

The Programme is implemented with the support of the **Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area (EEA FM)** 2014-2021, established by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Its total budget is **41 176 471 EUR**, with 85% of the funds provided by the EEA FM and the remaining 15% provided by the national budget.

The Programme is aimed at supporting local development through the implementation of *integrated measures* in the field of education, employment and health (with a focus on the needs of vulnerable groups).

News

Despite the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the “Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Enhanced Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups” Programme is being implemented **according to the approved schedule**.



Currently, contracts are being implemented for approximately **50% of the funds** under the Programme, intended for project funding. The remaining 50% of these funds are expected to be contracted by the middle of next year.

For more information about the projects:

<https://www.eeagrants.bg/programi/mestno-razvitie/proekti>

In 2020, a new amount of **7 407 307 BGN** was provided to expand the scope and activities of the four Youth Centers established with the EEA FM support during the previous programming period in the cities of **Stara Zagora, Plovdiv, Dobrich and Vratsa**.

The centers fully comply with the standards approved by the Council of Europe. This was proved by the fact that two of them (i.e., the centers in Stara Zagora and Plovdiv) were awarded the **Quality Label** of the Council of Europe for two consecutive periods.



In a short period, the four centers proved their social impact and were recognized by youth as a preferred place not only for acquiring new knowledge and skills, but also to have an interesting leisure time. Over 5 000 young people under the age of 29 are actively involved in the various activities of the centers.



On the other hand, the municipal authorities have recognized the youth centers as a reliable partner in their work with young people in the region.

For more information about the activity of the centers:

<http://youthcentre.plovdiv.bg/bg>

<http://ycd.bg/>

<https://youthcentervratza.com/>

<https://bg->

[facebook.com/InternationalYouthCenterStaraZagora/](https://bg-facebook.com/InternationalYouthCenterStaraZagora/)

<https://bg-bg.facebook.com/YouthCentrePlovdiv/>

<https://www.facebook.com/YouthCenterDobrich/>

<https://www.facebook.com/youth.center.vratsa/>



■ On October 20th, 2020, contracts in the total amount of **15,048,820.68 BGN** were concluded with the municipalities of **Burgas, Gabrovo, Montana and Pernik** for **the establishment of four new youth centers**.



Up to 60% of the funds provided under these contracts are intended for the construction of the infrastructure of the centers.

Thus, the National Network of Youth Centers will include four more centers that meet not only the needs of young people from the respective municipalities, but also the highest European standards, summarized in the “Quality Label” requirements of the Council of Europe.

For more information about the projects:

<https://www.eeagrants.bg/programi/mestno-razvitie/proekti>

■ In 2020, the implementation of the project “**Rehabilitation Center for Children with Oncohematological Diseases**” of the Municipality of Kostinbrod has started.

The project has a budget of **1,223,982.67 BGN** and will be implemented in partnership with the Association “Children with Oncohematologic Diseases”.



The main objective of the project is to help children and young people with oncohematological diseases, as well as their families, overcome and recover from the physical and psychological stress caused by the disease and its long and complex treatment.

For more information about the project:

<http://e-homecarebg.com/bg/>

<https://www.eeagrants.bg/programi/mestno-razvitie/proekti/vzstanovitelen-czentr-za-decza-s-onkoxematologichni-zabolyavaniya%E2%80%9C>

Open calls for project proposals

Invitation for Application under the **Bilateral Fund**

All potential beneficiaries under the Programme, as well as their potential partners from the Donor States, may apply for funding from the Bilateral Fund of the Programme. Under this fund, the exchange of experience and creation of new partnerships between the potential applicants from Bulgaria and appropriate organizations from the Donor States will be financed. The invitation will help reimburse the costs of travel, food, accommodation and domestic transport, with a maximum funding of up to **3,000 Euro per person**. Therefore, all organizations seeking potential partners for the development and/or implementation of projects under the Programme may apply for financing under the Bilateral Fund.

For more information about the Invitation:

<https://www.eeagrants.bg/programi/mestno-razvitie/novini-1/vzmozhnost-za-vsichki-potenczialni-kandidati-da-polzvat-dvustranniya-fond>

Forthcoming calls for project proposals

1. Call for proposals “**Early Childhood Education and Care**”, with a total budget of **6 029 412 EUR**. The Draft for Application Guidelines were published by the Programme Operator for public discussion. A “Round table” was organized with experts from the state administration, municipalities and non-governmental organizations working in the field of early childhood development and education. After reflecting the received recommendations, the draft document was sent for review to the National Focal Point and the Financial Mechanism Office. Once their approval is received, the call for proposals will be officially launched.

Under this call, municipalities will be able to apply with projects totaling up to 500 000 EUR (i.e. approximately 1 000 000 BGN). Part of this budget is envisaged for the construction or improvement of the infrastructure of the kindergartens, while the other part is reserved to expanding their scope, introducing innovative methods for working with children, involving parents in the preparation and conduct of various events and activities, as well as supporting the already established activities for socialization and civic education of children (including green initiatives, competitions, festivals and sports events, celebrations of holidays, visits to performances, art workshops for building skills in applied arts, etc.).

It is foreseen that at least 20% of the children involved in the funded projects will be from vulnerable groups.

2. Call for proposals “**Integrated Measures in Support of Roma Inclusion**”, with a budget totaling **8 000 000 EUR**. The Programme Operator has already held a public discussion of the Application Guidelines under this procedure and following their approval by the Programme Partners, the National Focal Point and the Financial Mechanism Office, the relevant call will be initiated.

3. **Small Grant Scheme**, with a budget of **4 000 000 EUR**. It will be used to finance projects to support the local development of municipalities that have unused reserves (natural, economic, social, administrative, etc.). The Application Guidelines are currently being developed by the Programme Operator.

Programme Operator

Ministry of Education and Science, “External European Programmes” Directorate



Programme Partner

Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)



International Partner

Organization
Council of Europe



Programme website:

<https://www.eegrants.bg/programi/mestno-razvitie>