



SCIENCE AND EDUCATION FOR SMART GROWTH
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME
2014-2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	SECTION 1 Strategy for the operational programme's contribution to the union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion	7
1.1.	Strategy for the operational programme's contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion.....	7
	Table 1	30
1.2.	Justification for the financial allocation	36
	Table 2.....	39
2.	SECTION 2 Priority Axes	44
2.1.	Priority axis 1	44
2.1.1.	Investment priority 1a	45
2.1.1.1.	Specific objective 1	45
2.1.1.2.	Specific objective 2	46
2.1.1.3.	Specific objective 3	47
	Table 3.....	49
	Action to be supported under the investment priority	51
	Guiding principles for selection of operations	56
	Table 5.....	59
	Table 6.....	62
	Tables 7-11	65
	Summary of the planned use of technical assistance	66
2.2.	Priority axis 2	68
2.2.1.	Investment priority 10i	69
2.2.1.1.	Specific objective 1	69
2.2.1.2.	Specific objective 2	71
	Table 4.....	73
	Action to be supported under the investment priority	75
	Guiding principles for selection of operations	78
	Table 5.....	79
2.2.2.	Investment priority 10ii	81
2.2.2.1.	Specific objective 1	81
2.2.2.2.	Specific objective 2	83
2.2.2.3.	Specific objective 3	84
2.2.2.4.	Specific objective 4	85
	Table 4.....	88
	Action to be supported under the investment priority	90
	Guiding principles for selection of operations	93

Table 5.....	94
2.2.3. Investment priority 10iii.....	98
2.2.3.1. Specific objective 1	98
2.2.3.2. Specific objective 2	100
Table 4.....	102
Action to be supported under the investment priority.....	104
Guiding principles for selection of operations	108
Table 5.....	110
2.2.4. Investment priority 10iv	113
2.2.4.1. Specific objective 1	113
2.2.4.2. Specific objective 2	114
Table 4.....	117
Action to be supported under the investment priority.....	119
Guiding principles for selection of operations	121
Table 5.....	123
Table 6.....	125
Tables 7-11	129
Summary of the planned use of technical assistance	131
2.3. Priority axis 3	133
2.3.1. Investment priority 9i	134
2.3.1.1. Specific objective 1	134
Table 4.....	137
Action to be supported under the investment priority.....	139
Guiding principles for selection of operations	140
Table 5.....	142
2.3.2. Investment priority 9ii	144
2.3.2.1. Specific objective 1	144
Table 4.....	146
Action to be supported under the investment priority.....	148
Guiding principles for selection of operations	150
Table 5.....	153
Table 6.....	155
Tables 7-11	158
Summary of the planned use of technical assistance	159
2.4. Priority axis 4	161
2.4.1.1. Specific objective 1	162
Table 12.....	163
Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objective.....	164
Table 13.....	165

	Tables 14-16	166
3.	SECTION 3 Financing plan.....	167
	Table 17.....	167
	Table 18a.....	169
	Table 18c	172
4.	SECTION 4 Integrated approach to territorial development.....	173
5.	SECTION 5 Specific needs of Geographical areas most affected by poverty or target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion (where appropriate)	177
	Table 22.....	178
6.	SECTION 6 specific needs of geographical areas which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps (where appropriate).....	179
7.	SECTION 7 Authorities and bodies responsible for management, control and audit and the role of relevant partners	180
	Table 23.....	180
8.	SECTION 8 Coordination between the Funds, the EAFRD, the EMFF and other Union and national funding instruments, and with the EIB	184
8.1.	Coordination with the other ESI funds (ERDF, ESF, COHESION FUND, EAFRD, EMFF).....	184
8.1.1.	Demarcation and complementarity with the Human Resources Development Operation Programme (HRD OP)	184
8.1.2.	Demarcation and complementarity with the Innovation and Competitiveness Operational Programme 2014–2020 (OPIC).....	186
8.1.3.	Demarcation and complementarity with the Regions in Development Operational Programme 2014–2020 (RDOP)	187
8.1.4.	Demarcation and complementarity with the Environment Operational Programme (EOP).....	188
8.1.5.	Demarcation and complementarity with the Good Governance Operational Programme (GG OP).....	189
8.1.6.	Demarcation and complementarity with the Transport and Transport Infrastructure Operational Programme (TOP)	190
8.1.7.	Demarcation and complementarity with the Rural Development Programme 2014–2020 (RDP).....	190
8.1.8.	Demarcation and complementarity with programmes co-funded through the ERDF under the European Territorial Cooperation objective (ETC)	191
8.1.9.	Demarcation and complementarity with programmes co-funded through the EMFF.....	191
8.2.	Coordination with other Union instruments (Horizon 2020, LIFE +, the Connecting Europe facility, COSME, Erasmus for all, Asylum and migration fund, Programme for employment and social innovation etc.)	192
8.2.1.	Demarcation and complementarity with Horizon 2020	192

8.2.2. Demarcation and complementarity with Commission facility with centralised management EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)....	194
8.2.3. Demarcation and complementarity with the Commission instrument with centralised management LIFE.....	195
8.2.4. Demarcation and complementarity with Commission facility with centralised management Erasmus +.....	195
8.3. Coordination with relevant national funding instruments that contribute to the same or similar objectives as the operational programme or complement its interventions	196
8.3.1. Demarcation and complementarity with the National Fund for Scientific Research (NFSR)	196
8.4. Demarcation and complementarity with European Economic Area programmes 2009–2014.....	197
9. SECTION 9 Ex-ante conditionalities	199
Table 24.....	199
Table 25.....	316
Table 26.....	318
10. SECTION 10 Reduction of administrative burden for beneficiaries.....	328
11. SECTION 11 Horizontal principles.....	329
12. SECTION 12 Separate elements.....	333
Table 28.....	333

ANNEX I

Model for operational programmes under the Investment for growth and jobs goal to the

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) No 288/2014

laying down rules pursuant to 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 and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund with regard to the model for operational programmes under the Investment for growth and jobs goal and pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal with regard to the model for cooperation programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal

CCI	<0.1 type="S" maxlength="15" input="S" "SME"> ¹ 2014BG05M2OP001
Title	<0.2 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M" "SME" > 1
Version	<0.3 type="N" input="G" "SME" > 1.1
First year	<0.4 type="N" maxlength="4" input="M" "SME" > 2014
Last year	<0.5 type="N" maxlength="4" input="M" "SME" > 2020
Eligible from	<0.6 type="D" input="G" "SME" > 2014-1-1
Eligible until	<0.7 type="D" input="G" "SME" > 2023-12-31
EC decision number	<0.8 type="S" input="G" "SME" >

¹ Legend for the characteristics of fields:
type: N = Number, D = Date, S = String, C = Checkbox, P = Percentage, B = Boolean
decision: N = Not part of the Commission decision approving the operational programme
input: M = Manual, S = Selection, G = Generated by system
"maxlength" = Maximum number of characters including spaces
PA – Y = Element can be covered solely by the Partnership Agreement
TA – NA = not applicable in the case of operational programmes dedicated exclusively to technical assistance
YEI – NA = not applicable in the case of operational programmes dedicated exclusively to the Youth Employment Initiative
SME = applicable also to programmes dedicated to joint uncapped guarantee and securitisation financial instruments for SMEs, implemented by the EIB.

EC decision date	<0.9 type="D" input="G""SME >
MS amending decision number	<0.10 type="S" maxlength="20" input="M""SME >
MS amending decision date	<0.11 type="D" input="M""SME >
MS amending decision entry into force date	<0.12 type="D" input="M""SME >
NUTS regions covered by the operational programme	<0.12 type="S" input="S""SME > BG – BULGARIA

1. SECTION 1 STRATEGY FOR THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNION STRATEGY FOR SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION

(Reference: Article 27(1) and point (a) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council)²

1.1. Strategy for the operational programme's contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion

1.1.1. Description of the programme's strategy for contributing to the delivery of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and for achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion.

<1.1.1 type="S" maxlength="70 000" input="M">

The Operational Programme Science and Education for Smart Growth 2014-2020 (OP SESG) translates its logic into two main tasks:

- To be one of the key instruments for achieving the targets adopted by Bulgaria under Europe 2020 (Reaching the national goal in EU2020 of 1.5% of GDP invested in R&D, reaching the rate of 36 % of the 30-34 year olds population with completed higher education; reduction of the share of early school leavers to 11 %; reduction of the people living in poverty with 260,000 until 2020; and increase in the employment rate to 76 %);
- To serve as an effective tool for the implementation of cohesion policies in accordance with the agenda at national and Union level.

² Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 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 and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320).

Reference documents

The above-quoted tasks of the OP SESG define as the main point of reference in the planning process the Strategy Europe 2020 and its flagship initiatives. These are:

- A digital agenda for Europe;
- Innovation Union;
- Youth on the move;
- Resource efficient Europe;
- An industrial policy for the globalisation era;
- An agenda for new skills and jobs;
- European platform against poverty.

The financial intervention under the OP SESG is aligned with the targets set under Europe 2020 which propose solutions for:

- Ensuring access to quality education as a condition for the successful participation of citizens in the **inclusive economy** /PA2 – quality education, PA3 – accessible education/;
- Building scientific, research and innovation capacity in Bulgaria as a condition for the development of a **smart economy** /PA1 - development of research potential/; PA2 – quality of higher education, access to and quality of Life-Long Learning, vocational education and training, all these being essential activities to bridge the gap between research and education systems, on one side, and the businesses and labour market needs, on the other side/. The strong synergy between these complementary measures justifies the use of the multi-fund approach in this OP – ERDF funding for PA1 and ESF funding for PA2 and PA3.

Directly linked to Europe 2020 are the **main reference documents** outlining the *challenges* to be addressed through the interventions of the Operational Programme:

- National Reform Programme as a prospect to tackle the challenges in the Bulgarian context;

The financial intervention under the OP corresponds to the goals of the National Reform Programme as it supports solutions to achieve the objectives under Strategic Priority 1. **Education, qualification and employment for inclusive growth** /measures under PA2 and PA3/ and Strategic Priority 2. **Scientific research, innovation and investments for smart growth** /measures under P1/.

- Council Recommendation of 8 July 2014 on the National Reform Programme 2014 of Bulgaria and delivering a Council opinion on the Convergence Programme of Bulgaria, 2014 (2014/C 247/02);

PA2 and PA3 of the OP are aligned with country-specific recommendation 4: Adopt the School Education Act and pursue the reforms of higher education, more specifically by **increasing the relevance of learning outcomes to labour market needs and fostering cooperation between education, research institutes and businesses.**

- Results of the in-depth reviews under Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011 on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances;

Part of PA2 in the OP envisages tools to tackle the problem identified in the in-depth reviews as follows “the inefficiency of the education system in Bulgaria in **adapting to the new conditions in the labour market that prevents the human capital accumulation**”.

- Partnership Agreement with the European Commission.

The sector-specific documents, used in the analysis of the programme funding needs, are:

I. Documents identifying the need to support applied research and research infrastructure /actions under PA1/:

- *Community documents:*
 - European Research Area Progress Reports 2013, 2014;
/COM(2013) 637 final/, /COM(2014) 575 final/
 - EU Strategy for the Danube Region /COM/2010/0715 final/ and Council conclusions /3083rd GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting, Brussels, 13 April 2011;
 - A European strategy for Key Enabling Technologies – A bridge to growth and jobs /COM/2012/0341 final/;
 - Communication Research and innovation as sources of renewed growth – COM(2014) 339
State of the Innovation Union – taking stock 2010-2014;
 - Research and Innovation performance in the EU /Bulgaria, Country Profile 2014/.
- *National documents:*
 - Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) of the Republic of Bulgaria (approved by decision of the Council of Ministers on 6th November 2014);
 - Input for Bulgaria’s Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialization, Report of World Bank (August 2013)
 - National Research Development Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria 2020 (adopted by virtue of Decision of the National

Assembly of 28 July 2011; to be aligned with RIS3 in 2015);

- National Roadmap for Research Infrastructure (adopted by virtue of Decision 692 of the Council of Ministers of 21 September 2010, updated by virtue of Decision 569 of the Council of Ministers of 31 July 2014; to be aligned with RIS3 in 2015);
- National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2020.

The National Research and Development Strategy (NRDS) and the National Roadmap for Research Infrastructure (NRRI) were prepared and approved by the Council of Ministers before the Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization (RIS3) was finalized. Therefore, NRDS and NRRI will be updated in year 2015 to be fully aligned with the goals and measures in the approved RIS3 Strategy.

II. Documents outlining the challenges and tasks for the reform of higher education /actions under PA2, IP10ii, SO2/:

■ Community documents:

- Bucharest Communiqué of the Ministers responsible for higher education “Making the Most of Our Potential: Consolidating the European Higher Education Area” (2012);
- Mobility strategy 2020 for the European Higher Education Area (2012);
- Declaration of the Third Bologna Policy Forum “Beyond the Bologna Process: Creating and connecting national, regional and global higher education areas” (2012);
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions “Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems” (2011).

■ National documents:

- Strategy for Development of Higher Education in the Republic of Bulgaria, 2014-2020;
- National Strategy for Lifelong Learning for the period 2014-2020.

III. Documents analysing the challenges and specifying the objectives for the development of the vocational education and training system (PA2, IP10iv, SO1)

■ Community documents:

- Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in

Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011-2020;

- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions “A new impetus for European cooperation in Vocational Education and Training to support the Europe 2020 Strategy”.

▪ *National documents:*

- National Qualifications Framework (adopted by virtue of Decree 96 of the Council of Ministers of 2 February 2012).

IV. Documents outlining the challenges and prospects for improving the quality of school education in Bulgaria /PA2, IP10i, SO1 /

- National Strategy for Lifelong Learning for the period 2014-2020;
- National program for development of school education and preschool education and training, 2006-2015.

V. Documents specifying investment needs to overcome all barriers to the full and effective inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the education cycle /PA3/:

▪ *Community documents:*

- Commission recommendation of 20.02.2013 “Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage”.

▪ *National documents:*

- National Youth Strategy, 2010-2020 (adopted by the Council of Ministers on 6 October 2010);
- Strategy for Educational Integration of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities, 2004-2015 (adopted by virtue of Order of the Minister of Education of 11 June 2004);
- National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2012-2020 (approved by Decision 1 of the Council of Ministers of 5 January 2012; adopted by virtue of Decision of the National Assembly of 1 March 2012);
- Action Plan for Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2012-2020 and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015;
- National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality for the period 2009–2015;
- National Demographic Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria;
- National Strategy for Equal Opportunities for Disabled People;

- National Regional Development Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria;
- National Strategy for the Child, 2008-2018;
- National Strategy “Vision for deinstitutionalization of children in the Republic of Bulgaria”;
- National Programme on Guaranteeing the Rights of Children with Disabilities, 2010-2013;
- Concept of state policy in the area of juvenile justice;
- Strategy for Preventing and Reducing the Share of Dropouts and Early School Leavers (2013-2020).
- National Strategy for Decreasing Poverty and Promoting of Social Inclusion 2020

1.1.2. A justification for the choice of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities having regard to the Partnership Agreement, based on an identification of regional and, where appropriate, national needs including the need to address the challenges identified in relevant country-specific recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 121(2) TFEU and the relevant Council recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 148(4) TFEU, taking into account the ex ante evaluation.

The problem context analysis in the systems of science and education outlines several thematic fields in which the needs for implementation of targeted measures in OP SESG are focused:

A. Capacity building for research, development and innovations (R&D&I) in the priority areas of the RIS3

The development of research and innovation activities in the member states and the regions is one of the key tools for achieving the targets under Europe 2020. The specific needs that Bulgaria experiences in this area, fall into several groups:

A.1. Needs at national level: increasing investment in R&D&I with a focus on excellent science in the priority areas of the RIS3

(a) Increasing investment in R&D&I and enhancing research excellence.

The statistical data show^{3,4} that in the past seven years, the R&D intensity in Bulgaria increased from 0.45% of the GDP in 2007 to 0.67% in 2013. However, the latter value is still significantly lower than the national target of 1.5% by 2020⁵, as well as the current EU average value of 2.06%. The increase in the total intensity is exclusively due to increased R&D investment in the business sector (to 0.43%), while in the public sector there was a

³ Research and Innovation Performance in Bulgaria, Country Profile 2014

⁴ Data from the National Institute of Statistics for 2013

⁵ National Development Program: Bulgaria 2020, adopted with decision 1057/Council of Ministers, 20.12.2012, p. 250.

decrease - from 0.31 in 2007 to 0.24% in 2012 (the lowest value in the EU)⁶. The main factor for the increase in the total R&D investment was the increased share of foreign funding (both private and EU funding), which grew from 7% in 2007 to 44% in 2011. The tendency of attracting R&D funding from abroad is a positive sign for the competitiveness of Bulgarian science internationally. However, it did not lead to attracting more investment from Bulgarian companies – the share of R&D investment of Bulgarian enterprises (of the total R&D investment) dropped from 30.2% in 2009 to 16.9% in 2011. At the same time, the corresponding values of these indicators across the EU and in the Eurozone have remained almost unchanged.

These persistently low levels of R&D funding in the country generated an array of negative consequences:^{3,7} obsolete research infrastructure; low payment for researchers; emigration of talented and highly-skilled young researchers (brain-drain); significantly reduced interest in a research career among young people; and a continuously decreasing interest in the study of engineering and natural science subjects. The low level of funding coupled with the inefficiencies and fragmentation in the allocation of public support through national funds for research and innovation, impedes the development of stable and sustainable capacity for research and innovation in Bulgaria, in particular in the high-technology areas outlined in the Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3).

The overall scientific performance in Bulgaria is relatively low, as reflected in various indicators.³ For example, of particular concern are the declining share of scientific publications featured in the top 10 % most-cited scientific publications worldwide, which are only 3.2 % from all scientific publications for 2009 (the third lowest value in the EU) and the low and falling level of public expenditure on R&D financed by business enterprise (-4.4 % as % of GDP over period 2007-2012)³.

The level of Bulgarian participation in EU Framework Programmes is also limited. Both the applicant success rate of 16.5% and the EC financial contribution success rate of 10.5% are much lower than the EU averages (21.9% and 19.7% respectively). On the composite indicator of research excellence, Bulgaria ranks 21st in the EU.³

To overcome these negative trends Bulgaria needs to increase significantly the funding in R&D activities, mobilizing both public and private investments, with a special focus on research excellence.

(b) Market-oriented research to boost innovation capacity and competitiveness

Bulgaria is a modest innovator and remains the poorest performer in the EU-28,⁸ due to structural underfunding, difficult procedures to access project funding, fragmented funding in different areas, poor connections between science, education and business, and lack of strategic focus of the interventions in this area.^{3,6} The innovation index of Bulgaria is not only much lower than the average of the EU (33 %) but have also rapidly declined in absolute values and in relative proportion to the EU average in the period between 2011 and 2013 (from 44% to 33%).⁷ It is important to note that this poor performance is grossly affected by the excessively low R&D expenditure in the public sector as % of GDP, by the weak innovation activities of SMEs and by the strong orientation of the Bulgarian research system towards the basic research⁸ – cf. Figures 1, 7 and 11 in the Innovation Union Scoreboard 2014.

⁶ Innovation Union Competitiveness Report 2013 SWD, January 2014

⁷ Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization, The Republic of Bulgaria, 2014-2020 (draft 17.11.2014)

⁸ Innovation Union Scoreboard 2014

Commercialization of the results is a major weakness of the Bulgarian research system.⁹ There are only very limited frameworks for supporting collaboration between public research establishments, universities and the private sector. Sharing and support systems are insufficiently developed to facilitate knowledge transfer and the creation of university spin-offs and to attract (venture) capital and business angels. Public policies are not fostering enough long-term sustainable partnerships among innovation actors³. The analysis of the results of the past programming period outlines one serious reason for this weakness, specific to the cooperation between the scientific organisations and business in Bulgaria. Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry issued official data showing that the Bulgarian enterprises are not prepared to either implement independently innovations (only 23% of entrepreneurs have expressed such readiness) or to assign the development of new products to universities or research organisations. This lack of cooperation and mutual trust between the research organizations and companies, along with the poor experience in commercializing of research results by both types of players, is one of the key reasons for the low innovation activity in Bulgaria (ranking last in the EU).^{3,7} Not surprisingly, the patenting activity in Bulgaria is very low.³ Therefore, special efforts will be needed to align the interests of scientific organisations and business, and to actively support and stimulate their cooperation.

The analysis of the state of play of research in Bulgaria, performed by the Ministry of Education and Science in 2010, outlines the weaknesses associated with the quality of services, offered by public research players, as well as the potential for development of the research and innovations. The main problem in this area is the poor cooperation with the business and more specifically:

- lack of coordinated policy for scientific and innovation activities;
- lack of modern research and innovation infrastructure;
- fragmented institutional environment;
- low share of competitive funding and an overall low funding rate;
- unfavourable age profile;
- scarcity of interactions between research institutions and companies.

There are certain strengths that could be used as the basis for a market-oriented reform:^{6,9} good traditions in natural sciences; preserved science schools and high publication rate in specific areas which are relevant to the emerging technologies (physics, chemistry, materials science, biochemistry and molecular biology, medicine, pharmaceutical and engineering sciences); cultural diversity coupled with a specific national identity; pronounced orientation towards international collaboration of researchers; positive public attitude towards education and science. However, these strengths must be streamlined along the goals and priority areas of RIS3 to materialize the innovation potential of the Bulgarian research system and to work on its adaptability and sustainability through greater focus on market signals and ways to attract private investors^{10,11}. The planned upgrade of the National Research and Development Strategy (NRDS) should fill this gap and align the scientific priorities and activities in NRDS with the RIS3 goals and priority areas.

OP SESG should play a crucial role in improving the level of R&D&I and in activating the innovation potential, by subscribing to the ambition stated in RIS3 that Bulgaria could move up from 'modest' to the level of 'moderate' innovators. For this purpose, it is necessary to raise

⁹ Input to Bulgaria's Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization, World Bank Report, 2013.

¹⁰ Study of DG RTD Expert Group, October 2013, sections 4.3-4.4.

¹¹ ERAWATCH report 2012, p. 17.

the general level and to focus the R&D&I financial resources and innovations in line with **RIS3** in which the following **priority areas** are specified:⁷

- Mechatronics and clean technologies;
- Informatics and ICT;
- Industry for healthy living and biotechnology;
- New technologies in creative and recreational industries.

Thus a need is identified for systemic support of the market-oriented R&D activities and for mainstreaming the financial interventions from OP SESG in the RIS3 priority sectors, in order to improve the competitiveness of Bulgarian research system and overall economy.

(c) Investment in modern research infrastructures and equipment.

Modern and well-equipped research infrastructures are important elements of R&D&I eco-systems.⁹ The analysis of the National Research Development Strategy 2020 identifies the following negative trends in the state of play of research infrastructure in Bulgaria:

- outdated facilities and inefficient use of the existing facilities;
- lack of advanced approach to the administrative and financial management of the existing infrastructure in base organisations;
- lack of professionally trained and qualified staff to operate the facilities and their users;
- lack of coordination and complementarity of available modern facilities within a single organisation or in between different organisations;
- lack of concentration of equipment and, in some cases, a highly personalised approach and duplication of equipment.

Furthermore, the national authorities (Ministry of Science and Education, National Science Fund) have not created yet a nation-wide map (NRRI) with the basic information about the research infrastructures, such as the availability of unique research instruments, their territorial and institutional distribution, ownership (public or private), and conditions for access by customers. This lack of information impedes the efficient use of infrastructure and does not allow one to draw a clear picture of the current state-of-play with respect to the available infrastructures and the needs of their development. In view of the scarcity of resources, and as a way to adapt the research capacity to the needs previously described, the NRRI adopted in 2010 will be revised to prioritise infrastructure investments which best match the objectives and goals of RIS3.

The negative trends, mentioned above, underpin a number of important issues whose solution requires a systemic approach. First, it is necessary to prioritise infrastructure investments which contribute to specialisation in the RIS3 areas. Second, it is necessary to set up a national system for the use of large research infrastructures, created with public funds – with publicly available map of the research equipment, clear rules of its use, broad access for public organisations and businesses, maximum efficiency, and a unified system for the distribution of public results. Third, it is necessary to support the leading regional universities and scientific centres to adapt to the new RIS3 priorities - this will require a modernisation of

their laboratories and research equipment to improve their capacity for research and to allow them to provide relevant, business oriented services.

The modernisation of research infrastructures can have important positive effects in several aspects: improving the opportunities for cooperation between leading scientific organisations and the business; much higher quality of staff training in modern technologies; improving the opportunities for involvement of Bulgarian scientific teams in European networks for development of new technologies in key enabling areas, which have been identified as priorities for Bulgaria (RIS3) and for the entire European Union. A significant consequence of the improvement of research infrastructure and the conditions for R&D&I will be the increased interest in careers in engineering, natural and medical sciences, which are crucial to the development of the advanced new technologies.

This analysis reveals the need for creating and developing leading research centres, equipped with modern research infrastructure and equipment, able to conduct top-level research and innovations at European level, with focus on RIS3 priority areas.

A.2. Needs at a regional level: Improvement of the territorial and thematic distribution of research infrastructure, with a view to regional smart specialization

Bulgaria's research system remains highly concentrated in institutional and geographic terms.⁹ The top five institutions, all of them being located in Sofia city region, produce about 75 % of the total publications.⁹ The analysis of the current map of research organizations in Bulgaria reveals the following peculiarities:

By far, the most active scientific organisations in attracting funding (86 % of the total R&D funding in Bulgaria) and in the implementation of national and international projects are those in Sofia-city region, including the institutes of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Medical University of Sofia, Technical University of Sofia and some other universities. These organizations have diverse research profiles and are involved in active cooperation with local and international companies.

Relatively high research activity and a clear regional specialisation can be observed in the Plovdiv region. The economic profile of the country's second largest city – Plovdiv, is strongly food- and agriculture-oriented. The most active players in the area are Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", Medical University of Plovdiv and University for Food Technologies. The smaller universities and organisations (such as the Thracian university and the institutes of the Agriculture academy) in the nearby city of Stara Zagora serve primarily the needs of the regional economy with similar focus.

The third most developed region in terms of knowledge and entrepreneurial dynamics is Varna. The best performing actors here are Technical University of Varna, Medical University of Varna and Oceanology Institute of BAS, working in areas such as quality of life, health and environment. The region is further important for the development of alternative energy sources and the conservation of the natural resources of the Black Sea region.

Significant capacity for involvement in projects and infrastructure under the Strategy for the Danube Region, in partnership with the business is shown by some universities in northern Bulgaria, such as Ruse University "Angel Kanchev" and Medical University of Pleven which work in cooperation with institutions based in Sofia and Plovdiv.

In the remaining Bulgarian regions there is no clear specialisation of the scientific organisations and their cooperation with the business.

Thus we see that the research activity vary significantly across the public research organizations and schools of higher education. For example, out of 51 schools of higher education, only 17 have published articles and scientific reports (with 8 of them being really active in publication activity), reflected in the SCOPUS database, and there are only 8 registered patents in the period 2011-2012.^{3,9} As a consequence, Bulgaria scores very low³ in terms of IP protection (104th out of 148) and university-industry collaboration in R&D (117th out of 148).

With few exceptions, most of these relations are based on the historical development of the research organizations and schools of higher education, without systematic development of those specific research structures (laboratories, specialized equipment, etc.) which could provide business-oriented services in the public research organizations.

Regionally sited research infrastructure and universities are of particular importance given the potential socio-economic that they can produce¹². Universities in particular are critical 'assets', mainly in less developed regions where private sector may be weak or relatively small, with low level of research and development activity¹³.

In this context, it is crucial that regional research infrastructures and universities are not seen only as islands for academic and fundamental research but as potentially strong contributors to the local economy including employment and industry¹⁰. They should become key players of regional specialisation and build the capacity to cooperate with businesses in the priority areas of RIS3.

Thus a need is identified for systematic and targeted interventions to promote the regional smart specialisation and the integration of the scientific organisations and key economic entities, with the aim to improve the overall economic development of the regions outside Sofia city.

A.3. Needs at institutional and individual levels: internationalization of research, and attracting and retaining professionals in the fields of research and high technology

(a) Internationalization of research.

As noted in the World Bank Report, countries like Bulgaria need a viable, internationally connected scientific system, in order to absorb and economically benefit from the knowledge generated worldwide.⁹ Therefore, systemic interventions are needed to support the Bulgarian research organizations and schools of higher education in their international research cooperation. These interventions will find a good basis – almost 50 % of all published articles are produced in collaboration with researchers from other countries.⁹ Bulgaria's main partners are from high-performance countries in the ERA and worldwide: Germany, USA, France and Italy. However, the efforts in favour of the internationalisation of Bulgarian research will be driven by the objective of achieving results in the areas where impact could be potentially the greatest for Bulgarian economy (i.e. in RIS3 priority areas).

Several types of current needs could be identified in this context:

¹² Commission publication 'Connecting Universities to regional growth – practical guide' Sept 2011.

¹³ Guide to strategies for S3 – May 2012.

- It is necessary to create and modernize **unique research infrastructures** which could be included as integral parts of the distributed European research infrastructures (ESFRI, CERN, etc.).
- Bulgarian researchers and research organizations need better and more systematic **support** in their efforts to be fully **integrated in the European Research Area**, including the **development of future and emerging technologies** at European level, as well as the **participation in EU research programs**, European technology platforms, ERA-NETs, partnership projects and networks.
- Bulgarian researchers need **free and convenient access to the international databases** of scientific data and publications, as they could not be fully efficient in their research without such access.

(b) Attracting and retaining professionals in the fields of research and high technology.

The share of university graduates in science and engineering in Bulgaria is slowly catching up to EU average levels.³ However, Bulgaria continues to experience massive outflows of highly skilled professionals, including talented young researchers.⁹ The country ranks among those with the lowest capacity to retain (142nd out of 148) and to attract (144th) talent.³ As far as research is concerned, the brain drain has two dimensions – leaving the country and also leaving the research sector.

This problem requires adequate institutional measures in higher education institutions and research organizations for the creation of a suitable environment for research and career development. This includes a transparent and modern career path framework; high mobility, including international training and cross-sectoral mobility, in the course of their academic studies; investment in interdisciplinary and entrepreneurial skills such as IPR protection; development of business plans and managerial skills for business start-ups (spin-offs/spin-outs).

There is a need for targeted investment in the training of researchers for the business sector, including training of professionals with doctoral degrees in the RIS3 priority areas. The latter should be supported through extensive training in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship, and encouraged to focus on the RIS3 areas, as well as to work in close cooperation with the business. The specialised academic studies should be combined with practical training in companies, and the knowledge and skills to set up and manage a private business should be fostered.

According to the data of NSI⁴, in 2013 the number of people involved in R&D sector in Bulgaria was around 17,500, of whom 51% in budget-funded research organisations (mainly the institutes of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Agricultural Academy); 26% in higher education institutions; and 23% in private companies. The number of researchers has shrunk over the last decade. This trend should be reversed in order to maintain a critical mass of researchers, needed to develop the research and innovation ecosystem.⁹ In this context, it is important to take into account the negative demographic profile of Bulgaria. The statistical projection shows that the population is expected to decline by 27% till 2060. The process of rapid ageing will reflect seriously on the characteristics of academic and teaching staff¹¹.

There is a clear need for proactive measures to prepare and support the next generation of young scholars, trained in modern infrastructure complexes, involved in transnational mobility, able to compete in international calls (e.g. in Horizon 2020) and to provide highly qualified expertise of research concepts, outputs and results. This includes the attraction and reintegration of researchers from abroad who would be

willing to develop their careers in Bulgaria. Such measures are a must in order to ensure the medium and long-term sustainability of *intelligent growth*, as considered from the viewpoint of quality and motivation of the researchers.

IN RESPONSE TO THE IDENTIFIED NEEDS IN THEMATIC FIELD “RESEARCH”

The purpose of the measures envisaged under the OP SESG is to overturn the negative trends, outlined above, and to support capacity building (infrastructure and human capital) for excellent research and knowledge dissemination in the priority areas of RIS3. Three complementary groups of activities will be supported to address the identified problems:

- **Enhancing excellent and market-oriented research.** OP SESG will support the creation and development of Centres of Excellence (CoE) and Centres of Competence (CoC) in the RIS3 areas. These centres will address the need for building modern research complexes which are focused on the areas with the greatest potential to increase the competitiveness of Bulgarian economy. Developing the capacity for research and innovation will open up opportunities for new partnerships with the business and for the creation of new businesses.
- **Improving the territorial and thematic distribution of research infrastructures, with a view to regional smart specialization.** These activities will balance the current overconcentration of research funding and capacity in Sofia region, with a special focus to regional smart specialization. In this way, the OP will assist to achieve substantial and quality applied research results, processes and services which are of interest to the regional business. The investment will be focused on leading scientific organisations with proven achievements and capacity to develop in the RIS3 areas, with a special focus on creating partnerships with the regional business. The activities will facilitate the transfer of knowledge and practices from the science and education sector to the business, and higher education will be tuned to the needs of the labour market in terms of highly-skilled professionals.
- **Increasing the participation of Bulgarian researchers in international cooperation.** Several types of complementary activities are envisaged with a special focus to distributed pan-European infrastructures, European technology platforms, and European partnership projects and networks. In order to involve actively Bulgarian researchers in the European Research Area, support will be given to centres and consortia which have the potential to effectively participate in Horizon 2020 Programme or/and could play an important role in the implementation of the ESFRI Roadmap, as long as the above conditions fall within the scope of the priority areas of RIS3. The OP will support the access to international research facilities and databases, as well as to publications in recognised scientific journals, which will enable internationalisation and strengthen the competitiveness of the Bulgarian science and economy.

ERDF and ESF interventions are complementary to the attraction and development of a new generation of highly skilled researchers and professionals in R&I. Under PA1 (funded by ERDF), the focus will be to attract the most talented researchers, to adjust their special skills to applied research through the focus made on RIS3 areas, and to create excellent conditions for their studies via modernisation of the research infrastructure. On its turn, PA2 (funded by ESF) will focus on the quality of the education system and more specifically will include 'horizontal' measures to improve the researchers' qualification (e.g. developing entrepreneurship knowledge and skills, trainings on intellectual property protection, and other (general) soft skills which are relevant to all scientists and young professors), mobility schemes, career development, and actions for promotion of science (IP 10ii, SO4).The

measures under OP SESG are expected to be complementary to the national schemes for funding R&D in Bulgaria. To use most efficiently the invested resources, support will be given to research teams with proven scientific achievements, that have internationally recognised strengths and development potential in the RIS3 priority areas. The selection will be based on competitive criteria and international evaluation of proposals.⁹

B. Higher education system

As an important component of the research sector, but also as a factor for positive impact on the labour market and on the economy competitiveness, the higher education system is the second area of intervention to be addressed by OP SESG. It is worth noting that the improvement of the higher education would provide a strong synergistic effect with the other measures, envisaged to strengthen and develop the R&D capacity, and thus, would have a strong impact on the overall research and innovation system in Bulgaria. The needs of the higher education system can be provisionally grouped as follows:

B.1. Needs related to the structure of the higher education system

The reference documents reveal that the existing network of 52 higher education institutions “significantly exceeds the average values in a number of comparable EU member states, such as in terms of population and territory”¹⁴. This unbalanced growth is connected with reduced government control, and its negative impacts include low effectiveness of the budgetary financing for the sector, poor quality of education, and poor career opportunities for graduates in the labour market¹⁵. Universities continue to be regarded as purely academic structures¹⁶.

The number of higher education institutions raises issues related to the balance between resources and quality. The competition of multiple beneficiaries for limited budget resources proves an unsatisfactory solution. The “weak” players in the education market endure by lowering their enrolment and completion criteria for the bachelor and master programmes. There are no strong incentives for schools of higher education to raise the quality of education and the requirements for student performance. This practice effectively closes the vicious circle of low requirements – gaps in the knowledge and skills – poor placement in the labour market. Graduation in a given professional area is often misaligned with the preparation and the level of knowledge required for doing a job.

The visible symptoms of this phenomenon are the increasingly sharp disparities between the large annual number of admissions and the small number of applicants. This leads to progressive lowering of admissions criteria, while the number of students increases at the expense of quality and thus ultimately exacerbates the inadequacy of education to labour market needs. Specific Recommendation 4 of the Council for 2013 addresses precisely this critical issue. It explicitly mentions that Bulgaria should “pursue the reforms of higher education with a view to better aligning outcomes to labour market needs”. Europe 2020, which draws the attention of member states to effective investment in education systems, including at the highest level, also lays particular emphasis on this need.

The reform should favour optimisation, consolidation and reduction in the size of the higher education network, while at the same time seeking to foster cooperation between education, research institutes and enterprises. In order to speed up the process, a vision for development, appropriate legal framework and targeted financial interventions will have to be put in place.

¹⁴ Strategy for Development of Higher Education, p. 9

¹⁵ (ibid.).

¹⁶ National Strategy of Scientific Research to 2020, p. 15

The Strategy for Development of Higher Education and the Action Plan for its implementation outline the guidelines for the reform of higher education. The OP SESG will support some of its key elements, such as improving the quality of education and strengthening the links with the labour market.

According to expert opinion¹⁷, the problem with the poor quality of education is grounded precisely in the expansion of the system of higher education, where the number of institutions is just a risk symptom but not the main cause. Problems are primarily caused by the lack of balance between the larger admission and the inability to provide the learning process with adequate human resources and facilities. The planning of admission numbers in different professional fields is not based on any long-term labour market prospects but on short-term logic grounded in the financial interest to attract state subsidies proportionate to the number of students.

The opening of the country to the European educational market after 2007 and the reduced number of secondary education graduates (from 32,413 in 2010 to 28,908 in 2013) have become catalysts for the described processes. In order to secure a stable funding rate, which is based on the number of students, universities are forced to use “more flexible” input and output criteria.

B.2. Needs related to the content of the educational product (knowledge and skills)

By *content* here is meant the design of the curriculum. Its compatibility with the dynamics of the economy is studied below.

The statistical data of the National Reform Programme show that in 2011 30.6% of the awarded bachelor and master educational and qualification degrees were in the field of business and administration, followed by social sciences and human behaviour studies with 15.2%. At the same time, the demand for labour was highest in the fields of healthcare, energy and education, and the sectors with the best prospects for development and demand for highly skilled labour were the food and beverage industry, transport, electronics and electrical engineering, the chemical industry and ICT.¹⁸ Less than 30% of university graduates find jobs in their respective professional fields¹⁹.

As regards vocational training programmes, there are discrepancies between the content offered by universities and the qualification required by the companies. According to a survey of business representatives carried out by NORC and BIA in 2010, 56% of the responding executives declared the lack of skilled staff as a hindrance to their development, while 19% identified this circumstance as “a major hindrance”.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) are the fastest growing sector in Bulgaria. However, a BIA survey of 2012 showed that this branch is not immune to the shortages of skilled staff, the trend becoming more pronounced with the growth of the software and telecommunications industries.

The difficulties facing the ICT industry that are relevant to the higher education system are related to the insufficient number of students in this field. Despite the high proportion of ICT students, they still fail to meet sector needs. The reasons are related to the:

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ National Reform Programme, p. 42

¹⁹ Strategy for Development of Higher Education, p. 10

- overall poor interest in exact sciences: in 2012 around 10 per 1,000 Bulgarian students were enrolled in programs associated with exact and mathematical sciences, compared to 14 per 1,000 on average in Europe²⁰;
- deficiencies in admissions planning: the admission quotas and the programmes offered by universities are not aligned with the labour market needs but are solely dictated by the desire of the academic institutions to utilize their capacities and thus maintain the level of state funding. In the process of planning admission quotas, business, being the end user, has a very limited role.

The gap between employers' needs and the training offered by the higher education system is largely a result of the isolation of the business from the debate around the curricula reform. As far as business participation in the development of education goes, this is mostly done unilaterally and on its own initiative. ICT sector representatives have found curricula to be theoretically- and academically- rather than practically-oriented. Second- and third-year internships pose a potential solution to offset this shortage. The practice of offering part-time employment to young students has a similar effect.

This is the essence of country-specific recommendation 4 of the Council to Bulgaria, namely "Speed up [...] accompanying measures by focusing on modernising curricula".

The educational profile of the work force has a direct impact on the development of the economy. Not surprisingly, one of the conclusions of the In-depth Reviews²¹ states that "in some sectors the economic growth is hampered by a *mismatch of skills and shortage of staff*". Adequate qualifications lead to higher added value, better payment and employment prospects. The crisis in Bulgaria has shown that employers adapt most quickly by laying off low-skilled workers with the lowest productivity and, respectively, with low payment costs.²² It is therefore logical to conclude that a comprehensive package of measures is needed to address the issue of the qualifications and skills of the employed.²³

A guiding principle in the planning of measures related to the quality and links between education and the labour market is the responsibility assigned under Europe 2020 *to better gear learning outcomes towards labour market needs*.

B.3. Needs related to the providers of educational services (university lecturers)

In addition to being the result of policies aimed at changing professionals' educational profile in accordance with the development of the economy, the content of the educational product also depends on the qualifications of the teaching staff in the system of higher education. The national programming documents, such as for example the Strategy for Development of Higher Education, outline the need for new skills for working with ICT, e-content and distance learning.

There is also a need to update the knowledge in specific areas of teaching. Depending on the subject, this could be achieved through cooperation with the business in practical qualification specialties or through involvement in research/joint conferences in more academically-g geared specialties. Lecturers need to be actively involved in the current state of play and in the global tendencies in their fields. The policy to boost the academic career of teaching staff can be seen as a tool to strengthen the prestige of the teaching profession and the motivation to teach.

²⁰ Eurostat, 2012

²¹ In-depth Review, p. 4

²² In-depth Review, p. 34

²³ In-depth Review, p. 41

Bridging the gap between lecturers and the current trends in their field and linking academic courses with real professional development with a view to adding extra pragmatic weight to higher education will significantly enhance students' interest.

Providing conditions for professional development and ensuring effective motivation to retain promising young graduates - not just in-country but also in university system - should become a key priority for the education system. The *Strategy for Development of Higher Education* quotes "the old methods of teaching", "demotivation", and "ageing" as the main weaknesses of the teaching staff²⁴. These three factors are mutually dependent. Young people are not interested in staying in the system of higher education and do not consider the academy an attractive prospect.

The main facility to link education and career are university career centres. They have been in operation in Bulgaria since 2005, having been created in the course of the incorporation of best practice from international experience²⁵. Potential employers are their natural partners. In Bulgaria, however, career centres still encounter multiple difficulties, such as incomplete databases²⁶ and poor cooperation with the business. At the same time, despite the presence of such specialised units in all universities, according to data of the Bulgarian Industrial Association, employers remain sceptical of hiring young graduates and quote the inadequacy of education to the requirements of the work environment as the most significant reason.

The cooperation between employers and career centres should be geared towards:

- developing internship programmes;
- getting feedback from businesses on the identified gaps in the training of young graduates.

The OP SESG has the potential to become the turning point that will force the system out of its current inert state. It will provide Bulgaria with the financial instrument to build "a new generation of university lecturers and researchers with solid public reputation, extensive language training, and high potential for mobility and international cooperation."²⁷

B.4. Needs to widen the range of users of educational services (university students)

Available data show that Bulgaria is the country with the lowest share of people with higher education²⁸ among 30-34 year-olds. Only 29% of such people have an educational and qualification degree (bachelor or master). The reasons for this lie in the difficult access to educational services of the higher levels for low-income groups. In times of crisis, poverty is turning into an increasingly more real obstacle to access the system of higher education. Upon completion of their secondary education young people are forced to start work or go abroad with the intention to continue their lives there as immigrants. Rather similar are the limitations in the access to higher education on occasion of special educational needs (SEN) or ethnic belonging. The lack of needs-adequate allowances is a discriminatory factor against young people with disabilities. As regards the Roma population, poverty, isolation, adverse family environment and gaps in the initial stages of education make university studies an almost impossible goal (the share of university graduates among the Roma is 0.5%).

²⁴ Strategy for Development of Higher Education, p. 22

²⁵ Business Foundation for Education, 2009

²⁶ Valentina Sharlanova, "Career planning in the knowledge-based society", 2009

²⁷ Strategy for Development of Higher Education, p. 35

²⁸ National Reform Programme, p. 40

Beyond the scholarship system, where the size of funding is insufficient to cover students' maintenance costs, the primary support mechanism are student loans, which for Bulgaria is a relatively new form of financial assistance. The student loan programme was launched in 2010. At present, it includes four banks and the size of state guarantees for 2014 is BGN 40 million.

The OP SESG proposes to offer student support through two types of grants – to develop professionals in priority areas aimed at finding solutions to labour market problems; and to expand the access to higher education.

The student loan system will be kept and further developed, however without any financial commitment on behalf of the OP SESG. Instead, opportunities under the Student Loans Act and the national budget will be used for the purpose.

As a result of the policies being put in place, including through the structural funds of the EU, the net enrolment ratio in higher education has been rising continuously since 2001. From 25.8% in the 2001/2002 academic year it increased to 42.6% in 2011/2012, while the annual average rate of increase in the share of holders of higher education degrees is 3.4%.²⁹

The strategic framework of the Operational Programme will ensure the sustainability of the above-quoted rate of increase. It will provide conditions to achieve the national target of a 36% share of people aged 30-34 with completed higher education by 2020 in line with the headline target of Europe 2020.

IN RESPONSE TO THE IDENTIFIED NEEDS IN THEMATIC FIELD “HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM”

The Operational Programme “Science and Education for Smart Growth 2014-2020” proposes the following *financial intervention strategy*:

- **As regards the needs related to the restructuring of the system:** In line with the proposed Strategy for Development of Higher Education, a set of measures has been foreseen *to improve the management, control and reporting systems* in higher education institutions. This Strategy envisages the development and implementation of models for *linking financing with the quality of education* and career development of graduates. Support will be given to institutions involved in *external evaluation and accreditation*. The role of the rating system in the planning of the national policy in the field of higher education will be increased. The Operational Programme will *provide a framework and incentives for the urgent restructuring* and optimisation of the higher school network.
- **As regards the needs related to the content of the educational product:** A *scholarship* system will promote education in the priority areas of RIS3. Support will be provided for introducing *new forms of teaching*, development of integrated curricula and *curricula focused on business needs*.
- **As regards the needs related to the providers of educational services:** The OP SESG contains provisions for *certified training for working with ICT* in accordance with internationally recognised standards. The complementarity principle will be used to expand *mobility opportunities for teaching staff*. Specialised programmes have been foreseen *to improve the methodological and management competences* in higher education.

²⁹ National Reform Programme, p. 40

- **As regards the needs to widen the range of educational services:** Through opportunities offered under OP SESG, additional funding will be secured for the *student scholarship system*, which will make studies more accessible and geared towards priority areas of RIS3. Special efforts will be made to expand the opportunities for inclusion of students, doctoral students and specialising postgraduate students with disabilities in the cycle of higher education.

These activities will contribute to the human resources development in the R&D&I area and, thus, they will support the smart economy, especially via the measures related to the researchers support, to the quality of higher education and LLL (PA1 and IP10ii of PA2).

C. Schooling, training, lifelong learning

The school education system and the sector of its related services are characterised by the largest number of participants, the widest range of stakeholder institutions and the strongest social impact. The needs in this thematic field can be grouped as follows:

C.1. Needs related to access to schooling

These have various and quite often complex dimensions: a need to overcome discriminatory conditions concerning the special educational needs of children; careful handling of issues related to students' ethnic backgrounds; mitigation of negative trends such as school leaving due to poverty, condition of the family environment etc.

The share of early school leavers in the age group 18-24 in Bulgaria in 2012 was 12.5%, which revolves around the EU27 average of 13.5%³⁰. This value still exceeds the 10% target set by Europe 2020, as well as the national target of 11%.

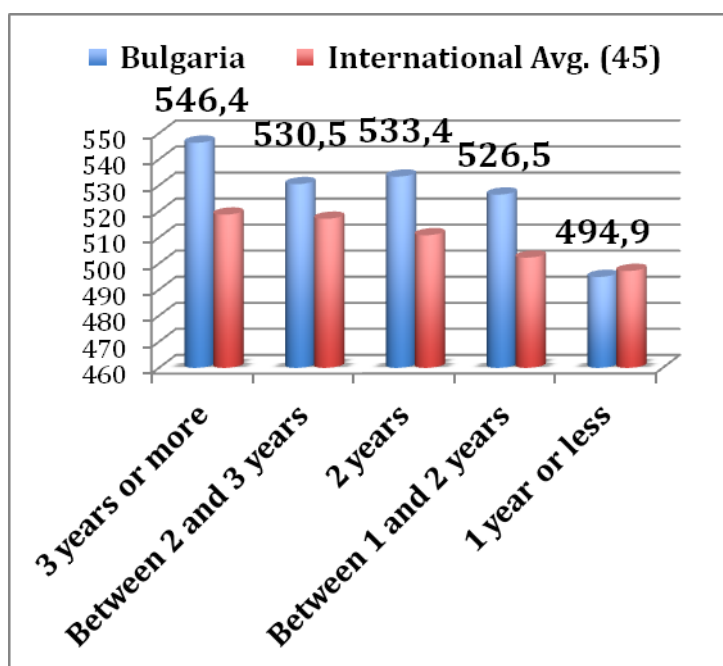
While the formal values do not indicate any drastic deviation from Union trends, the national context, i.e. the set of reasons behind the phenomenon, raise serious concerns: school leaving in Bulgaria occurs in an extremely complex network of factors where an ethnic-based problematic is aggravated by other social factors such as poverty and unemployment. The weaknesses analysis of the Strategy for Educational Integration of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities pinpoints the low "standard of living"³¹ as one of the main obstacles to effective participation in the educational cycle. The access to school education must also be considered from the perspective of the demographic dynamics of the population in Bulgaria, which as early as 2020 will result in a reduction of the population and serious ethnic fragmentation (*see NSI demographic projections*).

PIRLS survey data show that attending kindergarten significantly impacts 4th graders' performance. Differences exist not just between those who have attended pre-primary education, unlike those who have not, but also between those with less than a full year's attendance and those with longer.

PIRLS 2011 Results by duration of attendance of preschool education:

³⁰ National Reform Programme, p. 37

³¹ p. 3



A hindrance to quality assurance in school education is the poor support for the existing quality management system. The scale of the difficulties related to the inspection of educational institutions is somewhat similar.

A relevant positive example that should be mentioned is the work of the Centre for Control and Assessment of the Quality in School Education (CCAQSE), which since 2005 has been operating as a secondary spending unit under the MES.

Major problem. Despite the existence of a well-developed system for external evaluation, there is still no analysis to compare students' entrance and exit performance at the respective stage. Therefore, the results of the external evaluation cannot yield sufficiently reliable conclusions on students' performance in different types of schools nor any data on the impact of the environment.

The other difficulties can be summarised as follows:

- The data on the gaps in students' preparation generated through the tools of the external evaluation is not used for planning sound management decisions;
- It is not subject to systematic analytical work;
- No software product, similar to the rating system in higher education, has been designed to enable easy handling of available data.

Directly connected with access limitations, related to economic status and belonging to closed ethnic groups, are the regional disparities among the users of educational services. NSI statistics show that less than half of village inhabitants have at least secondary education. While in bigger cities, such as Sofia and Varna, the timespan of schooling is generally longer (11 years and over), in Kardzhali and Razgrad it is 9 years on average³². This geographic imbalance suggests the need for targeted programmes under the Structural Funds. In comparison, in the period 2007-2013 the operations launched by the MES as Intermediate Body covered the entire national territory without regional prioritisation.

Of less public interest but with a long-term impact on the concept of equal access to quality education for all sections of Bulgarian society is the difference between the quality of education in public schools and that in private schools. Due to a number of reasons, such as

³² www.nsi.bg

better funding, better qualified teaching staff and better competitiveness, in recent years private education has managed to secure a leading position in terms of the quality of teaching. In 2012 private schools achieved the best scores in the exams after completion of the primary stage and for admission in the secondary schools. Eight of the ten highest-ranking schools in Sofia in exams after grade 7 are private, and there is no private school among the bottom 45 rankings. The American College traditionally ranks first in the school-leaving exam in Bulgarian language and literature (BLL). Six private secondary schools rank among the 15 best high schools in Sofia city according to Eurostar, and 12 out of the first 25 schools are private, i.e. almost 50%. High-quality private education, however, is not open to everyone, and there are no state grants or transfers of grants to subsidise studying in a private establishment.

Last but not least, the chronic deficiencies of the environment (teacher training, curriculum, attitudes of children and parents from other ethnic groups) should also be considered. These pose more problems than they offer solutions for the adaptation and opening of capsulated communities through education.

The question of children and students with special educational needs takes a special place among the problems related to the access to educational services. As a result of inclusion policies having been pursued since the turn of the millennium, there has been a fivefold reduction in the number of children isolated in “special” institutions³³. At the same time, conditions for integrated education have been created. The structural assistance of the EU will remain important in two ways:

- ensuring the sustainability of best practices;
- catalysing reforms to promote “inclusive education”, tailored to the individual needs of the widest possible range of children.

In view of the above-quoted processes the Operational Programme can be seen as an important tool that will mitigate risks, as well as a buffer that will absorb the shocks of the transition to a new learning environment to match the demographic profile and labour market in the country by 2020.

C.2. Need to adapt education to the labour market: a need for good-quality and relevant education; establishing an environment for lifelong learning

Statistic projections show that the proportion of young people in Bulgaria will be steadily decreasing during the timespan of the Operational Programme.³⁴ Therefore, the full use of the work force, the level of its qualifications, and the ability to generate high added value will be of key significance to the prospects for the economy and the social system.

The conclusions of a number of programming documents clearly indicate that there is a need for new stimuli to support for the changes initiated under the HRD OP 2007-2013. The independent external PISA 2012 assessment of the overall system performance indicated serious gaps in mathematics and language literacy. The performance of 15-year-olds in Bulgaria (39,4 %) is below the critical first level literacy regarding reading, mathematics and natural sciences and disparities are particularly sharp depending on the type of school and the size of locality.

The basis for the development and career advancement of the working individual is marked by deficiencies. Severe disparities also exist between the specific qualifications offered by

³³ According to NSI data

³⁴ National Youth Strategy, p. 9

vocational training and the reality of the labour market. Expert assessments³⁵ classify rare and scarce professions as “endangered”, while at the same time attractively branded economic and other specialties with little or no effect to the economy take away from the already limited resources of the system. There is further a geographical differentiation of occupational demand, mostly in regions with dominant industries. For example, in south-east Bulgaria there is “hunger” for professionals in the field of electrical engineering and energy due to the concentration of power generating industries. Such specificities should be taken into account when updating the curriculum, and even when revising the profiles of some vocational schools.

The described deficiencies occur in an otherwise developed system of vocational education establishments, which as of 2012 consisted of 350 state, 41 municipal and 61 private operational vocational schools. It follows that changes should take the direction of curriculum and quality reforms rather than capacity building.

An important link between schools and the labour market are career centres. Their establishment was promoted through the implementation of a dedicated project under the operation BG051PO001-4.3.02 “Career guidance system in school education”. At the end of the programming period, however, the career centres network remains unstable and is still in the making. There is an urgent need, together with building their administrative capacities, to also develop relevant career guidance programmes. Schools should receive timely and accessible information about the state of play of the labour market³⁶.

Around 50% of vocational school graduates have studied economy and administration, a trend that mirrors higher education. The third most popular specialisation proves to be security and safety. At the same time, in the academic year 2011/2012 not a single student graduated with specialisation in ICT³⁷.

Compared to the labour market, these proportions testify of the lack of effective cooperation between secondary education and industries in certain areas.

As a whole, considering the message of Europe 2020 “to focus school curricula on creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship”³⁸, it is clear that the reform of the Bulgarian school system still has a long way to go. In this regard, expert opinions³⁹ have found the still high level of centralisation in secondary education (not just at the level of management, but also at the level of teaching) a persisting hindrance. Teachers are not in a position to choose textbooks, curricula and syllabi are not flexible, observation of formal requirements overtakes functional decisions. This makes it difficult to adapt the learning process to students’ individual needs and renders it rather stiff. The output of education grows distant from the realities of the world outside the classroom, and in particular from the needs of the labour market.

A typical feature of this needs range is the need to provide opportunities for additional training of low-skilled people and leavers in the lower levels of schooling or at an early age. In accordance with the logic of the sectoral strategy (*National Lifelong Learning Strategy*), adult education and lifelong learning are considered tools for adaptation of vulnerable groups but also favourable factors for the overall development of the labour market. The steps that Bulgaria has taken in this direction have not yet fully uncovered the potential of this approach.

³⁵ Source: interviews with representatives of line directorates in the MES

³⁶ Rasheva-Merdzhanova, 2012: 85-87

³⁷ Source: National Statistical Institute

³⁸ Europe 2020, p. 16

³⁹ Analysis of S.E.G.A. Foundation

In light of the above-quoted needs, the Operational Programme has the resources to continue to act as a catalyst for positive change for developing a good-quality and highly efficient education to match the needs of the labour market.

C.3. Needs of the teaching staff

*Bulgaria is among the bottom 30 countries worldwide in terms of “level of staff training” in the education system.*⁴⁰ This alarming position is the most precise articulation of the problems and needs of the teaching specialists. The overall context here to a large extent follows the logic of the identified needs of the staff in the higher education system. Teachers are not ready to use modern technologies and methods in the teaching process. There is a lack of skills in specific areas, such as working with children with SEN and working in a multicultural environment. The available options for mobility are insufficient. The public image of the teaching profession continues to deteriorate and pay levels remain very low. As a result, there is no inflow of promising university graduates into the school system.

Here are some quantitative impacts of these negative processes: according to data for the 2012/2013 academic year, the teacher salary in Bulgaria was lower than the GDP per capita and, despite the increase in its purchasing power recognised by statistics, in absolute terms Bulgarian teachers are the worst-paid in the EU with an average of EUR 4,370 per year, compared to EUR 10,000–13,000 in other ex-soviet countries such as the Czech Republic⁴¹. Important steps in the reform in terms of financial motivation are: a) allowing greater freedom to schools to manage their own budgets (decentralisation) and b) differential teacher pay. Although conceptually appropriate, the differential payment mechanism needs some extra specifications in terms of setting clearer and more objective criteria concerning the performance appraisal and the formation of additional remuneration.

Considered along the lines of inadequate qualification and poor motivation, the age profile of teaching staff in the education system is also not optimistic. According to data of the Analysis of the Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Bulgaria⁴², the number of teachers in mainstream schooling up to age 49 is decreasing in favour of an increase in the number of teachers aged 50 or over. In vocational schools teachers aged over 55 constituted 26% of the total teaching staff in 2011. Of all employed staff in mainstream schooling in 2011 almost 40% were approaching retirement age in the next six years. Between 2006 and 2011 the number of teachers in the age group 30-34 dropped by around 40%.

In order to meet the identified needs the OP SESG has envisaged measures based on sustainability and upgrade of best practice for a positive change in the capacity of teaching specialists.

IN RESPONSE TO THE IDENTIFIED NEEDS IN THEMATIC FIELD “SCHOOLING, TRAINING AND LIFELONG LEARNING”

The Operational Programme “Science and Education for Smart Growth” 2014-2020 proposes the following **financial intervention strategy**:

- **As regards the needs related to the access to schooling:** The OP SESG proposes a strategy for *sustainability* of the measures aimed at children with SEN initiated in the past programming period. The integration of children from different ethnic communities will be intensified through *additional training in Bulgarian*, measures for *early socialisation*, development of *teaching skills*, prevention of *public prejudice*. As

⁴⁰ National Reform Programme, p. 14

⁴¹ Teachers’ and Schoolheads’ salaries and allowances in Europe, 2012/2012, Euridice Facts and Figures, European Commission

⁴² National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2020, www.eufunds.bg

common framework for the access to education the Programme will put in place policies to *prevent school leaving* in compulsory schooling.

- **As regards the need to develop good-quality education adapted to the labour market:** The Programme foresees a set of measures for: a. Development of a system for *external evaluation*; b. Large-scale integration of *ICT* in the learning process; c. *Change and adaptation of curricula and content to address the changes in the career development environment and the challenges of the global society*; d. Expansion of opportunities for *dual and practical training*; e. Development of conditions for *lifelong learning*.
- **As regards the needs related to the teaching staff:** The Programme strategy focuses on the *academic/continuing training of specialists*. It has been designed to create incentives for remaining in or choosing the teaching profession and to build an adequate process for *career development*.

Table 1

Table 1: Justification for the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
<1.1.2 type="S" input="S" PA=Y TA="NA">	<1.1.3 type="S" input="S" PA=Y TA="NA">	<1.1.4 type="S" maxlength="1000" input="M" PA=Y TA="NA">
1 Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	1a Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In pursuance of the national EU2020 goal for reaching 1.5% of GDP in R&D. • In pursuance of the main objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, including increasing investment in research and innovation; • In accordance with the Innovation Union flagship initiative under Europe 2020, focusing on improving the framework conditions and access to finance for research and research infrastructure; • In accordance with the challenges of the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region,

		<p>and the ESFRI Roadmap;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In support of the Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation for increasing the national and R&I capacity in key areas. <p>Identified needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To enhance the excellence and market-orientation of research - To improve the territorial and thematic distribution of research infrastructure, with a view to regional smart specialisation - To foster the participation of the Bulgarian researchers in international cooperation
10 Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning	10i Reducing and preventing early school-leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non-formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In pursuance of the main objectives of the EU strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth Europe 2020, including reducing the number of early school leavers; • Taking into account the messages of the Council conclusions “Early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow”; • In pursuance of Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving and in accordance with the messages of the Communication “Tackling early school leaving: A key contribution to the Europe 2020”; • In pursuance of National Target 4. 11% share of the early school leavers by 2020 and a 36% share of the people aged 30-34 with higher education by 2020” set out in the National Reform Programme;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In pursuance of Council Recommendation on Bulgaria's 2012 National Reform Programme, Specific Recommendation 4. Speed up the reform of relevant legal acts on schools and higher education and of accompanying measures by focusing on modernising curricula and improving teacher training; • In pursuance of the priorities set out in the National program for development of school education and preschool education and training, 2006-2015; • and other strategic documents referred to in Section 1.1.1. <p>Identified needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of early school leavers; • Improve the performance of 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and natural sciences; • Support teaching specialists to enhance their qualifications and improve their professional skills.
10 Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning	10ii Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In pursuance of the main objectives of the EU strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth Europe 2020, increasing the percentage of the population aged 30-34 with completed higher education; • In pursuance of National Target 4. 11% share of the early school leavers by 2020 and a 36% share of the people aged 30-34 with higher education by 2020" set out in the National Reform Programme;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In pursuance of Council Recommendation on Bulgaria's 2012 National Reform Programme, Specific Recommendation 4. Speed up the reform of relevant legal acts on schools and higher education and of accompanying measures by focusing on modernising curricula and improving teacher training; • In support of the Declaration of the Third Bologna Policy Forum "Beyond the Bologna Process: Creating and connecting national, regional and global higher education areas" (2012); • and other strategic documents referred to in Section 1.1.1. <p><u>Identified needs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality and competitiveness of higher education; • Support teaching specialists to enhance their qualifications and improve their professional skills.
10 Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning	10iii Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking into account Strategic Objective 1. Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality; and Strategic Objective 2. Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training in Council Conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020); • In pursuance of the National Lifelong Learning Strategy for the period until 2020; • and other strategic documents referred to in Section 1.1.1.

		<p><u>Identified needs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernise the learning content and redirect its focus towards acquisition of key competences;
10 Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning	10iv Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work-based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In accordance with Priority 1. Improving access to and enhancing the quality of education and training and the qualitative characteristics of the workforce set out in the National Programme for Reforms of the Republic of Bulgaria; • and other strategic documents referred to in Section 1.1.1. <p><u>Identified needs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the mismatch between the labour market needs and skills provided by the education system;
9 Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	9i Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking into account Strategic Objective 3 in Council Conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training; • In pursuance of National Target 4. set out in the National Programme for Reforms of the Republic of Bulgaria; • In accordance with Strategic Objective 2 set out in the National Regional Development Strategy 2012-2022; <p><u>Identified needs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of children with disabilities and children with special educational needs included in mainstream education; • Ensure equal access to quality

		education and personalized support services in accordance with the needs of children with special educational needs;
9 Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	9ii Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In pursuance of Council Recommendation on Bulgaria's 2012 National Reform Programme, Specific Recommendation 4; • In pursuance of the priorities set out in the National program for development of school education and preschool education and training, 2006-2015; • In accordance with the priorities set out in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Strategy for Educational Integration of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities, 2004-2015 (adopted by virtue of Order of the Minister of Education of 11.06.2004); ✓ National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2012-2020 (adopted by virtue of Decision of the National Assembly of 01.03.2012); ✓ Action Plan for Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2012-2020 and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015. <p><u>Identified needs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of early school leavers; • Increase the number of students from the ethnic minorities and especially Roma who continue in higher education; • Ensure equal access to quality education and personalized

		<p>support services in accordance with the needs of children from ethnic minorities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate and prevent any form of discrimination and segregation in education.
--	--	---

1.2. Justification for the financial allocation

Justification for the financial allocation (Union support) to each thematic objective and, where appropriate, investment priority, in accordance with the thematic concentration requirements, taking into account the ex-ante evaluation.

<1.2.1 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M" PA=Y TA="NA">

The OP financial allocation is consistent with the funding provisions for the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and the thematic objectives (TO) set out in the Partnership Agreement.

The ERDF may finance measures in accordance with its scope of support within one thematic objective as provided for in Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006, namely TO1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation.

The ESF may finance measures in accordance with its scope of support within two thematic objectives as provided for in Regulation No 1304/2013, namely TO9. Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination; and TO10. Investing in education, training, including vocational training for acquiring skills, and lifelong learning.

The OP SESG will support the achievement of all three thematic objectives.

Priority Axis (PA) 1 - 243 381 138,00million euro (ERDF)

A significant part of the funding under PA1 is expected to be invested in the development of centres of excellence and centres of competence as hubs of high-quality research and innovation in the areas defined in the RIS3, as well as complementary investment for the implementation of the national target for 1.5% investment of the GDP in R&D.

Some of the funding under PA1 will be invested in research infrastructure of regional and national significance to support the modernisation of schools of higher education and scientific organisations in RIS3 priority areas, in accordance with Sub-priority 5.2. Increasing the quality and efficiency of scientific research and innovation (impact area "Creation of scientific and innovative infrastructure") of the National Development Programme (NDP): Bulgaria 2020.

Some of the funding under PA1 will be invested in measures to develop applied research and innovation capacity in RIS3 priority areas through support for the specialisation of researchers in RIS3 areas and their involvement in the European Research Area. These measures correspond to Sub-priority 5.2. Increasing the quality and efficiency of scientific research and innovation (impact area "Financing of activities for research and development and innovations of

enterprises”) of NDP: Bulgaria 2020.

PA2IP10i – 121 687 467,72 euro (ESF)

A significant part of the funding under PA2 is expected to be invested in measures to achieve the national target under Europe 2020 – reducing the share of early school leavers to 11 %.

Some of the funding under PA2 will be invested in supporting the acquisition of key competences. The intervention is complementary to the national funding for the implementation of Sub-priority 1.1. Providing accessible and qualitative education for the development of the personality through the modernisation of the education system and ensuring its adaptability to the needs of the labour market” of the National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2020.

IP10ii – 60 191 836,71 euro (ESF)

Some of the funding under PA2 will be aimed at improving the quality of higher education as a condition for better advancement in the labour market. The intervention will be complementary to measures planned under the national budget. It is connected with achieving the objectives under Sub-priority 1.1 quoted above.

Some of the funding under PA2 will be used as a means to initiate structural changes in the higher education system in Bulgaria. The resources contributed from the Operational Programme will ensure the required funding as specified in the Strategy for Development of Higher Education.

Some of the funding under PA2 will be aimed at supporting mechanisms to help achieve the national target under Europe 2020 – 36 % of the 30-34 year olds population with completed higher education.

Part of the funding will support activities aimed to increase the qualifications and research careers of human resources in the R&D sector, as a complement to the interventions under PA1.

IP10iii – 24 393 272,6 euro (ESF)

Some of the funding under PA2 will be aimed at qualifications for the teaching potential. The funding is complementary to measures implemented under the national budget and will contribute to achieve the objectives under Sub-priority 1.1 quoted above.

Some of the funding under PA2 will be aimed at complementary measures for developing lifelong learning. The measure will contribute to achieve the objectives under Sub-priority 1.2 “Improving the qualitative characteristics of the workforce”, impact area: “Dynamic adaptation of lifelong learning and mobility to the personal needs and requirements of the labour market” of the National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2020.

IP10iv – 13 037 942,44 euro (ESF)

The funding under IP10iv, associated with the development of vocational training, will serve as the main mechanism for the modernisation of vocational training, which is set as a goal in the National Programme for Modernisation of Vocational Education.

PA3 IP9i – 25 500 000 euro (ESF)

The funding under IP9i will support the implementation of measures to achieve both the national target under Europe 2020: reduce the rate of early school leavers (to 11%), and, indirectly, the target to reduce the number of people living in poverty or with 260,000 until 2020.

IP9ii – 84 031 782 euro (ESF)

A significant part of the funding under IP9ii of the total budget of PA3 is expected to be invested as an important source of finance for the integration of children at risk of exclusion from education on account of belonging to closed and marginalised ethnic groups. In this way, the measures under PA3 will complement the national funding. The creation of a favourable educational environment will create conditions to:

- 1) reduce the number of drop-outs (a major part of whom belong to marginalised groups at risk) and
- 2) enable better advancement in the labour market as a means of increasing employment and reducing social exclusion.

Both results are directly linked to national targets under Europe 2020: to reduce the number of people living in poverty with 260,000 until 2020; and to increase the employment rate to 76 %.

Table 2

Table 2: Overview of the investment strategy of the operational programme

Priority axis	Fund (ERDF ⁴³ , Cohesion Fund, ESF ⁴⁴ or, YEI) ⁴⁵	Union support ⁴⁶ (EUR)	Proportion of total Union support for the operational programme ⁴⁷	Thematic objective ⁴⁸	Investment priorities ⁴⁹	Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority	Common and programme-specific result indicators for which a target has been set
<1.2.1 type="S" input="G">	<1.2.2 type="S" input="G">	<1.2.3 type="N" " input="G">	<1.2.4 type="P" input="G">	<1.2.5 type="S" input="G">	<1.2.6 type="S" input="G">	<1.2.7 type="S" input="G">	<1.2.8 type="S" input="G">
1 Research and technological development	ERDF	243 381 138	40.84%	1 Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	1a Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest	1 Enhancing excellent and market-oriented research	Scientific publications among top 10 most cited in RIS3 priority areas Public expenditure on R&D (GOVERD plus HERD) financed by business enterprise as % of GDP
						2 Improving territorial and thematic distribution of research infrastructure, with a view to regional smart specialisation	Public expenditure on R&D (GOVERD plus HERD) financed by business enterprises in all regions Outside BG411 Sofia (stolitsa)* as % of total public

⁴³ European Regional Development Fund.

⁴⁴ European Social Fund.

⁴⁵ Youth Employment Initiative.

⁴⁶ Total Union support (including the main allocation and the performance reserve).

⁴⁷ Information by Fund and by priority axis.

⁴⁸ Title of thematic objective (not applicable to technical assistance).

⁴⁹ Title of investment priority (not applicable to technical assistance).

							expenditure on R&D (GOVERD plus HERD)
						3 Increasing the participation of Bulgarian researchers in international cooperation	International scientific co-publications per million population
2 Education and lifelong learning	ESF	219 310 520	36.80%	10 Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning	10i Reducing and preventing early school-leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non-formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training	Improving children's and students' performance in acquiring key competences	- Share of pedagogical specialists among those involved in actions under the OP having acquired additional qualification for application of modern evaluation methods
							Share of schools and kindergartens involved in actions under the OP having introduced innovative teaching methods using modern ICT
						Reducing the number of early school leavers and sustainable keeping of students in the education system	Decrease in the share of early school leavers (ESL) among those involved in actions under the OP (persons aged 18-24)
							Group net enrolment ratio for the different stages of education
							Share of schools offering activities to increase the motivation to learn through development of specific

							knowledge, skills and competences
					10ii Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups	Implementation of a system to monitor the number of graduates who are not included in subsequent training programs and have started work in the first year after graduation	Introduced system for monitoring the number of higher education graduates not involved in subsequent training programmes and having started work in the first year after graduation
						Introduction of management systems and financing of higher education institutions, according to the results achieved	Education support budget in the higher education institutions, which is calculated on the basis of education quality evaluation and relevance to the labour market needs, as a result of the OP interventions
						Increasing the number of higher education graduates among 30-34 year-olds	Share of 30-34 year-olds having completed higher education among those involved in actions under the OP
						Increasing the qualification of research staff and participation of young doctorates in research	Newly recruited researchers from abroad in research organisations supported under the OP
							Share of young scholars under 35 involved in actions under the OP among those employed in research and development (R&D)
							Share of lecturers in schools of higher education among those involved in actions under the OP, received certificate for successfully completed programme for raising the qualification

					10iii Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences	1 Developing the capacity and raising the qualification of the employed in the field of education	Share of pedagogical specialists aged up to 34 years (inclusive), who have successfully passed qualification courses under the OP and have remained in the education system
						2 Increasing the participation in continued learning and upgrading knowledge, skills and competences of the persons covered under the OP actions	Share of school students, among participating in the OP, who have been individually consulted with career guidance programmes
							Persons among those involved in actions under the OP having validated knowledge, skills and competences
							Schools of higher education participating in a common information career centre network as a result of the actions under OP
					10iv Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work-based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes	1 Increasing the number of students in VET schools and adapting of vocational education and training to labour market needs	Share of students in the secondary stage of education studying in vocational schools from the involved in actions under OP
						2 Increasing the share of graduates in vocational or higher education who have started work in the first year after graduation, in their area of study	Students in technical specialties from the involved in actions under OP Share of students having passed successfully practical training in a real work environment from the involved in actions under OP

3 Educational environment for active social inclusion	ESF	109 531 782	18.38%	9 Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	9i Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability	1 Increasing the number of educational institutions having ensured supportive environment for inclusive education	Children aged between 3-6 who receive early prevention services which aim to prevent educational difficulties
							Kindergartens / united institutions for childcare, who have provided a supportive environment for early prevention of learning difficulties
					9ii Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma	1 Increasing the number of successfully integrated through the educational system children and students from marginalized communities, including Roma	Children, students and youths from ethnic minorities (including Roma) integrated in the education system
							Share of pedagogical specialists among those involved in actions under the OP qualified to work in multicultural environment
							Share of persons (including Roma), received certificates for successfully completed literacy courses or courses for mastering the learning content intended for the lower secondary stage of basic education under the OP
4 Technical assistance	ESF	23 777 241	3,99%	Not applicable	Not applicable	1 Strengthening and reinforcing the administrative capacity of the Managing Authority and the beneficiaries of the Operational Programme	Submitted project proposals
							Share of the costs verified by the MA versus the costs reported by beneficiaries
							Share of the certified costs versus the costs verified by the MA

2. SECTION 2 PRIORITY AXES

(Reference: points (b) and (c) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

2.A A description of the priority axes other than technical assistance

(Reference: point (b) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

2.A.1 Priority axis (repeated for each priority axis)

2.1. Priority axis 1

ID of the priority axis	<2A.1 type="N" input="G" "SME" > PRIORITY AXIS 1
Title of the priority axis	<2A.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M" "SME" > RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments	<2A.3 type="C" input="M" >
<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level	<2A.4 type="C" input="M" "SME" >
<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development	<2A.5 type="C" input="M" >
<input type="checkbox"/> For the ESF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to social innovation or to transnational cooperation, or both	<2A.6 type="C" input="M" >

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or Fund (where applicable)

(Reference: Article 96(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<2A.0 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M">

Not applicable. The priority axis covers only thematic objective 1 “Strengthening research, technological development and innovation” /Article 9 (1) CPR/.

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

(Repeated for each combination under a priority axis)

<i>Fund</i>	<2A.7 type="S" input="S"“SME” > ERDF
<i>Category of region</i>	<2A.8 type="S" input="S"“SME” > Less developed
<i>Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)</i>	<2A.9 type="S" input="S"“SME” > Eligible Public Expenditure
<i>Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)</i>	<2A.9 type="S" input="S" >

2.A.4 Investment priority

(Repeated for each investment priority under the priority axis)

2.1.1. Investment priority 1a

<i>Investment priority</i>	<2A.10 type="S" input="S"“SME” > Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest
----------------------------	--

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

(Repeated for each specific objective under the investment priority)

(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

2.1.1.1. Specific objective 1

<i>ID</i>	<2A.1.1 type="N" input="G"“SME” > 1
<i>Specific objective</i>	<2A.1.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M"“SME” >

	Enhancing excellent and market-oriented research
<i>The results that the Member State seeks to achieve with Union support</i>	<p><2A.1.3 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M" "SME" ></p> <p>The major goal of the supported actions under SO1 is to enhance the level and market orientation of the research activities of the leading scientific organizations in Bulgaria. To overcome the deficiency of competitive and internationally recognized research complexes, qualifying for modern infrastructure and high level of scientific studies in the areas of interest to the Bulgarian economy, OP SESG will ensure support for the development and/or modernisation of two types of research centres – Centres of Excellence (CoE) and Centres of Competence (CoC).</p> <p>These centres will create the best possible conditions for attracting highly qualified researchers to conduct top level research at European scale in the priority areas of RIS3 and will improve significantly the potential for applied research, experimental development and innovations.</p> <p>CoE and CoC will turn into leading research organisations in Bulgaria, supporting the development of the other participants in the innovation ecosystem, through their unique research expertise and by training top specialists in the RIS3 areas. These centres will increase the scientific impact of the Bulgarian research organizations via producing internationally recognized publications and other applied research results in the priority areas of RIS3, will increase the market-orientation of their research and innovation agendas, and their ability to attract private investment and to ensure sustainability of investments.</p>

2.1.1.2. Specific objective 2

<i>ID</i>	<p><2A.1.1 type="N" input="G" "SME" ></p> <p>2</p>
<i>Specific objective</i>	<p><2A.1.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M" "SME" ></p> <p>Improving territorial and thematic distribution of research infrastructure, with a view to regional smart specialisation</p>
<i>The results that the Member</i>	<2A.1.3 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M" "SME" >

<i>State seeks to achieve with Union support</i>	<p>The actions under SO2 aim to improve significantly the territorial distribution of the research infrastructures, as well as to promote the regional specialization and the cooperation between the public research organizations and regional companies.</p> <p>These aims will be achieved by testing various pilot schemes to find the most appropriate models for regional cooperation and smart specialization. Support will be provided to develop specific research laboratories and expertise in service to the local enterprises, to test new concepts which may lead to novel types of products and services in the areas of RIS3, to train specialists and students learning “by doing” for the regional business partners, etc.</p> <p>In this way, specific expertise and new knowledge of interest to the local business will be developed and disseminated among the regional partners. The local business is expected not only to be a beneficiary of the acquired scientific knowledge, but also to be attracted to directly invest in R&D activities, which are of specific interest to increase its competitiveness at national and international level.</p> <p>These activities are expected to boost the mutually beneficial cooperation between the public research organizations and the private enterprises, and will help to fully develop the regional potential for smart specialization.</p>
--	--

2.1.1.3. Specific objective 3

<i>ID</i>	<p><2A.1.1 type="N" input="G"“SME” ></p> <p>3</p>
<i>Specific objective</i>	<p><2A.1.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M"“SME” ></p> <p>Increasing the participation of Bulgarian researchers in international cooperation</p>
<i>The results that the Member State seeks to achieve with Union support</i>	<p><2A.1.3 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M"“SME” ></p> <p>The measures under SO3 will support the development of research and innovation capacity in Bulgaria in several aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It shall provide access for Bulgarian researchers to the newest scientific discoveries and to most up-to-date

	<p>technologies under development in the EU.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will allow for Bulgarian research organizations, with their unique infrastructure and specific expertise, to be included in pan-European complexes. • Bulgaria will gain from the adoption of good European practices for the organisation of and approaches to research financing. • These measures will increase the capacity of research institutions and researchers to become fully integrated in the European Research Area and in the national and European Technology Platforms. <p>The implementation of the measures in SO3 will lead to a significant intensification of the international and transnational activity of the Bulgarian research organizations, with the expected related increase of the scientific production (co-publications, expert reports, etc.) created and published via international cooperation.</p>
--	--

Table 3

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators, by specific objective (for the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund)

(Reference: point (b)(ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>ID</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Measurement unit</i>	<i>Category of region (where relevant)</i>	<i>Baseline value</i>	<i>Baseline year</i>	<i>Target value⁵⁰ (2023)</i>	<i>Source of data</i>	<i>Frequency of reporting</i>
<2A.1.4 type="S" maxlength="5" input="M" "SME" >	<2A.1.5 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M" "SME" >	<2A.1.6 type="S" input="M" "SME" >	<2A.1.7 type="S" input="S" "SME" >	Quantitative <2A.1.8 type="N" input="M" "SME" > Qualitative <2A.1.8 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M" "SME" >	<2A.1.9 type="N" input="M" "SME" >	Quantitative <2A.1.10 type="N" input="M" > Qualitative <2A.1.10 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M" "SME" >	<2A.1.11 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M" "SME" >	<2A.1.12 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M" "SME" >
<i>IP1a, SO1</i>	Scientific publications among top 10 most cited in RIS3 priority areas	Number	Less developed	2.4	2013	4	EC	Annually
	Public expenditure on R&D (GOVERD plus HERD) financed by business enterprises as % of GDP	%	Less developed	0.02	2013	0.03	NSI	Annually
<i>IP1a, SO2</i>	Public expenditure on R&D (GOVERD plus HERD) financed by business enterprises in all regions Outside BG411 Sofia (stolitsa)* as % of total public expenditure on R&D	%	Less developed	1.98	2013	2.3	NSI	Annually

⁵⁰

For ERDF and the Cohesion Fund, the target values may be qualitative or quantitative.

	(GOVERD plus HERD)							
<i>IP1a, SO3</i>	International scientific co- publications per million population	Number	Less developed	<i>205</i>	2013	<i>270</i>	EC	<i>Annually</i>

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority

(by investment priority)

Action to be supported under the investment priority

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment priority</i>	<p><2A.2.1.1 type="S" input="S"></p> <p>1a Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest</p>
<p><2A.2.1.2 type="S" maxlength="17500" input="M"></p> <p>Representative Actions:</p> <p><u>Under SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1:</u></p> <p>1. Creation and development of <u>Centres of Excellence</u> (CoE), including the modernization of research infrastructure and implementation of their strategic research programmes.</p> <p>Support will be given to build, modernize and operate top-level scientific complexes, in which the scientific studies are performed following the best world standards and practices. The performance of the CoE will be evaluated in terms of the quality, quantity and impact of their scientific production (e.g., the publications falling in top 10 % of the research publications in the respective research area). These complexes should have a critical mass of high level scientists, well-defined organizational structure and own research programme. CoE will be supported in their efforts to realize their strategic research programmes which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building of new or major upgrade of existing specialized research infrastructures;• Purchase and upgrade of equipment, needed for realization of research programs;• Conducting market-oriented research at highest international level in the priority areas of RIS3;• Introducing new research, training and educational methods in their practice;• Attracting principal investigators and top specialists for conducting high level research in the priority areas of RIS3;• Providing specializations in the leading scientific centres abroad for the highly qualified researchers;• Building strategic partnerships and joint research programs with leading European research centres;• Participating in international and transnational research programs/partnerships which ensure high level of international visibility and scientific connectivity;• Ensuring excellent working and training conditions for the involved researchers, including high rate of exchange and mobility;	

- Dissemination of their scientific results amongst academic community and the business at international and national level.
- Development of sustainable sources of funding and operating conditions, including the development of sustainable partnerships with business and conducting joint projects with private investors;
- and other related activities, needed to make CoE fully operational

OP SESG will invest in the development of a limited number of CoE in Bulgaria which fall in the priority areas of RIS3 and operate under approved research programmes.

2. Creation and development of centres for applied research, called Centres of Competence (CoC), including the modernization of their research infrastructure and implementation of their strategic research programmes and innovation agendas.

Support will be given to build, modernize and operate high-level complexes, where the scientific studies, technological development and innovations are fully integrated, in accordance with the best world standards and practices. The performance of the CoC will be evaluated in terms of their measurable scientific production and technological innovations. These research complexes should combine a critical mass of high level scientists and technology developers, with well-defined organizational structure and own research and innovation agendas. These centres will be supported in their efforts:

- To build specialized infrastructures and purchase equipment, needed for realization of their specific research programs and innovation agendas;
- To conduct research (applied, mission-oriented, experimental development) and to develop/modify new technologies at high international level in the areas of RIS3;
- To introduce new innovation, training and educational methods in their practice;
- To ensure the specialization of top researchers and innovators in the priority areas of RIS3;
- To develop as leaders in the competitive international and national innovation systems;
- To develop strategic partnerships with leading technological research organizations and companies in Europe;
- To build strategic partnerships and work on projects with Bulgarian companies;
- To develop and commercialize their own IP portfolio, and to secure sustainable non-public funding;
- To create new start-up, spin-off and spin-out companies;
- and other related activities, needed to make CoC fully operational

As seen from the above descriptions, OP SESG will support a variety of activities which are needed to fully implement the research and innovation programs of the CoE and CoC. To avoid possible double funding, the research activities of these centres will be funded in OP SESG under SO1 in PA1 only, viz. the centres selected to be funded under SO1 in PA1 of OP SESG will not be eligible for funding under SO2 and SO3 in PA1 of OP SESG. In addition, the infrastructure/equipment investments in CoE and CoC should be above a certain critical mass (at least 74 % of the total ERDF support under the OP), in order to represent the ambition of these centres to reach a world level of research conditions. Isolated renovations of buildings with limited impact on the quality and quantity of the performed research, will not be eligible.

Complementary to the general guiding principles stated in Section 2.A.6.2, additional specific guiding principles will apply for the selection of operations under each SO of this PA. These specific guiding principles are presented in the present section, after the description of activities for each Specific Objective 1 to 3.

Specific guiding principles for selection of CoE and CoC:

Centres of excellence and centres of competence will be funded only after an independent international assessment of their scientific capacity, their development programmes, and their correspondence to RIS3 aims and priorities.

The research teams applying for CoE and CoC will be evaluated on the basis of their scientific achievements, human research potential, available research infrastructure and scientific equipment, as well as of the feasibility and relevance of proposed 10-year strategic development programs. These programmes should include detailed plans for: building new or substantially modernizing research infrastructure; development of feasible research plans in the priority areas of RIS3; development of long-term cooperation with leading European research and innovation partners; distribution and practical application of research results achieved; building research and innovation team's capacity in the area of application; development of human resources, including transparent career path for the researchers and employment in the national economy for the students; development of cooperation with the business and with the other users of the research results and specialists trained; comprehensive management plan and organization; provision of varied and sustainable sources of financing; and other related activities.

The development programs of CoE will be evaluated with special focus on the proposed plans for development of original top-level scientific research in the priority areas of RIS3.

The development programs CoC will be evaluated with special focus on the proposed integration of the planned scientific research with the development of new and emerging technologies, as well as with the capacity for commercialization of the scientific results and for development of innovation activities (IP protection, creation of new start-up companies, etc.).

For both, CoE and CoC, isolated renovations and/or small scale equipment needs with limited added value and impact on the quality and quantity of the performed applied research, will not be prioritised. The appropriate scale of ambition and critical mass, to address the specific challenges that these centres should aim, requires proposals requesting a contribution in infrastructure and equipment from the OP to be between EUR 10 million and 35 million for CoE, and between EUR 5 million and 15 million for CoC.

Under SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2:

3. Building regional RIS3 specialization capacity within research institutions and schools of higher education outside the Sofia-city region.

These interventions will support the regional research organisations and higher education schools, which lack the critical mass to become an efficient centre of excellence or competence, but play an important regional role for the development of the local innovation ecosystem. In particular, the following types of activities will be

supported, in view of the regional smart specialization:

- Building of new and modernization of existing research, analytical, testing or design laboratories (incl. virtual design labs);
- Purchase and installation of new research instruments and other research tools, needed to perform scientific studies;
- Purchase and installation of new equipment for pilot and prototyping labs for “training by doing” of specialists which are of interest to the regional business;
- Preparation of pilot research projects, aimed to promote the cooperation with the regional business players and to find the most viable cooperation models;
- Conducting applied research or experimental development upon request by the regional industrial clusters and developing concept tools for long term partnerships at regional level;
- Providing to the business specialized research services which require special scientific expertise of the operators (e.g., developing original design of new type of products or services);
- Training of specialists in the RIS3 areas, in the modern methods for technology scale-up, and in the main stages of transfer of innovative concepts into products and industrial operations;
- IP protection of the scientific results and innovative concepts;
- other activities for long term partnerships between higher education, public research institutions and businesses at regional level with a view to build-up regional smart specialisation.

OP SESG will support up to several infrastructures (research, analytical, testing, design or pilot laboratories, thematic research complexes of several such laboratories, or other research infrastructures of similar scale) in each of the six main geographic regions of Bulgaria, except for Sofia-city region (CoE and CoC being excluded, as they receive support for these activities under SO1).

Specific guiding principles for selection of regional laboratories and pilot centres to be supported under SO2:

OP SESG will support under SO2 laboratories and pilot centres, proposed by research teams with a noticeable scientific production at international level. The supported activities should enhance the capacity of these teams for research and training of specialists, and should promote their cooperation with the regional business. The application proposals should demonstrate convincingly the importance of the investment for the development of the regional economy and its competitiveness at national and/or international level; the role of the investment to create spill-over effects within the region and its value chain, and in strengthening the partnership and collaboration with regional business. For the universities, high position in the national rating system of the respective area of education, and planned activities to connect better the research and education of the applicants with the business, are required. The infrastructure/equipment investments in the regional centres should be at least 74 % of the total ERDF support under the OP, in order to ensure the conditions providing the

needed quality and quantity of research services to the regional business.

Under SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3:

4. Creation and modernisation of unique research infrastructures, including unique collections and archives, and Regional Partner Facilities/distributed nodes of the pan-European research complexes identified in the European Roadmap for Research Infrastructures.

The activities to be supported under OP SESG include building, modernization and use of unique research infrastructures; collecting unique data sets and archives; training and mobility of the research staff; and other related activities which are eligible for the partners of distributed pan-European infrastructures. The infrastructures/equipment investments should be at least 74 % of the total ERDF support under the OP, to ensure a significant development of the research infrastructure. Isolated renovations of buildings with limited impact on the quality and quantity of the performed research, will not be eligible.

5. Support for the access and participation of Bulgarian research organisations and universities in European technology platforms, joint technology initiatives and in European Institute of Innovation and Technology.

OP SESG will support activities, included in the agendas of the Bulgarian research organizations which apply for participation and/or participate in the European initiatives, related to development of new and emerging technologies (CoE and CoC, funded under SO1, are excluded here for reasons explained above). These may include the purchase and instalment of specific equipment, needed for conducting technology-related research, for implementation of new methods of training and education of specialists and engineers, for experimental development and applied studies focused on the development or useful modifications of new technologies, for dissemination of the results and better communication of the opportunities originating from these technologies, and other related activities.

6. Support for the access of Bulgarian researchers to international databases and publications (EC open data and open access initiatives) and for the participation of Bulgarian research organisations and universities (without CoE and CoC) in European and global partnership projects and networks for enhancing the competitiveness and quality of researchers' training in the priority areas of RIS3.

OP SESG will support the other activities which facilitate the inclusion of the Bulgarian researchers in the international and transnational collaborations.

Specific guiding principles for selection of research infrastructures to be supported under SO3:

OP SESG will support exclusively infrastructures, included in the National Roadmap for Research Infrastructure as soon as updated in 2015, which simultaneously satisfy the following three types of criteria: correspond to the objectives and priority areas of RIS3, fall within the scope of the active ESFRI projects, and are proposed by research teams who have received high score and have been prioritised in the framework of an independent international evaluation.

Identification of main target groups:

- Researchers, entrepreneurs, innovators, educators (lecturers), doctoral students, post-doctoral researchers, young researchers, graduate students, research participants, university students, school students.

Specific territories targeted:

- The entire territory of the country.

Types of beneficiaries:

Public and private research organisations (including the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Agricultural Academy), research institutes, laboratories, higher education schools and/or their primary units, R&D companies, consortia of research organisations and/or universities, centres of excellence and centres of competence (under SO1), MES and second-level spending units.

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Guiding principles for selection of operations

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<i><2A.2.2.1 type="S" input="S"></i> 1a Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest
<i><2A.2.2.2 type="S" maxlength="5000" input="M"></i> Respecting the principles of sound financial management When selecting operations it should be ensured that the grants will be spent in compliance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The investments should contribute to the achievement of the programme indicators. At the same time, connection between the objectives set out in the project, planned activities on the project implementation and the expected results will be sought; connection between the result and amount of the costs needed to its achievement will be sought, as well. Thematic concentration All planned actions and the entire funding under this axis are focused in two priorities as part of the implementation of Thematic Objective 1 in accordance with Article 9 of the Common Provisions Regulation. Investment efficiency to maximise the achievement of OP SESG objectives The measures to be financed under the OP SESG should fully contribute to the implementation of the programme objectives. Based on analysis of best practices and lessons learned from the previous programming period, the most appropriate ways of awarding grant funding and reducing the administrative burden of the beneficiaries will	

be selected.

Complementarity with other sources of financing

To maximise the effectiveness of the measures proposed to be financed, complementarity with other programmes financed through the EU funds, the state budget and private sources will be sought.

Addressing target groups' specific needs

The provision of funding for the specific measures will be based solely on the basis of identified target groups' needs in strategic and analytical documents. Only research corresponding to the priority areas of RIS3 will be supported.

Horizontal principles

Particular attention will be paid to ensure compliance with the principles of sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and gender equality.

Transparency, partnership and objectivity

The OP SESG will ensure maximum transparency in the selection of operations. Partnership and representation of all stakeholders in the programming mechanism of OP SESG operations will be sought.

Scientific market-oriented excellence and sustainable development of the research organizations

General guiding principles for selection of research organizations as beneficiaries:

To ensure focused and efficient use of the funds, research teams with proven scientific excellence, which is recognised by the international research community, will be supported under the OP.

To serve the purpose of a greater impact of research outputs and bridging the gap with market demand, all supported activities will fall in the priority areas and will be directed to fulfil the goals of the national RIS3 strategy. Emphasis will be placed on the assessment of projects with a potential to provide benefits to economic development and to the demonstration of spill-over effects for the whole country or a given region.

The long-term sustainability of investments and/or capacity to attract private investors will also constitute another main pillar, under which calls for proposals and selection criteria will be organised. Research agendas and/or development programmes that will constitute the basis for the selection of operations, in particular under SO1 and SO2, will be assessed in the light of the availability of a clear strategy on how research infrastructure will be supported and used, how will be kept and developed the attractive conditions for researchers, after the temporary financial support from the OP ends.

Provisions for international assessment of the research potential and attracting independent international reviewers in the selection and monitoring of the projects (regular and stage-based) will be included for all measures in order to ensure accountability on the use of the funds, progress made and results achieved in the light of output and result indicators, selected for the priority axis.

The Managing Authority of the Programme will be functioning as an administrator of state aid, including “state aid” by the definition of article 107/1/ of TFEU and de minimis, according to the de minimis Regulations in the cases where this will be applicable. When elaborating measures and operations where the “state aid” and “de

minimis” regimes are applicable, the MA is obliged to ensure compliance to the state aid rules, including at an individual project level.

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<2A.2.3.1 type="S" input="S">
<i>Planned use of financial instruments</i>	<2A.2.3.2 type="C" input="M">
<2A.2.3.3 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M"> Not applicable	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<2A.2.4.1 type="S" input="S">
<2A.2.4.2 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M"> Not applicable	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

(Reference: point (b)(iv) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Table 5

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators

(by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023) ⁵¹			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		

⁵¹ For the ESF, this list includes common output indicators for which a target value has been set. Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender. For the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund, gender breakdown is in most cases not relevant. "M" = men, "W"=women, "T"= total.

<2A.2.5.1 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.2 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.3 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.4 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.5 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.6 type="N" input="M" SME >			<2A.2.5.7 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M" SME >	<2A.2.5.8 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M" SME >
IP1a SO1 24	New researchers in supported entities	Full-time equivalents	ERDF	Less developed			250	MA	Annually
25	Researchers working in improved RI facilities	Full-time equivalents	ERDF	Less developed			350	MA	Annually
IP1a SO1	Newly built infrastructure complexes in CoE and CoC	Number	ERDF	Less developed			11	MA	Annually
	Joint research projects developed between centres (CoE or CoC) and businesses	Number	ERDF	Less developed			150	MA	Annually
IP1a SO2 25	Researchers working in improved RI facilities outside Sofia	full-time equivalents	ERDF	Less developed			200	MA	Annually
IP1a SO2	Renewed infrastructures	Number	ERDF	Less developed			20	MA	Annually
26	Enterprises cooperating with RI	enterprises	ERDF	Less developed			100	MA	Annually
IP1a SO3 24	New researchers in supported entities	full-time equivalents	ERDF	Less developed			50	MA	Annually
IP1a SO3	Researchers trained via international cooperation	Number	ERDF	Less developed			200	MA	Annually

	Research organizations and universities, participating in international technological initiatives	Number	ERDF	Less developed			10	MA	Annually
	Projects involving international cooperation	Number	ERDF	Less developed			200	MA	Annually

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7⁵²

Specific provisions for ESF⁵³, where applicable (by priority axis and, where relevant, category of region): social innovation, transnational cooperation and ESF contribution to thematic objectives 1 to 7.

Description of the contribution of the planned actions of the priority axis to:

- social innovation (if not covered by a dedicated priority axis);
- transnational cooperation (if not covered by a dedicated priority axis);
- thematic objectives referred to in points (1) to (7) of the first paragraph of Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

<i>Priority axis</i>	<2A.3.1 type="S" input="S">
<2A.3.2 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M"> Not applicable	

⁵² Only for programmes supported by the ESF.

⁵³ For the ESF, this list includes common output indicators for which a target value has been set and all programme-specific output indicators.

2.A.8 Performance framework

(Reference: point (b)(v) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2), and Annex II to Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Table 6

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis

(by fund and, for the ERDF and ESF, category of region)⁵⁴

Priority axis	Indicator type (Key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018 ⁵⁵			Final target (2023) ⁵⁶			Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
							M	W	T	M	W	T		
<2A.4.1 type="S" input="S">	<2A.4.2 type="S" input="S">	Implementation Step or Financial indicator <2A.4.3 type="S" input="S">	Implementation Step or Financial indicator <2A.4.4 type="S" input="M"> Output or Result <2A.4.4 type="S" input="G" or	Implementation Step or Financial indicator <2A.4.5 type="S" input="M"> Output or Result <2A.4.5	<2A.4.6 type="S" input="S">	<2A.4.7 type="S" input="S">	<2A.4.8 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M">			Implementation Step or Financial <2A.4.9 type="S" input="M"> Output or Result <2A.4.8 type="S" input="M">			Implementation Step or Financial indicator <2A.4.10 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M"> Output or Result <2A.4.10	<2A.4.11 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M">

⁵⁴ Where YEI is implemented as part of a priority axis, YEI milestones and targets must be distinguished from other milestones and targets for the priority axis in accordance with implementing acts referred to in the fifth subparagraph of Article 22(7) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, as YEI resources (specific allocation and matching ESF support) are excluded from the performance reserve.

⁵⁵ Milestones may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender. "M" = men, "W"=women, "T"= total.

⁵⁶ Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender. "M" = men, "W"=women, "T"= total.

		" maxlength="5" input="M"> Output or result<2 A.4.3 type="S" " input="S">	"M">	type="S" input="G" or "M">				input="M">	type="S" input="M">	
PA1	output	IP1a	New researchers in supported entities	Full-time equivalents	ERDF	Less developed	35	300	MA	The indicator is representative of the effect generated by the OP in the scientific community in Bulgaria, so that the interest for working in the R&I field be increased significantly.
PA1	output	IP1a	Researchers working in improved RI facilities outside Sofia	Full-time equivalents	ERDF	Less developed	50	200	MA	The indicator is representative of both: how many infrastructures have been renovated and secondly: are those fully used by employed in the field of R&I.
PA1	Financial	NA	Certified expenditures	EUR	ERDF	Less developed	28 633 075,06	286 330 751	MA	The rate of the financial indicator takes into account the level of certified

										<i>expenditure in other Research programmes in the EU, financed by ERDF (for example – the Czech Republic)</i>
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework
(optional)

<2A.4.12 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M">

2.A.9 Categories of intervention

(Reference: point (b)(vi) of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 7-11

Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention⁵⁷

(by Fund and category of region, if the priority axis covers more than one)

Table 7: Dimension 1 – Intervention field		
Fund	<2A.5.1.1 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > ERDF	
Category of region	<2A.5.1.2 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > Less developed	
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
<2A.5.1.3 type="S" input="S" Decision=N>	<2A.5.1.4 type="S" input="S" Decision=N >	<2A.5.1.5 type="N" input="M" Decision=N >
1	058. Research and innovation infrastructure (public)	180 000 000
1	060. Research and innovation activities in public research centres and centres of competence including networking	63 381 138237

Table 8: Dimension 2 – Form of finance		
Fund	<2A.5.2.1 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > ERDF	
Category of region	<2A.5.2.2 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > Less developed	
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
<2A.5.2.3 type="S" input="S" Decision=N>	<2A.5.2.4 type="S" input="S" Decision=N >	<2A.5.2.5 type="N" input="M" Decision=N >
1	01. Non-repayable grant	243 381 138

Table 9: Dimension 3 – Territory type	
Fund	<2A.5.3.1 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > ERDF

⁵⁷

Amounts include total Union support (the main allocation and the allocation from the performance reserve).

Category of region	<2A.5.3.2 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > Less developed	
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
<2A.5.3.3 type="S" input="S" Decision=N>	<2A.5.3.4 type="S" input="S" Decision=N >	<2A.5.3.5 type="N" input="M" Decision=N >
1	07. Not applicable	243 381 138

Table 10: Dimension 4 – Territorial delivery mechanisms		
Fund	<2A.5.4.1 type="S" input="S" Decision=N >	
Category of region	<2A.5.4.2 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > Less developed	
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
<2A.5.4.2 type="S" input="S" Decision=N>	<2A.5.4.4 type="S" input="S" Decision=N >	<2A.5.4.5 type="N" input="M" Decision=N >
1	07. Not applicable	243 381 138

Summary of the planned use of technical assistance

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate)

(by priority axis)

(Reference: point (b)(vii) of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Priority axis	<3A.6.1 type="S" input="S"> 1
<p><2A.6.2 type="S" maxlength="2000" input="M"></p> <p>The actions under PA4 will be aimed at upgrading the administrative capacity of the Managing Authority. There is also a need to reinforce the capacity of the beneficiaries for project management and reporting under the Programme. The actions related to capacity building of the MA staff and the beneficiaries are key to ensuring the successful management and implementation of the OP.</p> <p>Special attention will be paid to the adequate staffing and provision of material and technical equipment for the processes and activities, which are new for the MES in its capacity as a MA.</p> <p>PA4 will also support actions related to regular reporting on the progress in the management and implementation of the OP, implementation of different types of studies to facilitate the implementation and assess the impacts of the proposed OP measures within the context of efficient and effective utilisation of the support from the EU funds.</p>	

The Technical Assistance PA will also contribute to the fulfilment EAC 1.1 and 1.2 (mapping of RI), other activities of systemic nature: feasibility studies, validation of calls and/assessment of applications involving independent experts, etc.

SECTION 2 Priority Axes

(Reference: points (b) and (c) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

2.A.1 Priority axis (repeated for each priority axis)

2.2. Priority axis 2

ID of the priority axis	<2A.1 type="N" input="G" "SME" > 2
Title of the priority axis	<2A.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M" "SME" > EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments	<2A.3 type="C" input="M">
<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level	<2A.4 type="C" input="M" "SME" >
<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development	<2A.5 type="C" input="M">
<input type="checkbox"/> For the ESF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to social innovation or to transnational cooperation, or both	<2A.6 type="C" input="M">

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or Fund (where applicable)

(Reference: Article 96(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<p><2A.0 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M"></p> <p>Not applicable. The priority axis covers only thematic objective 10 "Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning".</p>
--

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

(Repeated for each combination under a priority axis)

<i>Fund</i>	<2A.7 type="S" input="S""SME" > ESF
<i>Category of region</i>	<2A.8 type="S" input="S""SME "> Less developed
<i>Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)</i>	<2A.9 type="S" input="S""SME" > Eligible Public Expenditure
<i>Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)</i>	<2A.9 type="S" input="S" > n/a

2.A.4 Investment priority

(Repeated for each investment priority under the priority axis)

2.2.1. Investment priority 10i

<i>Investment priority</i>	<2A.10 type="S" input="S""SME" > 10i Reducing and preventing early school-leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non-formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training
----------------------------	--

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

(Repeated for each specific objective under the investment priority)

(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

2.2.1.1. Specific objective 1

<i>ID</i>	<2A.1.1 type="N" input="G""SME" > 1
<i>Specific objective</i>	<2A.1.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M""SME" > Improving children's and students' performance in acquiring key competences

The results that the Member State seeks to achieve with Union support

<2A.1.3 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M"SME ">

Bulgarian pre-school and school education has its traditional merits that should be preserved. The results that the Member State seeks to achieve with Union support includes fully developed mechanisms for defining one child/student maintenance cost and the use of delegated budgets, balanced powers in view of the participation of all stakeholders in the system of pre-school and school education.

These efforts within compulsory school education should be preceded by quality and affordable education and childcare at early age. In this regard, the introduction of mandatory preschool training for children two years prior to entering school (since 2012) has had a huge impact on learning, the long-term benefits of which are even more pronounced in terms of the socialisation and achievement of each child throughout the whole of the study period and not just in terms of better outcomes in school.

The expected results under this SO are linked with improving the quality of pre-school education as a solid base for further learning and contribution to prevent school leaving and increase the benefits of completing the next educational level and acquiring new skills.

This SO is aimed to the linguistic development and the link to the school training later.

This SO is expected to contribute to:

- improving the level of literacy of 15-year-olds (including from vulnerable groups, including the Roma, whereby the specifics of each individual group and the need for a personalised approach will be taken into account during the implementation of measures) in reading, mathematics and science;
- acquiring knowledge and skills to work in the digital society;
- mastering competences in support of personal development, social integration and professional advancement, as well as developed attitudes to take informed decisions about oneself and about others to ensure sustainable development;
- reducing disparities in the learning outcomes in different schools and localities;
- modernizing curricula and syllabi, textbooks and

	<p>teaching aids;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing opportunities and support for implementation of teaching innovation and modern teaching methods; • enhancing the functionality of systems for early detection and intervention in cases of learning disabilities. <p>Some of the measures under this SO are expected to contribute to developing a functioning integrated system for quality management in education.</p> <p>In view of the above, measures for establishing standards and procedures of evaluation, as well as for development/administrative enhancement of analytical structures planned to act as transmitters between the monitoring and the daily management of the school system have been foreseen.</p>
--	--

2.2.1.2. Specific objective 2

<i>ID</i>	<p><2A.1.1 type="N" input="G""SME ></p> <p>2</p>
<i>Specific objective</i>	<p><2A.1.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M""SME ></p> <p>Reducing the number of early school leavers and sustainable keeping of students in the education system</p>
<i>The results that the Member State seeks to achieve with Union support</i>	<p><2A.1.3 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M""SME "></p> <p>In recent years in Bulgaria there has been a positive trend concerning the percentage of early school leavers among the population aged 18-24, and the rate of decreasing their share in Bulgaria in the last decade is significantly faster compared to the EU average. The current situation in the country shows that the share of 12.54% achieved in 2012 is still unsatisfactory. In the programming period 2014-2020 the share of early school leavers should be reduced below 11%.</p> <p>The SO seeks to achieve a decrease in the alienation of children and students, as well as in raising the motivation for mastering the learning content; overcoming the weaknesses in the methodology of teaching and in the organisation of the training process; improvement in the career guidance and counselling system.</p> <p>The activities aiming to increase motivation for learning</p>

	<p>through the development of specific knowledge, skills and competencies will contribute to increase the positive motivation to learn, improve the level of socialisation and effective learning, retain students in school, and facilitate re-integration into the education system. For children with different ethnic backgrounds these activities will be an additional opportunity for successful integration.</p> <p>The implementation of the proposed measures is expected to increase the number of children and students included in education, improve the access to school education, ensure smooth transfers between educational institutions and reduce the school drop-out rate, including among the Roma. To achieve these goals, actions have been proposed to focus on securing a positive educational environment in support of students' individual interests and abilities for their effective growth and development as independent, creative and socially active individuals. The activities to increase motivation for learning through the development of specific knowledge, skills and competencies will facilitate an effective self-evaluation of students' free time in accordance with their individual interests, as well as the discovery and development of their talents, creative thinking etc. As a result, students' interest in acquiring knowledge, practical skills and competences will be strengthened, and a more profound interest in knowledge as a way to build confidence in their own skills will be promoted.</p>
--	--

Table 4

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

(Reference: point (b)(ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value ⁵⁸ (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
Programme-specific <2A.1.13 type="S" maxlength="5" input="M"> Common <2A.1.13 type="S" input="S">	Programme-specific <2A.1.14 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M"> Common <2A.1.14 type="S" input="S">	<2A.1.15 type="S" input="S">	Programme-specific <2A.1.16 type="S" input="M"> Common <2A.1.16 type="S" input="S">	Programme-specific <2A.1.17 type="S" input="M"> Common <2A.1.17 type="S" input="S">	Common Output Indicators <2A.1.18 type="S" input="S">			Quantitative <2A.1.19 type="S" input="M"> Common <2A.1.19 type="S" input="G">	<2A.1.20 type="N" input="M">	Quantitative <2A.1.21 type="N" input="M"> Qualitative <2A.1.21 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M">			<2A.1.22 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M">	<2A.1.23 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M">
IP10i, SO1	Share of pedagogical specialists among those involved in actions under the OP having acquired additional qualification for application of modern evaluation methods	Less developed	%	NA			75	Ratio	2014			85	MA	Annually

58

This list includes common result indicators for which a target value has been set and all programme-specific result indicators. Target values for common result indicators must be quantified; for programme-specific result indicators, they may be qualitative or quantitative. Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender, the baseline values can be adjusted accordingly. “M” = men, “W”=women, “T”= total.

	Share of schools and kindergartens involved in actions under the OP having introduced innovative teaching methods developed by the programme using modern ICT	Less developed	%	NA			35	Ratio	2014			85	MA	Annually
IP10i, SO2	Decrease in the share of early school leavers (ESL) among those involved in actions under the OP (persons aged 18-24)	Less developed	%	NA			12,5*	Ratio	2013			11*	MA	Annually
	Group net enrolment ratio for the different stages of education	Less developed	%	NA			Primary stage- 95,5; Lower secondary stage- 79,7; Secondary stage- 83; Vocational training 0.3	Ratio	2013			Primary stage - 98; Lower secondary stage – 84; Secondary stage – 85; Vocational training – 0.5	NSI	Annually
	Share of schools offering activities to increase the motivation to learn through development of specific knowledge, skills and competences	Less developed	%	NA			80	Ratio	2014			60	MA	Annually

The value is a macroeconomic indicator for Bulgaria and is present in the Bulgaria 2020 Strategy. A progress on this indicator has not been used and reported by any OP until now and the values cannot indicate the specific influence of OP SESG as of now. The actual progress values will be reported after the completion of at least one operation which contributes to the fulfilment of the indicator.

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority

(by investment priority)

Action to be supported under the investment priority

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment priority</i>	<p><2A.2.1.1 type="S" input="S"></p> <p>10i Reducing and preventing early school-leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non-formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training</p>
<p><2A.2.1.2 type="S" maxlength="17500" input="M"></p> <p>The planned actions under the OP are based on the assumption that children's and students' development occurs at the cross point of the interaction between the family, the kindergarten/school institution and society as a whole. Important partners in the OP implementation will be NGOs, whose active involvement will contribute to multiply the achieved results.</p> <p>Improving the quality of pre-school education will be a solid base for further learning and will contribute to prevent school leaving and increase the benefits of completing the next educational level and acquiring new skills.</p> <p>What is key during pre-school age is the linguistic development and the link to the school training later. The child's linguistic development is a skill, which is a forerunner for his/her critical thinking skills and is displayed in the very first years of life. Individual differences in the children's verbal skills continue until nine years of age, when the children are already in the initial stage of school education. Over time, vocabulary differences from early childhood deepen and affect preparedness and performance at school, as well as career success at a later stage.</p> <p>In connection with the accomplishment of SO2, there will be additional counselling work to target a supportive learning environment, including additional and counselling work to target children and students with educational deficiencies, including different ethnic backgrounds, and children with outstanding abilities, as well as activities aiming to increase motivation for learning through the development of specific knowledge, skills and competencies.</p> <p>There will be systematic and effective approaches to support children and students with learning gaps, as well as a need for early detection and encouragement of gifted and talented children, and development of a cross-sectoral coordination mechanism at national, regional and local level whose policies, plans and measures will be based on systematic monitoring, analysis and evaluation as a prerequisite for corrective action, allocation of resources and targeting investment to match the needs at the respective level while ensuring regular reporting and transparency.</p>	

In addition to the proposed measures under SO1, there is a need to standardise the system for control and quality evaluation of education (criteria, instruments, procedures) at system and at educational institution level will be developed in order to ensure comparability of results. Under this IP, there will be measures for introduction, implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of standardised assessment of the level of school preparation.

The proposed measures will contribute to the actions under the Strategy for Preventing and Reducing the Share of Dropouts and Early School Leavers (2013-2020).

Under SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1:

- Actions to improve students' key competences focusing on literacy, communication skills in a foreign language, digital competence, social and civic competences;
- Introduction of modern technologies and interactive methods and tools in the education process, including e-content;
- Development, updating and evaluation of the effectiveness of curricula and syllabi;
- Creating modern and secure educational environment in schools based on advanced ICT facilities for visualisation/presentation of the study material and ensuring the required equipment in specialised classrooms (Physics, Chemistry etc.);
- Introduction of smart interactive systems for communication with parents and the general public;
- Development of a cloud environment for educational services and learning content with reliable access for users (experts, teaching staff and students);
- Modernisation of the learning process through introduction of ICT facilities for remote teaching and learning, introduction of distance education and training – provision of specialised equipment for online cooperation and joint projects between institutes/universities/schools etc.;
- Improving the management of institutions and processes in the pre-primary and the school education system, including in the field of inspection;
- Developing standards to ensure the quality of pre-primary education with the involvement of all stakeholders (including parents) and preparing appropriate curricula and learning content for children's development facilitating the acquisition of both cognitive and non-cognitive skills;
- Developing a specialised module for mastering the Bulgarian language for children whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian for the successful integration of such children;
- Early screening for learning difficulties with a view to planning for adequate individual support;
- Encouraging families to cooperate and get involved in the education and learning process;
- Supporting innovation in teaching for improving the chances of children and students to achieve better learning outcomes;
- Expansion and improvement of the implementation of the system for evaluation (external and internal) of students' learning outcomes at national, regional and school level;
- Measuring students' performance in reading, mathematics and science,

including actions related to participation in national and international research projects, including training of teaching professionals on the implementation of international standards for student evaluation;

- Introduction of a quality assurance system for teachers' performance.

Under SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2:

- Setting up interest clubs as part of the full-time organisation of the school day;
- Ensuring opportunities for development and expression of the creative abilities of children and students through activities aiming to increase motivation for learning through the development of specific knowledge, skills and competencies;
- Ensuring opportunities for learning tailored to the individual needs of children and students and promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship;
- Support for development and implementation of school programmes related to the specifics of the organisation and implementation of activities aiming to increase motivation for learning through the development of specific knowledge, skills and competencies;
- Ensuring access to pre-primary education by expanding the opportunities for inclusion in half-day groups;
- Introduction of an effective system for continuing training of teachers to motivate young people in accordance with their needs and professional development by promoting the use of innovative teaching methods and ways to address cultural diversity in the classroom;
- Introduction, implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of standardised assessment of the level of school preparation;
- Design, piloting and development of an early warning system for finding, activating and implementing measures for prevention, intervention and compensation aimed at 5-18 year-olds at risk of dropping out, having dropped out or never attended school to complete education, continue education or acquire qualification.

Identification of main target groups:

Children, students, youths, adults beyond compulsory school age, parents, teachers, pedagogical specialists, psychologists, directors.

Specific territories targeted:

The entire territory of the country.

Types of beneficiaries:

MES and second-level spending units, other ministries acting as financing bodies for schools, SACP, kindergartens, schools, higher schools, municipalities, resource centres, community centres, organisations registered under the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act.

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Guiding principles for selection of operations

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<p><2A.2.2.1 type="S" input="S"></p> <p>10i Reducing and preventing early school-leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non-formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training</p>
<p><2A.2.2.2 type="S" maxlength="5000" input="M"></p> <p>Respecting the principles of sound financial management</p> <p>When selecting operations it should be ensured that the grants will be spent in compliance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The investments should contribute to the achievement of the programme indicators. At the same time, connection between the objectives set out in the project, planned activities on the project implementation and the expected results will be sought; connection between the result and amount of the costs needed to its achievement will be sought, as well.</p> <p>Thematic concentration</p> <p>All planned actions and the entire funding under this priority axis are focused in three investment priorities as part of the implementation of Thematic Objective 10 in accordance with Article 9 of the Common Provisions Regulation.</p> <p>Investment efficiency to maximise the achievement of OP SESG objectives</p> <p>The measures to be financed under the OP SESG should fully contribute to the implementation of the programme objectives. Based on analysis of best practices and lessons learned from the previous programming period, the most appropriate ways of awarding grant funding and reducing the administrative burden of the beneficiaries will be selected.</p> <p>Complementarity with other sources of funding</p> <p>To maximise the effectiveness of the proposed funding measures, complementarity with other programmes financed through the EU funds and the state budget will be sought.</p> <p>Addressing target groups' specific needs</p> <p>The provision of funding for the specific measures will be based on the identified target groups' needs in strategic and analytical documents such as National Strategy for Lifelong Learning for the period 2014-2020; National Programme for Development of School Education and Preschool Education and Training (2006-2015); Strategy for Reducing the share of Dropouts and Early School Leavers (2013-2020) etc.</p> <p>Horizontal principles</p> <p>Particular attention will be paid to ensure compliance with the principles of sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and gender equality.</p> <p>Transparency, partnership and objectivity</p> <p>The OP SESG will ensure maximum transparency in the selection of operations. Partnership and representation of all stakeholders in the programming of OP SESG</p>	

operations will be sought.

2.A.6.3 *Planned use of financial instruments* (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<2A.2.3.1 type="S" input="S">
<i>Planned use of financial instruments</i>	<2A.2.3.2 type="C" input="M">
<2A.2.3.3 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M"> Not applicable	

2.A.6.4 *Planned use of major projects* (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<2A.2.4.1 type="S" input="S">
<2A.2.4.2 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M"> Not applicable	

2.A.6.5 *Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region*

(Reference: point (b)(iv) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Table 5

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators

(by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

<i>ID</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Measurement unit</i>	<i>Fund</i>	<i>Category of region (where</i>	<i>Target value (2023)⁵⁹</i>	<i>Source of data</i>	<i>Frequency of reporting</i>	<i>of</i>
-----------	------------------	-------------------------	-------------	----------------------------------	---	-----------------------	-------------------------------	-----------

⁵⁹ For the ESF, this list includes common output indicators for which a target value has been set. Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender. For the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund, gender breakdown is in most cases not relevant. "M" = men, "W"=women, "T"= total.

				relevant)	M	W	T		
<2A.2.5.1 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.2 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.3 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.4 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.5 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.6 type="N" input="M" SME >			<2A.2.5.7 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M" " SME >	<2A.2.5.8 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M" SME >
IP10i SO1	Pedagogical specialists involved in training for the application of modern evaluation methods	Number	ESF	Less developed			5,000	MA	Annually
	Schools and kindergartens involved in actions for introduction of innovative teaching methods using modern ICT	Number	ESF	Less developed			2,000	MA	Annually
IP10i SO2	School students involved in activities aiming to increase motivation for learning through the development of specific knowledge, skills and competencies	Number per year	ESF	Less developed			160,000	MA	Annually
	Schools offering activities to increase the motivation to learn through development of specific knowledge, skills and competences	Number	ESF	Less developed			1,500	MA	Annually

2.A.4 Investment priority

(Repeated for each investment priority under the priority axis)

2.2.2. Investment priority 10ii

<i>Investment priority</i>	<p><2A.10 type="S" input="S" "SME" ></p> <p>10ii Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups</p>
----------------------------	---

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

(Repeated for each specific objective under the investment priority)

(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

2.2.2.1. Specific objective 1

<i>ID</i>	<p><2A.1.1 type="N" input="G" "SME" ></p> <p>1</p>
<i>Specific objective</i>	<p><2A.1.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M" "SME" ></p> <p>Implementation of a system to monitor the number of graduates who are not included in subsequent training programs and have started work in the first year after graduation</p>
<i>The results that the Member State seeks to achieve with Union support</i>	<p><2A.1.3 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M" "SME" ></p> <p>This SO aims to improve the quality of higher education viewed from the perspective of adaptability to the market and employability of university graduates.</p> <p>At present, the national authorities, as well as the National Statistical Institute are not able to monitor the percentage of graduated students who have started work <u>in their specific field of study</u> in the first year after graduation. By creating such monitoring system, the MA will be able to make direct connection and observation on the quality of higher education, on the basis of whether the acquired knowledge by students is relevant enough for the contemporary labour market needs.</p> <p>Eurostat statistics provide a good illustration of the correlation between employability and</p>

	<p>educational attainment. In 2012 in the group of young people in Bulgaria (age 15-34) 11 % of university graduates were unemployed. In comparison, among young people with lower educational attainment the indicator yielded 33 %. While the educational attainment creates capacity for adequate involvement in the labour market, of no smaller importance are certain factors, specific for the tertiary educational level. The following should be outlined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • differences in the quality of the services offered across institutions; • content of specialties and their “sensitivity” to the economy; • adaptability of graduates to the competitive market environment. <p>At the highest level of education these “internal specifics” have been captured through the instruments of the university rating system, which was established with support from the European Social Fund. According to the latest published data by the consortium responsible for the maintenance of the system, there are serious imbalances between graduates’ admission and their employment. As regards Economics, the most popular field of study, just 37 % of the graduates hold positions that require higher education, and their insurable earnings are significantly lower than those of graduates in engineering and political science⁶⁰. However, there are also contradictions in individual professional fields. The graphs of the rating system⁶¹ for example show that slightly over 40 % of machine engineers, having graduated from the otherwise “successful” engineering science, work in their professional field, and 8 % work as “sellers”.</p> <p>Numerous examples of imbalances between quality/admission and employment can be generated. All of them suggest the need to plan and implement comprehensive reforms in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the system of higher education institutions; b) the content and format of the learning process; c) the effective management of resources by the
--	--

⁶⁰ osi.bg, 30.01.2014

⁶¹ <http://rsvu.mon.bg>

	<p>Ministry (maintenance, admission etc.)</p> <p>The scientific activities of universities are of particular importance. The ability to develop good professionals and to attract good students is contingent not just on teaching, but also on the involvement of students and lecturers in research activities. The presence of Bulgarian universities internationally is negligible and is mostly due to personal achievements of scholars or individual scholarly groups than to collective successes of institutions generating valuable academic output.</p> <p>The establishment of a system to monitor the number of graduates who are not included in subsequent training programs and have started work in the first year after graduation will allow the Ministry of Education and Science for the first time to do a precise estimation on the quality of higher education, as it will not only display the employment rate in the first year after graduation, but, more importantly – display who, among the graduates, has been hired in his specific area of study.</p>
--	---

2.2.2.2. Specific objective 2

<i>ID</i>	<p><2A.1.1 type="N" input="G""SME ></p> <p>2</p>
<i>Specific objective</i>	<p><2A.1.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M""SME ></p> <p>Introduction of management systems and financing of higher education institutions, according to the results achieved</p>
<i>The results that the Member State seeks to achieve with Union support</i>	<p><2A.1.3 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M""SME "></p> <p>This SO will target the structural problems of the network of higher education institutions. Despite the altered demographic balance (a decrease in population from nearly 9 million at the end of the 1980s to around 7 million in 2012), the number of students and higher education institutions in which they are taught has grown. Example: before 1990 there were 3 economic universities in Bulgaria, whereas in 2014 their number is already 11⁶². There has been an increase in both the demand and the supply of educational services.</p> <p>The question arises: given the permanent rate of</p>

⁶² Borisov, B., 2014. Higher education: myth and reality

	<p>the budget for higher education (under 1% of the GDP) and the declared goal to increase the number of people with university degree, what should be the change in the network of higher education institutions that will enable more efficient use of available resources to achieve a higher quality?</p> <p>This Specific Objective is intended to improve the efficiency of the resource management within the higher education system. The activities that will be supported under this Specific Objective will reduce the fragmentation of the institutional network. In addition, to strengthen the efficiency of the higher education institutions, the following solutions are envisaged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • measures aimed at improving existing management systems, • internal and organisational structuring, • process optimisation, • implementation of effective monitoring and control systems, • development and introduction of models for linking the funding of higher education institutions with their learning results and the career performance of their graduates.
--	---

2.2.2.3. Specific objective 3

<i>ID</i>	<p><2A.1.1 type="N" input="G"“SME” ></p> <p>3</p>
<i>Specific objective</i>	<p><2A.1.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M"“SME” ></p> <p>Increasing the number of higher education graduates among 30-34 year-olds</p>
<i>The results that the Member State seeks to achieve with Union support</i>	<p><2A.1.3 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M"“SME” ></p> <p>This SO has been planned within the context of the European headline target for at least 40 % of 30-34-year-olds having obtained higher education degrees by 2020. Although higher education is increasing its range in the educational profile of the population (the share of higher education graduates reached 29.1 % in 2013), sustained effort shouldto be made to attain the national headline target in the field of education – a 36 % share of young people with completed higher</p>

	<p>education by 2020.</p> <p>The SO will look forward to increase the number of university diploma holders while:</p> <p>a) striving to retain students in the open competitive European educational market and</p> <p>b) facilitating educational services for groups whose access has been limited due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poverty and/or geographical remoteness; • belonging to a marginalised ethnic or social group; • physical disabilities (special educational needs). <p>What will the expected result under this SO be?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eurostat shows that as of 2012 a strikingly high percentage of Bulgarian population was at risk of poverty and social exclusion (nearly 50 %, compared to an average of 24.7 % for the EU-27). At the same time, the latest representative European survey of social conditions of student life in Bulgaria performed under EUROSTUDENT III⁶³ reveals a definite correlation between studying in the tertiary level and the economic status of the family. In Bulgaria students originate from families where parents are economically active people. The result aimed for is that more children of retired, poor or unemployed people obtain a degree. <p><i>The rationale for this SO includes widening the access to higher education, in particular among groups with hindered access as identified with the statistical data presented above.</i></p> <p>For the needs of this SO, incentives will be foreseen for young people in risk of discrimination that will improve their options to obtain a university degree. On the other hand adequate stimuli need to be offered for prospective students that will otherwise continue their education abroad.</p>
--	---

2.2.2.4. Specific objective 4

ID	<p><2A.1.1 type="N" input="G" "SME"></p> <p>4</p>
----	---

⁶³ Results of Bulgaria's participation in Eurostudent III, CCAQE, 2009

<p><i>Specific objective</i></p>	<p><2A.1.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M""SME "></p> <p>Increasing the qualification of research staff and participation of young doctorates in research</p>
<p><i>The results that the Member State seeks to achieve with Union support</i></p>	<p><2A.1.3 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M""SME "></p> <p>This Specific Objective is aimed at developing the human resources working in the field of science. The goal will be to raise the qualification of the employed in the R&D sector in order to ensure sufficient qualified personnel with higher education degrees and practical experience in the field of research and to attract professionals from abroad to conduct research in Bulgaria. A further goal will be to encourage interest among children, young people and the general public towards research and its output.</p> <p>Targeted long-term investment in the development of human resources in the scientific field will contribute to improving the quality of research and the development of highly skilled professionals, which will stimulate economic growth.</p> <p>The weaknesses associated with the qualification of research staff are grounded in typically low motivation and payment, unattractiveness of the profession and inadequate criteria for professional and career development.</p> <p>An important aspect in the growth of any researcher is the opportunity for mobility, exchange of ideas and networking, i.e. the non-formal development of a researcher's potential.</p> <p>The activities under this Specific Objective will complement the investment under Priority Axis 1. They will further result in attracting leading researchers and innovators, young scholars, doctoral, post-doctoral and specialising post-graduate students by means of competitive remuneration, opportunities for professional development and mobility, conducive working environment and advanced infrastructure in centres of excellence, centres of competence and in other supported infrastructure units, laboratories and production centres.</p> <p>The interventions will lead to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving the qualification of research staff through support for participation in international research fora and trainings;

	<p>2. Strengthening the potential of the younger generation to conduct research through investment in educational programmes aimed at research;</p> <p>3. Attracting scholars from abroad (including Bulgarian researchers with extensive practical experience) by the means of adequate working conditions in the field of research;</p> <p>4. Support to make R&D a more attractive career choice by stimulating students' interest in research.</p> <p>The implementation of the above will lead to an overall improvement of the quality of the human resources in R&D, which will in turn enable an increase in research achievement and its public benefits in areas that will be supported under Priority Axis 1.</p>
--	--

Table 4

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

(Reference: point (b)(ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value64 (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
<i>Programme-specific</i> <2A.1.13 type="S" maxlength="5" input="M"> <i>Common</i> <2A.1.13 type="S" input="S">	<i>Programme-specific</i> <2A.1.14 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M"> <i>Common</i> <2A.1.14 type="S" input="S">	<2A.1.15 type="S" input="S">	<i>Programme-specific</i> <2A.1.16 type="S" input="M"> <i>Common</i> <2A.1.16 type="S" input="S">	<i>Programme-specific</i> <2A.1.17 type="S" input="M"> <i>Common</i> <2A.1.17 type="S" input="S">	<i>Common Output Indicators</i> <2A.1.18 type="S" input="S">			<i>Quantitative</i> <2A.1.19 type="S" input="M"> <i>Common</i> <2A.1.19 type="S" input="G">	<2A.1.20 type="N" input="M">	<i>Quantitative</i> <2A.1.21 type="N" input="M"> <i>Qualitative</i> <2A.1.21 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M">	<2A.1.22 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M">	<2A.1.23 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M">		
IP10ii, SO1	Introduced system for monitoring the number of higher education graduates not involved in subsequent training programmes and having started work in the first year after graduation	Less developed	Yes/No	NA			No	NA	2014			Yes	MA	Annually
IP10ii, SO2	Education support budget in the higher education institutions, which is	Less	%	NA			16	Ratio	2014			60	MA	Annually

This list includes common result indicators for which a target value has been set and all programme-specific result indicators. Target values for common result indicators must be quantified; for programme-specific result indicators, they may be qualitative or quantitative. Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender, the baseline values can be adjusted accordingly. “M” = men, “W”=women, “T”= total.

	<i>calculated on the basis of education quality evaluation and relevance to the labour market needs, as a result of the OP interventions</i>	developed												
IP10ii, SO3	<i>Share of 30-34 year-olds having completed higher education among those involved in actions under the OP</i>	Less developed	%	NA			26,9*	Ratio	2013			36*	MA	Annually
IP10ii, SO4	<i>Newly recruited researchers from abroad in research organisations supported under the OP</i>	Less developed	Number	NA			0	Number	2014			20	MA	Annually
	<i>Share of young researchers aged up to 34 years (inclusive) involved in actions under the OP among those employed in R&D (GOVERD plus HERD)</i>	Less developed	%	NA			12.5	Ratio	2013			15	MA	Annually
	<i>Share of lecturers in schools of higher education among those involved in actions under the OP, received certificate for successfully completed programme for raising the qualification</i>	Less developed	%	NA			16	Ratio	2014			30	MA	Annually

* The value is a macroeconomic indicator for Bulgaria and is present in the Bulgaria 2020 Strategy. A progress on this indicator has not been used and reported by any OP until now and the values cannot indicate the specific influence of OP SESG as of now. The actual progress values will be reported after the completion of at least one operation which contributes to the fulfilment of the indicator.

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority

(by investment priority)

Action to be supported under the investment priority

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment priority</i>	<p><2A.2.1.1 type="S" input="S"></p> <p>10ii Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups</p>
<p><2A.2.1.2 type="S" maxlength="17500" input="M"></p> <p>This Investment Priority will aim to enhance the quality of higher education and improve the employment prospects for graduates, including from vulnerable groups, whereby the specifics of each group and the need for a personalised approach will be taken into account in the implementation of the measures. The latter will facilitate the fulfilment of the recommendation of the EC to modernise higher education. Higher education institutions will be supported to introduce new and innovative forms of teaching, e-learning, and flexible training models. The higher education accreditation system will be improved and measures such as introduction of financial incentives, transfer of best practices, promotion of applied orientation and introduction of international criteria will be taken to ensure the prospect of Bulgarian universities ranking high in European charts by the end of the programming period (2020). Improving the quality of higher education will result in better opportunities for advancement in the labour market for young graduates.</p> <p>Conditions will be created to transform universities into modern knowledge centres bringing together the main components of the knowledge triangle – education, science and innovation. Support will be given to the creation of joint research campuses of geographically close universities with a view to establishing a common experimental base for undergraduate and graduate students to conduct various research tasks, tests and experiments. In addition, innovative links between education, research and business will be further strengthened. Acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and competences will be encouraged, as well as ensuring conditions to transform higher education institutions into centres for development and promotion of entrepreneurship. To support the restructuring of the higher education system the HEInnovate facility will be used. The main goal will be to include the Bulgarian university network in the knowledge and innovation communities of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology.</p> <p>Furthermore, a wide number of measures have been foreseen to make higher education in Bulgaria possible for a larger range of young people. A student aids system will be introduced through ESF funding. Its main highlights will be:</p>	

- adequate support against exclusion and discrimination;
- effective incentives for excellence.

Special attention will be given to students who have chosen priority subjects for science or the economy. This will improve the links between higher education and economic needs.

Participation of students in various forms of additional training, such as students' science clubs and research schools, will be promoted. With a view to improving the access to higher education, universities' activities related to improving admission schemes and applying flexible learning forms will also be supported. In the previous programming period 2007-2013 the HRD OP included children and students with SEN in its scope, however not a single programme was launched to target students and scholars with disabilities.

Considering the problems described above, the Operational Programme proposes the following set of measures:

Under SO 1:

- Development and introduction of models for binding the funding of higher education institutions with the learning results and career development of their students;
- Mainstreaming issues related to sustainable development into the learning content and implementation of interdisciplinary programmes to improve students' knowledge and skills in areas such as sustainable development and climate change;
- Establishing a national system for evaluation of the acquired knowledge, skills and competences by graduates in each professional branch of higher education with the participation of employers.

Under SO 2:

- Improving the management systems of higher education institutions and introduction of monitoring and control systems;
- Improving the accreditation system by encouraging flexibility and transparency in external and internal quality evaluation in higher education institutions and research organisations;
- Maintaining and upgrading of the developed rating system of higher education institutions;
- Optimisation of structure and operation of higher education institutions by improving the financing model;
- Using HEInnovate as an instrument for self-evaluation and promotion of change and innovation in higher education institutions.

Under SO 3:

- Promotion of student participation in various forms of additional training such as student research clubs, research schools, entrepreneurship centres etc.;
- Awarding student scholarships, including to promote studies in priority economic areas, as well as scholarships for outstanding achievement in

science, engineering and technology, pedagogical sciences, innovation and entrepreneurship, art, culture and sport (on a competitive basis).

Under SO 4:

- Integrated measures with the Erasmus+ programme will enable the implementation of activities such as: mobility for exchange of experience/practice for graduate students, doctoral and post-doctoral students, specialising post-graduate students, young scholars and researchers from international European universities and research centres in Bulgaria, including as additional funding under other EU mobility programme;
- Support for science and research promotion measures;
- Support for training, continuing training and career development for employed scholars;
- Developing the capacity and motivation of young professionals: doctoral students, post-doctoral students, specialising post-graduate students and young scholars in the science sector, including through joint research programmes with the business;
- Support for the development of doctoral students pursuing a “project” PhD in scientific and economic areas of national priority;
- Development of partnership networks between Bulgarian and foreign scholars, researchers, doctoral and post-doctoral students, specialising post-graduate students, young scholars and teachers for conducting research;
- Development of research potential and favourable conditions for research conduction, including through attracting scholars from other countries or opening positions for Bulgarian scholars having worked in research organisations abroad;
- Support for the process of dissemination of research results, including support for organisation of national and international scientific forums (conferences, seminars, symposia, congresses, summer schools, competitions);
- Measures for the introduction of mandatory periodic independent evaluation of the organizations funding and conducting research, development and innovation, along with a system of regular monitoring and analysis.

Identification of main target groups:

Students, prospective students, youths, doctoral students, post-doctoral students, lecturers and staff in higher education institutions.

Specific territories targeted:

The entire territory of the country.

Types of beneficiaries:

MES and its second-level spending units, higher education institutions and/or their basic units, BAS, Agricultural Academy, nationally represented organisations of workers and employees and employers’ organisations, employers, professional associations, representative student organisations registered in accordance with the law, organisations registered under the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act.

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Guiding principles for selection of operations

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<p><2A.2.2.1 type="S" input="S"></p> <p>10ii Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups</p>
<p><2A.2.2.2 type="S" maxlength="5000" input="M"></p> <p>Respecting the principles of sound financial management</p> <p>When selecting operations it should be ensured that the grants will be spent in compliance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The investments should contribute to the achievement of the programme indicators. At the same time, connection between the objectives set out in the project, planned activities on the project implementation and the expected results will be sought; connection between the result and amount of the costs needed to its achievement will be sought, as well.</p> <p>Thematic concentration</p> <p>All planned actions and the entire funding under this priority axis are focused in three investment priorities as part of the implementation of Thematic Objective 10 in accordance with Article 9 of the Common Provisions Regulation.</p> <p>Investment efficiency to maximise the achievement of OP SESG objectives</p> <p>The measures to be financed under the OP SESG should fully contribute to the implementation of the programme objectives. Based on analysis of best practices and the lessons learned from the previous programming period, the most appropriate ways of grant funding provision and reducing the administrative burden of the beneficiaries will be selected.</p> <p>Complementarity with other sources of funding</p> <p>To maximise the effectiveness of the proposed funding measures, complementarity with other programmes financed through the EU funds and the state budget will be sought.</p> <p>Addressing target groups' specific needs</p> <p>The provision of funding for the specific measures will be based on the identified target groups' needs in strategic and analytical documents such as Strategy for Development of Higher Education in the Republic of Bulgaria 2014-2020; National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2014-2020; National Research Development Strategy; Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation of the Republic of Bulgaria; National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2020 etc.</p> <p>Horizontal principles</p> <p>Particular attention will be paid to ensure compliance with the principles of sustainable</p>	

development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and gender equality.

Transparency, partnership and objectivity

The OP SESG will ensure maximum transparency in the selection of operations. Partnership and representation of all stakeholders in the programming of OP SESG operations will be sought.

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<2A.2.3.1 type="S" input="S">
<i>Planned use of financial instruments</i>	<2A.2.3.2 type="C" input="M">
<2A.2.3.3 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M"> Not applicable	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<2A.2.4.1 type="S" input="S">
<2A.2.4.2 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M"> Not applicable	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

(Reference: point (b)(iv) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Table 5

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators

(by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023) ⁶⁵			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
<2A.2.5.1 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.2 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.3 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.4 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.5 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.6 type="N" input="M" SME >			<2A.2.5.7 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M" SME >	<2A.2.5.8 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M" SME >
IP10ii SO1	Career centres which have been supported to follow-up the realisation of graduates in the first year after graduation	Number	ESF	Less developed			30	MA	Annually
IP10ii SO2	Higher education institutions, which have been included in the HEInnovate initiative	Number	ESF	Less developed			15	MA	Annually
IP10ii SO3	Students in priority specialties having received scholarships and special scholarships	Number	ESF	Less developed			30,000	MA	Annually
IP10ii SO4	Lecturers in schools of higher education involved in programmes for raising the qualification	Number	ESF	Less developed			4,500	MA	Annually
	Schools of higher education involved in measures for optimisation of the professional fields and the institutional network	%	ESF	Less developed			70	MA	Annually
	Students involved in mobility	Number	ESF	Less			850	MA	Annually

⁶⁵

For the ESF, this list includes common output indicators for which a target value has been set. Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender. For the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund, gender breakdown is in most cases not relevant. "M" = men, "W"=women, "T"= total.

	programmes			developed					
	<i>Young researchers aged up to 34 years (inclusive) supported under the OP to participate in R&D activities (GOVERD plus HERD)</i>	Number	<i>ESF</i>	Less developed			525	MA	<i>Annually</i>

2.A.4 Investment priority

(Repeated for each investment priority under the priority axis)

2.2.3. Investment priority 10iii

<i>Investment priority</i>	<p><2A.10 type="S" input="S""SME" ></p> <p>10iii Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences</p>
----------------------------	--

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

(Repeated for each specific objective under the investment priority)

(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

2.2.3.1. Specific objective 1

<i>ID</i>	<p><2A.1.1 type="N" input="G""SME" ></p> <p>1</p>
<i>Specific objective</i>	<p><2A.1.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M""SME" ></p> <p>Developing the capacity and raising the qualification of the employed in the field of education</p>
<i>The results that the Member State seeks to achieve with Union support</i>	<p><2A.1.3 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M""SME" ></p> <p>This Specific Objective is aimed at developing the human resources employed in the field of education and training. This group has been made the focus of attention as its development is an important aspect in ensuring the quality of education and research.</p> <p><i>In the school</i></p> <p>The SO will seek to achieve the following results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised status of the teaching profession: better motivation for professional development of students in the field⁶⁶. • Improved training of pedagogical

⁶⁶ National Strategy for Development of Teaching Staff, 2014.

	<p>specialists: higher admission and graduation criteria, up-to-date curricula and better performance according to the external evaluation of their students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved operation of the professional development and career growth system: increased participation in short-term training⁶⁷. <p><i>In the university</i></p> <p>The weaknesses related to the qualification of the teaching staff in higher education follow a similar pattern: low motivation and payment, unattractiveness of the profession, inadequate criteria for professional and career development⁶⁸. The sector is characterised by weaker centralisation and lower commitment of the authorities. Developing scholars and researchers is primarily the responsibility of autonomous higher education institutions. The personal initiative as well as the motivation of university lecturers themselves is of prior importance. The analysis of the network of higher education institutions (IP10ii, SO2) shows that the problems in quality are related to imbalances between the growth and supply of education and the number of trained professionals. The age composition (ageing) does not affect changes in any positive way due to shortened career spans. The results that the SO therefore seeks to achieve will be: better motivation and raised attractiveness of the profession of university lecturers as well as the elaboration of updated criteria for professional and career development.</p> <p>An important aspect in the development of university lecturers (scholars) is the opportunity for mobility, exchange of ideas and networking, i.e. the non-formal development of their potential. Reports on the academic mobility under Erasmus 2011-2012 show that 5.6% of lecturers have participated in mobility, which is above the EU average level of around 2%. The expert opinion on this issue, as laid out in the Strategy for Development of Higher Education 2014-2020,</p>
--	---

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Conclusions in the Draft National Strategy for Development of Higher Education 2014-2020.

	however, stresses on the need for further strengthening of the process. ⁶⁹ In this context, qualification of university lecturers will be raised through opportunities for mobility, joint programmes, career development and supporting trainings.
--	--

2.2.3.2. Specific objective 2

<i>ID</i>	<2A.1.1 type="N" input="G" "SME" > 2
<i>Specific objective</i>	<2A.1.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M" "SME" > Increasing the participation in continued learning and upgrading knowledge, skills and competences of the persons covered under the OP actions
<i>The results that the Member State seeks to achieve with Union support</i>	<2A.1.3 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M" "SME" "> In the period 2006-2010 the educational structure of the population ⁷⁰ aged 25-64 in Bulgaria continued to improve with a clear tendency for an increasing number and proportion of the population with higher and secondary educational attainment and, respectively, a decreasing number and proportion with basic or lower educational attainment. Though this SO, the efforts within the compulsory schooling system will be backed up with quality programmes for acquisition of core skills by adults, mainly through developing and upgrading of on-the-job

⁶⁹ For example on p. 18 “Increasing the mobility of students, lecturers and researchers”

⁷⁰ The statistics of education in Bulgaria is based on Regulation 452/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the production and development of statistics on education and lifelong learning, the current national legislation in the field of education, the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 1997 mappings), and their accompanying guidelines.

	<p>training programmes. The alarmingly low current rate of adult participation in training will be increased. The results of the ex-ante evaluation of the National Strategy for LLL in Bulgaria for the first programming period up to 2013 and the analysis of its implementation should serve as a base for the further development of national VET standards and the credit transfer system.</p>
--	--

Table 4

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

(Reference: point (b)(ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value ⁷¹ (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
Programme-specific <2A.1.13 type="S" maxlength="5" input="M"> Common <2A.1.13 type="S" input="S">	Programme-specific <2A.1.14 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M"> Common <2A.1.14 type="S" input="S">	<2A.1.15 type="S" input="S">	Programme-specific <2A.1.16 type="S" input="M"> Common <2A.1.16 type="S" input="S">	Programme-specific <2A.1.17 type="S" input="M"> Common <2A.1.17 type="S" input="S">	Common Output Indicators <2A.1.18 type="S" input="S">			Quantitative <2A.1.19 type="S" input="M"> Common <2A.1.19 type="S" input="G">	<2A.1.20 type="N" input="M">	Quantitative <2A.1.21 type="N" input="M"> Qualitative <2A.1.21 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M">			<2A.1.22 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M">	<2A.1.23 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M">
IP10iii, SO1	Share of pedagogical specialists aged up to 34 years (inclusive), who have successfully passed qualification courses under the OP and have remained in the education system	Less developed	%	NA			90	Ratio	2014			95	MA	Annually
IP10iii, SO2	Persons among those involved in actions under the OP having validated	Less developed	%	NA			50	Ratio	2014			65	MA	Annually

71

This list includes common result indicators for which a target value has been set and all programme-specific result indicators. Target values for common result indicators must be quantified; for programme-specific result indicators, they may be qualitative or quantitative. Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender, the baseline values can be adjusted accordingly. "M" = men, "W" = women, "T" = total.

	<i>knowledge, skills and competences</i>													
	<i>Share of school students, out of those included in career guidance actions under the OP, who have received individual career guidance consultation</i>	Less developed	%	NA			20	Ratio	2014			25	MA	Annually
	<i>Schools of higher education participating in a common information career centre network as a result of the actions under OP</i>	Less developed	Number	0			NA	Number	2014			40	MA	Annually

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority

(by investment priority)

Action to be supported under the investment priority

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<p><i>Investment priority</i></p>	<p><2A.2.1.1 type="S" input="S"></p> <p>10iii Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences</p>
	<p><2A.2.1.2 type="S" maxlength="17500" input="M"></p> <p>In response to the identified problems the Operational Programme proposes the following logic for the financial intervention:</p> <p>Investment in the development of the human resources in science and education contributes to improve the preparation of highly skilled professionals, thus stimulating economic growth and the development of the competitiveness of the economy.</p> <p>This Investment Priority will contribute to significantly improve the qualifications of the employed in the field of education. This is an important condition for the overall development of higher education in the country. Leading experts should be attracted to work in the field of higher education through competitive payment, career development opportunities, appropriate working environment and modern infrastructure. This will help reduce the brain drain, attract a new generation of professionals and create an appropriate environment for the development of highly skilled human resources meeting the needs of the labour market and the national economy.</p> <p>Lecturers will be provided with opportunities for additional training in protection of intellectual property, entrepreneurship, ICT (including certification of the training through EU-recognised certificates) etc. Career development opportunities will be improved on the basis of the achieved results, as well as opportunities for inclusion in international and national professional and scientific networks and mobility of lecturers. The actions under this Investment Priority will improve the conditions for mobility of lecturers, educational specialists, university students and employees in education institutions and school students.</p> <p>The rapidly evolving European labour market poses increasing requirements on the education system in Bulgaria at all levels, from school and vocational education to higher education. European and national employers' organisations have identified two key priority areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing opportunities for acquiring practical experience and key competences to school and university students; • Updating and expanding the knowledge and skills of teachers in educational

institutions in line with the requirements of the labour market.

One proven instrument to achieve these priorities is the stimulation and expansion of the scope of cross-border mobility within the EU. Cross-border mobility is a prerequisite for developing practical skills in young people. It enables Bulgarian teachers and university lecturers to engage in a continuous exchange of know-how with their colleagues in different European countries. This ensures the quality of teaching.

Moreover, the implementation of the planned activities under this Investment Priority is expected to improve the methodological and managerial development and to create incentives for the development and self-improvement of the teaching and non-teaching staff in the system of pre-primary education and in the school education system by providing opportunities for development of professional competences and upgrading management competences.

As a result, a favourable environment for improving the qualification of the employed in the education sector is expected to be achieved through inclusion of all uninvolved staff in induction training activities, and conditions for continuing training, including for previously upgraded qualifications, of previously involved staff.

The planned activities for qualification improvement are aimed at strengthening the practical application of the achieved results, promoting and supporting the professional development of teaching and non-teaching specialists, supporting early career development and improving the quality of opportunities for continuing professional development of teachers and other staff in the education system. The major part of the activities will seek to attract and retain young specialists, as well as to ensure an active involvement of males in the sector.

The proposed activities are expected to improve the opportunities for continuing professional development and offset certain deficiencies in basic training, i.e. acquiring additional qualification for successful professional development.

The implementation of the proposed measures is intended to improve career development opportunities on the basis of the achieved results, as well as to create opportunities for inclusion in international and national professional and learning networks and public dissemination and promotion of best practice. Specialised teacher training, related to the vocational preparation of students in vocational, sports and arts schools, is envisaged with a view to improving the quality of vocational education.

The improvement of the qualification of university lecturers and teaching specialists in the pre-primary education system and in the system of school education will contribute to increase Bulgaria's participation in European and international programmes as well as in programmes for exchange of experience, and will improve the quality of education in the country.

This Investment Priority is expected to increase the participation in various forms of lifelong learning, whereby the specifics of each individual group will be taken into account during the implementation of measures. Thus, better opportunities for advancement in the labour market will be ensured for the participants in such forms. The social and communication skills of young people and adults will also be improved. This will facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge that will enhance their quality of life. Adult participation in literacy courses, as well as in courses for mastering the learning content of the grades in lower secondary school and obtaining documents for acquired competences in the basic level of education upon successfully passing the

required exams, will enable them to continue their education, join the labour market or continue their studies for acquiring a degree of professional qualification.

The validation of learning outcomes, namely knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal and self-directed learning, will play a vital role in increasing employability and mobility, as well as in enhancing the motivation for lifelong learning, particularly among people in socially and economically disadvantaged position and among low-qualified people. The validation of adequate knowledge, skills and competences will provide an even more valuable contribution to improving the functioning of the labour market by stimulating mobility and strengthening competitiveness and economic growth.

With a view to providing every person with the opportunity to certify their learning outside formal education, including experience gained through mobility, and to make use of it in their professional development and further learning, mechanisms will be developed that will enable:

- validation of the knowledge, skills, and competences acquired through non-formal and self-directed learning, including, where applicable, through open access learning resources;
- acquisition of full or, where applicable, partial qualification on the basis of the validated experience acquired through non-formal and self-directed learning.

Career guidance is associated with a range of activities helping people of all ages and at each stage of their lives to identify their capacity, competences and interests, take decisions related to education, training and work, and manage their individual life and opportunities for learning, working and other commitments within which such capacity and competences can be acquired and/or applied. Improving and maintaining the career guidance system as early as school education will help students not only to expand the opportunities for access to the labour market but also to improve professional skills and acquire new knowledge. Through integrated operations with the Human Resources Operational Programme 2014-2020 measures for career guidance of students before graduation will be implemented under SO2 of IP10iii.

The proposed activities under the Investment Priority will contribute to the formation of lifelong career management skills. The main result to be reached during the programming period will be the provision of quality guidance services. This will also be achieved through promoting coordination and cooperation between stakeholders at national, regional and local level.

Under SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1:

- Support for qualification, continuing learning and career development of the employed in the field of education and training;
- Capacity development and creation of incentives for motivation and retention of young specialists in the system of pre-primary education and in the school education system, for example by providing scholarships to young teaching specialists employed in the pre-school or school education systems who wish to pursue a doctoral degree in education science;
- Creation of a master professional profile for each position of the career development path for teaching specialists, where the required competences are defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes of teaching specialists

by level of education, type of learning and educational institution;

- Development and implementation of a performance appraisal model for teaching staff, based on professional standards and introduction of an electronic evaluation system as a basis for professional and career development;
- Development of an information system with registers of teachers and teaching organisations and institutions;
- Improving the conditions for development and acquisition of new personal and professional knowledge and skills, including through development of partnership networks;
- Capacity building and stimulation of young specialists in higher education, including through joint programmes with businesses and economic sectors;
- Support for trainee teachers by funding internships as part of the practical training of students at higher education institutions;
- Through integrated measures with the Erasmus+ programme: Mobility for exchange of experience and know-how for teaching staff in mainstream education, including as additional funding under other programmes for mobility within the EU.

Under SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2:

- Promotion of flexible pathways to lifelong learning for persons who are not included in the traditional education system by expanding the range of learning opportunities, including adult literacy, courses for mastering the content of different educational degrees and courses for attainment of professional qualification;
- Support for actions to improve stakeholder coordination and development of mechanisms for cooperation in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of lifelong learning policies;
- Expansion of the range of research, analysis and impact assessment for designing appropriate education and lifelong learning policies;
- Support for activities under the National Qualifications Framework and sectoral qualifications frameworks;
- Creation of conditions for information provision of the processes in the lifelong learning system;
- Development of career guidance system (information and counselling, consultation, competence assessment; mentoring, legal assistance, training for decision-making skills, formation of career management skills) for school and university students in the education system;
- Development of a functioning national system for validation of the results of non-formal and self-directed learning and promotion of its use by all age groups over 16;
- Promotion of lifelong learning among all segments of the population as a factor of personal development, sustainable employment and social inclusion.

Identification of main target groups:

Children, school students, youths, university students, doctoral students, post-doctoral students, specialising post-graduate students, young scholars, teaching specialists in the pre-primary education system and in the system of school education, scholars, researchers, lecturers and staff in research organisations and higher education institutions, career counsellors, psychologists, persons with no educational attainment, unemployed and illiterate persons.

Specific territories targeted:

The entire territory of the country.

Types of beneficiaries:

MES and second-level authorising units for budget loans, other ministries acting as financing bodies for schools, higher schools and/or their basic units, kindergartens, schools, research organisations (including the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Agricultural Academy), research institutes, nationally represented organisations of workers and employees and employers' organisations, employers, professional associations, representative students' organisations registered in accordance with the law, organisations registered under the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act, municipalities.

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Guiding principles for selection of operations

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<p><2A.2.2.1 type="S" input="S"></p> <p>10iii Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences</p>
<p><2A.2.2.2 type="S" maxlength="5000" input="M"></p> <p>Respecting the principles of sound financial management</p> <p>When selecting operations it should be ensured that the grants will be spent in compliance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The investments should contribute to the achievement of the programme indicators. At the same time, connection between the objectives set out in the project, planned activities on the project implementation and the expected results will be sought; connection between the result and amount of the costs needed to its achievement will be sought, as well.</p> <p>Thematic concentration</p> <p>All planned actions and the entire funding under this priority axis are focused in three investment priorities as part of the implementation of Thematic Objective 10 in accordance with Article 9 of the Common Provisions Regulation.</p> <p>Investment efficiency to maximise the achievement of OP SESG objectives</p>	

The measures to be financed under the OP SESG should fully contribute to the implementation of the programme objectives. Based on analysis of best practices and lessons learned from the previous programming period, the most appropriate ways of awarding grant funding and reducing the administrative burden of the beneficiaries will be selected.

Complementarity with other sources of funding

To maximise the effectiveness of the proposed funding measures, complementarity with other programmes financed through the EU funds and the state budget will be sought.

Addressing target groups' specific needs

The provision of funding for the specific measures will be based on the identified target groups' needs in strategic and analytical documents such as National Strategy for Lifelong Learning; National Strategy for Development of Higher Education in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2014-2020; National Strategy for the Development of Pedagogical Staff (2014-2020); Strategy for Development of Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2015-2020 etc.

Horizontal principles

Particular attention will be paid to ensure compliance with the principles of sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and gender equality.

Transparency, partnership and objectivity

The OP SESG will ensure maximum transparency in the selection of operations. Partnership and representation of all stakeholders in the programming of OP SESG operations will be sought.

Integrated approach

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<2A.2.3.1 type="S" input="S">
<i>Planned use of financial instruments</i>	<2A.2.3.2 type="C" input="M">
<2A.2.3.3 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M"> Not applicable	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<2A.2.4.1 type="S" input="S">
<2A.2.4.2 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M"> Not applicable	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

(Reference: point (b)(iv) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Table 5

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators

(by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023) ⁷²			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
<2A.2.5.1 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.2 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.3 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.4 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.5 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.6 type="N" input="M" SME >			<2A.2.5.7 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M" SME >	<2A.2.5.8 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M" SME >
IP10iii SO1	Pedagogical specialists involved in programmes for raising the qualification under the OP: • Up to 34 years of age • B/w 35 and 54 years of age	Number	ESF	Less developed			4,000 30,000	MA	Annually
	Students enrolled in pedagogical sciences	Number	ESF	Less developed			28000	MA	Annually
IP10iii SO2	Participants in various forms of mobility with improved	Number	ESF	Less developed			380	MA	Annually

⁷²

For the ESF, this list includes common output indicators for which a target value has been set. Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender. For the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund, gender breakdown is in most cases not relevant. "M" = men, "W"=women, "T"= total.

	qualification and skills and better job opportunities								
	Participants in continued learning and upgrading knowledge, skills and competences, between 25-64 years of age	Number	ESF	Less developed			50000	MA	Annually
	Persons willing to validate knowledge, skills and competences	Number	ESF	Less developed			3000	MA	Annually
	School students involved in career guidance activities under the OP	Number	ESF	Less developed			200,000	MA	Annually
	Schools of higher education participating in the creation of a common information career centre network	Number	ESF	Less developed			45	MA	Annually

2.A.4 Investment priority

(Repeated for each investment priority under the priority axis)

2.2.4. Investment priority 10iv

<i>Investment priority</i>	<p><2A.10 type="S" input="S""SME" ></p> <p>10iv Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work-based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes</p>
----------------------------	--

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

(Repeated for each specific objective under the investment priority)

(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

2.2.4.1. Specific objective 1

<i>ID</i>	<p><2A.1.1 type="N" input="G""SME" ></p> <p>1</p>
<i>Specific objective</i>	<p><2A.1.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M""SME" ></p> <p>Increasing the number of students in VET schools and adapting of vocational education and training to labour market needs</p>
<i>The results that the Member State seeks to achieve with Union support</i>	<p><2A.1.3 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M""SME" ></p> <p>Vocational education and training (VET) is one of the major factors for achieving the headline targets of the EU. The VET system will be developed to meet the immediate and future labour market needs for skills.</p> <p>The VET system in Bulgaria is still unable to secure the skills that are in demand in the labour market. At present, there is no established system for monitoring vocational training needs to ensure that education is compliant with national and regional economic priorities. It is necessary to make sure that data is being fed back from the labour market to the provision of VET in order to</p>

	<p>guarantee that the assessment of future requirements and the addressing of labour market needs be given proper consideration in the planning of VET. The National agency for VET (NAVET) develops the standards in VET oriented to the learning outcomes (LOs). The new professional standards based on the LOs will guarantee the links of VET to the LM. Elaboration of Sectoral qualifications frameworks (SQFs) oriented to the LOs is one major pre-condition for VET supply to meet the skill needs. Further orientation of the VET supply to the LOs, development and introduction of a system for credits' transfer in VET will facilitate the permeability of VET to the HE. Elaboration of assessment standards in VET, based on the concept of LOs is a necessary step to develop a basis for permanent feedback from economy sectors.</p> <p>A higher level of professional skills will be required to increase the number of jobs by 2020. To this end, better educational standards, professional standards and well defined learning outcomes should be put in place and young people should be encouraged to develop transferable skills that will enable them to be more enterprising and adapt quicker to changes in the labour market, which will, in turn, facilitate the transition from education to employment and help reduce youth unemployment.</p>
--	--

2.2.4.2. Specific objective 2

<i>ID</i>	<p><2A.1.1 type="N" input="G" "SME" ></p> <p>2</p>
<i>Specific objective</i>	<p><2A.1.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M" "SME" ></p> <p>Increasing the share of graduates in vocational or higher education who have started work in the first year after graduation, in their area of study</p>
<i>The results that the Member State seeks to achieve with Union support</i>	<p><2A.1.3 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M" "SME" ></p> <p>The investment under this SO will help improve the links between vocational education and training and higher education and the mechanism for cooperation between vocational education and</p>

	<p>the business. It will also promote education in engineering, technical and natural sciences and in professional branches of primary importance to the economy. Furthermore, it will: enhance the prospects for successful advancement of VET or higher education graduates in the labour market; build networks between VET schools, higher education institutions and businesses; improve the practical skills of school and higher education students for working in a real environment, as well as their computer skills, as a major requirement of the information society.</p> <p>Through the measures in this SO, the following results will be achieved, so that the cooperation between systems of vocational education and training, and higher education on one side and business on the other side become more effective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The business sector will be actively involved in the curricula design; • Admission by specialty will become a result of stakeholder discussions; • More internship programmes will be created; • More working public-private partnerships will be established; • Vocational education infrastructure that meets the requirements of modern production will be created. <p>In addition, higher education institutions will benefit from the following results under this SO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better-conducted compulsory internships; • More partner relations established between faculties and businesses in the same field; • Learning content and lecturers in line with technological development; • Joint planning of professional needs between autonomous higher education institutions and companies. <p>Active cooperation with companies will bring knowledge close to the requirements of the real working environment. Recent changes in the VET</p>
--	--

	<p>Act create preconditions for strengthening the links between VET and business on the one hand, and VET and the HE - on the other. Further development of appropriate methodologies and tools for defining the content of qualifications based on the labour demand will be supported.</p> <p>The SO will provide structural support for the modernisation and development of the new VET standards, Training plans and Qualification framework programmes, oriented to the LOs and VET credits' transfer. The current rate of support for ensuring placement for training and production practices of school and higher education students on the part of the business will be raised in the programming period 2014-2020.</p>
--	---

Table 4

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

(Reference: point (b)(ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value ⁷³ (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
Programme-specific <2A.1.13 type="S" maxlength="5" input="M"> Common <2A.1.13 type="S" input="S">	Programme-specific <2A.1.14 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M"> Common <2A.1.14 type="S" input="S">	<2A.1.15 type="S" input="S">	Programme-specific <2A.1.16 type="S" input="M"> Common <2A.1.16 type="S" input="S">	Programme-specific <2A.1.17 type="S" input="M"> Common <2A.1.17 type="S" input="S">	Common Output Indicators <2A.1.18 type="S" input="S">			Quantitative <2A.1.19 type="S" input="M"> Common <2A.1.19 type="S" input="G">	<2A.1.20 type="N" input="M">	Quantitative <2A.1.21 type="N" input="M"> Qualitative <2A.1.21 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M">			<2A.1.22 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M">	<2A.1.23 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M">
IP10iv, SO1	Share of students in the secondary stage of education studying in vocational schools from the involved in actions under OP	Less developed	%	NA			50	Ratio	2014			51,5	MA	Annually
IP10iv, SO2	Students in technical specialties from the involved in actions under OP	Less developed	%	NA			19,2	Ratio	2014			25	MA	Annually

73

This list includes common result indicators for which a target value has been set and all programme-specific result indicators. Target values for common result indicators must be quantified; for programme-specific result indicators, they may be qualitative or quantitative. Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender, the baseline values can be adjusted accordingly. “M” = men, “W”=women, “T”= total.

	<i>Share of students having passed successfully practical training in a real work environment from the involved in actions under OP</i>	Less developed	%	NA			87	<i>Ratio</i>	2014			90	MA	<i>Annually</i>
--	---	----------------	---	----	--	--	----	--------------	------	--	--	----	----	-----------------

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority

(by investment priority)

Action to be supported under the investment priority

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment priority</i>	<p><2A.2.1.1 type="S" input="S"></p> <p>10iv Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work-based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes</p>
<p><2A.2.1.2 type="S" maxlength="17500" input="M"></p> <p>Investing in activities aimed at improving the quality of VET will enable a more successful advancement of graduates in the labour market. This will directly reduce the youth unemployment rate in the country. At the same time, it will also supply the business with qualified staff and will thus help attract more foreign investment.</p> <p>The investment under this Priority will help improve the links between vocational education and training and higher education and the mechanism for cooperation between vocational education and the business. It will also promote education in engineering, technical and natural sciences and in professional branches of prior importance to the economy. Furthermore, it will: enhance the prospects for successful advancement of VET or higher education graduates in the labour market; build networks between vocational and higher schools and businesses; improve the practical skills of school and university students for working in a real environment, as well as their computer skills, as a major requirement of the information society.</p> <p>Under SO2, school curricula will be developed together with representatives of the business. Professional competences in professions of importance to the local and regional economy will be considered a priority.</p> <p>Under SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support for actions related to the implementation of a credit system in vocational education as a tool for storage, recognition and transfer of the results of formal, non-formal and self-directed learning towards acquiring professional qualification and lifelong professional development, as well as for facilitation of citizens' transnational mobility;• Introduction of flexible learning forms in vocational education, such as modular training for acquiring professional qualification and learning materials designed in cooperation with the business;• Introduction and implementation of on-the-job (dual) learning for people aged	

over 16;

- Support for the operation of education and training providers and/or other forms of providers of education and training services.

Under SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2:

- Maintenance of a national information platform “Science-Education-Business”;
- Support for the development of systems for education planning in accordance with labour market needs at national and regional level;
- Promotion of education in the fields of engineering, technical and natural sciences and professional branches of prior importance to the economy;
- Updates of vocational syllabi and curricula with the participation of employers;
- Design and implementation of policies and measures for development of learning by doing and support for conduction of effective practical training in a real working environment for students in VET schools;
- Support for the practical training of students in vocational schools through additional practical training activities in real work environment;
- Provision of additional practical training of students in HEIs in real work environment;
- Support for actions associated with the development of a career guidance model at school level and a schools-labour market relationship model;
- Aligning the mechanisms for awarding credits in VET and for validation of the results of non-formal and self-directed learning;
- Support for a quality assurance system for VET;
- Support of training of mentors for in-company practical training in dual VET.

Identification of main target groups:

Children, school students, youths, higher education students, doctoral students, post-doctoral students, specialising post-graduate students, young scholars, pedagogical specialists in the pre-school and school education systems, scholars, researchers, lecturers and staff in research organisations and higher education institutions, career counsellors, psychologists, persons with no educational attainment, unemployed and illiterate persons.

Specific territories targeted:

The entire territory of the country.

Types of beneficiaries:

MES and second-level spending units, including the National Agency for VET in Bulgaria (NAVET), other ministries acting as financing bodies for schools, higher education institutions and/or their basic units, schools, research organisations (including the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Agricultural Academy), research institutes, nationally represented organisations of workers and employees and employers’ organisations, employers, professional associations, youth associations, representative student organisations registered in accordance with the law, organisations registered under the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act, municipalities.

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Guiding principles for selection of operations

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<p><2A.2.2.1 type="S" input="S"></p> <p>10iv Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and establishment and development of work-based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes</p>
<p><2A.2.2.2 type="S" maxlength="5000" input="M"></p> <p>Respecting the principles of sound financial management</p> <p>When selecting operations it should be ensured that the grants will be spent in compliance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The investments should contribute to the achievement of the programme indicators. At the same time, connection between the objectives set out in the project, planned activities on the project implementation and the expected results will be sought; connection between the result and amount of the costs needed to its achievement will be sought, as well.</p> <p>Thematic concentration</p> <p>All planned actions and the entire funding under this priority axis are focused in three investment priorities as part of the implementation of Thematic Objective 10 in accordance with Article 9 of the Common Provisions Regulation.</p> <p>Investment efficiency to maximise the achievement of OP SESG objectives</p> <p>The measures to be financed under the OP SESG should fully contribute to the implementation of the programme objectives. Based on analysis of best practices and lessons learned from the previous programming period, the most appropriate ways of awarding grant funding and reducing the administrative burden of the beneficiaries will be selected.</p> <p>Complementarity with other sources of funding</p> <p>To maximise the effectiveness of the proposed funding measures, complementarity with other programmes financed through the EU funds and the state budget will be sought.</p> <p>Addressing target groups' specific needs</p> <p>The provision of funding for the specific measures will be based on the identified target groups' needs in strategic and analytical documents such as the Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2015-2020; the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Bulgaria; National Development Programme "Bulgaria 2020"; and National Strategy for Lifelong</p>	

Learning 2014-2020.

Horizontal principles

Particular attention will be paid to ensure compliance with the principles of sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and gender equality.

Transparency, partnership and objectivity

The OP SESG will ensure maximum transparency in the selection of operations. Partnership and representation of all stakeholders in the programming of OP SESG operations will be sought.

Integrated approach

Integrated operations combining career guidance are planned to be launched under the Investment Priority “Improving the access to opportunities for lifelong learning, improving the skills and qualification of the labour force and increasing the relevance of education and training systems to the labour market, including improving the quality of vocational education and training and designing and developing schemes for learning through work and apprenticeships, such as the dual learning system”. With a view to achieving a strong synergistic effect, the OP SESG will fund career guidance activities offered by institutions inside the education system and the HRD OP will fund such activities offered by institutions outside the system.

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<2A.2.3.1 type="S" input="S">
<i>Planned use of financial instruments</i>	<2A.2.3.2 type="C" input="M">
<2A.2.3.3 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M"> Not applicable	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<2A.2.4.1 type="S" input="S">
<2A.2.4.2 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M"> Not applicable	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

(Reference: point (b)(iv) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Table 5

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators

(by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023) ⁷⁴			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
<2A.2.5.1 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.2 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.3 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.4 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.5 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.6 type="N" input="M" SME >			<2A.2.5.7 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M" SME >	<2A.2.5.8 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M" SME >
IP10iv SO1	School students participating in activities for promotion of vocational education in branches of primary importance to the economy	Number	ESF	Less developed			5,000	MA	Annually
IP10iv SO1	Number of established educational training firms (ETFs)	Number	ESF	Less developed			750	MA	Annually
IP10iv SO2	Number of vocational schools having introduced dual learning	Number	ESF	Less developed			40	MA	Annually
	School students included in practical training programs in a real work environment	Number	ESF	Less developed			20,000	MA	Annually

⁷⁴

For the ESF, this list includes common output indicators for which a target value has been set. Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender. For the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund, gender breakdown is in most cases not relevant. "M" = men, "W"=women, "T"= total.

	Students in HEIs involved in practical training activities in a real work environment	Number	ESF	Less developed			90,000	MA	Annually
--	---	--------	-----	----------------	--	--	--------	----	----------

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7⁷⁵

Specific provisions for ESF⁷⁶, where applicable (by priority axis and, where relevant, category of region): social innovation, transnational cooperation and ESF contribution to thematic objectives 1 to 7.

Description of the contribution of the planned actions of the priority axis to:

- social innovation (if not covered by a dedicated priority axis);
- transnational cooperation (if not covered by a dedicated priority axis);
- thematic objectives referred to in points (1) to (7) of the first paragraph of Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

Priority axis	<2A.3.1 type="S" input="S">
<2A.3.2 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M"> Not applicable	

⁷⁵ Only for programmes supported by the ESF.

⁷⁶ For the ESF, this list includes common output indicators for which a target value has been set and all programme-specific output indicators.

2.A.8 Performance framework

(Reference: point (b)(v) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2), and Annex II to Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Table 6

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis

(by fund and, for the ERDF and ESF, category of region)⁷⁷

Priority axis	Indicator type (Key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018 ⁷⁸			Final target (2023) ⁷⁹			Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
							M	W	T	M	W	T		
<2A.4.1 type="S" input="S">	<2A.4.2 type="S" input="S">	Implementation Step or Financial indicator	Implementation Step or Financial indicator <2A.4.4 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M"> Output or Result	Implementation Step or Financial indicator <2A.4.5 type="S" input="M">	<2A.4.6 type="S" input="S">	<2A.4.7 type="S" input="S">	<2A.4.8 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M">			Implementation Step or Financial <2A.4.9 type="S" input="M"> Output or			Implementation Step or Financial indicator <2A.4.10 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M">	<2A.4.11 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M">

⁷⁷ Where YEI is implemented as part of a priority axis, YEI milestones and targets must be distinguished from other milestones and targets for the priority axis in accordance with implementing acts referred to in the fifth subparagraph of Article 22(7) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, as YEI resources (specific allocation and matching ESF support) are excluded from the performance reserve.

⁷⁸ Milestones may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender. "M" = men, "W"=women, "T"= total.

⁷⁹ Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender. "M" = men, "W"=women, "T"= total.

		<2A.4.3 type="S" " maxlength="5" input="M"> Output or result<2 A.4.3 type="S" " input="S">	<2A.4.4 type="S" input="G" or "M">	Output or Result <2A.4.5 type="S" input="G" or "M">				Result <2A.4.8 type="S" input="M">	Output or Result <2A.4.10 type="S" input="M">	
PA2	output	IP10i	Pedagogical specialists involved in training for the application of modern evaluation methods	Number	ESF	Less developed	1 000	5 000	MA	NA
PA2	output	IP10i	School students involved in activities aiming to increase motivation for learning through the development of specific knowledge, skills and competencies	Number	ESF	Less developed	50 000	160 000	MA	NA
PA2	result	IP10ii	Education support budget in the	%	ESF	Less developed	16	60	MA	NA

			<i>higher education institutions, which is calculated on the basis of education quality evaluation and relevance to the labour market needs, as a result of the OP interventions</i>							
<i>PA2</i>	<i>output</i>	<i>IP10ii</i>	<i>Students in priority subjects having received scholarships and special scholarships</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>ESF</i>	<i>Less developed</i>	<i>7 500</i>	<i>30 000</i>	<i>MA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>PA2</i>	<i>output</i>	<i>IP10iii</i>	<i>Pedagogical specialists involved in programmes for raising the qualification under the OP:</i> <i>- up to 34 years of age</i> <i>- b/w 35 and 54 years of age</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>ESF</i>	<i>Less developed</i>	<i>- 1 200</i> <i>- 9 000</i>	<i>- 4 000</i> <i>- 30 000</i>	<i>MA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>PA2</i>	<i>output</i>	<i>IP10iii</i>	<i>Students enrolled in pedagogical sciences</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>ESF</i>	<i>Less developed</i>	<i>21000</i>	<i>28000</i>	<i>MA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>PA2</i>	<i>output</i>	<i>IP10iii</i>	<i>School students involved in career guidance</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>ESF</i>	<i>Less developed</i>	<i>50 000</i>	<i>200 000</i>	<i>MA</i>	<i>NA</i>

			<i>activities under the OP</i>							
<i>PA2</i>	<i>output</i>	<i>IP10iv</i>	<i>School students included in practical training programs in a real work environment</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>ESF</i>	<i>Less developed</i>	<i>6 000</i>	<i>20 000</i>	<i>MA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>PA2</i>	<i>result</i>	<i>IP10iv</i>	<i>Share of students having passed successfully practical training in a real work environment from the involved in actions under OP</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>ESF</i>	<i>Less developed</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>MA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>PA2</i>	<i>financial</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Certified expenditures</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>ESF</i>	<i>Less developed</i>	<i>77 403 712,75</i>	<i>245 111 757,05</i>	<i>MA</i>	<i>NA</i>

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework
(optional)

<2A.4.12 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M">

2.A.9 Categories of intervention

(Reference: point (b)(vi) of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 7-11

Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention⁸⁰

(by Fund and category of region, if the priority axis covers more than one)

Table 7: Dimension 1 – Intervention field		
Fund	<2A.5.1.1 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > ESF	
Category of region	<2A.5.1.2 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > Less developed	
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
<2A.5.1.3 type="S" input="S" Decision=N>	<2A.5.1.4 type="S" input="S" Decision=N >	<2A.5.1.5 type="N" input="M" Decision=N >
2	115. Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to high-quality pre-primary, basic and secondary education including formal, non-formal and informal learning pathways for re-inclusion into the education and training system	121 687 467,72
2	116. Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to higher and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and improving attainment levels, in particular for disadvantaged groups	60 191 836,71
2	117. Improving the equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in a formal, non-formal and informal setting, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences	24 393 272,6
2	118. Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening	13 037 942,44

⁸⁰

Amounts include total Union support (the main allocation and the allocation from the performance reserve).

	vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and establishment and development of work-based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes	
--	---	--

Table 8: Dimension 2 – Form of finance

Fund	<2A.5.2.1 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > ESF	
Category of region	<2A.5.2.2 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > Less developed	
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
<2A.5.2.3 type="S" input="S" Decision=N>	<2A.5.2.4 type="S" input="S" Decision=N >	<2A.5.2.5 type="N" input="M" Decision=N >
2	01. Non-repayable grant	219 310 519,47

Table 9: Dimension 3 – Territory type

Fund	<2A.5.3.1 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > ESF	
Category of region	<2A.5.3.2 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > Less developed	
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
<2A.5.3.3 type="S" input="S" Decision=N>	<2A.5.3.4 type="S" input="S" Decision=N >	<2A.5.3.5 type="N" input="M" Decision=N >
2	07. Not applicable	219 310 519,47

Table 10: Dimension 4 – Territorial delivery mechanisms

Fund	<2A.5.4.1 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > ESF	
Category of region	<2A.5.4.2 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > Less developed	
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
<2A.5.4.2 type="S" input="S" Decision=N>	<2A.5.4.4 type="S" input="S" Decision=N >	<2A.5.4.5 type="N" input="M" Decision=N >

<i>Decision=N></i>	<i>Decision=N ></i>	<i>Decision=N ></i>
2	07. Not applicable	219 310 519,47

Table 11: Dimension 6 – ESF secondary theme⁸¹ (ESF only)

Fund	<2A.5.5.1 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > ESF	
Category of region	<2A.5.5.2 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > Less developed	
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
<2A.5.5.3 type="S" input="S" Decision=N>	<2A.5.5.4 type="S" input="S" Decision=N >	<2A.5.5.5 type="N" input="M" Decision=N >
	04 Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	4 563 280,04
	08. Not applicable	214 747 239,43

Summary of the planned use of technical assistance

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate)

(by priority axis)

(Reference: point (b)(vii) of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Priority axis</i>	<3A.6.1 type="S" input="S">2
<p><2A.6.2 type="S" maxlength="2000" input="M"></p> <p>The actions under PA4 will be aimed at upgrading the administrative capacity of the Managing Authority. There is also a need to reinforce the capacity of the beneficiaries for project management and reporting under the Programme. The actions related to capacity building of the MA staff and the beneficiaries are key to ensuring the successful management and implementation of the OP.</p> <p>Special attention will be paid to the adequate staffing and provision of material and technical equipment for the processes and activities, which are new for the MES in its capacity as a MA.</p> <p>PA4 will also support actions related to regular reporting on the progress in the</p>	

⁸¹ Include, where appropriate, quantified information on the ESF's contribution to the thematic objectives referred to in points (1) to (7) of the first paragraph of Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

management and implementation of the OP, **implementation of different types of studies** to facilitate the implementation and assess the impacts of the proposed OP measures within the context of efficient and effective utilisation of the support from the EU funds.

2.A.1 Priority axis (repeated for each priority axis)

2.3. Priority axis 3

ID of the priority axis	<2A.1 type="N" input="G" "SME" > 3
Title of the priority axis	<2A.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M" "SME" > EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ACTIVE SOCIAL INCLUSION

<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments	<2A.3 type="C" input="M">
<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level	<2A.4 type="C" input="M" "SME" >
<input type="checkbox"/> The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development	<2A.5 type="C" input="M">
<input type="checkbox"/> For the ESF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to social innovation or to transnational cooperation, or both	<2A.6 type="C" input="M">

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or Fund (where applicable)

(Reference: Article 96(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<2A.0 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M"> Not applicable. The Priority Axis covers only Thematic Objective 9: Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination.

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

(Repeated for each combination under a priority axis)

<i>Fund</i>	<2A.7 type="S" input="S""SME" > ESF
<i>Category of region</i>	<2A.8 type="S" input="S""SME "> Less developed
<i>Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)</i>	<2A.9 type="S" input="S""SME" > Eligible Public Expenditure
<i>Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)</i>	<2A.9 type="S" input="S" > Not applicable

2.A.4 Investment priority

(Repeated for each investment priority under the priority axis)

2.3.1. Investment priority 9i

<i>Investment priority</i>	<2A.10 type="S" input="S""SME" > 9i Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
----------------------------	---

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

(Repeated for each specific objective under the investment priority)

(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

2.3.1.1. Specific objective 1

<i>ID</i>	<2A.1.1 type="N" input="G""SME" > 1
<i>Specific objective</i>	<2A.1.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M""SME" > Increasing the number of educational institutions having ensured supportive environment for inclusive education
<i>The results that the Member State seeks to achieve with Union support</i>	<2A.1.3 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M""SME" > This specific objective is focused on the problems of children and pupils with special educational

	<p>needs. Its implementation will build on deinstitutionalization policies and creating an environment for integrated education (the integrated education for children with special educational needs is a process in which the child, regardless of the type of disability, is included in the mainstream education environment), conducted since 2000 till present. During the last budget cycle 24 million BGN under Priority Axis 4 of the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" 2007-2013 were allocated to support efforts towards reducing the number of children in special schools while creating conditions for their inclusion in the mainstream education system.</p> <p>The organization of <i>integrated education</i> is only the first stage of the reform. Under the SO will be developed a school capacity to provide <i>inclusive education</i> that meets the needs of children with a wide range of difficulties, but without being limited to the functional ones. In the inclusive education, as opposed to the integrated education, the kindergarten/school develops a policy to include the child/student in the learning process by adapting the system to the needs of the child/student and not vice versa – adapting the child/student to the system.</p> <p>Inclusive education is a process of awareness, acceptance and support of the personality of each child or student and the diversity of needs of all children and students through mobilization and involvement of resources aimed at removing the barriers to learning and at creating opportunities for development and participation of children and students in all aspects of community life.</p> <p>During the new programming cycle, the specific results that will be achieved through the support provided by this SO are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • early diagnosis ("diagnostic screening") of learning disabilities conducted in kindergartens, • trainings of speech therapists, psychologists and resource teachers delivered with funds of the operational programme, • summer schools attended by mixed groups
--	--

	<p>of children, parents and teachers.</p> <p>In addition, there will be concrete steps that will aim at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • early assessment of educational needs and prevention of learning difficulties, • provision of teaching materials, aids and equipment for the learning of children and students according to their individual needs, • more trained specialists with a qualification to work with children and students depending on the different types of disabilities and disorders, • hiring of more specialists in remote and rural areas, • better preparation of teachers in kindergartens and schools to work with children and students with special educational needs; • Another result aimed at will be that more higher education institutions provide supporting environment for education of people with disabilities and in addition – more people with disabilities obtain degree.supporting young people with disabilities to apply for admission to higher education institutions; • training of students, specialising post-graduate students and doctorate students with disabilities
--	---

Table 4

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

(Reference: point (b)(ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value ⁸² (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
Programme-specific <2A.1.13 type="S" maxlength="5" input="M"> Common <2A.1.13 type="S" input="S">	Programme-specific <2A.1.14 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M"> Common <2A.1.14 type="S" input="S">	<2A.1.15 type="S" input="S">	Programme-specific <2A.1.16 type="S" input="M"> Common <2A.1.16 type="S" input="S">	Programme-specific <2A.1.17 type="S" input="M"> Common <2A.1.17 type="S" input="S">	Common Output Indicators <2A.1.18 type="S" input="S">			Quantitative <2A.1.19 type="S" input="M"> Common <2A.1.19 type="S" input="G">	<2A.1.20 type="N" input="M">	Quantitative <2A.1.21 type="N" input="M"> Qualitative <2A.1.21 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M">			<2A.1.22 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M">	<2A.1.23 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M">
IP9i, SO1	Children aged between 3-6 who have received early prevention services which aim to prevent educational difficulties	Less developed	Number	NA			150	Number	2014			500	MA	Annually
	Kindergartens / united institutions for childcare, who have provided a supportive environment for early prevention of	Less developed	Number	NA			25	Number	2014			43	MA	Annually

82

This list includes common result indicators for which a target value has been set and all programme-specific result indicators. Target values for common result indicators must be quantified; for programme-specific result indicators, they may be qualitative or quantitative. Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender, the baseline values can be adjusted accordingly. "M" = men, "W"=women, "T"= total.

	<i>learning difficulties</i>													
--	------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority

(by investment priority)

Action to be supported under the investment priority

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment priority</i>	<p><2A.2.1.1 type="S" input="S"></p> <p>9i Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability</p>
<p><2A.2.1.2 type="S" maxlength="17500" input="M"></p> <p>The implementation of the activities under this Specific Objective will ensure a smooth transition from integrated to inclusive education of children and students with special educational needs (SEN).</p> <p>Inclusive education seeks to build on integrated learning and to prepare the education system for new challenges. Its goal is to create a “school for all”, i.e. a harmonious and diverse educational environment in kindergartens and schools with a view to ensuring equality and access to quality education, more effective preparation for future public life and advancement in the labour market. The successful implementation of inclusive education, in particular for building positive public attitudes, will continue to rely on cooperation with non-governmental organisations supporting the inclusive education for children with SEN.</p> <p>The implementation of the measures under this Investment Priority will ensure complementarity with the interventions of the HRD OP aimed at deinstitutionalisation.</p> <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction of a model for early assessment of educational needs of children at pre-school age and for prevention of and early intervention with learning difficulties;• Development of a functional model to support the process of inclusive education through involvement and capacity utilisation of specialised schools for students with sensory and cognitive impairments;• Provision of conditions and resources for creation and development of a supportive environment in kindergartens and schools for inclusive education through: providing appropriate architectural and occupancy conditions, capacity building for pedagogical specialists and team work; use of flexible teaching forms; provision of specialised aids and tools; provision of individual support for learning and development in accordance with children’s and students’ educational needs etc.;• Establishment of specialised rooms for working with children and students at	

kindergarten and school level;

- Creating conditions for supporting young people with disabilities to apply for admission to higher education institutions;
- Support for training of students, specialising post-graduate students and doctorate students with disabilities;
- Creating conditions for formation of positive public attitudes to the process of inclusive education in kindergartens and schools;
- Supporting the process of inclusive education and social inclusion by optimising the network of specialised kindergartens and schools;
- Provision of alternative models for working with students with deviant behaviour that support their education and social inclusion;
- Provision of support for children involved in the deinstitutionalisation process;
- Creating conditions for active partnerships with parents at kindergarten and school level;
- Overcoming negative public attitudes towards the education of children and students with special educational needs in mainstream kindergartens and schools and ensuring their non-discrimination by teachers, other children or parents.

Identification of main target groups:

Children, school students and youths with special educational needs, parents, teachers, resource teachers, pedagogical specialists, psychologists, directors.

Specific territories targeted:

The entire territory of the country.

Types of beneficiaries:

MES and second-level spending units, other ministries acting as financing bodies for schools, SACP, higher education institutions, research organisations, research institutes, kindergartens, schools, municipalities, resource centres, community centres, organisations registered under the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Guiding principles for selection of operations

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<i><2A.2.2.1 type="S" input="S"></i> 9i Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
----------------------------	---

Respecting the principles of sound financial management

When selecting operations it should be ensured that the grants will be spent in compliance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The investments should contribute to the achievement of the programme indicators. At the same time, connection between the objectives set out in the project, planned activities on the project implementation and the expected results will be sought; connection between the result and amount of the costs needed to its achievement will be sought, as well.

Thematic concentration

All planned actions and the entire funding under this priority axis are focused in two investment priorities as part of the implementation of Thematic Objective 9 in accordance with Article 9 of the Common Provisions Regulation.

Investment efficiency to maximise the achievement of OP SESG objectives

The measures to be financed under the OP SESG should fully contribute to the implementation of the programme objectives. Based on analysis of best practices and lessons learned from the previous programming period, the most appropriate ways of awarding grant funding and reducing the administrative burden of the beneficiaries will be selected.

Complementarity with other sources of funding

To maximise the effectiveness of the proposed funding measures, complementarity with other programmes financed through the EU funds and the state budget will be sought.

Addressing target groups' specific needs

The provision of funding for the specific measures will be based on the identified target groups' needs in strategic and analytical documents such as National Youth Strategy, 2010-2020; Strategy for Educational Integration of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities, 2004-2015; National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2012-2020; Action Plan for Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2012-2020 and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015; National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality for the period 2009–2015; National Demographic Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria; National Strategy for Equal Opportunities for Disabled People; National Regional Development Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria; National Strategy for the Child, 2008-2018; National Strategy “Vision for deinstitutionalization of children in the Republic of Bulgaria”; National Programme on Guaranteeing the Rights of Children with Disabilities, 2010-2013; Concept of state policy in the area of juvenile justice; Strategy for Preventing and Reducing the Share of Dropouts and Early School Leavers (2013-2020), National Strategy for Decreasing Poverty and Promoting of Social Inclusion 2020 etc.

Horizontal principles

Particular attention will be paid to ensure compliance with the principles of sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and gender equality.

Transparency, partnership and objectivity

The OP SESG will ensure maximum transparency in the selection of operations. Partnership and representation of all stakeholders in the programming of OP SESG operations will be sought.

Integrated approach

OP SESG will support activities facilitating the access to education of children involved in deinstitutionalisation activities under the HRD OP with a view to achieving a strong synergistic effect between the two programmes.

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Not applicable

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<2A.2.3.1 type="S" input="S">
<i>Planned use of financial instruments</i>	<2A.2.3.2 type="C" input="M">
<2A.2.3.3 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M">	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Not applicable

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<2A.2.4.1 type="S" input="S">
<2A.2.4.2 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M">	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

(Reference: point (b)(iv) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Table 5

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators

(by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023) ⁸³			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
<2A.2.5.1 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.2 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.3 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.4 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.5 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.6 type="N" input="M" SME >			<2A.2.5.7 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M" SME >	<2A.2.5.8 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M" SME >
IP9i SO1	Children and school students with SEN , participating in activities, supported by the IP9i	Number	ESF	Less developed			2,300	MA	Annually
	Kindergartens/united childcare institutions supported to provide supportive environment for early prevention of learning difficulties	Number	ESF	Less developed			155	MA	Annually

⁸³

For the ESF, this list includes common output indicators for which a target value has been set. Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender. For the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund, gender breakdown is in most cases not relevant. “M” = men, “W”=women, “T”= total.

2.A.4 Investment priority

(Repeated for each investment priority under the priority axis)

2.3.2. Investment priority 9ii

<i>Investment priority</i>	<2A.10 type="S" input="S""SME" > 9ii Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma
----------------------------	---

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

(Repeated for each specific objective under the investment priority)

(Reference: points (b)(i) and (ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

2.3.2.1. Specific objective 1

<i>ID</i>	<2A.1.1 type="N" input="G""SME" > 1
<i>Specific objective</i>	<2A.1.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M""SME" > Increasing the number of successfully integrated through the educational system children and students from marginalized communities, including Roma
<i>The results that the Member State seeks to achieve with Union support</i>	The expected result that Bulgaria seeks to achieve with Union support is an early integration in the education system.. Bulgaria has established statutory conditions for equal access to education for all children and students, including children and students from ethnic minorities and children and students seeking or received international protection, and there has been systematic effort to overcome ethnic and religious prejudice and discrimination. The resources under this SO will be used in order to assure conditions for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• equal integration of students in the Bulgarian educational system• development of cultural identity in children and students;• improvement of financial and physical conditions,• raising the qualification of the staff for working in multicultural environment;• implementation of a strategy for training

	<p>and re-training teachers and administrative staff in the education system for working in multicultural environment, especially those working with bilingual children,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • obtaining quality education in rural areas, • updating the curriculum content of general subjects in order to preserve cultural identity, • creating appropriate social and psychological climate in society, • increasing motivation to learn the mother tongue <p>The existing problems are particularly acute among marginalised communities and are especially worrying in the case of Roma children.</p> <p>According to the NSI's data for 2011, despite a slight increase, the percentage of university graduates among the Roma population is negligible – just 0.5 % of their total number. The respective percentage for the Bulgarian population is 25.6 % and for the Turkish minority - 4.9 % . There is clear correlation between ethnic origin and participation in the higher levels of education. The reasons can be traced back to school: these are young people from poor families who are not proficient in Bulgarian. They are isolated within their group and often drop out of school. The basis for attaining a higher education degree is either missing or insufficient. The result aimed at will be that more people from ethnic minority groups (including Roma), enter universities and successfully graduate.</p> <p>Through the measures under this SO, the number of ethnically segregated kindergartens and schools is expected to decrease and that of the integrated students whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian is expected to grow alongside with a provision of an environment for preserving their cultural identity.</p>
--	---

Table 4

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

(Reference: point (b)(ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measure ment unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value ⁸⁴ (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
Programme-specific <2A.1.13 type="S" maxlength="5" input="M"> Common <2A.1.13 type="S" input="S">	Programme-specific <2A.1.14 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M"> Common <2A.1.14 type="S" input="S">	<2A.1.15 type="S" input="S">	Programme-specific <2A.1.16 type="S" input="M"> Common <2A.1.16 type="S" input="S">	Programme-specific <2A.1.17 type="S" input="M"> Common <2A.1.17 type="S" input="S">	Common Output Indicators <2A.1.18 type="S" input="S">			Quantitative <2A.1.19 type="S" input="M"> Common <2A.1.19 type="S" input="G">	<2A.1.20 type="N" input="M">	Quantitative <2A.1.21 type="N" input="M"> Qualitative <2A.1.21 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M">			<2A.1.22 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M">	<2A.1.23 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M">
IP9ii, SO1	Children, students and youths from ethnic minorities (including Roma) integrated in the education system	Less developed	Number	NA			30,000 (under HRD OP)	Number	2014			45,000	MA	Annually

84

This list includes common result indicators for which a target value has been set and all programme-specific result indicators. Target values for common result indicators must be quantified; for programme-specific result indicators, they may be qualitative or quantitative. Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender, the baseline values can be adjusted accordingly. "M" = men, "W"=women, "T"= total.

	<i>Share of pedagogical specialists among those involved in actions under the OP qualified to work in multicultural environment</i>	Less developed	%	NA			90 (under HRD OP)	Ratio	2014			90	MA	Annually
	<i>Share of persons (including Roma), who have received certificates for successfully completed literacy courses or courses for mastering the learning content intended for the lower secondary stage of basic education under the OP</i>	Less developed	%	71			NA	Ratio	2014			80	MA	Annually

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority

(by investment priority)

Action to be supported under the investment priority

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment priority</i>	<p><2A.2.1.1 type="S" input="S"></p> <p>9ii Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma</p>
<p><2A.2.1.2 type="S" maxlength="17500" input="M"></p> <p>The planned actions for a successful educational integration⁸⁵ of children and students of Roma origin are linked to the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020) and its Action Plan, developed in accordance with the recommendations of the EC from 2012, 2013 and 2014 to Bulgaria to increase the efforts to improve access to quality inclusive preschool and school education for disadvantaged children, particularly Roma. They include preparation of children at an early age (3-6) whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian for a successful future participation in the education process. It is particularly important to ensure equal access to quality education through elimination of primary and prevention of secondary ethnic segregation of kindergartens and schools and through improvements to the educational environment.</p> <p>Measures will be taken to improve the educational environment and modern conditions will be created to develop the physical, intellectual and personal potential of each child aiming for a successful social integration and subsequent career development. Other related measures will focus on motivating families from ethnic minority groups to include their children in education and additional training in Bulgarian for people from ethnic minority groups, as well as teacher training for working in multicultural environments and provision of additional teaching support.</p> <p>Special efforts will be targeted to overcome historically formed negative public attitudes towards the Roma ethnic group, by explaining the positive aspects of the joint/integrated education to the non-Roma children and their parents. The successful integration of children and students of Roma origin, in particular with regard to the clarification of the benefits of such integration, will continue to rely on the participation of non-governmental organisations, in their capacity as beneficiaries, working in the fields of social inclusion, human and civil rights and freedoms, non-discrimination etc.</p> <p>As a result of demographic changes over the recent decades many small towns were left with relatively small number of children.</p> <p>A significant part of the population in these populated areas originates from ethnic</p>	

⁸⁵ Successfully integrated are such representatives of the target group who attend general education schools and benefit from the whole complex of measures targeted to disadvantaged children, students and young people (incl. Roma)

minorities. Temporary or permanent unemployment is frequent, leading to partial or complete marginalization of some of the inhabitants.

After the introduction of a funding system based on the number of students, most of the schools in the rural and remote areas are experiencing a shortage of resources to conduct quality educational process /equipment and furniture, provision of qualified teachers from other places, etc./. At the same time, the remoteness from the central schools prevents the daily transportation of pupils.

The kindergartens and schools in these rural areas need to be supported in order to ensure access to quality education for the children.

Given the increasing number of children seeking or having been granted international protection, adequate measures should be taken for their inclusion and retention in schooling. The measures to be implemented for their successful educational integration include Bulgarian language training and additional training in subjects to fill the gaps in mastering the learning material once the level of their knowledge for a particular grade has been established in accordance with the state educational requirements, including for those without certificates for a successfully completed grade or level of education. In the course of their integration in Bulgarian society the principle of preserving the cultural identity of children and students from different ethnic backgrounds should be observed, and effort should be made to prevent the possibility of emergence of, as well as to overcome, negative public attitudes towards people seeking or having been granted international protection (refugees).

Actions:

- Additional training in Bulgarian for children and students (including children and students seeking or received international protection) whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian;
- Capacity building for pedagogical specialists for working in a multicultural environment;
- Provision of an appropriate material and psychological support for inclusion of children and students of Roma origin from ethnically segregated kindergartens and schools into kindergartens and schools outside Roma neighbourhoods through phased acceptance;
- Support to the process of educational integration and social inclusion through the closure or conversion of ethnically segregated kindergartens and schools in urban areas with more than one kindergarten/one school;
- Support for the training of children from Roma families and children and students seeking or received international protection in kindergartens from age 3 for early socialisation;
- Support for continuation of the education to upper secondary and higher education level;
- Support for development and preservation of the cultural identity of children and students from ethnic minorities, and children and students seeking or received international protection;
- Recognition of intercultural education as an integral part of the process of

modernisation of the Bulgarian education system;

- Promotion of parents' participation the educational process;
- Overcoming negative public attitudes based on ethnic origin and cultural identity (including through information campaigns for non-discrimination based on race, ethnicity or religion);
- Support for the provision of access to quality education in rural and remote areas.

Identification of main target groups:

Children, students, young people from ethnic minorities and children and students seeking or received international protection, and other vulnerable groups, parents, teachers, pedagogical specialists, mediators, directors.

Specific territories targeted:

The entire territory of the country.

Types of beneficiaries:

MES and second-level spending units, other ministries acting as financing bodies for schools, CEICYPM, kindergartens, schools, higher schools, municipalities, organisations registered under the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act.

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Guiding principles for selection of operations

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<i><2A.2.2.1 type="S" input="S"></i> 9ii Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma
<i><2A.2.2.2 type="S" maxlength="5000" input="M"></i> Respecting the principles of sound financial management When selecting operations it should be ensured that the grants will be spent in compliance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The investments should contribute to the achievement of the programme indicators. At the same time, connection between the objectives set out in the project, planned activities on the project implementation and the expected results will be sought; connection between the result and amount of the costs needed to its achievement will be sought, as well. Thematic concentration All planned actions and the entire funding under this priority axis are focused in two investment priorities as part of the implementation of Thematic Objective 9 in accordance with Article 9 of the Common Provisions Regulation. Investment efficiency to maximise the achievement of OP SESG objectives	

The measures to be financed under the OP SESG should fully contribute to the implementation of the programme objectives. Based on analysis of best practices and lessons learned from the previous programming period, the most appropriate ways of awarding grant funding and reducing the administrative burden of the beneficiaries will be selected.

Complementarity with other sources of funding

To maximise the effectiveness of the proposed funding measures, complementarity with other programmes financed through the EU funds and the state budget will be sought.

Addressing target groups' specific needs

The provision of funding for the specific measures will be based on the identified target groups' needs in strategic and analytical documents such as National Youth Strategy, 2010-2020; Strategy for Educational Integration of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities, 2004-2015; National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2012-2020; Action Plan for Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2012-2020 and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015; National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality for the period 2009–2015; National Demographic Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria; National Strategy for Equal Opportunities for Disabled People; National Regional Development Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria; National Strategy for the Child, 2008-2018; National Strategy “Vision for deinstitutionalization of children in the Republic of Bulgaria”; National Programme on Guaranteeing the Rights of Children with Disabilities, 2010-2013; Concept of state policy in the area of juvenile justice; Strategy for Preventing and Reducing the Share of Dropouts and Early School Leavers (2013-2020), National Strategy for Decreasing Poverty and Promoting of Social Inclusion 2020.

Horizontal principles

Particular attention will be paid to ensure compliance with the principles of sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and gender equality.

Transparency, partnership and objectivity

The OP SESG will ensure maximum transparency in the selection of operations. Partnership and representation of all stakeholders in the programming of OP SESG operations will be sought.

Integrated approach

Integrated operations are planned to be launched under the Investment Priority 9ii. With a view to achieving a strong synergistic effect, the HRD OP will support actions for ensuring access to employment, education, social and health services, while the OP SESG will support actions for ensuring access to education.

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<2A.2.3.1 type="S" input="S">
<i>Planned use of financial instruments</i>	<2A.2.3.2 type="C" input="M">
<2A.2.3.3 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M"> Not applicable	

2.A.6.4 *Planned use of major projects* (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b)(iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Investment Priority</i>	<2A.2.4.1 type="S" input="S">
<2A.2.4.2 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M"> Not applicable	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

(Reference: point (b)(iv) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Table 5

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators

(by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023) ⁸⁶			Source data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
<2A.2.5.1 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.2 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.3 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.4 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.5 type="S" input="S" SME >	<2A.2.5.6 type="N" input="M" SME >			<2A.2.5.7 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M" SME >	<2A.2.5.8 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M" SME >
IP9ii SO1	Disadvantaged children, students and young people (incl. Roma), participating in activities for educational integration and re-integration	Number	ESF	Less developed			56,250	MA	Annually
	Pedagogical specialists involved in training to work in multicultural environment	Number	ESF	Less developed			3,600	MA	Annually
	Persons over 16 (including Roma) involved in literacy courses or courses for mastering the learning content intended for the lower secondary stage of basic education under	Number	ESF	Less developed			20,000	MA	Annually

86

For the ESF, this list includes common output indicators for which a target value has been set. Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender. For the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund, gender breakdown is in most cases not relevant. "M" = men, "W"=women, "T"= total.

	the OP								
--	--------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7⁸⁷

Specific provisions for ESF⁸⁸, where applicable (by priority axis and, where relevant, category of region): social innovation, transnational cooperation and ESF contribution to thematic objectives 1 to 7.

Description of the contribution of the planned actions of the priority axis to:

- social innovation (if not covered by a dedicated priority axis);
- transnational cooperation (if not covered by a dedicated priority axis);
- thematic objectives referred to in points (1) to (7) of the first paragraph of Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

<i>Priority axis</i>	<2A.3.1 type="S" input="S">
<2A.3.2 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M"> Not applicable	

⁸⁷ Only for programmes supported by the ESF.

⁸⁸ For the ESF, this list includes common output indicators for which a target value has been set and all programme-specific output indicators.

2.A.8 Performance framework

(Reference: point (b)(v) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2), and Annex II to Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Table 6

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis

(by fund and, for the ERDF and ESF, category of region)⁸⁹

Priority axis	Indicator type (Key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018 ⁹⁰			Final target (2023) ⁹¹			Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
							M	W	T	M	W	T		
<2A.4.1 type="S" input="S">	<2A.4.2 type="S" input="S">	Implementation Step or Financial indicator	Implementation Step or Financial indicator <2A.4.4 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M"> Output or Result	Implementation Step or Financial indicator <2A.4.5 type="S" input="M">	<2A.4.6 type="S" input="S">	<2A.4.7 type="S" input="S">	<2A.4.8 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M">			Implementation Step or Financial <2A.4.9 type="S" input="M"> Output or			Implementation Step or Financial indicator <2A.4.10 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M">	<2A.4.11 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M">

⁸⁹ Where YEI is implemented as part of a priority axis, YEI milestones and targets must be distinguished from other milestones and targets for the priority axis in accordance with implementing acts referred to in the fifth subparagraph of Article 22(7) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, as YEI resources (specific allocation and matching ESF support) are excluded from the performance reserve.

⁹⁰ Milestones may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender. "M" = men, "W"=women, "T"= total.

⁹¹ Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender. "M" = men, "W"=women, "T"= total.

		<2A.4.3 type="S" " maxlength="5" input="M"> Output or result<2 A.4.3 type="S" " input="S">	<2A.4.4 type="S" input="G" or "M">	Output or Result <2A.4.5 type="S" input="G" or "M">				Result <2A.4.8 type="S" input="M">	Output or Result <2A.4.10 type="S" input="M">	
PA3	output	IP9i	Children and school students with SEN, participating in activities supported by the the IP9i	Number	ESF	Less developed	1 500	2 300	MA	NA
PA3	output	IP9ii	Disadvantaged children, students and young people (incl. Roma), participating in activities for educational integration and re-integration	Number	ESF	Less developed	15 000	56 250	MA	NA
PA3	financial	NA	Certified expenditures	%	ESF	Less developed	16 751 919,6	122 417 874	MA	NA

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework
(optional)

<2A.4.12 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M">

2.A.9 Categories of intervention

(Reference: point (b)(vi) of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 7-11

Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention⁹²

(by Fund and category of region, if the priority axis covers more than one)

Table 7: Dimension 1 – Intervention field		
Fund	<2A.5.1.1 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > ESF	
Category of region	<2A.5.1.2 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > Less developed	
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
<2A.5.1.3 type="S" input="S" Decision=N>	<2A.5.1.4 type="S" input="S" Decision=N >	<2A.5.1.5 type="N" input="M" Decision=N >
3	109. Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability	25 500 000
3	110. Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma	84 031 782

Table 8: Dimension 2 – Form of finance		
Fund	<2A.5.2.1 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > ESF	
Category of region	<2A.5.2.2 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > Less developed	
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
<2A.5.2.3 type="S" input="S" Decision=N>	<2A.5.2.4 type="S" input="S" Decision=N >	<2A.5.2.5 type="N" input="M" Decision=N >
3	01. Non-repayable grant	109 531 782

Table 9: Dimension 3 – Territory type	
Fund	<2A.5.3.1 type="S" input="S" Decision=N >

⁹² Amounts include total Union support (the main allocation and the allocation from the performance reserve).

	ESF	
Category of region	<2A.5.3.2 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > Less developed	
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
<2A.5.3.3 type="S" input="S" Decision=N>	<2A.5.3.4 type="S" input="S" Decision=N >	<2A.5.3.5 type="N" input="M" Decision=N >
3	07. Not applicable	109 531 782

Table 10: Dimension 4 – Territorial delivery mechanisms		
Fund	<2A.5.4.1 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > ESF	
Category of region	<2A.5.4.2 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > Less developed	
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
<2A.5.4.2 type="S" input="S" Decision=N>	<2A.5.4.4 type="S" input="S" Decision=N >	<2A.5.4.5 type="N" input="M" Decision=N >
3	06. Community-led local development initiatives	35058863,59
3	07. Not applicable	74 472 918,47

Table 11: Dimension 6 – ESF secondary theme ⁹³ (ESF only)		
Fund	<2A.5.5.1 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > ESF	
Category of region	<2A.5.5.2 type="S" input="S" Decision=N > Less developed	
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
<2A.5.5.3 type="S" input="S" Decision=N>	<2A.5.5.4 type="S" input="S" Decision=N >	<2A.5.5.5 type="N" input="M" Decision=N >
3	06 Non-discrimination	39 463 887,4
3	08 Not applicable	70 067 894,6

Summary of the planned use of technical assistance

⁹³ Include, where appropriate, quantified information on the ESF's contribution to the thematic objectives referred to in points (1) to (7) of the first paragraph of Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate)

(by priority axis)

(Reference: point (b)(vii) of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<i>Priority axis</i>	<3A.6.1 type="S" input="S">3
<p><2A.6.2 type="S" maxlength="2000" input="M"></p> <p>The actions under PA4 will be aimed at upgrading the administrative capacity of the Managing Authority. There is also a need to reinforce the capacity of the beneficiaries for project management and reporting under the Programme. The actions related to capacity building of the MA staff and the beneficiaries are key to ensuring the successful management and implementation of the OP.</p> <p>Special attention will be paid to the adequate staffing and provision of material and technical equipment for the processes and activities, which are new for the MES in its capacity as a MA.</p> <p>PA4 will also support actions related to regular reporting on the progress in the management and implementation of the OP, implementation of different types of studies to facilitate the implementation and assess the impacts of the proposed OP measures within the context of efficient and effective utilisation of the support from the EU funds.</p>	

2.B Description of the priority axes for technical assistance

(Reference: point (c) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

2.B.1 Priority axis (repeated for each Technical Assistance priority axis)

2.4. Priority axis 4

<i>ID of the priority axis</i>	<2B.0.2 type="N" maxlength="5" input="G"> 4
<i>Title of the priority axis</i>	<2B.0.3 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M"> Technical assistance

2.B.2 Justification for establishing a priority axis covering more than one category of region (where applicable)

(Reference: Article 96(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<2B.0.1 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M"> Not applicable
--

2.B.3 Fund and category of region (repeated for each combination under the priority axis)

<i>Fund</i>	<2B.0.4 type="S" input="S"> ESF
<i>Category of region</i>	<2B.0.5 type="S" input="S"> Less developed
<i>Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)</i>	<2B.0.6 type="S" input="S"> Eligible Public Expenditure

2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results

(repeated for each specific objective under the priority axis)

(Reference: points (c)(i) and (ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

2.4.1.1. Specific objective 1

<i>ID</i>	<2B.1.1 type="N" maxlength="5" input="G"> 1
<i>Specific objective</i>	<2B.1.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M"> Strengthening and reinforcing the administrative capacity of the Managing Authority and the beneficiaries of the Operational Programme
<i>Results that the Member State seeks to achieve with Union support⁹⁴</i>	<p><2B.1.3 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M"></p> <p>The actions under this priority axis will be aimed at upgrading the administrative capacity of the Managing Authority. There is also a need to reinforce the capacity of the beneficiaries for project management and reporting under the Programme. The actions related to capacity building of the MA staff and the beneficiaries are key to ensuring the successful management and implementation of the OP. During the first programming period of the HRD OP 2007-2013 the administrative capacity of MES in its role as IB was developed, however, there is a need for further training related to improving the processes and procedures for the management of the Operational Programme. Special attention will be paid to the adequate staffing and provision of material and technical equipment for the processes and activities, which are new for the MES in its capacity as a MA.</p> <p>As main problems for the HRD OP 2007-2013 were identified: the frequent changes in the statutory environment, which required ongoing upgrading of knowledge of both the administration and the beneficiaries; the staff turnover in the administrative structures, involved in the management of the OP; the administrative burden, expressed in large document flow and insufficient use of the new IT when implementing the individual operations.</p> <p>The main actions that will be supported under this priority axis will be related to improving the human resources capacity through training and other appropriate measures, increasing the motivation of the experts involved in the programme and project management, including through additional remuneration, and providing</p>

⁹⁴ Required where Union support for technical assistance in the programme exceeds EUR 15 million.

	<p>technical support for the management of the OP.</p> <p>This priority axis will also support actions related to regular reporting on the progress in the management and implementation of the OP, implementation of different types of studies to facilitate the implementation and assess the impacts of the proposed OP measures within the context of efficient and effective utilisation of the support from the EU funds.</p> <p>Conducting of independent evaluations of the OP will be provided, as well as development and maintaining of an internal system for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of its implementation.</p> <p>The implementation of the awareness raising and publicity actions will ensure maximum transparency of the interventions and improve public awareness of the OP SESG and its achieved results. Thus will also be encouraged the participation of the beneficiaries and the target groups at a larger scale.</p>
--	---

2.B.5 Result indicators⁹⁵

Table 12

Table 12: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)
(for ERDF/ESF/Cohesion Fund)

(Reference: point (c)(ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value			Baseline year	Target value ⁹⁶ (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
			M	W	T		M	W	T		

⁹⁵ Required where objectively justified given the content of the action and where Union support for technical assistance in the programme exceeds EUR 15 million.

⁹⁶ Target values may be qualitative or quantitative. Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender, the baseline values may be adjusted accordingly. “M” = men, “W”=women, “T”= total.

<2.B.2.1 type="S" maxlength="5" input="M">	<2.B.2.2 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M">	<2.B.2.3 type="S" input="M">	Quantitative <2.B.2.4 type="N" input="M">			<2.B.2.5 type="N" input="M">	Quantitative <2.B.2.6 type="N" input="M"> Qualitative <2.B.2.6 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M">			<2.B.2.7 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M">	<2.B.2.8 type="S" maxlength="100" input="M">
SO	Submitted project proposals	Number			3,685 (under PA3 and PA4 of HDR OP 2007-2013)	2014			4,500	MA	Annually
	Share of the costs verified by the MA versus the costs reported by beneficiaries	%			0	2014			89	MA	Annually

2.B.6 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives (by priority axis)

(Reference: points (c)(i) and (iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objective

2.B.6.1 A description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives

(Reference: points (c)(i) and (iii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Priority axis	<2.B.3.1.1 type="S" input="S">
<2.B.3.1.2 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M"> Indicative eligible actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the logistics of the management and implementation of the OP SESG; Provision of funding for salaries, social security contributions, tax and other outstanding payments in accordance with the existing legislation, as well as additional remuneration for the staff of the management structures of the OP SESG; 	

- Strengthening and improving the administrative capacity of the staff of the management structures of the OP SESG, including implementation of analyses and capacity assessments;
- Improvement and technical maintenance of the facilities and equipment available to the management structures of the OP SESG;
- Ensuring the logistics for the work of the Monitoring Committee of the OP SESG and of its sub-committees and working groups;
- Provision of information and publicity of OP SESG, including actions from the Annual Action Plans implementing the National Communication Strategy 2014-2020, assessments, studies, analyses and the like;
- Ensuring the logistics of the preparation activities for the programming period 2021-2027;
-

2.B.6.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results (by priority axis)

(Reference: point (c)(iv) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Table 13

Table 13: Output indicators (by priority axis)
(for ERDF/ESF/Cohesion Fund)

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023) ⁹⁷ (optional)			Source of data
			M	W	T	
<2.B.3.2.1 type="S" maxlength="5" input="M">	<2.B.2.2.2 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M">	<2.B.3.2.3 type="S" input="M">	<2.B.3.2.4 type="N" input="M">			<2.B.3.2.5 type="S" maxlength="200" input="M">
SOI	MA staff members trained	Number			96	MA
	Number of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are financed by Technical Assistance	Full-time equivalents			96	MA
	OP evaluations, analyses and studies performed	Number			10	MA
	Information campaigns	Number			80	MA
	Beneficiaries (organisations which have signed contracts for provision of grants) trained	Number			200	MA

⁹⁷ Target values for output indicators under technical assistance are optional. Target values may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender. "M" = men, "W"=women, "T"= total.

2.B.7 Categories of intervention (by priority axis)

(Reference: points (c)(v) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Corresponding categories of intervention based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and an indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 14-16

Tables 14-16: Categories of intervention⁹⁸

Table 14: Dimension 1 – Intervention field		
Category of region: <type="S" input="S">		
Less developed		
<i>Priority axis</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Amount (EUR)</i>
<2B.4.1.1 type="S" input="S" > Decision=N>	<2B.4.1.2 type="S" input="S"> Decision=N>	<2B.4.1.3 type="N" input="M"> Decision=N>
4 Technical assistance	121. Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection	19 735 110,03
4 Technical assistance	122. Evaluation and studies	2 377 724,1
4 Technical assistance	123. Information and communication	1 664 406,87

Table 15: Dimension 2 – Form of finance		
Category of region: <type="S" input="S">		
<i>Priority axis</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Amount (EUR)</i>
<2B.4.2.1 type="S" input="S" > Decision=N>	<2B.4.2.2 type="S" input="S"> Decision=N>	<2B.4.2.3 type="N" input="M"> Decision=N>
4 Technical assistance	01. Non-repayable grant	23 777 241

Table 16: Dimension 3 – Territory type		
Category of region: <type="S" input="S">		
<i>Priority axis</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Amount (EUR)</i>
<2B.4.3.1 type="S" input="S" > Decision=N>	<2B.4.3.2 type="S" input="S"> Decision=N>	<2B.4.3.3 type="N" input="M"> Decision=N>
4 Technical assistance	07. Not applicable	23 777 241

⁹⁸

Amounts include total Union support (the main allocation and the allocation from the performance reserve).

3. SECTION 3 FINANCING PLAN

(Reference: point (d) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

3.1 Financial appropriation from each fund and amounts for performance reserve

(Reference: point (d)(i) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Table 17

Table 17

	Fund	Category of region	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		Total	
			Main allocation ⁹⁹	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve
	<3.1.1 type="S" input="G" "SME">	<3.1.2 type="S" input="G" "SME">	<3.1.3 type="N" input="M" "SME">	<3.1.4 type="N" input="M" TA - "NA" YEI - "NA">	<3.1.5 type="N" input="M" SME">	<3.1.6 type="N" input="M" TA - "NA" YEI - "NA">	<3.1.7 type="N" input="M" SME">	<3.1.8 type="N" input="M" TA - "NA" YEI - "NA">	<3.1.9 type="N" input="M" SME">	<3.1.10 type="N" input="M" TA - "NA" YEI - "NA">	<3.1.11 type="N" input="M" SME">	<3.1.12 type="N" input="M" TA - "NA" YEI - "NA">	<3.1.13 type="N" input="M" SME">	<3.1.14 type="N" input="M" TA - "NA" YEI - "NA">	<3.1.15 type="N" input="M" SME">	<3.1.16 type="N" input="M" TA - "NA" YEI - "NA">	<3.1.17 type="N" input="G" SME">	<3.1.18 type="N" input="G" TA - "NA" YEI - "NA">
(1)	ERDF	In less developed regions	28 459 958,00	1 816 593,00	29 917 714,00	1 909 641,00	31 513 377,00	2 011 492,00	32 823 837,00	2 095 139,00	34 110 653,00	2 177 276,00	35 366 957,00	2 257 465,00	36 585 774,00	2 335 262,00	228 778 270,00	14 602 868,00
(2)		In transition regions																
(3)		In more developed regions																

⁹⁹ Total allocation (Union support) less allocation to performance reserve.

(4)		Total	28 459 958,00	1 816 593,00	29 917 714,00	1 909 641,00	31 513 377,00	2 011 492,00	32 823 837,00	2 095 139,00	34 110 653,00	2 177 276,00	35 366 957,00	2 257 465,00	36 585 774,00	2 335 262,00	228 778 270,00	14 602 868,00
(5)	ESF ¹⁰⁰	In less developed regions	41 235 275,00	2 630 506,00	43 347 399,00	2 765 243,00	45 659 335,00	2 912 728,00	47 558 044,00	3 033 852,00	49 422 496,00	3 152 790,00	51 242 739,00	3 268 908,00	53 008 667,00	3 381 561,00	331 473 955,00	21 145 588,00
(6)		In transition regions																
(7)		In more developed regions																
(8)		Total	41 235 275,00	2 630 506,00	43 347 399,00	2 765 243,00	45 659 335,00	2 912 728,00	47 558 044,00	3 033 852,00	49 422 496,00	3 152 790,00	51 242 739,00	3 268 908,00	53 008 667,00	3 381 561,00	331 473 955,00	21 145 588,00
(9)	YEI-specific allocation	Not applicable		Not applicable		Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
(10)	Cohesion Fund	Not applicable																
(11)	ERDF	Special allocation to outermost regions or northern sparsely populated regions																
(12)	Total		69 695 233,00	4 447 099,00	73 265 113,00	4 674 884,00	77 172 712,00	4 924 220,00	80 381 881,00	5 128 991,00	83 533 149,00	5 330 066,00	86 609 696,00	5 526 373,00	89 594 441,00	5 716 823,00	560 252 225,00	35 748 456,00

¹⁰⁰ Total allocation from the ESF, including matching ESF support for YEI. The columns for the performance reserve do not include matching ESF support for YEI, as this is excluded from the performance reserve.

3.2 Total financial appropriation by fund and national co-financing (EUR)

(Reference: point (d)(ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

1. The table sets out the financial plan by priority axis.
2. Where a priority axis covers more than one fund, the Union support and national counterpart is broken down by fund with a separate co-financing rate within the priority axis for each fund.
3. Where the priority axis covers more than one category of region, the Union support and national counterpart is broken down by category of region with a separate co-financing rate within the priority axis for each category of region.
4. The EIB contribution is presented at priority axis level.

Table 18a

Table 18a: Financing plan

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Basis for calculation of Union support (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Union support	National counterpart	Indicative breakdown of national counterpart		Total funding	Co-financing rate	For information EIB contributions	Main allocation (total funding less performance reserve)		Performance reserve		Performance reserve amount as proportion of total Union support
						National public funding	National private funding (1)				Union support	National counterpart	Union support	National counterpart ¹⁰¹	
				(a)	(b) = (c) + (d)	(c)	(d)	(e) = (a) + (b)	(f) = (a)/(e) _2	(g)	(h)=(a)-(j)	(i) = (b) – (k)	(j)	(k)= (b) * ((j)/(a))	(l) = (j)/(a) *100
<3.2.A.1 type="S" input="G" "SME" >	<3.2.A.2 type="S" input="G" "SME" >	<3.2.A.3 type="S" input="G" "SME" >	<3.2.A.4 type="S" input="G" "SME" >	<3.2.A.5 type="N" input="M" "SME" >	<3.2.A.6 type="N" "SME" " input="G" >	<3.2.A.7 type="N" input="M" "SME" >	<3.2.A.8 type="N" input="M" "SME" >	<3.2.A.9 type="N" input="G" "SME" >	<3.2.A.10 type="P" input="G" "SME" >	<3.2.A.11 type="N" input="M" "SME" >	<3.2.A.12 type="N" input="M" TA - "NA" YEI – "NA">	<3.2.A.13 type="N" input="M" TA - "NA" YEI – "NA">>	<3.2.A.14 type="N" input="M" TA - "NA" YEI – "NA">	<3.2.A.15 type="N" input="M" TA - "NA" YEI – "NA">	<3.2.A.16 type="N" input="G" TA - "NA" YEI – "NA">

Priority axis 1	ERDF	Less developed	public eligible cost	243 381 138,00	42 949 613,00	42 949 613,00	N/A	286 330 751,00	85%		228 778 270,00	40 372 636,00	14 602 868,00	2 576 977,00	6,00%
Priority axis 2	ESF	Less developed	public eligible cost	219 310 520,00	38 701 857,00	38 701 857,00	N/A	258 012 377,00	85%		205 208 166,00	36 213 206,00	14 102 354,00	2 488 651,00	6,43%
Priority axis 3	ESF	Less developed	public eligible cost	109 531 782,00	19 329 139,00	19 329 139,00	N/A	128 860 921,00	85%		102 488 548,00	18 086 215,00	7 043 234,00	1 242 924,00	6,43%
Priority axis 4	ESF	Less developed	public eligible cost	23 777 241,00	4 195 984,00	4 195 984,00	N/A	27 973 225,00	85%		23 777 241,00	4 195 984,00	0,00	0,00	0,00%
Total	ERDF	Less developed	public eligible cost	243 381 138,00	42 949 613,00	42 949 613,00	N/A	286 330 751,00	85%		228 778 270,00	40 372 636,00	14 602 868,00	2 576 977,00	6,00%
Total	ERDF	Transition		Equals total (2) in Table 17											
Total	ERDF	More developed		Equals total (3) in Table 17											
Total	ERDF	Special allocation to outermost regions or northern sparsely populated regions		Equals total (11) in Table 17											
Total	ESF ¹⁰²	Less developed	public eligible cost	352 619 543,00	62 226 980,00	62 226 980,00	N/A	414 846 523,00	85%		331 473 955,00	58 495 405,00	21 145 588,00	3 731 575,00	6,00%
Total	ESF ¹⁰³	Transition		This does not equal total (6) in Table 17, which includes ESF											

¹⁰²

ESF allocation without the matching support for the YEI.

¹⁰³

ESF allocation without the matching support for the YEI.

				matching support to YEI											
Total	ESF ¹⁰⁴	More developed		This does not equal total (7) in Table 17, which includes ESF matching support to YEI											
Total	YEI ¹⁰⁵	NA		This does not equal total (9) in Table 17, which only includes the YEI-specific allocation											
Total	Cohesion Fund	NA		Equals total (10) in Table 17											
Grand total			public eligible cost	596 000 681,00	105 176 593,00	105 176 593,00	N/A	701 177 274,00	85%		560 252 225,00	98 868 041,00	35 748 456,00	6 308 552,00	6,00%

(1) To be completed only when priority axes are expressed in total costs.

(2) This rate may be rounded to the nearest whole number in the table. The precise rate used to reimburse payments is the ratio (f).

¹⁰⁴ ESF allocation without the matching support for the YEI.

¹⁰⁵ Includes the YEI special allocation and the matching support from the ESF.

Table 18c

Table 18c: Breakdown of the financial plan by priority axis, fund, category of region and thematic objective

(Reference: point (d)(ii) of the first subparagraph of Article 96(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Priority axis	Fund ¹⁰⁶	Category of region	Thematic objective	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
<3.2.C.1 type="S" input="G">	<3.2.C.2 type="S" input="G">	<3.2.C.3 type="S" input="G">	<3.2.C.4 type="S" input="G">	<3.2.C.5 type="N" input="M">	<3.2.C.6 type="N" input="M">	<3.2.C.7 type="N" input="M">
Priority axis 1	ERDF	less developed	Thematic objective 1	243 381 138,00	42 949 613,00	286 330 751,00
Priority axis 2	ESF	less developed	Thematic objective 10	219 310 520,00	38 701 857,00	258 012 377,00
Priority axis 3	ESF	less developed	Thematic objective 9	109 531 782,00	19 329 139,00	128 860 921,00
Total				572 223 440,00	100 980 609,00	673 204 049,00

¹⁰⁶

For the purposes of this table, the YEI (specific allocation and matching ESF support) is considered as a fund.

4. SECTION 4 INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

(Reference: Article 96(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Description of the integrated approach to territorial development taking into account the content and objectives of the operational programme having regard to the Partnership Agreement and showing how it contributes to the accomplishment of the objectives of the operational programme and expected results

<4.0 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M">

The integrated approach to territorial development is aimed at reducing social, economic and territorial disparities. To address such disparities, the following mechanisms will be used:

- Implementation of the new Community-Led Local Development tool;
- Investment to promote sustainable urban development based on integrated plans for urban regeneration and development of designated growth hubs;
- Implementation of the European Territorial Cooperation objective, including the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

The Operational Programme will contribute to achieving some of the key goals of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. The Action Plan for implementation of the Danube Strategy has a dedicated Priority Area 7 to developing the Knowledge Society through research, education and ICT. The Operational Programme and its measures will contribute to overcoming the current differences between Danube countries in the area of innovation capacity.

Through the specific actions envisaged under Priority Axis 1 of the Operational Programme, measures will be implemented for participation of research institutes, higher educational institutions and MES in targeted projects, programmes and measures to support the priorities of the Danube Strategy. All actions will be within the scope of the priorities laid out in the National Research Development Strategy and the Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation.

4.1 Community-led local development (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (a) of Article 96(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

The approach to the use of community-led local development instruments and the principles for identifying the areas where they will be implemented

<4.1 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M" PA=Y>

In the 2014-2020 programming period Bulgaria will apply the model to implement an integrated territorial approach by the „Community-led local development“ (CLLD) using investment from the European Social Fund. This model will be applied only to areas that meet specific characteristics and requirements referred to in Art. 32 to 35 of Regulation 1303/2013, which are related to the planning and implementation of CLLD, as in Bulgaria, the Partnership Agreement provides CLLD be administered on a territorial basis

– at the level of municipality or group of neighbouring municipalities with a range of population between 10 000 and 150 000 inhabitants. CLLD will apply in the rural areas, fisheries areas and areas with specific characteristics defined in the National Concept for Spatial Development. The experience will be based on the experience from LEADER approach during 2007 – 2013.

Having in mind the horizontal nature of the programme, in 2014-2020, OP SESG will apply CLLD through measures in priority axes 2 and 3.

By applying the concept of CLLD, identifying and keeping focused and integrated policy, specifics of the territories will be preserved and existing divergent problems will be overcome. Applying the principle of CLLD aims concentration and adequacy of resources, effectiveness and efficiency in their management, as well as ensuring their focus.

The investments in the implementation of local development strategies developed and implemented through a „bottom-up” approach will ensure harmonious and balanced development and address social, economic and territorial disparities of covered areas compared to the rest of the country.

Funding through the OP SESG 2014-2020, will be aimed at supporting the implementation of measures for education, including educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities and children and students seeking or received international protection in small towns.

In regard to improving the quality of educational services and improving access to education, OP SESG will invest in measures aimed at marginalized communities.

4.2 Integrated actions for sustainable urban development (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (b) of Article 96(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013; Article 7(2) and (3) of Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹⁰⁷)

Where appropriate the indicative amount of ERDF support for integrated actions for sustainable urban development to be implemented in accordance with the provisions under Article 7(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 and the indicative allocation of ESF support for integrated action.

<4.2.1 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M">

Investment for sustainable urban development will be implemented primarily through an integrated priority in OPRD 2014-2020, and the ESF funding will be an additional function. In accordance with the National Spatial Development Concept 2013 – 2025 Bulgaria provides considerable support from ESIF for integrated actions for sustainable urban development in the period 2014-2020. In this connection by means of the programming period 2007 – 2013 is financed the development of integrated plans for urban regeneration and development (IPURD) in selected cities identified in the National

¹⁰⁷ Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 289).

Concept for Spatial Development (NCSD) that will be funded in the new programming period. Funded under OPRD 2014 – 2020 infrastructure projects will be supported by other operational programmes by providing complementary and supporting activities aimed at more adequate development of cities and provision of activities and services in the improved infrastructure. Realization of IPURD will be supported by ESF for complementary measures such as support for provision of better access to the labour market, social and health services.

For the period 2014-2020 support is provided for cities from different hierarchical levels, located in a balanced way on the territory of the country, that provide basic administrative and public services and form a large part of GDP at municipal and regional level.

Concentration of support will be achieved by focusing on predetermined areas of impact in the cities on 1, 2 and 3rd level: social areas, areas with public functions and areas with potential for economic development.

OPRD finances public and municipal education infrastructure of national and regional importance, by the European Regional Development Fund on the territory of the whole country, and municipal educational infrastructure of local importance within IPURD of cities under Priority Axis 1 "Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development".

OP SESG provides funding from the European Social Fund "soft measures" for funding under OPRD 2014-2020 objects of education infrastructure. According to the specific need, investments in educational infrastructure in different cities will be complemented by such under ESF through investments under OP SESG in activities for the provision of educational services.

Table 20: Integrated actions for sustainable urban development – indicative amounts of ERDF and ESF support

Fund	ERDF and ESF support (indicative) (EUR)	Proportion of fund's total allocation to programme
<4.2.2 type="S" input="G">	<4.2.3 type="N" input="M">	<4.2.3 type="P" input="G">
Total ERDF		
Total ESF		
TOTAL ERDF+ESF		

4.4 The arrangements for interregional and transnational actions, within the operational programme, with beneficiaries located in at least one other Member State (where appropriate)

(Reference: point (d) of Article 96(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

<4.4.1 type="S" maxlength="3500" input="M" PA=Y>

The European Territorial Cooperation has the greatest impact on the quality of the natural environment and risk management, quality of life, infrastructure construction (mainly small-scale), enhancing the capacity for joint planning, provision of services (mainly cultural) and training, promotion of tourism and promotion of competitive advantages of regions, and improving the quality of education.

In the period 2014-2020 the OP SESG will support integrated initiatives with other programmes and initiatives for training of young people and encouraging their successful careers; exchange of good practices to reduce the percentage of early school leaving; introduction of successful new learning forms and technologies. In addition, the modernisation of existing and the construction of new advanced research infrastructure will be a programme priority in line with the objectives of Europe 2020, in particular those for skills development to address market gaps and enhance the potential of natural sciences, mathematics and information technologies.

The planned synergies between cohesion funding and Horizon 2020 will contribute to the implementation of the concept of “stairway to excellence” and to improving transnational and interregional cooperation in areas with identified challenges for the economy and society.

The programming and implementation of OP SESG 2014-2020 will take into account the necessary demarcation and ensure synergies and complementarity for its interventions with programmes funded under the European Territorial Cooperation objective.

5. SECTION 5 SPECIFIC NEEDS OF GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS MOST AFFECTED BY POVERTY OR TARGET GROUPS AT HIGHEST RISK OF DISCRIMINATION OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION (WHERE APPROPRIATE)

(Reference: point (a) of Article 96(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

5.1 Geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion

<5.1.1 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M" Decision= N PA=Y>

5.2 Strategy to address the specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion, and where relevant, the contribution to the integrated approach set out in the Partnership Agreement

<5.2.1 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M" Decision= N PA=Y>

Investment Priority 2 of Priority Axis 3 envisages measures to support marginalised communities. Systematic efforts will be made to overcome prejudices and discrimination based on ethnicity and religion. Various studies have revealed multiple problems in the national education system hampering quality education, equal integration and the development of cultural identity for children and students. Therefore, special care will be taken to retrain teachers and administrative staff in the education system to work in multicultural environments, especially those working with bilingual children, as well as to tackle the difficulties associated with obtaining quality education in small schools in rural areas, the need to update the learning content of general subjects with a view to preserving cultural identity, and the lack of appropriate social and psychological climate in society.

Special measures will be aimed at improving the access to education for children and students of Roma origin. A pressing issue in this area is the lack of sufficient motivation to learn the mother tongue.

Special actions have been envisaged to prepare children at an early age (3-6 years old) for successful future participation in the education process, especially children whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian. This is expected to result in an early integration into the education system, as a means to preventing dropout in the next stages of education and overcoming language barriers. It is particularly important to ensure equal access to quality education through elimination of primary and prevention of secondary ethnic segregation of schools and through improvements to the school environment. The number of ethnically segregated schools is expected to decrease and that of integrated students whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian is expected to rise alongside with securing an environment that will help them preserve their cultural identity.

Reducing the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion is one of the key targets of Europe 2020 and of Bulgaria's national and regional policy. The CSF is expected to contribute towards achieving the national target to reduce poverty by 2020

and to promote social inclusion.

Most of the poorest municipalities are concentrated in the south-west and in the north-east. However, all of them are in provinces (NUTS3) with municipalities in a relatively better condition. This warrants, if deemed appropriate to address geographical areas most affected by poverty, designating municipalities, rather than provinces, as eligible areas for support.

On the other hand, taking into account currently available data, the mapping of poverty in the country shows significant territorial disparities. In 2020 Sofia Province (capital city) had the highest poverty threshold – BGN 451, with a poverty level of 18.8%, and Targovishte had the lowest poverty threshold – BGN 183 (poverty level of 17.3%). The persistently high rate of long-term unemployment in Severozapaden region is becoming an acute social problem. The problem, however, has large-scale implications and is well pronounced almost in the entire country. Compared to the national poverty threshold of BGN 284, only seven of a total of 28 provinces have higher poverty thresholds – Stara Zagora, Ruse, Varna, Burgas, Sofia Province, Pernik and Sofia (capital city). There is a concentration of social problems and high risk of social exclusion in urban centres in the country due to the high numerical concentration of the population. Based on expert opinion, there are significant disparities between the poverty profile in cities and that in rural areas. Urban poverty is grounded in a lack of money and rural poverty – in a lack of jobs, poor or inaccessible health, education and social services.

At regional level (statistical regions) five Bulgarian regions rank among the bottom ten regions with the lowest GDP per capita in the EU: Severozapaden with 28% of the EU average, Severen tsentralen with 30% and Yuzhen tsentralen with 30% occupy the three bottom positions in the ranking. The statistics for Yugoiztochen and Severoiztochen are 36% and 37% respectively. Yugoiztochen stands out among all Bulgarian regions with 73%, which is explained with the concentration of a significant part of the economic activity in the capital city; subsequently, it remains the most attractive location for business and employment in the country.

Given the prevalent nature of poverty in the entire country and the fact that Bulgaria has the highest level of poverty in the EU, OP SESG 2014–2020 envisages investment in all geographic areas.

Table 22

Table 22: Actions to address specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion¹⁰⁸

Target group/geographical area	Main types of planned action as part of integrated approach	Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Investment priority

¹⁰⁸ If the programme covers more than one category of region, a breakdown by category may be necessary.

<5.2.2 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M" Decision=N PA=Y >	<5.2.3type="S" maxlength="1500" input="M" Decision= N PA=Y >	<5.2.4 type="S" input="S" Decision= N PA=Y >	<5.2.6 type="S" input="S" Decision= N PA=Y >	<5.2.7 type="S" input="S" Decision= N PA=Y >	<5.2.5 type="S" input="S" PA=Y >
Children, students and young people from ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups	Special actions have been envisaged to prepare children at an early age (3-6 years old) for successful future participation in the education process, especially children whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian.	3 Educational environment for active social inclusion	ESF	Less developed	9ii – Socio economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma

6. SECTION 6 SPECIFIC NEEDS OF GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS WHICH SUFFER FROM SEVERE AND PERMANENT NATURAL OR DEMOGRAPHIC HANDICAPS (WHERE APPROPRIATE)

(Reference: point (b) of Article 96(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).

<6.1 type="S" maxlength="5000" input="M" Decisions=N PA=Y>

Not applicable

7. SECTION 7 AUTHORITIES AND BODIES RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGEMENT, CONTROL AND AUDIT AND THE ROLE OF RELEVANT PARTNERS

(Reference: Article 96(5) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

7.1 Relevant authorities and bodies

(Reference: points (a) and (b) of Article 96(5) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Table 23

Table 23: Relevant authorities and bodies

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Head of authority/body (position or post)
<7.1.1 type="S" input="S" Decision=N "SME" >	<7.1.2 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M" Decision=N "SME" >	<7.1.3 type="S" maxlength="255" input="M" Decision=N "SME" >
Managing authority	General Directorate “Structural Funds and International Educational Programmes” in the Ministry of Education and Science	Minister of Education and Science or another appointed person (i.e. General Director of General Directorate “Structural Funds and International Educational Programmes”)
Certifying authority, where applicable	Ministry of Finance, National Fund Directorate	Director of National Fund Directorate and Director of the Certifying Authority
Audit authority	Executive Agency “Audit of EU Funds”	Executive Director of Executive Agency “Audit of EU Funds”
Body to which Commission will make payments	Ministry of Finance, National Fund Directorate	Director of National Fund Directorate and Director of the Certifying Authority

7.2 Involvement of relevant partners

(Reference: point (c) of Article 96(5) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

7.2.1 Actions taken to involve the relevant partners in the preparation of the operational programme, and the role of those partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme

<7.2.1 type="S" maxlength="14000" input="M" Decisions=N "SME">

The OP SESG has been prepared in close cooperation with all partners. The working group for its preparation has included representatives of other ministries, administrative authorities, the academic and research community, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, employers’ organisations, organisations of workers and employees, youth organisations, and business organisations.

The partners will play a key role in the implementation of the Programme as their

representatives will be included in the Monitoring Committee and will thus be involved in discussions of selection criteria for specific operations.

The Ministry of Education and Science (MES), as successor to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (MEYS), has taken the lead role in the preparation of the OP SESG.

The main participants in the preparation are as described in Art. 5(4) of Decree No. 5 of the Council of Ministers (CM) of 18.01.2010 on the preparation of the strategic and programming documents of the Republic of Bulgaria for the management of Funds under the Common Strategic Framework of the European Union for the programming period 2014-2020 (DCM5):

- The Central Coordination Unit, the Certifying Authorities under the operational programmes, the Paying Agency for the Rural Development Programme, and the Audit Authority under the operational programmes for the programming period 2007 - 2013;
- The governmental agencies, responsible for the policies, measures from which will be financed by the respective programme;
- The “Strategic Development and Coordination” Directorate within the Council of Ministers Administration;
- The “Economic and Financial Policy” Directorate within the Ministry of Finance;
- The National Statistical Institute;
- The Commission for Protection against Discrimination;
- The Regional Development Councils of the level 2 regions;
- The Nationally representative organizations of the employers and of the employees, recognized by the Council of Ministers, following the procedure included in the Labour Code;
- Nationally representative organizations of and for the people with disabilities, recognized by the Council of Ministers, following the procedure included in the Integration of People with Disabilities Act;
- The National Association of the Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria;
- The academic society;
- Non-governmental organizations.

The OP SESG is a strategic document which will guide the investment of resources from the ESF and the ERDF, as well as from the national budget, in Bulgarian science and education in the programming period 2014-2020. The scope of the Operational Programme will be the entire territory of the country.

The preparation of the OP SESG went through two stages. In the first stage, pursuant to Decision No. 328 of 25 April 2012 of the Council of Ministers, the Minister of Education, Youth and Science set up a working group to develop measures in the areas of

research, technology and education for the next programming period and to propose an appropriate financing tool for their implementation. The working group included representatives of the academic and research communities, various governmental institutions, and the civil society. It prepared a concept for a dedicated operational programme, the OP SESG 2014-2020, which was submitted to the Council of Ministers. The concept outlines the main funding priorities in the field of research and education, as well as specific measures to achieve these priorities' objectives. The concept was published on the website of the MEYS for public consultation, which was promptly arranged. It was met with approval by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS) and its institutes, the Rectors' Conference, higher educational institutions and social partners.

Following the preparation of the concept, on 9 January 2013 the Council of Ministers adopted Decision No. 19 on developing an operational programme for science and education for smart growth. A new thematic working group (TWG), reporting to the Minister of education, Youth and Science, was set up to draft the OP SESG. The group included representatives of the research community, businesses, higher educational institutions, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, social partners, other ministries etc. The preparation of the programme took place at regular meetings of the TWG, at which the participants discussed all proposals in order to find the most appropriate solutions for achieving the programme goals. Decisions were taken by consensus of opinion among the members of the thematic working group.

The Operational Programme will opt for a two-fund approach - through the ERDF and the ESF, with a view to achieving a more integrated and sustainable impact of investment in research and education.

The Draft OP was presented in regional information centres, where further discussions were held with partners, potential beneficiaries and municipalities.

The programme preparation drew on the experience gained by the MEYS as Intermediate Body of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2007-2013 (HRD OP) and as direct beneficiary under multiple grant schemes under the HRD OP and the Regional Development Operational Programme 2007-2013.

The Operational Programme was prepared with the active participation of representatives of the academic and research communities, various governmental institutions, the civil society, experts and proponents of the thesis underpinning the National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2020 and the pan-European strategy for the same period, namely that significantly increasing the role, quality and scope of education, research and innovation will be one of the most efficient means to ensure accelerated smart and sustainable development for our society in the coming years. Representatives of the Administration of the Council of Ministers, including the CCU, the other ministries, the BAS, the Agricultural Academy (AA), higher institutions, the NAMRB, various agencies in the area of education and youth activity all took active part in the thematic working group on the preparation of the Programme. Non-governmental organisations were also included in the group, based on the selection mechanism approved by the Minister of EU Funds Management. In accordance with the said mechanism, seven non-governmental organisations in the area of education, science, youth and social policy were chosen. Social and economic partners, as well as the nationally representative organisations of and for the people with disabilities were also involved.

The Draft Operational Programme was also published on the official website of the MEYS/MES, resulting from which opinions and specific proposals were received from

citizens did not take part in the working group. Some of these proposals have been reflected in the final version of the Programme.

The Programme was presented at a series of thematic meetings in most regional centres in the country.

A detailed list of participating partners is included in subsection 12.3 of OP SESG.

7.2.2 *Global grants* (for the ESF, where appropriate)

(Reference: Article 6(1) Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013)

<7.2.2 type="S" maxlength="5000" input="M" Decisions=N>

7.2.3 *Allocation of an amount for capacity building* (for the ESF, where appropriate)

(Reference: Article 6(2) and (3) of Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013)

<7.2.3 type="S" maxlength="14000" input="M" Decisions=N>

8. SECTION 8 COORDINATION BETWEEN THE FUNDS, THE EAFRD, THE EMFF AND OTHER UNION AND NATIONAL FUNDING INSTRUMENTS, AND WITH THE EIB

(Reference: point (a) of Article 96(6) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

The mechanisms to ensure coordination between the Funds, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and other Union and national funding instruments, and with the European Investment Bank (EIB), taking into account the relevant provisions laid down in the Common Strategic Framework.

<8.1 type="S" maxlength="14000" input="M" Decisions=N PA=Y>

8.1. Coordination with the other ESI funds (ERDF, ESF, COHESION FUND, EAFRD, EMFF)

8.1.1. Demarcation and complementarity with the Human Resources Development Operation Programme (HRD OP)

The OP SESG will focus on research development and improving access to quality education compliant with the needs of the labour market, including through development of educational and ICT infrastructure.

In view of the fact that both the OP SESG and the HRD OP will be co-funded from the ESF, they have a number of intersections.

As far as public participation in various forms of lifelong learning is concerned, the guiding principle in the coordination between the two programmes will be that the HRD OP will only support training for economically inactive, unemployed and employed persons outside the formal education system, whereas the OP SESG will support public participation in various forms of lifelong learning as part of the formal education, i.e. forms that lead or contribute to obtaining a document of completion of an educational level or degree (certificates, diplomas).

Therefore, only activities related to issuing documents confirming successful completion of adult training delivered outside the system of formal education, will be eligible under the HRD OP. The OP SESG will support measures for development of a national system for validation of knowledge and skills, as well as for stimulation of adults to take part in validation activities.

As part of the formal education, adult literacy will be covered by the OP SESG, however, given that the majority of the target group are economically inactive and unemployed persons, integrated operations will be implemented between the HRD OP and the OP SESG in order to ensure the participation of the public employment services and other employment agencies.

Support for the human resources development in the higher education system, as well as all the remaining initiatives for staff development in the system of pre-school and school education will be provided only under OP SESG.

Training for pedagogical and non-pedagogical specialists (in their capacity as employees) will be eligible under the HRD OP only on condition that the training: is not part of measures for their career development; is not linked to the fulfilment of their

administrative duties or concrete job responsibilities; is not intended for acquiring additional knowledge, skills and competences for the implementation of their assigned tasks. The complementarity and coordination measures between the two operational programmes will guarantee access to training under equal conditions for all representatives of the target groups, as well as financial support for the activities planned in the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning for the period 2014 – 2020.

Both OP SESG and the HRD OP will provide earmarked support for activities included in the National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (NYGIP). Youth Guarantee implementation schemes, as well as training and employment schemes are envisaged under HRD OP. OP SESG will support a number of measures aimed at improving the quality and access to education in the general, vocational and higher education. For the implementation the NYGIP in particular the OP SESG will support measures for improving the link between vocational education and the business, and for introducing the dual system; envisaged are incentives for school and higher education students from the vulnerable groups to continue their education in the higher education institutions; development and implementation of distance learning forms and access to digital content in the different levels and stages of education. Through these and other measures the OP SESG will contribute for the participation and successful implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative. As part of the effort to reduce youth unemployment and facilitate the transition from education to employment, the HRD OP will support initiatives for provision of short-term employment such as, for example, student employment under a fixed-term contract. On the other hand, the OP SESG will support activities for ensuring practical skills for students (student placements) which will be coordinated and carried out by schools and higher education institutions. Moreover, the HRD OP will support activities for provision of vocational and career guidance to students and young people by the employment services, whereas the OP SESG will support vocational and career guidance for students and young people provided by schools and different higher education institutions. The activities for provision of services for easy transition from education to employment of organisations outside the system of secondary or higher education will be supported under the HRD OP. With a view to ensuring synergies, integrated operations between the two programmes will also be put in place through encouraging joint initiatives for vocational and career guidance of students – to facilitate the transition from education to employment, and of unemployed and employed – in view of the opportunities for continuing education. Coordination of the activities under the two programmes will be carried out both between the two Managing Authorities, and in the framework of the common coordination mechanism for the implementation of the NYGIP.

Both programmes are planning implementation of measures to improve the compliance of lifelong learning policies with the needs of the labour market. To this end, the HRD OP will support initiatives to strengthen the capacity of institutions in the labour market to better predict the needs of the business for workforce with specific skills, as well as the overall development of the labour market, while the OP SESG will support actions for adaptation of the curriculum content of secondary, including vocational, and higher education to the needs of the employers. Initiatives to strengthen the links between employment services and other institutions in the labour market and other stakeholders, including line ministries, social partners, employers and the education system, will be supported under the HRD OP. Accordingly, the OP SESG will support initiatives to improve the coordination between the education system and the organisations and institutions interested in achieving a better match between learning outcomes and

economic needs.

Using mechanisms for coordinated implementation of operations, the HRD OP and the OP SESG will support the reform for deinstitutionalisation of childcare in Bulgaria. The HRD OP will offer financial assistance for community-based social services in lieu of institutional care, and the OP SESG will implement measures to ensure that, upon leaving the institution, children have access to quality education.

As part of the support for integration of the most marginalised communities, the HRD OP is planning to implement operations including both support to improve access to employment, social and health services, and measures for local community development and overcoming negative stereotypes. With the help of mechanisms for coordinated implementation of operations and, where applicable, integrated operations, the OP SESG will complement the initiatives of the HRD OP by improving the access to education for the target groups through measures for inclusion in the education system. Thus, the support for the most marginalised social groups will include provision of a comprehensive social package that will simultaneously address all problems hindering the integration of the target groups in Bulgarian society.

8.1.2. Demarcation and complementarity with the Innovation and Competitiveness Operational Programme 2014–2020 (OPIC)

The OPIC and the SESG OP are geared towards achieving a smart growth of the Bulgarian economy. Each OP via mutually complementing interventions will contribute for the strengthening of research, technological development and innovation, i.e. Thematic Objective 1 of the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) for the ESI Funds.

The support under the SESG OP is aimed at developing the required infrastructure and human resources for the implementation of applied research in the thematic areas of the Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3). The newly established and the modernised research infrastructure (centres of competence and centres of excellence) will be involved in applied research leading to the creation and dissemination of publicly available knowledge in RIS3 areas, which in turn will serve as an incentive and scientific basis for the business to engage in innovation activity. At the same time, through the funding of applied research specialisation of scholars and preparation of doctoral and post-doctoral students to create and develop the necessary scientific and research potential in these areas will be accomplished. Furthermore, the regional needs for specialisation in RIS3 thematic areas will be addressed through a regional distribution of the centres of competence and support for the modernisation of the infrastructure in higher education institutions and scientific organisations whose activity is of greatest interest to the local business.

OPIC will in turn intervene in support of the production of applied research and innovation with a view to creating or improving specific products and services in enterprises, as well as their commercialisation, using the developed capacity and the results of the applied research carried out in centres of competence and centres of excellence, higher education institutions and scientific organisations.

With a view to supporting the innovation activity of enterprises, funding will be provided for the creation, equipment and accreditation of thematically focused laboratories and other similar infrastructure required by businesses for certification, standardised testing, technological checks, proof of concepts, test samples and utility models, prototyping and other similar activities that are not associated with creation of

knowledge but with development and implementation of innovation, including support for technology transfer offices with good basic infrastructure (outside the scope of centres of competence and centres of excellence).

Thus, the SESG OP will finance activities providing sound HR and scientific basis for developing the innovation activity of Bulgarian enterprises, since the quality of research infrastructure, the development of a new generation of scholars, and, respectively, the improvement of the level of education and research underpin the innovation capacity of any country. In turn, the OPIC will focus on encouraging businesses to make use of the results of the conditions created for innovation and to transform them into marketable products and processes generating economic growth.

An inter-institutional working group will be established at the launch of the OPs to coordinate the issues related to the demarcation and complementarity between the two programmes at all project cycle stages (selection of operations, programming, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation). Discussions and adoption of criteria for selection of operations, as well as of the specific parameters of the proposed procedures will also be undertaken by the Monitoring Committees of two Operational Programmes, where the Managing Authorities are represented with the status of full members.

The implementation of the two OPs and the expected synergies are expected to have a major contribution towards achieving the goals of the Bulgarian RIS3, namely to enable the country to move from the status of 'modest' to 'moderate' innovator in the Innovation Scoreboard, and the national target of 1.5 % GDP spent on R&D by 2020.

8.1.3. Demarcation and complementarity with the Regions in Development Operational Programme 2014–2020 (RDOP)

Educational and research infrastructure

The RDOP shall support state and municipal educational infrastructure of national and regional significance within the territory of the entire country as well as municipal educational infrastructure of local significance within the Integrated Plan for Urban Reconstruction and Development (IPURD)

The OP SESG shall provide finances from the European Social Fund for “soft measures” for institutions in the educational system which are educational infrastructure objects supported under RDOP 2014-2020.

RDOP shall support educational infrastructure in the state higher education institutions with the exception of buildings and premises renovated under projects for creation and development of centres of excellence and centres of competency under the OP SESG. The support under the RDOP will be geared towards measures for energy efficiency and improving the facilities in the higher education institutions, related to the organisation and delivery of the educational process, and not to their research activity. In this respect under RDOP will be financed equipment related to the educational environment in the higher education institutions.

A working group was composed of representatives of Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Regional Development (MRD), Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria for development of regional prioritisation of educational infrastructure. The working group prepared a Methodology for Prioritisation of Educational Infrastructure Objects which was submitted to MRD for the needs of the

management of RDOP.

Priority Axis 1 of the OP SESG contains provisions for financing research infrastructure with finances from the ERDF. Research infrastructure will not be financed under the RDOP.

Equipment and furnishing

An eligible action under Priority Axis 3. Regional Educational Infrastructure of the RDOP is the supply and installation of equipment and facilities for buildings/rooms in state and municipal schools and kindergartens of national and regional significance, as well as in higher education institutions, including adjacent yards and dormitories, as part of their overall renovation.

At the programming stage, the demarcation will be done at beneficiary and project level. The equipment for beneficiaries of projects financed under OP SESG will be linked to the logic of implementation of the soft measures within the scope of the individual projects and shall not be main focus of the financial intervention.

At the programming stage, complementarity with the RDOP can be sought in the measures to improve access to pre-school and school education under Priority Axis 2. Education and Lifelong Learning of the OP SESG. State and municipal schools and kindergartens in eligible urban areas repaired under the RDOP, could be equipped with OP SESG funds.

The measures under Priority Axis 2 of the OP SESG could be used for purchasing sports equipment for playgrounds and gyms in eligible under the RDOP cities. In case equipment was purchased within the projects under RDOP, the same equipment for these educational institutions will not be financed under OP SESG.

Complementarity can further be sought in terms of participation in integrated urban development plans under the RDOP, whereby the OP SESG could contribute actions under Thematic Objective 10. Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning, Priority Axis 2. Activities under OP SESG shall be aimed also at the educational institutions (schools and kindergartens), covered by IPURD through projects for improving the quality of and access to education.

Under Priority Axis 3 of the OP SESG will be financed projects of municipalities, schools and NGOs for educational integration and reintegration. Municipalities which via RDOP invest in the facilities of the schools and kindergartens included in the OP SESG will be encouraged. Under Priority Axis 3 of the OP SESG is envisaged significant support for integration of children and students with special educational needs in the mainstream schools. These measures will be supported under the RDOP through investments for provision of accessible architectural environment in the schools and kindergartens. Such activities should be envisaged in all projects related to renovation and equipment of educational infrastructure with a view of securing equal access to education.

8.1.4. Demarcation and complementarity with the Environment Operational Programme (EOP)

The EOP covers Thematic Objective 5. Promoting climate change adaptation and risk prevention and management, and Thematic Objective 6. Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency. The measures under Natura 2000 will be co-funded from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. In such

context, no demarcation needs to be drawn between the EOP and the Cohesion Fund. There is no overlap of thematic objectives between the two operational programmes.

The OP SESG will support measures under the National Priority Action Framework for NATURA 2000 (NPAF) related to environmental education and capacity building for issues relevant to NATURA 2000. The measures will be co-funded from the ESF.

The OP SESG and the EOP complement each other with respect to raising awareness of the stakeholders about the environmental network NATURA 2000. The EOP will envisage financing of measures for “Organising and conducting innovative environmental events”. Within these measures as eligible activities are identified: organising and conducting attractive, innovative forms of events at local and/or national level, including fests, parades, festivals, creative natural science competitions, cultural and art practices, etc., aiming at securing wide public support and strengthening the interest in NATURA 2000. In this sense the EOP measures complement the education received in schools/higher education institutions and the measures envisaged under OP SESG.

The environmental education of students is ensured through the study of the subjects: Environment, Individual and Environment, and Chemistry and Environmental Protection; and that of climate change through the subjects: Environment, Individual and Environment, and Geography and Economy. New state educational standards and curricula have been developed for these subjects and the volume of knowledge and skills that students acquire as a result of studying environmental protection and climate change has been significantly expanded. Plans to develop new schoolbooks have been put in place.

Complementarity can be sought (in the case of integrated territorial investment or coordinated projects) in terms of implementation of infrastructure projects for which the ESF will contribute co-funding for research and/or trainings by researchers in subjects related to the priorities of the EOP.

In addition, the OP SESG could promote the creation of partnership research facilities and networks, as well as of national research institutes in the field of the environment.

8.1.5. Demarcation and complementarity with the Good Governance Operational Programme (GG OP)

The GG OP will support the non-governmental organisations (NGO) sector in achieving better governance, including for the formation and implementation of policies. The OP SESG will in turn envisage measures for educational integration, which fall within the scope of activity of the NGOs in the implementation of cooperation in the field of education policies. The measures implemented within the scope of OP SESG shall contribute for strengthening the capacity of NGOs implementing activities under PA 2 and PA 3 of the OP SESG.

The GG OP will envisage measures aimed at developing e-governance. The OP SESG will support the introduction or modernisation of distance and e-learning systems. It will not contribute any funding towards actions other than developing digital content for documents related to the education system.

The measures aimed at supporting the students’ practices in real working environment, incl. student internships in the civil service will be financed only under the OP SESG. The GG OP will submit to the MES the developed in the programming period 2007-2013 system for coordination and requests for interns by the civil service, for the

purpose of integrating this system with the electronic system developed under “Students Practices” project.

8.1.6. Demarcation and complementarity with the Transport and Transport Infrastructure Operational Programme (TOP)

There is no overlapping between the thematic objectives of the two operational programs.

8.1.7. Demarcation and complementarity with the Rural Development Programme 2014–2020 (RDP)

The RDP envisages measures aimed at achieving the first of the six priorities outlined in the EAFRD Regulation: “fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas”. The implementation of this priority would suggest the implementation of activities both in the area of education & training, and in the research sector.

On the other hand, the OP SESG is geared towards research development and improving the access to quality education compliant with the needs of the labour market. This thematic scope shall suggest complementarity between the interventions under the two OPs.

Research activity and innovation

The OP SESG will support research activities in the scope of agricultural sciences, as far as they fall within the scope of the priority areas of the Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation. The RDP will finance projects in the agricultural sector, related to the application of research results in the form of innovations, demonstration projects, etc.

The OP SESG will support modernisation of research infrastructure and of existing research laboratories of research institutions and higher education institutions conducting research in areas corresponding to national research and innovation priorities.

The RDP through sub-measure 1.1 „Purchase or lease of new machinery and equipment for on-site demonstration activities carried out on location, which can be an experimental field, or an educational practice field, or a laboratory of a research institute, higher educational institution or vocational school providing education or conducting research in the area of agriculture, food or forestry” will complement the OP SESG by supporting the purchase or lease of new machinery and equipment for on-site demonstration activities carried out on location, which can be an experimental field, or an educational practice field, or a laboratory of a research institute, higher educational institution or vocational school providing education or conducting knowledge transfer in the area of agriculture, food or forestry. Leasing schemes for equipment, as well as demonstration activities in the agricultural sector shall not be carried out under OP SESG.

In the area of transfer of knowledge and innovation the RDP envisages “funding of innovative investment projects in accordance with local development strategies (projects that are directly related with the introduction of new technologies)”. This support does not overlap but will complement OP SESG actions aimed at supporting applied research (PA1).

Demarcation, between the planned actions under Investment Priority 1 of Priority Axis 1 of the OP SESG and the objectives envisaged in Article 35 “Co-operation” of the

EAFRD Regulation shall be made according to the type of activities. OP SESG will finance the building of research infrastructure and the implementation of applied research, while the measure under art. 35 shall not involve identical measures.

The OP SESG will support the construction, development and use of pilot centres in higher education institutions and in research institutes for training, research, experimental development and prototyping, and the RDP will contribute by funding innovative projects of the operational groups of the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability.

Education and training and educational infrastructure

In accordance with Article 14 (3) Knowledge transfer and information actions of the EAFRD Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005), “Support under this measure shall not include courses of instruction or training, which form part of normal education programmes or systems at secondary or higher levels.” In view of the above, no demarcation of the OP SESG is required for this specific measure.

The OP SESG envisages a specific measure for optimising the higher education system, and in particular higher education institutions, which provide training in *agricultural specialities*. This will contribute to improving the effectiveness and quality of education, including in specialties related to agriculture, livestock and food industries.

The OP SESG will finance soft measures, (PA2 and PA3) for improving the quality and the access to education, incl. in the rural areas, thus contributing to the development, which is the main object of RDP. As far as educational infrastructure is concerned, the RDP will support such infrastructure in rural areas in accordance with the definition of a rural area and outside the scope of funding for regional educational infrastructure under the RDOP. The OP SESG will not envisage measures related to the modernisation and development of infrastructure (buildings, repair works, accessibility of the environment). Under OP SESG will be provided equipment directly linked to the implementation of the educational project activities within its scope.

The RDP will finance reconstruction, repair, equipment and/or furnishing of educational infrastructure of local significance in rural areas, and the OP SESG will provide funding through soft measures for sites of the educational infrastructure.

Complementarity can further be sought in terms of ensuring access to information technologies. The RDP foresees investment for creation of broadband infrastructure, and the OP SESG envisages actions for implementation of ICT in schools.

8.1.8. Demarcation and complementarity with programmes co-funded through the ERDF under the European Territorial Cooperation objective (ETC)

Demarcation is not required at the programming stage. After the start of the programmes, monitoring will be required to prevent double funding at the level of target groups, beneficiaries, eligible activities/costs, results.

8.1.9. Demarcation and complementarity with programmes co-funded through the EMFF

All measures related to the implementation of scientific knowledge dissemination, innovative practices, professional skills acquisition, networking etc. in the field of fisheries and aquaculture will be supported by the new Maritime and Fisheries Programme.

Investment in research and innovation in the field of fisheries and aquaculture in accordance with measure 1. Innovation and fisheries and measure 8. Innovation in aquaculture will complement the investment for creation and development of research infrastructure envisaged under IP1a of PA1 of the OP SESG, which will contribute actions towards the creation and development of research centres and modernisation of research infrastructure.

The participation of research organisations in the validation of results of assessments of the impact of fishing activities on the environment or on a more sustainable use of marine biological resources will be co-funded from the EMFF. At project level, monitoring will be carried out to prevent double funding of eligible target groups, beneficiaries, activities, costs and results.

The OP SESG could complement the measures of the MFP through its planned operations for optimisation of the learning system in the maritime, fisheries and aquaculture sector. The development of a strategic normative framework of the lifelong learning system and of a national system for validation of non-formal and self-directed learning will also cover specialties/professions related to the fisheries, aquaculture and emerging marine and maritime sectors (e.g. blue biotechnologies, blue energy, recovery of raw materials from the seabed),

8.2. Coordination with other Union instruments (Horizon 2020, LIFE +, the Connecting Europe facility, COSME, Erasmus for all, Asylum and migration fund, Programme for employment and social innovation etc.)

8.2.1. Demarcation and complementarity with Horizon 2020

The EU programme Horizon 2020 brings together 3 programmes/initiatives:

1. the 7th Framework Programme (FP7);
2. innovation aspects of Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIFP);
3. European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).

Horizon 2020 has three priorities:

1. Excellent science;
2. Industrial leadership;
3. Societal challenges.

In order to increase the country's participation in the EU Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, Bulgarian researchers should be provided with access to research infrastructure of the highest level. They need to develop their talent and receive support for creating networks with researchers from other EU countries.

The OP SESG will ensure support for research capacity building of research organisations and higher educational establishments through modernisation of their equipment and creation of attractive conditions for researchers. As a result, a wider participation in Horizon 2020 can be expected. The modernisation of the research

environment will lead to attracting world-class researchers who could attract additional grant funding from Horizon 2020.

The interventions in OP SESG will facilitate the Bulgarian researchers to participate in the various European activities under Horizon 2020, such as JPIs, ERA-NETs and the Widening actions¹⁰⁹. In particular the evaluation results from the competition in the Teaming action will be used in the process of selection of the centres of excellence, supported by OP SESG.

At the programming stage, demarcation is required in terms of the development of partnership facilities and research centres etc. OP SESG funding will only be available to such institutions at national level. The Excellent Science priority of Horizon 2020 envisages the construction of research infrastructure, in view of which a demarcation line needs to be drawn with regard to the planned activities under Investment Priority 1 of Priority Axis 1 of the OP SESG.

This FP priority offers ample opportunity for complementing and continuing interventions co-funded under the OP SESG, such as attracting Bulgarian researchers and scholars to the European Research Council (ERC) for innovative ideas and research that were originally or partially funded under Priority Axis 1 of the OP SESG. In accordance with Part I (1.3) of the Regulation establishing Horizon 2020, “ERC grants shall be open to individual teams of researchers of any age and from any country in the world, working in Europe.”

A flagship initiative under Priority 1.4. European research infrastructures of the Framework Programme is “A digital agenda for Europe”, which also provides opportunities for complementarity of national measures co-funded under PA 1 of the OP SESG.

The activities under Priority 2. Industrial leadership will be mostly based on programmes for research and innovation prepared by industrial enterprises together with the research community and mostly aimed at attracting private sector investment (Part I(1) of the Regulation establishing Horizon 2020). The emphasis will be on research, development, large-scale pilots and demonstration activities, test-beds and living labs, prototyping and product validation in pilot lines. The activities are designed to boost industrial competitiveness by stimulating the industry, and in particular SMEs, to make more research and innovation investment.

This aspect will be a priority for the OPIC. Special monitoring will ensure the prevention of double funding at project level – beneficiary, target group, eligible activities, results.

Sub-priority 2.2. Access to risk finance (Leveraging private finance and venture capital for research and innovation) of the FP could have an extremely strong complementarity effect on leveraging private finance and venture capital for research topics/projects whose teams include Bulgarian researchers and/or research institutions.

Priority Axis 2 of the OP SESG includes provisions for developing research potential in established centres of excellence and favourable conditions for research, career advancement and mobility, including opportunities for attracting scholars from other countries or opening positions for Bulgarian scholars who have previously worked in

¹⁰⁹ Enabling synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and other research, innovation and competitiveness-related Union programmes (Guidance for policy makers and implementing bodies)

research organisations abroad.

Pursuant to the requirements of the respective Regulations (Common, ESF and ERDF), operational programmes should contribute (directly or indirectly) towards achieving the thematic objective 4 Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors. Here, the implementation of the areas of intervention of the OP SESG will continue and complement Priority 3. Societal challenges.

Another opportunity to promote complementarity between the funds is to provide complementary or follow-up funding for projects that have already been supported under Horizon 2020.

When programming the operations within the scope of OP SESG emerging trends like “blue growth” (e.g. blue biotechnologies, blue energy and recovery of resources from the seabed) will be taken into consideration, and with carefully observing the rules of double financing will be complemented initiatives of Bulgarian research organisations, supported under Horizon 2020, incl. initiatives included in international projects at European level.

8.2.2. Demarcation and complementarity with Commission facility with centralised management EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)

The EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (Social Change and Innovation) provides opportunity for upgrading projects co-financed under OP SESG, via activities at EU level in the fields of innovation development policies. Complementarity may be sought along the line of the opportunities for microcrediting of enterprises of students and young lecturers.

The PROGRESS axis will increase its support for research of innovations with respect to the social and market policies Eligible beneficiaries under the PROGRESS axis of the EaSI will be higher education institutions and research institutes. This provides an opportunity for building on projects co-funded under the OP SESG through EU-level action in the field of innovation development policies.

The fields where the Bulgarian higher education institutions and research institutions might benefit from the opportunities under the EaSI are indicated in the scope of the axis in art. 14 of Regulation 1296/2013, i.e. employment, and in particular for fighting the youth unemployment, social protection, social inclusion and poverty reduction and prevention, and working conditions.

Under PROGRESS axis may be financed analytical activities for data collection and statistics, development of common methodologies, classifications, microsimulations, indicators and targets with breakdown by gender and age group, where appropriate; surveys, research, analysis and reports; quality and quantity evaluations and impact assessments; monitoring and evaluation of the transposition and enforcement of the *acquis communautaire*; preparation and implementation of experiments in the field of social policy as a method for testing and evaluation of innovative solutions with a view of their wider use; dissemination of the results from the indicated analytical activities.

Under the programme may be financed also activities related to mutual learning, awareness raising and dissemination like exchange and dissemination of good practices, innovative approach and experience, partnership evaluations, benchmarking and mutual learning at European level; training of law and policy practitioners; drafting and publishing of manuals, reports educational materials and measures related to information, communication and media coverage of the initiatives, supported by the

programme; exchange of staff between the national administrations.

The demarcation will be at the level of individual projects. The activities financed under the two programmes in the area of transnational cooperation, exchange of knowledge, experience and staff, and dissemination of information and results from the performed surveys, research, analyses, will be kept under observation.

With regard to the EURES axis of the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation, demarcation is required at the level of projects (on the territoriality principle only), target groups and beneficiaries. Sustainability and added value with regard to the OP SESG will be possible in terms of targeted mobility schemes to fill vacancies where labour market shortcomings have been identified and/or help particular groups of workers such as young people (Article 20(b) COM(2011) 609 final).

Demarcation is not required between the objectives, eligible activities and bodies under the Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis of the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation and the OP SESG. Complementarity could be sought in terms of microfinance opportunities for enterprises, students and young lecturers.

8.2.3. Demarcation and complementarity with the Commission instrument with centralised management LIFE

No demarcation between the two programmes is required at the programming stage. Prevention of double funding will be monitored at project level.

COMPLEMENTARITY: Pursuant to Article 3 (2) of the ESF Regulation No 1304/2013, repealing Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006, and Article 5 (4) of the ERDF Regulation No 1303/2013, repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006, both funds shall contribute to achieving the thematic objectives related to the shift towards a low-carbon, climate-resilient, resource-efficient and environmentally sustainable economy through reform of education and training systems, adaptation of skills and qualifications, up-skilling of the labour force, and the creation of new jobs in sectors related to the environment and energy, as well as through support for energy efficiency and renewable energy use in public infrastructures and housing. Therefore, a large range of opportunities for sustainability and complementarity can be expected between LIFE and OP SESG projects.

8.2.4. Demarcation and complementarity with Commission facility with centralised management Erasmus +

The Erasmus+ programme is an EU financial tool supporting the Education, Training, Youth and Sports in the period 2014 - 2020. This Programme brings together all known to the Bulgarian citizens European programmes like Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig and Youth in Action. It shall be administered by national agencies across Europe. At national level shall be financed the following decentralised activities of Erasmus+ programme: learning mobility of individuals, strategic partnerships and structural dialogue.

The Bulgarian national authorities envisage a number of measures to provide demarcation and complementarity between OP SESG and Erasmus+ programme, which are in line with the EC Guidance, related to the provision of synergy between the European Structural and Investment Funds and the European programmes. (Enabling synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and other research, innovation and competitiveness-related Union programmes - Guidance for

policy-makers and implementing bodies).

The main mechanism to guarantee demarcation and complementarity at national level will be the establishment of one national agency which will administer all decentralised activities and sectors under Erasmus+ programme, thus securing integrated approach in the coordination of the EU funding and which will report directly to the Ministry of Education and Science.

The National Agency will be a second line budget spending unit at the MES and in this capacity will be an eligible beneficiary for a number of activities under OP SESG

Under the planned integrated measures provision of demarcation and complementarity will be envisaged as follows:

With respect of the mobility of students, doctoral students, specialising postgraduate students, young scientists and lecturers within the EU, complementarity is envisaged between OP SESG and Erasmus+ programme, which will be expressed in financing by the OP SESG of additional number of mobilities, applied for by the higher education institutions in Bulgaria, which have been awarded Erasmus Charter, but the financing for them under Erasmus+ programme for Bulgaria is insufficient. The demarcation will be provided by through close cooperation between the two structures, administering respectively the OP SESG and Erasmus+ programme, the availability of separate agreements with the higher education institutions in Bulgaria for the financing of the mobilities under the two programmes, separate and coordinated reporting by using the EC electronic systems and tools – EplusLink and Mobility Tool, where the information about each individual participant is registered. No double financing of the same participant will be allowed.

With respect of the mobility of students from vocational schools, general education students and teachers from general and vocational schools, complementarity is envisaged between the OP SESG and Erasmus+ programme, which is implemented by financing of Erasmus+ project proposals by the OP SESG in the sectors of general and vocational education and training, which have successfully passed quality assessment, but have been entered in the reserve list, due to lack of funds from Erasmus+ programme for Bulgaria. Automatic demarcation is in place as an implementation of the rules of Erasmus+ programme, which do not allow submission of more than one project proposal per year by the same organisation in the sectors of general and vocational education and training. Besides, not allowing double financing at individual participant's level will be guaranteed by using the EC electronic systems and tools - EPlusLink and Mobility Tool, where the information about each individual participant is registered. Financing of the same organisation is not eligible. Double financing of the same individual participant will not be eligible.

8.3. Coordination with relevant national funding instruments that contribute to the same or similar objectives as the operational programme or complement its interventions

8.3.1. Demarcation and complementarity with the National Fund for Scientific Research (NFSR)

Demarcation with the OP SESG: In general, the instruments of the NFSR include: research in certain thematic areas; support and promotion of research in higher education institutions, as well as joint projects of higher education institutions and other organisations involved in R&D; support of young researchers; support of established

Bulgarian scientists; funding of projects approved within bilateral scientific cooperation; development of research infrastructure; establishment of centres of excellence; enhancement of innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises; promotion of the participation of Bulgarian scientists in FP7 and the COST Programme. Given the thematic scope and design of the NFSR, prevention of double funding will be monitored at the level of individual projects, beneficiaries and target groups.

Complementarity with the OP SESG: Broad thematic complementarity and potential for continuity between the NSRF and the OP SESG. PA1 and PA2 of the OP SESG, where science is an area of co-funding and intervention, provide for mutual complementarity of activities and reinforcing the impacts of the implemented research/projects/initiatives.

OP SESG is with a focus on applied studies in the priority areas of RIS3. Therefore NSFR will refocus its activity on fundamental studies, bilateral collaborations, grants for researches and grants for studies falling outside the priority areas of RIS3.

8.4. Demarcation and complementarity with European Economic Area programmes 2009–2014

The European Economic Area (EEA) Grants are a tool for funding projects and programmes in different pre-defined priority areas which is jointly supported by Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein. The overall objectives of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 are to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and to strengthen bilateral relations between Donor States and Beneficiary States through financial contributions in priority sectors. Some of the priority sectors for which funding will be provided to Bulgaria are Human and Social Development and Student Scholarship Programme.

The Children and Youth at Risk Programme, which aims to improve the welfare of children and young people at risk, is focused on school attendance and the specific needs of Roma children. The Programme finances projects in two separate components: the first is aimed at building youth centres compliant with the quality standards of the Council of Europe; the second is aimed at services for early childhood education and training in kindergartens with focus on the integration of socially disadvantaged children, including the Roma minority. The implementation of the Programme will include activities that are similar to the eligible activities under PA3. Educational environment for active social inclusion of the OP SESG concerning the active inclusion of socially disadvantaged persons, improving the access to sustainable, quality and affordable services, including health and social services of general interest, and promotion of community-led local development. Demarcation and prevention of double funding will be applied at the project selection stage, in terms of the respective beneficiary municipalities, financed activities and target groups. As regards the Youth Centres component of the Children and Youth at Risk Programme, there is no direct overlap of activities. The Student Scholarship Programme awards scholarships for studying in Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein, unlike the OP SESG which will award scholarships for stimulation of studies in priority economic areas, as well as scholarships for outstanding achievement in science, engineering and technology, innovation and entrepreneurship, art, culture and sport (on a competitive basis).

The EEA Grants 2009-2014 will set up pilot models of cooperation in the field of Roma integration and will make the first steps towards the training and work of Roma Education Mediators, young leaders and teachers in pre-school institutions for effective integration measures, early intervention for prevention of school dropout and social

activity of school students and young people.

In the cases when the rules for cumulating state aid or de minimis rules are applicable to complementarity, the MA ensures through appropriate mechanisms that the maximum allowed intensity and range of the aid will be met.

9. SECTION 9 EX-ANTE CONDITIONALITIES

(Reference: point (b) of Article 96(6) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

9.1 Ex-ante conditionalities

Information on the assessment of the applicability and the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities (optional)

<9.0 type="S" maxlength="14000" input="M" PA=Y>

Table 24

Table 24: Applicable ex-ante conditionalities and assessment of their fulfilment

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
<9.1.1 type="S" maxlength="500" input="S" PA=Y "SME" >	<9.1.2 type="S" maxlength="100" input="S" PA=Y "SME" >	<9.1.3 type="C" input="G" PA=Y "SME" >	<9.1.4 type="S" maxlength="500" input="S" PA=Y "SME" >	<9.1.5 type="B" input="S" PA=Y "SME" >	<9.1.6 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M" PA=Y "SME" >	<9.1.7 type="S" maxlength="1000" input="M" PA=Y "SME" >
Thematic ex-ante conditionalities under ESIF						

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
1.1. Research and innovation: The existence of a national or regional smart specialization strategy in line with the National Reform Program, to leverage private research and innovation expenditure, which complies with the features of well-performing national or regional R&I systems	Priority Axis 1	NO	<p>A national or regional smart specialization strategy is in place that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — is based on a SWOT or similar analysis to concentrate resources on a limited set of research and innovation priorities; — outlines measures to stimulate private RTD investment; — contains a monitoring mechanism. 	NO	<p>A draft of the SRIS3 strategy is prepared and approved with Decision № 761 of the Council of Ministers from November 6th 2014, as a basis to fulfil EAC 1 in Annex XI to Regulation № 1303/2013.</p> <p>http://www.strategy.bg/publicconsultations/View.aspx?lang=bg-BG&Id=1414</p> <p>National Strategy of Scientific Research to 2020 - adopted by the National Assembly in 2011.</p> <p>http://www.strategy.bg/StrategicDocuments/View.aspx?lang=bg-BG&Id=708</p> <p>National Strategy of Scientific Research was adopted by Decision of the National Assembly in 2011 (State Gazette, issue 62, dated 12.08.2011). The strategy provides a stable framework for the development of research institutions and of the scientific and innovation activities in Bulgaria for a period of ten years 2011 - 2020. Furthermore, it is accompanied by a three-year Action Plan for the period August 2011 - August 2014, and the effectiveness of the implementation of the objectives and measures will be evaluated by independent</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					experts on a three-year period. The Action Plan is the framework for the activities, programs and initiatives that the Government will implement in connection with the implementation of the National Research Strategy. The Action Plan covers the policies, priorities and programs of line ministries and departments in the science and innovation system. The Action Plan proposes a combination of measures and actions, supported by various national funds, European programs, cohesion instruments and special schemes for support from third parties.	
			A framework outlining available budgetary resources for research and innovation has been adopted.	NO		

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
1.2 Research and Innovation infrastructure. The existence of a multi-annual plan for budgeting and prioritization of investments.	Priority Axis 1	NO	An indicative multi-annual plan for budgeting and prioritization of investments linked to Union priorities, and, where appropriate, the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) has been adopted.	NO	<p>Updated National Roadmap for Research Infrastructure http://www.mon.bg/top_menu/science/infrastructure/</p> <p>Adopted by CoM Decree No. 569/07.31.2014. As a result of the update, the National Roadmap for Research Infrastructure, adopted by CoM Decree No. 692 of 21.09.2010, becomes aligned with the draft Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation and the priorities of the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructure.</p> <p>In the course of the update a national inter-ministerial working group was set up and an international ex-ante evaluation was performed by the ESFRI international expert panel.</p>	<p>In implementation of the Roadmap, MES participated in three pan-European research infrastructures through concluded Memoranda of Understanding.</p> <p>As of 2013 Bulgaria is part of the following international consortia:</p> <p>1. EURO-ARGO - Global Monitoring of Oceans - PART OF THE ADVANTAGES FOR BULGARIA, Bulgaria has the potential to be designated as a Regional Coordinator for the Black Sea. Our participation in the EURO-ARGO will improve the technical installations for observations of the Black Sea, the climate change and for better precision and accuracy of weather forecasting. Will provide access to advanced facilities and information about the countries of the region and will provide services to the benefit of society - climate change, the state - security of maritime transport and business - aquaculture and fisheries, and others;</p> <p>2. BBMRI - BIOBANKING AND BIOMOLECULAR RESOURCES,</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>Bulgarian scientists will participate in the development of new diagnostic methods and drugs, including a quick transfer to clinical trials and development of methods for individual diagnosis and subsequent treatment.</p> <p>3. CLARIN-E-INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ELECTRONIC LANGUAGE RESOURCES WITH UNIQUE DATABASES AND KNOWLEDGE BASES FOR BULGARIAN LANGUAGE TECHNOLOGY SOFTWARE MODULES AND COMPUTER NETWORKS. CLARIN will preserve Bulgarian linguistic heritage and will provide wide access to language resources and technologies to all potential users from industry and research to education.</p>
9.2. A national Roma inclusion strategic policy framework is in place	Priority axis 3	Partially	<p>A national Roma inclusion strategic policy framework is in place that:</p> <p>— sets achievable national goals for Roma integration to bridge the gap with the general population. These targets should address the four EU Roma integration goals relating to</p>	NO	<p>A National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration (NSRBRI) 2012 – 2020</p> <p>http://nccedi.government.bg/page.php?category=125&id=1740</p> <p>On 5 January 2012, CoM approved the National Strategy of the Republic of</p>	<p>The targets should address the four EU Roma integration goals relating to access to education, employment, health and housing; The Strategy is consistent with and contributes to the implementation of three national objectives set by the National Reform Program of the Republic of Bulgaria (2011-2015) in implementing the strategy</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
			<p>access to education, employment, healthcare and housing;</p> <p>— identifies where relevant those disadvantaged micro-regions or segregated neighbourhoods, where communities are most deprived, using already available socio-economic and territorial indicators (i.e. very low educational level, long-term unemployment, etc.);</p> <p>— includes strong monitoring methods to evaluate the impact of Roma integration actions and a review mechanism for the adaptation of the strategy;</p> <p>— is designed, implemented and monitored in close cooperation and continuous dialogue with Roma civil society, regional and local authorities.</p>		<p>Bulgaria for Roma Integration and adopted an Action Plan with it. On 1 March 2012 the National Assembly passed a decision on the adoption of the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration.</p> <p>• On the basis of the Order of the Chairperson of the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues, the Interdepartmental Working Group for resource support on Roma integration with funds of the European Union resumed its operation. The first meeting of the working group was held on 22.10.2013. The operation of the Interdepartmental Working Group for resource support on Roma integration with funds of the European Union is Chapter 5 of the Action Plan to the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration 2012-2020. The group includes many members of the civil sector.</p> <p>The Rules of Procedure of National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues were amended by Council of Ministers Decree No. 276/2013 which concerned except to optimize the work of the Council and to the strengthening of its functions in relation to the monitoring and control of the National</p>	<p>"Europe 2020".</p> <p>• The measures for attainment of the objectives are set out in the Action Plan for implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020) and "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015". Action Plan for implementation of the Strategy</p> <p>The Ministry of Education and Science is the leading institution responsible for the achievement of the objectives of the Strategy, defined under priority Education.</p> <p>The implementation of the measures under priority Education will contribute to the implementation of National objective 4: "Relative share of early leavers of the educational system to drop to 11% by 2020 and the relative share of persons in the age group 30-34 with higher education to rise to 36% by 2020" and will also contribute indirectly to the achievement of National objective "Reducing the number of those living in poverty by 260 thousand persons".</p> <p>The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>Strategy for Roma Integration 2012-2020.</p> <p>Commission on the implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Integration (2012-2020) was established within The National Council, which is related to the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of the implementation of the state policy for equal integration of Roma in Bulgarian society. The members of the Commission are all NGOs, members of the Council who are working towards the integration of Roma. There are two working groups within the Commission: Interagency Working Group for resource support of Roma integration with EU funds and Interagency Working Group to monitor the implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Integration (2012-2020) and legal changes. These two working groups are an integral part of the Action Plan to the Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the important changes referring to National Strategy for Roma Integration is that the Commission for Roma Integration to the Council of Ministers was renamed the Commission for implementation of the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for 	<p>the leading institution responsible for the achievement of the objectives of the Strategy, defined under priority "Employment".</p> <p>The implementation of the measures under priority Employment will contribute to achieving the National objective: "Achieving 76% employment rate among the population aged 20-64 by 2020". Together with the implementation of the complementing measures under priority Education, aimed at raising the skills level of the labour force and the competences and qualifications of workers with low qualification, this will contribute to alleviating the poverty of the employed and their families and to attaining National objective 5: Reducing the number of those living in poverty by 260 thousand persons.</p> <p>The Ministry of Health is the leading institution responsible for the achievement of the objectives of the Strategy, defined under priority "Health".</p> <p>The Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works is the leading institution responsible for the achievement of the objectives of the Strategy, defined under priority "Improving Housing Conditions".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Strategy on Roma Integration

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>Roma Integration (2012-2020)" with functions to plan resourced and integrated interventions to implement the policy of Roma integration as defined in the National Roma Strategy, based on goals and priorities for a basic policy, health, education, social policy and housing policy, and to support, discuss and monitor the implementation of the measures and the achievement of results by priorities of the National Roma Strategy. In the Commission participate heads of structures in the ministries of: labour and social policy, education, agriculture and food, youth and sports, regional development, health, interior and culture with responsibilities under the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration (2012 - 2020), appointed by the respective ministers; the representative of the CCU in the Council of Ministers Administration - a member of the National Council; representatives of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria - members of the National Council; representatives of the non-profit legal persons, members of the Council, who carry out activities aimed at the integration of Roma in the Bulgarian society.</p>	<p>identifies where relevant those disadvantaged micro-regions or segregated neighbourhoods, where communities are most deprived, using already available socio-economic and territorial indicators. They are specified in the developed and adopted by the district administrations Regional Strategies for Roma Integration by 2020 and the municipal action plans for 2013-2014 include concrete measures depending on the specifics of the different situations. The same approach will have to be applied in the municipal action plans for the period from 2015 to 2020, which should be finalized by summer 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Roma Integration Strategy indicates the management mechanism of the integration policy and the performance monitoring - page 17-21. • The evaluation of the delivery of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020) is done by monitoring the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Strategy implementation. The progress is reported in an administrative report, which does not exclude the applying of other forms of monitoring and evaluation as well. <p>The monitoring objective is, on the basis of</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>These changes strengthen the control and monitoring of civil society organizations over the implementation of the strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In February 2014 was improved the coordination mechanism at national, regional and local level on the implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Integration (2012-2020). <p>Each institution and ministry has determined experts to coordinate the implementation of the measures of the Action Plan to the Strategy. A meeting of the National Council was held, during which were selected Vice Chairman of the Board from the NGO sector, as well as coordinators of key strategy priorities from the Commission on the Implementation of the National Roma Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat of the National Council is the National Coordination Unit for the process of regional planning. Regional strategies and municipal action plans are open systems; they follow the dynamics of change in the development of various indicators that determine the emergence of new needs. <p>Under the current system for monitoring</p>	<p>systematically collected and analysed information to assess the achievement of measurable results of the activities for implementation of the measures under the program document, while actively involving the stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation process.</p> <p>The progress made in the implementation of the foreseen priority activities are presented in an administrative monitoring report.</p> <p>The report has 28-Attachments - received reports from 28 regional administrations for the implementation of regional strategies and local plans. From the information provided it is seen the best results and challenges at regional and local level.</p> <p>The Secretariat of the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues to the Council of Ministers (NCCEII) coordinates and summarizes the information obtained in the report. The report goes through several levels of discussions and approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report is discussed by the Commission for Roma integration and by the ministries and agencies involved in the implementation of the Action Plan, It is approved by NCCEII

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>and control the information at municipal, regional and national level is collected from experts and summarized by the Secretariat of NCCEII.</p> <p>At this stage NCCEII Secretariat, together with the proven experts made basic indicators. They are currently involved in a self-assessment form for municipal planning for the period 2014-2020 on the priorities in the action plan. Evaluation forms will be completed by the units for monitoring and evaluation. Each district administration has a separate unit for monitoring and evaluation with clear, specific tasks and responsibilities. The core team of the Office of Monitoring and Evaluation covers 6-8 people - representatives of the regional government, experts from the local administration, NGOs and others. Their new duties to coordinate activities of monitoring and evaluation of regional planning are regulated by an order of the employer and must be included in job descriptions.</p>	<p>- It is discussed and adopted by the Council of Minister the 2013 report is adopted by CoM Decision № 211/17.04.2014.</p> <p>- After its adoption by CoM it is submitted to be adopted by the National Assembly – the Report is submitted to the National Assembly on time.</p> <p>A mechanism for the review of the strategy and action plan is in place. In order to achieve efficiency and sustainability of the measures, an intermediate review is planned /update of the Action Plan in 2017. After 2020 the Strategy could be continued, supplemented or amended in accordance with the results achieved, the existing political, social and economic realities and new challenges.</p> <p>• With reference to the Strategy, a close cooperation and continuous dialogue with Roma civil society, regional and local authorities is ensured.</p> <p>NSRBRI and the Action Plan are developed by a interdepartmental working group with the participation of representatives of Roma non-governmental organizations and experts as well as civil organizations that are involved in the Roma integration under the coordination of NCCEII and in particular the</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>Secretariat of NCCEII. NGOs participate in working groups and other formats related to the implementation and monitoring of the strategy and the national strategic policy framework for Roma inclusion - both to the Council of Ministers and to individual ministries, agencies. Civil society organizations – both Roma and those working on Roma issues, actively participate in the Interdepartmental Working Group for the support of Roma integration with resources from the EU funds in thematic groups preparing operational programs for the period 2014-2020.</p> <p>Civil society organizations - both Roma and those working on Roma issues - together with regional and municipal administrations participate in the preparation and implementation of regional strategies for Roma integration and action plans at the local level. The action plans contain specific for each municipality measures aimed at Roma inclusion.</p> <p>In the regional strategies and local action plans are given the controls and monitoring mechanisms.</p> <p>The mechanism for implementation of the strategy is improved through changes to the Rules of Organization and Procedure of the</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues (NCCEII) from December 2013. Commission was created for the implementation of the strategy, which aims to monitor the implementation of planned measures and the performance of the priorities of the strategy, to propose changes in the legal framework to support its implementation and to plan resource provisioning policy for Roma integration. To the Commission operates Inter-institutional Working Group for resource support of Roma integration with EU funds. It comprises representatives of the MA of the OP, representatives of institutions and NGOs.</p> <p>There is functioning mechanism for inter-institutional coordination in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy on Ethnic and Integration Issues.</p> <p>The Secretariat of NCCEII is a national contact point for implementing the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration. Performs the functions of coordinating the activities of the structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administrative structures at national level - At regional and local level in the

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of integration policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPHRD 2014-2020 will apply territorial approach -priority will be given to areas where there is a "cluster" of social problems, such as living areas and neighbourhoods. In OPHRD 2014-2020 and OPNOIR 2014-2020 there is investment priority "Socio-economic integration of marginalized communities such as the Roma". • The implementation of the Investment priorities will lead to achievement of the main strategic documents: the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration 2012-2020, as well as regional strategies and local plans for the integration of Roma. <p>Specific schemes, which can be applied for eligible activities and the amount of the grant will be developed after the final approval of the OPs from the European Commission.</p> <p>In the 2014-2020 period integrated measures will be applied, mandatory in in the labour</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>market, education and social inclusion.</p> <p>The established with scheme "INTEGRA" pilot model - combining measures to improve housing conditions (ERDF) with employment, education, social and health services (ESF) - will continue in the next programming period.</p> <p>OPRD 2014-2020</p> <p>It is foreseen specific concentration of resources in social services and social inclusion. At least 5% of the funds for each city are focused on social infrastructure, including social housing for marginalized communities of people, including Roma. Currently pilot integrated measures for social housing (ERDF) are implemented for representatives of disadvantaged groups and integrated services are provided. After performance analysis and results of this pilot model, it will be multiplied in the programming period 2014-2020</p> <p>Development of municipal action plans for Roma integration by 2020 municipalities started. The local action plans will be in line with the regional strategy.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>Based on an analysis of the needs and specificities of the local community the plans will include measures addressing the needs of the Roma.</p> <p>In the drawing up of the plans participate the relevant municipal departments, regional departments of all state institutions, other relevant authorities, NGOs working in the field of Roma integration. To be able to use the opportunities of the Ops, the municipalities will be supported by an inter-institutional working group for resource support for the integration of Roma with EU funds.</p> <p>Implementation of the action plans will be coordinated at regional level - within the Regional Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues / Regional Coordination Councils. Information on the implementation will be submitted to the Commission for Implementation of the National Strategy.</p>
			Upon request and where justified, relevant stakeholders will be provided with support for submitting project applications and for implementing and managing the selected projects.	YES	A National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration (NSRBRI) 2012 – 2020 http://www.nccedi.government.bg/page.php?category=35	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>Part of the functions of NCCEII is to promote cooperation, coordination and carrying out public consultation between public authorities and civil society organizations. Within these functions of the Council, with the organizational and expert support of the Secretariat of NCCEII and of the representatives of administrative units working directly with the projects and programs, in the expression of interest and if needed workshops are organized, training activities, information and consultations both for experts from the regional and municipal administrations on ethnic and integration issues, and for representatives of non-governmental organizations.</p> <p>The employees from the NCCEII Secretariat assist and support the regional and municipal experts on ethnic and integration issues - both by preparing methodological guidelines and through on-site visits - for example during the development of local action plans. This practice will continue in the development of municipal action plans until 2020.</p>	
10.1. Early school leaving: The existence of	Priority	YES	A system for collecting and analysing data and information on ESL at	YES	Register of children and pupils movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the academic year 2012/2013 a web-based register of movement of children and

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
a strategic policy framework to reduce early school leaving (ESL) within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	Axis 2		relevant levels is in place that: — provides a sufficient evidence-base to develop targeted policies and monitors developments.		www2.mon.bg/adminrs/login.html	<p>pupils has been introduced, which tracks the number of pupils in kindergartens, general and vocational high schools, culture schools and special schools. These records reflect the processes of enrolment of children and pupils, moving into another form of training and leaving the education system. Data is entered by schools and reflected in the registry in real time. Access to the registry is available for experts of the MES, the Regional Inspectorates of Education, the municipal administrations and heads of schools and kindergartens.</p> <p>The register contains data for the number, age, gender of children and the kindergartens. Data related to the socio-economic status and ethnic origin of children are not reflected - Art. 4, para. (2), http://www.mon.bg/opencms/export/sites/mon/left_menu/documents/law/zkn_prosveta.pdf.</p> <p>The existing register is the basis for a systemic approach to track the movement of pupils in the education system. The Strategy to reduce the share of early school leavers 2013-2020 (see criterion 2) relies on improved existing mechanisms and procedures for information management to upgrade the Register of movement of children and pupils, allowing tracking of</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>each case of a child or pupil at risk of early school leaving.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of the pupils not attending school and those moved to other school by NSI and MES - the Centre for Information Assurance of Education CIAE (ADMIN platform) and the "Organization, control and inspection" Directorate. <p>Monitoring and determining the early school leavers by NSI is done on the basis of statistic data, which do not allow tracking of individual cases of those who left.</p>
			<p>A strategic policy framework on ESL is in place that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — is based on evidence; — covers relevant educational sectors including early childhood development, targets in particular vulnerable groups that are most at risk of ESL including people from marginalized communities, and addresses prevention, intervention and compensation measures; — involves all policy sectors and stakeholders that are relevant to 	YES	<p>Strategy to Prevent and Reduce Dropouts and Early School Leavers (2013-2020).</p> <p>http://www.mon.bg/opencms/export/sites/mon/left_menu/strategies/documents/strategy_napusnali_obr_sistema_2013-2020.pdf</p> <p>The Strategy is adopted by Protocol Decision of CoM on 30.10.2013</p> <p>The strategy is evidence-based; it covers appropriate educational sectors, including early childhood development, and is geared towards prevention, intervention and compensation. In addition, it covers all</p>	<p>In implementation of item 12.1. of the Strategy to Prevent and Reduce Dropouts and Early School Leavers (2013-2020), a two-year Action Plan will be developed for its implementation. The Action Plan under procedure of inter-ministerial coordination.</p> <p>The Strategy is evidence-based:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -identifies the main factors causing early school leavers in the country (at the relevant territorial levels) which are established and proven by current data and information. -the measures correspond to the specific

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
			addressing ESL. -		<p>policy sectors and stakeholders.</p> <p>Action Plan 2014-2015 for the implementation of the Strategy to Prevent and Reduce Dropouts and Early School Leavers (2013-2020)</p> <p>Adopted by virtue of extract of Protocol No 44 of CoM of 29 October 2014</p> <p>National Strategy for Lifelong Learning, 2014 – 2020</p> <p>http://www.mon.bg/?go=page&pageId=74&subpageId=143</p> <p>Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, National Action Plan: Decade of Roma Inclusion</p> <p>http://www.nccedi.government.bg/upload/docs/Nacionalen_plan_dekada_2005_2015.pdf</p> <p>A National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration (NSRBRI) 2012 – 2020</p> <p>http://www.nccedi.government.bg/page.php?category=35&id=1741</p> <p>Action Plan for the implementation of the National Strategy of the Republic of</p>	<p>situation in the country (at the relevant territorial levels) and are aimed at groups at risk of early school leaving.</p> <p>-Taking into account the demographic needs, infrastructure needs to tackle early school leaving are valued and embodied in the long-term strategy for infrastructure network, where appropriate in order to ensure efficiency and sustainability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy covers the relevant stages of education, including the development in early childhood, and every child and pupil at risk of early school leaving. • The measures for prevention, intervention and compensation are addressed starting from kindergartens to completion of secondary education. • The measures cover both general and vocational education. • The Strategy provides for key measures aimed at children and pupils with special educational needs through inclusive education. • Measures are aimed at supporting and integrating vulnerable groups and communities who are at risk of early school leaving.

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>Bulgaria for Roma Integration (2012-2020) and Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015.</p> <p>Strategy for Educational Integration of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities http://www.nccedi.government.bg/upload/docs/strategy_integration.pdf</p> <p>National Youth Strategy (2010-2020). http://www.mon.bg/left_menu/strategies See TExAC 10.2.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The prevention provides for key measures to prevent occurrence of prerequisites for early school leaving and limiting conditions that favour it. Policies and measures for prevention are targeted towards education and care in early childhood to secondary level of education. Measures provide conditions for education, favouring the development of the personality of each child and pupil. • Measures are provided related to improving the quality of education as a prerequisite for the development of the personality of each child and pupil and preventing early school leaving. Based on an analysis, the Strategy determines the main reasons for early school leaving and establishes measures for their prevention. Development of an early warning system is envisaged in each educational institution, and in the section related to prevention it includes identification of children and pupils at risk of early school leaving, and identifying the causes of each case; • Measures are developed to be implemented at the school level to support those at risk. Development of an early warning system is envisaged in each educational institution which will determine at already identified risks, particular measures for overcoming

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>early school leaving in each specific case.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures are determined for all children and pupils at risk by paying attention to the key measures related to providing access to education and improving the quality of education of children and pupils with special educational needs and those of vulnerable ethnic communities. • Measures are envisaged related to the infrastructure for overcoming of early school leaving. • Measures are envisaged for the creation of appropriate conditions for reintegration into the education system, and for building a national system for validation of competences acquired through non-formal education and / or informal learning. • Career counselling and guidance is provided for. Financial support, as a compensation policy measure is not provided by the Ministry of Education and Science. • The Strategy involves all sectors and interested stakeholders in its efforts to reduce early school leaving • The Strategy provides for the development of a coordination mechanism to unite the

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>efforts of all interested stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coordination mechanism will be implemented at school, municipal and national level. <p>See TExAC 10.2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Draft Law on preschool and school education will be in conformity with the strategic goal and key measures, laid in the Strategy to Prevent and Reduce Dropouts and Early School Leavers (2013-2020)
10.2. Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	Priority Axis 2	YES	<p>A national or regional strategic policy framework for tertiary education is in place with the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — where necessary, measures to increase participation and attainment that: — increase higher education participation among low income groups and other under-represented groups with special regard to disadvantaged people, including people from 	YES	<p>Adopting a Strategy for Development of Higher Education in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2014-2020.</p> <p>http://www.mon.bg/?go=page&pageId=74&subpageId=143</p> <p>Adopted by Decision of CoM № 403/19.06.2014 and Decision of CoM of 01.10.2014</p>	<p>The Strategy was approved by Decision of CoM № 403/19.06.2014. By virtue of Decision of CoM of 01.10.2014 the updated version of the Strategy together with an Action Plan for the period 2014-2020, including indicators measuring the progress in the implementation, was approved. The Strategy is awaiting adoption by the National Assembly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Strategy specifies the key priorities which have to be considered by the dedicated policies and policy measures in the area of higher education in the period

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
			<p>marginalized communities;</p> <p>— reduce drop-out rates/improve completion rates;</p> <p>— encourage innovative content and programme design.</p> <p>— measures to increase employability and entrepreneurship that:</p> <p>— encourage the development of "transversal skills", including entrepreneurship in relevant higher education programmes;</p> <p>— reduce gender differences in terms of academic and vocational choices.</p>			<p>2014-2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the preparation of the Strategy an analysis of the state of play in higher education was carried out, including the need for measures to increase the number of teaching staff and higher education graduates. The data for the analysis are based on information from the National Statistical Institute. Account was also taken of the existing measures set out in the National Reform Programme with a view to ensuring equal access to higher education. • Measures to tackle poor performance and presence of appropriate infrastructure have been included in the Strategy. • The Strategy for Development of Higher Education envisages measures to increase the number of students in the higher education system. The data for the analysis are based on information from the National Statistical Institute about the different professional fields. • Measures to tackle dropouts from the system of higher education have been included in the Strategy. • The Strategy for Development of Higher Education includes measures in support of innovative content and structure of the

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>curriculum. A concrete example of the implementation of this measure is the effort to develop projects for updating curricula in higher education in accordance with the requirements of the labour market. In addition, improving the quality of teaching and learning is also sought with a view to ensuring compliance with European and international criteria and standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategy for Development of Higher Education includes measures to build a sustainable and efficient relationship between higher education institutions and the labour market. • The Strategy further includes measures to improve the quality of higher education with a view to overcoming the discrepancy between the qualifications and skills required by the labour market and those offered by higher education for improving the employment conditions for graduates. A concrete example of this is the implemented, operational and updated rating system for schools of higher education in Bulgaria. • The Draft Pre-School and School Education Act will be aligned with the Strategy for Development of Higher Education in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2014-2020 for the purpose of

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>National Youth Strategy (2010-2020) is in place.</p> <p>http://www.mon.bg/left_menu/strategies/</p> <p>Adopted by Decision of CoM on 06.10.2010, excerpt of Protocol No. 35.</p> <p>In pursuance of the National Youth Strategy (2010-2020) three Actions Plans – for 2011, 2012 and 2013 – have been developed and adopted by the Council of Ministers.</p>	<p>achieving a unified educational policy at all levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Updated Youth Strategy 2014-2020 is currently being prepared. By Decision of 18.12.2013, the Council of Ministers adopted the proposal to the National Assembly for approval of the document. The Updated Youth Strategy was supported by the Committee on Education and Science with the National Assembly. <p>Operational documents are in line with the key priorities of youth policy and specific objectives, tasks and activities of the responsible institutions in the country in terms of youth, and the municipalities in Bulgaria. The progress in meeting the expected results of the implementation of the strategic document is realized by monitoring of 21 macro-indicators included in the Reports on youth which are adopted by the National Assembly, based on NSI data, Eurostat, national longitudinal sociological studies and other international studies.</p> <p>- Within the framework of the National Youth Strategy (2010-2020) measures are</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>implemented to facilitate the transition from education to employment for young people, including self-employment and entrepreneurship, through the methods of formal and informal education and training.</p> <p>- As part of the National Youth Strategy (2010-2020) there are measures to reconcile work and private life of young people which prevent gender imbalance in terms of career choices and employment.</p> <p>- Subject to agreement on the sharing of information, the Ministry of Education and Science provides twice a year information to the MLSP on young people who are not enrolled in the next class/course or to the next level of education. This information will be provided to the labour offices to be used for identification of young people who do not study, do not work and are not registered as job seekers.</p> <p>- In order to monitor the implementation of operational documents and targets, it is necessary for the Employment Agency, within its database, to monitor the number of young people from the target group who received support for employment or training, including the amount of funding, regardless of the source of funding (OP HRD measures under EPA).</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						- An interim evaluation of the impact of the implementation of the strategic document in 2014 is forthcoming. As part of the evaluation will be included study and compliance with the objectives of the strategic document of the main problems, needs and characteristics of the target groups, including gender differences.
10.3. Lifelong learning (LL): The existence of a national and/or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	Priority Axis 2 Priority Axis 3	YES	<p>A national or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning is in place that contains measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — to support the developing and linking services for LL, including their implementation and skills upgrading (i.e. validation, guidance, education and training) and providing for the involvement of, and partnership with relevant stakeholders; — for the provision of skills development for various target groups where these are identified as priorities in national or regional strategic policy frameworks (for example young people in vocational training, adults, parents returning to the labour market, low skilled and older workers, migrants and other disadvantaged groups, in particular people with 	YES	<p>National Strategy for Lifelong Learning (NSLLL) 2014-2020</p> <p>http://www.minedu.government.bg/opencontent/sites/mon/left_menu/strategies/documents/strategy_LLL_2014-2020.pdf</p> <p>The strategy was adopted by the CoM Decision № 12/10.01.2014.</p> <p>Action Plan for 2014 on implementation of the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2014-2020</p> <p>http://www.mon.bg/?go=page&pageId=74&subpageId=143</p> <p>Adopted by the CoM Decision №187/03.04.2014.</p> <p>By virtue of Order of the Minister of Education and Science of 11.06.2014 a National Coordination Group for Lifelong</p>	<p>The 2014 – 2020 NLLS applies an integral approach, encompassing learning in all of its grades: starting from pre-school education and preparation and finishing with adults learning, and in all directions: comprehensive and vocational education and training, higher education, continuing training for adults and in all of its aspects, i.e. education, formal and informal training and self-learning.</p> <p>The strategy contains measures for development and expansion of the career guidance system in all age groups, and for building connections between the National Qualifications Framework and all the other instruments</p> <p>The strategy contains measures to improve the quality of education and training at all educational levels and in all fields; activities in support of the non-formal training of people of all ages. The acquisition of key</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
			<p>disabilities);</p> <p>— to widen access to LL including through efforts to effectively implement transparency tools (for example the European Qualifications Framework, National Qualifications Framework, European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training, European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training); — to improve the labour market relevance of education and training and to adapt it to the needs of identified target groups (for example young people in vocational training, adults, parents returning to the labour market, low-skilled and older workers, migrants and other disadvantaged groups, in particular people with disabilities).</p>		<p>Learning was set up including 31 representatives of state institutions, social partners, NGOs and Sofia Municipality. The group will coordinate the interaction of stakeholders in the process of operational planning, implementation and evaluation of the implementation of the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2014-2020.</p>	<p>competencies by all learners has been outlined as a main challenge.</p> <p>The Draft Law on preschool and school education will be in conformity with the strategic goal and key measures, laid in the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2014-2020.</p> <p>A 2020 National Lifelong Learning Platform is established, i.e. a system for multigrade and concerted coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the measures set in the strategy that provides a basis for informed planning and corrective actions, if applicable. An integrated information system will be established to measure the impact.</p> <p>One of the priorities of the strategy is building a harmonious and varied educational environment for the representatives of the vulnerable groups and for people in unequal position to ensure equality and access to quality education and training, more sufficient preparation for future social life and participation on the labour market.</p> <p>Specific measures are set oriented to various target groups: children, students and adults with special educational needs, children and students from migrant families, ethnic</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>minorities and Roma communities, in particular early school leavers, young people attending vocational training courses and young PhD students, adult trainees, low-qualifications and older workers and pensioners.</p> <p>The adults' literacy liquidation system is to be expanded to ensure access to the labour market, and to develop and apply a literacy encouragement and development strategy.</p> <p>The draft of a 2014 – 2020 National strategy for Lifelong Learning provides for the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Applying the National Qualifications Framework and development of sectoral qualifications frameworks; -Introduction of a system validating knowledge, skills and competences acquired by informal training and self-learning by 2018; -Introduction of a credit system in the vocational education and training by 2016 and ensuring comparability with the credit accumulation and transfer system as in the higher education; -Introduction of a vocational education and

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>training quality provision system by the end of 2015.</p> <p>The Strategy sets up as a priority the need of stimulation of education and training in conformity with the needs of the economy and the fluctuations on the labour market. The co-operation between state institutions, regional and local authorities, social partners is institutionalized through the National Council on Lifelong Learning. The measures set are based on the principle of partnership between the business community and the different degrees and sectors of education, training and scientific research to form an adaptive to the needs on the labour market education and training, including by means of common responsibility for the preparation and implementation of the curricula, for improvement of the career guidance policies and practices at all levels of education, training and employment, for validation of informally or independently acquired knowledge and skills, including at the workplace. Another fundamental principle of the Strategy is decentralisation.</p> <p>Prerequisites are created for effective co-operation between all stakeholders at a regional and local level, adequate to the local needs planning and implementation of Lifelong Learning initiatives in co-operation</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>between the local authorities and state authorities, including the labour offices, local enterprises, education and training providers, public organizations representing the interests of vulnerable groups of population, etc. This approach will enable partner initiatives for training and further qualifications based on shared resources, as well as more effective coverage of the groups in unequal position and recruitment thereof to various forms of learning in order to integrate them on the labour market.</p> <p>The Strategy provides for the introduction of a system for forecasting the needs on the labour market of workforce possessing certain determined characteristics; development and introduction of a national system for monitoring of the transition of the graduates of vocational education and training schools to the labour market and to further education and training; drafting and applying policies and measures for development of vocational training in the working environment, including by means of support of employers for training at the workplace, where a particular emphasis will be put on the SMEs and the enterprises in small settlements and in rural areas; measures supporting the participation of the low-represented groups with a focus on the young people; measures for improving the</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>skills and qualifications of teachers and trainers in vocational education and training in a more effective co-operation with the business community and the universities; development of public-private partnership in the sphere of vocational education and training as means of effective co-operation with the business community; close binding of adults training policy to the labour market policy and the introduction of various subsidized forms of informal training of unemployed and disadvantaged people.</p> <p>Updated Employment Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria 2013 -2020: http://www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/docs/indextr.htm</p> <p>National Action Employment Plan for 2014: http://www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/docs/indexplan.htm</p> <p>The Plan is adopted by the CoM on 21 December 2013.</p>
10.4. The existence of a national or regional strategic policy	Priority Axis 2	YES	A national or regional strategic policy framework is in place for increasing the quality and efficiency of VET	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law amending and supplementing the Vocational Education and Training Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2013 the implementation of activities under the project “Development of a system for forecasting the demand for labour with

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
framework for increasing the quality and efficiency of VET systems within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.			<p>systems within the limits of Article 165 TFEU which includes measures for the following:</p> <p>— to improve the labour market relevance of VET systems in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the strengthening of work- based learning provision in its different forms;</p> <p>— to increase the quality and attractiveness of VET including through establishing a national approach for quality assurance for VET (for example in line with the, European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training) and implementing the transparency and recognition tools, for example European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training. (ECVET).</p>		<p>Adopted on 07.11.2014, promulgated in State Gazette, No. 61 of 07.25.2014</p> <p>http://dv.parliament.bg/DVWeb/showMaterialDV.jsp?sessionId=11F92B970D75249809ECB365798F4768?idMat=86590</p> <p>- The Law amending and supplementing the VET Act sets out Article 56a: Functions of professional organizations of employers, including involvement of the professional organizations of employers in: the development and updating of curricula and training programmes for vocational preparation in vocational schooling and development of national examination programmes; provision of placements and apprenticeships for students and proposal of changes concerning their organization; training of teachers, trainers and mentors; assessing the quality of vocational education and training etc.</p> <p>- The Law amending and supplementing the VET Act sets out Article 9a. Quality of vocational education and training. Paragraph 42 of the Final Provisions of the Law amending and supplementing the VET Act specifies that the Minister of Education and Science shall within 6 months of the entry into force of above Law issue a regulation in accordance with Article 9a.</p>	<p>certain characteristics” continued.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A methodology was developed and a pilot study was conducted on the short term needs of employers of labour with certain qualifications. It was prepared a first draft of a macro- econometric model for forecasting the development of the labour market in medium and long term aspect, the model has been tested and the first forecasts to 2020 have been prepared. • OPHRD Project “System for career guidance in the school education”, implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science (2012-2014). Under the project were revealed 28 centres for career guidance of students in all regional cities of the country. 150 career counsellors were employed to provide career information services, advice and counselling to the students from class I to XII. It was Conducted a training of 150 counsellors with acquired internationally recognized certificate for conducting career guidance activities. <p>It was developed a "Handbook of the Career Counsellor", which will be provided to all schools in the system of secondary education. 80 interactive exercises for career guidance to students from class I to XII</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>- The Draft Pre-school and School Education Act will be aligned with the amendments and supplements to the VET Act.</p> <p>• Adopted by virtue of Decision of the Council of Ministers of 22 October 2014.</p> <p>Strategy for Development of Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Bulgaria 2015-2020.</p> <p>A Draft Concept for Development of Vocational Education and Training in Bulgaria was developed and discussed in the interagency working group. It proposes the main priority areas of action for the reform of vocational education and its linking with the needs of the labour market: ensuring quality and efficiency; improving opportunities to access vocational education and training; vocational education and training in the context of lifelong learning and enhancing the participation and responsibilities of all stakeholders for provision of human resources with the qualifications required by the economy. The Draft Concept was discussed at a meeting of the Public Council under the Minister of Education and Science. The Law amending and supplementing the Vocational Education</p>	<p>were prepared within the project; it is currently being implemented a training program for career guidance, which as of 30.04.2014 includes a total of 482 833 students. 30 thematic movies on career guidance are developed. Under development is a register for career guidance centres.</p> <p>• BIA project "Development and implementation of an information system to evaluate the competence of the workforce by sectors and regions" funded under the HRD OP in 2013.</p> <p>It has been developed an information system for competence assessment (MyCompetence). The system processes the data and provides a standardized information exchange, provides tools and other specialized services to assess the competence of the workforce in Bulgaria.</p> <p>• Bulgarian-German project "European Integration in Southeast Europe II. European integration of economies and labour markets through technical vocational education and training": 2010-2014, coordinated by GIZ, Germany, carried out with the participation of employers from the relevant sectors.</p> <p>Under the project has been developed a draft</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>and Training Act, adopted by the National Assembly on 11 July 2014, contains key elements of the Concept for Development of Vocational Education and Training in Bulgaria.</p> <p>Based on the Concept for Development of Vocational Education and Training a Strategy for Development of Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Bulgaria 2015-2020 has been prepared. It is published on the MES website, under the Strategies and Policies section: http://www.minedu.government.bg/?go=pape&pageId=74&subpageId=143</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In pursuance of the National Strategy for Development of Teaching Staff (2014–2020) a National Action Plan (2014–2016) for implementation of the National Strategy for Development of Teaching Staff has been developed. The Plan was adopted by virtue of Decision of the Council of Ministers of 29 October 2014. The actions for the implementation of the Strategy will ensure the creation of a single regulatory framework for state regulation of the initial training, continuing qualification and professional development of all teachers in the education system, 	<p>model of result units from the learning in the SER to acquire qualification by professions in cooperation with business representatives. The draft model was submitted to the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training National Agency for the approval of new “Framework requirements for the development of state educational requirements for acquiring qualification by professions”. Methodological guidelines for the development of SER for acquiring professional qualification by professions and further implementation of the model: The following are under development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -model of the connection between vocational and higher education to create opportunities for the recognition by the higher education system of learning outcomes acquired in vocational education; - draft modular curricula through application of an approach oriented to learning outcomes. <p>In February 2014 was fully completed the development of the draft mechanism for link between VET and higher education (HE). The mechanism is based on an agreement between universities and vocational schools. It allows for the recognition of outcomes achieved in modular VET in vocational</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>including in VET.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Strategy for the Development of Pedagogical Staff (2014 - 2020) http://mon.bg/?go=page&pageId=7&subpageId=63 <p>National Strategy for the Development of Pedagogical Staff (2014 - 2020) is adopted by CoM on 21.05.2014. It has been discussed at meetings of the Sectorial Council for Tripartite Cooperation and the Public Council at the Ministry of Education and Science. A public consultation is completed.</p> <p>With the implementation of the Strategy the quality of the pedagogues will be improved and as a consequence the quality of the education, incl. vocational one, will be improved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2014-2020 http://mon.bg/?go=page&pageId=74&subpageId=143 <p>Increasing the attractiveness and improving the quality of vocational education and</p>	<p>schools by higher education schools.</p> <p>Universities may award credits and recognize grades of the evaluation of the modules on the basis of a comparison of the educational content of the modules in the VT and the subjects in the specialties of the higher education, upgrading the VET courses. The draft mechanism was presented on 05.03.2014 in Plovdiv at discussion meeting “Partnership between professional high-schools, universities and business – prerequisite for successful realization at the labour market”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OPHRD Project "Managing for effective vocational education", implemented by the Ministry of Science and Education 2012 - 2014). <p>Within the project were constructed 20 sectorial networks that cover all vocational schools in the country. It was developed a "Handbook for the construction of a school system of quality management in vocational schools". A two-stage training to improve the management skills of the representatives of 142 vocational schools, experts in vocational education, experts from the Ministry of Education and Science and the social partners to introduce implementation,</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>training to ensure employment and competitiveness is an area of influence of the strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Programme “Modernisation of the Vocational Education and Training System” <p>http://www.minedu.government.bg/?go=page&pageId=13&subpageId=665</p> <p>The funds are used for the modernization of the facilities in schools in accordance with modern techniques and technologies, which allows for practical training in a real work environment. In pursuance of Decision No. 221 of the Council of Ministers of 23 April 2014 on the National Programme “Modernisation of the Vocational Education and Training System”, 38 projects of vocational schools from around the country have been approved for funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Action Plan for Implementing the European Youth Guarantee 2014-2020 <p>http://www.minedu.government.bg/openms/export/sites/mon/left_menu/projects/jointprojects/zapoved09-872.pdf</p>	<p>maintenance and evaluation of systems for quality management in vocational schools. It was developed an analysis of the current state of the effectiveness of vocational education in Bulgaria: It is in process of developing a system of indicators and benchmarks to measure the effectiveness of vocational education in Bulgaria:</p> <p>Organizational and functional model of a Unified System for Management of Vocational Education (USMVE) in Bulgaria; methodology and tools (rules and procedures) to build the USMVE.</p> <p>Preparatory activities for the organization and conduct of the 28 consultation and information meetings on the territory of each of the 28 regional centres are currently being carried out. At MES website in category “Vocational Education”, sub-category “Quality”, is published the developed under the project Handbook on establishment of school system for quality management in vocational high-schools (http://mon.bg/?go=page&pageId=2&subpageId=43)</p> <p>In July 2014 an online training (webinar) on the use the web-based platform created under the project was held for schools’ representatives and a training on the</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>On 18 December 2013 the Council of Ministers adopted a National Action Plan for Implementing the European Youth Guarantee 2014-2020. It provides supporting measures for integration in the labour market, including literacy training, training for acquiring professional qualification and/or key competencies demanded on the labour market, support in finding a job in the primary labour market, support for job creation, provision of apprenticeship job, providing apprenticeships for young people with low education and skills, etc.</p> <p>On 18 February 2014 was held the first meeting of the Coordination Council for the Implementation and Monitoring of the National Action Plan for Implementing the European Youth Guarantee 2014-2020. During the meeting it was decided to develop a national framework agreement between the institutions and organizations to identify and activate young people who are not in employment, education or registered in the labour offices.</p> <p>At the Coordination council a working group was launched on development of a National framework agreement for implementation of NAPIEYG. Elaborated and discussed is a first draft of the</p>	<p>administration and use of the platform was held for experts from the MES.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under implementation is a set of activities on the organization of the National competitions in professions in 2013/2014 school year – National Panorama of the vocational education 2014 (as per order of the minister of education and science, http://mon.bg/?go=page&pageId=16&subpageId=80). OPHRD Project BG051P001-3.3.07- 001 "Students practices" (2012-2014)(http://praktiki.mon.bg) <p>So far, 396 schools have been registered in the system. 22 317 students are part of student practices, successfully completed the practice – 15 556 students. 13 222 employers have registered and have announced free jobs. In order to complete a practice, partnership agreements between the school and employer are signed by specifying the students' mentors. So far, 5920 mentors participated in the project. Practical training of a student is conducted in a real working environment within 240 hours. To every student who completes the practice is issued a certificate and is paid a stipend in amount of BGN 300. Two</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>Agreement. Prepared for institutional coordination are amendments and supplements in NAPIEYG, reflecting technical notes of the EC.</p> <p>See TExAC 8.6.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order № PД 09-872/29.06.2012 of the Minister of Education and Science for approval of areas, criteria and indicators for assessing the quality of vocational education and training. <p>http://mon.bg/?go=page&pageId=2&subpageId=43</p> <p>Areas have been defined: school management, school environment, training and learning and school partnership. The VET criteria are set in accordance with the indicators of the European Reference Framework for quality assurance in VET. The Ordinance defines the organizational and methodological guidelines for organization of the activities for self-assessment in the vocational high schools. Self-assessment of professional training in vocational high schools was conducted in 2012/2013 academic year, as required by the Ordinance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre of Training Companies in 	sectorial conferences and 28 regional conferences with mentors from partner companies and teachers, training of school teams, days of professions in the six planning regions were held. In March 2014, 1609 students have started practice; 3768 employers and 2 schools have additionally registered in the system.

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>Secondary Vocational Schools (http://buct.org/intro.php)</p> <p>The centre is a state servicing unit in the public education system, which initiates, promotes and coordinates the activities of the training companies for practical training in economy to the vocational schools. The Centre maintains a network of training companies. In the system of school vocational and educational education are implemented programs of Junior Achievement Bulgaria: Banks in Action, Business Ethics, Virtual Enterprise, Student Company, etc. On 24-25 April 2014 in Plovdiv is held the Fair of training companies „Young entrepreneur” with international participation.</p> <p>• Logo and link to the website of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training EQAVET Network www.eqavet.eu on the website of the Ministry of Education http://old.mon.bg/news-home/</p> <p>Contributes to raising awareness, developing a culture of quality and promoting stakeholder involvement, as</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>well as for methodological support of the process of applying the Reference Framework at national level and at the level of the educating institution.</p> <p>• Sub-section "Quality" under the section "Vocational Education and Training" on the web site of MES. http://mon.bg/?go=page&pageId=2&subpageId=43</p> <p>Contains materials related to quality assurance of VET at national and European level. "Analysis of the system of quality assurance in vocational education and training in Bulgaria"; "Model of the system of quality assurance in vocational education and training in Bulgaria", which reflects the national approach of quality assurance in VET; Ordinance of the Minister of Education, Youth and Science for the establishment of areas, criteria and indicators for assessing the quality of vocational education and training; Guidelines for self-assessment of a vocational school; EQAVET information bulletin; EQAVET Network brochure "Approach to quality assurance by VET providers in line with EQAVET framework"; "EQAVET Working Program</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					2013-2015"; information materials related to projects aimed at quality assurance of VET.	
1. The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union anti-discrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds	Priority Axis 1 Priority Axis 2 Priority Axis 3 Priority Axis 4	YES	Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the involvement of bodies responsible for the promotion of equal treatment of all persons throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including the provision of advice on equality in ESI fund-related activities	YES	<p>- The Protection against Discrimination Act ((http://www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com/layout/index.php/layout-over-40-positions/normativni-dokumenti/zakon-za-zashtita-ot-diskriminacia) fully transposes EU directives on equality: 2000/43/EC, 78/200/EC, 75/117/EEC, 97/80/EC and 76/207/EEC, and ensures the protection of all citizens within the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria against forms of discrimination, while assisting for the prevention of discrimination and determining measures for equal opportunities.</p> <p>- Commission for Protection against Discrimination</p> <p>Under the provisions of Article 40 of the Protection against Discrimination Act, in 2005 the Commission for Protection against Discrimination was created as an independent specialised state body for prevention against discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities. The Commission monitors the implementation and observance of Bulgarian and</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>international anti-discrimination rules governing equal treatment and reports to the highest legislation authority - the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria. The Commission for Protection against Discrimination is a UN B status accredited institution for human rights protection in accordance with the Paris Principles.</p> <p>- As a platform for consultation and involvement of the authorities responsible for anti-discrimination, the Commission holds annual seminars with senior officials from central governing institutions - MoI, MLSP, MoC, etc.; the judiciary - judges and prosecutors; territorial municipal administrations; and media and NGO representatives.</p> <p>- To facilitate the active involvement of the CPD in the equal treatment of all people during the preparation and implementation of EU programmes and activities, Rules of Proceedings before the CPD have been adopted and put in place. A Draft Law Amending and Supplementing the Protection Against Discrimination Act has been prepared. It was approved by the Council of Ministers by virtue of Decision No 735 of 22 November 2013 and submitted to the National Assembly on 25</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>November 2013 under ref. No 302-01-46. The amendment will set out new simplified minimum requirements for referral to the CPD with a view to applying the equal treatment principle and preventing discriminatory acts.</p> <p>- Consultation and involvement will be achieved through participation in various coordination procedures in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the CoM, as well as in working groups, such as WG 13 "Social Policy and Employment" etc.</p> <p>- In accordance with Article 5, para. 4 of Decree No 5 of CoM of 18 January 2012 on the development of strategic and programming documents of the Republic of Bulgaria to manage funds under the Common Strategic Framework of the European Union for the programming period 2014-2020, the composition of the thematic working groups for the preparation of the programmes for the new programming period shall include representatives of the CPD and national representative organisations of and for people with disabilities recognised by the Council of Ministers under the Integration of Persons with Disabilities Act.</p> <p>- The horizontal principles of gender</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					equality and non-discrimination will underpin and be observed in all programmes in the new programming period.	
			Arrangements for training of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union anti-discrimination law and policy	YES	<p>- This criterion is fulfilled at several levels through: the Training Plan of the Training Centre of the MLSP; the project activities of the CPD; the activities of the Agency for People with Disabilities (APD), the Ombudsman, NGOs, social partners and other stakeholders that are aimed at raising the awareness and capacity in the field of anti-discrimination legislation and policy.</p> <p>- The CPD annually conducts training on EU anti-discrimination legislation and policy in the form of thematic workshops, where representatives of EU institutions are invited as guest speakers. The application of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol is covered in the trainings of the National Institute of Justice on safeguards against discrimination.</p> <p>- A public lecture with judge's participation was held in the Court of Justice of the European Union in Luxembourg on "The practice of the Court of Justice of the EU in connection with the</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Implications of the Charter for the Member States”. The programme covered anti-discrimination legislation and applicable practices of the Court of Justice of the EU. The public lecture was attended by 63 participants /48 judges, 9 prosecutors, 2 investigators, 2 representatives of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination, 1 representative of Sofia University and 1 representative of the Union of Bulgarian Jurists/.</p> <p>- The seminars covered a wide range of senior officials from central government authorities - MoI, MLSP, MES, MoC etc., territorial municipal administrations and representatives of the media and NGOs. Five seminars were held under the project “Combating discrimination for a fair society” (JUST/2012/PROG/AG/AD/3710) under PROGRESS (2007-2013).</p> <p>- As part of project activities the MLSP conducts training on anti-discrimination policies and applicable legislation. This includes training for social partners, employers' organizations, the structures of the Employment Agency (EA) and the</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>Agency for Social Assistance (ASS), trade unions, employers, NGOs etc. aiming at achieving a real effect and change of the labour market to reduce inequality based on any sign of discrimination.</p> <p>Another filed of action of the MLSP is training for prevention of discrimination at homes for children deprived of parental care. March saw the preparation of the third round table for Tsentralen Region and the training seminars in Plovdiv and Burgas for teams working with children in institutionalised car.</p> <p>In March and April 2014 two round tables – for Yugozapaden and Iztochen regions – were held in Sandanski and Burgas with the participation of employers, young people leaving childcare institutions, local authorities, regional structures of the Employment Agency and the Social Assistance Agency. The round tables aimed to change public attitudes and the professional advancement in the labour market for young people in their final year at care homes for children.</p> <p>In April 2014 two national campaigns was held to raise the awareness and</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					increase public sensibility in relation to Council Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC in Kardzhali and Balchik. The organisation of a final conference in Sofia in May 2014 marked the end of the project activities.	
2. The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds	Priority Axis 1 Priority Axis 2 Priority Axis 3 Priority Axis 4	YES	Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the involvement of bodies responsible for gender equality throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including the provision of advice on gender equality in ESI Fund-related activities;;	YES	<p>According to Art. 20 Directive 2006/54/EC, the Commission for Protection against Discrimination is designated as a national gender equality body.</p> <p>- Protection against Discrimination Act (in force since 01.11.2004) fully transposes EU directives on equality: 2000/43/EC, 78/200/EC, 75/117/EEC, 97/80/EC and 76/207/EEC, and ensures the protection of all citizens of the Republic of Bulgaria against discrimination, while assisting in the prevention of discrimination and establishing measures for equal opportunities. Under the provisions of Article 40 of the Protection against Discrimination Act, in 2005 the Commission for Protection against Discrimination was established, which is an independent specialised state body for prevention of discrimination, protection from discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities. The Commission monitors</p>	<p>With Order No PД01-727 of 27.09.2013 of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy was established an interinstitutional working group, which prepared a Draft Law on Gender Equality.</p> <p>The Draft Law was developed in fulfilment of the commitments of the Republic of Bulgaria under international and European treaties to which it is party.</p> <p>The Draft Law defines the authorities and mechanisms for the implementation of the state policy on gender equality and regulates the institutional mechanism for gender equality.</p> <p>The Council of Ministers adopted Decree No 104/10 May 2014 amending the Decree No 313 of the Council of Ministers/2004 for the establishment of the National Council on Equality between Women and Men at the Council of Ministers.</p> <p>The Decree amends the Rules for the structure and organisation of the National</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>the implementation and compliance with the Bulgarian and international anti-discrimination rules governing equal treatment and for its activities it is accountable to the highest authority of the legislature - the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria. Commission for Protection against Discrimination (CPD) is accredited body for human rights protection to UN, with status "B" in relation to responding to the Paris Principles.</p> <p>The state policy of the Republic of Bulgaria in the field of gender equality and non-discrimination on the ground of "sex" is a horizontal policy which is coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy at national level. A sustainable model for cooperation is achieved between the institutions and also with the social partners and civil society through their participation in the National Council on Equality between Women and Men at the Council of Ministers. Chairperson of the Council is the Minister of Labour and Social Policy. The strategic document of the Bulgarian government, defining the policy framework is the National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality for the period 2009 - 2015, which was adopted in accordance with the recommendations of</p>	<p>Council on Equality between Women and Men at the Council of Ministers, adopted as an annex to Art. 2 of Decree No 313/2004.</p> <p>The amendments to the Rules reflect the structural changes in the Council of Ministers and refer to strengthening the national institutional mechanism for the implementation of the policy on equality between women and men.</p> <p>According to Article 5, para. 4 of CoM Decree 5 of 18 January, 2012 for the development of the strategic and programme documents of the Republic of Bulgaria for managing the funds under the EU Common Strategic Framework for the programming period 2014-2020, it is mandatory that the thematic working groups for the development of the programmes for the new programming period include representatives of the CPD.</p> <p>In addition in all programmes for the new programming period shall be embedded and observed the horizontal principles of gender equality and non-discrimination.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					the Council of Europe, the strategic documents of the European Union and the principles underlying the UN conventions on human rights and women's rights. In fulfilment of this basic strategic document, each year, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy develops annual national action plans for the promotion of equality between women and men involving in the consultation process all responsible authorities for the implementation of gender equality. Through the national plans it is aimed to consolidate the efforts of all institutions for the implementation of measures and activities to achieve equality between women and men in all spheres of economic, political and social life. In fulfilment of the commitments of the Republic of Bulgaria under the European and international treaties to which it is a party, and of the adopted by the Council of Ministers Decision No 438 of 25 July 2013 Action Plan for the implementation of the final recommendations to the Republic of Bulgaria made by the UN Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, a Gender Equality Act will be developed. The aim is to create legal guarantees concerning measures to ensure equal opportunities for women and men and to strengthen institutional mechanisms	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>/ structures for implementation of the state policy in this area. The Action Plan (AP) is developed by an interinstitutional working group with the participation of representatives of all ministries, agencies, public authorities, social partners, non-governmental organisations working in the field of gender equality and human rights organisations. The following measures are provided for in the AP based on the recommendations made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - preparation of a Draft Law on Gender Equality; - strengthening the National Mechanism on Gender Equality; - activities to overcome gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices; - thematic studies and analyses of magistrates, investigating police officers, teachers and social workers; - activities to promote the participation of women in different spheres of social life, etc.. 	
			Arrangements for training for the staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union gender	YES	The Action Plan for the implementation of the final recommendations to the Republic of Bulgaria made by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against	In the catalogue of the MLSP Centre for Human Resource Development and Regional Initiatives for 2014 is planned a two-day training in July on "Practical

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
			equality law and policy as well as of gender mainstreaming.		<p>Women includes the following measures in accordance with the recommendations made, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training for improving the capacity of public administration staff on gender equality issues, including law and policies for gender equality; • conducting awareness and information activities, incl. among women from disadvantaged groups to promote the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and others.. 	<p>guidelines for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women”.</p> <p>The training is designed for senior management and expert positions from the MLSP, the second line budget spending units under the Minister of Labour and Social Policy and other central and local administrations, social partners and NGOs.</p> <p>The objectives of the training are:</p> <p>Introducing the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the final recommendations to the Republic of Bulgaria made by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the resulting obligations for the Republic of Bulgaria;</p> <p>Improving the capacity of public administration to implement the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the related documents;</p> <p>Building skills to apply an integrated approach in implementing the Action Plan;</p> <p>Improving the administrative competence.</p> <p>The training content is yet to be developed.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
3. The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC (1)	Priority Axis 1 Priority Axis 2 Priority Axis 3 Priority Axis 4	YES	Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the consultation and involvement of bodies in charge of protection of rights of persons with disabilities or representative organisations of persons with disabilities and other relevant stakeholders throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes;	YES	<p>On 26.01.2012, the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted the Law on ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which is the first major human rights treaty of the 21st century in the field of the policy for people with disabilities.</p> <p>By Decision No 868 of 19 October 2012, the Council of Ministers adopted an Action Plan containing measures to bring the Republic of Bulgaria legislation and policies for people with disabilities in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2013 -2014).</p> <p>The Action Plan aims to take effective steps for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key areas in need of legal reform and take consistent steps on implementing the requirements of the Convention; • Define and implement a coordination 	<p>In implementing the Action Plan, an interinstitutional working group is established to develop an independent mechanism pursuant to Art. 33.2 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including the establishment of a body and implementation of an independent mechanism.</p> <p>The established working group on coordination for the implementation of the Action Plan, development of a coordination mechanism, mechanism for monitoring and independent monitoring mechanism pursuant to Article 33 of the Convention, as well as for determining of implementation authorities continues its operation.</p> <p>The Action Plan identifies the participants from various institutions, as well as from the non-government sector active in the field of integration of people with disabilities</p> <p>The plan shows the various steps that regulate the leading institutions and their partners in the development of concepts for regulatory changes in various areas covered by the Convention.</p> <p>Currently, a review has been carried out and developed and adopted are Concepts for legislative changes in relation to the</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>mechanism and monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the Convention, with clearly defined roles, tasks and responsibilities of the involved institutions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity-building of government officials and experts from different fields to correctly apply the provisions of the Convention; • Widely promote the principles of the Convention in the public and involvement of the civil society in the process of its implementation; • Provide periodic update of activities to implement the Convention and monitor the application of the provisions of the Convention. 	<p>implementation of article 11 - Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies, article 12 - Equal recognition before the law, article 14 - Liberty and security of the person, article 18 - Liberty of movement and nationality, article 19 - Living independently and being included in the community and article 24 - Education from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and in implementation of the Action Plan. The adoption of a concept in terms of accessibility to the built environment (article 9) is forthcoming</p> <p>The plan regulates accordingly also the deadlines for implementation of the measures set out in it.</p> <p>By Orders No PД01-186 of 28.02.2013, subsequent Order PД01-353 of 04.23.2013 on the cancellation of the first and Order PД01-602 of 02.08..2013 on the amendment and supplementation Order PД01-353 of 23.04.2013 of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, an interinstitutional working group is established on coordination of the implementation of the Action Plan, containing measures to bring the legal framework and policies for people with disabilities, in accordance with the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities in the</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>Republic of Bulgaria (hereinafter referred to as the Coordination Group). The Coordination Group includes representatives of all government institutions and NGOs involved in the policy for people with disabilities</p> <p>Regarding civil society representatives, in particular organizations representing people with disabilities, in the Republic of Bulgaria to cooperate in the development and implementation of policy on the integration of people with disabilities, a National Council for the Integration of People with Disabilities is set up to the Council of Ministers, chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, and deputy chairpersons - the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy and the Deputy Minister of Health and a representative of the nationally represented organizations of people with disabilities and a representative of the nationally representative organizations for people with disabilities, elected on a rotating basis for a period of one year. The National Council for the Integration of People with Disabilities is an advisory body to the Council of Ministers, which shall consist of representatives: of the state, nominated by the Council of Ministers, nationally representative organizations of and for people with disabilities, nationally</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>representative organizations of employees, nationally representative organizations of employers and the National Association of Municipalities in Republic of Bulgaria. The National Council for the Integration of People with Disabilities shall issue opinions on all draft legislation, strategies, programs and plans affecting the rights of people with disabilities and their integration.</p> <p>According to Article 5, para. 4 of CoM Decree 5 of 18 January, 2012 for the development of the strategic and programme documents of the Republic of Bulgaria for managing the funds under the EU Common Strategic Framework for the programming period 2014-2020, it is mandatory that the thematic working groups for the development of the programmes for the new programming period include representatives of the CPD and of the nationally representative organizations of and for people with disabilities, recognized by the Council of Ministers under the provisions of the Integration of People with Disabilities Act.</p> <p>In addition in all programmes for the new programming period shall be embedded and observed the horizontal principles of gender equality and non-discrimination.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
			Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of applicable Union and Member States disability law and policy, including accessibility and the practical application of the UNCRPD as reflected in Union and Member States legislation, as appropriate;	YES	<p>In the Action Plan for the purposes of Art. 8 of the Convention "Raising awareness and changing attitudes on the rights of people with disabilities" operational objective is set "Increasing the capacity of local, regional and central administration and others related to the provisions of the UN Convention." In this connection seminars are envisaged for employees of public administration, the judiciary, doctors and medical professionals, seminars for teaching staff, other formats for people with disabilities, etc.</p> <p>On 11-12 November 2013 in Sofia, a seminar was held with international participation on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Action Plan for its implementation. It was a place to exchange experiences and best practices internationally and to present the Bulgarian experience in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The initiative provided an opportunity to raise the capacity of the representatives of the administration on the trends in the policy for people with disabilities in the context of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Europe and will ensure the implementation</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					of the measures in the two-year Action Plan for Implementation of the Convention. Widened was the knowledge of the national institutional framework for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - a mechanism for coordination, monitoring and independent monitoring; foreign experience in reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was examined and exchanged - principles, approaches, sources of information, methods of data processing, analyses; comprehensive information was received on the guidelines for the preparation of the national reports as well as acquiring practical knowledge and skills on the approaches and techniques for the preparation of the national reports. On 12 and 13 June 2014 in the MLSP Centre for Human Resource Development and Regional Initiatives was conducted training for the staff from the local, regional and central administrations and NGO experts working on the issues of and for people with disabilities on the topic "Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the participation of local, regional and central administrations". The aim of the training was to improve the capacity of the	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					staff from the local, regional and central administrations concerning the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to update the knowledge related to the policy for integration of the people with disabilities.	
			Arrangements to ensure monitoring of the implementation of Article 9 of the UNCRPD in relation to the ESI Funds throughout the preparation and the implementation of the programmes.	YES	<p>In the Action Plan for the purposes of Art. 8 of the Convention "Raising awareness and changing attitudes on the rights of people with disabilities" an operational objective is set "Increasing the capacity of local, regional and central government and others related to the provisions of the UN Convention." In this connection seminars are envisaged for employees of public administration, the judiciary, doctors and medical professionals, seminars for teaching staff, other formats for people with disabilities, etc.</p> <p>On 11-12 November 2013 in Sofia, a seminar was held with international participation on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Action Plan for its implementation. It was a place to exchange experiences and best practices internationally and to present the Bulgarian experience in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					initiative provided an opportunity to raise the capacity of the representatives of the administration on the trends in the policy for people with disabilities in the context of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Europe and will ensure the implementation of the measures in the two-year Action Plan for Implementation of the Convention. Widened was the knowledge of the national institutional framework for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - a mechanism for coordination, monitoring and independent monitoring; foreign experience in reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was examined and exchanged - principles, approaches, sources of information, methods of data processing, analyses; comprehensive information was received on the guidelines for the preparation of the national reports as well as acquiring practical knowledge and skills on the approaches and techniques for the preparation of the national reports.	
4. Existence of arrangements for the effective application of European Union's public	Priority Axis 1 Priority	Partial	Arrangements for effective application of the European Union's public procurement legislation in the field of	NO	National Strategy for Development of the Public Procurement Sector in Bulgaria for the period 2014 – 2020 r.	Measures in this direction will be further strengthened. In the developed National strategy for

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
procurement legislation in the field of the ESI funds.	Axis 2 Priority Axis 3 Priority Axis 4		the ESI funds.		http://www.government.bg/cgi-bin/e-cms/vis/vis.pl?s=001&p=0211&n=99&g Approved by Decision No. 498/11.07.2014 of the CoM. The Strategy envisages measures to increase efficiency in the public procurement award and to create guarantees for compliance with the legislation of the Union in this field. The EU legislation on public procurement (Directives 2004/18/EC, 2004/17/EC, Directives 89/665/EEC, 92/13/EEC and 2007/66/EC and 2009/81/EC and the Regulations associated with their implementation) has been fully implemented in the PPA. Different from the law, the regulations on public procurement contain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules for the Implementation of the PPA; • Ordinance on the competitions for projects in the planning and investment design, approved by Decree No. 75 of 2009 of the CoM, promulgated SG No. 26 of 2009; • Ordinance under Article 13, para. 3 of the Public Procurement Act (PPA) for the 	development of the public procurement sector in Bulgaria for the period 2014- 2020 is envisaged a measure to introduce the new European directives by developing an entirely new framework law. This will be achieved a codified, sustainable and simplified legislation, in full compliance with the new European directives. In relation to the introduction of new European directives by Order No. RD-16-154/02.10.2014 of the Minister of Economy and Energy was set up a working group, which must draw up a draft of an entirely new PPA not later than 30.09.2014. Envisaged are measures to use a uniform practice among the Public Procurement Agency, MA of OP, National Audit Office, SFIA, CPC and SAC and coordination of their activities. It will also include measures to further expand the scope of the ex-ante control by the Public Procurement Agency for effective cooperation between supervisory authorities in order to standardize the practices and streamlining ex-post control. There will also be measures to increase the effectiveness of judicial protection. In the enforced PPA there are discrepancies regarding the exemptions from the scope of

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>criteria and procedures for determining the presence of vital national interests in security and defence within the meaning of Article 346 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and the procedures to sign contracts; approved by Decree No. 180 of 22.08.2013 of the CoM, promulgated SG No. 75 of 2013.</p> <p>http://www.aop.bg/fckedit2/user/File/bg/Normativna%20baza/ZOP_15_02_2013.pdf</p> <p>http://www.aop.bg/fckedit2/user/File/bg/Normativna%20baza/PPZOP_09032012.pdf</p> <p>http://www.aop.bg/fckedit2/user/File/bg/Normativna%20baza/Naredba_konkursi.pdf</p> <p>http://www.aop.bg/fckedit2/user/File/bg/Normativna%20baza/Naredba_27082013.pdf</p> <p>In relation to amendments to the public procurement legislation – the currently enforced PPA has been adopted in 2004. Since then five major amendments have been made. Three of them introduce the</p>	the directives and possible modifications to a procurement contract, as stipulated in Art. 43 of the PPA. It is envisaged that the new PPA will eliminate these discrepancies and introduce exceptions and grounds for amending a public procurement contract in conformity with the new European directives.

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>applicable European Directives (Directive 2004/17/EC and Directive 2004/18/EC, Directive 2007/66/EC and Directive 2009/81/EC), while the other two – the ex-ante control by the Public Procurement Agency and the approved government concept related to changes in public procurement legislation. Apart from those, a number of amendments have been made on specific provisions of the law.</p> <p>The definition of the public law organization in the PPA is in full compliance with the applicable directives. Public law organizations are specifically regulated in Article 7, § 3 of the PPA as the term is defined in § 1, item 21 of the Additional provisions to the PPA.</p> <p>In terms of institutional arrangements – there are several bodies operating in the field of public procurement. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Procurement Agency – a national body which supports the Minister of Economy and Energy to implement the policy in the field of public procurement, issues methodological guidelines under the PPA, ex-ante control over certain procedures, etc. 	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPs Managing Authorities who also supervises the public procurement procedures and gives guidance to contracting authorities – beneficiaries of the operational programmes. • Bulgarian National Audit Office and the Public Financial Inspection Agency – bodies to carry out further control over the implementation of the PPA. • CPC and SAC – appeal bodies that settles disputes on the legality of the public procurement procedures. <p>Although some mechanisms for imposing a uniform practice, it is necessary to work for a uniform interpretation of the law by those bodies.</p> <p>There have been introduced different forms of control at all stages of the procurements, including at the stage of their implementation, as well as procedures for the imposition of a uniform practice.</p> <p>Since 2009 the Public Procurement Agency exercises ex-ante control of procedures for awarding public contracts financed in full or in part by the EU funds (Article 19, paragraph 2, item 22 and Article 20a of the PPA). Based on the amendments to the</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>Public Procurement Act, in force since 26.02.2012, this control is carried out in two phases – before and after the announcement of the procedure, and a mechanism is introduced for feedback by monitoring the implementation of the recommendations made.</p> <p>Pursuant to Article 19, paragraph 2, item 1 of the PPA, the Executive Director of the Public Procurement Agency issues general methodological guidance on the application of the law and its implementing rules. When these guidelines are agreed with the controlling authorities under law – Bulgarian National Audit Office and the State Financial Inspection Agency (SFIA), they become mandatory for them in carrying out their checks. Methodological guidelines are published on the Public Procurement Portal.</p> <p>http://rop3-app1.aop.bg:7778/portal/page?_pageid=93.1&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL</p> <p>Article 123, paragraph 1 of the PPA provides that the Bulgarian National Audit Office and the State Financial Inspection Agency shall carry out further control over the contracted public procurements. PPA</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>provides an administrative penalty part (Article 127 - Article 133 of PPA). It provides for violations for which the contracting authorities are imposed with fines.</p> <p>http://www.aop.bg/fckedit2/user/File/bg/Normativna%20baza/ZOP_15_02_2013.pdf</p> <p>Every OPs Managing Authority provides a procedure for ex-ante, ongoing and ex-post control concerning the public procurement procedures.</p> <p>Measures have been taken to address the main types of errors found in procurement, as follows:</p> <p>Decree No. 134 of the Council of Ministers of 5.07.2010 introduces a Methodology for determining financial corrections to be applied to expenses associated with the implementation of operational programmes co-financed by the structural instruments of the European Union, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Fisheries Fund. The authorities responsible for the implementation of the methodology are the contracting authorities (MA/ IB) under the operational programmes financed by SCF</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>RDP OP “Fisheries “ and the audit bodies on SCF, EAFD and EFF.</p> <p>Decree No. 18 of the Council of Ministers of 4.02.2003 establishes a Council to coordinate the fight against infringements affecting the financial interests of the European Union.</p> <p>Decree No. 285 of the Council of Ministers of 30.11.2009 adopts the Ordinance laying down the procedures for the administration of irregularities in funds, instruments and programmes financed by the European Union.</p> <p>http://www.eufunds.bg/bg/page/119</p> <p>Instructions issued by the Minister of Finance - ДНФ 7/22.12.2010 regulates the process associated with the write-off and recovery of undue payments and overpayments and unduly or improperly spent funds on projects co-financed by the Structural and Cohesion Funds of the European Union. The guidelines are published at:</p> <p>http://www.minfin.bg/bg/page/10?q=%D0</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					%94%D0%9D%D0%A4 OPs Managing Authorities keep records of financial corrections imposed in the implementation of public procurement procedures. Each MA disposes of specific employees who have in their job descriptions responsibilities on public procurement. The Law Amending and Supplementing the PPA, promulg. SG Issue 40, 2014, in force since 01.07.2014, extends of the ex-ante control carried out by the Public Procurement Agency regarding procedures for public works contracts financed with funds from the national budget and above a certain threshold. PPA regulates the two-instance appeal of the decisions of contracting authorities issued in relation to procedures for the award of public contracts. First instance is the Commission for Protection of Competition, which is an administrative body, and the second and final instance is the Supreme Administrative Court. There is a two months period for both instances to take a decision. In terms of the CPC – there is no delay in hearing the cases. In terms of SAC – there is some delay, taking into	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					account that the statutory one-month period to rule is inconsistent with the rules of procedure for dealing with cases of this Court. http://www.aop.bg/fckedit2/user/File/bg/Normativna%20baza/ZOP_15_02_2013.pdf	
			Arrangements which ensure transparent contract award procedures;	YES	http://rop3-app1.aop.bg:7778/portal/page?_pageid=93.408251&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL http://rop3-app1.aop.bg:7778/portal/page?_pageid=93.1488254&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&url=687474703A2F2F7777772E616F702E62672F657365617263685F7070322E706870 http://www.aop.bg/fckedit2/user/File/bg/Normativna%20baza/ZOP_15_02_2013.pdf http://www.aop.bg/fckedit2/user/File/bg/Normativna%20baza/PPZOP_09032012.pdf http://rop3-app1.aop.bg:7778/portal/page?_pageid=93.1&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL	Measures in this direction will be further strengthened. In this connection, regarding the introduction of e-procurement - the National Strategy for the Development of the Public Procurement Sector in Bulgaria for the period 2014 – 2020 envisages by the end of 2016 to introduce entirely electronic communication to the stage of e-offer, including. For this purpose, a contract for services was signed between the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Ministry of Economy and Energy, which was ratified by the 42 th National Assembly, by law, adopted on 24 January 2014, promulgated SG No. 11 2014. As a result of the implementation of the contract will be proposed a model for e-procurement based on European best practices and consistent with national specification.

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>Contracts with a value below the thresholds for applicable European directives are awarded under procedure provided for in the PPA (art. 14, para 1 of the PPA). The procedure is similar to that set out in the European Directives, with some exemptions.</p> <p>For the award for contracts of very low values, the PPA provides a procedure that respects the principle of publicity and transparency (Article 101a -101 g of the PPA). According to this procedure, the contracting authorities are required to collect bids by publishing public calls on the Public Procurement Portal, which is maintained by the Public Procurement Agency. There is a minimum period for public access to the call, which may not be shorter than 7 days. Thus, all stakeholders have the opportunity to see the contracts, which the contracting authorities intend to award.</p> <p>Decree No. 69 of 11 March 2013 provides the conditions and procedures for determining the contractor by candidates for grants or beneficiaries of contracted grants from the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund of the European Union, Joint Operational Programme "Black Sea Basin 2007 - 2013", financed by the</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>European Instrument for Neighbourhood and Partnership, Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area and Norwegian Financial Mechanism.</p> <p>The principle of publicity and transparency is also guaranteed by the Public Procurement Register (PPR), which is maintained by the Public Procurement Agency (Article 21 - 22a of the PPA). The Register is part of the Public Procurement Portal and is a unified electronic database, which contains information about all open public procurement procedures, the results of their award and implementation. Besides the information required under the European directives and regulations (notice for OP, contract information, etc.). PPR also contains information that stems from the national requirements (information on the implementation of the contract, the decision to negotiate without notice, information on the progress of appeal). http://rop3-app1.aop.bg:7778/portal/page?_pageid=93_158263&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL</p> <p>The Public Procurement Portal also contains public calls based on which contracting authorities collect bids under Art. 101a – 101g of PPA.</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					http://rop3-app1.aop.bg:7778/portal/page?_pageid=93.1488254&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&url=687474703A2F2F777772E616F702E62672F657365617263685F7070322E706870 Contracting authorities are able to provide through the Public Procurement Portal documentation electronically, to exchange questions and answers with the participants electronically and publish clarifications. Through the Public Procurement Portal is given the opportunity to fully communicate in electronic form between the participants and contracting authorities, through to preparation and submission of the bid. http://rop3-app1.aop.bg:7778/portal/page?_pageid=93.1&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL PPA regulates a number of additional measures relating to publicity and transparency. Some of them are related to: the ability to attract external persons as members of the committees who are from a list maintained by the Public Procurement Agency, public opening of tenders and envelopes with the price offered, the announcement of the evaluation of tenders	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>by other indicators - under criterion "most economically advantageous tender", publication of information on opening negotiated procedures without notice and for their awarding, posting opinions on progress monitoring of negotiated procedures without notice and information on the implementation of contracts, etc.</p> <p>http://rop3-app1.aop.bg:7778/portal/page?_pageid=93_1488254&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&url=687474703A2F2F7777772E616F702E62672F657365617263685F7070322E706870</p> <p>According to the recent amendments in the Public Procurement Act, promulgated. SG. 40 of 2014, contracting authorities are obliged to publish at its buyer profile all documents related to the implementation of these procedures - procurement contracts, additional agreements thereto, information about each payment, the public calls, the opinions of the Executive Director of the Agency on requests of the contracting authority and other useful information. The obligation to publish these documents is set in Art. 22b of the PPA and enters into force from 10.01.2014.</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
			Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI funds;	NO	<p>•According to reports of the Public Procurement Agency and OPs Managing Authorities, a number of suitable trainings for MA experts are provided on the effective implementation of the public procurement legislation, avoidance of the risk of imposing financial corrections and administrative penalties in the conduct of award procedures.</p> <p>•According to information from OPs Managing Authorities through their websites they provide to interested parties the necessary information, incl. via developed documents, manuals, instructions, handbooks, etc. in the field of public procurement.</p> <p>•In the National Strategy for the</p>	<p>•For all operational programmes financed by the Structural and Cohesion Fund is used a unified Management Information System (MIS). The system is fully implemented as a web based application and stores a complete history of all changes in the data and enables the generation of historical references and full traceability of the chronological sequence of changed records, each of which contains evidence of actions performed.</p> <p>• Within State Fund Agriculture was developed and is currently functioning an Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS). The access, operation and storage of information in the system is applied in accordance with the information policies of State Fund Agriculture.</p> <p>Information and Systems for Management of EU funds Directorate to the Administration of the Council of Ministers supports a Single Information Portal through which information is provided for all operational programmes, sample documents, calls for project proposals, etc.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>Development of the Public Procurement Sector in Bulgaria for the period 2014 – 2020 are envisaged activities related to the training of persons involved in the preparation and conduct of public procurement procedures, as well as officials from the Public Procurement Agency and the OPs Managing Authorities.</p> <p>Public Procurement Agency maintains a centralized information system (Public Procurement Portal), which gives access to all aspects of public procurement. It provides information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legislation in the field of public procurement; • Public Procurement Register (PPR); • general methodological guidelines concerning the application of the law; • issued practical guidance related to completing the document templates, batch creation and a unique PPR number, sending information to the agency, etc.; • list of the entities to be used as external experts; • published public calls; 	<p>Information from the Central Coordination Unit on the trainings in MAs of OPs (2013):</p> <p>For MA of OPHRD were conducted 10 training sessions, the total number of trained employees is 115.</p> <p>For IB – Employment Agency were conducted 3 trainings, the total number of trained employees is 10.</p> <p>For IB - ASA is conducted 1 training; the total number of trained employees is 2.</p> <p>For IB - MEYS were conducted 11 training sessions; the total number of trained employees is 11.</p> <p>From February to October 2013, there were 65 participations in Bulgaria or abroad of experts from the MA and IB of the OPHRD in trainings on implementation of the PPA and introduction to current developments within the European procurement rules. For November, there are no planned trainings on the topic.</p> <p>Through official correspondence and the website of the MA is presented the required information through manuals, instructions and guidelines. In the Handbook of HRD</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> opinions of the preliminary control of negotiated procedures without notice; other information. <p>The National Strategy for the Development of the Public Procurement Sector in Bulgaria for the period 2014 – 2020 envisages measures for effective cooperation between the authorities responsible for functions related to the methodology and control of public procurement with a view to establishing a uniform practice.</p>	<p>OP is the declaration of the officers familiar with the changes; guidelines have been prepared with the most common errors in the award.</p> <p>In 2012, 16 employees of MA OPE participated in 5 trainings on procurement issues and from IB OPE 30 employees – in 3 trainings.</p> <p>In 2013, 16 employees of the MA OPE participated in 4 trainings on public procurement issues, and 4 employees of the IB – in 1 training.</p> <p>In 2014, 5 employees of OPE DG participated in 3 trainings on public procurement issues. The matters of public procurement are dealt with by "Ex-post control and litigation" Department after the restructuring of the IB and OPE MA into DG OPE at the end of March 2014.</p> <p>MA OPE has posted on its web site a number of guidelines and supporting documents for beneficiaries related to public procurement (mainly published in section "Documents/Manuals/Instructions /Guidelines):</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>1. Most common violations related to the award and implementation of public procurement:</p> <p>http://ope.moew.government.bg/files/useruploads/files/documentation/ukazania/narushenia_obshtestveni_porachki.pdf</p> <p>2. Documents relating to errors and violations and current issues of the PPA:</p> <p>http://ope.moew.government.bg/bg/pages/dopuskani-greshki-i-narushenia/67#1</p> <p>3. In section Manuals, instructions, guidelines/Implementation of projects financed by the OPE – Additional section 1 "Procurement" with additional supporting materials, incl. model forms</p> <p>http://ope.moew.government.bg/bg/pages/naruchnitsi-ukazania-rakovodstva/66#1</p> <p>As a new measure to help increase the capacity of beneficiaries in the field of public procurement, Managing Authority will prepare a quarterly newsletter with practical examples and descriptions of the different types of violations found during verification. The newsletter will be sent by email and will be posted on the official website of the programme. The first newsletter was published in June 2014 (http://ope.moew.government.bg/bg/pages/d</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>opuskani-greshki-i-narushenia/67#1) Under preparation is the second newsletter.</p> <p>50 officials from the MA OPT have attended various trainings on Public Procurement Act for the period from 2007 until present.</p> <p>In 2012 were held 3 trainings on procurement, which have trained a total of 9 employees MA OPDCBE.</p> <p>Planned are two trainings, which will train 64 employees of MA OPDCBE.</p> <p>Arrangements for training are regulated by Chapter 18 of the Manual of Operational Programme "Competitiveness" and the Internal Rules on the organization and conduct of training and qualification of employees in MEE.</p> <p>Earlier this year, the MA approved annual training plan for employees, which shall be developed based on their personal learning plans.</p> <p>Delivered were trainings on the topic "Public procurement financed by EU funds 2013" and in practice of the application of the Public Procurement Act.</p> <p>Pending is the training on "Tender</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>procedures in line with PPA, regulations on public procurement."</p> <p>In the period 2008-2012 were conducted 7 trainings on procurement for a total of 23 employees from OPTA MA. OPTA MA carries out ex-ante control of the procedures under the PPA funded from OPTA with a view to identifying any omissions as early as at the stage before the start of the relevant procedure; 2. OPTA MA liaises regularly with the beneficiaries and holds regular meetings with them regarding the progress of the projects/implementation of activities, which includes a discussion of current and planned procedures under the PPA.</p> <p>10 employees of the MA-OPAC have attended 4 trainings related to public procurement. Ahead are 2 trainings on public procurement.</p> <p>In the period 2011 - October 2013 were held 18 trainings for beneficiaries - municipal, regional, central administration and the judiciary, through which information was provided and practical exercises were carried out on the application of the rules governing Procurement under projects</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>financed by ESF-OPAC. Planned is the delivery of additional 2 trainings for beneficiaries.</p> <p>Through its website, the OPAC MA provides information on public procurement, including in the form of documents elaborated on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of indicators for assessing the bids using the criterion of "most economically advantageous tender" when awarding training service; • Procedure for ex-ante control of procurement funded through OPAC projects; • Common errors and violations in the drafting of documentation and tendering for public procurement; • Instructions for completing the schedule of planned public procurement; • Examples of violations; • Guidelines for beneficiaries. <p>Within OPAC have been taken and are in the process of implementation the following measures to improve the communication between the Managing Authority and the Beneficiaries in the field of enforcement of the Public Procurement Act:</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> regular trainings to beneficiaries after conclusion of contracts; providing advice and clarifications for the beneficiaries; maintaining a special section "For beneficiaries" on the website of the programme. <p>71 employees from MA of OPRD have attended various trainings on Public Procurement Act for the period from 2009 until now. Planned are trainings on procurement for 28 employees of the MA of OPRD.</p> <p>Eight experts from the Directorate General "Programming of Regional Development" took part in three training sessions on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice of the Audit Office, APFI, CPC and Public Procurement Agency on implementing the PPA; Practice and changes in public procurement in 2013; ABC of public procurement. <p>Information for 2014</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>Two experts from DG "Programming of Regional Development" took part in training on "How to assign a lawful and effective procurement".</p> <p>Conducted an internal workshop of experts from DG "Programming of Regional Development" on the topic "New approach of the audit authority on procurement by beneficiaries of the Regional Development Operational Programme 2007-2013.</p> <p>Six experts from DG "Programming of Regional Development" took part in two training sessions on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Practice of Public Procurement - Expected amendments to the PPA. Practical problems of the procedures for award of public procurement. Practice of the Public Procurement Agency." - "Act amending the Public Procurement Act (prom. SG Issue 40 of 2014) - Analysis and Interpretation. Preparation and conduct of an open procedure. New practices of the CPC and SAC relative to the enforcement of the PPA." <p>Forty-three experts from Directorate General "Programming of Regional Development" took part in three training sessions on the following topics:</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Up-to-date amendments to the Public Procurement Act"; - Eighteenth national seminar "Practice of Public Procurement" - "Recent amendments to the Public Procurement Act. Management of public procurement processes under the new rules. Practice of the Public Procurement Agency"; - Seminar: "Improving the control systems in the MA in connection with ex-ante and ex-post control of procedures for procurement by beneficiaries under the Regional Development Operational Programme 2007-2013" <p>Eight experts from the Directorate General "Programming of Regional Development" took part in three trainings on the following topics;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Act amending the Public Procurement Act (SG Issue 40 of 13 May 2014) Analysis and Interpretation. Preparation and conduct of an open procedure. New practices of the Commission for Protection of Competition and the Supreme Administrative Court on the implementation of the Public Procurement Act"; - "New developments in the control activity

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>and the appeal of public procurement awards";</p> <p>- "Improving the control systems in MA in connection with ex-ante and ex-post control of procurement procedures by beneficiaries under the Regional Development Operational Programme 2007-2013"</p> <p>In the period 28-29.07.2014 MA of the OPRD organized and conducted a training seminar for MA staff and training of beneficiaries for legitimate public procurement with the participation of representatives from the audit unit of DG "Regional and urban policy" and representatives of DG "Internal Market and Services" from the European Commission and of the Public Procurement Agency.</p> <p>The seminar participants were acquainted with the best practices and the errors in procurement, taking of preventive actions to prevent violations.</p> <p>OPRD MA maintains systems to exchange information to help participants in the implementation and monitoring of the programme as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issuing guidance to assist the beneficiaries, both general and in relation to specific cases;

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain an updated summary of the practice of admitted violations in awarding public procurement found by the audit authorities when auditing the MA of OPRD and related recommendations, where the prepared up-to-date information is published on the website of OPRD, and is provided as instruction to the experts from the MA performing ex-ante and ex-post control. The information is updated on follow-up basis after the audits carried out; • Established practice for continuous exchange of experience and good practice between experts from the PE, "ZORN" department and "Monitoring" department in connection with implementing ex-ante and ex-post control. <p>In respect of procurement, 4 officers of the MA RDP participated in various trainings.</p> <p>The IB of the MA of OP Fisheries - In 2010 a study was conducted in relation to PPA for employees from the "Fisheries and aquaculture" department.</p> <p>Planned is involvement of two experts from</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>the same department.</p> <p>In 2012, 6 employees of MA RDP were trained on PPA, where the trainings were organized by the "European Training Centre" Ltd.; also in 2012 were trained 29 employees of the MA RDP on PPA; with the training being organized by a contractor under a project funded under the measure "Technical assistance" of the RDP (2007-13);</p> <p>State Fund "Agriculture" - During 2012 and early 2013, 7 people from the "Control of procurement and implementation of local development strategies" have been trained concerning the PPA. At the end of 2011, all employees of the department CPILDS responsible for processing procedures on procurement have undergone training related to the upcoming changes in the PPA subsequently entered into force on 26.02.2012.</p> <p>NAFA</p> <p>Employees of the Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture have undergone trainings related to the application of the procurement rules of the EU at all relevant levels.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>Measures to improve the communication channels between the managing authorities and beneficiaries in the implementation of the Public Procurement Act will be included in the Programme for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries from 2014 to 2020.</p> <p>Public Procurement Agency</p> <p>During the period 2007 - 2013, the Public Procurement Agency (PPA) has organized and participated in conducting 85 training of persons involved in the process of procurement.</p> <p>With Decision No. 41 from 27.12. 2012 is approved for funding under the Operational Programme "Technical Assistance" a project entitled "Strengthening the capacity of the PPA, improving the system of ex-ante control of procedures, financing with European funds" with PPA as beneficiary. The project aims to increase the effectiveness of the ex-ante control performed by the PPA on procedures financed by the EU. The project envisages 4 trainings in the field of procurement for a total of 200 employees of the Managing Authorities, Intermediate Bodies and the</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>Public Procurement Agency.</p> <p>Information for 2014:</p> <p>So far have been held 3 of the trainings envisaged under the project, with 128 trained employees.</p> <p>In an annex to the grant contract for the project under the OPTA is envisaged the opportunity for organizing and conducting 2 additional trainings for 80 people.</p> <p>In connection with the recent changes in the PPA, effective 01/07/2014, employees of the Agency participated as speakers in 14 training, 11 of which have been organized by the IPA, 2 by the MRD and 1 by the National Association of Worker Cooperatives.</p>
			Arrangements to ensure administrative capacity for implementation and application of Union public procurement rules.	NO	<p>http://rop3-app1.aop.bg:7778/portal/page?_pageid=93_168247&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL</p> <p>The Public Procurement Agency is established with the Public Procurement Act (promulgated in SG, issue 28 of 2004, effective from 01.10.2004). It is a legal entity with the status of an Executive Agency to the Minister of Economy and</p>	At present, in order to ensure personnel carrying out preliminary scrutiny PPA executed project OPTA in which means are provided for 10 additional positions. It is envisaged in the draft Partnership Agreement that Public Procurement Agency will be included as beneficiary under OPDU to strengthen the administrative capacity of

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>Energy and assist him in the implementation of the state policy in the field of public procurement.</p> <p>The functions of the Agency are described in Art. 19, para. 2 of PPA.</p> <p>The most important of them are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drafting of legislation in the field of public procurement for the implementation of European Directives and Regulations and national rules; • methodological support by giving opinions on inquiries of contracting authorities; • issuing common methodological guidance on the application of PPA and the rules for implementation of PPA; • ex-ante control of procedures for the award of public contracts financed entirely or partially under the EU funds; • opinions of the ex-ante control of negotiated procedures without notice; • maintaining the Public Procurement Register (PPR) and the Public 	the Agency.

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>Procurement Portal etc.</p> <p>Each MA has certain employees who have in their job descriptions responsibilities on public procurement issues. Appropriate trainings are held on various topics.</p> <p>The National Strategy for the Development of the Public Procurement Sector in Bulgaria for the period 2014 - 2020 provides measures for strengthening and stability of the administrative capacity of the Public Procurement Agency.</p> <p>According to Art. 19, para. 2, items 1 and 2 of the PPA, the Public Procurement Agency issues general methodological guidelines to the unification of practices in the application of PPA and the rules on the implementation of PPA and provides methodological support to contracting authorities by providing opinions on their queries. Methodological guidelines are published on the Public Procurement Portal.</p> <p>According to the changes in PPA, effective from 01.10.2014, the contracting authorities are obliged to provide that in the preparation of technical specification</p>	<p>Information from the CCU on the administrative capacity of the MA OP (2013):</p> <p>The OPT has 8 employees who have in their job descriptions responsibilities on public procurement.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>and assessment methodology participates at least one expert who has professional competence related to the subject of the procurement. When they do not have such a specialist, they can provide such a person from the list of external experts maintained by the Public Procurement Agency. This list includes persons nominated by professional associations and organizations in the respective branch or by the bodies under Art. 19, para. 2-4 of the AA or those who have submitted an application for self-registration.</p> <p>According to information by OPs Managing Authorities through their websites, provide to interested parties the necessary information, incl. under the form of developed documents, manuals, instructions, guidance and more in the field of public procurement.</p> <p>The National Strategy for the Development of the Public Procurement Sector in Bulgaria for the period 2014 – 2020 provides measures to ensure technical assistance to those who apply the rules on public procurement.</p>	<p>In MA OPDCBE has 119 employees who have responsibility on public procurement.</p> <p>In OPTA MA has 2 employees who have responsibilities related to public procurement.</p> <p>The OPAC MA has six employees who have responsibilities on pa procurement.</p> <p>MA RDP - In job descriptions of employees in "Legal and information services" has included responsibilities in relation to public procurement. Ministry of MA of OP Fisheries (Directorate "Fisheries and Aquaculture" State Fund "Agriculture") - no employees whose job descriptions to include responsibilities relating to public procurement.</p> <p>In the OP MA - the "Rural Development" Directorate - has no employees with responsibilities concerning the issues of public procurement;</p> <p>State Fund "Agriculture" - Paying Agency: In the job descriptions of the 49 employees</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>of the SFA-PA, the "Implement measures to Rural Development", "Control over the procurement and implementation of local development strategies" is written handling public procurement procedures.</p> <p>In MA of OPRD 89 employees have responsibility on public procurement issues.</p> <p>In Manual for the management and implementation of the Operational Programme "Regional Development" 2007-2013 Chapter 20 Technical Assistance are written procedures for the award of public procurement orders for the provision of grants for projects with specific beneficiary departments DG "RDP" under the PPA. There are teams for the development of the documentation for the award of the OP. Schedules is how to control the procurement process conducted by the departments of DG "RDP" which takes place on various stages of conducting the procedure.</p> <p>As of 28/04/2014 have been adopted amendments to the checklists for performing ex-ante and ex-post control of open procedures and negotiated procedures without notice; checklist for ex-post control</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>when contracting under Chapter "Eight" a of the PPA /the most used ones/ - version 9.1. The changes are made to strengthen the control mainly concerning the legality of the rejection of participants/candidates in the procedures and the legality of the assessment methodology and their application in the work of the Committee for consideration, evaluation and ranking of tenders. The control of the Expert 2 is strengthened – in terms of conformity of the technical specifications from the documentation and requirements in public procurement to those set in grant contracts and the subsequent need for compliance of offers with these requirements.</p> <p>In connection with the violations found during the routine audit mission from 07.04.2014-11.04.2014, in a letter from DG "Regional and urban policy" to the European Commission, received on 03/06/2014 in the OPRD Managing Authority, taking into account the identified violations committed by OPRD beneficiaries in procurement, which are the basis for determining financial corrections and in view of the need to improve the control systems, the MA of OPRD has taken the following actions:</p> <p>- On 06.20.2014 were adopted amendments and supplementations to Chapter 13</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>Monitoring of NUIOPRR (effective from 01.07.2014), including as regards: the checklists for implementing: ex-ante and ex-post control of the procurement procedures; checklist for ex-post control in procurement by public invitation under Chapter Eight "a" of the PPA – Version 9.2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducting internal training of MA employees responsible for conducting ex-ante and ex-post control, for work with the improved checklists of NUIOPRR -26-27.06.2014; - Supplementing the issued guidelines for beneficiaries, published on 25.06.2014 on the website of the OPRD MA, in order to prevent violations in the procurement; - Practical training of beneficiaries in relation to the new control mechanisms implemented by the MA OPRD. - In the period 28-29.07.2014 was held additional training of the employees of MA and practice training of beneficiaries with the participation of representatives from the audit department of the DG "Regional and urban policy" and representatives of DG "Internal Market and Services" from the European Commission and of the Public Procurement Agency. Seminar participants

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>were familiarized with the best practices and the found errors in the procurement, preventive action to prevent violations.</p> <p>On 28.07.2014 was held a technical meeting on expert level with the participation of the Head of the MA OPRD, representatives of the EC, the national audit authority and of our certifying authority, on which were discussed the specific steps to be taken for resumption of payments under the two axes of the programme, recommendations were made to supplement the checklists for ex-post control with control questions about the risk areas in the award of procurement;</p> <p>- The MA OPRD analysed the findings on violations committed in the procurement by OPRD beneficiaries with the aim and for the purpose of readiness for continuous improvement of the management and control system.</p> <p>- Execution of contracts for the provision of specialized legal services for MA of OPRD in order to support the process of ex-ante and ex-post control, the administering of denunciations and support of the MA in the case of proceedings under Art. 100 of</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>Regulation No. 1083/2006 by the Council.</p> <p>MA OPHRD - 6 employees with responsibilities relating to issues of procurement and 32 employees with responsibilities related to inspection of activities, some of which are public procurement procedures under PPA;</p> <p>IB - EA - 15 employees with responsibilities related to issues of public procurement;</p> <p>IB - SAA - 34 employees with responsibilities related to issues of public procurement;</p> <p>IB - MEYS - 25 employees with responsibilities related to public procurement issues.</p> <p>In addition to the above control mechanisms, information about entities, as part of the control is also the involvement of external expertise where such is missing within the contracting authority.</p> <p>In 2012, 16 employees of MA OPE participated in 5 trainings on procurement issues and from IB OPE 30 employees – in 3 trainings.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>In 2013, 16 employees of the MA OPE participated in 4 trainings on public procurement issues, and 4 employees of the IB – in 1 training.</p> <p>In 2014, 5 employees of OPE DG participated in 3 trainings on public procurement issues. The matters of public procurement are dealt with by "Ex-post control and litigation" Department after the restructuring of the IB and OPE MA into DG OPE at the end of March 2014.</p> <p>MA OPE has posted on its web site a number of guidelines and supporting documents for beneficiaries related to public procurement (mainly published in section "Documents/Manuals/Instructions /Guidelines):</p> <p>1. Most common violations related to the award and implementation of public procurement:</p> <p>http://ope.moew.government.bg/files/useruploads/files/documentation/ukazania/narushenia_obshtestveni_porachki.pdf</p> <p>2. Documents relating to errors and violations and current issues of the PPA:</p> <p>http://ope.moew.government.bg/bg/pages/dopuskani-greshki-i-narushenia/67#1</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>3. In section Manuals, instructions, guidelines/Implementation of projects financed by the OPE – Additional section 1 "Procurement" with additional supporting materials, incl. model forms</p> <p>http://ope.moew.government.bg/bg/pages/naradni-rachnitsi-ukazania-rakovodstva/66#1</p> <p>As a new measure to help increase the capacity of beneficiaries in the field of public procurement, Managing Authority will prepare a quarterly newsletter with practical examples and descriptions of the different types of violations found during verification. The newsletter will be sent by email and will be posted on the official website of the programme. The first newsletter was published in June 2014 (http://ope.moew.government.bg/bg/pages/dopuskani-greshki-i-narushenia/67#1) Under preparation is the second newsletter.</p>
5. The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds.	Priority Axis 1 Priority Axis 2 Priority Axis 3 Priority	YES	Arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules;	YES	<p>The national legislation on state aid is available at:</p> <p>http://stateaid.minfin.bg/</p> <p>1. State Aid Act (SAA) - Art. 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13; (CoM Decree 86/2006 in effect since 1.1.2007, amended CoM</p>	<p>All aid measures - notifiable or exempt from notification, except for de minimis, are subject to mandatory coordination.</p> <p>Cumulation rules are directly applicable according to the requirements of the aid measures. National legislation does not contain specific regulations, because cumulation is an element of specific aid</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
	Axis 4				<p>Decree 16/2008)</p> <p>2. SAA Implementing Rules - notification procedures; (CoM Decree 26/2007, amended CoM Decree 97/2007, CoM Decree 10/2009, CoM Decree 3/2010)</p> <p>3. Ordinance № H-16/ 23.11.2006 on the order rules to ensure the transparency of financial relations between state authorities and local governments and state and municipal enterprises and financial transparency within certain enterprises</p> <p>The current SAA regulates national procedures for the implementation of Art. 107 and Art. 108 TFEU, as well as the powers of the Ministry of Finance and the Minister of Agriculture and Food, the nature of the procedures, information exchange and coordination. It establishes a framework for compliance with the regime at national level, incl. with respect to the notifiable aid, aid exempted from notification and de minimis aid.</p> <p>The MA of OP SESG has included the corresponding audit trails and rules in Chapter 13 of the MA Manual: "State Aid</p>	<p>measures and is obligatory checked when coordinating the measure. Compliance with the rules cumulation are monitored by the administrator through: - determining at the programming phase whether the measures are / are not eligible for cumulation - check of the maximum amount of the aid under a specific project - in ex-ante and ex-post control of the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Deggendorf" clause is legally regulated in Article 9, para. 3 of the SAA Implementing Rules. It is applicable to all aid administrators. • According to § 1, point 5 of the SP of SAA, any amendment of an aid shall be treated as new aid and it is subject to the same rules of coordination and approval. • Regardless of the way of management of the financial instrument, the State aid rules are applicable to the aid administrator. Objectives, content and specific parameters of any new state aid are developed by the administrator and submitted to the Ministry of Finance. In case of doubt or ambiguity the Ministry of Finance provides recommendations. Regardless of the form and the instrument for support, grant / financial instruments, state aid legislation is applicable to each

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					and De Minimis rules”.	<p>administrator (MA). In case of multi-phase schemes, the latter is applicable to each of the participants. The aid element may be missing at a particular level of the measure but it may appear on another level. Exceptions and / or special derogations from the procedure for notification and assessment in case of repayable assistance are not provided for.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National law governs the procedure for recovery of illegal and incompatible aid under the Tax Insurance Procedure Code (TIPC) by NRA. NRA acts are subject to appeal before the competent national courts. Effective and timely recovery is governed by the procedures for the recovery and securing of public debts. Decisions of the Commission for recovery of unlawful State aid shall be enforceable under the TIPC. Additional measures are taken to improve the legal framework to allow immediate and full implementation of the decisions of the Commission for recovery. The compliance with General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) is regulated in SAA. The Minister of Finance shall consider the information received and shall issue an opinion. In the event that there is uncertainty about the application of the measure or discrepancy, the administrator

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>has 14 days to correct the project. In case where the administrator does not bring state aid in alignment within the prescribed period, the MoF shall inform the administrator that the aid does not meet the criteria for block exemption. A state aid administrator not accepting the opinion of MoF and grants the state aid is responsible for its legality. The state aid administrator shall inform the Ministry within three days of the delivery of any state aid covered by GBER and will publish information on the Internet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exchange of information on state aid and de minimis aid at national level are governed on two levels that are sufficiently accurate and timely. Data to the Commission are provided as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - based on specific requests from the European Commission; - regular data exchange - annual report, thematic reports etc. <p>At present, the EU legislation does not have a requirement for a central register of de minimis aid, this is an option only for the aids under Regulation 1407/2013 and Regulation 360/2012. Special separate statement is included in the new GBER (Regulation 651/2014 of 17.06.2014). The</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>Bulgarian state aid legislation empowers MoF to request information related to the state aid and provides for sanctions in case of non-delivery by the administrator.</p> <p>The SAA obliges the state aid administrators to maintain their own registers of state/de minimis aid and they bear the responsibility for the reliability of the data and upon request allow access to the registers. To ensure transparency and reporting, MoF supports an Internet based information system "Register of De minimis and State Aid" available at: http://minimis.minfin.bg. The Register is completed directly by the state aid administrators that submit the same information on hard copy to the MoF. The register allows for drawing various types of public reports. The information on state aid is only the one based on the requirements of the new GBER. In a subsequent revision of the European legislation in the field of state aid, requiring additional registers for information, such will be created.</p> <p>According to the document "Procedure for managing user access to Information system "Register of De minimis and state aid", approved by Order of the Ministry of Finance ZMF-925 of 15.08.2014, the system provides access at two levels - user</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>part (for aid administrators) and administrative part (for the Ministry of Finance staff).</p> <p>User part serves to the administrators for input and processing the necessary information about the types of aid measures and beneficiaries, and the administrative one - to provide access to administrators. The system has a public module for (accessible to all), which has now been extended in order to retrieve data under different criteria according to the requirements of the new GBER.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A draft bill of the SAA has been prepared and will be submitted for consideration by the Council of Ministers. The draft of the SAA will be proposed for new discussion before it is submitted to the CoM. The change of the Act seeks technical refinement and updating of the rules so as to improve the procedures and interaction between the parties in the process of granting state aid from the moment of its planning until the time of its actual use. This shall be required since the main version of the State Aid Act is of 2006, respectively in effect from 01.01.2007 and currently does not reflect the development of the regime at European level. Substantial changes in the draft bill

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>over the status quo are:</p> <p>The new SAA draft does not amend conceptually the order and regime at a national level, but rather refines texts and procedures.</p> <p>The novelties are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introducing a special procedure for recovery of illegal and incompatible aid when recipients and amounts of aid are not predefined in the EC decision for recovery. SAA currently does not regulate this specific case, the provision defines only that the aid be recovered pursuant to the decision of the European Commission. 2. Provisions are made to ensure sufficient capacity for planning, development, notification, management, reporting and control of the granting of state aid by aid administrators. The proposal creates a connection between previously existing legal obligation for administrators and its practical implementation, ensuring maintenance of administrative capacity at all levels, providing state aid. Currently there are no provisions for capacity in the SAA. 3. The functions of the MoF to provide methodological guidance to administrators and to take measures to improve the regime

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>are expanded. In the current SAA functions of MoF do not allow issuing of guidelines, only opinions to help administrators.</p> <p>4. Improved is the coordination and monitoring of state aid by suggesting the drafting of acts for establishing violations to be carried out by officials of the Agency for State Financial Inspection (ASFC). Under the current SAA arrangement violations are established by acts issued by officials authorized by the MoF. With the proposed change the existing control mechanism is improved which ensures the applicable enforcement of the regime and clearly separates control from the methodological functions. Control is delegated to a subject with control functions.</p> <p>To improve control, an amendment is suggested in the State Financial Inspection Act in terms of functions. Until now Art. 5 of SFIA regulates control over the utilization of state aid and spending of expedient subsidies, after the amendment control should cover the granting, utilization and spending.</p> <p>5. Terminological and practical refinement of the law:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - introduction of basic principles that must be complied with when providing aid.

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>This is in the context of European legislation on state aid, as it requires provision of aid to be necessary, appropriate, efficient and transparent, also to have an incentive effect in certain cases. These are defined according to the criteria laid down in the relevant act of the European Union law, on which aid is granted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - moving the requirement to comply with the Deggendorf criteria from the regulation to the Act; - creating a framework regulating the development and maintenance of an IT system for monitoring and coordination of state aid at central, regional and municipal level. The current SAA does not have such provisions. Currently, the system of coordination takes place within Working Group 6 under CoM Decree 85/2007 or through targeted initiatives on specific problem. The purpose of this change is not to significantly change the existing mechanism but to improve its performance by regularity and raising awareness. - refining the aid exempt from notification on grounds other than the block exemption like Regulation 1370/2007 and EC decision on SGEI 2012. - introducing the obligation for aid

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						administrators to inform recipients about the type, size and compatibility of the aid, as well as about the obligations arising from the regime. Until now, the current SAA does not regulate specific arrangement.
			Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI Funds;	YES	<p>Sources of specialized information</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. http://stateaid.minfin.bg/ 2. http://minimis.minfin.bg/ 3. http://www.minfin.bg/en/page/12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All MA have undergone trainings on state aid in the School of Public Finance at the Ministry of Finance, and some of them within the framework of OPs technical assistance. <p>School of Public Finance at the Ministry of Finance (http://www.minfin.bg/bg/page/12) organizes trainings in state aid on request several times a year. All training programmes are developed according to the objectives and needs of the trainees. The trainings are free-of-charge..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of information and publicity of state aid is implemented through two information channels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ general - specialized Internet site on State Aid legislation 	<p>MoF maintains specialized web page for information related to State aid, where the Bulgarian and the legislation of EU, the procedures and initiatives of EC are available.</p> <p>Information system "Register of De minimis and State Aid" is maintained by MoF. It is completed by the administrators of state aid.</p> <p>The Institute of Public Administration(IPA)/School of Public Finance provide training for each administrator and/or public authority on issues related to state aid.</p> <p>In order to strengthen the regime the proposal for amending SAA provides for additional obligations for state aid administrators, which are developed, in order to be built and maintained sufficient administrative capacity to plan, develop, inform, manage, report and control state aid and grant de minimis aid.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					http://stateaid.minfin.bg/ and within WG 6 at the Council of European Affairs (CEA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o thematically by the MoF, as appropriate and in accordance with different cases, such notification shall be made by official correspondence or e-mail and via the FAQ page of the State Aid Department; • The system of exchange of information on state aid at the level of each administrator (MA) is carried out according to the specifics of its activities - for example by internal rules. • MoF may issue thematic guidance on various topics aimed to clarify specific issues Each relevant MA (OPHRD, OPE, OPRD, OPDCBE) has certain experts who are responsible for public procurement issues which responsibilities are included in their job descriptions	
			Arrangements to ensure administrative capacity for implementation and application of the Union State aid rules.	YES	The national and European legislation on state aid is available at: http://stateaid.minfin.bg/	As of 01.09.2014 is in force a new functional characteristic of the "Finances of the Real Sector" Directorate (FRSD) in the MoF, with part of the functions of the State

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the national legal framework, MoF is the national body responsible for the monitoring, transparency and coordination of state aid at national, regional and local level, with the exception of aid schemes or individual aid in the agriculture and fisheries, where the competent body is MAF The competences of the Ministry of Finance regulate the issuance of specific opinions and preliminary coordination of aid measures In the draft bill for the new SAA refining of the functions of the coordination unit is planned by preparing methodological guidelines and taking measures for the development of the regime in the field of state aid MoF has experience in issuing publications, manuals and instructions for the benefit of aid administrators, including MA. Beyond regular opinions of the State Aid Department in the MoF, since 2007 thematic guidelines for the benefit of MA are issued / updated as well. All current national guidelines and EU publications that would be useful for administrators are published on a specialised website In the draft amendment to the SAA an 	<p>Aid Department reallocated to other departments in the FRSD, imposing to them competences and specific functions in the state aid area. This aims at the creation of additional capacity within the existing financial resources. The State Aid Department has been renamed as “Methodology, Monitoring and Coordination of State Aid” Department.</p> <p>Prepared changes in SAA explicitly require any aid administrator, as OPMA, to build and maintain sufficient capacity for planning, development, notification, management, reporting and control of the granting of state and de minimis aid.</p> <p>Provisions are envisaged for each aid administrator to individually determine the measures for the implementation of these activities, according to the volume and specifics of the administered aid, including at least technical and staffing provision and measures for data protection.</p> <p>The draft provides for each state aid and de minimis aid, the administrator to determine the persons responsible for carrying out the planning, development, notification, management, reporting and control of granting of state aid and de minimis aid.</p> <p>The bill contains a change in the functions of</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
					<p>introduction of a specific obligation for aid administrators is envisaged (including OP MAs) to build, maintain, and provide sufficient capacity for the planning, development, notification, management, reporting and control of granted state and de minimis aid. Measures for the implementation of the latter are determined individually by each aid administrator</p> <p>Each relevant MA (OPHRD, OPE, OPRD, OPDCBE) has certain experts who are responsible for public procurement issues which responsibilities are included in their job descriptions</p>	<p>MoF. New functions are envisaged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - on the preparation of methodological guidelines for the implementation of this Act and the legislation on state aid; - on the measures for the development and improvement of the regime in the field of state aid and for ensuring transparency. - on building and maintaining of information system for monitoring and coordination of state aid at central, regional and municipal level; the system will consist of a set of measures for exchange of information, building and maintaining administrative capacity in order to improve the transparency of state aid at all levels. <p>Currently, the system of coordination takes place within Working Group 6 under CoM Decree 85/2007 or through targeted initiatives on specific problem. The purpose of this change is not to significantly change the existing mechanism but to improve its performance by regularity and raising awareness.</p> <p>These functions are intended to clarify the legal framework in which MoF shall provide specific recommendations and guidance to help administrators.</p> <p>Until now, such recommendations have been</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>provided on the basis of the general powers of the Minister of Finance as a national body for monitoring, coordination and ensuring transparency and do not have unified and binding nature for the administrators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the adoption of the proposed regulatory changes MoF will be able to issue thematic instructions to the administrators. The amendments in the SAA will not change the obligatory character of the issued instructions. The current model is being kept – the administrator of aid to carry responsibility of the legal conformity of the aid granted. The instructions of the MoF regarding the aid, subject to notification as per art.108/3/TFEU and regarding de minimis aid are methodological, not obligatory. Obligatory are the opinions regarding the aid exempted from notification. • The change in the legal framework will allow the MoF to provide thematic and practical instructions, for example for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - preparation of Internal Rules for the preliminary assessment of the aid and the phases in which the aid measures are coordinated - development of internal rules for assessing the eligibility of cumulation of aid and for

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes /no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>effective control of the same.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development of individual mechanism by which to check the compliance with the provision of Art. 9, para. 3 of the SAA Implementing Rules ("Deggendorf"); - Drafting of a specific procedure for the steps of the modification of already published / approved aid measure and the arrangements for coordination with the Ministry of Finance, and if necessary - to notify the European Commission (e.g. pursuant to Art. 4 of Regulation 794/2004 and Regulation 800/2008). - for inclusion in MA procedural manuals of specific provisions (steps) to ensure awareness and dissemination of information on the rules on state aid at all levels. <p>In the context of the new operational programmes, the need for specific actions related to the capacity of the MA shall be evaluated after the Ministry of Finance starts the coordination of specific procedures, aid measures and/or other relevant information, and where ASFC provides information about the inspections/checks, in which there are findings and recommendations in the field of state aid.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
<p>7. The existence of a statistical basis necessary for the evaluations of the effectiveness and impact of the programmes.</p> <p>The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.</p>	<p>Priority Axis 1</p> <p>Priority Axis 2</p> <p>Priority Axis 3</p> <p>Priority Axis 4</p>	Partially	<p>Arrangements for timely collection and aggregation of statistical data with the following elements are in place:</p> <p>— the identification of sources and mechanisms to ensure statistical validation;</p> <p>— arrangements for publication of and public access to aggregated data;</p>	YES	<p>European statistics Code of Practice http://www.nsi.bg/files/Quality/1.1.%20CoP_ALL_BG.pdf</p> <p>Declaration on the quality of the national statistical system of the Republic of Bulgaria: http://www.nsi.bg/files/Quality/QUALITY_NSI_Declaration.pdf</p> <p>Statistics Act: http://www.nsi.bg/dokument.php?P=64&SP=102&NSP=1#cont</p> <p>National Statistical Programme for 2013: http://www.nsi.bg/dokument.php?P=64&SP=102&NSP=36#cont</p> <p>Rules for the dissemination of statistical products and services: http://www.nsi.bg/dokument.php?P=64&SP=102&NSP=20#cont</p>	<p>To ensure the quality of results, harmonized national statistics are developed, produced and disseminated on the basis of standards and harmonized methods. The following quality criteria are applied:</p> <p>a) "relevance", which refers to the degree to which statistics meet current and potential needs of the users;</p> <p>b) "Accuracy", which refers to the closeness of estimates to the unknown true values;</p> <p>c) "Timeliness", which refers to the period of time between the date of availability of the information and the event or phenomenon it describes;</p> <p>d) "Punctuality", which refers to the period of time between the date of the release of the data and the target date (the date by which the data should have been delivered);</p> <p>e) "Accessibility" and "clarity", which refer to the conditions and modalities by which users can obtain, use and interpret data;</p> <p>f) "comparability", which refers to the measurement of the impact of differences in applied statistical concepts, evaluation tools and procedures where statistics are compared between geographical areas, sectoral domains or over time;</p> <p>j) "coherence", which refers to the adequacy of the data to be reliably combined in different ways and for various purposes (uses).</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>NSI - leading with regard to the provision of general for the programmes performance indicators and mechanisms to ensure statistical validation.</p> <p>OPs Managing Authorities – leading with regard to the development and maintenance of an effective system of indicators.</p> <p>For the systems developed to date, the information concerning indicators under the individual programmes shall be available in the public UMIS, on the websites of the Managing Authorities of the respective programmes.</p>
			<p>An effective system of result indicators, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — the selection of result indicators for each programme providing information on what motivates the selection of policy actions financed by the programme; — the establishment of quantitative targets for these indicators; — the consistency of each indicator with the following requisites: robustness and statistical validation, clarity of normative interpretation, responsiveness to policy, timely 	NO	<p>List of standard statistical indicators:</p> <p>http://www.nsi.bg/img/uplf/StdInd2013.pdf</p> <p>http://www.nsi.bg/img/uplf_e/StdInd2013_en.pdf</p>	<p>The performance of the criterion is linked to the complete development of the OPs.</p> <p>Indicators that will be developed during the implementation of OPs by the MA or by the beneficiaries will have to undergo statistical validation in accordance with the following procedures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When the indicators are based on administrative data, the definitions and concepts used for administrative purposes should be close enough to those required for statistical purposes. 2. Sampling and assessment methods should be well justified. 3. Methods of data collection should be

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
			collection of data;			<p>coordinated with NSI, and their application is observed in terms of compliance with the methodology.</p> <p>4. Beneficiaries and MA cooperate with NSI to ensure data quality.</p> <p>Quantity and quality goals for result indicators are defined, which content is coordinated between the EU programmes and other donors.</p> <p>For the indicators are defined quantity and quality goals which shall be in conformity with those set in the Europe 2020 Strategy.</p>
			Procedures to ensure that all operations financed by the programme adopt an effective system of indicators - introduced.	NO		<p>For the ESF is envisaged collection of information on an individual level for each participant in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 1304/2013 as well as at project level and at priority Axis level. Reporting will be accomplished through performance and result indicators set at the appropriate level of the operational programme for which the reporting or the impact assessment are held.</p> <p>Monitoring of data shall be presented at each meeting of the Monitoring Committee (MC) so that MC members can discuss issues that could hinder the proper implementation of the programme. Activities carried out in relation to the timely collection of microdata for participants shall be reported in the</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						<p>annual implementation reports, as well as in the progress reports submitted to the MC.</p> <p>The data itself reflects all participants that have directly benefited or are benefiting of ESF support, as in case of doubled participation in the same operation, the individual participant is counted only once. For reporting purposes (despite the fact that only aggregated data shall be provided to the EC) personal data for each participant shall be used (e.g., gender, status on the labour market, education level, etc.) including "sensitive" one (e.g., disability, minority status, vulnerability, etc.). Under the provisions of the Directive on the protection of personal data, each participant may refuse to give "sensitive" information, in which case the relevant Programmes management bodies have to provide documents that they had attempted to collect such data, and that had been refused.</p> <p>Much like the common indicators in Regulation 1304/2013, the Managing Authorities shall provide clear and understandable definitions of specific indicators of individual programmes with which to achieve a common understanding of them and to facilitate their subsequent reporting.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (yes/no/partially)	Criteria:	Criterion fulfilled: Yes/No	Reference (reference to strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, incl. relevant sections, articles or paragraphs, accompanied by web-links or access to full text)	Explanation
						Managing authorities develop their own systems for storage and reporting of data on individual participants in an electronic form, with regard not only to the formal implementation of the provisions of Article 56 of Regulation 1303/2013 and Article 5 and Article 19 of Regulation 1304/2013, but in order to effectively fulfil the obligations on Programmes monitoring and evaluation. For this purpose, the latter are based on the systems and procedures for ESF monitoring over the 2007-2013 programming period, which, however, need additional settings and adjustment, both with regards to compliance with the requirements applicable to 2014-2020 programming period and to reporting indicators for immediate and long-term result, including those on a sample basis.

9.2 Description of actions to fulfil ex-ante conditionalities, responsible bodies and timetable 110

Table 25

Table 25: Actions to fulfil applicable general ex-ante conditionalities

General ex-ante conditionality	Criteria fulfilled	not	Actions to be taken	Deadline (date)	Bodies responsible
<9.2.1 type="S" maxlength="500" input="G" PA=Y "SME" >	<9.2.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="G" PA=Y "SME" >		<9.2.3 type="S" maxlength="1000" input="M" PA=Y "SME" >	<9.2.4 type="D" input="M" PA=Y "SME" >	<9.2.5 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M" PA=Y "SME" >
4. The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of ESI Funds	The existence of arrangements for the effective implication of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds		Action 1 (adoption of National strategy) Action 2. Adoption of a codified, sustainable and simplified legislation on public procurement through adoption of a new PPA and secondary legislation acts for its application.	Action 1: adopted in July 2014	ME PPA
			Action 3. Design of reinforced management and control systems for ESI Funds, incl. effective cooperation to ensure consistency between the actions in the ex-ante and ex-post	Deadline for Action 2: January 2016	MA CCU EA AEUF PPA Court of Auditors

¹¹⁰ Tables 25 and 26 cover only applicable general and thematic ex-ante conditionalities which are completely unfulfilled or partially fulfilled (see Table 24) at the time of submission of the programme.

		control Action 4: review of appeal system		PFIA
	Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI Funds.	Action 1. Design and implementation of a training and development programme for staff involved in the management of ESI Funds (including training on public procurement under the Training Academy on ESI Funds).	Deadline for Action 1: December 2016	IPA MA PPA
		Action 2. Review and update of existing systems for dissemination and exchange of information between MA staff and beneficiaries and other stakeholders in the field of public procurement for establishment of a uniform practice.	Deadline for Action 2: December 2016	MA CCU EA AEUF PPA Court of Auditors PFIA
	Arrangements to ensure administrative capacity for implementation and application of Union public procurement rules.	Action 1. Strengthening and enforcement of the administrative capacity of the Public Procurement Agency by increasing staffing and conducting specialized training.	Deadline for Action 1: December 2015	MEE PPA
		Action 2: Provision of technical assistance	Deadline for Action 2: December 2016	IPA MA

		to the persons involved in the application of public procurement rules through organization and conduction of regular training and other measures/needs identified through opinion surveys and target group consultations.		PPA
--	--	--	--	-----

Table 26

Table 26: Actions to fulfil applicable thematic ex-ante conditionalities

Thematic ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadline (date)	Bodies responsible
<9.2.1 type="S" maxlength="500" input="G" PA=Y "SME" TA- "NA">	<9.2.2 type="S" maxlength="500" input="G" PA=Y "SME" TA- "NA" >	<9.2.3 type="S" maxlength="1000" input="M" PA=Y "SME" TA- "NA" >	<9.2.4 type="D" input="M " PA=Y "SME" TA- "NA" >	<9.2.5 type="S" maxlength="500" input="M" PA=Y "SME" TA- "NA" >

1.2 Research and innovation infrastructure. The existence of a multi-annual plan for budgeting and prioritisation of investments	An indicative multi-annual plan for budgeting and prioritisation of investments linked to EU priorities, and, where appropriate, the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures – ESFRI has been adopted	<p>Aligning research infrastructure and scientific priorities with economic priority areas identified in RIS3</p> <p>The detail of the activities is outlined in annex “Future Actions to be completed until June 2015 for compliance with EAC 1.1 and 1.2”</p>	July 2015	ME / MES
9.2. A national Roma inclusion strategic policy framework is in place	<p>The only sub-criterion connected with the strategic policy framework for Roma inclusion that is partially fulfilled is as follows:</p> <p>A national Roma inclusion strategic policy framework is in place that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - includes strong monitoring 	<p>Action 1:</p> <p>Development of basic functionalities of a monitoring and control system for the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria 2012-2020</p> <p>The baseline indicators, currently under preparation, and the evaluation form will underpin the development of an improved functional electronic monitoring and control system for the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria 2012-2020. The monitoring system will feed the information at municipal, district and national level onto a single information platform. It will perform accumulation, aggregation and processing of data, which will improve the follow-up and analysis of the achieved results and will enable a more effective evaluation of the implementation of the integration policy at national, district and municipal level.</p> <p>The Secretariat of the NCCEII has been identified as a direct beneficiary under the HRD OP 2014-2020 for the development of a monitoring and control system for the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of</p>	December 2015	NCCEII

	<p>methods to evaluate the impact of Roma integration actions and a review mechanism for the adaptation of the strategy.</p>	<p>Bulgaria 2012-2020.</p> <p>In July the Secretary of the NCCEII conducted meetings with the Managing Authority of the HRD OP on the preparation of Terms of Reference for the development of the monitoring and control system, as well as submission of the concept for review to the Monitoring Committee in September 2014. A further meeting was held with a representative of the Agency for Fundamental Rights regarding the indicators to be incorporated into the system. At the meeting the FRA representative expressed the Agency's willingness to get involved in the preparation of the Terms of Reference, as well as for multiplying the entire system in all states having a National Roma Strategy.</p> <p>In August 2014 criteria for the operation "Development and implementation of a system for monitoring, evaluation and control of the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria 2012-2020, and other measures targeting vulnerable ethnic minorities with a focus on Roma" under the HRD OP 2014-2020 were drawn up.</p> <p>Meetings are held regularly with the Managing Authority of the HRD OP.</p> <p>In October 2014 the Secretary of the NCCEII took part in a meeting of the working group at the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) on development of a minimum set of indicators to measure Roma integration, applicable in all EU Member States – information was presented on the monitoring system; a meeting was held between the Secretary of the NCCEII and the President of the National Statistical Institute to discuss cooperation and the involvement of the NSI in the development and implementation of the monitoring system; this and other current issues concerning deadlines etc. were discussed with the MA in meetings and by e-mail.</p>		
--	---	---	--	--

In view of compliance with ex-ante conditionality pursuant to Article 19(2) of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 for Thematic Objective 1, the following activities have been planned:

Future Actions to be completed until June 2015 for compliance with EAC 1.1 and 1.2

No	Activity	Leading institution	Partner institution	Activities to be undertaken	Expected results	Dependence on other activities	Deadline
	Objective: Improving the organizational structure for the governance of implementation of IS3 and coordination with the OPs						

1	Decision Draft of the Council of Ministers (CoM) on the activities and functions of the Council for Smart Growth (CSG)	ME	CoM	Clarification of the functions of the Secretariat with the CoM	Adoption of Decision of CoM for the establishment of CSG	Clarification of the responsibilities of ME in connection with the new structure of the government	March, 2015
2	Preparing the Rules of Procedure Draft of the activities of the Council for Smart Growth	ME	CoM, MES,	Elaboration of mechanism for identification of authoritative representatives of business and science-members of CSG	Clear rules on responsibilities and tasks for CSG	Clarification of responsibilities of ME in connection with the new structure of the government	March, 2015
3	Determination of “SME’s and Innovation” Directorate for Secretariat of IS3	ME	CoM	Preparation of Order of the Minister of Economy	Written and affirmed responsibilities of the Secretariat for IS3 implementation	Structuring of the government, nomination of policy management of ME	December, 2014
4	Identification of stakeholders for participation in the activities of the National Council on Innovation and the National Council on Science and Innovation(NCSI) with the Ministry on Agriculture and Food (MAF)	ME, MES, MAF	Ministries, BIA, BCCI, CEIB, AIC, HEIs, BAS, CA, NGOs	Sending letters for nomination of respective representatives	Order for approval of council’s staff	-	May, 2014
5	Identification of authoritative representatives of business and science to participate in the activities of NCI and NSCI with MAF as private persons	ME, MES, MAF	Media, BIA, BCCI, CEIB, AIC, HEIs, BAS, AA, NGOs	Consideration of the nominated representatives with an wide circle of stakeholders	Determination of leaders of the working groups with representatives of science and business to the Councils after their establishment	P. 4	June, 2014
6	Regular meetings of NCI and NSCI for handling incoming suggestions from business, science and all stakeholders	ME	MES	Updating Council’s staff	Conducting effective Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP)	After composing of the government and P.4	continuous

7	Detailed structure of the monitoring and evaluation process	ME	MES, MTITC	Introduction of single accounting form. For OP – in accordance with the OP rules. For national resources – in accordance with the adopted budget procedures.	Introduction of clear, realizable rules for monitoring and evaluation	Elaborated single rules for accounting under Ops	June, 2015
8	Coordinated management of OP IC and OP SESG	ME/MES		Setting-up of Inter-institutional working group (IIWG) with clear mandate to ensuring a close coordination in the management of both OPs with a view (i) to increase synergies and (ii) avoid duplications and overlaps	Adoption of Decision of CoM for the establishment of IIWG and corresponding rules of procedure	Adoption of OPIC and OP SESG	February, 2015
9	Adoption of Statutes for monitoring and evaluation of R&D activities conducted by HEIs and science organizations and NFSR activities	MES	Representatives of science community	Finalizing Statutes' texts	Introduction of regular evaluation of research activities of science organizations		June, 2015
Objective: Promotion of private investments in R&D							
10	Elaboration of multiannual plan with indicative budget of the measures for IS3 implementation	MES, MTITC, MAF	Regional Partner's network	Organizing consecutive expert meetings of the responsible institutions for clarification of time frame for future activities	Survey and tracking for achievement of the IS3 objectives	Structuring of the new government and clarifying of the new structure of ME	June, 2015
11	Support of innovative companies for development of new products and	ME	Authoritative scientists and	Harmonizing the rules of NIF with the Ministry	Opening the next NIF procedure,	Ensuring national resources for the	June, 2015

	technologies with the resources of the National Innovation Fund		businessmen	of Finance	Attracting private investments in R&D in favor of quickly developing enterprises	activities of NIF	
	Objective: Aligning research infrastructure and scientific priorities with economic priority areas identified in IS3						
12	Mapping of the research infrastructure capacity in Bulgaria	MES		Survey on research capacity and recommendations for prioritisation in IS3 Thematic areas			June 2015
13	Update of Research Infrastructure roadmap	MES		Alignment of the Research Infrastructure roadmap with the IS3 that: (i) gives priority to the RI involved in IS3 Thematic areas (ii) defines the role to be played by RI for IS3 at regional level	Approval by Decision of CoM on the updated roadmap	Setting-up of the CSG	July 2015
14	Update of the National Strategy of Scientific Research			Bring the National Strategy of Scientific research in line with the IS3	Approval by Decision of CoM on the updated national strategy of Scientific research	Setting-up of the CSG	July 2015
	Objective : Ensuring synergy to solve national and regional challenges – identifying the mechanism of implementation of horizontal and vertical links in the implementation of IS3						
15	Establishing a regional partnership network	ME	District administration	Identifying of district administration	List with nominated district administration	Changes in the District Administration	October, 2014

				representatives	representatives	Structure, Changes in the structure of ME	
16	Statutes for the activities of the Regional Partnership Network (RPN)	ME/MES	District administration	Meeting of District administration nominees for presentation of the objectives and tasks of the RPN	Order of the Minister for approval of the Statutes for the activities of the RPN	Nominating District administration representative for RPN	February, 2015
17	Organizing a regional partnership event to discuss IS3 (North-East region)	ME	MES	Identifying local stakeholder to be invited to discussions	Realizing the “Entrepreneurial Discovery Process”		December, 2014
18	Organizing a regional partnership event to discuss IS3 (North-West region)	ME	MES	Identifying local stakeholders to be invited to discussions	Realizing the “Entrepreneurial Discovery Process”		December, 2014
19	Organizing a regional partnership event to discuss IS3(North-Central region)	ME	MES	Identifying local stakeholders to be invited to discussions	Realizing the “Entrepreneurial Discovery Process”		December, 2014
20	Organizing a regional partnership event to discuss IS3 (South Central region)	ME	MES	Identifying local stakeholders to be invited to discussions	Realizing the “Entrepreneurial Discovery Process”		January, 2015
21	Organizing a regional partnership event to discuss IS3 (South East region)	ME	MES	Identifying local stakeholders to be invited to discussions	Realizing the “Entrepreneurial Discovery Process”		January, 2015
22	Organizing a regional partnership event to discuss IS3 (South West region)	ME	MES	Identifying local stakeholders to be invited to discussions	Realizing the “Entrepreneurial Discovery Process”		January, 2015
23	Actual picture of the innovation potential of	ME/MES	Local and	Opening Public	Identifying potential	Securing resources for	October, 2015

	regions NUTs 2 /Districts		municipal authorities, employers' organizations, academia at local level	procurement order	for development in the defined thematic areas and assessing the necessity for change/in details	Public procurement order	
	Objective: Intensifying the Entrepreneurial Discovery process, activating the links between science and business by identifying the specific challenges and the ways to overcome them						
24	Thematic event „Informatics and ICT“	ME	Cluster, branch organizations	Identifying stakeholders from business, academia, NGOs	Realizing the “Entrepreneurial Discovery Process” by Thematic areas		February, 2015
25	Thematic event „New technologies in creative and recreational industries“	ME	Representatives of the business, academia, NGOs	Identifying stakeholders from business, academia, NGOs	Realizing the “Entrepreneurial Discovery Process” by Thematic areas		March, 2015
26	Annual meeting of science circles with entrepreneurs and investors	ME	MES, BAS, HEIs, Employers' organizations	Identifying stakeholders from business, academia, NGOs	Realizing the “Entrepreneurial Discovery Process”		May, 2015
27	Thematic event „Mechatronics and clean technologies“	ME	MES, clusters, branch organizations	Identifying stakeholders from business, academia, NGOs	Realizing the “Entrepreneurial Discovery Process” by Thematic areas		May, 2015
28	Thematic event „Healthy life and Bio-technology“	MES	ME, clusters branch organizations	Identifying stakeholders from business, academia, NGOs	Realizing the “Entrepreneurial Discovery Process” by Thematic areas		May, 2015
29	Elaborating Technology roadmaps related to Thematic areas	ME	Industry, science circles	Opening Public procurement order	Elaborating product and technology niches with growth	Securing resources for the Public procurement order	October, 2015

					potential		
30	Summary and taking notes of the received comments and remarks	ME	MES, MAF, MTITC	Creating strict organization	Finalizing of IS3 text		May, 2015
31	Approval of IS3 by CoM	ME	MoF, CoM				June, 2015

10. SECTION 10 REDUCTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN FOR BENEFICIARIES

(Reference: point (c) of Article 96(6) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Summary of the assessment of the administrative burden for beneficiaries and, where necessary, the actions planned accompanied by an indicative timeframe to reduce administrative burden

<10.0 type="S" maxlength="7000" input="M" decision=N PA=Y>

In the programming period 2007-2013 some changes were introduced to reduce the administrative burden for beneficiaries, such as electronic submission of applications for grant funding and electronic project reporting. In spite of those, the administrative burden has remained quite high. This is mostly due to the large number of documents requested from beneficiaries at the stages of application and contracting.

In the new programming period 2014-2020 reducing the administrative burden should be taken up as a priority by the Managing Authority in order to avoid delays in procedures. The main focus will be:

- Fast administrative services;
- Electronic service provision – electronic submission and electronic reporting;
- Optimising the process of evaluation of project proposals;
- Reducing the number of requested documents from beneficiaries;
- Providing beneficiaries with the opportunity to request clarifications electronically and ensuring quick and efficient feedback;
- Using simplified costs options

11. SECTION 11 HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

(Reference: Article 96(7) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

11.1 Sustainable development

Description of specific action to take into account environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management, in the selection of operations.

<13.1 type="S" maxlength="5500" input="M" decision=N>

The OP SESG embraces the definition of sustainable development of the UN Bruntland Report¹¹¹:

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The key concepts of “needs” and “limitations” have been mapped onto our understanding of processes in Bulgaria as part of a global system based on relations in time and space:

What is happening here today will necessarily model what will happen tomorrow elsewhere.

This is the common understanding behind the overall logic of the Programme, *the focal point of which is **smart** growth.*

The key environmental aspect of sustainable development, which includes elements such as development of green technologies and sound management of natural resources, has been consistently elaborated within the scope of Priority Axis 1. Research and technological development.

During the planning of the respective operations, criteria for prioritisation of projects aimed at environmental innovation and technologies for energy efficiency and renewable energy, organic farming and foods will be formulated. The preparation of tender documentation will seek to ensure compliance with the sectors in the RIS3:

- Mechatronics and clean technologies;
- Informatics and ICT;
- Industry for healthy living and biotechnology;
- New technologies in creative and recreational industries.

Aside from the field of science, within the scope of Priority Axis 2. Education and lifelong learning the tenets of sustainable development will underpin the adaptation of the learning content and the preparation of new curricula and syllabi. At school level, best practice in the field of environmental education will be built upon and further developed, including through preparation of new schoolbooks. As regards university education, calls for proposals will focus on specialties preparing professionals in the fields of green energy, organic farming and food processing, energy efficiency and alternative fuels.

¹¹¹ Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future, United Nations, 1987

11.2 Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

Description of specific action to promote equal opportunities and prevent discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation, design and implementation of the operational programme and in particular in relation to access to funding, taking account of the needs of the various target groups at risk of such discrimination and in particular the requirements to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities.

<13.2 type="S" maxlength="5500" input="M" decision=N>

The application of the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination will affect the following commitments of the OP SESG:

- a. Identification of specific target groups at risk;
- b. Introduction of compulsory criteria for the project selection;
- c. Launching targeted operations focused on the needs of groups of people at a disadvantaged position;
- d. Inclusion of a compulsory set of measures to support disadvantaged people;
- e. Inclusion of mechanisms for monitoring and control in the rules of procedure of the administrator of funding.

A. As regards specific target groups the Operational Programme has identified two categories:

A.1. Participants with limited access to education

Investment Priority 1 of Priority Axis 3. Educational environment for active social inclusion identifies as subject of the measures **children and students with special educational needs**. Special attention has been drawn to the weaknesses in the early assessment of the needs of such children, the provision of teaching materials and technical aids, and the number of professionals with the required qualifications.

A.2. Participants at risk of discrimination

These are explicitly referred to in the title of Investment Priority 2. Social and economic integration of **marginalised communities such as the Roma**. Some important issues concerning this category are:

- Prejudice based on religion or ethnicity;
- Lack of basic environment and ability to work with multiethnic groups;
- Poor command of Bulgarian.

B. As regards the introduction of specific criteria in the selection methodology, the administrators of funding will shape procedural rules and eligibility criteria in a way that will obligate project contractors to ensure physical conditions for good performance of participants at a disadvantaged position, such as buildings with mobility facilities,

training materials and aids for people with impaired vision and hearing.

C. As regards the planning of targeted operations focused on the needs of the identified groups at risk, Priority Axis 3. Educational environment for active social inclusion contains a set of indicative actions (integration, inclusive education) setting thematic directions for forthcoming calls for proposals.

D. As regards the compulsory measures to support disadvantaged groups, in addition to the targeted intervention under Priority Axis 3, their needs will be considered under other operations that are not specifically aimed at inclusion and integration. The general educational orientation of Priority Axis 2. Education and lifelong learning will address identified groups at risk through:

- Prevention of early school leaving (assessment of special educational needs);
- Development of mechanisms for student support (preferential conditions for people at risk);
- Training of trainers and teachers (to work with children at risk);
- Introduction of new forms of teaching and development of the potential of ICT in education (alternative remote participation in the learning process to eliminate discomforts associated with physical presence).

E. As regards the monitoring of compliance with the principles, at operational level the application of the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination will be subject to a separate check as part of the monitoring. This means that dedicated evaluation tables and forms with focus on specific indicators rather than formal compliance will need to be prepared.

11.3 Equality between men and women

Description of contribution of the operational programme to the promotion of equality between men and women and, where appropriate, the arrangements to ensure the integration of the gender perspective at operational programme and operation level.

<13.2 type="S" maxlength="5500" input="M" decision=N>

The OP SESG's understanding of the gender perspective is in accordance with the following definition of the concept of gender mainstreaming of the UN:

*Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels.*¹¹²

The OP SESG will ensure the application of the principle of gender equality through:

1. Criteria for selection of project management teams which provide equal opportunities for participation;

¹¹² UN General Assembly: Report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997 (A/52/3, 18 September 1997); available at <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/52/plenary/a52-3.htm>

2. Recruitment practices to ensure adequate representation for the target group;
3. Modelling learning content in a way that will shift the focus in the representation of traditional gender roles and promote a change of attitude.

12. SECTION 12 SEPARATE ELEMENTS

12.2 Performance framework of operational programme

Table 28

Table 28: Performance framework by fund and category of region (summary table)

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023) ¹¹³		
						M	W	T
<12.2.1 type="S" input="G">	<12.2.2 type="S" input="G">	<12.2.3 type="S" input="G">	<12.2.4 type="S" input="G">	<12.2.5 type="S" input="G">	<12.2.6 type="S" input="G">	<12.2.7 type="S" input="G">		
PA1	ERDF	Less developed	New researchers in supported entities	Full-time equivalents	35			300
PA1	ERDF	Less developed	Researchers working in improved RI facilities outside Sofia	Full-time equivalents	50			200
PA1	ERDF	Less developed	Certified expenditures	EUR	28 633 075,1			286 330 751
PA2	ESF	Less developed	Pedagogical specialists involved in training for the application of modern evaluation methods	Number	1 000			5 000
PA2	ESF	Less developed	School students involved in activities aiming to increase motivation for learning through the development of specific knowledge, skills and competencies	Number	50 000			160 000
PA2	ESF	Less developed	Education support budget in the higher education institutions, which is calculated on the basis of education quality	%	16			60

¹¹³ The target value may be presented as a total (men+women) or broken down by gender.

			<i>evaluation and relevance to the labour market needs</i>					
<i>PA2</i>	<i>ESF</i>	<i>Less developed</i>	<i>Students in priority subjects having received scholarships</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>7 500</i>			<i>30 000</i>
<i>PA2</i>	<i>ESF</i>	<i>Less developed</i>	<i>Pedagogical specialists involved in programmes for raising the qualification under the OP:</i> <i>- Up to 34 years of age</i> <i>- b/w 35 and 54 years of age</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>1 200</i> <i>9 000</i>			<i>4 000</i> <i>30 000</i>
<i>PA2</i>	<i>ESF</i>	<i>Less developed</i>	<i>Students enrolled in pedagogical sciences</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>21000</i>			<i>28000</i>
<i>PA2</i>	<i>ESF</i>	<i>Less developed</i>	<i>School students involved in career guidance activities under the OP</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>50 000</i>			<i>200 000</i>
<i>PA2</i>	<i>ESF</i>	<i>Less developed</i>	<i>School students included in practical training programs in a real work environment</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>6 000</i>			<i>20 000</i>
<i>PA2</i>	<i>ESF</i>	<i>Less developed</i>	<i>Share of students having passed successfully practical training in a real work environment from the involved in actions under OP</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>87</i>			<i>90</i>
<i>PA2</i>	<i>ESF</i>	<i>Less developed</i>	<i>Certified expenditures</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>77 403 712,75</i>			<i>245 111 757,05</i>
<i>PA3</i>	<i>ESF</i>	<i>Less developed</i>	<i>Children and school students with SEN, participating in activities supported by the OP</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>1 500</i>			<i>2 300</i>
<i>PA3</i>	<i>ESF</i>	<i>Less developed</i>	<i>Disadvantaged children, students and young people (incl. Roma),</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>15 000</i>			<i>56 250</i>

			<i>participating in activities for educational integration and re-integration</i>					
<i>PA3</i>	<i>ESF</i>	<i>Less developed</i>	<i>Certified expenditures</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>16 751 919,6</i>			<i>122 417 874</i>

12.3 Relevant partners involved in preparation of programme

<12.3 type="S" maxlength="10500" input="M" decision=N>

- MES/MEYS;
- Ministry of Finance;
- Ministry of Labour and Social Policy;
- Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism/MEE;
- Ministry of Interior;
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works/MRD;
- Ministry of Health;
- Ministry of Culture;
- Ministry of Physical Education and Sports/MYS;
- Ministry of Transport, Information Technologies and Communication;
- Ministry of Environment and Water;
- Ministry of Defence;
- Ministry of Justice;
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food;
- Administration of the Council of Ministers – Strategic Development and Coordination Directorate; Programming of EU Funds Directorate; Monitoring of EU Funds Directorate; Information and EU Funds Management Systems Directorate; Operational Programme “Technical Assistance”;
- Bulgarian Academy of Sciences;
- Agricultural Academy;
- Rectors’ Conference;

- National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria;
- Executive Agency “Audit of European Union Funds”;
- National Centre “European Youth Programmes and Initiatives”;
- National Agency for Vocational Education and Training;
- National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency;
- Centre for Control and Assessment of the Quality in School Education;
- Centre for Information Assurance of Education;
- Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Young People from Minorities;
- National Institute for Training and Qualification in the System of Education;
- National Centre for Information and Documentation;
- Human Resource Development Centre;
- National Assembly of the Students’ Councils;
- Representatives of the academic community;
- Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture;
- State Fund Agriculture;
- State Agency for Child Protection;
- Economic and Social Council;
- National Statistical Institute;
- Commission for Protection against Discrimination;
- National Representative Organisations of and for People with Disabilities;
- Regional Development Councils of Severoiztochen Region, Severen Tsentralen Region, Severozapaden Region, Yugoiztochen Region, Yuzhen Tsentralen Region, Yugozapaden Region;
- Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
- Confederation of Employers and Industrialists in Bulgaria;
- Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association;
- Bulgarian Industrial Association;
- Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria;

- Confederation of Labour Podkrepa;
- Educational organisations;
- Organisations providing information services, organisations working in the field of youth and in the field of public health, organisations working towards integration of minority ethnic groups and immigrants, organisations working in the field of human and civil rights;
- Research organisations;
- Council for Administrative Reform;
- UNICEF.

ANNEXES (uploaded to electronic data exchange system as separate files):

- Draft report of ex-ante evaluation with executive summary (mandatory)
(Reference: Article 55(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)
- Documentation on assessment of applicability and fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities (as appropriate)
- Opinion of national equality bodies on sections 11.2 and 11.3 (as appropriate)
(Reference: Article 96(7) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)
- Citizens' summary of operational programme (as appropriate)