



Operational Programme "Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy"

[Bulgaria]

Context

The European Union has set the "Community Strategic Guidelines" (CSGs) on 5 July 2008 within the framework of the Lisbon strategy. They determine the use of structural funds for growth and employment. The new regional policy ends the zoning scheme, which concentrated the aid on predefined areas. Three objectives have been adopted by the European Union and aim to put an end to the "sprinkling" selection of many micro-projects.

- Objective 1 - "Convergence": to accelerate the economic development of the least developed countries and regions. Financed by the ERDF (European Regional and Economic Development Fund), the ESF (European Social Fund) and the Cohesion Fund. Priorities are physical and human capital, innovation, knowledge, environment and administrative efficiency. The total budget is € 251.163 billion.
- Objective 2 - "Regional competitiveness and employment": aid for all regions not covered by the Convergence Objective. It aims to reinforcing competitiveness, employment and attractiveness of these regions. Innovation, the promoting entrepreneurship and environment protection are key themes. The funding (€ 49.13 billion) comes from the ERDF and the ESF.
- Objective 3 - "European territorial cooperation": financed by the ERDF—€ 7.75 billion; it aims to promote cooperation between European regions and the development of common solutions in the fields of urban, rural and coastal development, as well as for economic development and environmental management. It supports:
 - Cross-border cooperation
 - Transnational cooperation
 - Interregional cooperation

In accordance with its Community Strategic Guidelines, on 26 September 2007 the European Union approved a major development programme for Bulgaria for the period 2007-2013 entitled "Operational Program for the Development of Competitiveness of the Economy Bulgarian". This programme provided support for the entire national territory in the context of the Convergence objective.

This operational programme is in line with the objectives of the Lisbon Agenda 2000 and the Community strategic guidelines for economic, social and territorial cohesion. In addition, the Operational Programme contributed to the achievement of the EU's horizontal objectives, namely the protection of the environment, equal opportunities and the development of the information society.



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Description and Main Objectives

The Operational Programme "Developing of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy" is the main programming document aimed at optimizing the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy. The proposed assistance will support the development of competitive and efficient production in the industrial sector. It aims to increase economic growth and facilitate the necessary economic restructuring of the Bulgarian economy with a view to achieving high standard of living based on sustainable economic and social development.

These objectives are to be achieved through support to improve the productivity and growth potential of small and medium-sized enterprises, foster the development of innovations, facilitate the transition to a knowledge-based economy and the introduction of new technologies, and optimize the business environment.

In order to achieve the main objective of the programme, the following specific points should be emphasized: encouraging innovation, increasing the efficiency of enterprises and improving the environment in which they operate.

The programme defined five priority axes:

1. Priority axis 1 - Developing a knowledge economy and innovation activities for enterprises;
2. Priority axis 2 - Increase business efficiency and promote a supportive environment (modernization of technologies, quality management, improvement of advisory and information services, energy efficiency, cooperation);
3. Priority axis 3 - Improve access to capital by increasing investment activity and enhancing entrepreneurship through specific financial instruments and financial engineering for SMEs;
4. Priority axis 4 - Strengthen the Bulgarian economy on the international market by promoting its integration into the European and global Single Market, by improving the investment and export environment (encouraging foreign investment, optimizing potential export of the national economy);
5. Priority axis 5 - Provide technical assistance for the management, conduct, monitoring and control of program activities.

The programme is implemented through calls for proposals.

Budget

The total budget of the OP is €1.162b; ERDF funds amount to € 988 M (about 15% of the total investment in Bulgaria).

Time frame

Start date: 2014 - End date: 2020

Contacts & Links

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