









# Operational Programme Regional Development

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2007-2013



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# OVERALL OBJECTIVE:

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



# Programme budget: BGN 3 131 821 212





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

#### Priority axis 1: Sustainable and integrated urban development

Budget:BGN 1 861 603 132

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

#### Priority axis 2: Regional and local accessibility

Budget:BGN 645 889 482

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

#### Priority axis 3: Sustainable tourism development

**Budget:**BGN 310 294 351

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

#### Priority axis 4: Local development and cooperation

Budget:BGN 208 236 772

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

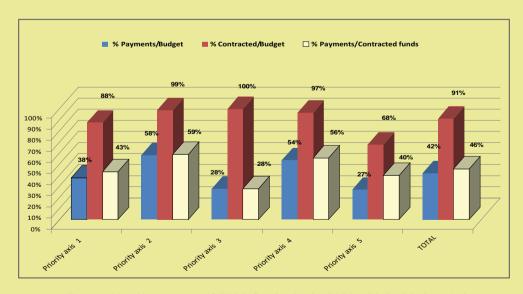
#### **Priority axis 5: Technical assistance**

**Budget:**BGN 105 797 473

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

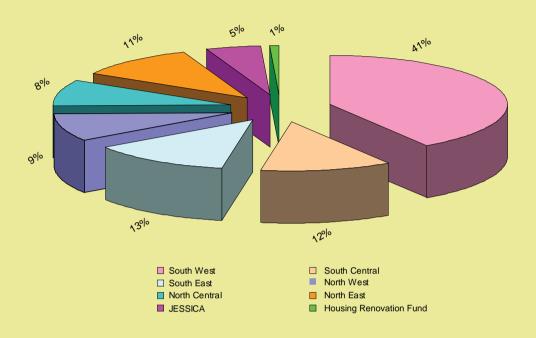
# Indicators of the overall progress of OPRD implementation

- Published were **48 grant schemes** for a total of **BGN 3,131 billion** or above **100 %** of the OPRD budget.
- In 2013 the released resources under the programme will be reallocated to scheme BG161PO001/1.4-01/2007 "Support reduction and prevention of risks and damages caused by fire in urban agglomeration areas" with specific beneficiary the Ministry of Interior
- Under the programme as of 30.04.2013 were **submitted a total of 1893 project proposals** and were signed **1005 contracts to a total amount** of grant **BGN 2,850 billion** or **91 %** of the programme's budget (BGN 3,131 billion);
- The total amount of payments as of 30.04.2013 adds up to **BGN 1 036** billion or 46 % of contracted funds and 33 % of **OPRD budget**. The total amount of certified funds is **BGN 858 million**.
- With these indicators OPRD finds its place among the most successful programmes in Bulgaria. Through supported activities we reach every region of the country, demonstrating visible results and contributing for improved quality of living and working environment of each Bulgarian citizen with **better access** to basic services and new opportunities for increased regional competitiveness and sustainable development.



Financial implementation of OPRD for the 01.01.2007 - 30.04.2013 period

## % paid funds by regions at NUTS 2 level for the 01.01.2007- 30.04.2013 period





# Key projects of Operational Programme Regional Development 2007-2013

#### 1. Deinstitutionalization of children in the Republic of Bulgaria

Within the framework of Operation 1.1 Social infrastructure a grant scheme "Support for deinstitutionalization of social institutions providing services to children at risk" is in implementation. Specific beneficiaries are 62 municipalities in urban agglomerations. The scheme aims to support construction/ reconstruction/ renovation of an adequate infrastructure on the territory of urban agglomerations, to replace institutional care and provide new opportunities to children with disabilities and their families to receive assistance within the community and in their natural environment. Signed were 62 contracts to a total amount of BGN 103 million. With the implementation of the projects are to be established 133 Accommodation Centers of Family Type and 27 Protected Homes.

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



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

Provided were **BGN 123 million** as a grant to the Ministry of Health for reconstruction and renovation of **13 state medical institutions**. Also envisaged are **BGN 140 million** for reconstruction and renovation of **municipal** medical facilities (2 grant schemes under Priority axis 1 and Priority axis 4). As of 30.04.2013 were signed **31 contracts** to a total amount of **BGN 129 million**.

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

Main objective of the scheme is to encourage accessibility, interconnectivity and cohesion within regions through improvement and rehabilitation of regional and local roads. Beneficiary is the Road Infrastructure Agency. The total amount of funds is **BGN 501 million**. Rehabilitated / reconstructed will be approximately **795 km. of road sections** on the territory of the country. Under implementation are 49 contracts to a total amount of BGN 491 million. As of 30.04.2013 were rehabilitated and put into exploitation a total of **454 km. road sections.** 



#### 4. Support for urban transport in the big cities

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

#### • Integrated urban transport project of Burgas Municipality

The Integrated urban transport in Burgas project is the first major project within the meaning of Article 39 of Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 in line of OPRD. The total amount of the project adds up to BGN 131 million, of which the grant

amount under OPRD is **BGN 101 million** and BGN **30 million** is the contribution by Burgas Municipality. The grant contract was signed on 26 November 2010 and will be implemented for 36 months. It was approved by the European Commission on 16 August 2011.

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

Components of the urban transport projects:

- Renovation of rolling stock and maintenance facilities;
- · Building of a central bus station and renovation of bus terminals;
- Introduction of a new optimized and attractive bus route network and a system for prompt bus service;
- Construction of bicycle routes and pedestrian overpasses;
- Introduction of an integrated e-ticket system and real time passenger information system at bus stops and on the buses;
- Integrated center for control and management of the traffic, supported by systems for video surveillance and public transport control;
- Traffic lights systems with priority for the buses of the public transport.

#### • Integrated urban transport project of Sofia Municipality

The **Support for integrated urban transport in Sofia Municipality** project is the **second major project** within the meaning of Article 39 of Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 in line of OPRD. The total amount of the project adds up to **BGN 122 million**, of which the grant amount under OPRD is **BGN 98 million** and **BGN 25 million** is the contribution by Sofia Municipality. The grant contract was signed on 23 August 2011 and will be implemented for 36 months. It was approved by the European Commission on 13 June 2012.

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

Components of the projects:

- Intelligent traffic management system;
- Electronic information boards;
- Delivery of 50 new trolleybuses;
- Marketing and legal research for public transport sheds;
- Modernization of the tram line on Bulgaria Blvd.;
- New tram line from the Seminary to Darvenitsa district.

#### • Integrated urban transport project of Varna

The project is the **third largest project** within the meaning of Article 39 of Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 in line of OPRD. The total amount of the project adds up to **BGN 114 million**, of which the grant amount under OPRD is **BGN 90 million** and BGN **23 million** is the contribution by Varna Municipality. The grant contract was signed on 9 July 2012 and will be implemented for 36 months. It was approved by the European Commission on 17 December 2012.

The project for integrated urban transport of Varna includes the realization of 10 components, in accordance to the main strategic objectives of the OPRD for establishment for proper urban transport.

Components of the urban transport projects:

Automated ticket system;

Priority of vehicles for the mass urban public transport (MUPT);

System information to passengers in real time

Management center for the public transport (MUPT);

- BRT corridor;
- Rolling stock;
- Facilities for cycling;
- Improvement to the three final stops;
- Improvement of the production/technical facilities;
- Measures for accessibility and improvement of the static information at the stops of the public transportation.

#### Integrated urban transport projects in big cities

For implementation of urban transport modernization projects in other big cities in Bulgaria under OPRD are envisaged funds to the amount of **BGN 204 million** allocated between the big cities based on number of residents, population using public transport and tourist flow. In June and August 2012 were signed contracts with the municipalities of Pleven, Plovdiv, Russe and Stara Zagora. The total amount of the projects adds up to **BGN 125,9 million**, of which the grant amount under OPRD is BGN **112,5 million**.

Components of the urban transport projects:

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

#### 5. Support for housing policy

#### • Support for energy efficiency in multifamily residential building

Operational Programme Regional Development supports implementation of energy efficiency measures through scheme BG161PO001/1.2-01/2011 "Support for energy efficiency in multifamily residential buildings in 36 urban centers. The scheme was launched on 18.07.2011 as it is an integral part of the National Housing Strategy and will contribute to long-term improvements in the living conditions of the cities. Specific beneficiary is Housing Policy" Directorate within the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, responsible for implementing the housing policy in the Republic of Bulgaria. The start of project implementation was marked by issuing an Order of the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works on 09.04.2012 for provision of grant to the specific beneficiary. The total project amount comes up to BGN 65 million, of which the grant amount under OPRD is BGN 50 million. Up to 75% of the budget for energy renovation for each approved building under the project will be grant. The other 25% will be provided with own or borrowed funds by the condominium. Until now, the owners were able to get financial aid of up to 50%.

Within the project framework is envisaged implementation of energy efficiency measures in multifamily residential buildings in 36 urban centers, including energy efficiency audits and introduction of energy efficiency measures in multifamily residential buildings (insulation, replacement of woodwork, local installations and/or connections to gas and heating systems).

### Support for establishment of a financial engineering instrument Housing Renovation Fund.

In March 2012, after public procurement procedure was signed a contract with Corporative Commercial Bank for the establishment of a Housing Renovation Fund (HRF) with a budget of BGN **12,467** million provided by OPRD and **BGN 1 million** co-financing by CCB. HRF is a financial engineering instrument for provision of loans / bank guarantees to owners of properties in multifamily residential buildings to be used for securing financial participation in the process of housing fund renovation in Bulgaria.





#### 6. Support for social homes of vulnerable groups

Implementing a scheme launched on 30.08.2011 with a budget of **BGN 16 million** aimed at providing modern social housing for disadvantaged groups, through renovation and change of use of existing buildings owned by public authorities or non-profit purpose. It will contribute to social inclusion of vulnerable people through improving their living standard and overall improvement of the quality of housing in urban communities. Specific beneficiaries are the municipalities of Burgas, Vidin, Devnya and Dupnitsa, selected by an Interinstitutional Working Group under the leadership of the Minister of EU Funds Management with the aim to establish pilot models providing contemporary social homes and sustainable solution of problems in this field. Currently in progress are three contracts with Varna, Devnya and Dupnitza municipalities, whereas the size of the grants amount to **BGN 10,2 million.** 

#### 7. Joint European Initiative JESSICA

**The JESSICA** initiative aims to support sustainable and integrated urban development. In Bulgaria JESSICA is implemented through OPRD – a Holding Fund managed by the European Investment Bank and two Urban Development Funds

(UDF) supporting public-private partnership and other urban development projects on the territory of Sofia and the six big cities – Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas, Russe, Stara Zagora and Pleven.

The **Urban Development Fund Sofia** provides low interest loans and equity for sustainable projects on the territory of Sofia City. The amount of financial resources to be invested in projects by the Fund is **BGN 49,2 million**, including BGN 24,6 million by OPRD and 24,6 million by the Fund Manager.



The **Regional Urban Development Fund** provides low interest loans and equity for projects on the territory of the six big cities. The amount of financial resources to be invested in urban development projects by the Fund is **BGN 110,7 million**, including BGN 36,9 million by OPRD and BGN 73,8 million by the Fund Manager.

The Urban Development Funds work on a broad portfolio of potential projects to be financed by low-interest loans under the JESSICA initiative.

The first projects approved for funding by the Urban Development Funds by JES-SICA, will receive loans totaling **BGN 11.9 million**, whereas the investments are provided for:

- Reconstruction and capital refurbishment of the Women's Bazaar in Sofia;
- Reconstruction of the Central Municipal Bazaar in Stara Zagora;
- Refurbishment of the former underground facility with defense functions (bomb shelter) in an amusement attraction facility Underground City in Burgas.

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

The Ministry of Culture is implementing **18 contracts** to a grand total of **BGN 49 million** for reconstruction and renovation of cultural sites of national significance as the National Museum Complex, Sveta Sofia Basilica, Aleko Konstantinov Satirical Theatre-Sofia, etc. Completed 10 projects, which have been renovated and modernized buildings of 3 theater: Theatre Adriana Budevska-Burgas Theatre Stefan. Buchvarov-Varna, Satirical Theatre Aleko Konstantinov-Sofia; 3 operas: Rousse Opera, Opera and Philharmonic Society – Rousse, Opera and Philharmonic Society – Burgas; 3 Museum: National Museum of Bulgarian Fine Arts, the National Polytechnical Museum - Sofia, Architectural Museum St. Sofia and 1 concert Hall - concert complex Bulgaria.

Provided are **BGN 32 million** under **10 contracts** supporting the development of immovable cultural valuables of national and world significance such as Ancient Cultural Communication Complex Serdika (so-called Largo), the National Historical and Archaeological Reserve (NHAR) Pliska, the Historical Reserve (HR) Trapezitsa in Veliko Tarnovo, etc.

Completed 4 projects are being improved tourist attractions - real cultural values and related infrastructure - Eski Mosque and establishment of Museum of Religions, Stara Zagora, Sv. Georgi (St. George) Church in Arbanassi village, Roman fortress Sexaginta Prista – Ruse and Cruciform barracks (ethnographic exhibition) in Vidin.



#### 9. Support for development of tourist attractions in municipalities

Within the framework of 2 OPRD schemes are supported 60 projects aiming to improve the condition of cultural valuables and natural landmarks on the territory of municipalities through a complex of measures for development of an integrated tourism product – a combination of infrastructure, marketing and conservation activities. The approved projects are to a total grant amount of BGN 196 million. Support is provided to some of the key landmarks of the country, and OPRD funding will contribute for improving their attractiveness:

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

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



### 10. Support for development of the regional tourism product and marketing of destinations

The Operational Programme Regional Development supports development of the regional tourism product and marketing of destinations through 2 schemes within the framework of Operation 3.2 Development of the regional tourism product and marketing of destinations. Beneficiaries under the scheme are all 264 municipalities on the territory of the country. The activities to be supported are focused on destinations with significant tourist potential, promoting natural, cultural and historical heritage. Currently in progress are **27 contracts** to a total amount of **BGN 12.1 million.** 



In July 2012 was launched a **second scheme** Support for development of the regional tourism product and marketing of destinations II with a total budget of **BGN 6 million**. In February 2013 were concluded **12 contracts** with total amount of **BGN 5,6 million**.

#### 11. In support of the next programming period

In March 2012 was launched a scheme In support of the next programming period. It is implemented within the framework of Operation 5.3 Capacity building of OPRD beneficiaries under Priority axis 5 Technical assistance. The application of the scheme is carried out fully electronically through the electronic module of MIS application deadline 30 April 2013. The scheme is aimed at developing working investment project designs so the beneficiaries will be able to apply for funding in the next programming period 2014-2020. The scheme's budget is BGN **27,5 million** and eligible beneficiaries are 36 municipalities – centers of urban agglomerations.

The first proposals are submitted in December 2012, at this stage are concluded 2 contracts to provide of CCD in the amount of **BGN 3 million** with Dobrich and Sofia Municipalities.

#### 12. Improvement of the urban environment

Under OPRD are implemented 41 contracts to a grant amount of **BGN 195 million**, funded within the framework of two schemes for integrated and sustainable development through improvement of the urban environment – parks, recreation areas, bicycle lanes, green spaces, etc. In September 2012 was launched a third scheme for improvement of the urban environment – Green and accessible urban environment with an indicative total amount of **BGN 180 million** and specific beneficiaries 36 municipalities, centers of urban agglomerations. Submitted and approved are 36 proposals totaling of CCD **BGN 177 million**.

In process of implementation are also 36 contracts to a total grant amount of **BGN 19 million** for preparation of integrated urban regeneration and development plans of the 36 cities – centers of agglomeration areas. In January 2013 is a scheme BG161PO001/5-03/2013 "**Support for integrated urban reconstruction and development II**", which is implemented in the framework of Priority axis 5 Technical assistance, Operation 5.3 Capacity building of beneficiaries on OPRD. The main purpose of the scheme is to be made integrated plans for urban reconstruction and development in 31 cities from Level 3 and Level 4, according to the approved National spatial development concept (NSDC). The application of the scheme is carried out fully electronically through the electronic module of MIS application deadline 30 April 2013. The total size of CCD shall be in the amount of BGN 7 100 000. The scheme is 1 contract in pursuance of Ivailovgrad Municipality the amount of the grant is BGN 200 000.



#### **Programming period 2014-2020**

Challenges before the Managing Authority of OPRD for the next programming period are related to active participation in discussions on defining and subsequent turnaround the new strategic objectives and priorities of Cohesion Policy at European level, elaboration of the programming policy for development of the Republic of Bulgaria until 2020, effective coordination and cooperation in strategic planning, programming of state regional development after 2014.

For the new programming period through a competitive procedure was chosen the new programme names: Operational programme Regions in growth, and a new message: A Better place to live. Logo symbolizes the relationship of general i.e. Bulgaria and the individual constituent parts, regions, district, cities, operating in sync with each order.

The Managing Authority of OPRD started the programming process early as 2011 by elaborating a detailed social and economic analysis of the operational programme Regions in growth (OPRD) for the 2014-2020 period. Developed was a focused analysis of the specific territorial features, urban development, and national sectorial policies of regional significance that fall outside the urban development policy, as well as analysis of the capacity and project management and implementation opportunities, and analysis of the regional development funding sources available for the next programming period. Formulated were the main conclusions of the SWOT analysis of Bulgarian regions. An update of the analysis based on the comments from interested parties, including The European Commission, and the preliminary environmental assessment of OPRD.

With the adoption in December 2012 by the Council of Ministers National spatial development concept 2013-2015 fulfill the requirement of reformed European Cohesion Policy to strengthen the territorial context of documents for the strategic planning of regional development for the next programming period, the principal result is the specified number of cities (67), specific beneficiaries under the Priority Axis 1 Sustainable and integrated urban development of OPRD 2014-2020 for the application them in a purposeful State policy for urban development.

In July 2012 with an Order issued by the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works was set up a Thematic Working Group to develop of OPRD 2014-2020. As of 30.04.2013 were held eight meetings of the Working Group,the sixth held on 18.12.2012 was the first officially approved project of operational programme.

Within the last two meetings was discussed the updated and expanded version of OPRD. Held the first round of negotiations with representatives of European Commission, were obtained first official comments from EC under the programme, which will be reflected in the second official project of OPRD.

Project of operational programme Regions in growth for the next programming period 2014-2020 provides support for following priority areas:

Priority axis 1: Sustainable and integrated urban development

Priority axis 2: State educational infrastructure

Priority axis 3: Regional healthcare infrastructure

Priority axis 4: Regional social infrastructure

Priority axis 5: Regional tourism

Priority axis 6: Regional road infrastructure

Priority axis 7: Risk prevention
Priority axis 8: Technical assistance

Operation programme will be elaborated in compliance with and in support of the two national documents on Bulgaria's development until 2020 –Bulgaria 2020 National Development Programme and National Reform Programme 2012-2020.

Developing further and upgrading the achievements of the present programming period and in relation to the reinforced role of urban development for obtaining the Cohesion Policy objectives, main priority in the 2014-2020 period will be the sustainable and integrated urban development. The priority will be implemented within the framework of the integrated urban regeneration and development plans - 67 city, a beneficiary under Priority Axis 1, implementing them in a purposeful state policy for urban development. Given the strategic focus of OPRD 2014-2020, aimed at urban development in this priority focuses about 62 percent of the financial resources of the program. Within the priority axis will support the implementation of six investment priorities including list of activities for implementation. Indicative activities are related to interventions in cultural, educational, sports and social infrastructure, improving the urban environment, energy efficiency in commercial and residential buildings, integrated public transport areas with potential for economic development.

The second, third and fourth priorities of the future operational programme will be aimed at the effective implementing of investments in state educational, regional healthcare and social infrastructure, as investments outside urban regeneration and development plans will be funded. Supported will be sectorial policies with distinct regional impact that goes beyond urban dimension. Potential support will be ensure complementarity of municipal measures implemented, integrated development and added value for the intervening territory. OPRD concept is aimed at the implementation of measures to upgrade, modernization and reconstruction of pre-defined projects of the infrastructure, based on a methodology for prioritization and availability of a strategic framework for the development of the sector.

A particular priority axis will support regional tourism and priority investments through preservation, promotion and development of the cultural and natural heritage. The main activities to be undertaken are related to the development of natural, cultural and historical attractions and religious sites of national and international significance and the development of regional marketing. Development of regional tourism and the use of local economic potential is an essential tool for the creation of new forms of employment in the region and achieving sustainable economic growth.

The regional road infrastructure is considered as a priority of national significance. Investments will be directed to first class, second class (non-trans) and tertiary roads. Will be funded road sections of national and regional importance, predetermined based on developed road 2020 Strategy and methodology for prioritization from the Road Infrastructure.

OPRD will support action to tackle climate change and risk prevention, which is extremely important in terms of focused investment, quality of life and appropriate environmental conditions. The priority axis Technical Assistance financial resource

is aimed at strengthening and improving the administrative and institutional capacity of the Managing Authority and beneficiaries in the successful management and implementation of the operational program Regions for Growth

The next programming period will develop and reward the use of tools. JESSICA type projects will be applied with regard to urban development and tourism, as it is planned to enlarge the territorial scope, including 67 cities of the country and to increase significantly the funds allocated for repayable investments under OPRD. This will expand greatly potential opportunities for establishing public-private partnerships, financing business initiatives with a social and economic impact, and contributing to OPRD 2014-2020 objectives.

The results of the OPRD is expected to have a positive impact on regional development processes in the country, are supporting counter the effects of the global financial and economic crisis. In this context, the main objective of the program: to ensure sustainable and balanced economic growth, increase competitiveness and attractiveness of cities and create new jobs.

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

the European Regional Development Fund and state budget of the Republic of Bulgaria.