

SUMMARY FOR CITIZENS OF ANNUAL REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME ENVIRONMENT 2014-2020 (OPE 2014-2020) FOR 2015

1. Grounds for preparation of Annual Report on Implementation of OPE 2014-2020 in 2015

The annual report on the implementation of OPE 2014-2020 is prepared in accordance with article 50, paragraph 2 and article 111 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. The main goal of the annual report is to provide summarized key information regarding the programme and its priorities with respect to the financial data, general and programme-specific indicators and quantitative target values.

2. General information

Operational Programme Environment 2014-2020 was officially approved by the European Commission by Decision C(2015) 4144 of 15 June 2015 for support from the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund under the Investment for Growth and Jobs in goal in Bulgaria.

3. Results achieved in 2015

In 2015, in pursuance of the **Indicative Annual Work Programme (IAWP) 13 procedures** were announced to the total amount of BGN 895,193,247.55:

- 6 procedures under priority axis 1 “Water” to the total amount of BGN 719,720,167.55.
- 1 procedure under priority axis 2 “Waste” to the amount of BGN 97,791,500.00.
- 3 procedures under priority axis 3 “Natura 2000 and Biodiversity” to the total amount of BGN 30,864,980.00.
- 2 procedures under priority axis 4 “Flood and Landslide Risk Prevention and Management” to the total amount of BGN 46,116,600.00.
- 1 procedure under priority axis 5 “Improvement of Ambient Air Quality” to the amount of BGN 700,000.00.

The announced procedures include:

1. “Supporting regional investment planning of Water Supply & Sewerage sector” (Axis 1)
2. “Preparation of SEA for the adoption of River Basin Management Plans for the period 2016-2021 and for the Marine Strategy, and the Programme of Measures” (Axis 1)
3. “Support for the effectiveness, management and the institutional capacity in relation to the implementation of the WSS reform” (Axis 1)
4. “Development and introduction of methods for analysis of waters, sediments and biota and provision of additional equipment of the Executive Environment Agency laboratories” (Axis 1)
5. “Second phase of projects for construction of WSS infrastructure started under OPE 2007-2013” (Axis 1)
6. “Implementation of early WSS projects” (Axis 1)
7. “Design and construction of composting installations for separately collected green and/or biodegradable waste, incl. provision of the necessary equipment, facilities and machinery for separate waste collection of green and biodegradable waste” (Axis 2)
8. “Development of management approach for Natura 2000 network and for management of the National Prioritized Action Framework” (Axis 3)
9. “Identifying and complementing the establishment of the network of marine NATURA 2000 sites” (Axis 3)
10. “Analyses and research of species and habitats, subject to reporting under article 17 of the Habitats Directive and article 12 of the Birds Directive” (Axis 3)
11. “Establishment of six centers to increase the preparedness of the population for an adequate response to floods and subsequent crises” (Axis 4)
12. “Implementation of a pilot project phase I of the establishment of a National real time water management system (NRTWMS) – Iskar river” (Axis 4)

13. “Establishment of information system for reporting ambient air quality data as a part of the National Real Time Ambient Air Quality Monitoring System” (Axis 5)

No contract to provide grants under the priority axes have been concluded in the reported period.

One procedure for “Technical Assistance for the Managing Authority of the Operational Programme Environment 2014-2020, which is not part of the IAWP, has been announced under priority axis 6. Two orders for provision of grants have been signed: “Budget heading 2016 for preparation, implementation, monitoring and control of OPE 2014-2020” and “Activities related to promotion of OPE in 2016”.

4. OPE 2014-2020 Monitoring Committee (MC)

In 2015, four meetings of MC were held and three written procedures to adopt resolutions in lieu of a meeting. The members of MC adopted Internal Rules on the work of MC, the Indicative Annual Work Programmes for 2015 and 2016, methodologies and criteria for evaluation of project proposals. The members of MC got themselves familiar with the Annual Action Plan for the measures under information and communication of OPE OPIOC 2014-2020 for the years 2015 and 2016, the main specifics in the rules for management and reporting of the operational programme in the programming period 2014-2020 as well as the new points in the second programming period – indicators, financial instruments, ARACHNE system and integration of the policies on the environment and climate change.

5. Implementation of Financial Instruments

Over the reporting period in relation to the implementation of the financial instruments under OPE an ex ante evaluation has been carried out by external contractor according to the requirements of article 37, paragraph 3 of Regulation 1303/2013 on the determination of market inefficiency or suboptimal investment situation in the country and the estimated level and scope or public needs of investments.

Based on the results of the ex ante evaluation financial instruments are envisaged under the 1st priority axis to the amount of EUR 101,687,080.00 of the Cohesion Fund and EUR 22,786,665.70 under priority axis 2 of the European Regional Development Fund.

For the implementation of the financial instruments in Bulgaria during the period 2014-2020 by order of the Council of Ministers dated 22 July 2015 a wholly-owned joint-stock company with state participation in the capital was established under the name “Fund Manager of Financial Instruments in Bulgaria EAD” to carry out the functions of a funds’ fund and manage the financial instruments under all operational programmes in Bulgaria. As at the end of 2015 the company was restructured with the assistance of the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank and the documents necessary for the start of fund’s operations and signing of financial agreements with the Managing Authorities of the respective programmes were prepared.

6. Implementation of information and communication measures

In 2015, the first information campaign under OPE 2014-2020 was held. 10 information events for the promotion of OPE 2014-2020 and the opportunities to apply under OPE took place, among them were a press conference for presentation of the approved operational programme to the general public, information meetings for presentation of the programme before the business and non-governmental organizations.

The conditions for applying under the first procedure for competitive selection announced by OPE 2014-2020: “Design and construction of composting installations for separately collected green and/or biodegradable waste, incl. provision of the necessary equipment, facilities and machinery for separate waste collection of green and biodegradable waste”, were announced by means of press conferences and information days as well as by preparation and dissemination of leaflets.

The Operational Programme Environment also participated in an exhibition of operational programmes entitled “One Direction, Many Opportunities”. On 3 December, the Annual Information Event of OPE was held: a performance “It’s Cool To Be Eco” promoting the measures under two of the axes of OPE 2014-2020: “Waste” and “Improvement of Ambient Air Quality”. The event was aimed at forming an environmental awareness in little citizens of the country as a guarantee for sustainability of the measures taken under OPE. The environmental performance was delivered in front of 350 children from 6 schools in Sofia by ecoclubs and participants in the “Children’s Water Parliament” initiative. After it gained success the performance was included in a broader educational and information campaign that will go on in 2016 as well.

All information events of OPE 2014-2020 in 2015 received media coverage in national and regional media.