

Application form for a project under the Recovery and Resilience Facility

1. Name of the project.
Digitalization of the information databases containing registry data in the public administration and e-validation from the registers
2. Description of the project (objectives, main activities).
<p>The integrity of data in registers maintained by administrative authorities is of primary importance for the quality of the provided administrative services.</p> <p>According to information from the registers inventoried in 2017, as of 31.12.2017., a total of 17 797 registers were maintained by state administration at central and territorial level. Of those, 15 013 are used to provide administrative services, and the remaining 2 784 – other inter-organizational management activities. The registers maintained by municipal administrations alone were over 13 000. One of the main problems identified during the inventory, was that of the 1 236 registers kept at central level related to provision of services, only 15 % were supported in digital format with secure programming interfaces for access to databases and data exchange. The level of interoperability between registers and their supporting information systems is low. These complicate the implementation of the e-Government Act (EGA) requirements for single collection and multiple provision of data, as well as the obligation to provide internal electronic administrative services.</p> <p>In order to address these risks, a complete modernization of registers and digitalization of the information database in the public administration containing registry data is vital. It will pre-define the process of citizens, businesses and administration declaring and receiving a certificate of certain facts and circumstances, recorded electronically in a register.</p> <p>Currently, a large part of the registers are kept on paper or in unstructured form and the documents on which records are created are also paper-based. The information obtained after consultation with the administrative authorities and the National Association of Municipalities in Bulgaria (NAMRB) shows that the paper records number in the hundreds of millions of pages.</p> <p>To ensure interoperability, it is important to apply standards and specifications recommended in the EU based on Common Specification for Information Packages, as well as BSS_ISO_15489 and recommendations and tools provided under the CEF program in the e-Archiving section.</p> <p>Main objective</p> <p>The project aims at fulfilling the preconditions for wide provision of electronic and internal electronic administrative services, as well as complex administrative services, proactive services and “life cycle” services. This will be achieved by standardization and automation of authentication processes - attainable when information databases are digitalized.</p> <p>The digitalization of paper files and register data retrieval processes will seriously reduce the administrative burden on citizens and businesses at least in the following aspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. guaranteed possibility for receiving electronic administrative services (EAS) and providing native electronic administrative services (NEAS); 2. elimination of the need for direct contact between the service applicant and the employee of the respective administrative structure, incl. anti-corruption measures; 3. improved administrative services;

4. reducing the time and cost of administrative services implementation;
5. a positive environmental effect due to a reduction in the need to issue paper documents;
6. the possibility for machine processing of information in the registers, including its provision for the purposes of analyses, recommendations, forecasts and advice aimed at citizens, businesses and administration to make better decisions, prevent errors, malicious actions and potential problems;
7. improving the quality of life in Bulgaria.

The planned project activities include:

1.Activity 1 — Digitalization of **the information database, containing registry** data of key public administrations –Registry Agency and National Social Security Institute – 55 months.

Sub-activity 1.1. Digitalization of the available paper archive in Registry Offices of **the Registry Agency (Property Register) – 48 months.**

In 2009, the Registry Agency introduced an Integrated Information System for Cadaster and Property Register (IISCPR) in all 113 Registry Offices with provided technical support and communication connectivity. Until the implementation of IISCPR, the acts subject to registration were implemented through various software products without functionality for scanning images. Currently, the information from the acts introduced through the old software products is available in unstructured form and there is a lack of scanned acts.

The main part of the services provided by the Public Registry – inquiries, certificates and transcripts are issued directly by checking with the paper form of the listed acts. There is a huge paper archive in each Registry Office, which is not included in the information system, but daily references are made when issuing certificates of obstruction and transcripts on paper. After counting the accumulated paper massive in the archives of the Registry Offices, it amounted to approximately 40 610 656 pages.

The digitalization of all paper media in the Registry Offices is mandatory for the creation of property accounts and a Property Register within the meaning of the CPRA. The implementation of the project will provide all prerequisites (technological and legal) for the long-postponed reform of the establishment of a Property Register in Bulgaria.

As a result of the implementation of Sub-activity 1.1 of the project, by 31.12.2025 citizens/business will be able to receive for the first time completely electronic, at level 3 and 4, the following services:

- 3095 Provision of an uncertified transcript of Property Register Act
- 3091 Provision of a certified transcript of Property Register Act
- 3092 Provision of a certificate for a person from the Property Register
- 3093 Provision of a certificate of property from the Property Register
- 3103 Provision of a certificate for a specific period of the Property Register
- 3101 Provision of a property certificate for a specified period of the Property Register

The service provision times, both electronically and at the counter will be shortened.

Sub-activity 1.2. Digitalization of social security documents held by insured persons and used by the **National Social Security Institute (NSSI)** — 55 months.

The creation and maintenance of social security history of persons through the construction of a Register of documents for social security service, including the missing data from the social security documents held by the insured persons, will allow the prior examination of the

data recorded therein, their entry in the internal registers for social security service and social security income, and their use in assessing the rights of short-term and long-term benefits. Thus, the NSSI will meet the requirements for e-government progress in accordance with the developed Sectoral Strategy.

The majority of the documents certifying the insurance records are kept by insured persons on paper and are often in poor physical condition, destroyed or lost.

The implementation of Sub-activity 1.2. will allow a change in the policy of collecting social security information and the assessment of the right to compensation for individuals to be issued without the need to submit paper documents henceforth.

As a result of the implementation of Subject 1.2 of the project, by 31.12.2025 citizens/business will be able to receive for the first time complete electronic, at level 3 and 4, the following services:

- Calculation of an estimated individual coefficient and estimated amount of the pension
- Reference from the Register of Social Security History (new EAS) – with provided access to both the insured persons and to the insurers. It can also be used by other administrations (e.g.: Court, Prosecutor's Office)
- Provision of a pension order (all pensions linked to social security service) – paper documents to be submitted by the persons will be waived.
- Issuance of an order to allocate funds received from the EU pension scheme, the ECB and the EIB
- Provision of a certificate of social security record for foreign competent institution – the need to submit documents in paper form by the persons will be waived

2.Activity 2 — Digitalization of civil status acts stored by municipal administrations – 35 months

In 2011, with an amendment to the Law on Civil Registration, a National Electronic Register of Civil Status Acts was created, in which the electronic versions of the acts were entered immediately after their paper draft. Data for previous periods are not contained in the register and therefore it does not fulfil its main purpose of reducing the administrative burden through the possibility of official verifications.

No less than 250 municipal administrations will be covered and the civil status acts on paper will be digitized.

The total number of birth, marriage and death paper certificates in municipalities is around 40 million, and in relation to the data contained therein, about 1 million certification services were provided in 2019.

The digitalization of these documents will allow the National Electronic Register of Civil Status Acts to have comprehensive for Bulgarian citizens on the circumstances that are entered in the three types of acts, and this in turn will allow all inquiries, checks and certifications in connection with the administrative service to be performed by the administrative bodies only through the National Register, ex officio and automatically. In the digitalization process, activities such as identification and preparation of relevant documents and physical scanning will be carried out. The platform delivered under Activity 3 will allow for subsequent machine recognition, storage of scanned content, metadata and data entry in the respective register. The platform will provide opportunities for subsequent storage, electronic access and authentication, automated or through employee participation.

As a result of the implementation of Activity 2 of the project, by 31.12.2025 citizens/business will be able to receive for the first time at level 3 and 4, entirely electronically, 27 services

related to life cycle – birth, marriage, inheritance, death, etc., (described in a separate file).

3.Activity 3 — Delivery and installation of a Platform for automation of digitalization processes and subsequent processing, storage and management of digitized information. The Platform will be installed and supported in the State Hybrid Private Cloud and will provide as a service the necessary functionalities for workflow, documents and interface management

The platform will provide the following solutions:

- data storage in internal or external database, including when available for e-form register support;
- request and verification of recorded facts and circumstances in the registers, covered within the scope of digitalization, fully or partly e-maintained;
- development of interfaces which enable reference exchange and certified information integration with the integral cradle, realized through the RegiX (environment for inter-register exchange) information system ;
- user interface and document development to record, maintain and certify information from registries, as well as the management of related work processes;
- publication of machine-readable open data, where applicable.

After delivery and installation of the platform, the contractor will ensure the development of the functionalities, work processes, documents and interfaces needed in the process of digitization, information and workflow management in the administration.

The activities envisaged will be implemented as follows:

Preliminary stage

Preparation of methodological guidelines for the **digitalization of the information database** by the State “E-Government” Agency (SeGA). This will create conditions for ensuring the management of electronic content/documents and mandatory synchronization of archive process management in non-electronic form.

The methodological guidelines will be prepared in the context of the national interoperability framework update with the aim to facilitate the work of the public sector in Bulgaria and improve its efficiency by increasing the opportunities for providing improved EAS (e-administrative services).

Regarding the digitization of civil status acts at the preliminary stage, the methodological framework will be prepared by the General Directorate Civil Status at the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works.

Activities 1 and 2 will be implemented with partners:

- for Activity 1 – Registry Agency and NSSI;
- for Activity 2 – Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works and National association of the municipalities in republic of Bulgaria (NAMRB)/municipal administrations

For the implementation of **Activity 1**, Registry Agency and NSSI will carry out public procurement and the digitization of each administration will be carried out independently of the other partners.

For the implementation of **Activity 2** Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works/National association of the municipalities in republic of Bulgaria/ State “E-Government” Agency will conduct a public procurement procedure and will sign a framework agreement with selected contractors, while for the digitization of each structure a choice will be made

The implementation of **Activity 3** will require public procurement, carried out by SeGA.

State E- Government Agency (SeGA) partnering with the Registry Agency, the National Social Security Institute, the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Workd and municipal administrations.

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Preliminary stage will be initiated before the approval of the project.

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5. Indicative financial resource by activities, including sources of funding (SBs, European funding, private funding, IFI).
<p>The indicative total financial resource for the implementation of the project proposal is BGN 127 500 000 from the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility.</p> <p>The total financial resource for Activity 1 is BGN 99 135 000. The total financial resource for Activity 2 is BGN 19 865 000. The total financial resource for Activity 3 is BGN 8 500 000.</p>
5.1. Allocate the financial resource according to the type of expenditure:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction/Rehabilitation of Infrastructure (CRI– 0 %) - Physical capital (purchase of machinery and equipment) – 3 % - Human capital (skills improvement, requalification – 0 % - Labor (wage costs, consulting services...) – 90 % - Technology (costs for acquisition of Intangible Long-term Assets (ILTA)– patents, software...) – 7 %
6. Indicators
6.1. Result indicator(s)
Number of digitized pages and introduced metadata
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial value – 0 pcs. [2021] - Intermediate value – 30 million pcs. [2023] - Final value – 125.5 million pcs. [2025]
Developed platform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial value – 0 pcs. [2021] - Final value – 1 pcs. [2023]
6.2. Effect indicator(s)
Improved administrative services by the administrations involved in the project – number of provided native electronic administrative services (NEAS) using data from digitalized information databases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial value – 0 pcs. [2021] - Intermediate value – 50 000 pcs. [2023] - Final value – 500 000 pcs. [2025]
Number of services transformed into Internal EAS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial value – 0 pcs. [2021] - Intermediate value – 10 pcs. [2023] - Final value – 50 pcs. [2025]
Number of services for citizens/business transformed at level 3 and 4, entirely e-provided

by project partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial value – 0 pcs/ [2021] - Intermediate value – 10 pcs. [2023] - Final value – 38 pcs. [2025]
7. Does the implementation of the project require a procedure under the Public Procurement Act?
<p>For the implementation of Activity 1 the project partners –Registry Agency and NSSI will conduct a public procurement procedures respectively.</p> <p>For the implementation of Activity 2 MRDPW/NAMRB/SeGA will conduct a public procurement and will sign a master agreement with competitive bidding between the selected contractors for the digitalization of each structure.</p> <p>For the implementation of Activity 3, a public procurement will be required.</p>
7.1. If a PPA procedure is required, what part of the activities and financial resources will be subject of the public procurement?
90 %
7.2. If a PPA procedure is required, what is the indicative timeline for its implementation?
<p>For Activity 1 – announcement in 2021 - open procedure for awarding a PP in accordance with the Public Procurement Act: 180 days for preparation and conduct of the procedure, of which 60 days for preparation of technical specification and documentation; 30 days for collection of tenders; 40 days for commission labor, 15 days for appeal, 10 days for unforeseen circumstances, as questions to the participants and elimination of irregularities) and 25 days for entering into agreement,</p> <p>* The indicated timeline excludes procedure appeal period, which may extend the specified deadlines by up to 60 days.</p> <p>For Activity 2 – announcement in 2022 For Activity 3 – announcement in 2021</p>
8. Distinction and extension
8.1. If similar projects have been implemented (regardless of their source of funding), describe how this project builds on/complements the achievements of previous projects.
<p>The digitalization of information databases (registers) of central and local administrations will ensure the exchange of information between registers, improve interoperability and quality of data in the public sector, and business processes in administrations. This will establish the basis for measures, envisaged in the new Programme for Research, Innovation and Digitalization for smart transformation 2021-2027 to provide free and secure access to large data databases, open and spatial data, and development of standards and tools for their use, including the development and implementation of modern tools for subsequent data</p>

aggregation, large data analysis and related data, process optimization, artificial intelligence, machine learning, Internet of Things. After ensuring data availability in a structured format from key registers, digital transformation in the public sector will continue with the establishment of digital data collection, processing, storage, automatic digital data processing and security-related processing of large data through the capabilities of new technologies, with the support of this programme.

At the same time these measures are complemented by current interventions in the field of interoperability and the reform of registers co-financed through the ESF (under the Operational Programme "Good Governance" 2014-2020). A reference architecture for interoperability is currently being developed in accordance with the European Interoperability Reference Framework. A centralized registry management system will be set up to allow each administration to automatically create data structure and perform business processes related to registry-based services.

The Registry Agency has completed a project for digitalization of archives in the Registry Office – Provadia and Chepelare, which is characterized as a pilot project. With the implementation of this project the entire available paper archive will be digitized in the Registry Offices (in total 111 Registry Offices). All acts which are subject to registration will be digitized, prioritizing those transferring property rights (sales, donation, exchange, giving instead of execution, expropriation against an obligation to look and feed, etc.) or such, which constitute, transfer, amend or terminate any other property right (right to use, property ownership, etc.) on immovable property, as well as acts which confer, alter or terminate any other property right (surface rights, property ownership, etc.) on immovable property, as well as acts which recognize such rights (constituted acts, non-legislative acts, acts of state property, municipal property acts, etc.). This is determined by their actual importance for clarification of property rights in subsequent transfer transactions and acts that require the issuance of certified and uncertified copies.

8.2. If similar projects are envisaged under the Partnership Agreement programmes, centrally managed EU instruments or the Just Transition Fund, outline the demarcation with the current project.

With sub activity 1.1. the current project will build on the implemented activities and the results achieved under the project "Upgrade of property register for integration with cadastral register and providing additional e-services" of the Roadmap for implementation of the Strategy for development of e-government in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2016-2020. In relation to the other activities and sub-activities under the Partnership Agreement programmes, the centrally managed EU instruments or the Just Transition Fund are not envisaged for the implementation of similar projects.

9. Does the project directly contribute to the implementation of any of the Council's Specific Recommendations addressed to Bulgaria within the framework of the European Semester 2017-2020? Please describe how.

Paragraph 24 of the preamble to the Council Recommendation on the National Reform Programme of the Republic of Bulgaria for 2020 and the Convergence Programme of Bulgaria 2020-2023 states "In the future effective public administration will be of key importance for ensuring the timely and effective implementation of the recovery measures." The Council also accepts as a key requirement "the reduction of the administrative burden on improving the business environment and the strengthening of the public sector with investments, which will have a positive impact on the recovery pace. In that relation, in 2020, a specific recommendation (SR) № 4 was addressed to Bulgaria - "To minimize the administrative burden for enterprises by improving the efficiency of public administration and strengthening e-government."

In response to the Council Recommendation, new implementation measures have been updated and added to the National Reform Programme of Bulgaria for 2020, with a special measure related to the establishment and maintenance of centralized registers, transformation and migration of data. The expected effect of the implementation of this measure is to enable:

- Optimization of the process of establishment and maintenance of public administration registers to ensure the official exchange of information and data for the provision of quality services, the option of providing services based on data from registers of other administrative authorities, and the quality, comprehensiveness and security of data; and
- Automation and optimization of processes to prevent duplication and discrepancies between data contained in the registers of different administrative bodies.

The current project for digitalization of information databases covers the specific activities contributing to the implementation of the measure addressing SR No 4.

By turning the information from paper sets into a structured, machine-readable and automated exchange, the project will create the basic conditions for ensuring the service exchange of information and data for the provision of quality services, for process optimization and wider implementation, and provision of electronic and native electronic administrative services, as well as complex administrative services, proactive services and life episode services.

The project directly contributes to the achievement of "effective administration" and plays a key role in "minimizing the administrative burden on enterprises", as it aims at:

1. Guaranteed possibility of obtaining electronic administrative services (EAS) and providing native electronic administrative services (NEAS);
2. Eliminate the need for direct contact between the service applicant and the employee of the respective administrative structure, including as an anti-corruption measure;
3. Improved administrative services;
4. Reduced time for the implementation of the administrative services, including their cost, the need to submit certificates, issued by another administration;
5. Supporting citizens, businesses and administration to make better decisions, prevent mistakes, malicious actions and to cause potential problems.

**10. Does the project contribute to the implementation of a reform in any sector?
Please describe how.**

The project contributes to the implementation of policies aimed at improving the business environment and reforming the public administration. Improving the business environment is a direct result of increasing the productivity of the administration and achieving higher standards of quality of administrative services. On the other hand, part of the reform of the administration is aimed at making more efficient use of the limited resources to provide quality public services. This project is a connecting basis for the implementation of both policies because it will provide data and information, which are a major resource, in a form that ensures higher productivity and more efficient use for the purposes of quality administrative services.

The main goal in the framework of the overall reform of the public administration is the registry reform. The same is adopted in the Government Program 2017-2021, where one of the main measures is the digitization of registers, as well as ensuring interoperability for switching to automated data exchange and electronic documents. This will optimize the organization of registers in the public administration to ensure their maintenance with the least possible costs; the official exchange of information and data for the provision of quality services; the

possibility of providing services based on registers kept by other administrative authorities; and the quality, comprehensiveness and security of data. The digitization of the paper files will allow the transition to data-based management and the provision to citizens and businesses of secure, comfortable, integrated electronic services “from end to end”.

The activities envisaged in this project are in implementation of the concept for registry reform, adopted by Decision № 546 of the Council of Ministers of 18 September 2019. The principles of digitization and unification of the structure, data format and technological processes laid down in the Concept are directly transposed into activities 1, 2 and 4 of the current project. As a result of these activities, the registers will be maintained only in digital format with a public interface for data retrieval, their information will be provided in machine-readable format in system-to-system interaction and in electronic form when provided to users in structure and content entered in the Interoperability Register. Secure storage of data archives necessary for the operation of critical eGovernment registers will be ensured, with the possibility of easily increasing capacity without interruption. There will be a possibility of applying uniform technological model of interaction in registering, altering and verifying facts and circumstances from a register. The establishment of the registers will be ensured by following common requirements for the structure, data and content format. The project therefore also respects and contributes to the implementation of the leading European and national e-government principles – Digital by Default, One-Time Data Collection, Use and Reuse, Default Interoperability.

11. Does the project contribute to any aspects of sustainable economic development? Please describe how.

Digital transition is key to strengthening the social and economic sustainability of the European Union and individual Member States. The digital potential of the public sector for sustainable economic development has now been revealed more than ever and the urgent transformation of available data and information from paper sets into digital form, enabling their processing and reuse, is inevitable. The European Commission's Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy 2021 relies on promoting the digital transformation of all economic and social sectors, including public services.

The activities of this project underpin the implementation of the principle of modernization, according to which "key digital public services should be updated and made accessible to all (...) allow citizens to access to their data online and digital services (...)". The digitalization of public administration and public services increases their efficiency and ensures sustainable economic development.

The project also has the potential to help achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, outlined by the United Nations, because of its horizontal approach, proposing solutions to compile paper data and information in the administration in a digital form, allowing reuse for all purposes.

12. Does the project contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the National Development Programme BULGARIA 2030? Please describe how.

The project is fully in line with Priority 10 “Improving the institutional framework” and in particular of impact 10.3.a “Data-driven government” where e-government is aimed at increasing the added value by using available data as the core capital of the government, and the area of impact through the implementation of measures for the digitalization of existing

data sets. The Programme is set to continue the efforts to build e-government by completing the necessary infrastructure, connecting key registers and ensuring interoperability to move towards automated data exchange and electronic documents. The e-Government policy will aim at minimizing the instances, the path and the time needed for citizens and businesses to use administrative services, reducing the administrative burden and improving living and business conditions. A key aspect of this policy is investment in the digitization of all databases relevant to the provision of administrative services, including both central and local archives.

The project will contribute to improving Bulgaria's ranking on the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) in particular for the indicators "Pre-filled forms", "Comprehensive online services" and "Digital Public Services for Business".

13. Does the project contribute to the implementation of the objectives and priorities set out in the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan? If yes, please describe how.

The project contributes to the implementation of the objectives and priorities set out in the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan as part of the implementation of the National Plan of the Ministry of Environment and Water.

Its implementation will reduce the relative share of paper documents and limit the resources needed for their storage, which will contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the national plan – a national waste prevention programme and a programme to achieve the objectives of preparing for the re-use and recycling of municipal waste from paper, metals, plastic and glass.