

## **Involving all stakeholders in a project will increase the chances for receiving a grant**

*Bulgaria's European Union membership has afforded opportunities to the country to participate in the European Regional Policy. Our country has the chance to absorb almost EUR 7 billion from the EU Structural Funds. The funds will be allocated to projects that meet the priorities of the seven Operational Programmes. The development of a project to apply for grants under the EU Structural Instruments is a process where the partnerships, between different organisations that are related to the set in the project objective, have an important role to play. Hence – BE ACTIVE!*

The contracts for awarding grants are to be concluded between the beneficiaries and the Managing Authority or an Intermediate Body.

### **The contract should contain the following information:**

- name of the applicant
- type of assistance (e.g. ERDF)
- grant size and co-financing
- project start date and project completion date, prescribed period of operation
- rules on eligibility of expenditure
- process and conditions of claiming payments
- delivery of project progress reports
- rules on state aid (where these apply)
- type of procedure and rules on state aid
- provision of information and publicity

- provision of documentation
- rules on on-the-spot checks
- provisions on dispute arbitration, settlement or legal recourse (where these apply)
- provisions on withholding and repayment of grant
- securities
- process and conditions of amendments to the grant contract

**The following shall be attached to the grant contract:**

- budget of the project with costs broken down by expenditure categories and year;
- quantitative target and indicators of achievement, broken down by year;
- securities (e.g. authorisation for prompt collection, mortgage contract, if required)

The covering offer letter will list the documents that have to be attached to the application form, as well as templates of other necessary attachments for participation in the procedure. They must be delivered by the beneficiaries and represent an important pre-condition for signing the contract.

**These may include:**

- model signature
- certificates of legal status
- certificates of the tax and social authorities that the beneficiary does not have overdue public debts

- certificates of the environment protection, nature conservation and water management authorities
- authorisation(s) for prompt collection in respect of each of the beneficiary's accounts
- mortgage contract plus certificate that the mortgage is registered by the Land Registry or by the Notary Chamber of Bulgaria, in case such securities are required by law

Once the contracts have been signed the Managing Authority/Intermediate Body prepares a notice of award to be published on the web site of the relevant Managing Authority, which includes: name and address, name and legal seat of the beneficiaries respectively; the operation wherefor the grant is awarded and the amount of the grant; as well as deadline for the project implementation.

The project selection and evaluation procedure usually takes from 60 to 100 calendar days.

### ***Partnerships and consultations would help the applicants***

In order to ensure that the project is indeed in line with Programme and other requirements, potential project applicants should be able to consult with impartial experts and receive help with turning their ideas into a fundable, sufficiently concrete and manageable project.

### **Development of a project in partnership**

Successful projects are result of collective thinking. A project promoting organisation should strive to involve all parties that are concerned by the implementation or the effects of the planned project, have a direct stake in it, or whose co-operation or resistance may be of decisive importance for the success or failure of the initiative. Establishing a dialogue between stakeholders will improve the project's chances for success.

All project applicants will be encouraged at an early stage to seek the advice and guidance of local partnerships and other partners in developing their projects. Local partnerships will give advice on all local projects, and assist those that fit their development strategy. They will in particular

want to help project developers ensure that relevant people and organisations are involved in the development of a project and to take forward any issues that relate to the cross-cutting themes or are linked to other activity in the area.

### **Commitment to equal opportunities**

The Managing Authority (or the Intermediate Body) controls the appraisal process. All projects need to demonstrate firm commitment to the principle of equal opportunities and avoidance of discrimination. For instance, by developing an action plan the organisations shall provide an opportunity for training to all their employees in compliance with the principle of equal opportunities.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment**

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) shall be undertaken for all programmes and projects when it is required by law and when such impacts are possible. This is done after an assessment by the Ministry of Environment and Water in Bulgaria.

### **State aid**

The assistance from the Structural Funds for the enterprises should comply with the state aid rules. The monitoring and transparency of state aids at national, district and municipal level is ensured by the Minister of Finance. According to its authority, the Minister of Finance has published an Ordinance on the Set of Rules for the Supervising and Ensuring the State Aid Transparency.

