

Project Application Form

Under the Recovery and Resilience Facility

1. Project name
Strengthening, developing further and upgrading the Unified Information System of Courts of Justice
2. Description of the project (objectives, main activities)
<p>In the latest Report of the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on Bulgaria's progress under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism of 22.10.2019, as well as in the Rule of Law Report of 2020, the introduction of e-Justice and balanced workload management in the courts of justice are defined as significant challenges that will require sustained efforts in the coming years in the context of ongoing judicial reform. The introduction of e-Justice in terms of improving digitalisation in the judiciary system is one of the key steps to improve access to justice. As part of the overall e-Justice strategy, regulated in Article 360a et seq. of the Judiciary System Act, have been established and are operational: 1. Unified Information System of Courts of Justice (UISCJ) developed under Project BG05SFOP001-3.001 Priority Axis No 3 "Transparent and Effective Judiciary System", Operational Programme "Good Governance"; 2. Single e-Justice Portal (SEJP) designed under a project of Operational Programme "Administrative Capacity" and developed further with Project No. BG05SFOP001-3.001-0013/11.12.2017 Further development and centralisation of the portals in the Justice sector for access of citizens to information, e-services and e-Justice.</p> <p>UISCJ is an internal communication system within the judiciary system and the task of SEJP is to ensure the access of the participants in the legal cases to the electronic folders of legal cases, electronic service of summons and participation in online hearings.</p> <p>According to the adopted e-Justice Strategy reflected in the Judiciary System Act, the task of UISCJ is to ensure full digitalisation of legal cases, with all statements and instruments submitted to the judicial authorities on paper carrier being entered in UISCJ by capturing an electronic image of a type and in a way permitting their reproduction. Each legal case will have its full electronic image including all statements of the court and the participants in the legal cases, as well as the procedural steps taken, including the evidence collected. UISCJ is a system uniting all electronic files and ensuring their management, including the random selection upon the assignment of cases, taking account of the workload of the courts of justice, and collection and processing of statistical information about the activity of the courts of justice. Participants in legal cases are ensured and guaranteed the right of remote, continuous and free e-access to electronic files. The whole or part of the electronic file can be reproduced, at the request of the participants in the legal cases, in the required number of documents on paper carrier having the force of official transcripts.</p> <p>The project is aimed at strengthening, developing further and upgrading UISCJ, which, according to a decision of the Supreme Judicial Council of December 2020, is implemented in all courts of justice on a phased basis till 30.06.2021, appellate region by appellate region. All functionalities embedded in UISCJ are available and operational in the courts of justice where UISCJ has been implemented, including the case assignment module. Essential for the normal functioning of UISCJ, for the digitalization of justice, accordingly, is the procurement of the required hardware (for example, the absence of scanners and copiers makes it impossible to create e-folders of legal cases).</p>

The project also aims to improve the business environment in Bulgaria. A number of institutional challenges have a negative effect on the quality and competitiveness of the business environment. Bulgaria's current ranking in the 'Ease of Doing Business Scores' index (61 places) is partly determined by the slow pace of improvement in several areas, including the judiciary system and e-Justice. World Bank's methodology for calculating the "Ease of Doing Business Scores" index includes a couple of elements which fall within the scope of the present project. These are the possibilities:

- To file a suit online, including without submitting the documents for filing a suit on paper carrier;
- To notify the other party to the case electronically, including without a need to submit documents on paper carrier;
- To pay the legal costs electronically, including without actual physical contact being required to realise the transaction;
- To publish judgements in commercial cases at all instances online.

Further to the structural challenges identified above, the project also contributes to the fulfilment of a priority of the Updated Judicial Reform Strategy: Specific Objective 5: e-Justice /3.5.3 Equal and as close to citizens and businesses as possible electronic access to e-Justice and e-Government and making this access the preferred option to the one involving documents on paper carrier/. The project implementation will make the work of courts of justice more effective through automated data and electronic document exchange between the participants in the judicial process. The introduction of e-Justice tools will also increase public confidence in the judiciary system as a measure to curb corruption. An important result of digitalisation is also the reduced administrative burden for citizens and the reduced workload of the judicial staff.

An "Order for payment procedure" module will be created within the UISCJ upgrading project. It will contribute for centralised assignment and full electronic processing of order for payment legal cases with a view to a more equal distribution of the workload among the regional magistrates across the country, facilitated access of the parties to the legal case and accelerated continuance of the litigation. Centralised assignment involves full digitalisation of proceedings and change of jurisdiction through introduction of centralised random selection assignment of order for payment legal cases among regional magistrates across the country. Order for payment legal cases make up over 50% of total legal cases tried in regional courts and their rational assignment depending on the workload (given the uneven workload of courts of justice), also through their full electronic processing, without applying the local jurisdiction rules, will contribute to the fast closure of legal cases. The terms of reference for the implementation of the module are designed pursuant to Project "Order for payment procedure" under Contract SRSS/SC2019/012 at the European Commission's Structural Reform Support Service (completed in November 2019) and the ongoing project "Continuing reform of the order for payment procedure", under Contract REFORM/SC2020/133 at European Commission's Directorate General for Structural Reform Support, duration up to 31.12.2021. The reform of the order for payment procedure is to be implemented through legislative changes, the proposals for which are part of the deliverables under Project "Continuing reform of the order for payment procedure".

Introducing **a module for centralised assignment and electronic processing and management of order for payment legal cases in the UISCJ** will contribute to a significantly more balanced workload in the judiciary system, which will have a direct effect on the optimisation of the judiciary map, towards more effective use of the judiciary system resources – human and financial, accordingly.

A module for administration of mediations in legal cases will be created within the UISCJ upgrading project. It will be implemented in support of the Project "Introducing

alternative dispute resolution methods (ADR) in the Bulgarian judiciary system – piloted introduction of compulsory court mediation; completing the network of judicial centres in all district regions of the country; designing a strategy for full use of other alternative dispute resolution methods.” The UISCJ upgrading will be thus implemented within one project, towards ensuring consistency, interoperability and sustainability of the investment.

The overall objective of the project is to improve the effectiveness of work within courts by automating the exchange of data and electronic documents between the participants in the judicial process and optimizing procedures allowing for quality electronic management of legal cases.

The overall project objective will be achieved by implementing the following specific objectives:

1. Improving the access to justice by upgrading the UISCJ to ensure that citizens and businesses are able to communicate and exchange electronic documents with the judiciary system fully online.
2. Balancing the workload of courts of justice within the order for payment procedure and the alternative dispute resolution by implementing centralised assignment of order for payment legal cases and creating a module for administration of the mediations in the cases.
3. Procuring the required IT infrastructure for the needs of e-Justice.

The above objectives will be attained by strengthening, developing further and upgrading the existing Unified Information System of courts of justice (built under Project “Creating a model for optimisation of the judiciary map of Bulgarian courts of justice and prosecutor’s offices and developing a Unified Information System of courts of justice” financed under grant contract No. BG05SFOP001-3.001-0001-C01/26.08.2016, procedure BG05SFOP001-3.001, Priority Axis No 3 “Transparent and effective judiciary system”, Operational Programme “Good Governance” 2014-2020 (OPGG) co-financed by the European Union from the European Social Fund), regulated in Article 360a et seq. of the Judiciary System Act. The present project is related to the implementation of the project for developing further the Single e-Justice Portal for access of citizens and legal persons to e-services and e-justice. While the portal is the front office of e-Justice, UISCJ is the back office of the system of courts of justice.

The project objectives will be attained through a couple of **core activities**:

Activity No. 1 “Carrying out procedures for the selection of contractors to implement the project objectives”.

Procurement procedures will be prepared and conducted within the activity for:

- Upgrading the existing and creating new functionalities in UISCJ, to enable citizens and businesses to communicate and exchange electronic documents with the judiciary system fully online as well as in the light of regulatory basis developments, changes in the internal administration and management structure of the courts of justice, integration with new systems and implementation of a module for centralised assignment and full electronic processing of order for payment legal cases;
- Procuring the required computer equipment for the full online operation of courts of justice: PC configurations and laptops;
- Upgrading the data centres in SJC.

Activity No. 2: “Upgrading the existing and creating new functionalities in UISCJ to enable citizens and businesses to communicate and exchange electronic documents with the judiciary system fully online as well as in the light of regulatory basis developments, changes in the internal administration and management structure of the courts of justice, integration with new systems and implementation of a module for centralised assignment

and full electronic processing of order for payment legal cases”. Trainings for handling the new functionalities will be conducted within the activity. The trainings will cover about 3 000 participants.

Activity No. 3 “Procuring the required computer equipment for the full online operation of courts of justice: PC configurations and laptops”

Activity No. 4 “Upgrading the data centres in SJC”.

Of key importance for attaining the project objectives is to conduct a detailed analysis of the applicable legal framework and to enable citizens and businesses to interact with the judicial authorities fully by electronic means, as well as and to enable courts to work in a fully electronic environment. If the analysis establishes gaps or omissions in the legal framework, specific regulatory changes will be proposed. In addition to the legal analysis, a further analysis of workflows and user cases relating to working with UISCJ will be carried out, towards full digitalisation, simplification and application of the “digital-by-default” and “once-only” principles.

The legal analysis and the analysis of the workflows and user cases will be conducted by the contractor selected in a procurement procedure.

Throughout the project implementation, fulfilment of the requirements of the national and European data protection and network and information security laws and regulations will be ensured.

The project is aimed at making UISCJ a fully functional system, a digital back office of courts of justice within e-Justice and, as such, the main target group that will benefit from the project results are magistrates and the judicial staff.

The project is logically related to the project for upgrading SEJP. The implementation of the two projects will contribute to attaining their overall objectives and results. The two projects address different aspects of e-Justice (SEJP addresses the work with external users and UISCJ addresses the implementation of the processes in the judiciary system and the work with external users) and they are complementary to each other.

Investments in equipment (project activities 3 and 4) are necessary and will ensure the implementation of the infrastructure environment within which UISCJ will operate with full transition to e-Justice. The full transition to e-Justice sets high standards for reliability, accessibility, availability and security of the system as a whole and the parts thereof. This cannot be achieved without an adequate infrastructure base. The required equipment for attaining the project objectives is currently unavailable and that is the reason to include those activities.

3. Beneficiary

SUPREME JUDICIAL COUNCIL

4. Time schedule for project Implementation, including activities, stages¹

The total duration of the project is 31 months, according to the following table

Months of project implementation																															
	Месеци от изпълнението на проекта																														
Дейност	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Дейност 1	X	X	X	X	X	X							X	X	X	X	X	X													
Дейност 2							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Дейност 3							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Дейност 4							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X														
Организация и управление	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Activity
Activity 1
Activity 2
Activity 3
Activity 4
Organisation management and

The first six months of the project are envisaged for preparing and conducting the contractor selection procedures. The upgrading of the existing and the creation of new functionalities in UISCJ to enable citizens and business to communicate and exchange electronic documents with the judicial authorities fully online, as well as in the light of regulatory basis developments, changes in the internal administration and management structures of courts of justice, integration with new systems, new e-services, etc., as well as the implementation of a module for centralised assignment and electronic processing online of order for payment cases, will start immediately after the contract with the selected contractor is signed. The planned duration of this activity (Activity No. 2) is up to 24 months. This time limit includes all stages of software development, testing and implementation, as well as conducting trainings on working with the new functionalities of UISCJ.

The required computer equipment for the full online operation of courts of justice (computer configurations, laptops) will be procured in two stages of award, two stages of supply and commissioning, accordingly, within the project duration.

The plan is to upgrade the data centres in SJC within 12 months after the public contracts are signed.

4.1. When can the project implementation start at the earliest after its approval?

Immediately after the project proposal is approved.

5. Indicative financial resource by activity, including sources of financing (national budget, European funding, private funding, IFIs)

¹ The time schedule shall be relevant for determining interim targets within the framework of the Recovery and Resilience Plan and is directly related to the disbursement of grant instalments from the Recovery and Resilience Fund.

Source of financing – European financing

The indicative financial resource for the activities described and for attaining the objectives amounts to 27 455 000,00 (twenty-seven million four hundred and fifty-five) BGN inclusive of VAT, broken down as follows:

1. Upgrading the existing and creating new functionalities in UISCJ to enable citizens and businesses to communicate and exchange electronic documents with the judiciary authorities fully online, as well as in the light of regulatory basis developments, changes in the internal administration and management structure of the courts of justice, integration with new systems and implementation of a module for centralised assignment and full electronic processing of order for payment legal cases online, and a module for administration of mediations in legal cases:
BGN 3 795 000.
2. Supply of the required computer equipment for full online operation of courts of justice: personal computer configurations and laptops, with 36 months of warranty service:
 - 2.1. PC configurations – 6000 pcs x BGN 1200 = BGN 7 200 000;
 - 2.2. Mobile computers (15.6", for remote access by magistrates) – 2200 pcs x BGN 1800 = BGN 3 960 000
3. Upgrading the data centres in SJC – two + archive centre for disaster recovery and monitoring and reaction to cyber threats and incidents of all systems, with 36 months of warranty service – BGN 12 500 000;
 - 3.1. Data centres – Two mirror centres, initial investment for technological equipment, servers, communication devices and cyber security, etc.: server systems (18 pcs), e-mail security (2 pcs), WEB security (2 pcs), WEB and E-mail management (2 pcs), authentication and management (1 pc), Malware protection system (1 pc), SIEM (Security information and event management, 1 pc), backup software (1 pc).
 - 3.2. Archive centre, third location, intended as an archive for data recovery in cases of disasters or incidents in the two Data Centres – built on the basis of slow storages serving only for information archiving. The investment includes two routers, core switches, firewalls and end-point switches each, as well as one management switch, backup copy disk storage and archive disk storage each.
4. Human capital – skills improvement, retraining of magistrates, judicial staff, representatives of branch organisations, etc., by conducting trainings on working with the upgraded UISCJ modules – the costs are included in UISCJ Upgrading BGN 300 000.
5. Wage costs related to the management and implementation of project activities and provision of consulting services – the costs are included in UISCJ Upgrading BGN 200 000.

The cost of the project has been calculated on the basis of procurement procedures which are identical in scope with the project activities:

- Market consultations "Building a Unified Information System (UIS) for the needs of the Financial Supervision Commission" (<https://app.eop.bg/today/100873>);
- Support, administration, integration, development, technological renovation and ensuring the continuous operation of the Revenue Management Software (RMS) in NRA, old PCR - 00530-2018-0109 (<https://www.nra.bg/news?id=3785>);
- Development and implementation of Institutional Architecture of CA for the modules "Risk Analysis", "Risk Information Processing", "Administrative Criminal Proceedings", "Cash Declaration", and module "Register of Debts to Customs Administration, automatic collection of debts and interfaces to RegiX, old PCR -

<p>00334-2019-0030 (https://customs.bg/wps/portal/agency/home/buyer-profile/customer-profile-from-01012018/market-consultations/32-221649/32-221649/!ut/p/z1/7VVNc9JAGD77L-KBm2E3gVLojcEq1RYGO21JLp0QFoiGbBoSKJ6wrR_TS3vQ0UOtHX9ByrSKVfAvbP5Cf4nvJlqBjlbHGQ-OGWYh7_O8X8--7CIVIZFqaW2jrrkGtTQT3hU1tZ4vpbNSMS3fTefz87gkLd3OrhYWYEmhtUkCvonTOJtfLKxk0rcknJtB6jhcLBUBni9KucVMQsKyPO1_maD-Uf7kr-XHP3iy-Cr_VaQi1daNKIJmkkTOyDMJcTaTnhWTKayJWIJPibKcnNVqFT1Z0VKcrVuu7TaQotWJpXduGW4JIYbtAlrxesSR7QdWjNMeNW9lgv2C4tYc2hTxBKWZCylY7ipOO-IK-rUanmmG25aK4YTMuSUUsnM2M9poS4rqf5chzVe-hVSXxVDgRpmf6jmQglT8xgtnpkobp-j1hV4oAT2DY84nSXvXqdtHiT85ZWMckkJXSbtFDP0UmOWi6x3AKtTqKbSMHhdnzHkWLDPsTbdrxFNEdvcNjUutT7igJgU8c1iRvvGFaVdsZ4nmMgJXrNQTjizIU1XxS PIPPE22vsiPnsPeuzQbDFBuxUYAOb9YNdsJyyd-wE0CG3vmLD4BGnBFvBdvAEqCMAfPaRr2D3BfjqBY_DOKfsLKT1uHnll312ILDp bCSwEeBDWJ8BaxhIDBmfIOBJsM0-Cue9Q-BHwQfsfYRDrEHwiJ0x_7x3cGOafsiOeTJ2Hlbfvfy6wnHE7dAeNLIDtB6E8Hkjwd50RMj-mr25IOQ57wtq8nmqyFMA6XzemB-meco7EkCnHIBPQR36YcGhqppRjtgL9pldsH3l44PiW3HuuAstDMJWLhrgKcBvFzK_izQL9iLBB1E3oDcovwPYB2gUjGdA_iTcl3WjzHe7y-fqDILrJq1EJ2jDde25GI7hTqcTNyrNuE6bMWxS14M_67cJioak_H9l_v0h-dWRMKmumQSViTv9ck6e3iUM91jbIB20YIGnCUO3_Ju3Uj6c2J_fD1C1cX9jQ81-PTI3XVT-u1cYVCA7S7mIOvSmuQ3RsGoUlcfw7z_t5go8zXSiKz6oFQoz7fHPw0WyJip32p1u wqxnR38BkA9mGw!!/dz/d5/L2dBISeVZ0FBIS9nQSEh/?urile=wcm%3Apath%3A%2Fagency%2Fsite%2Fhome%2Fbuyer-profile%2Fcustomer-profile-from-01012018%2Fmarket-consultations%2F32-221649%2F32-221649);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply of computer equipment (https://app.eop.bg/today/79528); • Research of price lists of manufacturers of equipment for the data centres with included expected discounts on price lists. 	<p>5.1. Indicative allocation of the financial resource, depending on the type of expense</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building / rehabilitation of infrastructure (construction works) – 0% - Physical capital (purchase of machinery and equipment) – 67,97% - Human capital (skills improvement, retraining...) – 1,09% - Labour (wage costs, consulting services...) – 0.73% - Technology (costs of acquisition of intangible fixed assets – patents, software...) – 30,21% <p>6. Indicators</p> <p>6.1. Result indicator/s</p> <p>1. For the project as a whole Result: Implemented investment project Objective: 1 implemented investment project Result indicator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of implemented investment projects <p>Source of information: Centralized Automated Electronic Public Procurement Information System, project implementation report</p>
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2. For Activity No. 2 – UISCJ

Result: Upgraded existing functionalities and created new functionalities in UISCJ to enable citizens and businesses to communicate and exchange electronic documents with the judicial authorities fully online, as well as in the light of regulatory basis developments, changes in the internal administration and management structure of courts of justice, and integration with new systems

Objective: Commissioning of upgraded existing functionalities and created new functionalities in UISCJ to enable citizens and businesses to communicate and exchange electronic documents with the judicial authorities fully online, as well as in the light of regulatory basis developments, changes in the internal administration and management structure of courts of justice, and integration with new systems

Result indicator:

- Commissioned upgraded existing functionalities and created new functionalities in UISCJ to enable citizens and businesses to communicate and exchange electronic documents with the judicial authorities fully online, as well as in the light of regulatory basis developments, changes in the internal administration and management structure of courts of justice, and integration with new systems

Source of information: project implementation report

3. For Activity No. 2 – order for payment procedure in UISCJ and alternative dispute resolution

Results: Created module in UISCJ for centralised assignment and full electronic processing of order for payment legal cases. Created module for administration of mediations in legal cases.

Objective: Commissioning of the created modules in UISCJ for centralised assignment and full electronic processing of order for payment legal cases, and for administration of mediations in legal cases.

Result indicator:

- Commissioned modules in UISCJ for centralised assignment and full electronic processing of order for payment legal cases, and for administration of mediations in legal cases

Source of information: project implementation report

4. For Activity No. 3

Result: Procured necessary computer equipment for the full online operation of courts: personal computer configurations and laptops

Objective: Supply and commissioning of the procured computer equipment for the full online operation of courts: personal computer configurations and laptops

Result indicator:

- Delivered 6000 embedded PCs (desktops) with monitors
- Delivered 2200 mobile computers (laptops)

Source of information: project implementation report

5. For Activity No. 4

Result: Upgraded data centres in SJC

Objective: Commissioned upgraded data centres in SJC

Result indicator:

- Commissioned 2 main data centres and 1 archive data centre

Source of information: project implementation report

- Number of implemented investment projects
 - Start value – 0 pcs [at the start of the project]
 - Intermediate value – 0 pcs [1st semester 2021]
 - Intermediate value – 0 pcs [2nd semester 2021]
 - Intermediate value – 0 pcs [1st semester 2022]
 - Intermediate value – 0 pcs [2nd semester 2022]
 - Intermediate value – 0 pcs [1st semester 2023]
 - End value – 1 pc [2nd semester 2023]

- Commissioned upgraded existing functionalities and created new functionalities in UISCJ to enable citizens and businesses to communicate and exchange electronic documents with the judicial authorities fully online, as well as in the light of regulatory basis developments, changes in the internal administration and management structure of courts of justice, and integration with new systems
 - Start value – 0% [at the start of the project]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [1st semester 2021]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [2nd semester 2021]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [1st semester 2022]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [2nd semester 2022]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [1st semester 2023]
 - End value – 100% [2nd semester 2023]

- Commissioned module in UISCJ for centralised assignment and full electronic processing of order for payment legal cases
 - Start value – 0% [at the start of the project]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [1st semester 2021]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [2nd semester 2021]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [1st semester 2022]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [2nd semester 2022]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [1st semester 2023]
 - End value – 100% [2nd semester 2023]

- Delivered 6000 embedded personal computers with monitors
 - Start value – 0% [at the start of the project]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [1st semester 2021]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [2nd semester 2021]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [1st semester 2022]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [2nd semester 2022]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [1st semester 2023]
 - End value – 100% [2nd semester 2023]

- Delivered 2200 mobile computers (laptops)
 - Start value – 0% [at the start of the project]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [1st semester 2021]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [2nd semester 2021]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [1st semester 2022]
 - End value – 100% [2nd semester 2022]

- Commissioned 2 main data centres and 1 archive data centre
 - Start value – 0% [at the start of the project]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [1st semester 2021]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [2nd semester 2021]
 - Intermediate value – 0% [1st semester 2022]

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - End value – 100% [2nd semester 2022]
5.1. Effect indicator/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Start value - [year] - Intermediate value - [year] - End value - [year]
6. Does the project require the opening of a procedure pursuant to the Public Procurement Act (PPA)?
It does.
6.1. If a procedure under the Public Procurement Act is required, what part of the activities and financial resources will be subject of the public procurement?
Over 99% of the activities and the financial resources under the project will be implemented by public procurement procedures under the Public Procurement Act.
6.2. If a procedure under the Public Procurement Act is required, what is the indicative schedule for its implementation?
The indicative schedule for implementation of the procedures for selection of contractors will be in accordance with the provisions of PPA and the expected deadline for signing contracts with the selected contractors is up to 6 months.
7. Demarcation and complementarity
7.1. If similar projects have been implemented (regardless of their source of funding), describe how this project builds on/complements what has been achieved with previous projects.
<p>Project “Creating a model for optimisation of the judiciary map of Bulgarian courts of justice and prosecutor’s offices and developing a Unified Information System of courts of justice” financed under grant contract No. BG05SFOP001-3.001-0001-C01/26.08.2016, procedure BG05SFOP001-3.001, Priority Axis No 3 “Transparent and effective judiciary system”, Operational Programme “Good Governance” 2014-2020 (OPGG) co-financed by the European Union from the European Social Fund</p> <p>A Uniform Information System of courts of justice has been built under the OPGG project. It is a web-based application for organising the processes of management of electronic legal cases. UISCJ integrates the whole process of management of legal cases, from the registration of the initiating documents, through the opening of the case, random assignment of legal cases, management of hearings, delivery and depersonalisation of judicial decisions, court statistics, automatic calculation of the workload of magistrates, financial management of legal cases, management of the service of summons, including through the existing mobile application for process servers. All activities for management of legal cases are integrated through an option to perform the actions in one information system, not in several different and separate systems as was the case before.</p>

As a web-based information system, UISCJ enables optimized and reliable electronic management of legal cases, ensuring the required information security for protection of the information processed and exchanged by the judicial authorities. UISCJ operates in a protected APN communication channel.

The system consists of 19 functional and 19 system modules (total 38 modules). The functional modules serve to manage the workflows by performing user actions in front of the system interface. The system modules have a system-level nature which means that they do not serve a specific workflow in its entirety; they help to manage and reflect the results of certain actions performed within workflows by means of the functional modules.

Integrations with a multitude of external systems and registers have been implemented and are operational in UISCJ, including Uniform Information System for counteracting crime (UISCC), Single e-Justice Portal (SEJP), Electronic service of documents system (ESDS), Central web-based interface for publication of judicial decisions (CWBIPJD), Bankruptcy proceedings information system (BPIS), National Population Database (NPDB), Commercial register and register of non-profit legal entities, BULSTAT Register, NRA Information System, NSSI Information System, Bulgarian Identity Documents Automated Information System. Citizens and attorneys access case files in UISCJ via the Single e-Justice Portal. The portal is accessed with a user name and a password provided on the basis of an application to the respective court of justice. The integrations are mainly of a reference nature and should be extended towards full digitalisation of the system.

UISCJ is currently implemented in all courts of justice covered by the project. It operates in full, using all modules and functionalities, and the requirements thereto, that are implemented under the project.

The following modules have been implemented:

1. Functional modules:

- 1.1. Court registry activity management module
- 1.2. Module for management of general information on legal cases
- 1.3. e-Casefile support module
- 1.4. Module for management of the information on parties, representation and other participants in the litigation
- 1.5. Module for management of the service of documents activity
- 1.6. Module for preparing standardized outgoing documents (summons, communications, letters, etc.)
- 1.7. Module automating the preparation, conducting and reflecting the results of hearings
- 1.8. Module for registration, issuing and depersonalisation of judicial decisions
- 1.9. Module for recording the case flow between courts
- 1.10. Module for monitoring of the location of legal cases
- 1.11. Module automating the case file archiving process
- 1.12. Module supporting information on books and registers
- 1.13. Financial module
- 1.14. Deadline monitoring module
- 1.15. Module for internal administrative document flow
- 1.16. Random assignment module
- 1.17. Module for calculating the workload of magistrates
- 1.18. Module for physical and electronic evidence
- 1.19. Reports module

2. System modules

- 2.1. Module managing the connections between legal cases
- 2.2. Module managing the information on natural and legal persons

- 2.3. Address management module
- 2.4. Mobile application to manage the service of documents activity
- 2.5. Keeping the Register of Decisions of Courts of Justice
- 2.6. File content management module
- 2.7. Module for registration, processing and recording the results of appellations
- 2.8. Incremental identification numbers module
- 2.9. Personalised screen, calendar and notification
- 2.10. Module for monitoring and registering the changes made
- 2.11. Data repository
- 2.12. Administrative module
- 2.13. Search module
- 2.14. Configuring the parameters of UISCJ
- 2.15. System log, event support and selection
- 2.16. User and group management
- 2.17. Nomenclature management
- 2.18. System event information management
- 2.19. Archiving, backup and prophylaxis of the system

The future development of UISCJ involves continuing development of the digitalization of Justice processes in emergencies such as pandemics, natural disasters, etc., in order to provide access to justice. The system's functionalities for management of electronic legal cases arising from legislative changes and development in the field need to be upgraded and the scope of integration with other (new and improved) public administration systems needs to be expanded (including in respect of the systems of the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Property Register, the Commercial Register, the information systems of the Ministry of Justice, etc.). There is a need to invest in upgrading central-level hardware and equipment and in computer equipment and peripherals in each court of justice.

The UISCJ needs to be upgraded by developing the following modules and functionalities thereof:

Upgrading the Court registry activity management module and the Module for recording the case flow between courts of justice, by fully digitalising the process of electronic exchange of documents and casefiles between the courts and the citizens, the businesses and the procedural representatives, on one part and between the courts of justice covered by the project, in the context of full digitalisation of the electronic back office of courts, on the other part. Elimination of paperwork in the document exchange.

Upgrading the Module for management of general information on legal cases through further automation of the process of opening and managing cases, by enabling caselaw search and assisting the judicial staff and the magistrates in making decisions and taking procedural and technical steps in legal cases.

Upgrading the Module automating the preparation, conducting and recording the result of hearings and optimising the processes of drafting documents which are the result of hearings, through integration with technical means and technological platforms for automated drafting of texts.

Upgrading the Module for random assignment and the Module for calculating the workload of magistrates with a view to optimising the workload of magistrates and achieving maximum even assignment of cases based on their complexity and the actual physical workload of magistrates resulting from the procedural steps taken.

Upgrading other functional modules with a view to optimising the workflows and

decreasing the manual work of the judicial staff and the magistrates in performing service of documents actions, management of electronic and physical evidence, depersonalisation of judicial decisions (depersonalisation of content to comply with personal data provisions), financial resources and cashflows in relation to cases, in connection with the full digitalisation of the electronic back office of courts of justice.

Project "Order for payment procedure" under Contract SRSS/SC2019/012, Lot 1, at the European Commission's Structural Reform Support Service and ongoing Project "Continuing reform of the order for payment procedure", under Contract REFORM/SC2020/133 at European Commission's Directorate General for Structural Reform Support, aimed at designing Terms of Reference for a future UISCJ module which will contribute to digitalisation of the order for payment procedure, towards more efficient assignment of cases /with direct effect on the judiciary map optimisation/, facilitating the parties to the proceedings and cutting down the time for closing the proceedings.

7.2. If similar projects are envisaged to be implemented under the Partnership Agreement programs, the centrally managed facilities of EU or the Just Transition Fund, outline the demarcation with this project.

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

The project directly contributes to attainment of the major objectives arising from Bulgaria's e-Governance Strategy 2019-2023 and the Roadmap for fulfilment of the Updated Strategy for Development of Electronic Governance in the Republic of Bulgaria, 2019-2023 (Roadmap).

The present project proposal addresses part of the implementation of Measure 54 of the Roadmap – "Commissioning and future development of UISCJ and designing and/or integrating new functionalities therein, resourcing of its functioning and of the courts with the necessary technical equipment and system software for implementation of e-Justice, as well as other projects related to the main objectives of the strategy for implementation of e-Governance and e-Justice – information systems, software, functionalities, etc."

The project implementation will help address the problem of the high workload of magistrates and the judicial staff in the Republic of Bulgaria within the discharge of their procedural obligations, which has been identified as a major problem to the effectiveness, speed, transparency and independence of the judiciary system.

The problem of the high workload of magistrates is in the focus of a number of systemically relevant documents such as the Roadmap for implementation of the Updated Strategy for Continuing the Reform of the Judiciary System, Commission's 2018 Report on Bulgaria's progress under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism, the results of the empirical study on the workload of magistrates in Bulgaria approved by the SJC, the latest annual workload analyses by the Judges' College of the SJC, the annual reports by the Supreme Court of Cassation and the bigger courts of justice, etc.

9. Does the project contribute to the implementation of a reform in a given sector? Please describe how.

1. The project contributes to the implementation of the judicial reform which is among Bulgaria's strategic priorities. The judicial reform covers a number of sectors. At the forefront are the implementation of e-Justice and **addressing the issue of the uneven workload** of the courts of justice across the country (resulting from the strong demographic processes of concentration of the population in the bigger cities). The project aims to upgrade the existing and create new functionalities in the light of regulatory basis developments, changes in the internal administration and management structure of courts of justice, integration with new systems, new e-services, etc., implementation of a module in UISCJ for centralised assignment and electronic processing of order for payment legal cases and procurement of the required computer equipment: personal computer configurations and laptops. The attainment of the project objectives will enable better electronic management of legal cases, significantly more optimised work of courts of justice and continued steps towards implementation of effective e-Justice, in accordance with the major principles of accessibility, transparency, one-off data collection, personal data protection, improved speed and quality of service, as well as facilitated access to public information. The planned integration between the developed and implemented UISCJ and what is laid down in the present project will enable timely, effective and efficient management of legal cases and information, as well as better management of the relations between the different instances, and improved access to justice.

The project implementation will help build on the efforts for modernisation of the judiciary and completion of the judicial reform, such as:

- Independence of the court and of the judicial authorities;
 - Ensuring good management of judicial authorities and highly effective functioning thereof;
 - Unleashing the potential of the judicial human resources and ensuring high motivation, competence and social responsibility of magistrates, prosecutors and investigators;
 - Implementing modern criminal justice policy and the required institutional and regulatory reforms;
 - Ensuring full right to a fair trial to every citizen and effective human rights protection;
 - Ensuring a European standard of justice to natural and legal persons;
 - Making the judicial authorities an effective guarantor of the rule of law and improvement of state governance and of the institutions in our country.
2. The implementation of a module of order for payment legal cases in UISCJ will be used to achieve comprehensive reform of the order for payment procedure in the light of addressing the above-mentioned problems of uneven workload of regional courts of justice in Bulgaria, through development and implementation of a centralised electronic system of assignment and processing of order for payment legal cases which will contribute to enhanced effectiveness of the Bulgarian judiciary system through balanced work of courts and decreased total time for processing of each specific legal case. This system will put in practice the process of comprehensive digital administration of justice and, through the centralised

assignment of order for payment cases across the country on the basis of pre-announced criteria, it will help regulate the workload of the different regional courts of justice. The serious imbalances existing in the workload of Bulgaria's regional courts have direct negative effect on the length of the justice service which affects standard civil cases, as well as order for payment procedures. The high share of order for payment procedures, which are concentrated mainly in the regional courts with the highest workload, has an additional negative effect because it leads to regional magistrates having less time to devote to hearing legal cases that are more complex in terms of fact and law and it also slows down the hearing and closing of all civil cases in general. In the broader sense, the problem concerns the overall effectiveness of the national judiciary system which, in turn, could be a factor preventing access to justice. In this context, the problem concerned is a very broad one, with effect on almost all sectors of the national social and economic life. An effective and transparent judiciary system is essential for guaranteeing the rights of citizens and for creating a well-functioning economy. There is a direct link between the efficiency of courts of justice and economic growth rates. In countries where the judiciary system guarantees effectiveness of the justice service, creditors are more willing to grant finance and bad faith in business is considerably less prevalent.

The Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of Europe of 13.10.2015 on the application of R (EC) No. 1896/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council creating a European Order for Payment Procedure finds that the swift and efficient recovery of uncontested outstanding debts is of vital importance for economic operators in the European Union. Late payments are a key cause of insolvencies, in particular of small and medium-sized enterprises, and result in numerous job losses.

10. Does the project contribute to the development of any aspect of sustainable economic development? Please describe how.

1. The project contributes to the development of the business environment, e-Governance and innovations – the aspects of sustainable economic development, in particular to:
 - Reducing the administrative burden;
 - Developing and upgrading e-Governance;
 - Enabling open data;
 - Implementing innovative approaches in the judicial process;
 - Optimising the judicial map;
 - Optimising the human and financial potential of the judiciary system.
2. The Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of Europe of 13.10.2015 on the application of R (EC) No. 1896/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council creating a European Order for Payment Procedure finds that the swift and efficient recovery of uncontested outstanding debts is of vital importance for economic operators in the European Union. Late payments are a key cause of insolvencies, in particular of small and medium-sized enterprises, and result in numerous job losses. In that light, the implementation of the module

for order for payment legal cases will lead to swifter and more efficient recovery of uncontested outstanding debts that have fallen due.
11. Does the project contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the National Development Program BULGARIA 2030? Please describe how.
Yes: sustainable economic development
12. Does the project contribute to the implementation of the objectives and priorities set out in the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan? If yes, please describe how.