OP Managing Authorities;
- Procedures Manual for the CCU and checklists;
- Internal Rules of Procedure for NSRF Monitoring Committee;
- Guidelines for Establishment and Functions of the OP Monitoring Committees (Internal Rules of Procedure and Code of Conduct);
- Guidelines for Establishment of the Projects Selection Committees and Procedures for Project Approval.
- Description of the cash-flows and the responsibilities of the Certifying Authority and the MAs/IBs concerning cash-flows management; instructions to the MAs/IBs in relation to payment and certification

Information System

A unified Monitoring/Management Information System (MIS) is set up for the purpose of the effective management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the EU Structural Funds

Assistance. The system is installed in the Ministry of Finance, which is responsible for the coordination and the effective management of the EU Structural Funds Assistance in Bulgaria.

The system is used by the Central Coordination Unit, the OP Managing Authorities, the Intermediate Bodies, the Certifying Authority and the control bodies by the means of access passwords. The passwords allow different levels of access depending on the user.

The main unit of the information system are the individual projects and the data is submitted by the beneficiaries. The system gives aggregated information at the level of individual operations, OP-priority and OP-level. The system secures electronic flow of information for the programmes and projects supported by the Structural and Cohesion Funds in Bulgaria. Furthermore, as recommended by the European Commission, the MIS will allow an interface with the information system, covering the EAFRD projects.

The basic territorial unit is a municipality (LAU 1). The MIS allows to visualise the projects in process of implementation in a given municipality, as well as in the relevant district planning regions.

The system is tested and set up to ensure the ability to exchange electronic data between the MIS in Bulgaria and the system developed for the European Commission (SFC 2007).

Publicity and Information

Information and publicity measures concerning preparation for, and implementation of, the assistance from the Structural Funds in Bulgaria include a functioning public web-site: www.eufunds.bg. It is intended to increase public awareness and transparency of the programming process, relevant national and EU documents and EU funding opportunities. The information is regularly updated to include news and events concerning the EU Cohesion Policy in Bulgaria.

Leaflets, brochures, information booklets, short films and many other consultative materials are under preparation as part of Communication Strategy or within the budgets of the leading ministries, especially the Ministry of Finance. The Central Coordination Unit and the Managing Authorities will be the key to ensuring compliance with the principles of publicity and transparency and will establish the necessary structures and the relevant instruments. Public conferences, discussions, debates and round tables also comprise part of publicity and information on the NSRF in order to raise the awareness of all Bulgarian stakeholders and support the high level of SCF applications.

INSTITUTIONAL AND FINANCIAL CHARTS

The institutional chart contains the designated bodies in Bulgaria as well as their participation in NSRF and OP Monitoring Committees. The Managing Authority is the institution

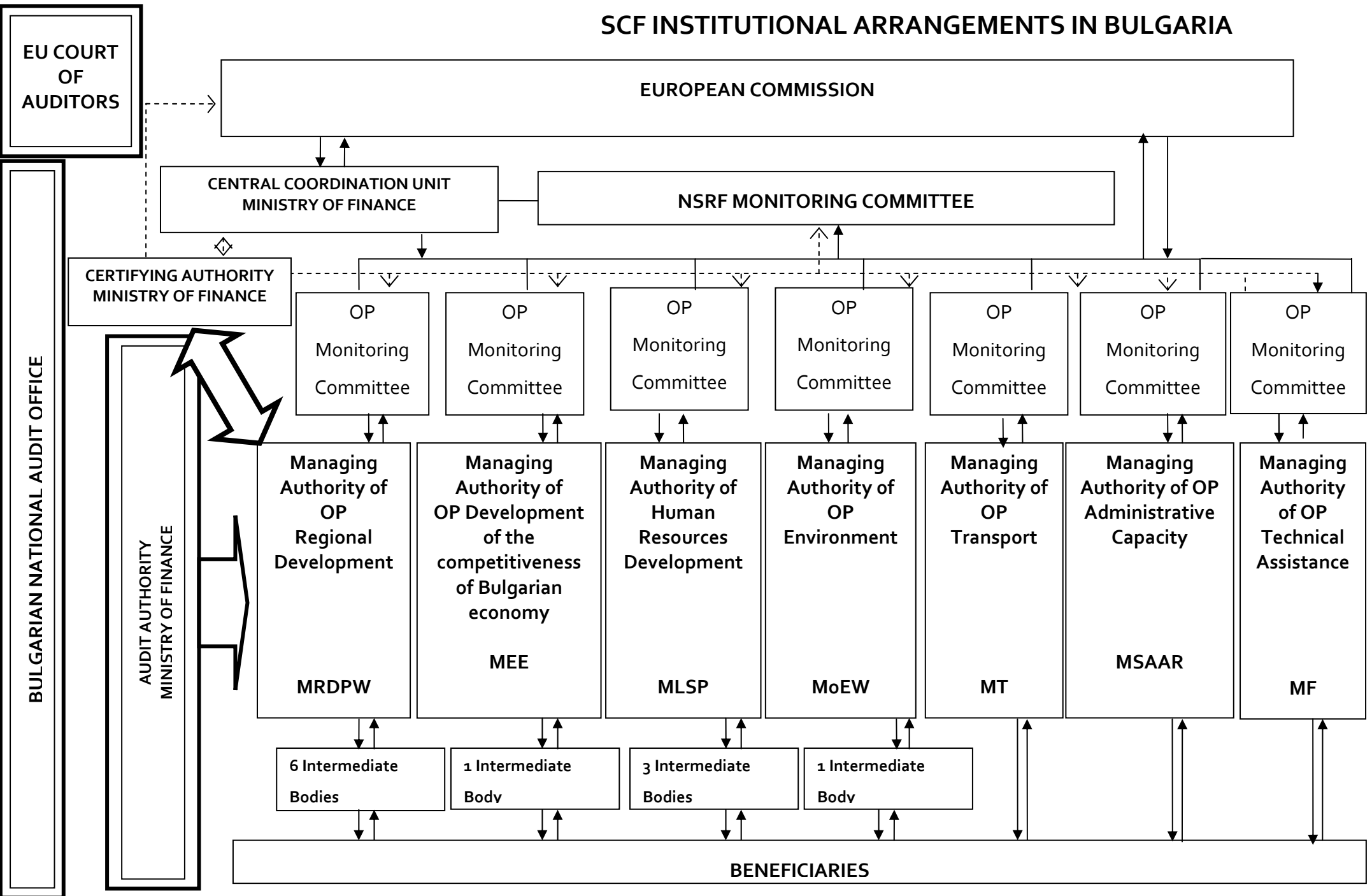
designated by the Member State as responsible for managing and implementing the Operational Programme efficiently, effectively and correctly in line with the provisions of Article 60 of the General Regulation. The designated Managing Authorities in Bulgaria are the following:

MA of OP Regional Development – Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works
MA of OP Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy – Ministry of Economy and Energy
MA of OP Human Resources Development – Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
MA of OP Environment – Ministry of Environment and Water
MA of OP Transport – Ministry of Transport
MA of OP Administrative Capacity – Ministry of State Administration and Administrative Reform
MA of OP Technical Assistance – Ministry of Finance

The financial chart below summarises the financial and reporting arrangements envisaged at this stage.

ORIGINAL

SCF INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS IN BULGARIA



Note:

Additional arrangements following the same rationale are envisaged for the National Strategic Plan for Rural Development and Rural Development Programme to be managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the National Strategic Plan for Fisheries and OP Fisheries to be managed by the Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

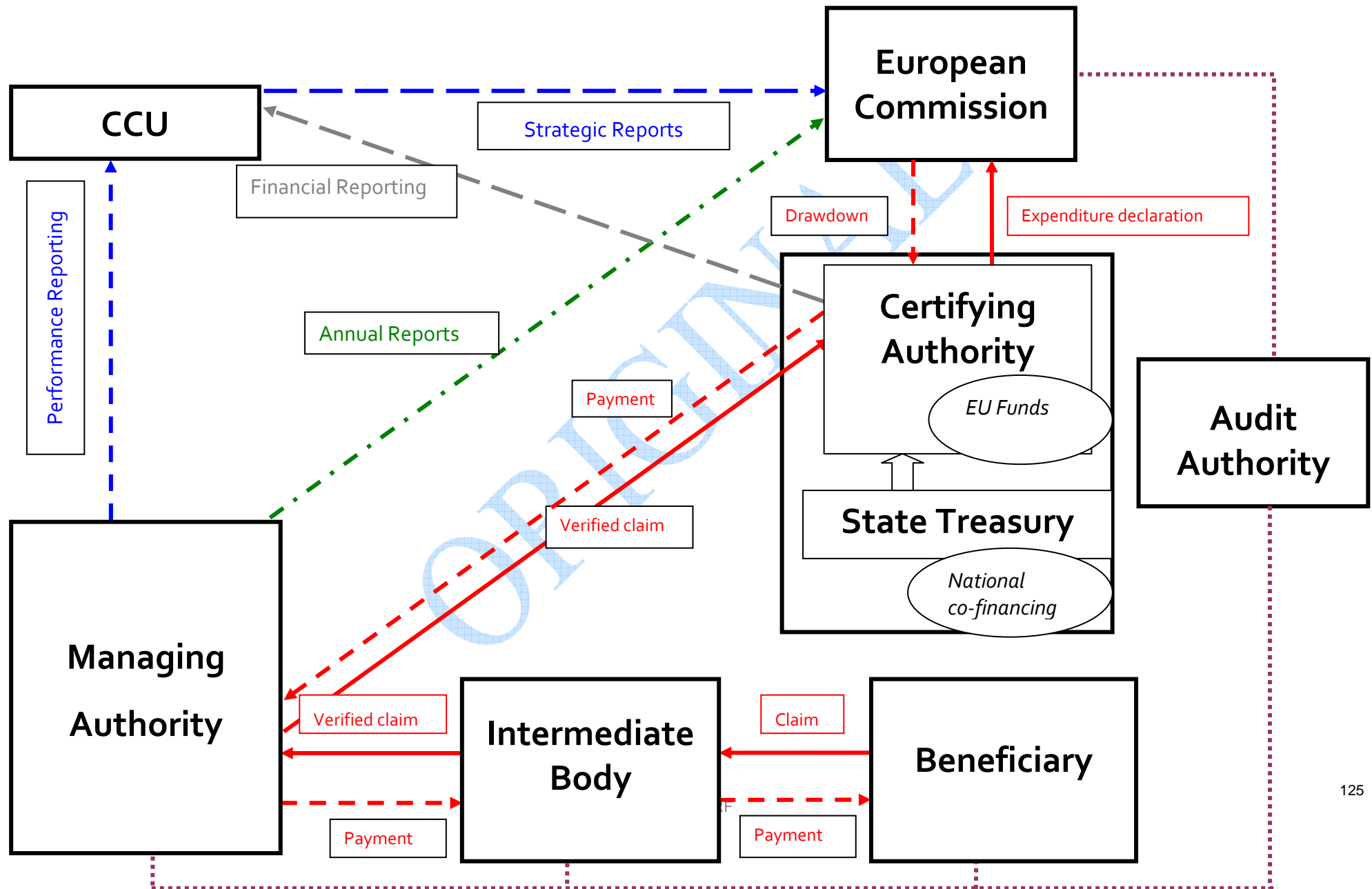
The coordination mechanism under the European Territorial Cooperation Objective is also separately considered given the specificities of the cross-border, trans-national and inter-regional cooperation programmes, which require coordination with other participating countries. The management of Objective 3 in Bulgaria is the responsibility of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, General Directorate "Planning of Regional Development".

ORIGINAL

RESPONSIBILITIES ACCORDING TO PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT

SCF Responsibilities in Bulgaria	CCU	CA	OP MAs	IBs (where applicable)	FBs
<i>Programming</i>					
- Set-up of institutional structure & inter-ministerial coordination	X		X		
- Coordination of NSRF and OPs preparation	X				
- OP preparation			X	X	
- Organisation of partnership	X		X		
- Negotiations with EU	X		X		
<i>Implementation</i>					
- Awareness, project promotion & publicity campaign	X		X	X	X
- Project application					X
- Project selection and approval			X	X	
- Ensure compliance with EU policies			X	X	X
- Project implementation (tendering, supervision etc.)			X	X	X
- Financial control and accounting		X	X	X	X
<i>Monitoring & Evaluation</i>					
- Set up NSRF Monitoring Committee	X				
- Set up OP Monitoring Committees			X		
- Monitoring implementation	X		X	X	X
- Organize evaluations	X		X		

SCF FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS IN BULGARIA



The National Fund in the Ministry of Finance is designated by the Member State to fulfil the role of Certifying Authority, responsible for certifying declarations of expenditure and applications for payment before they are sent to the Commission in line with the provisions of Article 61 of the General Regulation. The National Fund is also designated by the Member State to act as the Competent Body for payments, responsible for receiving all payments of ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund resources made by the Commission in respect of all OPs and for transferring payments of Community resources to the Beneficiaries. It operates as the Commission's counterpart for financial reporting.

The CCU coordinates and overlooks the implementation of the NSRF, and operates as the Commission's counterpart for official reporting. Performance Reporting includes the process of Annual and Mid-term reporting that the Managing Authorities are required to conduct in the delivery of their Operational Programmes.

The CCU agrees the allocation of funds with the Managing Authority.

MA may delegate its financial and accounting tasks to an intermediate body but keeps the ultimate responsibility.

MA aggregates the information on expenditure supplied by the IBs in reports on certification, and certifying such expenditure in the certification report. The latter is completed at Operational Programme level and submitted on a periodic basis to the CA with the applicable lists of priorities, with references made in the report on certification submitted by IBs, as well as to reports supplied by the beneficiaries. MA shall specify the deadline within which the IBs under the MA must submit the reports on certification.

MA reports to the CA on a monthly basis all irregularities detected and reported by the Intermediate bodies in the course of verifications of expenditure and any other activities undertaken in the course of its management of the OP.

MA makes the financial payments to the beneficiaries for the sums set out in individual expenditure claims, having deducted any amounts deemed irregular or ineligible during the course of certification of the IB and its own verifications of expenditure and reported as Irregularities. Each payment authorization is broken down between the contribution of the relevant Structural Instrument and the national co-financing contribution according to the intervention rate agreed in the corresponding contract. Where the MA delegates the functions of payment to the IBs it shall obtain from them and provide the Certifying Authority, with written standards for undertaking the payment authorisation process.

MA is required to provide an accurate forecast on a regular basis to the National Fund, of the level of financial commitments and payments likely to be needed to cover approvals coming forward and implementation of operations under the OP. Together with the monthly claim the MA shall provide the CA and Payments Departments with an expenditure forecast for the current and following year and with an updated expenditure forecast.

CA certifies expenditure listed in the Claims for Reimbursement submitted, to the European Commission, provided that the Managing Authority and Intermediate Bodies, which report to the MA and are responsible for Programme implementation, have met the conditions laid down in the EU regulations, and in particular in the General Regulation, and comply with Bulgarian rules

based on the EC regulations, and in particular that the Programme funding is spent in accordance with the Public Procurement Law.

ORIGINAL

11. CAPACITY BUILDING TO ENSURE SUCCESSFUL NSRF IMPLEMENTATION

Bulgaria is implementing targeted plans for strengthening of the capacity to manage and absorb the Structural and Cohesion Funds at central, regional and local level. With regard to the central level Bulgaria has completed all the administrative procedures and preparations and planned recruitment across the different concerned bodies. The increased salaries for civil servants involved in administering EU funds have facilitated the recruitment of qualified staff, the further motivation of the existing staff, the reduction in the staff turnover. The opportunities for staff training in Bulgaria and in the other EU Member States have increased substantially to ensure an effective implementation of the NSRF strategy.

The building of capacity for absorption and effective management of the resources from the Cohesion Fund and the Structural Funds of the EU is an important part of the Strategy for Modernisation of the State Administration – from Accession to Integration, 2003-2006, adopted on 26.09.2003 by the Council of Ministers. The following measures for implementation of the strategy have been carried out:

- Strengthening the capacity of the MAs on the framework of the community support and the sectoral and regional operational programmes and the Cohesion Fund;
- Preparation of the administrative structures for programming, management, monitoring, control and evaluation of the OPs;
- Capacity building for planning and programming of projects at regional level;
- Elaboration of mechanisms for partnership in the programming of the resources from the Structural Funds.

Currently the efforts are more concentrated on the continued capacity building at the regional, district and local levels. Following the recommendations from the EC Monitoring report from May 2006 and September 2006 the Bulgarian government continues to deliver capacity building to guarantee the implementation of Structural and Cohesion Funds prioritizing the regional, district and local levels. The exercise involves all programme and project managers and potential beneficiaries of the Operational Programmes and is directed by the coordination and financial control structures in the Ministry of Finance as leaders in capacity building in this particular field. The Ministry of Finance continues to provide the example and overall guidance as to Structural and Cohesion Funds capacity building, including human resources management. For the first time there is a long-term Strategy for Human Resources Development in the Ministry of Finance for the period 2007-2011, which pays particular attention to the capacity for EU funds management, financial control and audit. The line ministries and their territorial structures, as well as district and local level administrations, are starting to follow this established good practice.

The new Regulations in the field of EU funding for the period 2007-2013 emphasize the role of the Managing Authorities of the Operational Programmes. In accordance with this policy orientation each Technical Assistance Priority Axis within the different Operational Programmes pays specific attention to building up capacity of the stakeholders and the beneficiaries at the regional, district and local level. In addition, the Managing Authorities of the Operational Programmes in Bulgaria have been encouraged to put strict emphasis on the human resources aspect within each of their technical assistance budget. Training of staff of all organizations involved at all territorial levels and at all stages – programming, planning, management, monitoring, control and implementation of the Operational Programme, project generation and

project pipeline development, awareness raising as to the beneficiary responsibility, strengthening the capacity of the potential local beneficiaries (specific trainings, workshops and seminars for the potential beneficiaries), dissemination of knowledge and skills throughout the country will be supported. This issue is particularly relevant for the managing authority of the Regional Development Operational Programme (the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works), which through their territorial structures have initiated a large-scale project generation exercise for the regional level (supported by consultants) and capacity building for the earliest possible preparation of their project pipeline and in order to secure the project implementation phase.

In 2006 the Institute of Public Administration and European Integration (IPAEI) conducted a number of training courses in the area of strengthening of the administrative capacity for absorption of the Structural Funds as follows:

- IPAEI Catalogue of trainings:
 - Φ *Regional policy of EU: new tendencies and assessment of the impact*
 - Φ *Project cycle management*
 - Φ *Management of European projects in a real environment*
 - Φ *Joint agriculture policy: new tendencies and assessment of the impact*
 - Φ *EU policies and instruments for cross border cooperation*
 - Φ *EU educational and vocational training programmes*
 - Φ *Practical preparation for management of a project cycle*
 - Φ *Projects and programmes coordination and management*
 - Φ *European standards for waste management*

Total number of trainees on the topic for 2006 – 380 from the central, district and local administrations..
- IPAEI` s projects (incl. international):
 - Regional policy of the EU, EU budget, Relations between Bulgaria and the EU – project "Team Europe" between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Denmark and IPAEI*
 - Regional policy of the EU and the Structural Funds – a project of MSAAR and IPAEI*

Total number of trainees on these projects for 2006 is 268.

Capacity building is funded in a complementary manner through several financial sources:

- National budget allocation: This includes the financing for the activities of the IPAEI. The key trainings in this respect targeted at all levels of administration for 2007-2008 concern:
 - Φ *Development of strategies and formulation of policies. Coordination and consultations, preliminary impact assessment*
 - Φ *Strategic management and planning*
 - Φ *Projects management*
 - Φ *Counteraction to the corruption in the process of the EU Funds absorption*
 - Φ *Budget of the European Union*
 - Φ *EU Cohesion policy and Structural Funds*
 - Φ *European Social Fund – opportunities for investments in human resources*
 - Φ *European Regional Development Fund – opportunities for financing*

- Φ *Project Cycle Management*
- Φ *Policy for the management of the cultural heritage – grant schemes and projects – regional cooperation*
- Φ *Preparation, tendering and control of public procurement*
- Φ *Practical guidelines for projects development*

In 2007 approximately 1200 people will be trained on these issues.

- Pre-accession Instruments (especially Phare as described below)
- Public Finance School (Ministry of Finance) budget including:
The training “Preparation and implementation of projects under the Structural and Cohesion Funds” is conducted repeatedly in 7 sessions in 2007 with an aim to be completed by 280 employees of the regional and local administrations in Bulgaria covering:

- Φ *Norms and institutions*
- Φ *Financial management*
- Φ *Partnership and cooperation opportunities*
- Φ *Information and publicity.*

The training “Design and preparation of investment projects, opportunities for public-private partnership” takes place in 7 sessions in 2007 for approx. 280 employees of the regional and local administrations.

The training “Content and use of the audit manual under the Structural and Cohesion Funds” provides 2 sessions in 2007 for 80 staff members in key implementation structures and local level administration.

- Operational Programme “Technical Assistance” (as describes below)
- Operational Programme “Administrative Capacity” (as describes below)
- Technical Assistance Priority within the other five Operational Programmes.
- Communication strategy budget in 2007, including 60 000 to 100 000 lv. (30 000 to 50 000 euro) for each Managing Authority;
- Ministry of Finance communication strategy budget provides about 2 mln. leva (1 mln. euro) from the national budget for information, communication and capacity building in 2007 with a focus on districts and municipalities.
- Budget of the relevant ministries, including for the Monitoring Committees. The Monitoring Committees have been established for nearly all Operational Programmes at this stage and they all include representatives from the regional, district and local level. Training of the members of Monitoring Committees is ongoing.
- In the period of May – September 2007 the MA of OPAC is undertaking a series of information seminars under a joint MSAAR/UNDP project “Project “Strengthening the Capacity of the Managing Authority of the Operational Programme “Administrative Capacity” and of the Ministry of State Administration and Administrative Reform Relevant Directorates Involved in Programme Implementation”. The seminars would prepare the potential beneficiaries, namely the state administration on central, regional and municipal level, NGOs and socio-economic partners on eligibility of activities and expenditures under ESF projects, application procedures and requirements of the MA. The events would be organized on NUTS 3 level in the 28 districts and approximately 1200 people are expected be trained.

The aim of the training programmes is to build sufficient capacity at all levels for absorption of Structural funds at the earliest possible stage. The indicative number of trained people is expected to exceed 15 000 in 2007, including representatives from the regional and local level. The additional added value of the comprehensive training, predominately conducted by the

directly involved state administration, is the provision of networking and partnership opportunities.

List of projects aiming at strengthening of the administrative capacity for implementation of the EU Structural instruments in Bulgaria – key project descriptions

BG 2004-016-919.04.01: Development of in-service training centre network linked to the implementation and enforcement of the *acquis*

Total Budget: 4.475 mln. euro

The overall objective of the project is to improve in-service training opportunities for local inspectors and stakeholders working at municipal and regional level. This will be achieved through building a networked system for in-service training to satisfy clearly identified training needs and priorities for sustainable improvements in support for *acquis* implementation and enforcement in compliance with the Community norms. The project shall contribute, at least, to achievements in the following areas of the *acquis*: food production legislation and controls; veterinary legislation and controls; environmental standards in water and solid waste management; healthcare including care of children, the elderly and the handicapped; transport legislation (road, maritime and inland waterway); consumer protection; EU financial instruments and their management; public procurement.

BG2004/016-711.11.02 & BG2005/017-353.10.03: Support to mobilising bottom-up development and project capacity as part of Structural Funds preparations in Bulgaria

Total Budget: 9.400 mln. euro

This project supports the potential final beneficiaries of the structural funds and results in a reservoir of “ready-for-funding” project applications large enough to enable Bulgaria to efficiently use a substantial part of the ERDF and ESF funds available in the period after 2007. The target group of the project are also the intermediate bodies who assist both the beneficiaries and the OPs managing authorities, concentrating extensively on their role as promoters of development projects and trainers.

BG 2004/016-711.10.05.01.10: Strengthening the capacity of Ministry of Environment and Water to manage Operational Programme “Environment” under EU Structural and Cohesion Funds

Total budget: 0.600 mln. euro

The project improves the institutional framework in order to fully prepare the Ministry of Environment and Water to act as a MA of OP Environment in the areas of: training in programming, implementation, evaluation and monitoring, financial management and control phases of ERDF/CF projects and programmes; and functioning Monitoring Committee in accordance with the requirements of the partnership principle.

BG2004/016-711.10.05.01.09: Strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Transport to manage the Sectoral Operational Programme on Transport under the Cohesion Fund and the ERDF

Total budget: 0.600 mln. euro

The project improves the institutional framework in order to fully prepare the Ministry of Transport to act as a MA of OP Transport in the areas of: training in programming, implementation, evaluation and monitoring, financial management and control phases of ERDF/CF projects and programmes; and functioning Monitoring Committee in accordance with the requirements of the partnership principle.

BG 2005/IB/SPP/03/UE: Further development of the management and implementation system of the OP “Development of the competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy” 2007-2013

Total budget: 0.600 mln. euro

The project guides the staff of the Managing Authority (MA) and the Intermediate Body throughout the process of launching the Operational programme “Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy”. It also includes training of the staff of the Managing Authority, Intermediate body and final beneficiaries for the OP “Development of the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy”, in order to ensure efficient and effective absorption of the ERDF aid.

BG 2005/017-353.11.02.04: Strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of State Administration and Administrative Reform for managing OPAC

Total budget: 0.250 mln. euro

The project ensures review, update and design an effective institutional framework for the MA, elaboration of manuals and procedures guidelines on MA working processes for effective use of the ESF resources and smooth OPAC management, establishing the Monitoring Committee according to the partnership principle, identification of training needs, design a training programme and delivery of training.

BG 2005/017-353.10.05: Preparing for future management of Human Resources Development Operational Programme

Total budget: 1.380 mln. euro

The twinning project provides the fine-tuning of the operational institutional structures for managing ESF type measures, elaboration of job descriptions and profiles, organizational charts, and other documents describing the structures of and the responsibilities with the MA and IBs. The project contributes to establishing ESF monitoring system in the MA and IBs of OP Human Resources Development, integration with the Management Information System, defining financial management and control systems procedures and audit trails, provision of relative documents and training activities.

BG 2006/018-343.08.05: Improvement of the coordination, management and implementation mechanisms of EU Structural Instruments in Bulgaria

Total budget: 2.000 mln. euro

The project envisages fine-tuning of systems and schemes for better management, monitoring and control of SF in Bulgaria and strengthening the capacity of the CCU, MAs, IBs and final beneficiaries involved in EU Cohesion policy application in Bulgaria.

One dimension of the project is related to improvement of the coordination and management functions at central level – proposals for improvement of the systems and schemes in place, including MIS, ensuring the principle of compliance with horizontal policies, etc. The other key dimension aims at strengthening the capabilities of all institutions involved in the management of operational programmes including financial management and control, state aids, public procurement. Assistance is envisaged also for strengthening the capabilities of the Regional Development Councils in the 6 NUTS II planning regions and the technical directorates supporting their work. Finally, technical assistance is guaranteed for strengthening the capacity of the final beneficiaries to prepare and implement good quality projects through analysis of the training needs.

Operational Programme “Technical Assistance”

The strategy reflects the notion of OPTA as a key horizontal instrument to function as a pre-requisite and guarantor of the proper functioning of the system for Structural and Cohesion Funds in Bulgaria in the new environment.

The first pillar of OPTA addresses the main novelties in the EU funding system in the country, i.e. the structures at the central level – CCU, CA, AA and MAs, which need support for quickly adapting not only to the SCF framework, but also to the legal requirements for the period 2007-2013 as opposed to the previous programming period in the EU. Building administrative capacity is a key priority throughout the Bulgarian administration as the country moves towards the absorption of Structural and Cohesion Funds of the European Union. There is a necessity of setting up a working system which will support and which will lead to the fullest possible absorption of the SCF in Bulgaria through deliberately-planned, intensive interventions and precise and predefined actions. The UMIS is certainly a challenge in this respect.

The second pillar addresses the need for knowledge, competences and transferred experience through communication, in-depth analyses and locally-based and quick access to information.

The identified needs for proving better training of the personnel and raising its motivation, increasing its effectiveness and efficiency in work performance; setting-up a computerised system for management and control; ensuring transparency and publicity; collection of the necessary data information for statistical purposes etc. will be covered through implementation of the following measures:

- o Narrowly-focused and programmed trainings of the personnel of the key structures for coordination and financial control – Central Coordination Unit, Certifying Authority, Audit Authority and Managing Authority of OPTA: Developing and implementing a training plan for the staff of OPTA MA which will provide basic training to all persons employed. The plan will cover all spheres of the OPTA implementation area and it will ensure a constant annual detailed and specialised training as per personal responsibilities and duties of each employee during the whole programming period 2007-2013.

- o Supply of Specialised Software, the relevant specialised hardware and office equipment: There is a particular need for supplying specialized software for managing the audit activities and specialized software for sampling and performing financial analysis, for carrying out and documenting on-the-spot checks during the audits, for encrypting the data on all portable computers, thus mitigating leakages of internal information while verifying the quality of the Community budget funded activities;

- o On the Spot Checks and specific missions - certification, audit on operations and system audits, performing on-the-spot checks and missions in Bulgaria and in FYRO Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey as per the Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 and the ones subjected to it 1080/2006, 1081/2006, 1084/2006, and 1085/2006, as well as in Greece and Romania if necessary: Ensuring the necessary financial resources for creation of mobility of the Audit Authority's Team and also for transportation services and transportation needs for the proper execution of the on the spot checks, inspections and audits;

- o Providing the necessary resources and data for the support and execution of the Monitoring committees and all other events, closely related to the effective and efficient implementation of OPTA, which are not mentioned explicitly hereafter;

- o Developing a remuneration package for the personnel, hence, optimising the management of the motivation of the Human resources and increasing the effectiveness and improving the quality of its work performance, undertaking preventive measures against loss of highly qualified staff and attracting new experienced and motivated persons to apply and start working in the CCU, CA, AA, and MA OPTA.

- o On-going evaluation: In pursuance of Article 48, paragraph 3 of the Council Regulation 1083/2006, during the programming period the Member State shall carry out evaluations linked to the monitoring of the OP; the on-going evaluation will be assigned to an external organisation;
- o Hiring external experts to support the preparation of technical documentation and other tender documentation if necessary and where relevant.
- o Ensuring the proper use of the integrated UMIS at all levels of administration in charge of the structural instruments; ensuring the maintenance and introduction of appropriate upgrades during the whole period, including equipment expansion;
- o Training users at all levels of administration.
- o Actions for better understanding the importance of Community assistance for transforming Bulgaria in a country with high quality of life, based on sustainable social and economic development in the overall EU integration process.
- o Creating a clear public and media awareness as regards the transparency and openness principle in respect of European financing issues.
- o Achieving broad public awareness of the substance, implementation, the mechanism of operation and manner of absorption of ESF and allocation thereof as financial resource under the Operational Programs.
- o Setting up a national network of 28 Info Points on the European Cohesion Policy in Bulgaria
- o Gathering statistical information and analysis for EU absorption in Bulgaria.

Operational Programme “Administrative Capacity”

Operational Programme Administrative Capacity (OPAC) is a strategic document for modernisation of the Bulgarian state administration for the period 2007-2013. It has been elaborated in compliance with the priorities of the NSRF.

Operational programme Administrative capacity has a horizontal scope, and its strategic goal is:

Creating an efficient and competent administration, capable of developing and implementing the national and European policies while meeting the citizens' and the business sector's expectations for better service delivery and ethics.

Providing support for efficient judicial system.

The purpose of the Operational Programme will be accomplished by **4 Priority axes**. They are targeted at the state administration at all levels, civil society structures, bodies of the judiciary.

Priority axis I: Good governance .

Strengthening of the administrative capacity is related to the application of the good governance principles – an element of the Lisbon Strategy. The Revised Lisbon Strategy from 2005 encourages the setting up and implementation of policies targeting higher economic growth, more and better jobs. The principles of good governance are: rule of law, openness and accessibility, responsibility, accountability, effectiveness, subordination, coordination and predictability. Their achievement will be accomplished by measures granting effective structure of the state administration; ensuring transparent and accountable state administration; conducting coordination and partnership for policy making and implementation; development of public-private partnership for optimal and effective use of public resources. The support for increase of the confidence of the citizens and business in the judicial system will also ensure its transparency and effectiveness.

Priority axis II: Human resources management in the state administration, the judicial system and civil society structures.

The implementation of this Priority axis covers activities for improvement of human resources management, quality training and enhancement of the qualification of people employed both in the state administration and in the judicial system, and the civil society structures. The activities under this priority axis are not directed at providing training for the absorption of the resources from the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund.

Priority axis III: Quality administrative services and e-governance development

The priority axis is mainly oriented at improving the quality aspect of the administrative service, including the integration of information systems and the processes and services supported by them, implementing quality management systems, development of e-governance. It aims at delivering simplified, free of regulatory burden administrative services, which shall be provided in reasonably-built administrative structures (delivery points) by specially trained employees.

The introduction of information technologies in the judiciary will result in more effective work in the judicial system and enhanced transparency in the activities of the judicial institutions.

The trainings foreseen under this priority axis will contribute for the achievements of the its goals for provision of better administrative services.

Priority axis IV: Technical Assistance

The technical assistance is focused on improving the capacity for effective and efficient management and implementation of the OPAC. The technical assistance supports and facilitates the MA in the process of programming, management, control, beneficiaries and projects selection, monitoring, evaluation of the Operational Programme and elaboration and update of the necessary procedures, manuals and other documents. Under this priority axis the capacity of the MA, beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries to apply and implement the projects under the OPAC will be improved. Promotion of the Programme among the general public and the media will allow for clarifying its goals and results.

12. ANNEXES

12.1 Annex 1. Ex-ante evaluation

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the ex-ante evaluation is to improve the quality of programming and optimise the allocation of resources. The content of the report are structured as follows:

- 1) Review of the Socio-Economic Analysis
- 2) Assessment of the SWOT analysis
- 3) Evaluation of the proposed Strategy and Programming
- 4) Assessment of the Implementation Arrangements

Review of the Socio-Economic Analysis

The socioeconomic analysis presented in the Bulgarian NSRF covers the themes: macroeconomic stability and growth, basic infrastructure, human resources development, entrepreneurship and good governance, territorial development and lessons learned from the pre-

accession period. For each theme, the main findings of the analysis were summarised and assessed.

The analysis of Bulgaria's macroeconomic framework is detailed and precise. On all the themes addressed, sufficient amount of data is provided and in most cases the important issues are clearly highlighted. The Bulgarian authorities have reiterated that a **sectoral approach** to programming providing sectoral data (e.g. types of industries and services with highest potential) will be developed only gradually. The analysis could be enriched with a brief discussion of grey economy (size and effects).

The analysis of the **transport sector** could be even more specific about the transportation network with more information about traffic flows and congestion or speed problems on specific parts of the network (main roads or railway lines). Further traffic data and traffic forecast could enrich the analysis. The main problems in rail infrastructure are described as technical which results in low speed and rolling stock. Further attention in the NSRF should be paid to specific issues connected with operation of the railway lines in order to bring it in line with the thorough explanation of this issue in the Operational Programme (operation of state rail company, service levels, prices, promotion). Sustainable transport and the (unbalanced) development of different transportation modes could be discussed in more details which will additionally deepen the analysis.

The analysis of the **environment** has significantly improved compared to previous drafts. Further clarification of the precise problems and threats for the biodiversity is needed. Main threats for biodiversity protection to be discussed in the analysis or SWOT include: accelerated economic growth, urbanization and tourism in specific regions or areas. For water and waste more attention could be given to the specific infrastructure needs and regional dimension. In addition, the discussion of environment related issues could be enriched to include soil and surface water, monitoring systems for environmental quality (air, water, noise), illegal dumps/polluted terrains and more information on hazardous waste.

ICT penetration and use is lagging behind in Bulgaria compared to EU-25. Some issues regarding lack of ICT infrastructure which prevents the full development of the ICT sector could be highlighted. The analysis could be further improved to include the current status regarding use of ICT in the government (current situation in E-government and other issues) and the main problems in some regions (for example the Northwest).

The analysis of **energy infrastructure** could focus more on the reasons for the high energy consumption of the business sector relating to specific outdated technologies in certain industries or the price level of energy as possible causes. Also, it could further address energy consumption of households and causes for high consumption related to quality of the housing stock, heating, cooking, gas connection and the price of energy.

The review in the NSRF of social development and quality of **human resources** covers a large array of issues. The analysis is thorough and a great deal of data is provided, both national and comparative with other EU countries. Labour market analysis could be enriched with more data for the employment of women and for institutions and programs for combating unemployment (e.g. subsidised employment programs).

In **education**, the analysis could be more explicit in identifying and quantifying the existing problems regarding vocational training and lifelong learning. The discussion of the **health** sector should address more clearly issues related to the capacity and availability of healthcare professionals and the underinvestment in infrastructure.

The section describing **vulnerable groups, social exclusion and poverty** could be improved by separating the identification of those groups and providing some data as to the size of each group, the problems they face and the possible causes for these problems. The analysis of the Roma issues is comprehensive; however the discussion of health and health insurance problems could be clearer, distinguishing Roma from other vulnerable groups if data specifics justify such approach. Issues regarding gender equality should include problems related to women's income and employment levels, domestic violence and human trafficking.

The section on **entrepreneurship and good governance** is comprehensive and thorough; sufficient data is provided and most of the major issues are addressed, such as business environment, reforms in the state administration, role of SMEs and innovation policy. There are a few issues that need to be further analysed, namely the effect of grey economy and corruption on SMEs and certain issues related to the human resources in the state administration (capability to carry out the implementation of the SFs and high staff turnover).

The analysis of **territorial development** gives comprehensive general information on the six planning regions. Causes of unbalanced regional development could be specifically addressed with emphasis on the rural-urban dimension. Examples of causes of unbalanced territorial development could be the geographical position and underdeveloped production structure in some regions (Northwest), lack of skilled labour force or quality of the transportation network or availability and quality of industrial sites. Clearer focus could be added on the most important regional issues, especially intraregional disparities. Overviews (maps or tables) of GDP per capita and unemployment figures for intraregional disparities (rural versus urban areas or for groups of municipalities) would be very helpful. Opportunities for rural areas in diversification of the economic activity (apart from developing tourism) deserve further attention both in the analysis and the strategy. The effect on social aspects, the economic base and services in the rural areas caused by the depopulation of rural areas should be more clearly stated.

Assessment of the SWOT analysis

In a SWOT, strengths and weaknesses describe internal/inherent characteristics of the country at its present state while opportunities and threats refer to external or dynamic characteristics. Each element of the **SWOT analysis** should be easily traced back to the **socio-economic analysis**.

Evaluation of the proposed Strategy and Programming

The vision of the NSRF is that by 2015 Bulgaria should become a competitive EU country with a high quality of life, incomes and social awareness. The strategic goals for the achievement of this vision are (a) to strengthen the competitiveness of the economy so as to achieve high and sustainable growth and (b) to develop human capital so as to ensure higher employment, income and social integration.

The above **stated goals are relevant to Bulgaria's current situation and direction for the future**, especially under the light of its imminent integration to the European Union. In addition, they are accompanied by target indicators.

Priority 1. Improving Basic Infrastructure

The main objectives under Priority 1 relate to investments in transport, ICT infrastructure, environmental protection infrastructures and investments in the energy sector for sustainable development. Regarding transport, the main types of activities are **improving key links** in road and rail transport, investments in safety of transport, regional and rural road improvements and investments in transport inter-modality and navigation on inland waterways. More than two-thirds of EU assistance will be focused at the main European priority axes in accordance with the Community Strategic Guidelines. Apart from the list of projects in the relevant Annex, this commitment should be clearly stated in the NSRF. The **balance between modes** could be justified in more detail. For roads and rail, a large number of major projects are given. The strategic considerations behind the selected objectives and projects could be described more clearly in the strategy.

With view to ICT infrastructure the main types of activities are investment in broadband connections, establishing digital connections and capacity development for public information systems. It is not sufficiently clear why these types of activities are prioritized and some other possible **communication infrastructures** have not been chosen (e.g. communication networks in transport). Some more information on the chosen activities and justification could be given and the relation with ICT issues in the other priorities might be highlighted.

In the section of **the strategy dealing with environmental protection**, the main types of activities concern the improvement of waste water infrastructure, solid waste collection and treatment (including waste management) and conservation and preservation of biodiversity (NATURA 2000). Some other important policy issues in the environment should also be explicitly addressed: water supply and air quality (including urban air emissions). Referring to the socio-economic analysis and the SWOT might give more clarity on these issues. The actions on biodiversity are mainly related to developing the NATURA 2000 network (designation of NATURA 2000 sites). Other types of actions in the field of biodiversity could also be included: registration of species, protection and management of sites, etc.

The main types of activities in the **energy sector** are supporting the energy production from renewable resources, as recommended by the EC, and providing general support to gasification and gas-distribution networks. Activities in the fields of reducing air emissions of existing energy suppliers and in the field of reducing energy consumption of households or businesses should be also included.

Priority 2. Increasing the Quality of Human Capital with a Focus on Employment

This priority aims at developing the human capital of Bulgaria and includes objectives related to employment support, education, training and life-long learning, mobility and adaptability of the labour force, social protection and social inclusion, social services and healthcare. The strategy on employment support is focused primarily on main policy orientations. These orientations are relevant to the disparities and the EU policies on employment. It would be useful to discuss in more detail the groups of operations envisaged with activities targeted towards **combating low participation rate, long-term unemployment and youth unemployment**, since these have been identified as major issues in the socioeconomic analysis and in the OP. The role and capacity of social partners should be highlighted since they are a main ingredient for the successful design and implementation of employment support measures.

The strategy on education and training is extended with more information on specific actions envisaged for **vocational guidance, life-long learning and ensuring equal access** to education for

people with special needs. The concept of *people with special needs* covers those people with disabilities with certain percentage of reduced capacity to work, which leads to the need of special efforts regarding their equal access to education, vocational guidance, life-long learning. The section on mobility and adaptability includes policies and activities related to both employment and training. Although these concepts are to a large extent interrelated, it may be more comprehensible to separate the different components and include them in the corresponding sections above. Regarding social services, more specific types of envisaged interventions should be discussed. For healthcare the policies and activities planned for enhancing preventive treatments and rehabilitation and reducing health risk hazards could be enriched, since these are important problems identified in the socioeconomic analysis and the SWOT.

Priority 3. Fostering Entrepreneurship, Favourable Business Environment and Good Governance

The two main themes of this priority are related to (a) enhancing the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy through supporting businesses and innovation and (b) improving state administration at all levels. Priority 3 manages successfully to present both objectives and envisaged activities; thus it gives a clear picture of what is pursued and how it will be achieved.

Concerning business, innovation and SMEs, the combined approach of supporting innovation and ICT assimilation, improving management and production processes and enhancing investment opportunities is effective and well designed. The goal of reducing the economy's dependence on traditional lower added value sectors is mentioned, but these sectors should be specifically identified and targeted. By the same token, **sectors with higher added value** could also be identified and particular measures for their further development could be described.

Improvement of the **state administration** at all levels is a crucial factor not only for enhancing good governance and facilitating economic growth, but also for the successful implementation of SF assistance. The proposed policies and planned activities are well thought out and presented. The important threat of weakening of the state administration due to "brain drain" and high turnover (which is also identified in the SWOT) should be explicitly addressed in the Strategy. It is necessary to not only improve the qualifications of the civil servants but to also provide suitable financial and other incentives for them not to leave the public sector, as the OP "Administrative Capacity" will aim to ensure.

Priority 4. Supporting Balanced Territorial Development

The main specific objectives under this priority are: urban development, improving connectivity and rural development across all regions in Bulgaria. The assistance from the Structural Funds is described in the Operational Programme Regional Development and will cover mainly non rural municipalities. The Rural Development Programme, which is outside the scope of NSRF and is funded by EAFRD, will mainly cover municipalities in rural areas. The objectives of this priority are of a horizontal (cross-national) nature; the focus on specific regions with most severe socio-economic problems should be made clearer. Annex 15 is focused at the demarcation of municipalities between the OPs and EARDP assistance but it will be also useful specific groups of municipalities to be prioritized on the basis of outlined criteria for Structural Funds assistance.

Regarding **urban development**, the following types of activities are presented: improving networks, technical infrastructure and public works, restructuring and renewal of industrial locations, improvement of public buildings, social infrastructure, cultural assets and housing and urban transport. The concept within this objective is of cities as engines of growth: cities have a role generating economic spin-offs to the countryside. However, the mechanism and pre-

conditions of how this could lead to more balanced growth should be better explained. There is a risk that if these spin-offs do not arise in reality, more unbalanced growth between city centres and rural areas may occur. There could be more elaboration on this risk and how it could be avoided. Moreover, it should be more clearly stated on which types (or groups) of the 83 municipalities the activities will focus.

The main types of activities related to **connectivity** are: improving regional transport, development of communication networks (broadband infrastructure), mobility management & sustainable transport and interregional and intercity cooperation. The development of broadband infrastructure in the regions could be a risk in relation to the not sufficient internet penetration and ownership of computers due to the low purchasing power in the regions. Paying more attention to these issues will help to avoid risks of low usage of broadband infrastructure.

Regarding **rural areas**, the described policies of the NSRF include the promotion of foreign language learning, local business development, tourism development (especially cultural tourism), preservation of natural and cultural heritage and promotion of inter-regional cooperation (both between Bulgaria's regions and cross border cooperation). Economic diversification of rural areas can be strengthened if it is made clearer what type of activities (apart from general ideas of promotion of local business development and tourism) are foreseen. The relation of NSRF with the Rural Development Programme (funded by EAFRD) and OP Regional Development and the linkages between these programmes might be further explained in this section (or briefly addressed and further referred to in Annex 15).

The priorities of the **NSRF are consistent with the national strategies** regarding the environment, the transport system, social policy and regional development. However, the national goal of more sustainable transport should be better reflected in the NSRF and the types of activities foreseen in order to achieve this goal.

The framework for cohesion policy 2007-2013 sets out 3 main objectives: convergence, regional competitiveness and employment and European territorial cooperation. Within these objectives and regarding the (renewed) **Lisbon Agenda** cohesion policy should seek to target resources on the following three priorities: improving the attractiveness of member States, regions and cities, encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy and creating more and better jobs. On this general level **the objectives of the NSRF are in line with these three priorities**. In addition to that, there should be a separate priority in the NSRF on information society, which is a prevalent objective in the existing priorities (ICT, telecommunication infrastructure, E-Government, Human Capital and ICT etc.).

The main goal of the **Lisbon Agenda** is to create knowledge based competitive and dynamic European Economy. The medium term goals of the NSRF are to attain and maintain high economic growth by dynamic knowledge economy and to improve the quality of human capital. These goals are in line with the general objectives of the Lisbon Agenda.

An important thematic area in the NSRF is environment which leads to the following objectives in the NSRF: improvement of waste water sewage and treatment and solid waste infrastructure and management and biodiversity protection: development of NATURA 2000 network, conservation and rehabilitation of natural species, raising public awareness. On the other hand, objectives and measures in the field of air emissions are not specifically addressed. However, it is stated that Strategic Environmental Assessments are foreseen for OPs and Environmental

Impact Assessments (EIAs) will be undertaken for projects when legally required. Mitigation policies to protect the environment might be a result of these foreseen studies. Finally, it is not in the NSRF but in the manuals how **environmental issues will be integrated** at all stages of programming and implementation (e.g. project selection).

Gender equality is an issue in the NSRF and it is stated that gender equality is an important aspect in programming and implementation (project selection) of the activities. However, it is not clear which precise types of activities are foreseen to promote gender equality.

The NSRF does not contain thorough information about the (amendment of) the **national public procurement law**, concessions act and the role of the Public Procurement Agency. Also possible issues in Public Private Partnership might be mentioned in this respect.

The NSRF contains summary information on the key issues at stake in the field of **state aid**. Each OP contains information certifying that aid to enterprises under Structural Funds should be compliant with the rules of State Aid.

The **financial allocations** have been elaborated as a result of an interactive process, which combines a “top-down” and “bottom-up” approach. As a starting point in the process of allocation, a proposal was elaborated based on the EU rules of the Funds and co-financing, the experience in allocations across similar priorities of the new EU member states and the particular considerations among priorities. This top-down exercise initiated budget related dialogue with the OP working groups, which resulted to a bottom-up adjustment and fine-tuning of the financial allocation based on analysis of national level measures and budget possibilities for co-financing of the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund.

The **national and private co-financing** is missing from the NSRF (apart from references in footnotes). Therefore, the total amounts of expenditures are not explicit and the assumptions for the EU co-financing rates are not presented. It is advised to give more explanation regarding the financial allocation.

The **structure for the indicators** of the NSRF is now in place and some indicators for GDP and employment have been quantified (baseline and targets). The quantification of baselines and targets of many of the indicators still needs to be improved due to inputs required from the OPs. It is envisaged that the OPs will quantify their indicators in October 2006. In general the indicators are related to the strategic objectives and priorities of NSRF. It is advised to speed up the quantification process in OPs as soon as possible in order to obtain quantified objectives for all priorities in the NSRF. Some of the indicators should be further discussed, for example GDP per capita target might be too ambitious (51% GDP per capita compared to EU average current level of 32%).

The Bulgarian Agency for Economic Analysis and Forecasts (AEAF) has undertaken a **model simulation for the assessment of socio-economic impacts** of NSRF policies. The AEAF model contains four blocks: a real sector demand block, a supply block, an external sector block and a fiscal sector block. The main concern about the impacts assessed is that the model used is mainly a macro-economic short term oriented demand model (with some limited features of the supply side in a very simple production function). The model does not include important long term supply side aspects of the economy such as human capital, physical infrastructure, endogenous factor productivity or production costs. In order to achieve more reliable impact estimations in

the future, it is advised to construct a long term supply side oriented economic model of the Bulgarian economy.

Assessment of the Implementation Arrangements

The **structures** responsible for the management and implementation of the structural instruments in Bulgaria have been defined and described in the NSRF – the Central Coordination Unit, the MAs and IBs, the Certifying Authority, the Audit Authority, the Monitoring Committees, etc. The description and legal status of these institutions are in place.

Sufficient **administrative capacity** is an important issue related to the absorption of funds. Administrative capacity building can be addressed by training, human resource development (HRD) and increasing of staff or institution building. NSRF focuses mainly on HRD and training thus not explicitly addressing the possibilities of increasing the number of staff in institutions and institution building. These are particularly relevant issues for those OPs where new types of policies are implemented or where the absorption capacity of beneficiaries might be a risk (e.g. municipalities, regions).

In addition, a variety of **guidelines and tools** has been developed (mainly relating to procedures manuals for CCU, MAs, control and audit bodies) and a Management Information System (MIS) will be established. However, other tools and guidelines related to guiding project applicants and project preparation (for example checklists for feasibility studies and tendering documents, ToRs) and risk management are not described in the NSRF but in the SCF manuals. Previous experience in ISPA and Phare show that these types of tools are essential for sound quality of project preparation (project pipeline management). Finally, some aspects of multi-annual budgeting as a tool could be described in this chapter of the NSRF.

The precise **evaluation arrangements** for the NSRF and the OPs (ex-ante, ongoing, ex-post) are not well described. In general, the provisions for monitoring and evaluation of the Structural Funds are not discussed systematically. A thorough explanation of the future implementation process in relation to the project cycle including arrangements for project pipeline development and project selection is only briefly explained in the SCF manuals. Also, more description of the selection of IBs could be given.

The general provisions for **project generation, project applications and project selection** across the OPs are not described in the NSRF. It is advised to describe in the NSRF the general structure, responsibilities and staffing of bodies in project pipeline development and selection of projects (across the OPs), since these are crucial issues for the timely absorption of funds.

Regarding **partnership**, socio-economic partners have actively participated in the working groups of NSRF and OPs. However, the precise mechanisms to involve partners in implementation, project pipeline development and project selection are not yet described. Also, actions to improve absorption capacity of municipalities and NGOs could be mentioned.

It is intended to increase **public awareness and transparency** of the programming process, relevant national and EU documents and EU funding opportunities, but precise information in the types of communications foreseen to stakeholders is not given. More could be said about creating awareness of EU Funds and possibilities for project generation at the level of municipalities, NGOs and other bodies (beneficiaries). The responsibilities for publicity of CCU,

MAAs, IBs, FBs in relation to the EU requirements (for example bill boards, logos), as described in the SCF manuals, could also be briefly described in the NSRF.

APPLICATION OF THE EX-ANTE RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Socio-Economic Analysis

The socio-economic analysis has been improved in view of the recommendations of the ex-ante evaluation. Additional data, including further sectoral data is provided, either in the NSRF text or as an information note. A reference to the grey economy is inserted. The National Statistical Institute now collects data with respect to aspects of the grey economy and its possible effects. Such information could be integrated in the NSRF if at a later stage impacts on Cohesion Policy not envisaged at the programming stage occur.

The analysis of traffic flows is conducted for the analysis of the transport sector. The main problems in rail infrastructure are described in more detail. The analysis of environment is enriched with aspects of air, soil, water and biodiversity in general. Information about the current status regarding use of ICT is added, as well as references to the National Programme for Accelerated Information Society Development. Energy, human resources, including vulnerable groups and health-related annexes supplement the main NSRF text.

Further discussions continue as to the absolute clarity of the demarcation issues between the Cohesion policy and the NSP for agriculture and rural development. At the same time, OP Regional Development provides a smooth link between the two policies, especially with respect to diversification.

2) SWOT Analysis

Each SWOT element has been carefully examined in itself and as to whether it can easily be traced back to the socio-economic analysis. Adjustments are made.

3) Strategy and Programming

For Priority 1 Annexes with priority projects in Transport and Environment are included in order to specify the forthcoming interventions. Concerning ICT a combined approach has been undertaken using e-government (in OP Administrative Capacity), ICT infrastructure (in OP Regional Development) and ICT in enterprises (in OP Competitiveness). In the area of environment further issues could be included, although the restricted budget requires that strategic choices be made.

For Priority 2 the strategy is either more precise or contains references to the key national documents which supplement the NSRF main text.

Priority 3 has been identified as NSRF priority in order to confirm the importance of good governance and the effective functioning of the administration. Administrative capacity, including at the regional, district and local level and including the socio-economic partners, remains a challenging area for Bulgaria and there is clear commitment from the government that

the policy of further strengthening of the administrative capacity will be continued and reinforced.

Priority 4 now directs OP regional Development better in the direction of urban policy. The cities indeed have a role generating economic spin-offs to the countryside and the mechanism and pre-conditions of how this leads to more balanced growth is thereby explained.

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) will be undertaken for all programmes and projects when legally required and when possible issues of concern may occur, which is considered by the Ministry of Environment and Water in Bulgaria. Issues with respect to gender equality, public procurement and state aids are more detailed in the Bulgarian General Manual for the Structural and Cohesion Funds Implementation and the respective OP Manuals.

The financial allocations should be distinguished from the discussions concerning the financial allocation. The discussions indeed combined top-down and bottom-up approaches. Nonetheless, the resulting financial allocations aim to reflect the driving forces and development tendencies of the NSRF as a visionary document.

The inclusion of the national and private co-financing has been done for all the OPs, but is not a legal requirement for the NSRF.

The work on a system of indicators has continued. The goal set for the analysts remains to think ambitiously, but realistically.

The AEAF team is aware of the imperfections of the conducted model simulation for the assessment of socio-economic impacts of NSRF. Additional information with a focus on the supply side is elaborated separately.

4) Implementation Arrangements

As already mentioned, administrative capacity remains a challenging area for Bulgaria and there is clear commitment from the government that the policy of further strengthening of the administrative capacity will be continued and reinforced. Nevertheless, the early clarity of the structures, the guidelines and tools, the transparency and communication initiatives hugely support the process.

Concerning the function according to the project cycle, a table is inserted outlining the key responsibilities of the institutions involved.

12.2 Annex 2. Assessment of the macroeconomic impact by NSRF interventions

The assessment of the macroeconomic impacts caused by the NSRF interventions is made by the means of the existing macroeconomic model in the Agency for Economic Analysis and Forecasting⁸⁷. For this purpose two alternative scenarios have been elaborated. The first one (baseline scenario) has been build with the assumption of no EU Structural Funds (SF) money entering the economy in the period under consideration, while the alternative scenario assumes

⁸⁷ See provided brief description below

that the whole amount of the funds available for the country from the EU budget is fully absorbed and utilized. It has to be noted that the macroeconomic impact assessment, which findings are presented here, did not have the task to project the absorption capacity rate; it rather evaluated what would be the effects of the absorbed SF over the main macroeconomic indicators, such as GDP growth rate, investments, consumption, inflation, etc. The difference between the projected values of these macroeconomic variables in the two scenarios actually represents the influence of the SF on the Bulgarian economy.

Still, it has to be noted that as far as macroeconomic model was used for the evaluation of the macroeconomic impacts, caused by the absorption of EU SF, it was not possible to be observed and assessed effects on several important aspects of the NSRF and EU Cohesion policy, especially when regional development was concerned. The forthcoming findings present the thorough macroeconomic picture in the country with no clear distinction of the small pieces (sectors, industries, regions) within it.

We assume commitments from EU will be spent according to 'n+3' rule in the period 2007-2009, while for the remaining period the 'n+2' rule will be applied. Effects are assessed on the basis of spending and not on commitments. The reform of the Bulgarian national budget has already been undertaken in order to allow efficient programme-based multi-annual planning, to prepare for the substantial levels of EU financing and to prevent cutting existing funding levels in areas not receiving funding from the EU. These efforts are expected to free up sufficient budget resources in order to secure national cofinancing of NSRF interventions without worsening the fiscal stance.

Given the nature of actions in which government interventions are concentrated we do not expect crowding-out effect to appear, i.e. the expenditures made will not crowd out private investment. On the other hand, it is unlikely that the government's expansionist policy will result in a notable interest rate change, though we expect a moderate downward technical correction to take place. In other words, the public investment programme and the inflow of resources under the Structural Funds will not affect much private investment in the medium-term.

Main conclusions

Given the specified clarifications and hypotheses, government interventions over the period under review will result in a higher real GDP growth rate by 0.27 pps on average mainly due to the expected 0.79 pps faster increase of gross capital formation. The interventions envisaged in the National Strategic Reference Framework are expected to yield positive results on both the supply and demand sides. Demand side impetus is of short-term nature as it directly or indirectly results in an increase of final demand. Supply side effects, however, are of longer-term character and have to do with the establishment of new production facilities, improvement of the qualitative properties of labour force, the spread of modern technologies, and ultimately, with the enhancement of the production technology level. The supply side will be affected through two channels. Firstly through increased capital stock in the economy (increased capital stock will cause 0.3 pps higher real GDP growth). The second effect comes from the higher Total Factor Productivity (TFP). We expect investments in innovation and in human capital under OP Competitiveness and OP Human resources to have a positive effect on TFP.

The made estimations show that as a result of the planned interventions the labour market will improve both on terms of participation rate and unemployment. The number of employed

persons will increase by 36,736 persons on average in the alternative scenario in the period under consideration.

Meanwhile, the increased incomes and investment demand will lead to higher imports. Still, the current account deficit will improve by 409.7 mln. euro on average in comparison with the baseline scenario in the period 2007-2013 and will reach 10.7% of GDP in 2013. Two major factors will contribute to the CA improvement, namely the increased exports and the higher current transfers, reflecting the positive net position of the country with the EU budget.

At the same time, the inflation level will not be affected by the government interference in the economy. Over the programming period, the increase of average inflation in Bulgaria, gauged by the consumer price index, will exceed by bare 0.09 pps the CPI growth under the baseline scenario, which in turn will bring about a negligible real appreciation of the exchange rate.

Table Structural Funds influence over main economic indicators

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	average 2007-2013
GDP, real growth rate (baseline)	5.45%	5.58%	5.78%	5.72%	5.42%	5.32%	5.30%	5.15%	5.47%
GDP, real growth rate (alternative)	5.45%	5.87%	6.18%	6.14%	5.70%	5.40%	5.50%	5.35%	5.73%
effect, pps		0.29	0.40	0.42	0.28	0.08	0.20	0.20	0.27
GFCF, real growth rate (baseline)	17.00%	9.00%	8.60%	8.50%	8.50%	7.60%	6.32%	6.12%	7.81%
GFCF, real growth rate (alternative)	17.00%	11.00%	9.70%	9.60%	9.00%	7.77%	6.60%	6.50%	8.60%
effect, pps		2.00	1.10	1.10	0.50	0.17	0.28	0.38	0.79
CPI, p.a. (baseline)	7.66%	4.18%	2.78%	3.04%	3.40%	3.25%	3.25%	3.25%	3.31%
CPI, p.a. (alternative)	7.66%	4.23%	2.80%	3.14%	3.47%	3.30%	3.36%	3.45%	3.39%
effect, pps		0.05	0.02	0.10	0.07	0.05	0.11	0.20	0.09
Exports of goods, nominal growth rate (baseline)	29.00%	13.92%	12.49%	12.79%	12.99%	14.06%	13.50%	13.12%	13.27%
Exports of goods, nominal growth rate (alternative)	29.00%	13.95%	12.65%	12.94%	14.49%	14.54%	13.86%	13.64%	13.72%
effect, pps		0.03	0.16	0.15	1.50	0.47	0.35	0.51	0.46
Exports of services, nominal growth rate (baseline)	12.75%	10.96%	10.09%	10.02%	9.92%	10.30%	9.90%	9.59%	10.11%
Exports of services, nominal growth rate (alternative)	12.75%	10.98%	10.17%	10.09%	10.67%	10.57%	10.12%	9.91%	10.36%
effect, pps		0.02	0.08	0.07	0.74	0.27	0.22	0.32	0.25
Current account balance, EUR mn current prices (baseline)	-3,374.0	-3,190.1	-3,129.2	-3,376.9	-4,029.6	-4,526.7	-4,808.3	-5,043.7	-4,014.9
Current account balance, EUR mn current prices (alternative)	-3,374.0	-3,318.3	-3,205.2	-3,298.2	-3,422.2	-3,633.9	-3,900.3	-4,458.7	-3,605.3
effect, EUR mn		-128.2	-76.0	78.7	607.3	892.8	908.0	585.0	409.7
Employment, thousands persons (baseline)	3,084.3	3,107.8	3,120.4	3,123.2	3,123.5	3,130.7	3,133.2	3,139.2	3,125.4
Employment, thousands persons (alternative)	3,084.3	3,118.2	3,144.7	3,161.4	3,170.9	3,175.7	3,180.1	3,184.1	3,162.2
effect, thousands persons		10.5	24.3	38.1	47.3	45.0	47.0	44.9	36.7

The used macroeconomic model is based on the IMF methodology called “Financial Programming”. Furthermore the model is upgraded and improved considerably by inclusion of large number of additional econometrically evaluated parameters and their interrelation.

The model

External sector

Bulgaria is a small and open economy. Foreign demand is an important factor for economic performance. That is why the external sector is an important module of the model. Foreign trade depends on variables exogenous to the model: economic development of trading partners, international prices of metals, energy, etc, exchange rates and interest rates. The IMF, WB, and EC forecasts are used for these variables.

Fiscal sector

Fiscal module of the model formalises general government demand in GDP. The model forecasts consolidated budget revenues and having pre-determined deficits evaluate budget expenditures: current and capital. Budget revenues fall into three categories: tax revenues, non-tax revenues, and transfers from EU. Each category of revenues is estimated on the base of specific information and set of equations. Under pre-determined deficit budget expenditures are a function of revenues. The model evaluates separately current and capital expenditures and transfers to/from EU budget.

Real sector

GDP is estimated from the demand side and supply side. From the demand side the model forecasts private consumption and investments. General government final expenditures and net exports are estimated in the fiscal and rest of the world modules of the model. We employ the inflation rate in Bulgaria and in the EU as proxies for import and export deflators.

Domestic inflation forecast is based on three factors: changes in international prices, changes in administrative prices, and changes in money supply. International price changes is an assumption, changes in administrative prices follows government policy. Money supply is tight to changes in Currency board reserves. Supply side is formalized by means of Cobb-Douglas production function. We solve the function with respect to labour and total factor productivity. Production function assesses the contribution of each production factor (capital, labour, and total factor productivity) to growth. Under the hypothesis the wage growth equals productivity growth we get to real wage growth.

12.3 Annex 3. Additionality Table

As per the Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999 the additionality principle stays to ensure the genuine economic impact of the Structural Funds contributions to the economies of the Member States.

The underlying tenet of the additionality principle is that the contributions from the Structural Funds shall not replace public or equivalent structural expenditure by a Member State. In practical terms this means that the Commission and the Republic of Bulgaria shall determine the level of public or equivalent structural expenditure which the latter shall maintain at national level during the 2007 – 2013 programming period.

The general rule is that the level of the public expenditures in 2007 – 2013 programming period shall be at least equal to the amount of average annual expenditure in real terms attained during the period 2004 – 2005. Furthermore, the level of expenditure shall be determined with reference to the general macroeconomic conditions in which the financing is carried out and taking into account certain specific or exceptional economic situations, such as privatisations as well as an exceptional level of public or equivalent structural expenditure by the Republic of Bulgaria during the previous 2004 – 2005 period.

The process of assessment of the additionality principle is threefold:

- Ex-ante assessment included in the drafting of the National Strategic Reference Framework;

- Mid-term verification of the additionality for the Convergence objective will be accomplished by the Commission in cooperation with the Republic of Bulgaria in 2011. As part of this mid-term verification the Commission may decide to modify the required level of structural expenditure if the economic situation in the Republic of Bulgaria has significantly changed from the one existing at the moment of the determination of the level of public or equivalent structural expenditure.

The Commission shall, in cooperation with the Republic of Bulgaria, verify additionality ex post on 31 December 2016 for the Convergence objective. The Republic of Bulgaria shall transmit to the Commission the information required to enable the verification of compliance with the level of public or equivalent structural expenditure determined ex ante. Where necessary, methods of statistical estimation should be used.

ORIGINAL

BULGARIAN ADDITIONALITY TABLE

Summary financial table of public or other equivalent structural expenditure in Convergence objective regions

(euro, 2006 prices)

	Annual average 2004-05						Annual average 2007-13					
	Total	Of which public enterprises	CSF**		Not EU co-financed	Total	Total	Of which public enterprises	NSRF		Not EU co-financed	Total
			EU	National					EU	National		
	Nat. + EU	Nat. + EU	EU	Nat.	Nat.	Nat.	Nat + EU	Nat + EU	EU	Nat	Nat	Nat
1	2=4+5+6	3	4	5	6	7=5+6-2-4	8=10+11+12	9	10	11	12	13=11+12-8-10
1. Basic infrastructure	649 776 752	154 017 500	157 047 068	45 712 226	447 017 458	492 729 684	668 155 113	185 482 298	122 563 408	80 195 787	465 395 925	545 591 708
Transport	238 915 091	27 127 500	83 131 612	21 687 972	134 095 507	155 783 479	226 470 932	32 669 476	65 377 960	43 749 109	117 343 863	161 092 972
Telecommunications	21 872 976	0	148 426	53 339	21 671 211	21 724 550	14 513 090	0	5 165 921	911 633	8 435 536	9 347 169
Energy	152 953 619	126 890 000	18 822 073	6 112 743	128 018 803	134 131 546	162 084 081	152 812 821	5 235 731	923 952	155 924 398	156 848 350
Environment & water	190 806 150	0	54 190 364	17 612 809	119 002 977	136 615 786	208 857 108	0	44 137 779	34 144 147	130 575 182	164 719 329
Health	45 228 915	0	754 592	245 363	44 228 960	44 474 323	56 229 902	0	2 646 014	466 943	53 116 945	53 583 888
2. Human Resources	152 946 271	0	58 871 377	19 127 659	74 947 235	94 074 894	228 245 851	0	105 523 073	18 621 719	104 101 063	122 722 779
Education	63 125 255	0	17 621 691	5 728 697	39 774 867	45 503 564	102 839 604	0	38 102 614	6 723 990	58 013 000	64 736 990
Training	57 485 114	0	19 709 565	6 400 778	31 374 771	37 775 549	105 168 428	0	55 260 050	9 751 773	40 156 605	49 908 378
RTD	32 335 902	0	21 540 121	6 998 184	3 797 597	10 795 781	20 237 819	0	12 160 408	2 145 954	5 931 457	8 077 411
3. Productive Environment	160 488 746	0	23 267 392	7 563 586	129 657 768	137 221 354	399 570 307	0	209 988 866	37 056 859	152 524 588	189 581 443
Industry	7 377 702	0	4 493 775	1 461 511	1 422 416	2 883 927	100 187 844	0	83 978 881	14 819 802	1 389 161	16 208 963
Services	143 166 496	0	11 661 095	3 787 127	127 718 274	131 505 401	266 413 242	0	99 482 277	17 555 695	149 375 270	166 930 965
Tourism	9 944 548	0	7 112 522	2 314 948	517 078	2 832 026	32 969 221	0	26 527 706	4 681 359	1 760 156	6 441 515
4. Others	101 342 394	0	43 615 768	14 177 725	43 548 901	57 726 626	73 118 777	0	11 955 483	2 109 791	59 053 503	61 163 294
TOTAL	1 064 554 162	154 017 500	282 801 604	86 581 196	695 171 362	781 752 558	1 369 090 048	185 482 297	450 030 824	137 984 148	781 075 076	919 059 224

VERIFICATION OF ADDITIONALITY TABLE

Summary financial table of public or other equivalent structural expenditure in Convergence objective regions

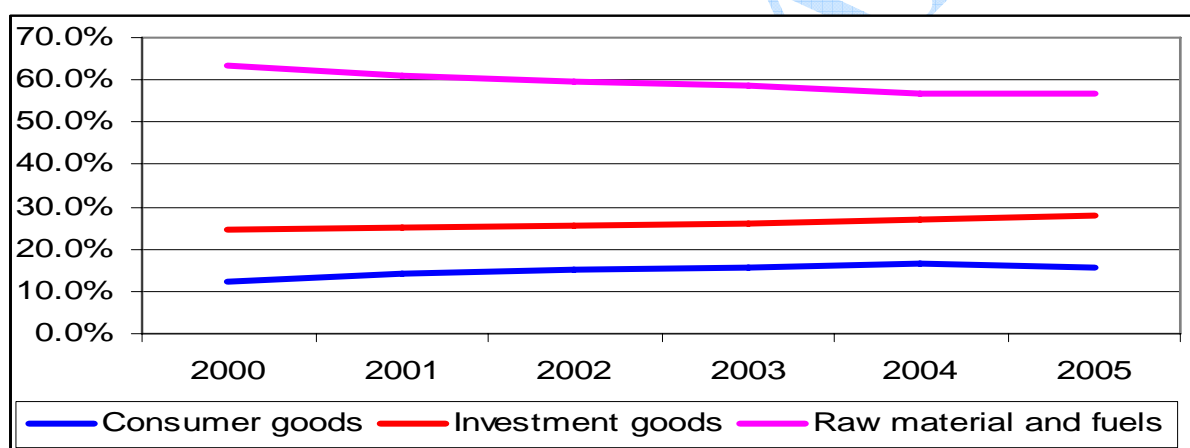
(euro, 2006 prices)

	Annual average 2007-13 NSRF (ex ante)						Annual average 2004-2005 (actual)					
	Total	Of which public enterprises	NSRF		Not EU co-financed	Total	Total	Of which public enterprises	CSF**		Not EU co-financed	Total
			EU	National					EU	National		
	Nat + EU	Nat + EU	EU	Nat	Nat	Nat	Nat + EU	Nat + EU	EU	Nat	Nat	Nat
1	2=4+5+6	3	4	5	6	7=5+6=2-4	8=10+11+12	9	10	11	12	13=11+12=8-10
1. Basic infrastructure	668 155 113	185 482 298	122 563 408	80 195 787	465 395 925	545 591 708	649 776 752	154 017 500	157 047 068	45 712 226	447 017 458	492 729 684
Transport	226 470 932	32 669 476	65 377 960	43 749 109	117 343 863	161 092 972	238 915 091	27 127 500	83 131 612	21 687 972	134 095 507	155 783 479
Telecommunications (capital)	14 513 090	0	5 165 921	911 633	8 435 536	9 347 169	21 872 976	0	148 426	53 339	21 671 211	21 724 550
Energy (capital)	162 084 081	152 812 821	5 235 731	923 952	155 924 398	156 848 350	152 953 619	126 890 000	18 822 073	6 112 743	128 018 803	134 131 546
Environment & water (capital)	208 857 108	0	44 137 779	34 144 147	130 575 182	164 719 329	190 806 150	0	54 190 364	17 612 809	119 002 977	136 615 786
Health (capital)	56 229 902	0	2 646 014	466 943	53 116 945	53 583 888	45 228 915	0	754 592	245 363	44 228 960	44 474 323
2. Human Resources	228 245 851	0	105 523 073	18 621 719	104 101 063	122 722 779	152 946 271	0	58 871 377	19 127 659	74 947 235	94 074 894
Education	102 839 604	0	38 102 614	6 723 990	58 013 000	64 736 990	63 125 255	0	17 621 691	5 728 697	39 774 867	45 503 564
Training	105 168 428	0	55 260 050	9 751 773	40 156 605	49 908 378	57 485 114	0	19 709 565	6 400 778	31 374 771	37 775 549
RTD	20 237 819	0	12 160 408	2 145 954	5 931 457	8 077 411	32 335 902	0	21 540 121	6 998 184	3 797 597	10 795 781
3. Productive Environment	399 570 307	0	209 988 866	37 056 859	152 524 588	189 581 443	160 488 746	0	23 267 392	7 563 586	129 657 768	137 221 354
Industry	100 187 844	0	83 978 881	14 819 802	1 389 161	16 208 963	7 377 702	0	4 493 775	1 461 511	1 422 416	2 883 927
Services	266 413 242	0	99 482 277	17 555 695	149 375 270	166 930 965	143 166 496	0	11 661 095	3 787 127	127 718 274	131 505 401
Tourism	32 969 221	0	26 527 706	4 681 359	1 760 156	6 441 515	9 944 548	0	7 112 522	2 314 948	517 078	2 832 026
4. Other	73 118 777	0	11 955 483	2 109 791	59 053 503	61 163 294	101 342 394	0	43 615 768	14 177 725	43 548 901	57 726 626
TOTAL	1 369 090 048	185 482 297	450 030 824	137 984 148	781 075 076	919 059 224	1 064 554 162	154 017 500	282 801 604	86 581 196	695 171 362	781 752 558

12.4. Annex 4. Balance of payments dynamics

The major factor for the widening goods trade deficit is the investment activity of the local firms as the imported investment goods surged by nominal 183.7% in the period 2000-2005 to 3.9 bln. euro. Since 2000 the investment goods share in the overall goods imports of the country exhibits a sustainable growth reaching 27.6% at end-2005. Moreover, the valued imports of raw materials and energy sources boosted 2.7 times in period under consideration, being also a strong contributor to the trade and current account deficits deterioration. Bulgaria is a small country, relatively poor in mineral resources, raw materials and energy sources. At the same time, the inherited production structure of the country still requires high availability of energy resources. Thus, for example, in 2000 about 63% of the goods' import constituted raw materials and energy resources. The resource dependence of Bulgarian production represents a potential risk for the competitiveness of the economy due to the strong dependence of the national production on the international situation and specifically – the prices of the main raw materials and energy resources.

Figure 3: Relative share of the individual groups of goods in the overall imports



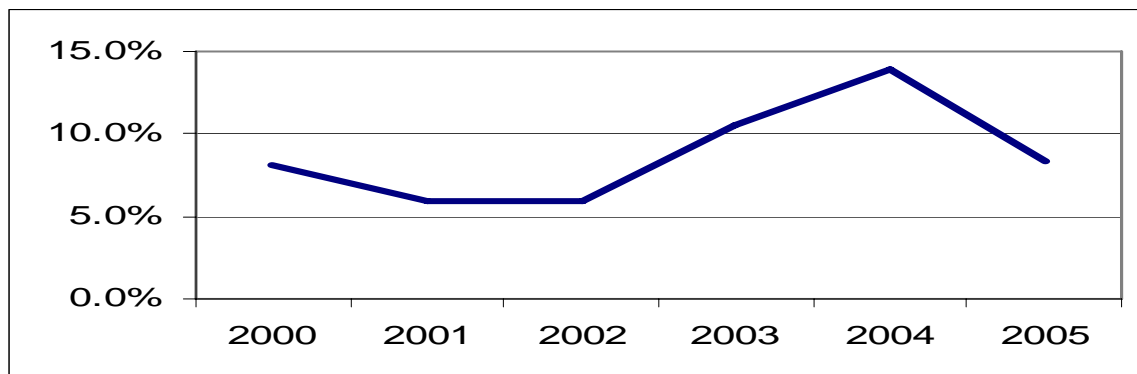
Source: BNB, AEAf calculations

Meanwhile, an opposite tendency has been observed in the services - the positive balance surged by 118.1% (from 306 mln. euro in 1999 to 667 mln. euro in 2005), which indicates the capabilities for improving the competitiveness of the economy. The improvement of the services balance is due primarily to the increase of revenues from tourism, especially during the period 2002-2004. Since 2005 though, the pace of growth of tourism revenues slowed because of unresolved infrastructure problems and resorts' areas overbuilding. However, with the reforms accomplished the tourism sector might become a stable source of revenues for the Bulgarian economy.

The current account deficit is financed entirely through financial account transactions whereas the overall balance of payments is invariably positive and the Central Bank's reserves are increasing every year (Annex 7). The FDI inflows constitute on average about 80% of the financial account balance. They are characterized by rapid and sustainable growth, stimulated by the macroeconomic stability and progress in restructuring the economy. During the observed period their structure has considerably changed from dominated by privatisation

revenues to dominated by greenfield and expansion investments mainly due to the progress in privatisation (in 2000 most of the state owned assets with exception mainly of the infrastructure industries have already been privatised).

Figure 4: FDI in percent of GDP

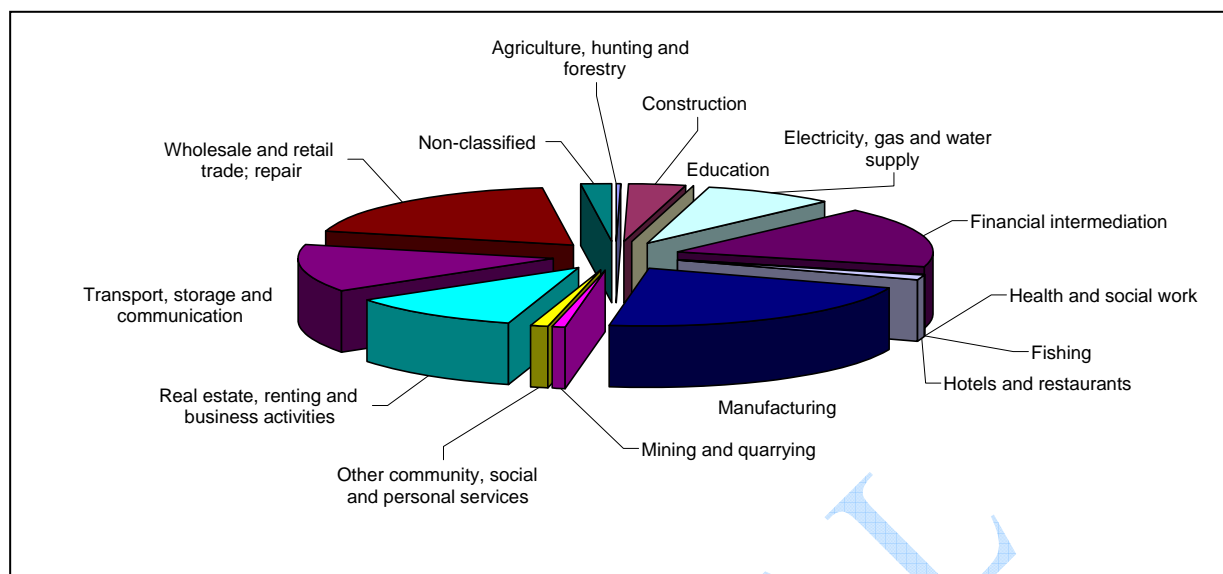


Source: BNB NSI, AEAf calculations

Despite the high growth rates in recent years the FDI have not yet reached the critical mass needed to improve efficiency and competitiveness of the economy. The FDI per capita in Bulgaria is still about four times less than the respective values in EU-25⁸⁸. The sector structure of FDI in Bulgaria remains dominated by the investments in services – which have an average share of 65.5% in the FDI for the period, while the share of foreign investments in industry needed to replace the outdated technologies, is still below the desired levels.

⁸⁸ For the period 2002-2004 Bulgaria has attracted on average 205.5 euro FDI per capita compared with 748.9 euro for EU-25 (Luxemburg excluded), World Investment Report (2005).

Figure 5: Average FDI flows by industry (2000-2005)



Source: BNB

Nevertheless, the foreign investors are attracted by the potential of future profits in the Bulgarian manufacturing industry in prospect to place production on EU markets. The EU funds are expected to support the development of middle and medium enterprises, thus extending the potential of exports. With the increasing share of investments goods exported, the process of closing trade deficit gap will take place in medium term.

1.1. Annex 5. Indicative list of major projects under OP Transport 2007-2013

No	Name of project	Main components	Total eligible cost of the project (indicative)	EU funding contribution (indicative)		National funding (indicative), mln. euro	Time table		
				CF, mln. euro	ERDF, mln. euro		Preparation indicative	Start indicative	Completion indicative
1.	Modernisation of Vidin-Sofia railway line (along Trans-European transport corridor IV)	Construction works, Signalling, Telecommunications and Information systems, Supervision and Long Term Assistance.	1,320 mln. euro till year 2013 - 320 mln. euro	*	*	**	2009	2010	2017 2013
2.	Modernisation of Sofia-Plovdiv railway line (along Trans-European transport corridors IV and VIII)	Construction works, Signalling, Telecommunications and Information systems, Supervision and Long Term Assistance.	350 mln. euro till year 2013 - 125 mln. euro	*	*	**	2009	2010	2015 2013
3.	Renewal of railway sections along Plovdiv-Bourgas railway line	Rail track renewal and related maintenance of signalling, telecommunications and catenary equipment	63 mln. euro	*	*	**	2007-2008	2008	2009
4.	Modernisation of Sofia-Pernik-Radomir railway line (as part of Modernization of Sofia-Kulata railway line)	Construction works, Signalling, Telecommunications and Information systems, Supervision and Long Term Assistance.	100 mln. euro	*	*	**	2008-2009	2009	2011
5.	Modernisation of Sofia-Dragoman railway line (along Trans-European transport corridor X)	Construction works, Signalling, Telecommunications and Information systems, Supervision and Long Term Assistance.	83 mln. euro	*	*	**	2008-2009	2009	2011
6.	Renewal of railway sections along Mezdra-Gorna Oryahovitza railway line	Rail track renewal and related maintenance activities for signalling, telecommunications and catenary equipment	160 mln. euro	*	*	**	2007-2008	2008	2010
7.	Reaching the technical and operational parameters of the road infrastructure in accordance with the	New rehabilitation of section along Corridors IV,VIII and IX previously rehabilitated under the Transit Roads Rehabilitation Projects 1 and 2, that are with expiring operational period	107.625 mln. euro	*	*	**	2007-2008	2009	2014

	European standards along Corridors IV and VIII with L= 880 km	between two rehabilitations.							
8.	Upgrading of road I-1 (E 79) Vratza-Botevgrad	Upgrading the existing two lanes road to four lanes expressway with total length of 31.5 km	85 mln. euro	*	*	**	2007-2009	2009	2012
9.	Construction of bypasses along TEN-T network, Phase I	Construction of several city bypasses along the TEN-T road network: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bypass of Montana – road 1 (E-79), 11,2 km long Bypass of Vratca – road 1 (E-79), 6,5 km long Bypass of Gabrovo – road 5 (E-85) with remaining length of 6,5 km and temporary link – 3,1 km 	80 mln. euro	*	*	**	2007-2008	2009	2011
10.	Construction of Struma Motorway	Construction of sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dolna Dikanya – Dupnitsa – 22 km; Dupnitsa – Simitly – 37 km; Sandanski – Kulata – 49 km. 	600 mln. euro	*	*	**	Feasibility study prepared	2008	2013
11.	Construction of Maritsa Motorway	Construction of section from km 5 to km 72	210 mln. euro	*	*	**	2006-2007	2007	2010
12.	Extension of the Metroliten Sofia from “Hemus” Hotel to Central Station and Central Bus Station”, “Drujba” and new terminal at the Sofia Airport	Construction works I Stage – extension from Metro Station 13 to Metro Station 17; II Stage – extension from Metro Station 17 to Metro Station 21 to Sofia Airport	240 mln. euro	*	*	**	Preliminary Design prepared	2008	2012
13.	Improvement of the navigation on the Danube in joint Bulgarian - Romanian parts: from rkm 530 to rkm 520 - Bathin from rkm 576 to rkm 560 - Belene	Improvement of the navigational conditions in the two critical sections on the Danube river at low water levels (at +107cm the Lowest Navigational and Regulating Water Level).	138 mln. euro	*	*	**	2008-2009	2009	2012

* Due to the complexity and importance of each project the indicative allocation of funds from the CF and ERDF will be subject to further clarification in OP Transport. In this relation, the projects will be treated individually.

** The allocation between the EU funds and National funding will be different for each project with overall national funding of 20% for CF and 15% for ERDF.

1.2. Annex 6. Indicative list of major projects under OP Environment 2007-2013

No.	Name of project	Main components	Total eligible cost of the project (indicative in euro)	EU funding contribution (indicative in euro)		National funding (indicative)	Time table		
				CF	ERDF		Preparation indicative	Start indicative	Completion indicative
1	Kurdjaly waste water and sewage project	WWTP; Reconstruction of sewerage network; Construction of sewerage network;	25 237 847.00	21 452 169.95	0.00	3 785 677.05	2007 - 2008	second half of 2008	second half of 2010
2	Yambol waste water and sewage project	WWTP; Extension of sewerage network - 6 000 l.m.; Reconstruction of sewerage network - 7 000 l.m.	28 440 906.00	24 174 770.10	0.00	4 266 135.90	2007 - 2008	second half of 2008	second half of 2010
3	Plovdiv waste water and sewage project	WWTP; Construction of sewerage network - 15 836 l.m.	45 477 292.00	38 655 698.20	0.00	6 821 593.80	2007 - 2008	second half of 2008	second half of 2010
4	Kocherinovo - Construction of regional waste management centre	New regional landfill; 3 transfer stations	34 125 793.00	0.00	29 006 924.05	5 118 868.95	2006 - 2007	first half of 2008	first half of 2010
5	Construction of regional waste treatment facilities in Stara Zagora region	New regional landfill; Development of material recovery facilities (MRF's); In-vessel composting facilities; Windrow composting facilities for green waste; Transfer station; Development of recycling centres;	36 061 131.84	0.00	30 651 962.06	5 409 169.78	2007 - 2008	first half of 2009	first half of 2011
6	Construction of regional waste treatment facilities in Varna region	New regional landfills; Development of material recovery facilities (MRF's); In-vessel composting facilities; Windrow composting facilities for green waste; Development of recycling centres;	30 058 873.00	0.00	25 550 042.05	4 508 830.95	2007 - 2008	first half of 2009	first half of 2011
7	Closure of the existing landfill for municipal solid waste - Rouse	Closure of the existing landfill site at Rouse Municipality, Region Rouse.	25 000 000.00	0.00	21 250 000.00	3 750 000.00	2006 -2007	second half of 2007	second half of 2009

12.7. Annex 7. Policy in the area of energy

The Bulgarian energy policy in the context of the new energy policy of the EU and the newly established Energy community

The main priorities of the Bulgarian energy policy are entirely in line with those of the energy policy of the EU for the development of competitive energy markets while preserving the environment and ensuring the security of energy supply. The commitments made by the Bulgarian side in the process of negotiations with the EC under Chapter 14 “Energy” lead to fast introduction of the requirements of the energy legislation of the EU, accomplishment of the needed reforms and the implementation of measures for the liberalization of the energy sector in line with the member states of the EU.

The Bulgarian side actively participates in the EU debate formulating the new energy policy of the Union and supports the priorities and targets laid down in the new Green book “European strategy for secure, competitive and sustainable energy” from March 8th, 2006. The six priority areas defined in it (effective functioning of the competitive common energy market, diversification of the energy supply, sustainable development, innovations, common coordination of the internal EU energy policy), are also inline with the Bulgarian vision for the development of the energy sector, highlighted in the “Conception for the participation of Republic of Bulgaria in the regional energy markets and in the common energy market of EU” and forming the Bulgarian position in the framework of the relationship of EU in the establishment of the Energy community. One of the main accents in the Conception is ensuring the security of the energy supply trough diversification of the sources and routes, and also the creation and functioning of competitive regional and European energy markets. In relation to the efforts are being aimed toward the building and development of relevant energy infrastructure, along with physical capacity to function in the common energy market of the EU and that of the Energy community.

In relation to the above stated, Bulgaria also supports, the based in the new Green book of the EC, for the creation of clear coordinated policy and vision of the EU for ensuring the security and diversification of the supply, and also specifically stated strategic regions and projects for oil and gas pipelines. In relation to this, it is a priority for Bulgaria to strengthen the partnerships with the main producers/suppliers (Russia, Caspian region, Middle East and North Africa), the main energy importers/users, and especially the dialogue with the transit countries, such as Ukraine and Turkey. Bulgaria also clearly defines the necessity of common coordinated energy policy of the countries in the EU and the candidate for membership countries, with an aim to ensure secure and more competitive conditions for the supply, transit and prices of the energy resources.

Bulgaria is an active participant in the process of creating the regional energy market of Southeast Europe (SEE) and the country played an important role in the signing of the treaty for the creation of the Energy Community between the EU and the countries of SEE on 25.10.2005 in Athens, along with the followed ratification, as a result of which the contract came into effect on July 1st, 2006. The creation of the Energy community in practice means creating the biggest in the world integrated competitive energy market with more than 500 million customers, functioning on common regulations. This treaty ensures the coordinated energy policy in the framework of its geographical scope, with an aim to ensure the security and better conditions for supply, transit and prices of the energy resources.

The Bulgarian energy market has a decisive role in the stable energy supply of the SEE region. At different times in the last few years the Bulgarian energy supply covers from 45% to 100% of the deficit in the energy balance of the net importing countries in the SEE, which is a major contribution to the economic and political stability in the region. Bulgaria is also an important country, providing the transit of natural gas for the countries of SEE (Turkey, Greece and FYRO Macedonia) through well developed transit pipeline network.

On the Bulgarian energy market falls a major part of the investments in the energy sector in the region of SEE. During this year in the Bulgarian energy sector, under implementation are energy projects with secured financial means in the amount of over 3 bln. euro, while till the end of 2007 it is expected the volume of investments to surpass 6 bln. euro, which means that a large part of the investments are provided from private and public companies without any state guarantees.

Keeping in mind the dynamic development of the processes in the energy sector and with an aim to account for the new realities from the participation in the regional and common energy market of the EU, and with the expected actualization of the energy policy of the Community through the newly prepared by the European commission Green book "European strategy for secure, competitive and sustainable energy", the basic guidelines for actualization of the Energy strategy of Republic of Bulgaria are inline with:

1. Development of the Bulgarian energy sector in the context of the Energy community in the common energy market of the EU.
2. The implementation of the commitments concerning the energy sector, undertaken with the Accession Treaty.
3. Starting the implementation of the main priority energy projects for the Bulgarian country, such as Atomic power plant (APP) Belene, natural gas pipeline NABUKO, petroleum pipeline Bougras – Alexandropolis and AMBO and others, related with the necessity to ensure secure and diversified energy supply for Bulgaria, SEE and the EC, along with the efficient functioning of the energy market in the Energy community.
4. Ensuring competitive price of the energy resources for the Bulgarian economy, in mind the trends of development of the demand and supply of energy resources in the region of SEE, Europe and the world.
5. The implementation of the requirements of the relative Directives of the EU for the preservation of the environment, predetermining the future ways for development of the energy sector.
6. At the same time lowering the energy intensity in all sectors of the economy of the country and the way of life, while better employing the potential of the local renewable energy resources.
7. Optimization of the methods for the realization and the sources for financing of the strategic projects, related with preserving the leading position of Bulgaria in the SEE. Elaborating of models and schemes for attracting investments, employment of flexible financial mechanisms, financial stimulus, absorption of Structural and Cohesion funds of the EU and others.

Policy and specific activities and measures for ensuring energy autonomy, diversification of supply and development of Renewable energy resources (RER)

The basic energy balance of the country is well structured from the point of view of the variety of types of primary energy resources, but at the same time the dependence of imports of the above mentioned is around 70% (40% average for the EU), with a single main supplier – the Russian Federation. The share of the imported energy source in Bulgaria, compared to the total import of raw materials, investments and consumer goods, is approximately 18%.

The only meaningful local energy resource is a low calorific lignite coal with high sulphur content. The nuclear energy sector remains the main factor for the capacity and energy balance of the country in an environment of high technology and efficiency of manufacturing. In view implementation of the engagements for the preservation of the environment and the lowering of the emissions of CO₂, SO₂, NO_x and flying dusts, the country will continue to depend on nuclear power and will develop it in line with the current requirements for dependability, nuclear safety and radiation security.

In order to limit the dependency on imported energy sources, serious efforts are being made in three areas:

- Lowering of the energy consumption for every single gross domestic product of the economy;
- Optimal use of local and renewable energy sources;
- Ensuring the security of energy supply through diversification of energy routes.

The Bulgarian country has prioritized the matters concerning guaranteeing the security and the diversification of energy supply. In relation to this, the Bulgaria is actively working to provide alternative sources of natural gas supply to the country, the region of SEE and EU. The demand for alternative energy sources is also necessary for the avoidance of exceedingly high prices, which would exert additional stress on the national economy.

In the field of electrical energy sector

The creation of the new production capacity of electricity, employing local lignite coal (“Thermoelectric-power plant Maritca Iztok 1”) renewable energy resources (Hydrohub “Cankov Kamak”) and nuclear fuel (Nuclear power plant NPP “Belene”), as well as the enlargement and modernization of the national electric transmission network (Project “Energy” 2), will contribute to the increase of the security of the electric power supply and the uninterrupted power supply, not only for Bulgaria, but also to the Energy Community, considering the forecasts of the TCTE, according to which, if no new electricity producing plants are being built, there is a real danger of electricity deficit in the region to increase significantly by 2010-2012. Bulgaria is continuing to depend on the development of nuclear energy, which contributes to the availability of security, competition and sustainable development of the energy sector, while strictly following the community standards for nuclear safety.

At the same time, large part of the investment decisions are also associated with the rehabilitation and modernization of existing power producing capabilities (NPP “Kozloduy”, “Thermoelectric-power plant Maritca Iztok 2”, “Maritca Iztok 3”, Thermoelectric-power plant “Varna” and others), in mind the fact, that around 50% of the existing thermoelectric plants are in use more than 30 years, so with an aim to prolong their useful life, increase their

capacity and coefficient of efficiency and implementation of the requirements of the energy legislation.

Priorities for Bulgaria are also the energy projects along European corridor No. 8 (Bulgaria-FYRO Macedonia-Albania-Italy), incorporating electricity transmitting connections, as well as the projects for the development and enlargement of the intersystem energy connections between Bulgaria and the countries in the region of SEE – electric transmission network sub station Chervena Mogila (Bulgaria) – sub station Shtip (FYR of Macedonia), electric transmission network sub station Maritsa Iztok (Bulgaria) – sub-station Philipi (Greece) or substation Nea Santa (Greece).

In the field of natural gas

Significant attention is directed toward the discovery of possibilities for ensuring diversity of natural gas supply for Bulgaria, the region of SEE and the EU. Bulgaria is along the main countries participants in the implementation of the priority, even for the EU, project for natural gas pipeline “NABUKO”, which would ensure access to the significant natural gas resources of the Caspian region and the Middle East. Also the possibility to build a regional reception (re-gasification) terminal for liquid natural gas on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast is being considered, in order to provide diversification and to ensure the security of natural gas supply for Bulgaria and the countries in the region of SEE. Under discussion is also the project for building a natural gas intersystem connection with Romania, to connect to the natural gas market of the EU and an opportunity for swap transactions with natural gas from North Europe. The Bulgarian side has also prioritized the natural gas projects along European corridor No. 8 (Bulgaria-FYR of Macedonia-Albania-Italy), including the so called Trans-Adriatic natural gas pipeline.

In the field of petroleum supply

The Bulgarian country is actively working to implement the two strategic for the EU and the region projects of petroleum pipelines Bourgas – Alexandropolis and Bourgas – FYRO Macedonia – Vliora (AMBO), since the realization of these is of crucial economical and geo political importance.

In the field of the RERs development, energy effectiveness and environment protection

Significant investments are been implemented in renewable energy sources (RERs) development in line with the requirements of the EU legislation in this area, which leads to decreasing dependence on external sources and environment protection. Notwithstanding reaching the indicative scope of 11 per cent it is needed that electro-energy production from RERs increases up to 4.61 TWh by 2010.

Significant attention is been also paid on building the necessary infrastructure as to fulfil the requirements on decreasing the emission of definite polluters in the atmosphere from big installations (Directive 2001/80/EC). The energy industry is the biggest producer of sulphur dioxide and one of the main producers of nitrogen oxides. The only significant local energy source is low-calorific lignite coals with high sulphur content. In addition after the early block closure of the NPP Kozloduy the share of solid fuel produced energy grows. This along with the importance of energy supply determines the role of mining and heat power stations.

12.8. Annex 8. List of key involved institutions and partners

INSTITUTIONS	PARTNERS
Ministry of Finance	
Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works	Bulgarian Industrial Association (BIA)
Ministry of State Administration and Administrative Reform	Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association (BICA)
Ministry of Economy and Energy	Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI)
Ministry of Labour and Social Policy	Bulgarian International Business Association (BIBA)
Ministry of Transport	Employers Association of Bulgaria (EABG)
Ministry of Environment and Water	Confederation of Industrialists and Employers in Bulgaria
Minister of European Affairs	Bulgarian Union of Private Entrepreneurs "Vazrazhdane"
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	Union of Private Economic Enterprise (UPEE)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	
Ministry of Health	Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB)
Ministry of Education and Science	Confederation of Labour "Podkrepa"
Ministry of Justice	Economic and Social Committee
Ministry of State Policy for Disasters and Accidents	
Presidency Administration	National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria
National Assembly	Foundation for Local Government Reform
Council of Ministers	
Mission of Bulgaria to the EU	Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD)
	Centre for Liberal Strategies (CLS)
Agency for Economic Analysis and Forecasts	Institute for Market Economics
National Statistical Institute	Economic Policy Institute
	European Institute
Agency for State Financial Inspection	Institute of Economics and International Relations
Social Assistance Agency	Balkan Institute for Labour and Social Policy
Agency for Information and Technologies	Open Society Institute
Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture	Centre for Economic Development
Road Executive Agency	
Executive Agency "Maritime Administration"	Bulgarian Association of Regional Development Agencies
Bulgarian SME Promotion Agency	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Public Procurement Agency	Swiss Embassy, Cooperation office
Tourism Agency	ICT Cluster
Employment Agency	Association Balkan Assist
State Agency for Youth and Sports	Regional Association of Municipalities PAGANE
Anti-Discrimination Commission	Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development (FED)
Bulgarian National Bank	Centre for Environmental Information and Education
Bulgarian National Audit Office	Environmental Association "For the Earth"
	WWFDCP
National Council for Ethnic and Demographic Issues	Association for Sustainable Ecological Decisions "Agrolink"
National Council for Coordination of Infrastructure Projects of National Importance	Association of the Ecologists from Bulgarian Municipalities
	Bulgarian Association for Bird Protection
Commission on Protection of Competition	Bulgarian Foundation "Biodiversity"
Communications Regulation Commission	Association for Sustainable and Environmental Practices
Financial Supervision Commission	
Commission for Consumer Protection	University of National and World Economics
	University of Sofia
Institute of Economics (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)	University for Architecture, Construction and Geodesy
Bulgarian Institute for Standardization	Technical University
Institute for Public Administration and European Integration	National Association of people with disabilities
Diplomatic Institute	Amalipe Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance
National Institute of Justice	Interethnic Initiative Foundation
School of Public Finance	
	Bulgarian Farmers Association
	Bulgarian National Forwarders Association
	Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism
	Association of Bulgarian Enterprises for International Transport and Roads
	National Craftsmen Chamber
	Club "Economica" 2000
	World Learning
	Twinning assistance under Twinning project BG03/IB-SPP-01 (UK, Italy)
	Management Information System PHARE project (Hungary)

12.9. Annex 9. Investment strategy

Encouragement of investments in Bulgaria takes a special place in the country's strategy. More investments in the economy will lead to better growth and employment opportunities and will help improve the country's competitive positions. The accomplishment of the privatization process and the major restructuring of the economy are setting new challenges for the country's development - attraction of qualitative investments which will lead to an increase of the productivity and the value added of the produced output and respectively to higher income.

In 2005, fast developing private sector and the investment were the main driving force for achieving high economic growth. The share of the private sector in economy has increased with 1.3% as per 2004 and reached 68.2% from GDP. Investments in capital stock have real increase of 19% and reached 23.5% share in GDP, thus registering the highest value among the countries of CEE.

For the period of 1998-2005, the sectors with biggest attracted amount of FDI are: processing industry – 31.9%; trade, repair and technical maintenance – 24.3%; financial intermediary – 21.6%; transport, storage and communications – 15%; real estates, renting and business services – 13%, production and distribution of electricity and heating energy, gas, fuels and water – 8.7%.

In 2005 with the participation of line ministries in the area of economic policy and a wide representation of the socio-economic partners a **Strategy for Encouragement of Investments for the period 2005-2010** has been adopted, which defines a comprehensive set of priorities of the country and recognizes the need for targeted policy in this area.

The implementation of the strategy is coordinated by the Ministry of Energy and Economy. The strategy is based on the implementation of 7 priority areas:

- improvement of the overall administrative and normative base,
- development of the technical infrastructure,
- increasing the quality of the working force,
- strengthening the regional policy for encouragement of the investments,
- support for the investments in innovation and high-technology activities,
- implementation of a strategy for investment marketing and improvement of the financial environment for the investors.

The improvement of the legislative basis defining the framework of the business environment will be among the highest priorities of the government. A special emphasis is given to the enhanced partnership in this area with the private sector and the introduction of mechanisms for preliminary assessment of the legislative acts. Efforts will also be directed towards the introduction of the administrative procedure for trade registration, development of the alternative mechanisms for settlement of trade disputes, reforming the system for compulsory contracts reinforcing and optimization of the bankruptcy procedures. First steps in this area have already been made with the adoption of the relevant legislation and the introduction of the mechanism for approval from the Council for economic growth of list of project laws to the subject of preliminary assessment. Improvement of other main legislative acts will also aim at reduction of the expenses connected with the realization of the investments, improving the conditions for fair competition and guaranteeing transparency and predictability of the

business environment. Further optimization of the regulative regimes will also take place in order to ensure the proper balance between the regulation and economic freedom.

The gradual decrease of the overall tax burden and improvement of the overall financial environment is also a constant policy of the Bulgarian government. For example the corporate tax has been reduced from 19.5% in 2004 to 10% in 2007. A debate for introduction of incentives for investments in research and development activities and introduction of innovations is also in place.

The country's investment strategy clearly focuses on the strengthening of the capacity to attract investments at the regional level. This will encompass development of the legislation in the area of financial decentralization with the aim of improvement of the opportunities for financing at the local level, improvement of the capacity for strategic and territorial planning and programming, for servicing of the investors and management of investment projects.

The strategy supports also the elaboration and implementation of an Investment Marketing Strategy which will also be supported under the Structural funds. This will pertain to the selected higher value added sectors to be further promoted among the potential investors.

The policy of the country in the area of improving the technical infrastructure, improving the quality of the human resources and the policy in the area of encouragement of innovations which are described as a separate parts of the NSRF strategy will also be in compliance with the investment strategy and are designed in order to improve the investment environment in the country.

12.10 Annex 10. Industrial R&D instruments

The main organizations participating by the creation of new knowledge in the country are the Bulgarian Academy of Science (BAS), the National Center for Agrarian Sciences (NCAS) and the universities. During the years of transition the financing from the state and the enterprises of the research activities has been significantly reduced and most of the sector research institutes and the research units of the enterprises have been liquidated. As a result the prevailing part of the Bulgarian research institutes are working under the conditions of outdated equipment and technical infrastructure. Exception from this rule are some institutes of BAS which are implementing projects under the framework programmes of the EU and the NATO Science Programme "Science for piece". The research units of the NCAS have also managed to preserve most of their research potential and to carry out successful R&D activity. An important feature of the human resource potential is its ageing and the limited inflow of young scientists. The average age of the scientists is 50,1 years with the share of young scientists amounting to only 14,42%.⁸⁹ The migration of high qualified specialists in other countries has also significantly grown up.

During the last years some attempts are made to gradually introduce the project financing principle for the state research units and particularly through the various programmes under the National Science Fund. Nevertheless the financing remains extremely insufficient. An important source of financing are the resources received from the implementation of the international science programmes with EU and other countries.

The draft Strategy for Scientific Research defines the necessary actions in order to increase and improve the investment in public research. The document foresees the definition of priority areas for scientific research, the gradual introduction of the project financing in the public sector and the adoption of international criteria for the regular assessment of the quality and effectiveness of the scientific research. The integration of the higher education system and other research entities and the development of the human resource potential are also among the main areas of action.

The key industrial R&D instruments of Bulgaria will be built upon the experience of the country in financing projects through the two main funds, supported by the state budget – National Science Fund (NSF) and the National Innovation Fund (NIF). The experience gained by financing from these Funds will be used to further develop and extend a strategy for increasing the applied research activities and enhanced cooperation between the research entities, universities and the business.

The NSF is among the first attempts in Bulgaria to introduce the principle of project financing in the area of scientific research. Its activities aim at development of the research potential of prospective branches of the science, supporting its integration within the international research community and improving the linkages with the other elements of the innovation system. Its thematic priorities are in the defined in the following areas: information technologies, new materials and technologies, agro-and medico-biological research and technologies and national identity and cultural heritage. The NSF finances also a Foresight Programme for defining the scientific priorities with the aim to defining the priority areas for industrial research support through the NSF and NIF.

⁸⁹ Ministry of Economy and Energy

The NIF is created with the aim of stimulating the research activities of the business sector and creating conditions for attracting private financing for the innovation activities by subsidising up to 50% of the selected projects. An additional subsidy up to 20% is granted by participation of SMEs, research entities and universities. Since its establishment in 2005 it has approved for financing 218 projects of total amount of about 32mln.euro. The planned resources for the NSF amount to 6.7 and 10.7 mln. euro respectively for the years 2007 and 2008. The priorities of the NIF will be concentrated in the following areas: nanotechnologies, biotechnologies, nuclear energy, energy saving technologies, eco-innovations and innovative start-ups

The enhanced cooperation between the policy in the area of science and innovations will be ensured through the participation of line ministries engaged in these areas in the National Innovation Council and the National Council for Scientific Research.

In order to benefit from better innovation opportunities the strategy of the country will be to integrate the available resources and stakeholders into a single innovation system, which will allow a better coordination and will facilitate the information exchange between the main participants and help to reveal and analyse the main bottlenecks and the areas where the intermediation between the science, business and education has to be improved. The aim is through enhanced cooperation to overcome the fragmentation in the innovation system and the ineffective use of the financial resources.

Furthermore, in order to boost the innovation potential of the regions, the six Regional Innovation Strategies approach completion. Their focus is the identification of priority areas to be financed by the Structural Funds and other Community financial instruments. The identified RIS projects become integrated into a national innovation network.

The innovation policy of the country will try to balance between the support for projects in prospective large companies and boosting the innovation potential of the small and medium sized enterprises. The encouragement of the large firms will have positive effects on increasing the R&D expenses and overall competitiveness of the economy through using and further developing their innovation potential. They have own research potential and detached research units as well as well organized structures for marketing and realization of new products and production technologies on the market. On the other hand the SMEs are much more flexible than the large companies which make them an important innovation carrier capable of developing of new ideas.

The encouragement of cooperation between the enterprises by providing support for building clusters in prospective sectors of the economy will also be an important part of the strategy of the country for increasing the industrial R&D. At the end of 2006 a National Strategy and Action Plan for Creation of Clusters in Bulgaria was elaborated. As a result of extensive analysis of the potential of different regions, concentration of resources and availability of strategies for development about 15 sectors have been identified and methodology for support and assessment of the clusters at the different stages of their life cycle. Increasing the innovation and export activities and providing training will be at the core of the project. The structural funds activities will further build on this experience and on the experience of the non-governmental organizations in this area by setting the framework for future support for increasing the cooperation between the enterprises.

12.11. Annex 11. Strategy for development of industrial areas

With the acceleration of the economic growth in Bulgaria and the increase of the investments in the economy new challenges for the strategic development of the country are now in place. The steady growth of the foreign direct investments requires taking a special care for guaranteeing a favorable business environment and facilitating the conditions for starting a business for the large strategic investors. The limited supply of qualitative sites and buildings equipped with modern infrastructure is currently undermining the country's competitive position in the EU.

Industrial zones are an important instrument for economic development with regard to promotion of investments, creation of jobs, improvement of the level of technology equipment, as well as for alleviation of the disparities in the economic development of the regions. The development of the industrial zones will also enable investments in higher value added production and services. These sites are defined as particular parts of the country territory, where investment projects of local and foreign investors can be realized. The territory of the industrial zones comprises real estate with municipal or state ownership. In this respect, functions for operating, managing and promoting an industrial zone, could be possibly delegated to an appropriate legal entity. There are already the first successful examples for public private partnership in this area in some of the largest sites in the country as well as in some small municipalities which show the positive effects for the improvement of the quality of business environment, stimulation of the investments and additional gains of development of commercial and industrial cooperation.

The existing production facilities in the country available for sale or lease are predominantly old and the possible repairs would cost much more or equally to a newly-built facility. Having in mind that they will not fully comply with the requirements of the investor, such an investment is practically inefficient. On the other hand, there are zones/locations which only need some improvements of related infrastructure in the surroundings of the production facilities. Industrial sites located close in the outskirts of the cities have good advantages for meeting investors' needs – transport access to main import/export road networks, communication and infrastructure security (water supply, gasification, communication technologies). However, infrastructure of these sites is often obsolete and not maintained well, since municipalities are not able to invest amounts considerably exceeding their annual budget. For that reason, although having good development potential, these areas could not utilise this potential due to a lack of adequate infrastructure.

As a result of investigating the interest of foreign investors, taking into account the present existing opportunities and the experience in other Central and Eastern European countries (the Czech Republic, Romania, Poland, Hungary), it could be concluded that availability of industrial zones with sufficient and well maintained infrastructure and, if possible, ready-built production facilities definitely boosts the investors' interest for establishing further industrial production activities.

Demand is visible in the following statistics of requests for ready buildings deposited at Invest Bulgaria Agency (IBA). The investors looking for industrial zones in Bulgaria come mainly from the EU (80% of the companies), USA, China and Turkey, and are engaged in mechanical and electrical engineering (16 companies), textile (4 companies), electronics (2 firms) and other manufacturing activities like plastic parts, furniture etc. Statistics show that about 20% of investors are looking for land for expansion between 10,000 and 40,000 sq.m.

For the last 7 months, there have been 24 companies who have approached the IBA searching for ready buildings. The majority of them look for production facilities between 3,000 and 6,000 sq.m. An urgent need is registered for fully equipped industrial sites that can be readily offered to potential investors. The most preferred locations for situating the manufacturing facilities are within 100 km distance from Sofia or in other big cities with industrial traditions and sufficient workforce, on or close to highways or first class roads, near to good logistics connections.

The strategic development of industrial zones in Bulgaria is considered as an important pre-condition for boosting the regional development potential and creating opportunities for long-term sustainable regional growth and attraction of investments in higher value added production and services. The policy is therefore in full compliance with the country's Strategy for Promotion of Investments and will build further on the measures already envisaged by the Law for Encouragement of the Investments. This law contains measures for attracting large strategic investors in the country through mechanisms for ensuring quicker and effective administrative servicing of the investments above 5 mln. euro and in cases of investments of above 35 mln. euro also an opportunity to receive a grant funds for building the necessary technical infrastructure.

The strategic elements of the industrial areas policy address the following identified facets:

- 1) Availability of sufficient (at least 10,000 sq.m) land with clear municipal or/and state ownership as in-kind contribution for developing industrial zone;
- 2) Accessibility of industrial plots and connectivity with the transport network (highways, firstclass roads);
- 3) Remoteness from big city centres;
- 4) Opportunities to connect and develop technical infrastructure (i.e. electricity, water supply, sewerage, communications, etc.) to the site facilities;
- 5) Environmental clearance of the locations;
- 6) Committed co-financial guarantees or financial guarantees;
- 7) Capability to cover management and running costs;
- 8) Availability of sufficient skilled work force at local labour market adequate to the investors' interest.

A good example of the investors' interest is the development of industrial zone of such kind in Rakovski municipality in Bulgaria. Since the time when the zone became operational, there have been a high number of foreign and Bulgarian companies, which have visited the zone to get familiar with the investment opportunities. For the first 6 months of its existence, contracts with investors have been concluded and their production facilities will be located in the area very soon.

Already pre-accession assistance is allocated for improving the infrastructure of industrial zones, business parks and locations and establish efficient conditions for attracting new investments, thus increasing the economic development potential.

12.12. Annex 12. Information society

Bulgaria will continue its efforts in acceleration of information society development in line with the launched by the EC initiative i2010 – European Information Society 2010 as a key element of the renewed Lisbon partnership for growth and jobs. The foreseen measures in this field are summarised in the State Policy for Accelerated Information Society Development⁹⁰ and will be further specified in the National Programme for Accelerated Information Society Development. The state policy document defines five priority areas for acceleration of the development of the information society in legislative, technological, economic and social dimension:

- Increasing the quality of life through development of the national ICT infrastructure and improving the quality of public services through further development of the e-government;
- Encouragement of the usage of ICT technologies as a key factor for the creation of favourable business environment and support for the development of an competitive ICT industry;
- Successful integration of ICT in the education and training with the aim of assuring high-qualified human resources for the needs of the ICT sector and the labour market and modernization and optimization of the ICT infrastructure of the research institutes, schools and universities;
- Ensuring the conditions for broad access for the citizens to the services of the information society and popularization of their usage;
- Improving the information security, guaranteeing the consumer protection and ensuring the inviolability of the written communication.

⁹⁰ Draft to be approved by the Council of Ministers

12.13. Annex 13. Transport

ROAD TRANSPORT

Present condition of the road infrastructure

The condition of the national roads at the present moment is as follows:

Class of roads	Length /km/	Condition of road pavement /km /			Without road pavement /km /
		Good	Fair	Poor	
Motorways	331.2	232.6	87.9	10.7	-
I	2 960.6	1 502.6	562.4	895.6	-
II	4 011.9	1 460.9	1 170.3	1 352.7	28.0
III	11 730.4	3 185.0	3 810.0	4 473.4	262.0
Road links to road junctions and interchanges	241.6	156.2	71.2	14.2	-
TOTAL	19 275.7	6 537.3	5 701.8	6746.6	290.0

As shown in the table above the total length of the national roads is 19 275.7 km, 12 448.4 km of them being in fair and poor condition and not conforming the criteria for normal operational condition of the roads. The reasons for this situation are the long periods between repairs - over 18 years at average due to lack of funds. About 33 MEURO are being spent for current repair and maintenance. These activities include stabilizing, patching of pavement and partial overlaying. Separately, about 22.5 MEURO are spent for all remaining activities related to current repair – drainage, safety fences, road marking, traffic signing, landscape shaping, repair of structures, etc.

In 2005 for the whole road network 55.5 MEURO on the average are spent or 3000 EURO on the average per km of road /winter maintenance excluded/. For bringing of 12 448.4 km roads to normal operational conditions at least 1.8 billion EURO are needed, which includes rehabilitation of these roads in order to provide for their good operational condition and maintenance. For a three-year period for the whole road network 2.1 billion EURO are necessary to be provided or 0.7 billion EURO per year – about 14 times more as compared to the funds spent up to now.

Maintenance of new investments in road transport

The total length of the Trans-European Network on the territory of Bulgaria is 2 102 km. About 13.5 MEURO will be needed yearly for maintenance of these roads for the first three years by 15% increase per year till running out of their inter-repair period. The funds are intended for the following repair works:

- Maintenance and repair of road pavement;
- Maintenance and repair of structures;
- Maintenance and repair of road facilities;
- Planting and landscape shaping;
- Earth works;

- Recovery of road sections and structures damaged by disasters, failures, landscapes, landslides, etc.;
- Winter maintenance.

For that purpose contracts for current repair and maintenance, including winter maintenance of the national roads are concluded with qualified companies for a period of three years. The companies operate with annual or monthly Terms of References accordingly to the needs of repair by type of works, respectively the funds needed.

The control is exercised by both the Regional Directorates “Road Administration” and the National Road Infrastructure Fund through experts in charge for the individual contracts. A new Road Management System is elaborated under the Dutch Program “Partners for Roads”. The implementation of the System will contribute to enhance the effectiveness of the complete activity towards maintenance and development of the road infrastructure and achieving the European standards. In any case special attention will be taken on maintenance of the Trans-European Road Network accordingly to the EC requirements and standards.

Road Charging

Base on the Decision # 144 of the Council of Ministers from 2002, Bulgaria started the phased implementation of a time-related road user charging system from April 1, 2004. In 2003 (the period of vignette system preparation) when calculating the vignette charges levels were observed the following principles of the Directive 1999/62/EC on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures:

- In line with the **cost efficiency principle** at the first step the charges’ level was calculated based on the actual costs for construction, operation, and development of the respective class vignette roads, taking into account the maximum amount of annual user charges per vehicle type as set in Annex II of the Directive.
- In line with the **transparency principle** the vignette system introduction was preceded by a comprehensive Public Acceptance Survey, covering all road users categories, as well as governmental institutions, NGOs and mass medias; Based on the Survey results the so calculated charges were reduced in order to achieve highest possible public acceptance/wiliness to pay, guarantying in this way 100% coverage of the operation and maintenance costs, but only 10-12% coverage of the vignette network development costs.
- Following the **principle of harmonization of the levy systems** from the date of vignette system introduction the former Road Tax was abolished (amendment of the Local Taxes and Charges Act).
- Respecting the requirement the user charges to be **proportional to the duration** of the use made of the infrastructure Bulgaria applies three types of validity time-related charges: annual, monthly and weekly.

In line with the negotiated with the European Commission transition period in 2004 – 2006 periods the vignette charges levels for vehicles with Bulgarian registration remained different compared with those for the vehicles with foreign registration. Nevertheless, a time schedule for gradual alignment of the charges for both Bulgarian and foreign vehicles up to 1 January 2007, has been agreed with the Commission (DG TREN) and Bulgarian Government strictly respects it.

Preparation for the full harmonization of the Bulgarian vignette system with the relevant EU legislation as of 1 January 2007 started in the beginning of this year and is going on. It takes

into account both Directives (1999/62/EC and the new Directive 2006/38/EC amending 1999/62 one). The relevant measures are taken in view of the following:

- To align the time-related user charges to be paid by vehicles with Bulgarian and foreign registration in line with the **non-discrimination principle**
- Full implementation of the requirement for **proportionality** between the price level and the period of vignette roads' use through the introduction of daily vignettes for the vehicles having maximum permissible gross laden weight of not less than 12 tons.
- Recalculation of vignette charges' levels in line with the **infrastructure costs definitions** as set in the Directive 2006/38/EC, taking into account the amended amount of the annual charges.

As of the moment the Draft Law amending the Roads Act in order to reflect the above changes as well as the respective by-laws are elaborated and under adoption procedure.

Bulgarian Government is fully aware of the EC focus on the "polluter pays" principle and of the necessity for internalization of the external costs. However, due to the very short period (from the moment of Directive 2006/38/EC adoption) it is not in position to practically implement them starting from 1 January 2007.

Additionally, the following important aspects should be pointed out:

- In line with Directive 2006/38/EC stipulations Bulgaria already applies time-related user charges not only in respect to the heavy vehicles having a maximum permissible gross laden weight of not less than 12 tons, but also to these of not less than **3.5 tons**.
- All the vignette system revenues are **earmarked** to cover the operation and maintenance costs for the vignette roads. This is secured through the Roads Act and the corresponding by-law on the way and conditions for time-related road user charges collection. In this way the necessary funds for the vignette roads' sustainable maintenance in the future are guaranteed.
- In line with the requirements of both Directives the user charges to be applied and collected in such a way as to cause as **little hindrance** as possible to the free flow of traffic, Bulgaria set up a very dense network of outlets selling vignette stickers (over 2,500).
- The preparation for the introduction of the first vignette system phase (for 2004-2006 period) and its current amendments aiming its full harmonization are done with the technical assistance of EU Consultant (Dornier Consulting GmbH), guaranteeing in this way application of user charge calculation methodology that is in line with the Directives' principles.
- In both preparation periods (2003-2004 and this year) the responsible Bulgarian authority (Roads Executive Agency/National Road Infrastructure Fund) together with the international Consultant are regularly informing and consulting DG TREN in respect to the all steps, envisaged measures and calculation results.

Road safety

Implementation in Bulgaria of Directive 96/53/EC as of 1 January 2007

The basic guidelines in the Accession Treaty of Bulgaria to the European Union regarding the implementation of Directive 96/53/EC are as follows:

1. "As from the date of accession, no restrictions may be imposed on the use, by vehicles complying with the requirements of Directive 96/53/EC, of the main transit routes set out in Annex I to Decision No 1692/96/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 1996 on Community guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network⁹¹.";
2. "By way of derogation from Article 3(1) of Directive 96/53/EC, vehicles complying with the limit values of categories 3.2.1, 3.4.1, 3.4.2, and 3.5.1, specified in Annex I to that Directive may only use non-upgraded parts of the Bulgarian road network until 31 December 2013 if they comply with Bulgarian axle-weight limits.";
3. "As from the date of accession, all vehicles in international traffic fitted with air-suspension complying with the limit values of Directive 96/53/EC shall not be subject to any temporary additional charges on the entire Bulgarian road transport network.";
4. "In line with the completion of the upgrading, there shall be a progressive opening of the Bulgarian road network, including the network as contained in Annex I to Decision No 1692/96/EC, for vehicles in international traffic complying with the limit values of the Directive."

The Republic of Bulgaria has held technical consultations with representatives of the EC and has presented there its proposal. The main target is to open in maximal degree the road network that serves the transit traffic, thus meeting the provisions of the Accession Treaty. The proposal includes all E - roads and some other important roads that represent necessary links in the road network serving the transit traffic. Roads, which will be open for 11.5 t/axle for vehicles not fitted with air-suspension as of 1 January 2007 are listed bellow:

1. **Road E 70:** Bulgarian-Romanian border/Ruse – Varna
2. **Road E 79:** Bulgarian-Romanian border/Vidin – Kulata/Bulgarian-Greek border (fully open as of 2005)
3. **Road E 80:** Bulgarian-Serbian border/Kalotina – Kapitan Andreevo/Bulgarian-Turkish border (fully open as of 2002)
4. **Road E 83:** Byala – Sofia (fully open as of 2002)
5. **Road E 85:** Bulgarian-Romanian border /Ruse – Svilengrad/ Bulgarian-Greek border
6. **Road E 87:** Bulgarian-Romanian border /Durankulak – Malko Tarnovo/Bulgarian-Turkish border
7. **Road E 772:** Yablanitsa – Shumen
8. **Road E 773:** Popovitsa – Burgas
9. **Road E 871:** Sofia – Gyueshevo/Bulgarian-Macedonian border
10. **Road I-5:** section Haskovo – Makaza/ Bulgarian-Greek border
11. **Road I-6:** section Sofia – Sliven
12. **Road II-55:** section Veliko Tarnovo – Nova Zagora
13. **Road III-554:** section Nova Zagora – Harmanli

This road network predominantly serves the transit traffic and the vehicles conforming to the limits for categories 3.2.1, 3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.5.1 of Annex I of the Directive may use it without

⁹¹ OJ L 228, 9.9.1996, p. 1. Decision as last amended by Decision No 884/2004/EC (OJ L 167, 30.4.2004, p.1).

being subject to temporary additional charges. Bulgaria will periodically update the List of these roads depending on the progress of the rehabilitation works and the Schedule shown in the Accession Treaty.

Road upgrading programme (km)

Table 1

N	ROAD	SECTION	LENGTH /KM/	OPEN TO TRAFFIC	MEASURE
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	I-5/E-85/	GABROVO - SHIPKA	18	2014	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2	I-5/E-85/	KARDJALI - PODKOVA (MAKAZA)	18	2008	NEW CONSTRUCTION
		SUBTOTAL	36		
3	I-6	SOFIA - PIRDOP	56	2009	REHABILITATION
4	I-7	SILISTRA - SHUMEN	88	2011	REHABILITATION
5	I-7	PRESLAV - E-773	48	2010	RECONSTRUCTION
		SUBTOTAL	136		
6	I-9 /E-87/	ROMANIAN BORDER - BALCHIK	60	2009	REHABILITATION
7	II-12	VIDIN - SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO BORDER	26	2008	RECONSTRUCTION
8	II-14	VIDIN - KULA - SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO BORDER	42	2009	RECONSTRUCTION
9	II-18	SOFIA RING ROAD - NORTH ARCH	24	2014	NEW CONSTRUCTION
10	II-19	SIMITLI - GOTSE DELCHEV - GREEK BORDER	91	2008	REHABILITATION
11	II-29	DOBRICH - VARNA	21	2010	REHABILITATION
12	II-35	LOVECH - KARNARE	28	2011	RECONSTRUCTION
13	II-53	SLIVEN - YAMBOL	25	2010	REHABILITATION
14	II-55	GURKOVO - NOVA ZAGORA	26	2010	REHABILITATION
15	II-55	NOVA ZAGORA - SVILENGRAD	81	2012	REHABILITATION
		SUBTOTAL	107		
16	II-57	STARA ZAGORA - RADNEVO	42	2010	REHABILITATION
17	II-62	KYUSTENDIL - DUPNITSA	26	2011	RECONSTRUCTION
18	II-63	PERNIK - SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO BORDER	20	2010	RECONSTRUCTION
19	II-73	SHUMEN - KARNOBAT	44	2012	RECONSTRUCTION
20	II-73	SHUMEN - KARNOBAT	19	2011	RECONSTRUCTION
		SUBTOTAL	163		
21	II-78	RADNEVO - TOPOLOVGRAD	40	2013	REHABILITATION
22	II-86	ASENOVGRAD - SMOLYAN	72	2014	RECONSTRUCTION
23	II-98	BURGAS - MALKO TARNOVO	64	2014	RECONSTRUCTION
24	III-197	GOTSE DELCHEV - SMOLYAN	87	2013	RECONSTRUCTION
25	III-198	GOTSE DELCHEV - FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA BORDER	95	2013	RECONSTRUCTION
26	III-534	ELENA - NOVA ZAGORA	52	2012	RECONSTRUCTION
27	III-534	NOVA ZAGORA - SIMEONOVGRAD	53	2014	RECONSTRUCTION

		SUBTOTAL	105		
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28	III-601	KYUSTENDIL - FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA BORDER	27	2011	NEW CONSTRUCTION
29	III-622	KYUSTENDIL - FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA BORDER	31	2013	NEW CONSTRUCTION
30	III-865	SMOLYAN - MADAN	15	2011	RECONSTRUCTION
31	III-867	SMOLYAN - KARDJALI	69	2014	RECONSTRUCTION
32	III-868	BYPASS SMOLYAN	40	2012	NEW CONSTRUCTION
33	IV-410068	SIMITLI - FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA BORDER	28	2009	NEW CONSTRUCTION
34		BYPASS PLOVDIV	4	2014	NEW CONSTRUCTION
	A1	"TRAKIA" MOTORWAY - STARA ZAGORA - KARNOBAT			
35		LOT 2	33	2010	NEW CONSTRUCTION
36		LOT 3	37	2011	NEW CONSTRUCTION
37		LOT 4	48	2014	NEW CONSTRUCTION
		SUBTOTAL	118		
		TOTAL	1598		

Table 2

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
MEASURE								
REHABILITATION	91	116	114	88	81	40	0	
RECONSTRUCTION	26	42	68	88	96	182	258	
NEW CONSTRUCTION	18	28	33	64	40	31	94	
	135	186	215	240	217	253	352	1598 km

RAIL TRANSPORT

Present condition of the rail infrastructure

By the end of 2005 the total railway line length is 4316 km, of which 2915 km along main railway lines. The total railway track km length is 7326 km, of which 4904 km or 67% are electrified.

In comparison to many of the European countries, the operational and technical conditions of the railway infrastructure are poor. Considerable part of the railway lines have been constructed more than 50 years ago, with geometrical parameters, lower construction and facilities suitable for speed of up to 100 km/h. Bulgarian railway sector is lacking railway lines for speed of up to 160 km/h. The sections which have been doubled in the last 20-30 years are also suitable for limited speed, due to their geometrical parameter, the state of the lower construction, the facilities and the platform development within the station areas.

During the last ten years 806 km of the railway network have been renewed, which is 18.6% of the total railway length and mid-range repair works have been carried out to 790 km of

main railway lines and only to 41 km of secondary lines. However, due to the policy of renovation and/or repair work of certain sections, those activities do not change the transport capacity of the railway network as a whole. The constant insufficiency of funds for maintenance of the railways and the related railway facilities, as well as the lack of long-term plans and programmes justified with relevant resources, led the poor conditions of the infrastructure and speed limitations along nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the rail network.

At this stage, the national railway network is considerably underdeveloped compared to the railway network in the European countries. The allocation of the railway lines is quite imbalanced. The programming for maintenance and development of the railway infrastructure, implemented until now, is not sufficient and not justified with the necessary financial resources from the National Budget. Moreover, the technologies used are old and require a number of employees and considerable expenditures. The permanent lack of financial resources for rehabilitation of the railway track and the railway equipment, in the last ten years, led to a delay in implementation of the rehabilitation time-tables and thus to decrease in the speeds and poor condition of the railway network capacity.

The main reason for the temporally restrictions is the difficulty in maintaining the track gauge, due to:

- Tumbled and damaged sleepers;
- Dipped rail-ends;
- Fastenings and rail in curves that are in bad condition;
- Damaged formation as reflected in pumping of sleepers due to poor drainage and the poor quality of ballast.

The future development of the railway infrastructure aims to favour the development of services of the railways operator in domestic and international market and is mainly oriented to the revival and improvement of the technical and operational parameters of the railway track, catenary, telecommunication and signaling equipment along the cross-border transport corridors according to the Trans-European Network (TEN) initiative; Agreement for High Speed railway lines (AGC); Agreement for Railway Lines for Combined Transport (AGTC); Trans - European Railway Project (TER).

Rail cross border check points

There are 6 existing railway cross-border points at the territory of the Bulgarian railway infrastructure. The Cross-border point Kulata – Promahonas between Bulgaria and Greece was upgraded by electrification of the existing tracks. The track Dragoman – Kalotina – Dimitrovgrad Yug (Serbia) – the cross-border point Between Bulgaria and Serbia was also electrified.

The NRIC envisages the following upgrades of the existing cross-border points:

- (1) electrification of the railway track at Svilengrad – Kapukule cross-border point between Bulgaria and Turkey on TEC VIII;
- (2) electrification of the railway track at Svilengrad – Dikea cross-border point between Bulgaria and Greece on TEC IX;
- (3) construction of the new Danube bridge at Vidin – Kalafat as new cross-border point between Bulgaria and Romania on TEC IV;

The NRIC envisages encouraging the cooperation with National Border Police Service, national veterinary and sanitary control service with aim to improve the operational conditions at cross-border railway stations as well as to speed up and increase the quality of servicing of international passenger and cargo trains.

ORIGINAL

12.14. Annex 14. NSRF, NDP and NRP

The National Development Plan (NDP) of Bulgaria for the period 2007-2013 is a national strategic document presenting the long-term public investment programme of the country, consisting of investments in both physical and human capital. This document is based on an extensive analysis of the country's development, comprising of 7 key elements: macroeconomic framework, productive sector, regional development, agriculture and rural areas, basic infrastructure, social development and quality of human resources, social development and social inclusion. The analysis has been influenced by the planned investments from the EU Cohesion Policy, the CAP and the CFP and thus should be considered in conjunction with the key sectoral strategic documents, such as the National Strategy for Integrated Development of the Infrastructure in Bulgaria and Action Plan for the period 2006-2015, the National Strategy for Environment 2006-2015, National Strategy for Demographic Development 2006-2020, National Strategy for Regional Development 2005-2015, and the more detailed ones concerning areas of particular interest, e.g. investment promotion, tourism, continuous vocational training, innovation, innovation society, etc.

The NDP 2007-2013 sets out the two key development goals of the country:

- To attain and maintain high economic growth by dynamic knowledge economy in accordance with the principles of sustainable development;
- To improve the quality of human capital and to achieve employment, income and social integration levels, which provide high living standards.

The NSRF and the National Strategic Plan for Agriculture and Rural Development have been developed in line with these two goals.

The NSRF specifically addresses the above-mentioned two goals in a more streamlined manner to further reflect the Community Strategic Guidelines:

- Strengthen the competitiveness of the economy to achieve high and sustainable growth;
- Develop human capital to ensure higher employment, income and social integration.

To achieve the NSRF goals and contribute to the larger goals of the NDP Bulgaria needs to focus on four strategic priorities – three thematic and one territorial:

- Improving basic infrastructure;
- Increasing quality of human capital with a focus on employment;
- Fostering entrepreneurship, favourable business environment and good governance;
- Supporting balanced territorial development.

The NRP provides the national response of Bulgaria to the challenges of the Lisbon Strategy. It stems from the Integrated Guidelines as well as with key programming documents of the Bulgarian Government, namely: Government Programme for European Integration, Economic Growth and Social Responsibility 2005-2009, the Multi-Annual Budgetary Framework, the Agreement between the Council of Ministers and Bulgarian National Bank for Introduction of the Euro, the National Employment Plan, Innovation Strategy, Educational Strategy 2006-2015, Higher Education Strategy, Economic and Social Development Pact until 2009.

The fundamental aspects of the NRP – *growth* and *employment and education* mirror the NDP goals and the respective elements of *growth* and *employment*, especially entrepreneurship, innovation, R&D, sustainable development, education and training, complement the strategic orientations of the NSRF priorities. The Bulgarian NRP is a key comprehensive programme

for long-term reform to achieve employment and overall economic growth starting from 2007. Among the main themes are:

- reinforcing macroeconomic stability and maintaining fiscal sustainability in the face of the pressures for Bulgaria from the competitive EU market but also from the demographic challenges. This will additionally improve the country's domestic and especially foreign investments. The latter are envisaged to encompass both infrastructures and human resources;
- ensuring a favourable business and administrative environment in support of active business development and entrepreneurship;
- enabling the labour market to take advantage of the human capital and its potentials by modernizing education, training, encouragement of professional knowledge and advancement and life-long-learning;
- monitoring the equality of access to education, healthcare and the labour market;
- increasing innovation and linkages between science, education and market needs whereas the bases are envisaged to be new technologies and human skills.

The process of the Bulgarian NRP development is highly advanced, although NRP elaboration does not constitute a pre-accession or accession commitment of Bulgaria. The coordination between NDP, NSRF and NRP during programming has been ensured not only at the policy level, but also by involving the core NDP and NSRF team in the NRP drafting. The Agency for Economic Analyses and Forecasts (AEAF) as an Executive Agency attached to the Minister of Finance and as a source of analytic expertise and continuity has been the principal actor in the process.

12.15. Annex 15. Main demarcation criteria

CONCERNING ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY THE ERDF, ESF, THE COHESION FUND, EAFRD AND EFF

The main distinction between the territorial interventions of the Cohesion Policy and EAFRD – axis 3 interventions is based on the national definition of the rural and urban areas in Bulgaria, approved by MAF Ordinance 14/2003. According to the national definition, of total 264 municipalities in the country, 231 are classified as rural and 33 as urban. For some of the measures in the Axis 3 of NSPRD additional territorial criteria will apply.

The Structural Funds and the EAFRD will provide support for investments in the development of social, recreational and cultural services, Internet-related work and services for the economy. The Structural Funds, Cohesion Fund and the EAFRD will provide funding for buildings, reconstruction, infrastructure and roads. The general demarcation criteria will be territorial coverage: the Operational Programme Regional Development (OPRD) will cover 86 municipalities in the agglomeration areas (see the map below) and the Rural Development Programme will cover 178 municipalities of the rural areas. OPRD will support on the entire territory of Bulgaria (in all municipalities) the development of broadband access in underserved areas (scarcely populated or with difficult topography), health services and schools

Specific demarcation criteria are introduced for the following:

- The guiding principle of demarcation for the investments in infrastructure of the municipal roads is the territorial coverage (as described above) **and type of roads**. Transport OP will support motorways, first class roads, second class roads included in TENS; OPRD will support second class roads (that are not included in TENS) and third class roads on the whole territory of Bulgaria, and municipal roads in the urban agglomeration areas (86 municipalities); RDP will support municipal roads in other 178 municipalities.
- For investment in sewage systems and water supply infrastructure the guiding principle will be the **size of the settlements**. The OP Environment will support the settlements with population equivalents above 2000 inhabitants, while the RDP will support projects for sewage systems and water supply infrastructure in settlements with population equivalents below 2000 inhabitants on the entire territory of Bulgaria.

The vocational training supported by the EAFRD will target agriculture and forestry holders and employees, as well as to local communities (which will be supported in elaborating and implementing local development strategies). The vocational training of all other groups (incl. beneficiaries from the food-processing industry) will be supported by the Structural Funds. The vocational training in the Fishery sector will be supported by the EFF.

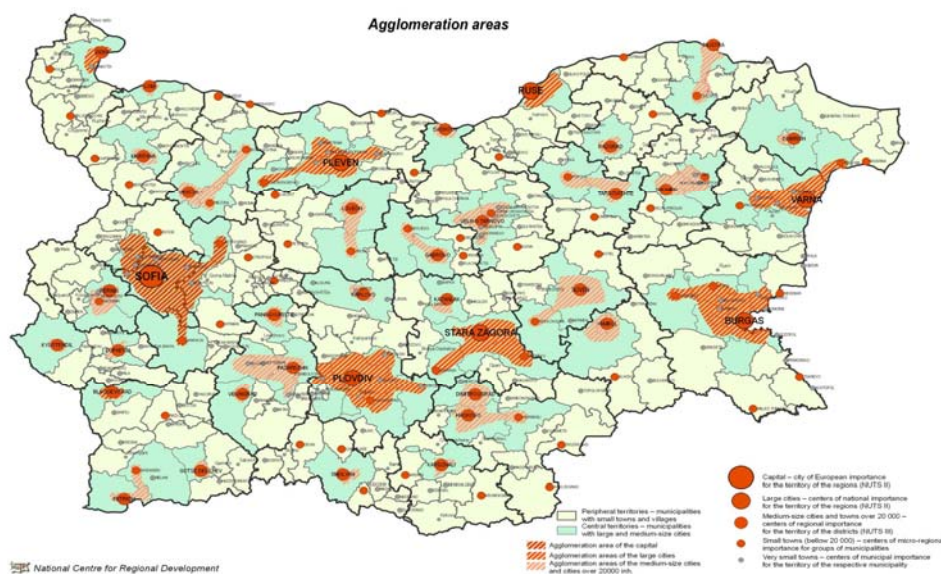
EAFRD will provide investment support for food processing enterprises which have up to 750 employees or an annual turnover of less than EUR 200 million and if the investments are aiming at the processing and marketing of agricultural products listed in Annex 1 to European Community Treaty, from the sectors eligible under the RDP, excluding fishery products (independently the final product is listed or not listed in the EC Treaty). The investments in processing and marketing of fishery products will be supported by the EFF. The investments in aquaculture will be provided only through EFF.

For the processing/or marketing of forestry products RDP will only support micro enterprises whereas if wood is used as an input, only investments for work operations prior to industrial processing of wood (without furniture manufacturing) will be eligible. The remaining groups of SMEs will be eligible to apply for other Structural instruments.

EAFRD will support agricultural producers for diversification in non agricultural activities providing aid for initial investments and consultancy aid. EAFRD will provide also aid to initial investments and external consultancy for micro-enterprises in rural areas, with the exception of highly innovative start-ups. The highly innovative start-ups on the whole territory of the country will be supported by OP “Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy Economy”.

The EAFRD will support investments in renewable energy sources of micro-enterprises and municipalities in rural areas, agricultural producers, micro-enterprises processing forestry products, micro-enterprises and SMEs as well as enterprises, which have up to 750 employees or an annual turnover of less than EUR 200 million, processing agricultural products listed in Annex I to the EC Treaty, except fish products whether the processed products are listed in Annex I to EC Treaty or not.

EAFRD will support development of tourism services and infrastructure in 103 rural municipalities (municipalities with population below 10 000 inhabitants), which are not included in the list of the OPRD. EAFRD will not support tourism projects in settlements and resorts which are traditional destinations of mass tourism. Fishing tourism will be supported by the EFF.



Intervention Area	OPs financed by the SF and CF, NSPRD and RDP financed by EAFRD, NSPFA⁹² financed by EFF
ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - e-Government (OP Administrative Capacity) - in SMEs (OP Competitiveness) - infrastructure (OP Regional Development) - services in 178 municipalities in rural areas which are not included in the urban agglomeration areas (RDP)
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - services (OP Human Resources) - infrastructure (OP Regional Development) <p>Education is outside the scope of the RDP.</p>
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - institutional strengthening (OP Human Resources) - productivity through better health (OP Human Resources) - social infrastructure (OP Regional Development) - e-health (OP Administrative Capacity) - services (OP Human Resources) - infrastructure (OP Regional Development) <p>Health is outside the scope of the RDP.</p>
Social, recreational and cultural services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in 86 municipalities in the urban agglomeration areas (OP Regional Development) - in 178 municipalities in rural areas (RDP)
Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - motorways, first class roads, second class roads included in TENS (OP Transport) - second class roads (not included in TENS), third class roads on the whole territory of Bulgaria, and municipal roads in the urban agglomeration areas (86 municipalities) (OP Regional Development) - municipal roads in 178 municipalities in rural areas (RDP)
Sewage systems and water supply infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - settlements with population equivalents above 2000 inhabitants (OP Environment) - settlements with population equivalents below 2000 inhabitants (RDP)
Vocational Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - agriculture and forestry holders and employees, as well as local communities (RDP) - employees in Fishery sector (NSPFA) - all other groups (incl. beneficiaries from the food-processing industry) (OP Human Resources)
SMEs support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - food processing enterprise (which have up to 750 employees or an annual turnover of less than EUR 200 million) and if the investments aim at processing and marketing of agricultural products listed in Annex 1 to EC Treaty; (RDP) - initial investments and consultancy aid for agricultural producers (RDP) - processing and marketing of fishery products and

⁹² National Strategic Plan for Fisheries and Aquaculture 2007-2013

	aquaculture (NSPFA) - processing/or marketing of forestry products-only micro enterprises (RDP) - the remaining groups of SMEs (OP Competitiveness)
Start-ups	- initial investments and external consultancy for micro-enterprises in rural areas (RDP) - highly innovative start-ups on the whole territory of the country (OP Competitiveness)
Risk Prevention	- State Property (responsibility of the Ministry of State Policy for Disasters and Accidents) - Municipal property (OP Regional Development) Risk prevention is outside the scope of the RDP.
Renewable energy sources	- for efficient energy production: micro-enterprises and municipalities in rural areas, agricultural producers, micro-enterprises processing forestry products, micro-enterprises and SMEs as well as enterprises, which have up to 750 employees or an annual turnover of less than EUR 200 million, processing agricultural products listed in Annex I to the EC Treaty, except fish (RDP) - efficient energy consumption is integrated as horizontal priority for all OPs
Tourism	- tourism attractions and related infrastructure in municipalities with population above 10,000 inhabitants (OP Regional Development) - tourism services and infrastructure in 103 rural municipalities with population below 10,000 inhabitants (RDP) - fishing tourism (NSPFA)

12.16. Annex 16. Health reform in Bulgaria

The Ministry of Health develops and implements a National Health Policy, it defines the objectives and the priorities of the Health System; develops National Health Programmes for improvement of the health status of the population and develops the legislative documents within the sphere of the health sector. The Ministry is responsible for the overall control of the Health System, which has been managed by regional structures since 1995. The regional structures of the Ministry of Health, situated in the twenty eight administrative regions encompass twenty eight Regional Health Centres and twenty eight Regional inspectorates for protection and control of public health which support the implementation of the National Health Policy at a regional level.

Currently, the Ministry of Health manages the research centres for contagious and parasitic diseases, National Centre of Public Health, National Centre of Health Information, National Centre of Radiobiology and Radiation Protection, The highly specialized Health-care Establishments for medical support authorized to operate at a national level incorporate nineteen hospitals to the Higher Medical Institutions and four National Specialized Hospitals.

The Ministry of Health manages twenty-five multi profile hospitals for active treatment, which are with regional scope; twelve psychiatry hospitals, forty-eight dispensaries, and thirty-two houses for medical and social cares for children below three years. Subject to the ministry are the following two executive agencies: The Executive Agency of Transplantation and The Bulgarian Drug Agency. The latter is responsible for the registration of the drug products and medical substances in Bulgaria.

The Ministry of Health directly manages twenty eight Centres for Emergency Medical Care on the territory of Bulgaria, which provide emergency medical treatment of the population, as well as, the National Centre, the regional ones and the wards of Haematology and Transphysiology.

The ministry of Health coordinates its activities with other institutions like National Health Insurance Fund, Bulgarian Medical Association, The dentist union in Bulgaria, and the Pharmaceutical Union in Bulgaria.

The Authorized structures for the implementation of the NSRF are the following Directorates: Directorate "National Health Policy ", Directorate "Management of Projects and Programmes", Directorate „ Investment Policy”. The "National Health Policy" Directorate develops the drafts of strategies in the field of health policies, and coordinates their implementation, prepares analysis of the health needs of the population. "Management of projects and programmes" Directorate is involved in the elaboration and management of international projects and programmes in the area of healthcare, financed by the European Union. The directorate is responsible for the overall coordination and monitoring of implementation of the international programmes and projects, elaboration and update of a system of criteria and indicators for monitoring and evaluation of the programmes and projects, implemented by the ministry, participates in the co-ordination of draft financial memoranda and other agreements for awarding EU financial aid to pre-accession programmes and projects as well as programmes and projects in the field of healthcare under EU Structural and Cohesion fund's aid. "Investment policy" Directorate examines the system structure needs in compliance with the ministry investment policy for conducting the healthcare reform and elaborates draft proposals for new construction works, reconstruction or refurbishment, organizes and participates in procedures for award and hand-over of study and project works, construction and supply of medical equipment and consultancy services, carries out direct technical and financial control in the

implementation of the services and renders technical and methodological aid to the ministers' second-level budgetary bodies and to the state healthcare institutions which are legal entities.

Range of the healthcare reform

The reform in the **hospital sector** starts with updating of the building fund register for healthcare institutions aimed at: conducting evaluation and analyses of the infrastructure of hospital and outpatient healthcare on type, location, property, condition and national and regional priority, optimization of the hospital system and investments, respectively; sale, privatization and concession of groups of sights and activities; elaboration of public-private partnerships; elaboration and introduction of system of institutions for post-hospital state, for continuous and on-going treatment, chronic care and rehabilitation; reformulating of programme priorities for development of the specialized hospitals for mental diseases, the network of psychiatric wards, integrated and multi-profile hospitals and dispensaries; elaboration and introduction of a system for quality control of the rendered medical aid; improvement of the healthcare institution accreditation model.

The reform in the **emergency healthcare** includes establishment of an “emergency ward” in the structure of the regional hospitals as well as development of emergency healthcare centers as mobile structures for rendering of emergency aid.

The following actions have been undertaken with the aim to provide guaranteed healthcare services with improved quality and secured access:

- Initial analysis of the scope of the packet of healthcare services, guaranteed by the law for a health insurance; Annual report and analysis of the provided health services and identifying the topics of their provision; A fiscal insurance and provision of advanced state fund, guaranteing the treatment of the uninsured socially-disadvantaged groups of the population;
- Creation and modernization of medical standards; inclusion of the patient's organizations in formulating of the health policy control of the quality of health services;
- Optimization of the infrastructure of healthcare institutions; creation of the needed number of mobile medical units for servicing the population of remote regions; paying special attention of the people with disabilities; increased interaction with the municipalities; standartization and improvement of remuneration of the general practicing doctors, working in remote and inaccessible regions of the country.

With an aim to guarantee the fiscal sustainability of the national system of healthcare the reform begins with analysis of the ways of payment of the healthcare and determination of the mechanisms for introduction on diagnostically connected groups; introduce unified indicators for the fiscal accountancy of the healthcare; develops the indices, regulating the degree of the individual remuneration of the executors of medical activity, in relation to their qualification and specific work realization; conducts analysis and audits the form of the National frame contract; leads the mechanisms for immediate control of the executors of medical care from the scope of the negotiation; introduces diagnostically associated groups as ways of remuneration of the healthcare aid; and emphasizes on the publicly- private partnership.

The reform in the healthcare envisages stimulation of the voluntary health insurance and private health insurance; creation of a system for the development of the human resources by

construction of an entire system of continuing education and creation of information gateways for access to health information.

The main components of the national health strategy

The strategic goals of a national health strategy 2007 – 2012 are:

1. Ensuring conditions for promotion of health and prevention of diseases.
2. Provide guaranteed healthcare services with increased quality and ensured access to them.
3. Improvement of the outpatient medical care
4. Restructuring and efficient management of the hospital healthcare.
5. Ensuring of medicines and medical products, matching the demands of the customers, and their economic abilities
6. Creating a system for development of the human resources in the healthcare industry
7. Creating of an integrated healthcare electronic system
8. Ensuring of fiscal sustainability of the national system of healthcare.
9. Effective membership in the European union

Descriptions of the healthcare activities forecasted to be supported by the OPs with the corresponding coordination.

Strengthening of the healthcare system is founded in a few operating programs.

Operational program “Regional Development”, which supports the development of sustainable, close and approachable city centers, will provide the relevant and profitable healthcare infrastructure, trough modernization of the infrastructure and the equipment of the healthcare institutions for primary, emergency, specialized outpatient and hospital aid.

Operational program “Development of the Human resources” supports the increase working capacity and the longevity of the working ability of the workforce trough better health for achieving the aims outlined in the Lisbon strategy. The investments in this area of intervention will contribute for wider inclusion of the labor market, long ears of working ability, optimization of the healthcare and social expenses.

The operations, which will be supported are:

- public informational promotional and preventive healthcare campaigns;
- development and implementation of campaigns with screening and early diagnosis of socially significant diseases;
- access to medical aid for outer regions and urbanizations with citizens of predominantly minority groups;

With an aim to increase the capacity and efficiency of the working institutions, active in the area of the healthcare, activities aimed at the development of monitoring systems are envisaged, evaluation of the efficiency and evaluation of the influence of the healthcare services, and also introduction of good practices and activities of institutions and suppliers in the area of the health care services.

Summary of the National Health Strategy 2007 – 2012

I. Strategic Objective 1: Ensuring conditions for health promotion and diseases prevention:

1. Raising the awareness of citizens on the healthy way of living as well as the threats for their health condition through:
 - a. Carrying out of information campaigns and studies;
2. Optimization of the prevention of public health activities by means of:
 - a. Implementation of the National Programme for Smoking Restriction
 - b. Elaboration of the National Programme for Restriction of Alcohol Abuse;
 - c. Implementation of the National Strategy for Fighting against Drugs (2003-2008)
 - d. Implementation of the National Action Plan 'Food and Nourishment'
3. Support to ensuring good mental health through:
 - a. Building up of regional structures, based on a functional principle for the coordination of the activities under the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Mental Care Policy in Bulgaria on a Regional Level for the period 2006-2012;
 - b. Preparation for opening of the psychiatric sections in the multi-profile hospitals for intensive treatment - needs assessment on regional level, the existing facilities, equipment and human resources;
 - c. Implementation of the National Action Plan for Implementation of the Mental Care Policy for the period 2006-2012 as well as 2007.
4. Implementation of the National Programme for Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence for the period 2007-2008.
5. Prevention of possible risks for the Health of the Nation through:
 - a. Introduction of rigorous measures for prevention of imports of infections with high epidemical risks
 - b. Organizing trainings for ministries and governmental bodies on issues dealing with state prevention of imports of infections with high epidemical risks
 - c. Association of the country to the existing systems in the EU for early warning and response.
6. State Health Control through:
 - a. Strengthening the role and improving the quality of the state health control
 - b. Directing the state control towards risky objects, commodities and activities of importance to human health
 - c. Equipment for the Regional inspectorates for protection and control of public health and Regional Health Centers laboratories for testing of chemical substances and products;
 - d. Raising the qualification of the staff, exerting state health control of the required contemporary level
 - e. Updating of the national system for the noises monitoring ensuring its compliance with the EU requirements
 - f. Updating of the systems for monitoring of the air.
 - g. Updating the National Action Plan on Environment-Health and incorporation of Chapter 'Children Health-Environment'.
 - h. Implementation of the National Programme for Prevention and Control of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases and the Programme 'Prevention and control of HIV/AIDS', funded by the Global Fund for Fight against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

- i. Implementation of the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Tuberculosis in Bulgaria.

II. Strategic Objective 2: Provision of guaranteed health services with improved quality and access to them:

1. Improving the quality and the effectiveness of health services by means of:
 - a. Establishing and updating of medical standards;
 - b. Association of the patients' organizations in the elaboration of the health policy as well as the health services quality control.
2. Improvement of the accreditation system of health institutions.
3. Facilitating the access to guaranteed health services:
 - a. Ensuring of social-health aid for disadvantaged people who do not participate in the national ensuring system;
 - b. Optimization of the medical institutions infrastructure;
 - c. Establishment of a sufficient number of mobile medical units for servicing people in remote regions;
 - d. Facilitating the access to health care services of disabled people;
 - e. Intensified cooperation with the municipalities in the implementation of the health activities in the regions;
 - f. Standardization and improvement of the remuneration of the OIJI, working in remote and hard-to-access regions of the country
 - g. Carrying out of joint programmes among Ministry of Health, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, Ministry of Transport and the municipalities for improving the communication between settlement systems and facilitating the access of the population in these regions to health services
4. Strengthening of the research and the medical sciences and ensuring the application of scientific research in the practice of the medical experts

III. Strategic Objective 3: Improvement of the out of hospital aid:

1. Settlement of problems with the medical aid related to cases of emergencies through:
 - a. Identification of the regions with problems in the field of emergency for the optimization of the intercourse between the practices for first medical aid and the emergency units;
 - b. Setting up of phone number 112;
 - c. Introduction of an upper limit of the number of people serviced by a single doctor; time for carrying out examinations; criteria and requirements for their implementation on the basis of medical standards.
2. Improvement of the dental health of the population through streamlining of mechanisms for provision of dental aid.

IV. Strategic objective 4: Restructuring and effective management of hospital aid:

1. Analyzing the methods of payment for hospital aid and defining the mechanisms for adoption of diagnostically related groups;
2. Adopting uniform indicators for financial reporting of hospital aid;
3. Adopting diagnostically related groups as a method of payment for hospital aid;
4. Updating the National Health Card and its move for adoption by the Council of Ministers;
5. Assessing the infrastructure in and out of the hospitals at regional level;

6. Analyzing the needs of medical institutions of different type and location in the country;
7. Analyzing and assessing the ownership and condition of the existing equipment;
8. Identifying medical and healthcare institutions of high national and regional importance;
9. Identifying the priorities for funding of investment programmes and projects;
10. Designating items for sale or privatization or for different types of private-public partnership – concessions, discharging medical institutions of non-operational expenditures
11. Defining and specifying of the target groups and activities for concession.
12. Using of Public-private partnership in funding the health system on the basis projects of social importance where leading criterion is the public interest
13. Definition of the criteria and the framework for management and monitoring of the execution of contracts and conclusion of concession contracts.
14. Development and introduction of a system, comprised of medical institutions for additional treatment, protracted treatment, chronicle cares and recreation;
15. Redefining of the priorities in the programme for development of psychiatric hospitals, the network of psychiatric sections, integrated in the multi-profile hospitals and dispensaries.
16. Amendments to the legal framework for infrastructure restructuring of medical aid according to National health map;
17. Elaboration of legal documents, defining the limits of the activity of the medical aid workers;
18. Elaboration of the principles and mechanisms for conducting of investment policy ‘Money against reform’;
19. Development and introduction of a system for control of the quality of the provided medical aid;
20. Establishment of public-private structures of management;
21. implementation of the National Plan for Restructuring of the Hospitals;
22. Improving the accreditation model for medical institutions.

V. Strategic objective 5: Provision of medicines and medical products in line with the needs of the people and their financial status:

1. Provision of quality and safe medicines and medical products through:
 - a. Adoption and implementation of the law for medical products in the humanitarian medicine and the law for medical products, transposing the European legislation.
2. Implementation of a system for reimbursement of medicines and medical products, providing detailed access to the medical means and medical products
3. Implementation of modern systems for medical information and control on the subscription and granting medical means and medical products

VI. Strategic objective 6: Elaboration of system for development of human resources in the healthcare sector:

1. Planning, selection and preparation of human resources through:
 - a. Elaboration of register for all medical, health and other specialists in the health system
 - b. Elaboration of criteria for specifying of training bases for specialists in restructured and accredited healthcare institutions

- c. Elaboration of drafts of legislative acts, which regulate the professional qualification in the sphere of the regulated professions in the health system
2. Strengthening of the professional qualification and further training
 - a. Actualization of the number of the specialities in the healthcare system, the conditions and the sequence of conduction of the training and achieving of speciality on the healthcare, and its financing
 - b. Actualization of the education schedules

VII. Strategic objective 7: Establishment of integrated electronic health system:

1. Elaboration of legislative rules for informational safety and transfer of information in the healthcare system
2. Implementation of electronic health cards
3. Development of complex and integrated between themselves as well as with other applications hospital information systems
4. Elaboration of draft of electronic medical patient's file
5. Elaboration and development of telemedical projects
6. Establishment of virtual protected network for exchange of data between the Ministry of Health and other budget spending units
7. Informing and training

VIII. Strategic objective 8: Insurance of financial stability of the national health system

1. Provision of specialized governmental fund, guarantying health insurance rights of the social weak groups of the population
2. Review the format of the National Framework Contract through:
 - a. Binding in the terms of the frame contracting with the adoption the budget of the country and increasing the terms of action of the National Framework Contract;
 - b. Early contracting and definition of the values and the prices of the medical activities to be made between National Health Insurance Company(NHIC) and the performer of the medical help.
3. Legislative regulation of the electronic accounting of the health help performers
4. Guarantying the financial stability of the (NHIC) as a single paying authority to the activities in the range of the compulsory health insurance through:
 - a. Clear and exact definition of the main package of medical services, freely given to the insured persons through:
 - i. Analyze the range of the package of health services and cares, guarantied for the Health Insurance Law.
 1. Consultations with the organizations of the employers, patients organizations, communities and organizations of specialists in the out of hospital and hospital help on National level
 2. Inclusion of the social partners, NAMRB in the consultation process on definition of the range of the health services and cares package
 3. Elaboration and implementation of the consultations as a permanent instrument for definition of the package for health cares and services;
 - ii. Elaboration of an analysis of the problems of the public health services provision

- iii. Financial provisions for a specialized State fund, which has to guarantee the treatment of the unsecured and socially weak groups of the population
- iv. Improvement of the National Framework Contract form
- v. Preparation of a National Health Insurance Fund Report, an analysis of the public health services provided in 2007 and identification of the problems with the public health services provision
- vi. Determination of measures for their elimination
- vii. Stipulation by the Law on medical aid insurance of the mechanism for financial and medical control
 - 1. Elaboration of indicators for control of the individual reward of the health services providers depending on their qualification and their particular work experience
 - 2. Taking the mechanism for direct control of the public health services providers out of the scope of the negotiations
- viii. Submission of a proposal for an increase of the obligatory medical aid insurance instalment but without to increase the overall tax burden of the population.
- ix. Preparation of a National Health Insurance Fund Report, an analysis of the public health services provided in 2008 and identification of the problems with the public health services provision
- x. Preparation of an analysis of problems caused by public health services provision
- xi. Support of specialized state fund, which has to guarantee the treatment of non-insured socially weak groups of the population.
- xii. Preparing analysis of the impact of laws and regulations which regulated activities of NHIF;
- b. Elaboration of mechanisms for expenditure of resources of NHIF through system for monitoring and control on payments;
- c. Improvement the methods for financing of the hospital help from NHIF. Investigation, pilot introduction and approbation of the positives and negatives from the implementation of the diagnostically connected groups
- d. Development of the voluntary health insurance through:
 - i. Analyzes of the existing practices for voluntary health insurance
 - ii. Definition of the possible action areas for voluntary health insurance
 - iii. Participation in the elaboration of the mechanisms for stimulating voluntary health insurance
 - iv. Increasing the relative share of the voluntary health insurance on the principle of upgrade of the payment for medical activities out of the range of the compulsory health insurance
 - v. Expansion of the tax relieves on the payments for voluntary health insurance for natural and legal entities, by definition of insurance usage risks;
 - vi. Analyzing the effect of the increase of the relative share of the voluntary health insurance

IX. Strategic objective 9: Effective membership in the EU:

1. Administrative capacity building and necessary infrastructure in the area of free movement of goods (food, cosmetics, innovations, medical products, etc.) and people (mutually recognition of diplomas, qualifications and for official qualification of medical specialists, coordination of the social insurance schemes), social policy and employment (safe and healthy labor facilities, social health, tabaccos), environment (water, noise), legislation and internal affairs (drugs), etc.
2. Introduction of European health insurance card
3. Active participation of experts from the Ministry of Health and its structures in the activities of working groups and committees in the EU institutions
4. Conduction of information campaigns among the performers of the medical help in the country for work with European health insurance cards and for the possibilities for medical treatment of Bulgarian citizens on the territory of EU.

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12.17. Annex 17. Roma Minority

Bulgarian government implements several framework documents that aim to tackle social, educational and health problem of Roma minorities. Main documents dedicated to resolve mentioned problems are: National Plan for Equality, Strategy Combating Poverty and Social Isolation, Framework Programme for Integration of Roma People in Bulgarian Society, Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion, National action plan for employment. All of the above stated documents together with Decade of Roma Inclusion Initiative (2005 – 2015) and its National Action Plan envisage a number of concrete activities that guarantee full civil rights integration of Roma into society.

As far as right of equal **access to education** is concerned some institutional mechanisms and legal changes will be set, besides a Center for educational integration of ethnic minorities was established. In addition Special fund for educational integration together with implementation rules will be organized. To ensure integration of Roma children schools and kindergartens in Roma areas will be closed and the children will be transferred in schools outside these areas. The necessary transportation will be provided. Opinion of Roma parents will be respected. All these measures will be part of municipal plans and programs with detailed budget for educational integration. In addition to the initiatives stated above an assistant to the teacher will ensure better adaptation of Roma kids in the new schools. Seminars and trainings for parents will be organized to overcome negative stereotypes and intolerant attitude.

As far as **health care** of Roma population is concerned the basic priorities are defined: Decreasing infant mortality, early pregnancy registration, observation and in due time hospitalization. In order to reduce negative trends advisory healthcare units will be arranged in Roma areas. Their function is to advice the population on family planning issues and prevention of sexual transmitted infections. Additional activities envisage improving preventive treatment among Roma. Access to health care will be guaranteed via approaching health care services near Roma areas. Farther more training clarifying patients' rights and obligations will be arranged.

Improving **housing conditions** foresees joint actions between national housing strategy, national strategy for regional development and community development plans. The concrete activities for the solution of the Roma housing problem include building and reconstruction of the existing and new technical and social infrastructure in the region with Roma population. Approval and realization of municipal housing programmes and tools for needy Roma families with active participation of the Roma society is forthcoming. Solving the problems with **unemployment** and inadequate qualification of the Roma population in the framework of the yearly educational programmes in National Action Plan for Employment requires organizing additional training for the unemployed. Higher qualification and adaptability for employment of Roma population will be achieved through increased literacy and professional qualifications for the people seeking employment. Additional consultations for professional orientation and motivation for more active job search will be ensured.

There have been implemented projects and measures for preserving the Roma cultural identity and for non-discrimination. In addition, to local and national campaigns and initiatives of Roma organizations, social and civil dialogue for job realization of the Roma population is encouraged.

List of active projects aiming at Roma Population Integration in Bulgaria – key project descriptions

BG 0204.01: Urbanisation and social development of areas with disadvantaged minority populations

Total Budget – 0.640 mln. euro

This project aims to improve the living conditions, reduce the rate of unemployment and create the conditions for the social and economic integration of disadvantaged minority communities in Bulgaria while at the same time preserving their ethnic identity.

BG 2003/004-937.01.03: Educational and medical integration of vulnerable minority groups with a special focus on Roma

Total Budget – 4.930 mln. euro

The project aims to support the economic and social integration of vulnerable minority groups with a special focus on Roma by improving their level of education and health conditions, to foster good interethnic relations and to implement part of the Framework Programme for the Equal Integration of the Roma in Bulgarian society. It focuses on improving access to quality education and health care for vulnerable minority groups with a special focus on Roma including: a) the adaptation of the curricula of pre-school, primary (grades 1 to 8) and secondary education (grades 9 to 12), the qualification/pre-qualification of teachers and the improvement of the material base of selected integrated kindergartens and schools; and b) the qualification of medical staff to work in multicultural environment, support to preventive healthcare services and health promotion and education.

BG 2004/006-070.05.01: Ethnic minorities labour market integration

Total Budget – 2.860 mln. euro

The project aims to contribute to the social and economic integration of disadvantaged minority communities in Bulgaria by implementing targeted active labour market policies in selected areas with ethnically mixed population. It also aims to assist the implementation of the measures under the chapter “Employment” of the Framework Programme for Equal Integration of the Roma in Bulgarian Society. It focuses on creating long term employment opportunities for disadvantaged minority groups in the selected geographical areas through implementing targeted vocational training scheme and targeted business support activities.

BG 2004/016-711.01.03, BG 2005/017-353.01.03 & BG 2006/018-343.01.02: Improvement of the situation and inclusion of the disadvantaged ethnic minorities with a special focus on Roma (in three phases)

Total Budget – 34.562 mln. euro

The aim of this project is to ensure systematic improvement of the situation of disadvantaged ethnic minorities with a special focus on Roma by implementing specific measures with regard to education, health and urbanization and establishment of institutional arrangements at all levels. It focuses on: improved access to integrated education, specialised healthcare services and public infrastructure for disadvantaged ethnic minorities with a special focus on Roma; improved interactions between the disadvantaged ethnic minorities and central/local public administration and police structure; created conditions for social integration of young Roma through participation in higher education; improved material base of selected integrated kindergartens and schools with ethnically mixed classes; improved health status of Roma by performed preventive health care services, health promotion and education; improved disadvantaged ethnic minorities social integration by upgrading the existing public

infrastructure and measures for legalising the constructions; and sustainable administrative capacity to manage, in the future, social cohesion projects.

BG 2004/016-919.01.01: Restructuring of pilot multi-profile hospitals and developing of emergency medical care with a view to improve access to healthcare for vulnerable group of people with a special focus on Roma

Total Budget – 5.400 mln. euro

This project secures access to quality medical services including emergency medical services to disadvantaged group of people and particularly members of ethnic minorities, disabled people and citizens living in remote areas. It aims at improving the quality of life of the population of these regions as a whole, by decreasing the mortality rate, secondary complications and late disability of the population caused by emergency medical cases and especially by cardiovascular diseases. In this regard, elaboration of a model and piloting of two multi-profile hospitals for active treatment comprising Centres for Emergency Medical Care is foreseen. Mobile units will allow full accessibility of a basic set of medical service for all individuals living in the area of these centres with a particular focus on the above mentioned groups.

In the period from 10–28 July 2006 a joint MLSP/UNDP project supported the partnership principle in the development of the NSRF and HRD OP through organizing a series of public discussions. There were six public discussions with local stakeholders at the NUTS II level and two more with Roma community organizations and the institutions and organizations working in the social inclusion sphere. The public discussions were held in the regional centres of the 6 NUTS II regions, namely Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Bourgas, Vidin and Rousse. The objective of the public discussions was to gain broad publicity of the operations to be co-financed by ESF under the Human Resources Development OP and also to gather comments and opinions about the specific regional impact of the OP priorities and operations. More than 500 representatives of local and regional authorities, NGOs, private companies, schools and universities and other interested partners and stakeholders participated in the 8 discussions. Based on the comments and recommendations of the public discussions, the socio-economic analysis was refined and formulations of some of the operations were improved. The MA gathered project ideas that would be later developed. The public consultations indicated the state of awareness of the HRD OP at the regional level.

More than 50 Roma community organizations have been personally invited to the public discussions of the HRD OP and announcements were published in several daily newspapers for the each event.

List of Roma organizations involved:

1. Drom Dromendar Newspaper
2. Hot Line Ltd
3. Confederation of Roma “Europe”
4. Interethnic Initiative for Human Rights
5. Youth Organisation “Proxen”
6. National Roma Centre “St. George”
7. Organisation “Roma Women Movement”
8. Organisation “Human Rights Project”
9. Roma Foundation “Iskra”
10. Association “Alternativa-BS”
11. FMS – Napredak – Pazardzhik

12. Foundation “Ethnocultural Dialogue”
13. Foundation “Future”
14. Foundation “Earth – source of incomes”
15. Foundation “Roma Initiative 2006”
16. Foundation “S.E.G.A”
17. Foundation CARE International – Bulgaria
18. Centre for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance “Amalipe”
19. ROS "Kupate"
20. NCH "Roma Star"
21. Association “Children and Youth”
22. NSSE
23. Foundation “Support to Roma 2000”
24. Foundation “Ethnopalitra”
25. “Info-link”
26. Foundation "ZPM"
27. Foundation “Local Government Initiatives”
28. Caritas Bulgaria
29. Foundation “Sustainable Development”
30. Bulgarian Helsinki Committee

Written comments were received on the NSRF from Roma organizations such as Amalipe, especially contributing to the sources of information used. In addition over 45 Roma organizations have provided formally and informally comments on the different parts of the text of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme. In conformity with the partnership principle the comments and recommendations have been reviewed and about 90 % of them have been accepted and integrated in the programme.

12.18. Annex 18: Territorial Units of the Managing Authorities

Operating Programme	Units on regional/district level	Staff	Functions
OP "Regional Development"	6 regional units on a NUTS II level: Northwest North Central North-East South-East South Central Southwest	Total 45 8 8 6 8 8 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation and publication of calls for proposals; • Technical assistance and dissemination of information to the beneficiaries; • Organization of committee meetings for evaluation of project proposals; • Receipt of application forms from the final beneficiaries; • Update of the data base of information for the received application forms; • Certification, that the received application forms correspond with the requirements and criteria, written in the call for proposals; • On the spot check of the operations; • Execution of the oversight system in light of the procedures, financial and physical.
OP "Development of the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy"	Agency for the promotion of small and medium enterprises – territorial units in the 28 NUTS III districts.	Total 29 district coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and publicity in connection with the OP on a district level; • Gathering and processing of the needed statistical, technical and financial information in connection with the execution of the program on a district level and preparation of reports for the evaluation of the execution of the program; • Preparation of criteria for the selection of projects, in accordance with the specifics of the region; • Identification and preparation of a system of projects on a district level. • Preparation and organization of the publication of calls for proposals, gathering and registration of the application forms, evaluation of the project proposals, organization of the activities of the evaluation committees for the project proposals; • Monitoring in the execution of the projects; • Execution of on the spot checks; • Reporting of irregularities to the IA.
OP "Development of Human resources"	Implementing Authority - district coordinators in the 28 NUTS III districts Intermediate Body – Employment agency – district coordinators in the 28 NUTS III districts	56 experts (2 experts per district) 28 coordinators (1 expert per district)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of the execution of the OP on a district level; • Procedures for gathering of project proposals and their evaluation; • Execution of on the spot checks; • Preparation of regular reports for the execution of the OP; • Gathering of information in connection with the identification of irregularities and dissemination of the information to the MA of the OP.
OP "Administrative"			

Capacity”			
OP “Transport”	State Road Infrastructure Fund National Company “Railroad infrastructure”		
OP “Environment”			
OP “Technical assistance”	28 info points in all the NUTS III districts	56 experts (2 experts per district)	The Info Points will function as resource centres for the population in the respective NUTS III regions and will have a dedicated web page linked to the central web-site on structural instruments. The Info Points will be required to direct questions of potential applicants to the appropriate managing authority (ideally, to their closest territorial structures) for issues connected to a specific operational programme. The Info Points will also organise events connected to their activity.

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12.19. Annex 19: Further information on the anti-corruption

Bulgaria has elaborated and approved a national *Strategy for Transparent Government, Prevention of and Fight against Corruption for the period 2006-2008*. The Strategy further develops and specifies the priority areas for preventing and counteracting corruption, including high-level corruption, through:

- ensuring transparent governance and accountability of the public administration activity;
- regulating clear and effective rules for interrelations between the citizens and the administration officials;
- expanding transparency at decision-making at governance level;
- establishing values as integrity and ethics in the public relations;
- preventing corruption practices;
- raising public confidence in the institutions, strengthening the civil society control;

The Strategy has been directed to actual reduction of the administrative corruption, as well as of the high-level corruption, and to a substantial rise of the confidence in the institutions, of the trust in the rule of law and everyone's equality before it. Corruption should not be hindrance to the free economic initiative, normal functioning of the market economy and effective and efficient governance of the country.

The measures envisaged in the Strategy are divided into the following major areas.

I. Measures in the public sector

The anticorruption institutional legal framework in Bulgaria has already been set-up. In implementation of the adopted strategic documents on counteracting corruption, important anticorruption institutional mechanisms and legal instruments were introduced.

II. Measures in the private sector

During the latest years a substantial progress was made in the financial stabilization, liberalization and building-up of the institutional-legal framework of the Bulgarian market economy, which led to creating a better business environment, decreasing the share of the "hidden" economy and limiting corruption in the economic field. The Bulgarian government will continue its policy for decreasing the scope of the state interference, and will strengthen the state organization and the legal order. In this way, the possibilities for administrative corruption will be decreased, and the quality of the service provided and the business environment will be improved.

III. Civil society control and strengthening the cooperation with the civil society

During the last years, the civil organization capacity to evaluate the impact of the anticorruption policy and propose effective decisions for prevention and counteract of the existing corruption practices and corruption risks was raised substantially. Counteracting corruption turned into a major field of the activity for a set of Bulgarian NGOs, which with the media assistance initiated a number of public debates on corruption, as well as for the needed measures for its limitation. The public-private partnership supplements the

government efforts to introduce standards of transparency and accountability, and creates the needed premises for limiting the corruption practices.

IV. Coordination and implementation of the Strategy

Special Committee for the Prevention and Counteraction of Corruption within the Council of Ministers exercises control and coordination over the implementation of the strategy, while analyzing and summarizing information about the measures and actions undertaken against the corruption as well as about the results and effectiveness of the fight against the corruption. During the elaboration of the state anticorruption policy the Commission proposes decision on the priorities of government anticorruption activities for the respective year and the most efficient approaches for the effective counteraction and corruption prevention in different social and political fields. The Commission also cooperates with civil society institutions during their regular surveys assessing the spread of corruption within the country and citizens and businesses attitudes to the quality and performance of the state administration activity. The Commission reports on its activity to the Council of Ministers.

Furthermore, a new Directorate “Chief inspectorate” directly subordinated to the Prime Minister is functioning as Secretariat of the Commission for Prevention and Counteraction of corruption. It supports the organizing of the activities for executing the state anticorruption policy; coordinates and supports the activities of the inspectorates; examines and if necessary executes audits under incoming signals about conflict of interests, corruption and other violations of the executive power bodies and state employees with management positions and prepares report of the results; analyses the reasons and circumstances for the stated violations and provides measures for their elimination; supports the execution of the decisions of the Committee for the Prevention and Counteraction of Corruption. The directorate also:

- exerts control over all of the activities of the administration and executes general and specialized audits, assigned by the prime minister;
- executes checks and controls for specific matters and cases based on decrees of the Prime Minister;
- provides organizational, technical support to the committee for the prevention and counteraction of corruption.

12.20. Annex 20: Further clarifications on the model used for assessing macro-economic impacts of NSRF

With regard to the EC comments related to the model and the estimated macro-economic effects of Structural Funds, introduced in EC Services' Second Position Paper on Bulgarian NSRF, "6.7. *Macro-Economic Stability*" part, some more detailed information is given below:

1. How the SF inflows are included in the model? How they affect GDP components? How SF inflows feed back into domestic demand and import growth?

In the AEAF model the SF, as part of the EU funds entering the economy, have a direct impact on the Balance of Payments in its part Official Transfers (credit) and on the government consumption and investment. The model uses exogenously given weights (estimated beforehand using expert estimations, having in mind the structure of the intended actions in the relevant OP) for distribution of the SF commitments in GDP final use components (consumption and investments). *Table 1* shows how the numbers for the payments feed back into the model, after they are transformed into current prices figures taking into account the timing of the payments (i.e. the $n+3$ and the $n+2$ rules) and the relevant price indexes. The resources required for co-financing are included in the government investments. Having the effects on domestic demand (see *Table 2*), the model evaluates the induced changes in imports, using the known marginal propensity to import as well as the consumption and investment elasticities to imports. Still we note that, the overall demand elasticity to imports could be overrated, especially in the long-term, which will mean that the GDP forecasted is somewhat underestimated. However, the data for the last decade make us believe that the scenario is not unrealistic. *Table 2* show the overall effect of SF inflows on the imports and exports.

2. What is the induced effect on inflation?

As Bulgaria is a highly open economy (with imports accounting for 77.4% of GDP in 2005), it is rather a "price-taker" than a "price-maker". This means that the domestically generated impulses (apart from changes in administrative prices) have much lower impact on the inflation figures than the imports prices, especially those of the energy resources. That is why when modelling the price levels we use the expected changes in administrative prices and the global oil prices and this explains why the inflation is not affected very much by SF inflows (having in mind the relatively low prices of increased import). It is worth mentioning that consumer inflation in Bulgaria in 2006 was not influenced by the huge FDI inflow (EUR 4.1bn, surging by 32.3% y/y), while the acceleration of price level growth, which indeed took place in the year (by some 0.04pps y/y to 6.49% at end-2006) was formed by the changes in excises on tobacco products and record-high oil price at the global markets.

3. Labour market and inflation

Though the model lacks estimations for natural unemployment rate and cycle behaviour, we assume that the labour market will not generate pressure for wage increase and subsequently inflation. We ground our expectations on two basic facts. Firstly, the government policy is supposed to be anti-cyclical. Secondly, the intended actions under OP "Human Recourses Development" are among all aimed at decreasing the natural unemployment rate, which in fact will mean increasing of the potential output. Alternative estimations, made in the Agency for Economic Analysis and Forecasting show that the potential output growth will accelerate in mid-term and will outstrip the real GDP expansion.

Table 1

<i>EUR mln. (curr. prices)</i>		2007		2008		2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
		<i>SF funds</i>	<i>baseline</i>	<i>SF funds</i>	<i>baseline</i>	<i>SF funds</i>	<i>baseline</i>	<i>SF funds</i>	<i>baseline</i>	<i>SF funds</i>	<i>baseline</i>	<i>SF funds</i>	<i>baseline</i>	<i>SF funds</i>	<i>baseline</i>
Total	EU														
payments, o/w		850.7	799.3	1 387.5	1 171.9	1 722.9	1 263.2	1 901.4	1 041.7	2 242.1	1 009.5	2 581.9	1 086.0	2 377.9	1 176.4
affecting															
consumption		382.5	366.8	555.1	489.3	636.7	496.4	666.0	403.8	690.6	314.5	767.8	311.4	682.4	315.9
affecting															
investments		368.2	333.4	514.4	368.9	679.9	369.6	803.6	223.3	1 064.1	232.1	1 236.0	226.3	1 036.4	225.6
direct payments		36.4	35.4	285.6	281.3	373.2	364.0	431.8	414.6	487.5	462.8	578.2	548.2	659.0	635.0
other															
(compensation)		63.7	63.7	32.5	32.5	33.1	33.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
			<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>
Total	EU														
payments, o/w			51.4		215.6		459.8		859.7		1 232.6		1 495.9		1 201.5
affecting															
consumption			15.7		65.7		140.2		262.2		376.0		456.4		366.6
affecting															
investments			34.7		145.5		310.3		580.2		832.0		1 009.7		810.9
direct payments			1.0		4.3		9.2		17.2		24.7		29.9		24.0
other															
(compensation)			0.0		0.0		0.0		0.0		0.0		0.0		0.0
GDP		25 991.5	25 845.4	28 241.0	28 094.4	30 680.2	30 371.6	33 177.7	32 734.0	35 756.4	35 242.2	38 711.4	37 967.1	41 804.8	40 813.2
Import GNFS		22 946.9	22 762.5	25 512.1	25 194.5	28 335.1	27 900.5	31 732.9	31 118.0	35 738.8	34 852.8	40 083.3	38 749.7	44 583.2	42 935.8
			<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>
GDP			146.1		146.6		308.6		443.7		514.2		744.3		991.6
Import GNFS			184.4		317.5		434.6		614.9		886.0		1 333.6		1 647.4

* - change – the difference between the two scenarios in nominal figures

Table 2

	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
<i>real growths</i>	<i>SF funds</i>	<i>baseline</i>	<i>SF funds</i>	<i>baseline</i>	<i>SF funds</i>	<i>baseline</i>	<i>SF funds</i>	<i>baseline</i>	<i>SF funds</i>	<i>baseline</i>	<i>SF funds</i>	<i>baseline</i>	<i>SF funds</i>	<i>baseline</i>
GDP	5.9%	5.6%	6.2%	5.8%	6.1%	5.7%	5.7%	5.4%	5.4%	5.3%	5.5%	5.3%	5.4%	5.2%
Imports goods	12.7%	11.7%	12.7%	12.2%	12.4%	12.0%	12.4%	11.9%	11.6%	11.0%	11.0%	9.9%	9.6%	9.2%
Exports goods	14.3%	14.3%	13.1%	12.9%	13.0%	12.9%	14.2%	12.7%	12.8%	12.3%	12.1%	11.8%	11.7%	11.2%
	<i>change*</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>	
GDP	0.3		0.4		0.4		0.3		0.1		0.2		0.2	
Imports goods	1.0		0.6		0.4		0.5		0.7		1.0		0.4	
Exports goods	0.0		0.2		0.1		1.5		0.5		0.3		0.5	
<i>real growth</i>														
Domestic Demand	6.8%	5.9%	7.1%	6.5%	6.9%	6.3%	6.2%	6.3%	6.1%	5.8%	6.0%	5.2%	5.1%	4.9%
	<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>		<i>change</i>	
Domestic Demand	0.9		0.6		0.6		-0.1		0.3		0.8		0.2	

* - change – the difference between the real growths in the two scenarios in percentage points

12.21. Annex 21: Operational Programmes, OP priorities and operations

Operational Programmes and Priorities	Operations
OP Administrative Capacity	
1. Good governance	<p>Operation 1.1. Effective structure of the state administration</p> <p>Operation 1.2. Transparent and accountable state administration</p> <p>Operation 1.3. Effective coordination and partnership for policy making and implementation</p> <p>Operation 1.4. Administration partner with business</p> <p>Operation 1.5. Transparent and effective judicial system</p> <p>Operation 1.6. Transnational cooperation</p>
2. Human resources management in the state administration, judiciary system and the structures of civil society	<p>Operation 2.1. Modern human resources management in the state administration</p> <p>Operation 2.2. Competent and effective state administration</p> <p>Operation 2.3. Strengthening the capacity of the civil society structures</p> <p>Operation 2.4. Competent judicial system</p> <p>Operation 2.5. Cooperation and good practices in human resources management in the state administration, civil society structures and the judicial system</p>
3. Quality of administrative service delivery and e-government development	<p>Operation 3.1. Improving service delivery to the citizens and the business, including e-governance development</p> <p>Operation 3.2. Standard information and communication environment and interoperability</p> <p>Operation 3.3. Support for the development of information technologies in the judicial system</p> <p>Operation 3.4. Transnational cooperation</p>
4. Technical Assistance	<p>Operation 4.1. Management and implementation of the OPAC</p> <p>Operation 4.2. Promotion of the OPAC</p> <p>Operation 4.3. Cooperation and good practices in the management and implementation of the OPAC</p>
OP Competitiveness	
1. Development of a knowledge-based economy and	1.1. Support for creation and commercialization of innovations by enterprises

innovation activities	1.2. Improvement of the pro-innovative infrastructure
2. Increasing efficiency of enterprises and promoting a supportive business environment	2.1. Improvement of technologies and management in enterprises 2.2. Creation of business support infrastructure 2.3. Introduction of energy-saving technologies and renewable energy sources 2.4. Promotion of business networking and clustering
3. Financial Resources for Developing Enterprises	3.1. Improvement of access to finance for SMEs through instruments of financial engineering 3.2. Support for creating or extending the operation of existing business angels networks in Bulgaria.
4. Strengthening the international market positions of Bulgarian economy	4.1. Promoting the investors' advantages of Bulgaria 4.2. Promoting the internationalisation of the Bulgarian enterprises 4.3. Improvement of the certification infrastructure
5. Technical Assistance	5.1. Support for the management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the operational programme 5.2. Other activities for the implementation of the OP
OP Environment	
1. Improvement and development of waste water infrastructure in settlements with over 2 000 PE	
2. Improvement and development of waste treatment infrastructure	
3. Preservation and restoration of biodiversity	
4. Technical assistance	
OP Human Resources development	
1. Promotion of sustainable employment and development of inclusive labour market	1.1. Employment through development of entrepreneurship 1.2. Integration of vulnerable groups on the labour market
2. Raising of adaptability and competitiveness of the employed persons	2.1. Improving the adaptability of employed persons 2.2. Promoting the labour market flexibility 2.3. Improving the working conditions at the workplace
3. Improving the quality of education and training in correspondence with the labour market needs for building knowledge-based economy	3.1. Improving of the quality of services in education and training 3.2. Modernising the education and training system 3.3. Strengthening the ties between educational and training institutions, R&D sector and

	business
4. Better access and integration to education and training	4.1. Access to education and training for disadvantaged groups 4.2. Children and youth in education and society 4.3. Development of the life-long learning system
5. Social inclusion and enhancement of social economy	5.1. Support to the social economy 5.2. Social services in support of labour market integration 5.3. Employability through better health
6. Improvement of the efficiency of the labour market institutions and social and healthcare services	6.1. Development and modernisation of the labour market system 6.2. Strengthening the capacity of institutions for provision of social and health services
7. Transnational cooperation	
8. Technical assistance	8.1. Support for HRD OP Management 8.2. Assistance for Information and Promotion of HRD OP 8.3. Strengthening the capacity of potential beneficiaries
OP Regional Development	
1. Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development	Operation 1.1. Social Infrastructure Operation 1.2. Housing Operation 1.3. Organisation of Economic Activities Operation 1.4. Improvement of Physical Environment and Risk Prevention Operation 1.5. Sustainable Urban Transportation Systems
2. Regional and Local Accessibility	Operation 2.1. Regional and Local Road Infrastructure Operation 2.2. ICT Networks and Services Operation 2.3. Access to sustainable and efficient energy resources
3. Sustainable Tourism Development	Operation 3.1. Enhancement of tourism attractions and related infrastructure Operation 3.2. Regional Tourism Product Development and Marketing of Destinations Operation 3.3. National Tourism Marketing
4. Regional and Local Networking, Cooperation and Capacity	Operation 4.1. Integrated Development Partnerships Operation 4.2. Spatial Planning and Project Development Operation 4.3. Small-scale Local Investments Operation 4.4. Inter-regional Cooperation
5. Technical Assistance	Operation 5.1. Management, Monitoring, Evaluation and Control

	Operation 5.2. Communication, Information and Publicity Operation 5.3. Technical Administration
OP Transport	
1. Development of railway infrastructure along the major national and Trans-European transport axes	1.1. Modernization, rehabilitation and electrification of railway sections along the trans-European transport axes of nation-wide and EU importance 1.2. Modernization, rehabilitation and electrification of railway sections connecting the main railway network of Republic of Bulgaria with the main railway networks of the neighbouring countries
2. Development of road infrastructure along the major national and Trans-European transport axes	2.1. Construction of new and rehabilitation and modernization of the existing motorways of nation-wide and EU importance along the TEN-T network with a major priority to the operations located in the TEN-T priority axis 7 2.2. Construction of new and modernization and rehabilitation of the existing I class roads of nation-wide and EU importance along TEN-T network 2.3. Construction of new and modernization and rehabilitation of the existing II class roads of nation-wide and EU importance along the TEN-T network 2.4. Construction, modernization and rehabilitation of road sections connecting the main road network of Bulgaria with the main road networks of the neighbouring countries
3. Improvement of inter-modality for passengers and freight	3.1. Improvement of the network of combined transport terminals and development of areas for freight villages 3.2. Development of multimodal mobility for passenger in Sofia
4. Improvement of the maritime and inland-waterway navigation	4.1. Removing the bottlenecks on the Danube River (TEN-T priority axes 18) 4.2. Setting up and development of navigation information systems
5. Technical Assistance	5.1. Preparation of General Transport Master Plan 5.2. Preparation, Evaluation, Monitoring and Control of SOPT 5.3. Strengthening the administrative capacity 5.4. Information and Publicity 5.5. Preparation of General Plan for Monitoring of the Environment and its implementation 5.6. Administrative management of SOPT
OP Technical Assistance	
1. Support to the implementation of the activities, performed by the Central Coordination Unit,	Operation 1: Training and support to the Central Coordination Unit Operation 2: Technical Assistance for the Certifying Authority

Certifying Authority and Audit Authority, OPTA Managing Authority, NSRF Monitoring Committee and OPTA Monitoring Committee	Operation 3: Technical Assistance for the Audit Authority Operation 4: Ensuring Support for the OP “Technical Assistance” Implementation
2. Further development and support for the functioning of the Unified Management Information System	Operation 1: Overall support to the UMIS launching, implementation, further software development and adaptation Operation 2: Continuous support and training for the users of UMIS Operation 3: Establishment of Help Desk for UMIS Operation 4: Hardware supply for the UMIS needs
3. Promotion of European Cohesion Policy in Bulgaria and Ensuring the Provision of General and Statistical Information.	Operation 1: Supporting public information campaigns of the European Cohesion Policy; Operation 2: Ensuring appropriate statistics, data and impact analyses throughout the current as well as the next programming periods; Operation 3: Functioning of a national network of regional Info Points on the Cohesion Policy in Bulgaria.

12.22. Annex 22: Further information concerning the Transition Facility in Bulgaria

Title	Total Budget (in euro)	Project Purpose(s)
Strengthening the public management of the judiciary and court administration	2 200 000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvement of the Supreme Judicial Council operational structure, effective management and administrative capacity as a policy making body in the process of the strategic planning, in order to ensure efficiency of the judicial process; - Improvement of the access to information and transparency of the judicial system in the context of the public awareness and outreach through strengthened coordination and cooperation of the courts, court administration and other institutions of the judicial system in Bulgaria with government, professional and civil society organizations.
Strengthening the equally application of the new procedural legislation in Bulgaria	2 000 000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvement of institutional capacity of the Supreme Court of Cassation and Supreme Administrative Court and Regional Administrative Courts to apply equally the new penal, civil and administrative procedural legislation.
Support for the development of sustainable training programmes in the field of protection of classified information for the judiciary and the public administration with emphasis on the border and local administration	1 000 000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of sustainable training programs, for the State Commission on Information Security (SCIS), specifically designed for training of the judiciary in the field of protection of national classified information and EU classified information; - Development of sustainable training programs for the State Commission on Information Security

		(SCIS) in order to provide the necessary knowledge and skills of the border and local administration for the proper handling of national and/or EU classified information.
A further step towards a higher quality of training in the judiciary	800 000	- Improvement of quality of training of magistrates and court clerks, provided by NIJ, through elaboration of programs for distant continuing training in EU-law as well as in further specialized topics (fight against corruption, fight against financial fraud, judicial co-operation in civil and criminal matters etc.); introduction of technology and software for distant learning as well as elaboration of a module for regional trainings for court clerks.

12.23. Annex 23: Further information concerning the environmental acquis in Bulgaria

1. Transitional arrangements and programmes for implementing EU Directives

During *Chapter 22 Environment* negotiations extreme efforts are exerted to establish the financial parameters of the financial commitments of the country with respect to the environmental acquis. The preliminary analysis showed that transitional arrangements would be necessary in order to ensure the public and private resources to fully comply with the requirements in this sphere, especially concerning the so called 'heavy directives'. The respective periods relating to 10 Directives were justified with detailed implementation programmes containing budgetary calculations. Within the framework of the implementation programmes further budget estimations were made:

Table 1: Total public investment expenditures according to the implementation programmes (in mln. euro):

Sector	Total investment expenditures	Investment expenditures till 2005	Investment expenditures for the period 2005-2009 (annual, cumulative)						Investment expenditures after 2009
			2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2005 - 2009	
Waters	2 218	144	120	151	175	211	239	896	1 177
Waste	445	53	51	52	54	29	31	216	176
Pollution	47	16	8	7	7	6	4	31	0
Emissions	657	137	164	195	161	0	0	520	0
Total	3 367	350	343	405	396	245	274	1 663	1 353

Source: Implementation programmes

Table 2: EU norms and the transitional periods (since 01.01.2007):

DIRECTIVE/REGULATION	PERIOD
Directive 99/32/EC concerning sulphur content of liquid fuels OTHOCHO	3 years – until 31.12.2009 for gas oil 5 years – until 31.12.2011 for boiler fuels
Directive 94/63/EC on the control of volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions resulting from the storage of petrol and its distribution from terminals to service stations	1 year – until 31.12.2007 r. for 355 gas stations and for 50 tankers 3 years – until 31.12.2009 for 653 gas stations and for 466 tankers
Directive 94/62/EC for restriction of the quantity of packages in the waste flow	5 years – until 31.12.2013 for 22.5% plastic recycling 6 years – until 31.12.2014 for 60% waste reuse 6 years – until 31.12.2014 for 55% waste recycling 5 years – until 31.12.2013 for 60% glass recycling
Directive 99/31/EC on the landfill of waste	8 years – until 31.12.2014 for 14 installations
Regulation (EEC) No 259/93 on the supervision and control of shipments of waste within, into and out of the European Community	3 years – until 31.12.2009 for some imported waste
Directive 91/271/EC concerning urban waste water treatment	4 years – until 31.12.2010 for settlements above 10 000 PE 8 years – until 31.12.2014 for settlements with 2000-10 000 PE
Directive 96/61/EC concerning integrated pollution prevention and control	1 year 2 months – until 31.12.2008 – for 5 installations 2 years 2 months – until 31.12.2009 – for 1 installation 5 years 2 months – until 31.12.2011 – for 35 installations
Directive 2001/80/EC on the limitation of emissions of certain pollutants into the air from large combustion plants	8 years – until 31.12.2014 – (for some thermo-electric power stations until 31.12.2008 and 31.12.2010).
Directive 2002/96/EC	2 years – until 31.12.2008

2. The compliance with EU standards and requirements in the area of environment will take stage-by-stage character and will cover the following environmental areas:

A. Waters

The introduction of an integrated water management on basin level as it is required by the Framework water directive and development of basin management plans are an important part of the MOEW policy.

The realization of the programme for WWTP construction is on its pace. Some important priorities related with the provision of good quality and sufficient quantity of waters for different purposes are: realization of projects for preparation and development of collection and treatment of waste waters, improvement and expansion of settlement' water supply systems, and further avoiding of water supply limitations in best part of the existing settlements with water supply problems, and achieving full compliance with the EU drinking water quality requirements. Bulgaria currently invests and must invest significant additional investments for construction of new and renovation of existing urban water supply and waste water collection and treatment systems before their returning back in the nature.

Significant part of investments necessary to meet the EU water requirements will be ensured by the Cohesion fund under OP Environment 2007-2013 – 1 284 207 842 Euro (incl. national co-financing).

Bulgaria should meet the requirements of Directive 91/271/EEC for purification of urban waste waters for agglomerations with population higher than 10 000 PE before 31 December 2010, and for those with population among 2 000 and 10 000 PE – before 31 December 2014. This needs expansion, reconstruction and modernization of existing, and construction of new WWTP in the relevant settlements. The above mentioned deadlines are the time schedule for purification of waste waters in accordance with this Directive' requirements.

Meanwhile Bulgaria has declared all her waters are sensitive (without river of Mesta and Dobrudja rivers areas). This leads to the meeting of requirement for extraction of azoth and phosphor components in the waste water of agglomerations placed in such sensitive areas.

In 2003 in Bulgaria Implementation programme for achieving the requirements of Directive 91/271/EEC was designed. According to it, for 430 agglomerations (separate or groups of settlements, resorts, recreation villages, squares in big cities) construction is needed of full-containing sewage infrastructure, completion of the construction or renovation of sewage networks and WWTP.

Approximately 70% of the total budget of OP Environment 2007-2013 are provided for financing of water supply and sewage infrastructure. This will ensure about 68% of the required financing for the Implementation programme of Directive 91/271/EC.

B. Waste

Waste generation in Bulgaria continues to be a problem jeopardizing the environmental quality. The measures for solving of that problem that take place in the national legislation cover all waste management aspects and are in compliance with the EU requirements.

MOEW follows a policy for closure of all illegal landfills and old polluted terrains, of expansion and optimization of the construction and municipal waste collection system, covering all settlements, via stage-by-stage construction of systems for separated collection, secondary utilization and recycling of mass wastes. The expenses and investments for waste treatment, utilization and deactivation continue to increase, due to the enforcement of legislation and modern technical standards.

Continues the stage-by-stage construction of facilities for deactivation of municipal waste implementing the national obligations taken under chapter 22 "Environment" for waste depositing and introduction of separated collection and utilization of packaging waste.

A main priority in the area of waste management is the establishment of system for separated collection of municipal wastes. The development of national and local systems for separate collection of packaging waste will allow the delays and gaps in place to be overpowered and

progress will be achieved in the implementation by Republic of Bulgaria of requirements for separate collection of packaging waste to EU, thus taking its worthy place like a Community member.

Priority axis 2 **“Improvement and development of waste treatment infrastructure”** of OP Environment 2007-2013 foresees significant investments in sector “Waste” – 366 743 573 Euro (including national co-financing). This priority assists mainly the compliance with Directive 75/442/EEC for wastes and Directive 1999/31/EEC for waste depositing. In that moment good part of the existing landfills serving settlements with organized waste collection do not meet the requirements of the national and EU legislation for waste depositing. Exception exists for those constructed, reconstructed, renovated or established after 1997. Because of the associated risk their rehabilitation is a first-rate priority, in order to provide their further exploitation or closure and construction of new relevant new facilities in line with the implementation programme for Directive 1999/31/EC for waste depositing.

During the negotiation process Republic of Bulgaria agreed on a number of transition periods in some programmes for implementation, as follows:

- For Directive 94/62/EC, amended by Directive 2004/12/EC:
 - 2 years (till 31.12.2008) for the requirement of 60% paper recycled; 50% metals recycling and 15% wood recycling;
 - 6 years (till 31.12.2014) for 60% waste utilization and 55% - 80% packaging waste recycling;
 - 5 years (till 31.12.2013) for 22,5% plastics recycling and 60% glass recycling;
- For Directive 2002/95/(EC) and Directive 2002/96/EC, amended by Directive 2003/108/EC:
 - 2 years (till 31.12.2008) for the separate collection and secondary utilization/recycling targeting at 4 kg/citizen/year;
- For Directive 99/31/EC:
 - 8 years (till 31.12.2014) for 14 installations, in the context of prohibition for depositing of liquid waste;
- For Regulation 259/93/EEC:
 - 3 years (till 31.12.2009) for the import of some types of wastes in the Yellow list not mentioned in a list for possible utilization.

C. Biodiversity

The MOEW policy in the area of preservation of natural heritage and protection of the rich biodiversity of our eco-systems is in relation with the inclusion of these eco-systems in protected areas and the establishment of national network of environmental protected areas NATURA 2000, and aims to achieve the global objective for stopping the process of world biodiversity losing till 2010.

The main challenge in the coming years is the establishment and maintenance of system protected areas in Republic of Bulgaria, consisted by units being in compliance with their structure and purpose in those covered by the European environmental network NATURA 2000, to which the national protected areas system will be included after the accession of our country towards EU.

In order to monitor the impact of measures for protection of the NATURA 2000 habitats mapping and assessment should take place on the current positions of habitats at national scope. The assessment report will provide the backbone information for the conservation statute of species and habitats covered by Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.

Within the frames of priority axis 3 Protection and restoration of biodiversity in OP Environment 2007-2013 an amount of **103 308 048 euro** are provided to finance the activities in sector “biodiversity”.

D. Air

The main legislation in the country for the “air” sector is focused in the **Law for the protection of the environment, the law of the cleanliness of the atmospheric air and the sub legislative normative acts**. In line with the national program for the gradual suspension of manufacturing and usage of leaded fuel since 01.01.2004 in the country is forbidden the use and manufacturing of leaded fuel.

During the negotiation process of Bulgaria with the EC, transitional periods for a few programs were negotiated, as follows:

- **by the end of 2011** for the limitation of sulphur in the vehicle fuels up to 1% (popular/mass) in line with the directive 99/32/EC. In the program for the application of this directive, the current situation is being investigated, calculated are the expenses for reaching those and the sources of financing. The general expenses for reaching the requirements of the directive are estimated to be 1.5 mln. euro, which will be provided mainly from the state budget.
- **by the end of 2007 and 2009** for the limitation of emissions of VOC when safekeeping, transportation and distribution of fuels for terminals and gas stations with “medium” and “low” capacity in line Directive 94/63/EC. The negotiated transitional periods are for the accomplishment of the requirements, connected with the emissions of volatile organic compounds, as a result of the safekeeping, transportation and distribution of fuels for terminals and gas stations with “medium” and “low” capacity. In the program for the implementation of this directive, the existing (or functioning) installations and gas stations were examined on the territory of the country, calculated are the expenses for reaching those requirements, and the sources of financing have been described. The investment plan for the application of this directive does not envisage the usage of outside financing for ensuring the availability of investments for reaching this parity. It is negotiated that, the investments should be provided by the operators of the terminals in question, the gas stations and the transportation companies. The investments for the implementation of the measures in connection with the armed forces, the police and the state reserve will be divided equally between the state budget and the Entity for the management of activities connected with the environment (EMACE).
- **by the end of 2011 and by the end of 2014** for the gradual bringing into compliance (for the achievement of the norms for the allowed emission levels) of the different reactors of TEPS “Ruse”, “Lukoil Neftohim – Burgas”, “Varna” and “Bobov dol” in line with Directive 2001/80/EC. The transitional periods are for gradual achievement of compliance (i.e. for the achievement of the admissible values for the emission levels) of the different reactors of TEPS “Ruse”, TEPS “Lukoil Neftohim – Burgas”, TEPS “Varna” and TEPS “Bobov dol”. The other 31 functioning large scale fuel installations, incl., the big pollutants in the region of TEPS “Maritza Iztok” will be brought into compliance by the end of 2007. The program for application outlines expenses and sources of financing. For the above mentioned TEPSs, financing is envisaged solely from private sources of the operators (i.e. new owners of installations). The program for implementation envisages financing of expenses connected with the functioning of the large scale fuel installations, which should be compliant by 2007, solely from private sources of the operators.

In relation to the above mentioned operating program “Environment” 2007-2013 does not envisage financing from the cohesion and/or structural funds for the implementation of the requirements of these directives.

The program for implementation of Directive 99/13/EC for the limitation of the emissions of VOC (volatile organic compounds) from the usage of solvents in certain manufacturing activities does not envisage transitional period for its implementation. As a result, the already applied technical requirements should also be applied toward the currently operating installations on the territory of the country by 31.10.2007.

E. Emissions of hothouse gasses

The Ministry of Environment and Water is the responsible institution for conducting the Climate change policy in the Republic of Bulgaria and it is one of the key policies for the sustainable development. With the ratification of the Frame convention of the United Nations for the climate change and the Kyoto protocol attached to it, the Bulgarian government clearly demonstrates its concern and will to join the International efforts to avoid this change.

The European scheme for trade with quotas for hothouse gasses emissions and the International negotiations for duties related to the Kyoto protocol for the period after 2012 are also priority for our country. Since 1 January 2007 with the accession to EU, Bulgaria will implement Directive of the European parliament and the European Council introduction scheme for trade with quotas for emissions of hothouse gasses in the frame of the Community. Implementation of the European scheme for trade with emissions of hothouse gasses in Bulgaria is a challenge for our country. The Bulgarian enterprises will have to provide monitoring and reporting of the emissions in full compliance with the legislative requirements, which demand from the operators of the installations to input new internal procedures for management of the data for the emissions of the hothouse gasses and to integrate them in the now working systems for management of the quality and systems for management of the environment. At the same time the participation of our country in the European scheme for trade with emissions give flexibility to the operators of the installations which fall into the range of the Directive to achieve their aims for decrease of the emissions of carbon dioxide according to their own strategies for most effective development.

Operational programme “Environment 2007 – 2013” do not envisage financing from the Cohesion fund and/or the Structural funds for this sector.

F. Noise

The environmental noise, caused by the transport is one of the main ecological problems in the big cities of the country. The examination of the city noise is made by internal methodology and indicators, adopted in the frame of the National system for control, restrain and decrease of the city noise.

Problems which directly correspond to the noise pollution coming from the ground transport are lack of noise-isolating equipments, weaknesses in the town-planning, ineffective organization of the traffic, badly maintained road network. A new legislation for the utmost limits of noise, reading the specific aviation noise will be elaborated in the future.

Directive 2000/14 ES about the levels of the noise emissions emitted from open equipment and Directive 86/594/EES about the noise from house equipment are transposed in the national legislation in year 2003. At the end of August 2005 a law for protection from the environmental noise was adopted and it transposes to the Directive 2002/49/ES about the evaluation and management of the environmental noise. To implement the requirements of Directive 2002/49/ES, secondary legislation for the indicators of the noise in the environment

and elaboration of strategic maps for noise and action plans are currently elaborated. Bulgaria took the engagement from the date of being a full member to implement the European legislation in “Noise” Sector, adopted until 2003 and for that reason the Operational programme “Environment 2007 - 2013” will not provide financing for this sector from the Cohesion and the Structural funds of EU.

G. Soils

The Ministry of the Environment and Waters directed its efforts to the legal regulation of the requirements for comprehensive management of the lands and fight with the devastation. A step to achieve the aims is the elaboration of a new law for the soils and elaboration and adoption of a National programme for action, with clearly formulated priorities for their sustainable management and concrete strategic measures for fight with the devastation and sustainable management of lands. Incorporation of the sustainable management of the lands to the local regulation of the management of the lands, as well as the incorporation of the National programme for action to the future plans for development of the municipalities and plans for management of the river pools.

On other hand the National programme for action for sustainable management of the lands is the instrument, with which the national policies and resources, related to the sustainable management of the lands will join, as a result of these friendly conditions consistent land policy will be created in the country.

3. Estimates of the required expenditures in the environmental sector

Cost analysis was conducted for the period 1998-2015 as a result from the EU-funded project “Technical assistance for development of national programme for acquis alignment”, and revised under project BUL 111 “Development of Bulgarian programme for implementing the aligned legislation in the field of environment”.

The most recent study combines the results from the two previous ones and the results are the following:

Table 3: Expenditures for EU accession (in mln. euro, 2001):

Sector	Total investment expenditures		Annual investment expenditures		Annual expenditures for exploitation and maintenance		Total annual expenditures	
	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.
Air pollution	3051	3260	359	383	391	428	750	811
Drinking water	246	1 463	29	172	16	53	45	225
Waste water	734	1 114	86	131	16	22	102	153
Waste treatment	476	850	56	100	49	102	105	202
Waste management	850	1 150	100	135	93	132	193	267
Nitrates	103	155	12	18	-	-	12	18
Others	30	30	3	3	12	12	15	15
Total	5 490	8 022	645	942	577	749	1 222	1 691

Source: World Bank, 2001.

The necessity for large-scale investments in the environmental sector is obvious. Therefore, pre-accession instruments such as Phare, ISPA and Sapard play a key role, which for the next programming period is overtaken by the Structural and Cohesion Funds, IFIs, public-private partnerships as well as direct private financing.

LIST OF PHARE PROJECTS RELATED TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ACQUIS TRANSPOSITION AND IMPLEMENTATION		
Name of the project	Budget (euro)	Short description
BG 2004/016-711.07.01: Transposition and implementation of the environmental acquis at national level	2.310 mln.	<p>The purpose of this project is to improve the institutional and administrative framework necessary to implement and enforce the legislation in the field of fuel quality and marketing requirements (FQMR), supervision and control over transboundary movement of waste and genetically modified organisms. The sub-purposes aim to assist the Bulgarian authorities in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transposition of the new EU FQC directives and survey of the possibilities for implementation of the new EU fuel quality control (FQC) directives and parallel study of the quality control and marketing requirements for each fuel type; • Assist Bulgaria with the development of institutional capacities for the implementation of EU requirements in the genetically modified organisms sector and to ensure adequate level of GMO management; • Preparation of the experts responsible for supervision and control of transboundary movement of wastes for implementation of the <i>acquis communautaire</i> within this scope, through assessment of the existing legislative solutions, organizational systems and comparison of the services' experiences in this area with those of the EU Member States
BG 2004/016-711.07.02: Implementation of the environmental acquis at regional and local level	7.034 mln.	<p>The purpose of this project is to improve the institutional and administrative framework at local level necessary to implement and enforce the legislation and supporting the necessary investments to give effect to the entire body of the EU Environmental acquis.</p> <p>The sub-purposes aim to assist the Bulgarian authorities in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening the monitoring and reporting capacity of the Ministry of Health (MoH) and other relevant institutions and improving the capacity building of the Regional Hygiene and Epidemiology Inspectorates (RHEIs) and the National Centres - National Centre of Hygiene, Medical Ecology and Nutrition (NCHMEN) and National Centre of Radiobiology and Radiation Protection (NCRRP). • Establishment of the most appropriate administrative structures in order to ensure implementation of integrated waste management approach within selected regions and to undertake all necessary steps in order to ensure the start of the proper functioning of these systems • Strengthening administrative capacity of the local Bulgarian authorities in development and implementation of municipal environmental programs in accordance with the national and EU environmental requirements and improvement of the information systems and data exchange at local level.
BG 2005/017-353.06.02: Further development of administrative capacity in implementation of the environmental acquis at local level	2.000 mln.	<p>This project aims to assist the Bulgarian authorities in further strengthening the capacity of the local authorities and other relevant organisations, such as Regional Environmental Inspectorates, for preparation and management of environmental investment plans, programmes and projects with emphasis on development and implementation of different financial schemes for environmental projects and further improvement of the information systems and data exchange at local level, raising public awareness about environmental issues and establishment of the most appropriate administrative structures at local level in order to ensure implementation of integrated environmental management approach.</p>
BG 2005/017-353.11.02.13: Preparation of Executive Environment Agency for implementation of EU environmental reporting obligations	0.150 000 mln.	<p>Strengthening the Bulgarian Executive Environment Agency in order to implement effectively all environmental data reporting obligations to European institutions</p>

LIST OF ISPA PROJECTS RELATED TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ACQUIS

Name of the investment project	Budget (euro)	Short description
2000/BG/16/P/PE/002 "Set of Six Regional Waste Disposal Sites- Montana, Pernik, Rousse, Sevlievo, Silistra and Sozopol located in Bulgaria"	54 519 761	The measure implements one of eight axes of the National Waste Management Programme (NWMP). The Programme contains an action plan covering legislative, institutional and investment measures. The plan identifies performance objectives, responsible institutions and potential sources of financing – national and international (EU instruments, international financial instruments, bilateral agreements with Member States, etc.).
2001/BG/16/P/PE/005 "Regional Wastewater Treatment and Collection Located in Gorna Oriahovitza, Republic of Bulgaria"	14 970 551	The measure is one of the 36 priority projects of the "National Programme for construction of urban wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) in the Republic of Bulgaria". The objective of the Programme is to establish, according to the identified river basins, the priorities for construction of urban WWTPs for all populated areas in the country with over 10 000 population equivalent. The measure is also consistent with the National Development Plan until the year 2006, Sector "Environment".
2001/BG/16/P/PE/006 "Wastewater Collection and Treatment Located in Pazardjik, Republic of Bulgaria"	17 199 871	The measure is consistent with the National Programme for priority construction of urban wastewater treatment plants in the Republic Bulgaria. The objective of the Programme is to establish, according to the identified river basins, the priorities for construction of urban WWTPs for all populated areas in the country with over 10,000 equivalent inhabitants. It includes finalising the construction of unfinished urban WWTPs, reconstruction, extension and modernisation of existing ones, as well as design and construction of new urban WWTPs.
2001/BG/16/P/PE/008 "Wastewater Treatment Located in Blagoevgrad, Republic of Bulgaria"	11 322 419	The measure is designed to meet effluent standards within the Urban Wastewater Directive 91/271 for discharges from agglomerations greater than 10,000 population as transposed in the Bulgarian legislation by the Ordinance 6/9.11.2000. The measure will serve a population of 87,520 for the year 2025, corresponding to a population equivalent of 111.111.
2002/BG/16/P/PE/009 "Wastewater Collection and Treatment located in Bourgas- Meden Rudnik, Republic of Bulgaria"	10 206 220	The overall project comprises the construction of a wastewater treatment plant for the treatment of wastewater generated in Meden Rudnik, which will eliminate the discharge of untreated sewage into the Black sea plus additional works on the existing sewerage network and on the connection to the future WWTP.
2002/BG/16/P/PE/010 "Wastewater Collection and Treatment located in Targovishte, Republic of Bulgaria"	15 235 915	Domestic and industrial wastewaters arising from the town are currently discharged into the river Vrana without any treatment in combination with infiltration water, and when applicable storm-water flows. The overall project comprises the construction of a wastewater treatment plant for the treatment of wastewater generated in the city of Targovishte, which will eliminate the discharge of untreated sewage into the Black sea basin; plus additional works relating to the existing sewerage network and to the connections to the future WWTP.
2002/BG/16/P/PE/011 "Wastewater Collection and Treatment located in Lovech, Republic of Bulgaria"	17 811 576	Domestic and industrial wastewaters arising from the town are currently discharged without any treatment in a mixture with infiltration water, and when applicable storm-water flows, to the Osam river. The overall project comprises the construction of a wastewater treatment plant for the treatment of wastewater generated in the city of Lovech, which will eliminate the discharge of untreated sewage into the Danube River; plus additional works on the existing sewerage network and on the connection with the future WWTP.
2002/BG/16/P/PE/012 "Wastewater Collection and Treatment located in Montana, Republic of Bulgaria"	15 067 113	The overall project comprises the construction of a wastewater treatment plant for the treatment of wastewater generated in the city of Montana, which will eliminate the discharge of untreated sewage into the Danube River; plus ancillary works necessary to ensure the connection of the new plant to the existing sewerage network.

2002/BG/16/P/PE/0014 “Wastewater Collection and Treatment located in Sevlievo, Republic of Bulgaria”	13 987 623	Sevlievo has, currently, a population of approximately 28 600 which will grow to approximately 32 000 in year 2022. Domestic and industrial wastewaters arising from the town are currently discharged without any treatment in a mixture with infiltration water, and when applicable storm-water flows, to the Rositza river after its confluence with the Yantra river downstream of the Municipality of Sevlievo. The overall project comprises the construction of a wastewater treatment plant for the treatment of wastewater generated in the city of Sevlievo, which will eliminate the discharge of untreated sewage into the Danube River, plus additional works on the existing sewerage network and on the connection with the future WWTP.
2002/BG/16/P/PE/015 “Popovo Wastewater Collection and Treatment in Bulgaria”	11 860 433	The overall project comprises the construction of a wastewater treatment plant for the treatment of wastewater generated in the city of Popovo, which will eliminate the discharge of untreated sewage into the Danube River, plus additional works relating to the existing sewerage network and to the connection between the networks and the future WWTP.
2002/BG/16/P/PE/016 – Varna Integrated Water Project in Bulgaria	25 432 000	The measure comprises the following components: (a) Transformation of the old Asparuhovo preliminary WWTP into a new transfer pumping station with mechanical treatment and a 2.25 km long transfer pipeline underneath Varna lake to be connected to the main Varna sewer network and to the main Varna plant; (b) Refurbishment of part of the main collector sewer in Asparuhovo with connection to the new main pumping station; (c) Upgrading of the current main Varna WWTP (secondary plant) to full secondary treatment inclusive of nitrogen removal and prepared for biological phosphorous reduction; (d) Refurbishment of part of the existing drinking water system; (e) Refurbishment of part of the existing sewerage system; (f) Technical assistance for implementation; (g) Supervision.
2002/BG/16/P/PE/017 - Balchik Integrated Water Project in Bulgaria	21 589 225	The measure proposed indicatively includes: (a) Water supply infrastructure rehabilitation (primarily the replacement of asbestos cement pipes); (b) Sewerage rehabilitation and extension to achieve approximately 100 % connection from the current 40 %; (c) New Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) using re-circulated activated sludge technology and a 240m long sea marine outfall; (d) Technical assistance for implementation support in the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) on the Dobrich Regional water company; (e) Supervision during construction.
2002/BG/16/P/PE/018 - Shoumen Water Cycle Improvements in Bulgaria	30 130 000	The measure is a part of the National Programme of priority construction of Drinking Water and Waste Water Facilities in towns with a population above 10 000 equivalent inhabitants. Components of the measure: A) Reconstruction of the Water Supply System; B) Extension and Refurbishment of the Sewerage Network; C) Extension of Waste Water Treatment Plant to secondary treatment; D) TA/Supervision component; The overall objective of the measure is to protect the Poroiyna and Kamchya Rivers (and ultimately the Black Sea) from polluting discharges of untreated sewage and industrial wastewater as well as to minimise the environmental impacts and the risks to human health for the population living in the target areas served by the new upgraded WWTP, in the areas around the receiving waters and in the Black Sea coastal area.
2002/BG/16/P/PE/013 - Smolian Integrated Water Project in Bulgaria	24 471 021	The measure will consist of the following main components: – Refurbishment and extension of the existing main collector of the sewerage system and connection of all the existing forty-five wastewater outfalls to the new/existing main collectors so that the collected wastewater passes to the new Urban Wastewater Treatment Plant (UWWTP); – Refurbishment of part of the existing drinking water system; – Construction of a new urban wastewater treatment plant (WWTP); – Technical assistance during implementation; – Supervision.

2002/BG/16/P/PA/002 - Technical Assistance for the Preparation of a Water Sector Investment Project Located in Sofia, Bulgaria	1 500 000	The proposed future investment measure is consistent with the environmental priorities of the Accession Partnership and its implementation will allow the effective fulfilment of EU Directives 91/271 and 80/778/EEC, which are one of the mid-term priorities of the Bulgarian National Programme for the Adoption of Acquis (NPAA), and is in compliance with the introduction of a new water management organisation, based on the river basin-principle of integrated management.
2003/BG/16/P/PE/019 - Kardjali Regional Waste Management Centre in Bulgaria	14 547 162	The establishment of Kardjali waste management centre is proposed as an important part of Bulgarian national waste disposal infrastructure, which aims at the appropriate disposal of waste generated throughout the territory of Kardjali and Haskovo region. The centre will conform to the Waste Framework Directive which obliges the relevant authorities to establish an integrated and adequate network of disposal installations. The rate of Community assistance granted to the measure is fixed at 75 % and national co-financing is fixed at 25%.
2003/BG/16/P/PA/004 TA for the Preparation for Institutional Strengthening and Preparation of ISPA and Cohesion Fund Projects in the Water and Solid Waste Sector in Bulgaria	15 921 000	This ISPA measure is implemented for strengthening the role of ISPA stakeholders (Municipalities, Regional Water companies etc.) of the projects approved in the pipeline, part of this measure. The main components of this ISPA measure are integrated water and waste management measures and Institutional strengthening of ISPA and Cohesion fund implementing bodies.
2001/BG/16/P/PE/004 "Construction of Flue Gas Desulphurization Plants at Units 5 and 6 of TPP "Maritsa East 2" EAD"	72 330 000	The project has a high priority in the National ISPA Strategy for Environment in the area of air pollution. The next stage is the installation of FGD plants at Units No 5&6, which is vital to ensure Bulgaria meets its requirements under the Protocol for Further Reduction of Sulphur Emissions (Oslo, 1994) and the "acquis communautaire" of the European Union. EBRD has been requested to provide funds for financing the installation of FGD plants for units 5 and 6 in addition to the assistance requested from ISPA. The total project cost is estimated at € 75 million and the proposed financing plan includes an ISPA grant, EBRD financing and local contribution.
2005 BG 16 P PE 006 - Integrated water project for town of Kyustendil located in Kyustendil in Bulgaria	21 200 000	Due to historical underinvestment, the entire water and wastewater stock asset in Kystendil is in a poor state of repair and levels of service are below those considered acceptable by national and international standards.
2005-BG-16-P-PE-001 - Integrated water project for the town of Sliven located in Sliven in Bulgaria	21 200 000	<p>The measure from part of the Implementation programme for EC Directive 91/271/EEC concerning urban wastewater treatment. The discharged waters of Sliven agglomeration have to comply with the requirements for discharges in sensitive areas of agglomerations of more than 10.000 p.e. by 31 December 2010.</p> <p>The objective of the measure is to improve the environment protection of the following components: 1) Extension and renovation of the sewerage network, 2) Technical assistance, 3) Renovation of the wastewater treatment plant. In the financing of the measure is included loan from European Investment Bank which is 15% of the total FM amount, 10% national co-financing and 75% of the Community assistance.</p>
2000-BG-16-P-PE-001 - Integrated water project - City of Sofia located in Sofia in Bulgaria	58 500 000	<p>The measure's implementation will allow the effective fulfilment of EU Directives 91/271/EEC (Urban Wastewater Directive) and EU Directive 98/83/EC on the Quality of Waters Intended for Human Consumption. Compliance with these two Directives is one of the mid-term priorities of the Bulgarian National Programme for Adopting the Acquis (NPAA).</p> <p>This measure is Integral part of Investment plan of the Municipality of Sofia in the area of water management. The proposed investment measure is consistent with the environmental priorities of the Accession partnership and its implementation will allow the effective fulfilment of EU directives 91/271/EEC (the Urban Wastewater Directive) and EU Directive 98/83/EC on the quality of waters intended for Human consumption (which has amended Directive 80/778/EEC). Compliance with these two Directives is one of the mid-term priorities of the Bulgarian National Programme for the adoption of Acquis (NPAA). The rate of Community assistance is 75% of the total amount of the measure, the loan from European Investment bank is 15%</p>

		and national co-financing is 10%.
2006/BG/16/P/PA/001 - Technical Assistance for Project Preparation in the Environmental Sector in Bulgaria	18 846 748	The measure aims at helping the Bulgarian authorities in a set of activities directly linked to the preparation of the sound and viable projects suitable for grant financing under Cohesion fund and Structural funds. Specifically, this measure will help to prepare a set of 7 regional waste management measures and 10 water management projects.

LIST OF THE PROJECTS FOR FINANCING BY EIB FOR ENVIRONMENT FOR "2007-2008" (excluding those already in OP Environment)			
Name of the future investment project that is under preparation	Short description of the separate components of the future investment project	Indicative budget of the component in the investment project (Euro)	Total Indicative budget of the component in the overall investment project (Euro)
Projects prepared under ISPA programme not received financing up to 2006			
1	Vratza (Integrated project for water)	Extension of the existing sewage network-17,4km; Reconstruction of existing sewage network - 10.4 km WWTP Equipment	18 719 974
		Renovation of water supply network, phase I-III -72 km.	6 421 685
2	Gabrovo (Integrated project for water)	Extension of the existing sewage network-17,9km; Reconstruction of existing sewage network - 19,14 km WWTP - reconstruction Equipment	22 145 829
		Renovation of DWTP Reconstruction of water-supply pump station Renovation of water-supply system - 65.6 km.	14 812 990
3	Sliven (Project for water phase II)	Reconstruction of existing sewage network - 10,6 km Equipment	5 556 000
		Renovation of water supply network - 81 km Renovation of 37 pumping stations	13 717 377

4	Kocherinovo (development of regional centre for waste management)	Construction of the first phase of new regional landfill, including simple facilities for composting, areas for construction and demolition waste, facilities for temporary storage of hazardous waste before their transportation to the national facilities. Construction of facilities for utilization of materials. Construction of transfer stations.	31 193 403	34 125 793
		Closure of 18 old landfills and development of gas ventilation or collection/utilization system.	2 932 390	
5	Development of national centre for treatment of Hazardous waste	National centre for treatment of Hazardous waste. The project was included in <u>JASPERS plan for 2006</u>		56 129 000

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