



**MID-TERM
PROGRAMME FOR
DEVELOPMENT
ASSITANCE AND
HUMANITARIAN
AID OF THE
REPUBLIC OF
BULGARIA FOR
THE PERIOD
2020-2024**



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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

CoMD	Council of Ministers Decree
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EU	European Union
GNI	Gross National Income
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
DM	Diplomatic Mission
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

01.

PROLOGUE



**Ekaterina ZAHARIEVA,
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FOR JUDICIAL
REFORM AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

The third consecutive Mid-term Programme for Bulgaria's participation in the international development cooperation, covering the period between 2020 and 2024, reaffirms our country's political will to be actively involved in the multilateral efforts and partnership to implement the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals, defined in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and adopted unanimously by the international community in 2015.

With its accession to the European Union (EU), Bulgaria has assumed important commitments to participate in the Union's Common Foreign Policy, including the development policy, whose importance for security is increasing. Strengthening the EU's leading role as the world's largest donor in international development cooperation remains one of the key priorities in the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy of 2016. The Bulgarian development assistance successfully complements our sharing in the common instruments for EU external action in order to assist neighbouring countries and regions, as well as developing countries, and to provide humanitarian aid.

This Mid-term Programme builds upon and enriches the geographical and sectoral priorities of Bulgaria's official development assistance formulated in the previous

strategic documents on the subject and broadens the range of participants. It proves our country's steady shift from being mainly a development aid recipient to becoming a donor country that is actively preparing to achieve one of its crucial foreign policy goals: membership in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

As an important foreign policy instrument, official development assistance pursues several major objectives:

- to affirm Bulgaria as a consistent, reliable and predictable partner on the international scene and to safeguard national interests;
- to facilitate the pursuit of good-neighbourly and friendly relations with neighbouring countries and with countries that are home to Bulgarian communities;
- to invigorate economic contacts with Bulgaria's long-standing and new partners in the Middle East, Asia and Africa;
- to help overcome poverty and inequalities within and among countries that catalyse refugee flows and illegal migration;
- last but not least, to assert the principle of multilateralism in international relations, respect for international law, the values of democracy and human rights.

The new Mid-term Programme acknowledges the need for Bulgarian development assistance and humanitarian aid to prioritise activities related to mitigating health, economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the midst of the crisis, Bulgaria promptly redirected financial resources to urgent humanitarian aid provided to the countries of the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership. We will try to keep responding as adequately as possible to partner countries' needs of protection of health workers at the frontline, children and vulnerable groups ensuring that no one is left behind.

I would like to thank the experts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the other competent authorities represented in the Working Group on International Development Cooperation, as well as the Bulgarian Platform for International Development as a representative of civil society, for contributing to the drafting of this important strategic document.

02.

BULGARIA'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND HUMANITARIAN AID POLICY: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES

Development cooperation policy is an integral part of the foreign policy of the Republic of Bulgaria and, according to Article 1 (2) of *Council of Ministers Decree No. 234 of 1 August 2011 on the Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria Regarding its Participation in International Development Cooperation*¹, it is implemented in synergy with the European Union's policy (as formulated in the *Treaty on European Union* and the *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*).

In general, Bulgarian development cooperation supports partner countries in implementing the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda)*, adopted by the United Nations in September 2015. With the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its core, the *2030 Agenda* is a transformative political framework to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development globally. It balances the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, including the key issues of governance and peaceful and inclusive societies.

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, as an integral part of the *2030 Agenda*, sets a new paradigm for implementation through effective use of financial and non-financial means, by placing domestic action and sound policies at the forefront. Furthermore, the *2030 Agenda* is complemented by the *Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction* and the *Paris Agreement on Climate Change*.

At the same time, according to Article 208 of the *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*, the development cooperation policy of each Member State should complement the EU's common policy and instruments in this area. In this sense, the Bulgarian ODA takes account of the EU goals of strengthening social and sustainable development in the developing countries and their integration into the world economy. Bulgaria's policy is in line with the *New European Consensus on Development*², which outlines the principal approaches of the EU and its Member States to the implementation of SDGs in partner countries, and the *European*

¹ CoMD No. 234 of 2011 defines the goals and principles of development-cooperation and humanitarian-aid policy, the governance, planning, implementation and monitoring mechanisms, and the instruments, forms and methods of providing development aid and humanitarian aid. The Decree is available online at <https://www.lex.bg/bg/laws/ldoc/2135745013>.

² Available online at https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/european-consensus-on-development-final-20170626_en.pdf.

*Consensus on Humanitarian Aid*³, which lays down the principles of action of the EU and its Member States in response to humanitarian crises.

The goals and areas of development aid mapped out in the Mid-term Programme take account of the specific Bulgarian experience and capacity built during the years of transition, the economic realities, and the need to optimise the targeting and spending of the financial resources allocated for the implementation of Bulgarian development policy.

Bulgaria implements its development cooperation policy on the basis of the following principles:

- **partnership:** implementing Bulgaria's development policy on the basis of sound and long-term cooperation with partner countries and with the members of the international donor community, based on mutual trust and respect for the partners' sovereignty, traditions and culture;
- **ownership:** tailoring Bulgarian Development Aid to partner countries' needs and adapting the development cooperation programmes to the national development strategies and the action ensuing from them;
- **focus:** concentrating the efforts on a limited range of beneficiaries and areas of intervention owing to the resource constraints of the Republic of Bulgaria;
- **conditionality:** providing assistance on the basis of partner countries' performance and in line with good governance requirements;
- **effectiveness:** maximising the effectiveness of development aid by partnering with all stakeholders, and above all with EU Member States, in order to improve the quality and outcomes of the assistance and increase the effectiveness of its utilisation by partner countries;
- **transparency:** opening cooperation with developing countries for discussion with representatives of the Bulgarian public administration, NGOs, private business persons, academics and other interested social groups, and with partner countries. Resources are allocated and their utilisation is evaluated on the basis of objective and transparent criteria based on good governance principles.
- **non-discrimination:** Bulgarian Development Aid is provided on the basis of equal treatment and equal opportunities, i.e. without discrimination on grounds of gender, race, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, etc.

³ Available online at [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42008X0130\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42008X0130(01)&from=EN).

Humanitarian aid is provided respecting fundamental principles which are enshrined in international law and are included in the *European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid*:

- **humanity:** the main purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life, health and dignity of all people, with particular attention to the most vulnerable in the population;
- **impartiality:** humanitarian aid is provided solely on the basis of need and without discrimination within affected populations;
- **neutrality:** humanitarian aid must not favour any side in an armed conflict or other dispute;
- **independence:** humanitarian objectives are autonomous from political, economic, military or other objectives and serve to ensure that the sole purpose of humanitarian aid remains to relieve and prevent the suffering of victims of humanitarian crises.

The main challenge facing Bulgaria's development cooperation policy is honouring the commitment assumed when our country acceded to the EU. Bulgaria, just as the rest of the new Member States which joined after 2002, **is expected to strive to reach a target of 0.33% of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI)** within the time frame set by the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* for the achievement of the SDGs. This presupposes a gradual augmentation of ODA funds, including mobilisation of financial resources from the private sector and enhanced cooperation with other foreign donors and international organisations.

03.

PRIORITIES OF THE BULGARIAN DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The development policy of the Republic of Bulgaria is aligned with the country's key foreign policy priorities relying on traditional historic, economic and cultural ties, geographical proximity to partner countries, as well as their political will for cooperation.

The sectoral priorities of the assistance take into account the partners' needs, the experience, expertise and resources available to Bulgaria, and the track record of development cooperation. Account will also be taken of the existence of good governance and respect for human rights in the partner country.

Considering the economic realities, the provision of ODA is guided by the need to focus on a limited number of areas so as to achieve effectiveness in the medium term.

3.1. Geographical priorities

During the period between 2020 and 2024, the Bulgarian development assistance will target the following priority geographical regions:

- Western Balkans;
- Eastern Partnership;
- Middle East and North Africa;
- Sub-Saharan Africa;
- Asia.

Relations with existing partner countries will continue to develop. The regions of the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership are a Bulgarian foreign policy priority, and their sustainable development and stability correspond to the country's strategic interests.

The emphasis placed on certain partner countries of the Middle East and North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia is detailed, carrying forward the geographical priorities of the previous Mid-term Programme for the Period 2016-2019.

Bilateral cooperation instruments will be in the focus of providing the Bulgarian development assistance.

Partner countries will be selected for the provision of development assistance under specific criteria including:

- Bulgaria's foreign-policy and economic interests;
- The partner country's identified need of development;
- Support for development cooperation and engagement of local stakeholders (governments, civil society, business and local authorities);
- Experience and capacity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of the partners from among Bulgarian ministries and central-government departments;
- Opportunities for the Bulgarian organisations to provide the necessary experience and expertise, and potential for attracting the private sector in public-private partnership;
- Responding to global challenges (migration, pandemics, refugee flows, etc.);
- Cooperation on the ground with the EU, EU Member States and other donors.

3.1.1. Western Balkans

(Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro)




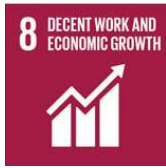



Bulgaria has a tradition in providing development assistance to the Western Balkan countries, guided by the strategic goal of their successful integration into the EU in the medium and long term.

The Western Balkans were a central and priority topic for the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, during which their European perspective and integration were confirmed by the adoption of the *EU Strategy for the Western Balkans*, the *Sofia Declaration* and the *EU Council conclusions* of 26 June 2018. The admission of the Republic of North Macedonia and Albania to NATO and the March 2020 EU Council decision to open accession negotiations with the two countries, confirming the *2003 Thessaloniki Agenda*, are driving a positive change in the situation in the region. The initiatives within the framework of the *Berlin Process*, whose joint presidency in 2020 is held by Bulgaria and the Republic of North Macedonia, also support the European integration of the countries in the region.

Development cooperation has established itself as one of Bulgaria's important foreign policy activities, which deepens the country's tangible presence in the Western Balkan countries at national and local level. This cooperation will also lead to development of economic partnerships and expansion of trade and economic ties.

In programming and implementing its development assistance in the Western Balkans, Bulgaria will seek synergies with the EU and EU Member States and other donors, paying particular attention to the interaction on the ground.

The *National Development Programme BULGARIA 2030* and the EU Development Cooperation Policy will be contributing to the overall coordinated focus of projects in the Western Balkans on aiding partner countries in the implementation of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

OBJECTIVES	Consolidation of the rule of law, public sector reform, local capacity building, protection and promotion of human rights paying particular attention to women, children, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups	Enhancement of the quality of education, including through an improvement of the educational infrastructure	Enhancement of the quality of healthcare, including through an improvement of the infrastructure and of the pandemic response preparedness	Sustainable economic development and support for sustainable employment, support to the business in implementing the EU standards, mitigation of the adverse socio-economic effects of COVID-19
SECTORS	Good governance and civil society	Quality education	Healthcare	Economic sector and services, productive sector
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS				
CROSS CUTTING TOPICS	  			




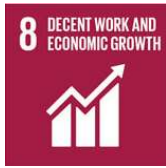


3.1.2. Eastern Partnership

(Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine)

Bulgaria will continue to view the Eastern Partnership countries as priority partners considering the geographical proximity, the longstanding links of friendship and the desire to support these countries in their efforts to move closer to and integrate with the EU. In the ongoing pursuit of this cooperation, Bulgaria will participate in the implementation of the *European Neighbourhood Policy* and the *strategic vision for the Eastern Neighbourhood*⁴.

⁴ Council Conclusions of 11 May 2020 on Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020, available online at https://www.consilium.europa.eu//media/43905/st07510-re01-en20.pdf?utm_source=dsms-auto&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Eastern+Partnership+policy+beyond+2020%3a+Council+approves+conclusions, and Joint Communication by the European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for

Bulgaria will engage in enhanced interaction on the ground with the EU, EU Member States and other donors, especially in tackling the negative socio-economic impact of the global COVID-19 crisis.

OBJECTIVES	Consolidation of the rule of law, public sector reform, local capacity building, protection and promotion of human rights paying particular attention to women, children, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups	Enhancement of the quality of education, including through an improvement of the educational infrastructure	Enhancement of the quality of healthcare, including through an improvement of the infrastructure and of the pandemic response preparedness	Sustainable economic development and support for sustainable employment, support to the business in implementing the EU standards, mitigation of the adverse socio-economic effects of COVID-19
SECTORS	Good governance and civil society	Quality education	Healthcare	Economic sector and services, productive sector
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS				
CROSS CUTTING TOPICS	 			

3.1.3. Middle East and North Africa

(Iraq, Yemen, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia)

Bulgaria will be paying increasing attention to providing development assistance and humanitarian aid to the countries of the Middle East and North Africa with a view to addressing the root causes of irregular migration and refugee waves by means of promoting sustainable development, creating employment on the ground, and strengthening stability and peace.




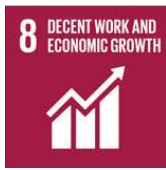



Within the context of overcoming the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the countries and communities of the Middle East and North Africa will be assisted

Foreign Affairs and Security Policy JOIN(2020) 7 final/18.3.2020, available online at https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/joint_communication_on_the_eap_policy_beyond_2020.pdf. An Eastern Partnership Summit took place in June 2020.

in their efforts to enhance their preparedness to respond to such challenges and to improve their resilience.

Expanding this aspect of its development cooperation, Bulgaria will be participating in the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy and in the implementation of the EU development, cooperation and humanitarian aid instruments, funds and mechanisms in response to COVID-19, the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa, the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, etc.

Seeking an effective combination of humanitarian aid and development aid, Bulgaria will be interacting on the ground with the EU, EU Member States and other donors.

OBJECTIVES	Consolidation of the rule of law, public sector reform, local capacity building, protection and promotion of human rights paying particular attention to women, children, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups	Enhancement of the quality of education, including through an improvement of the educational infrastructure	Enhancement of the quality of healthcare, including through an improvement of the infrastructure and of the pandemic response preparedness	Sustainable economic development and support for sustainable employment, support to the business in implementing the EU standards, mitigation of the adverse socio-economic effects of COVID-19
SECTORS	Good governance and civil society	Quality education	Healthcare	Economic sector and services, productive sector
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS				
CROSS CUTTING TOPICS	  			

3.1.4. Sub-Saharan Africa

(Angola, Ethiopia, Namibia, Nigeria)



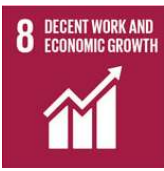



Bulgaria will invigorate its partnership with four least developed and less developed countries of sub-Saharan Africa, carrying forward this geographical priority from the Mid-term Programme for the Period 2016-2019, guided by the 'no one left

behind' principle of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, acting in line with the main strands of the EU's comprehensive Strategy with Africa⁵.

This renewed partnership will take advantage of the tradition in the friendly relations and the accumulated experience in trade and economic cooperation. The existence of Bulgarian embassies and consulates in the region covering those countries and of associations of people who have graduated in Bulgaria is a favourable factor to the implementation of projects.

Bulgaria will be making available its experience and expertise in the sectors of education (offering scholarships), healthcare and agriculture (sending Bulgarian professionals, including volunteers, and sharing knowledge and experience) in order to enhance the sustainable development in partner countries, to improve their resilience in response to various challenges related to migration, climate change, economic development and employment. Tackling the adverse socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic will require continuous efforts in the medium term.

The coordinated interaction on the ground with the EU and EU Member States will increase the possibilities to pursue development cooperation.

OBJECTIVES	Improvement of the access to education and training, thus offering employment prospects to young people	Enhancement of the quality of healthcare and of the pandemic response preparedness	Sustainable economic development, improvement of food security, mitigation of the adverse socio-economic effects of COVID-19
SECTORS	Quality education	Healthcare	Agriculture
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS			
CROSS CUTTING TOPICS	  		




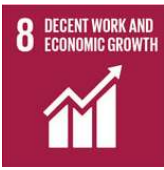


⁵ JOIN(2020) 4 final/ 9.3.2020

3.1.5 Asia

(Afghanistan, Vietnam, Mongolia)

Bulgaria has a long-standing tradition of friendly relations with Vietnam and will continue to provide development assistance to that country with a view to facilitating its sustainable development. The development aid to Mongolia will continue to be provided in line with the modalities of the intergovernmental agreement in the sectors of education and agriculture.

Bulgaria has been providing development assistance to Afghanistan over the last two decades. At this stage and in the near future, the possibilities to implement projects on the ground are blocked owing to the high security risks caused by the complicated military and political situation and continued hostilities. Therefore, administrative capacity building projects and training projects will be implemented mainly in Bulgaria.

OBJECTIVES	Consolidation of the rule of law, public sector reform	Enhancement of the quality of education, including through an improvement of the educational infrastructure	Enhancement of food security	Sustainable economic development and support for sustainable employment, support to the business in implementing the EU standards, mitigation of the adverse socio-economic effects of COVID-19
SECTORS	Good governance and civil society	Quality education	Agriculture	Economy and services
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS				
CROSS CUTTING TOPICS	 			

An extension of the geographical priorities is only possible after achieving an increase of the financial resources for ODA and in strict compliance with the criteria, rules and guidelines of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD DAC) in this area.

3.2. Sectoral priorities

The sectoral priorities of the programme are identified depending on partner countries' needs, the capacity and experience available to Bulgaria, and the results of the monitoring and evaluation of development aid by partner country.

Global challenges and the Sustainable Development Goals are an important factor in choosing sectoral priorities of Bulgarian development assistance. In this way, Bulgaria's development cooperation contributes to the national priorities for the implementation of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

3.2.1. Quality education



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Bulgaria supports an improvement of conditions for, and access to, education in partner countries by sharing its experience in the sphere of inclusive and cross-cultural education, offering study scholarships for students, designing up-to-date curricula, including in global education, etc.

This sectoral priority also includes providing better access to the labour market for disadvantaged group members by activation, information, pro-active motivation, guidance and counselling services tailored to their needs, as well as upskilling and competence-upgrading training to increase their employability.

3.2.2. Quality healthcare



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

A priority sector for the programme is ensuring quality healthcare with an emphasis on vulnerable groups, especially women and children, including raising awareness of preventive healthcare, training of medical specialists and providing support for enhancement of the quality of healthcare. Health and occupational safety, including prevention of work-related diseases, create conditions for ensuring health-related well-being and a high quality of work.

Based on the lessons drawn from the global health crises, Bulgaria will continue to encourage the inter-sectoral initiatives at the international, regional and local level and will be putting strengthening of the capacity and resilience of the health system at the heart of programming development in healthcare.

3.2.3. Capacity building in support of security and development, including through support for good governance and civil society building



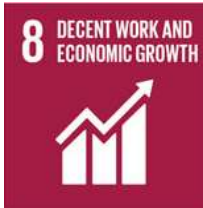
Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

The specific situation in many partner countries makes it necessary to adopt an approach based on the peace, security and development nexus. The creation of a crisis prevention capacity will help building international peace and security in the zones of risk and instability and create sustainable communities.

Promoting democratic processes based on the values of democracy, the rule of law, transparency and effectiveness of institutions is at the core of Bulgarian development assistance. Through this policy, our country assists its partners in the process of reforming the public sector, managing public funds, support for the rule of law and participation of civil society in democratic processes, local capacity building, reforming the security sector and crisis management.

Protection and promotion of human rights is a prerequisite for the sustainable and progressive development of each country, and Bulgaria is giving emphasis to human rights (in particular, gender equality and the rights of children within the context of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*) in the implementation of its policy towards partner countries. The efforts for social inclusion of vulnerable groups are also in the focus of Bulgaria's development policy.

3.2.4. Economic growth



Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable



End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

Through its development aid, Bulgaria provides support to tackle the root causes of migration and improve living conditions in countries which generate a substantial migration flow.

Bulgaria supports partner countries' efforts to improve living conditions by assisting the promotion of micro, small- and medium-sized enterprises, introducing innovation and job creation, through technical support, including in the field of agriculture, and expert assistance for the introduction of sustainable management structures.

We lay emphasis on the specific needs of young people through enhancement of job quality and promotion of entrepreneurship opportunities, supported by effective policies in education, vocational training, skills development, and through access to digital technologies and services.

3.2.5. Cross cutting priority: gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

One of the principal objectives of the *2030 Agenda* is building a world in which all legal, social and economic barriers to the empowerment of women and girls have been removed. There is a growing body of opinion that just and sustainable global development cannot be ensured without achieving equality between women and men, girls and boys.

In practice, however, violence against women and girls is a widespread violation of human rights. This is a worldwide phenomenon and cuts across the spectrum of generations, nationalities, communities and spheres of our societies, regardless of age, ethnicity, disability or other status.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are important objectives by themselves, but they are also a key driver of accelerated realisation of the *2030 Agenda* and the implementation of all 17 SDGs, which are essential for poverty eradication, conflict prevention and sustainable peace building.

The 'no one left behind' principle places the focus on the poorest, marginalised and vulnerable groups, including women, girls and members of the LGBTI community and stresses the importance of taking various measures to eradicate extreme poverty, reduce inequalities and combat discrimination.

The global legal framework for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls includes the *UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* and the Optional Protocol to it; the declarations and platforms for action of the *UN Fourth World Conference on Women* (Beijing, 1995) and the *International Conference on Population and Development* (Cairo, 1994); *UN Security Council resolution 1325* and the related resolutions on women and peace and security, etc.

The last couple of years have witnessed certain hurdles to the global efforts to achieve gender equality, including in the financing of projects and activities in this direction. In its latest assessments, OECD DAC singles out Goal 5 as the least financed one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and this is gradually becoming a persistent trend.

In this context, Bulgaria should be more active in implementing development cooperation and humanitarian aid projects and activities directly related to gender equality:

- economic, social and political empowerment of women and girls;
- protection of women and girls in conditions of instability and conflict;
- elimination of sexual exploitation, harassment and other harmful practices of gender-based violence and discrimination;
- improvement of sexual and reproductive health;
- ensuring access to food and water;
- provision of quality health services and education to women and girls, tailored to their specific needs;
- provision of post-conflict reconstruction services, etc.

3.2.6. Cross-cutting priority: environmental protection and actions to fight climate change



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy



Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development



Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

The well-being of people and the resilience of societies depend on a healthy environment and functioning ecosystems. Environmental challenges respect no 'boundaries' and are interdependent and interlinked across borders.

Neighbouring countries' applying effectively high environmental and health protection standards and thus contributing to an improvement of the quality of life in the region is of systemic interest to the Republic of Bulgaria. Our country supports partners' efforts in this process by sharing lessons learned and best practices in the sustainable management of natural resources, nature conservation and climate change mitigation, providing expertise and technical support for the harmonisation of national legislation with EU law in this area, disaster risk reduction, raising awareness and other appropriate initiatives.

Bulgaria supports the protection and improvement of the quality of the marine environment, including by raising public awareness of the damage caused by marine litter and the possibilities to avert the related threats to the marine environment.

Access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation is a major challenge in many parts of the world. The risks arising from the use of dirty and dangerous water may have a very negative impact on people and the economy. Economic development, demographic processes and rapid urbanisation are having an impact because the local authorities in water deficient regions will not be in a position to meet the needs of essential services, including water supply and sanitation. Therefore, our country supports the use of EU's external policy instruments, including development cooperation, to ensure safe drinking water and sanitation for all.

In addition, waste generation poses a challenge at global level and affects adversely the environment and human health. Our country supports the environmentally sound management of waste over its whole life cycle through prevention, reduction,

recycling and reuse, as well as through raising people’s awareness of the sustainable management and effective utilisation of natural resources.

The specific activities (development projects and/or contributions to international organizations) that will be set on the cross cutting priority “environmental protection and actions to fight climate change” will be consistent with and will help to fulfil Bulgaria's obligations under Art. 9 of the *Paris Agreement* in terms of supporting developing countries to mitigate the effects of climate change and adapt to them.

3.2.7. Cross-cutting priority: protection and promotion of the rights of the child



End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all



The scale of progress made worldwide towards achieving the SDGs by 2030 will directly affect the future of millions of children and hence our common future as a global community. The SDGs are universal in scope, and their pledge that no one will be left behind put the world’s most vulnerable and marginalised groups, including children, on top of the *2030 Agenda*.

The protection and promotion of children’s rights is an important topic for our country both nationally and internationally and is a key priority of our foreign policy in the area of human rights. This topic is at the core of a number of our initiatives, including at the UN Human Rights Council. We express support for initiatives intended to promote the rights of the child by means of a healthy environment, ensuring access to quality services (healthcare and education, including inclusive education for children with disabilities and disadvantaged children), elimination of all forms of violence, including online violence.

04.

TOOLS OF THE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICY

The Mid-term Programme for Development Assistance and Humanitarian Aid will be implemented by means of the instruments specified in CoMD No. 234 of 2011.

Multilateral instruments include:

- participation in the EU's development policy;
- participation in universal development cooperation mechanisms through the United Nations system and other international organisations;
- voluntary contributions to the EU or international organisations listed in Annex 2 to the DAC Statistical Reporting Directives.

Regional and bilateral instruments for provision of development assistance include:

- in-kind assistance;
- financial grant assistance;
- external debt relief;
- development programmes and development projects including investments in or donation of movable property provided under these programmes and projects;
- sending experts and volunteers;
- sharing knowledge and experience;
- education on development matters and raising public awareness;
- provision of scholarships for study at Bulgarian higher education institutions;
- support for national, including Bulgarian, or international non-governmental organisations active in the sphere of development; etc.

Participation of the non-governmental sector and business in ODA activities

To increase the effectiveness of ODA, Bulgaria needs to invigorate the participation of the non-governmental sector and business in development aid activities in line with the leading global practices. To this end, the national regulatory framework needs to be adapted so as to encourage the participation of Bulgarian business and

of Bulgarian non-profit legal entities. Another instrument applied by donor countries is incentivising business to participate in development aid activities by State support for entry in the market of the beneficiary developing countries⁶.

In the process of implementing the *Roadmap for the accession of Bulgaria to the OECD*, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the other stakeholder institutions will carry on their cooperation with OECD DAC for sharing experience, expertise and good practices so as to diversify the toolkit of Bulgarian development assistance.

⁶ For example, EXIMBANKASR in Slovakia extends concessional loans to public enterprises of beneficiary countries for the purchase of Slovak products or services. The loan has a grant element which is financed by the State budget. This scheme is regulated in the *OECD Consensus on Officially Supported Export Credits* and is applied for low per capita income countries.

05.

HUMANITARIAN AID

Humanitarian aid is a fundamental expression of the universal value of solidarity between people and a moral imperative⁷. It differs from development assistance in its specific features conditioned by the need of flexible and rapid response to existing needs in countries affected by severe humanitarian crises.

Humanitarian aid presupposes the **provision of material and logistic support** where it is needed, organised in order to address various problems like natural disasters, man-made crises, diseases, famine and other comparable emergencies. Last but not least, contemporary humanitarian crises have also led to increased numbers of displaced people, both refugees and internally displaced persons. In such cases, especially in protracted crisis situations, humanitarian aid extends beyond material and logistic assistance to cover a number of support activities intended to relieve the suffering and mitigate the negative effects of the crisis on the victims/displaced persons, including but not limited to: protection, shelter, psychosocial support, healthcare, education and qualification, employment, integration and other measures aligned with the nature of the crisis and the specific vulnerabilities of the target groups.

Legal and policy framework

The provision of humanitarian aid is regulated in CoMD No. 234 of 2011. Our humanitarian aid policy is in line with the *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*, *The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid*, the *Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative*⁸ and the *World Humanitarian Summit*⁹.

⁷ Joint Statement by the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission, *The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid*, *Official Journal of the European Union*, C-25 of 30 January 2008, p.1-12: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42008X0130\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42008X0130(01)&from=EN).

In accordance with Article 4 of the TFEU, the provision of humanitarian aid by the EU is a matter of shared competence between the Member States and the Union. EU humanitarian aid is managed jointly by the EC and the Member States in accordance with the modalities set forth by Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid.

⁸ Official website: <https://www.ghdinitiative.org/ghd/gns/home-page.html>. All donors of the EU commit to apply the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship (Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship, Stockholm, 17 June 2003, approved by OECD DAC in April 2006) and to work together, as well as with other participants, for applying the best donor practices.

⁹ Official website: <https://agendaforhumanity.org>.

Principles and forms of humanitarian aid

Bulgarian humanitarian aid is provided respecting the following **fundamental principles** which are enshrined in international law and are spelled out in the *European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid*:

- humanity;
- impartiality;
- neutrality;
- independence¹⁰.

At the same time, there has been an increasing tendency for International Law, including International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights Law and Refugee Law, to be ignored or blatantly violated.¹¹ In this context, adherence to the principles of humanitarian aid is critical in order to distinguish humanitarian action from the activities of political, military and other actors. Compliance with humanitarian principles and ensuring that humanitarian organisations act in accordance with them are also key to their gaining acceptance on the ground.

Bulgarian humanitarian aid will be provided in the following **forms**, specified in Council of Ministers Decree No. 234 of 1 August 2011:

- organising rescue operations;
- providing humanitarian resources in the form of movable property;
- financial grant assistance;
- humanitarian assistance projects;
- voluntary contributions to the EU or international organisations;
- other.

The response to the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 confirmed the need to encourage Bulgarian contractors of humanitarian aid provision.

Humanitarian actors

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinates the humanitarian aid provided by Bulgaria, **partnering** with the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economy, the

¹⁰ The principles are detailed in Section 2 of the Mid-term Programme.

¹¹ In 2005 the EU adopted *Guidelines on promoting compliance with international humanitarian law*, which were subsequently updated in 2009. The Guidelines are available at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52009XG1215\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52009XG1215(01)&from=EN)

Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Interior and, depending on the nature of the humanitarian crisis, also with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

Humanitarian aid is provided in cooperation with Bulgarian humanitarian NGOs, the Bulgarian Red Cross, international humanitarian organisations, local institutions and organisations in the countries where a humanitarian crisis unfolds, as well as with other international donors and humanitarian organisations. Bulgaria participates in the management of EU humanitarian aid¹² and in the *EU Civil Protection Mechanism*¹³.

Humanitarian aid targeting

At present, humanitarian crises are complex and almost invariably unfold in complicated conflict conditions, which calls for an integrated approach to their resolution, involving all stakeholders. The purpose of this approach is to **effectively bridge the gap between humanitarian aid and development assistance, as well as with the peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts**, with a view to eliminating the risks of a crisis that has unfolded. In this regard, Bulgaria will be guided by the *OECD Development Assistance Committee Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus*¹⁴.

Bulgarian humanitarian aid is targeted, as a priority, at **destabilised countries and regions**, paying particular attention to the crises that **generate migrant flows and would have an especially damaging impact on our national security interests, considering the fact that Bulgaria is an external border of the EU**. In this sense, the priority commitments cover countries of the Middle East and North Africa, West Asia and Afghanistan. In accordance with the humanitarian imperative, priority consideration is given to **emergency response to natural and climatic disasters**, as well as to **protracted, often forgotten humanitarian crises**.

In the context of the increasing number of protracted conflicts, the number of people with humanitarian needs is growing, too. Sustainable development and long-term solutions to problems like migration and forced displacement are impossible without peace. This necessitates an in-depth implementation of the **concept of interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actions in the**

¹² In accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid (OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1)

¹³ Established by Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 924), amended by Decision (EU) 2019/420 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 March 2019 (OJ L 77I, 20.03.2019, p. 1)

¹⁴ Available online at: <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-5019>.

framework of the Bulgarian policy on ODA provision, the essence of which is a coordinated mobilisation of all factors and horizontal sectors to conduct activities for consistent removal of the population out of the state of humanitarian need and vulnerability at every stage of the humanitarian crisis.

The nexus should be complemented by the following horizontal priorities: respect of **international humanitarian law and protection of the most vulnerable groups of the civilian population**, with a special emphasis on women, children and people with disabilities.

The spread of the **COVID-19** pandemic puts this situation in an even more worrying light. In countries with ongoing humanitarian crises, hospital capacity is severely constrained, and the eventual prolongation of the pandemic will have severe socio-economic consequences. Bulgaria is dedicating substantial resources to the provision of medical and food supplies to its partners both as direct humanitarian aid and through the existing mechanisms of the EU and of leading international organisations.

Local response to **crisis and disaster risk reduction, including disaster preparedness and recovery**, are essential to saving lives and enabling communities to increase their resilience to emergencies. Capacity building activities to prevent and mitigate the impact of disasters and to enhance humanitarian response are also part of Bulgaria's humanitarian aid.

When appealed for, humanitarian aid requires a rapid response in order to save lives, relieve suffering and promote human dignity in the aftermath of various crises. In recurrent or chronic crisis situations like natural disasters, humanitarian aid has a medium-term dimension as well, reducing vulnerability and building resilience, which makes its purpose and content similar to development aid.

The provision of Bulgarian humanitarian aid **is tailored to the needs of the beneficiary country and takes into account the need to spend effectively** the resources allocated for this purpose.

06.

MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Within multilateral development cooperation, **Bulgaria participates in the activities of the European Union and of other international organisations and funds.**

Multilateral cooperation is used as an **instrument for supporting** the countries and sectors where acting on a bilateral basis would be impossible or ineffective for Bulgaria.

At the same time, enhanced multilateral cooperation **enables the country to develop further its bilateral efforts and to multiply the impact and effect** in implementing its development priorities.

6.1. Contributions to international organisations

Membership fees, voluntary financial contributions to particular international organisations and their specific funds¹⁵, as well as part of the contributions to the EU budget, the Union's funds and instruments, are reported as official development assistance in strict compliance with the criteria, rules and strategic guidelines of OECD DAC.

Voluntary financial contributions are essential for implementing the development cooperation and humanitarian aid policy and hence the country's foreign policy interests. Voluntary contributions are, above all, an expression of political support for the mandate and operation of a particular international organisation, but also helps enhance the credibility of Bulgaria internationally. Unlike regular membership fees, voluntary contributions can be used for the attainment of a particular objective in line with the strategic priorities of the Bulgarian ODA, which gives Bulgaria a say in the activities and the projects on which the funds allocated will be spent. Owing to resource constraints, Bulgaria dedicates its resources to utilising the capacity of international organisations and multilateral

¹⁵ Bulgaria follows very closely and assists, by means of periodically assuming political and/or financial commitments, the activities of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement; the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe; international organisations of the UN family (including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, UNESCO, the United Nations Population Fund, the International Labour Organization, etc.); the International Organisation of La Francophonie.

funds in pursuit of the development cooperation policy objectives with a focus on countries that are impacted by crises or permanent instability.

Measures for increasing the effectiveness of the use of multilateral development cooperation will be applied during the period until 2024:

- Encouraging interested Bulgarian entities to participate in programmes and projects of the EU, the UN and other international organisations and financial institutions, including through joint programming.
- Providing systematic support and information to interested Bulgarian entities in connection with options for co-financing of development projects or access to public tenders of the EU or international financial institutions.
- Promoting opportunities for operationalising the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.
- Ensuring benefits for Bulgaria when making and sharing in the management of voluntary financial contributions through multilateral channels.
- In order to achieve more effective spending of voluntary contributions, an option could be explored to sign a cooperation agreement with an international organisation that receives financial support (in case regular contributions are envisaged, such an agreement could also make specific provisions for joint consultations, traineeships or capacity building/enhancement).
- Regular assessment of the effectiveness of the funds spent on ODA through multilateral channels, including through the assessment of the EU mechanisms and other multilateral mechanisms.

Multilateral contributions account for **approximately 85% of the total amount of the Bulgarian ODA**. Therefore, special attention needs to be paid to participation in the management and effective use of these contributions so as to ensure conditions for achieving sustainable targets as well as a specific benefit for Bulgaria and its recognition in the donor community. It is just as important to seek interaction and synergies between the activities of the EU and the activities of international organisations and international financial institutions of which Bulgaria is a member.

6.2. Cooperation with other donors of official development assistance

By cooperating with other donors in the developing countries, Bulgaria seeks to coordinate and increase the effectiveness of its development aid activities. Sharing experience with traditional donors in support of national capacity building undoubtedly adds value, too. At the same time, such cooperation also bolsters the visibility of the Bulgarian ODA.

In recent years, our country has managed to establish **good cooperation with other ODA donors**: within the framework of the US State Department's Emerging Donor Challenge Program; the Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of Development Cooperation, signed with Slovakia; interaction with Japan within the framework of the *Western Balkans Cooperation Initiative*. What has been achieved so far should be maintained and built on by establishing new partnerships¹⁶.

The *Roadmap for Cooperation between the Republic of Bulgaria and the OECD Development Assistance Committee for the Period 2019-2020* will continue to be implemented. This Roadmap includes conduct of seminars for enhancing expertise and sharing experience of work with/within the framework of the OECD, as well as traineeships. This **helps improve the image of Bulgaria in the eyes of the OECD Member countries**, which calls for continued deepening of cooperation with the Committee in the future.

¹⁶ At the time of writing this Mid-term Programme, options for cooperation with Israel, the Netherlands and Hungary with regard to the countries of Africa are being explored.

07.

FINANCING, PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT AID AND HUMANITARIAN AID

According to a commitment assumed back when it joined the European Union, Bulgaria, as well as the other new Member States, should strive to reach a target of 0.33% of GNI for ODA allocations. The EU's common position on development financing was reiterated in the 26 May 2015 Council conclusions, by which the EU reaffirmed its collective commitment to achieve the 0.7% ODA/GNI target within the time frame of the post-2015 agenda, with Member States which joined the EU after 2002 striving to increase their ODA/GNI to 0.33%.¹⁷

Despite the effect of the 2008-2009 global economic crisis and the tendency of certain donor countries to decrease the amount of their official development aid disbursements, in the 2016-2019 period Bulgaria maintained a steady level of development aid allocations amounting to 0.11% of GNI. The share of bilateral assistance also showed an increasingly upward trend during that period. In June 2018, Bulgaria became a participant to the OECD Development Assistance Committee.

Untapped reserves for increasing the share of ODA can be found mainly in bilateral development aid. At present, bilateral project financing covers just 4.48% of Bulgaria's ODA, including through the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is insufficient for achieving the purposes of development-cooperation policy as part of our foreign policy.

The allocations for development aid and humanitarian aid are planned and disbursed on the basis of a verifiable justification in accordance with the international standards for good governance and effectiveness, set out in the 2005 Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness, the 2011 Busan Declaration, the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, and the related international understandings.

Development aid allocations are planned on the basis of contributions due to the EU development aid instruments and funds, to the principal budgets of international organisations and financial institutions acting for the achievement of the objectives of development aid, to conventions whose technical functions include provision of

¹⁷ EU Council conclusions on A New Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015, 26 May 2016, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9241-2015-INIT/en/pdf>.

development aid, as well as on the basis of planned bilateral development aid, taking account with our country's commitment to achieve the levels of development aid allocations set by the EU. The necessary funds will be provided from the budget for the respective year of the ministries/agencies engaged in the implementation of the activities under the Mid-Term Programme for Development Assistance and Humanitarian Aid of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2020-2024, and no additional costs / transfers / other payments from the state budget will be required.

A systematic increase in the share of bilateral assistance is sought in arriving at the total amount of ODA. Humanitarian aid allocations are planned as a percentage of the allocations for bilateral development aid, and they will continue to account for some 20% of the ODA budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Development financing is managed according to the rules of procedure of the International Development Cooperation Council, chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Considering the specific nature of ODA provision and management activities, further work is needed for increasing the administrative capacity of specialised staff in accordance with OECD requirements, the training of qualified employees in project management and public procurement procedures.

Performance could be improved and the procedures for soliciting and selecting project proposals could be optimised, along with a more effective and focused delivery of Bulgarian ODA, by strengthening the administrative capacity and, namely, by establishing a separate directorate for management of development aid at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The directorate will be responsible for the selection and management of development programmes and projects and will carry out technical support, monitoring and reporting activities.



VISIBILITY OF THE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICY

Basic principles and objectives

Development policy is based on targeted and active communication with stakeholders at the national level and in partner countries. Broad public support, publicity and visibility of Bulgarian development assistance are essential for its successful implementation.

Bulgarian development Aid is tasked essentially with affirming Bulgaria in the eyes of partner countries as a country committed to, and active in, the international development cooperation effort.

To ensure sustainable change, Bulgarian development policy will concentrate on raising awareness and creating active civil society, including through the opportunities of global education. Projects engaging the Bulgarian public and sensitising/informing it on the global challenges facing social, economic and environmental development will be encouraged, including through a targeted programme for global education¹⁸ and awareness raising.

Bulgaria participated actively in the coordinated response of the EU and its Member States to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis, externally, including in communicating these challenges in partner countries and fighting disinformation.

With a view to building effective communication with beneficiaries and the general public, communication with them will be tailored to the specific context and will be based on the following criteria:

¹⁸ The Programme for Global Education (GE) and Awareness Raising will be contributing to improving the regional and bilateral instruments for provision of development aid referred to in Item 7 of Section 3 “Development Cooperation Policy Instruments”, as well as to the effective implementation of the instrument referred to in Item 7 of Article 5 (3) of CoMD No. 234 of 2011. The Programme for GE and Awareness Raising of Bulgarian Development Aid supports projects engaging the Bulgarian public and sensitising/informing it on the global challenges facing social, economic and environmental development. The Programme works with civil society organisations at the local and national level to promote strengthening the assertion of the universal values of freedom, democracy and the rule of law and enables the Bulgarian public to contribute positively to global development. Informed citizens can play an active part in identifying development priorities as voters, as activists, and even through the merchandise they decide to purchase in the supermarket. Through its Programme for GE and Awareness Raising, Bulgarian Development Aid therefore seeks to contribute to informing Bulgarian citizens of development issues. The activities carried out under the projects financed by the Programme are in tune with the 2030 Agenda principles and foster raising awareness and achieving the SDGs by facilitating the implementation of the ‘no one left behind’ principle.

- communicating understandable and specific objectives;
- interconnection with the global context of the SDG;
- monitoring.

Target groups

- stakeholders at national and European level, partner countries and international organisations;
- general public;
- opinion leaders;
- development aid beneficiaries.

Logo

To ensure the identifiability of Bulgarian Official Development Assistance, a logo will be used that is easily associated with Bulgaria's development policy and the efforts made by the country in the area of international development cooperation.



Communication channels and activities

The principal communication channels and visibility methods for Bulgarian Development Aid include:

- traditional media;
- social media and other modern forms of public relations;
- public diplomacy.

The publicity and communication activities of Bulgarian Development Aid take a communicative approach and include:

- organising and holding formal and informal meetings with stakeholders, institutional partners and civil society, business representatives, opinion leaders, academia;
- organising and holding public discussions and roundtables with a broader range of participants;
- communicating the messages of Bulgarian Development Aid to institutional partners and stakeholders concerned with international development cooperation;
- networking with civil society/NGOs and business in order to formulate and make visible the principal objectives and messages;
- active enlistment of the media in the process of communicating and putting the main issues of development policy on their agenda;
- using Global Education as a communication tool to drive social change and attitude change;
- feedback from direct participants in international development projects financed by Bulgaria's ODA allocations, processing and analysing the information for more effective use of development aid in regions and sectors prioritised by Bulgaria;
- creating and maintaining a Bulgarian Development Aid profile on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and sharing information on social media and other modern forms of public relations.

Monitoring and results

The publicity, visibility and communication of Bulgarian Development Aid result in:

- improvement of Bulgaria's image and identifiability as a donor country in the eyes of the general public in partner countries;
- bolstered support on the part of the Bulgarian public for the implementation of Bulgaria's development policy;
- putting the matters concerning international development cooperation and the issues of sustainable development on the public agenda, including in the context of implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The monitoring and results measurement are carried out on the basis of activities and indicators.

Activity	Implementer	Benchmark 2020-2024
Applying the Publicity and Visibility Guidelines for Bulgarian Development Aid	Beneficiaries	250 to 400 projects
Number of publications related to development aid on the website of the MFA and the DMs	MFA, DMs, Beneficiaries	250 to 400 publications
Number of posts related to development aid on the Facebook page of the MFA and the DMs:	MFA, DMs, Beneficiaries	250 to 400 publications
Number of views of the Facebook posts on development cooperation	Stakeholders, general public	500 to 1,000 views
Target groups covered and number of participants in public events concerned:	MFA, DMs, Beneficiaries	7,500 to 10,000
Communication channels used	MFA, DMs, Beneficiaries	3 to 6
Attitudes survey conducted (2020-2024)	MFA	1 sociological survey

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PROGRESS AND RESULTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MID-TERM PROGRAMME

The monitoring and evaluation of the Mid-term Programme includes a **complex of three core activities**: observation, analysis and evaluation of the overall implementation process.¹⁹

Evaluation and monitoring are based on the standards and principles for development evaluation laid down in the OECD DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation (2010)²⁰, the DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance (1991)²¹, and the Norms and Standards for Evaluation of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) (2016)²². Evaluation furthermore takes account of the evaluation guidelines and methodology of the European External Action Service and the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO).²³

The evaluation will be interim (in the middle of the programming period) and final (after the end of the programming period) and is intended to improve the quality, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and relevance of the development aid provided by Bulgaria to the benefit of partner countries and to increase the transparency in the operation of the public institutions involved in the implementation of the Programme.

The Mid-term Programme is planned and implemented and its implementation is evaluated **having regard to the ODA criteria established by OECD DAC**:

- effectiveness;

¹⁹ OECD on public policies monitoring and evaluation: <http://www.oecd.org/gov/policy-monitoring-evaluation.htm>.

²⁰<https://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf>.

²¹<http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/2755284.pdf>.

²²<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>.

²³ A Revised EU International Cooperation and Development Results Framework in line with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New European Consensus on Development. (SWD(2018) 444 final).

- efficiency;
- transparency;
- impact;
- sustainability;

The evaluation of the Mid-term Programme will also take into account the contribution to the implementation of the Goals and indicators of the 2030 Agenda.

The monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Mid-term Programme include **reports on the implementation of the Mid-term Programme for Development Aid and Humanitarian Aid, annual reports and medium-term reports on the assistance by country** and will be carried out within the following **time frame**:

- producing and publishing reports on the official development assistance provided on the budgets of the separate ministries
deadline: by 31 January of the following year;
- producing and publishing annual reports on the official development assistance provided by Bulgaria
deadline: by 30 April of the following year;
- producing and publishing a report on the implementation of the Mid-term Programme for Development Aid and Humanitarian Aid
deadline: by 30 April 2025

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinates the formulation and implementation of the development cooperation policy in Bulgaria and is assisted by the other ministries and central-government departments within their respective spheres of competence. This activity is carried out partnering with civil society, local government and business in Bulgaria.

The evaluation of the Mid-term Programme should also take account of the following medium-term and long-term objectives of Bulgarian Development Aid and their performance indicators.

OBJECTIVE	OUTPUT	DEADLINE	IMPLEMENTER	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
Developing an efficient legal framework	International Development Cooperation and International Humanitarian Aid Act	2021	MFA	Adoption of the Act by the National Assembly
Increased participation of ministries in development cooperation	Activity of the Inter-institutional International Development Cooperation Council and of the Inter-institutional Working Group on Development Policy	2020 and onwards	MFA and other stakeholder ministries	Meetings of the Inter-institutional Council at least once a year. Meetings of the Inter-institutional Working Group at least twice a year.
	Participation of the ministries in the instruments and forms of providing development aid and humanitarian aid (Article 5 (3) and (4) of CoMD No. 234 of 2011)	2020 and onwards	MFA and other stakeholder ministries	Value of the projects and of the other bilateral instruments and forms financed by the ODA budgets
Increased participation of the Bulgarian non-governmental and private sector in ODA	Implementation of the instruments under Items 4 to 8 of Article 5 (3) and of the forms under Items 1, 2 and 4 of Article 5 (4) of CoMD No. 234 of 2011	2020 and onwards	MFA, NGOs, private sector	Keep a level of at least 7%-7,5 % annually
				Value of projects financed and number of NGOs
				Value of projects financed and number of business organisations
Increase of the participation of Bulgarian contractors in ODA	Sending Bulgarian experts and volunteers, sharing knowledge and experience	2020 and onwards	MFA, stakeholder ministries ²⁴ and central-government departments	Value of projects financed and number of Bulgarian experts and volunteers
Strengthening the monitoring and evaluation system	Regular performance of monitoring and evaluations	Ongoing	MFA	Quarterly summary monitoring reports on the implementation of the programmes and projects Reports on evaluation at the level of: Mid-term Programme; Strategic programmes by partner country (Article 17 (1) of CoMD No. 234 of 2011); Trilateral and multilateral

²⁴The stakeholder ministries are listed in Art. 9, item 2 and 3, of Council of Ministers Decree No. 234 of 01.08.2011.

				interaction; Humanitarian aid
Strengthening the administrative capacity	Increasing the professional capacity of the employees involved in development cooperation	Ongoing	MFA and other stakeholder ministries	Drawing up training plans and complete delivery of at least 2 courses annually
	Well-functioning mechanism for rotation of staff between the Central Office and DMs	2022 and onwards	MFA	Posting 2 development diplomats at DMs
Increased visibility of Bulgarian Development Aid	Increase of the media coverage of Bulgarian Development Aid	2024	MFA and other stakeholder ministries and civil society partners	Doubling the level of the positive public opinion from the level measured by a survey in 2021
	Implementation of the instrument under Item 7 of Article 5 (3) of CoMD No. 234 of 2011 and implementation of Global Education	Annually	MFA, civil society	Total value of at least 0.3% of ODA annually Reach of projects: 2,000 participants reached directly and 20,000 participants reached indirectly
Strengthened trilateral and multilateral interaction in development cooperation	Implementation of the instruments and the forms under Article 5 (2) and Item 5 of Article 5 (4) of CoMD No. 234 of 2011 and the Memorandums	2020 and onwards	MFA and other stakeholder ministries	Value as percentage of total ODA
				Number of projects financed

GLOSSARY

Sustainable development is a type of development that meets the needs of the present generation without limiting the ability of future generations to meet and fulfil their own needs. Sustainable development is achieved in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner.

Official Development Assistance: funds provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies to developing countries and territories or to multilateral development institutions in order to promote the welfare and economic development of developing countries.

OECD Development Assistance Committee is one of the first-established and most important committees of the OECD. It is an international forum that brings together the largest donors of development aid and that defines and monitors the global standards in the area of development aid.

Humanitarian aid is assistance and actions aimed at saving human life, alleviating suffering and preserving human dignity during, and as a result of, man-made crises, natural disasters and industrial accidents, as well as at preventing and strengthening preparedness for such situations when they occur. Humanitarian aid consists in providing financial resources, supplying basic necessities (shelter, utilities, food), coordination, logistics, protection, as well as sending professionals.

Partner country is a target country of development aid and one which fulfils the eligibility criteria of OECD DAC.

Donor country is a country providing development aid in accordance with the rules of OECD DAC.

Strategic programme is a key programming document regulating the provision of development aid in a partner country.

Global Education, as defined by the Council of Europe, is education that opens up people's minds and hearts to the interrelationships and similarities existing between people, communities and countries across the world, seeking to stimulate sensitivity and a proactive attitude to inequality and injustice in the world. This kind of education equips young people upon whom the future depends with the knowledge, skills and values that will help them build a fair and shared future of the world. Global Education comprehends education for sustainable development, human rights education, education for a culture of peace, intercultural education, in the context of global citizenship education.

Communication for development is a two-way process for sharing ideas and knowledge using a range of communication tools and approaches that empower individuals and communities to take actions to improve their lives. It serves to achieve positive and sustained change in development initiatives through effective dissemination and exchange of information using empirical research.