

# Project Application Form

## Under the Recovery and Resilience Facility

<b>1. Project name</b>
<b>Improving road safety in the Republic of Bulgaria by creating conditions for sustainable road safety management</b>
<b>2. Description of the project (objectives, main activities)</b>
<p><b>2.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE:</b></p> <p>Today, the transport sector is undergoing profound transformations: technological, economic, and social. It is essential not only to harness the potential of these changes, but also to counter the risks involved. As the travel intensity increases, the interaction between people and the transport system also enhances. The phenomenon of road trauma is thus unfolding with major socioeconomic consequences, referred to by the World Health Organization as an 'epidemic'.</p> <p>In 2019, 628 people died and 1,937 were seriously injured on Bulgarian roads. Bulgaria reported relatively low levels of road safety compared to the EU average. European practice shows that the systematic efforts to establish institutional capacity for road safety management have been delivering high results, with a number of Member States demonstrating real achievements and proven societal benefits in the field. On a comparative level, Bulgaria has yet to start this process in a new, coordinated, and systematic way, while most European countries have already reported many years of experience in effectively countering road trauma, with each planning period building on the previous one.</p> <p>The socioeconomic costs of road accidents account for between 1% and 3% of countries' gross domestic product. While annual costs of road trauma are difficult to accurately estimate, global experience shows that they significantly exceed the resources invested in prevention. The levels of investment in road safety in the public sector cannot be clearly estimated either, as many safety-related inputs are included in categories of expenditure in the sectors of transport, regional development, health, home affairs, education, etc. These investments, irrespective of their size, will remain disperse and thus insufficiently effective unless specifically systematized and properly coordinated.</p> <p>In 2019, the European Commission announced a target of halving road fatalities and serious injuries by 2030 compared to 2020. In order to meet the EU-wide targets, Bulgaria's national road safety policy requires the commitment of increasing public attention and resources to effectively counter road trauma.</p> <p>Therefore, the National Strategy for Road Safety in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2021-2030, adopted by Decision 775/26.10.2020, integrates the 'safe system' approach, according to which people will make mistakes and may end up in road accidents, but the aim should always be to <b>create a forgiving road transport environment mitigating undesirable severe consequences.</b></p> <p><b>2.2 OVERALL PROJECT OBJECTIVE:</b></p> <p>The overall objective of the project is to improve the safety of Bulgarian roads in line with the priorities of European and national policies in the field, and the achievement of this objective is to provide long-term socioeconomic benefits to society to which the project will directly contribute.</p> <p><b>2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECT OBJECTIVE:</b></p>

The specific objective of the project is to limit the risk of road accidents and reduce trauma through a targeted impact on key road safety management processes.

## **2.4 PROJECT ACTIVITIES:**

### **2.4.1 Measures to optimize national and municipal road safety management activities**

#### **Activity justification:**

(1) On the one hand, the development of national roads is hampered by a systemic investment gap. The existing national road network needs extensive resources to improve its safety, both in terms of strategic improvements and ongoing maintenance. The lack of sufficient financial resources is the reason for the still unsatisfactory technical condition of certain elements of the system, low performance, and pronounced territorial disparities. One of the main shortcomings of the services provided by national road owners is the outdated or non-existent modern equipment to ensure safe conditions for users and workers, and the state of the roadside is one of the most pronounced problems.

(2) On the other hand, the analysis of municipal roads in the country provided by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works shows that over 11 thousand km of these require renovation and/or reconstruction, with over a thousand routes having been identified in poor condition, with a total length of nearly 5 thousand kilometers.

In this context, road owners, i.e. the Road Infrastructure Agency and Bulgarian municipalities, face serious challenges requiring the maintenance of a difficult balance between capital investment planning and the systematic allocation of resources for ongoing road maintenance, at a slow improvement pace and with very limited human and financial resources. At the same time, a developed and low-conflict road infrastructure is a prerequisite for safe mobility of people and goods, economic growth, competitiveness and territorial cohesion. This requires a compatible and interconnected transport network that can offer accessibility, optimal connections among transport modes, traffic management based on a common database, security, reduced environmental impact, cost-effectiveness, and optimization of operation and maintenance costs. Targeted investment is therefore needed in support of road safety management activities, including the provision of upskilling training to road maintenance workers and the provision of appropriate specialized mechanization.

#### **Activity description:**

(a) Development and integration of software applications for:

- management and prioritization of activities on national and municipal roads to ensure road safety based on available information on their condition, by means of built-in algorithms to model their future status within the financial, material, intangible, and human resources available. The functionalities of this application relate to: establishment of a comprehensive database of the condition of all road infrastructure elements, including information available and additionally required from municipalities/district road administrations; assessment of the condition of the road infrastructure; developing a methodology for managing and prioritizing infrastructure development activities in line with planned budgetary allocations; effective planning of ongoing road maintenance activities; at present, road owners do not have any software applications/systems to enable effective management and prioritization of activities on national and municipal roads. In this sense, the activity does not imply building on an existing base, but the creation of an entirely new software product.
- a national electronic system for reporting and processing of road infrastructure safety-related signals. The system to be developed will cover signals in its functionality, which concern both national and municipal roads and streets. The new system also implies direct reporting by a user and, depending on the type of alert,

the information is delivered in real time by the respective sender, directed to the specific administration managing the road for taking action and sending feedback to the sender, and is visible to all application subscribers. These four key functionalities (in terms of the range of roads, alert senders, re-routing, alert feedback and visualization) do not allow the of the stand-alone use of the existing LIMA system supported by RIA, which is technically not suitable to perform the functionalities described above, but do not exclude the use of some of its existing functionalities to be upgraded with the new system.

(b) Procurement of equipment to ensure the needs for ongoing renovation and maintenance of national roads. The overall assessment of the road network to be carried out by SARS includes direct corrective action to rectify the weaknesses identified by the assessment. The measure envisages the technical ability for district road administrations, as territorial units of Road Infrastructure Agency, to take this corrective action as road managing administrations. More specifically, the activity includes:

- 27 units of multi-functional modular specialized equipment to support road maintenance activities;
- 2 units of specialized vehicles for automated reversing traffic control by means of physical separators.

**Effect of the action:**

- safer conditions for road users: improved road environment recognition and visual perception; improved accident response; improved management of traffic flows; improved safety and comfort of travel;
- safer conditions for road workers;
- improved road safety management at national and municipal levels;
- optimized government expenditure;
- extended lifetime of road infrastructure;
- increased productivity of the administration;
- improved condition of roadsides;
- improved transport connectivity;
- ensured conditions for increased competitiveness, sustainable development of the regions of the country, and bridging territorial gaps.

#### **2.4.2 Measures to support the activities of State Agency Road Safety**

**Activity justification:**

According to Directive 2019/1936 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management, Member States should carry out the first network-wide road safety assessment by the end of 2024. The scope of the Directive covers the entire trans-European road network, motorways, primary roads and all other road sections implemented with EU funds since 2010. The scope of the assessment requires the collection of a set of data that can be subdivided into **baseline-static** (design characteristics, traffic flows, emergency, intelligent transport systems and centers), which can be provided by the competent institutions, and **operational-dynamic** (driver behavior, traffic intensity, actual average traffic speed, traffic organization and safety, and transport and operating condition), which are variable and should be defined locally. The available data on design characteristics may not be up to date and/or geo-referenced, and it is necessary to provide for material and technical equipment to ensure its generation during on-site audits. SARS, as coordinator for the implementation of state policy in the field of road safety, is a lynchpin, which is to carry out the overall road safety assessment procedure, for which regulatory amendments to the Roads Act are foreseen. In order to carry out this strategic task, it is necessary to procure the relevant equipment.

**Activity description:**

- Provision of 2 units of specialized equipment (mobile laboratory) to assess the state of road safety during road audits, including roadside objects, with a view to identifying specific design characteristics, road surface performance indicators and their functional condition.

**Effect of the action:**

- increased capacity of SARS administration;
- national obligations resulting from amendments to Directive 2008/96 fulfilled
- an up-to-date (digitized) single database on the state of road infrastructure provided
- improved road infrastructure safety;
- improved quality of the safe and comfortable travel service provided.

### 2.4.3 Measures to improve traffic conditions in border crossing point areas

**Activity justification:**

Managing heavy goods traffic flows and ensuring the safety of all road users in the areas of Kapitan Andreevo BCP, Ruse BCP, Vidin BCP and other points represent a major challenge as systematically observed are: lines of a large number of heavy goods vehicles, leading to an increased risk of road accidents; unauthorized stay; environmental pollution; traffic hindrance; increased costs for responsible institutions as well as for road users; reduced public welfare due to increased costs and income foregone.

**Activity description:**

Implementation of a system to manage cross-border heavy goods traffic through a dedicated mobile application for road users. The activity will be implemented in cooperation with Border Police GD and the Customs Agency. The system will include the following functionalities:

(1) real-time BCP workload check: information on the workload of approaches to BCPs will be provided by video surveillance of certain sections. Unlike existing alternative applications (e.g. Google maps, WAZE), this system will differentiate traffic by type of flows (cars, heavy goods vehicles, buses), which is key to its functionality.

(2) registration of a time interval for border crossing by a specific motor vehicle: each HGV driver will be able to request a time interval in which to cross a specific BCP. The app will provide information on free time bands to avoid crowding of cars.

(3) indication of possible regulated places of stay: through this function, users will receive information on the places where they can use the regulated rest time, as well as the stay during the different types of traffic restrictions.

(4) provision of information on available rest parking lots: in addition to the above function, provision is made for sending information to users on how busy a specific rest parking lot is and whether they will be able to use it.

**Effect of the action:**

- improved safety by reducing the risk of road accidents;
- improved mobility by shortening travel time;
- better planning of travel for heavy goods vehicles;
- improved comfort of travel;
- preserved environment by reducing harmful emissions from vehicles as well as prevented household and bio-waste pollution of road adjacent areas;
- incentivized construction of inland car parks;
- reduced public expenditure for maintaining road infrastructure, including road adjacent areas.

### 3. Beneficiary

State Agency Road Safety

#### 4. Time schedule for project implementation, including activities, stages<sup>1</sup>

Project implementation is foreseen for a maximum duration of **36 months**.

The parallel implementation of all project activities will include the following four stages:

- (1) prepare public procurement documentation under the Public Procurement Act: **9 months**
- (2) carry out public procurement tenders (up to the selection of a contractor): **12 months**
- (3) implement public procurement contracts: **12 months**
- (4) integrate measures into existing systems: **9 months**.

**Note:** The duration of each stage is presented according to the most time-consuming element of the components of project activities. The weight of the time element for each of the above stages, for each individual project activity, is presented in the table below.

Month of project implementation	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	32	33	34	35	36
Activity 2.4.1 Measures to optimize national and municipal road safety management activities																																				
Stage 1 Prepare participation documentation																																				
Stage 2 Carry out a procedure under the Public Procurement Act																																				
Stage 3 Implement a public																																				

<sup>1</sup> 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.

[illegible]



<b>4.1. When can the project implementation start at the earliest after its approval?</b>
Project implementation may start up to 2 months after its approval.
<b>5. Indicative financial resource by activity, including sources of financing (national budget, European funding, private funding, IFIs)</b>
<p>The source of funding for the envisaged activities is European, through the Recovery and Resilience Facility.</p> <p><b>Activity 2.4.1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Software applications for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) management and prioritization of road activities to ensure road safety based on available information on road condition by means of built-in algorithms to model their future status within available resources: <b>BGN 1,000,000</b></li> <li>(b) national electronic system for reporting and handling of road infrastructure safety-related alerts: <b>BGN 500,000</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>- 27 units of multi-functional modular specialized equipment to support road maintenance activities: 27 x BGN 200,000 per unit; total: <b>BGN 5,400,000</b></li> <li>- 2 specialized vehicles for automated reversing traffic control by means of physical separators: 1 x BGN 400,000 for light mechanization; and 1 x BGN 1,600,000 for mechanization heavy physical separators — reinforced concrete; total: <b>BGN 2,000,000</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Activity 2.4.2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 units of specialized road safety assessment equipment (mobile laboratories) total: <b>BGN 2,100,000</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Activity 2.4.3:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- System for cross-border heavy goods traffic management through a specialized mobile application: <b>BGN 1,000,000</b></li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL: BGN 12,000,000</b></p> <p><b>Note:</b> A detailed justification of planned costs is appended hereto.</p>
<b>5.1. Indicative allocation of the financial resource, depending on the type of expense:</b>
<p>Infrastructure construction/rehabilitation (construction and assembly works): <b>0%</b></p> <p>Physical capital (purchase of machinery and equipment): <b>79.2%</b></p> <p>Human capital (upskilling, retraining): <b>0%</b> (Note: Included in the physical capital purchase amount)</p> <p>Labor (wage costs, consultancy services costs): <b>0%</b></p> <p>Technology (acquisition of intangible fixed assets: patents, software): <b>20.8%</b></p>
<b>6. Indicators</b>
<b>6.1. Result indicator/s</b>



<p>1 software application for the management and prioritization of road activities</p> <p>1 software application for a national electronic system for reporting and handling of road infrastructure safety-related alerts</p> <p>1 software application for cross-border heavy goods traffic management</p> <p><b>27 units</b> of multi-functional modular specialized equipment to support road maintenance activities</p> <p><b>2</b> specialized vehicles for automated reversing traffic control by means of physical separators</p> <p><b>2 units</b> of specialized road safety assessment equipment (mobile laboratories)</p>
<p>1 software application for the management and prioritization of road activities</p> <p>Initial value - 0 [2021]</p> <p>Interim value - 0 [2022]</p> <p>Final value - 1 [2023]</p> <p>1 software application for a national electronic system for reporting and handling of road infrastructure safety-related alerts</p> <p>Initial value - 0 [2021]</p> <p>Interim value - 0 [2022]</p> <p>Final value - 1 [2023]</p> <p>1 software application for cross-border heavy goods traffic management</p> <p>Initial value - 0 [2021]</p> <p>Interim value - 0 [2022]</p> <p>Final value - 1 [2023]</p> <p><b>27 units</b> of multi-functional modular specialized equipment to support road maintenance activities</p> <p>Initial value - 0 [2021]</p> <p>Interim value - 0 [2022]</p> <p>Final value - 27 [2023]</p> <p><b>2</b> specialized vehicles for automated reversing traffic control by means of physical separators</p> <p>Initial value - 0 [2021]</p> <p>Interim value - 0 [2022]</p> <p>Final value - 2 [2023]</p> <p><b>2 units</b> of specialized road safety assessment equipment (mobile laboratories)</p> <p>Initial value - 0 [2021]</p> <p>Interim value - 0 [2022]</p> <p>Final value - 2 [2023]</p>
<p><b>6.2. Effect indicator/s</b></p>
<p><b>Activity 2.4.1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improving road safety management and road trauma reduction processes by road owners: technical and personnel capacity built in the 27 district road administrations to optimize national road infrastructure maintenance activities</li> <li>- Improving processes of managing all elements of road safety and road trauma reduction by SARS as a lynchpin coordinating national road safety policy and by the Ministry of the Interior, RIA, and municipalities as key stakeholders, through timely action on alerts on road safety risks or issues: number of alerts addressed</li> <li>- Improving road safety planning, coordination, and partnership to reduce road trauma by optimizing and prioritizing measures in general action plans at national level and in district planning programs based on conclusions of the implemented methodology for the management of road infrastructure activities: a summary action plan and district planning programs drawn up</li> </ul> <p><b>Activity 2.4.2:</b></p>

- Improving road safety management and road trauma reduction processes: technical and personnel capacity built within SARS to carry out a comprehensive road safety assessment
- Improving road safety management processes by carrying out a road network safety assessment (part of the overall road network safety assessment): network kilometers surveyed

**Activity 2.4.3:**

- Increased satisfaction of HGV drivers crossing BCPs with the improved mobility as measured by the mobile app based on a five-grade scale and a target average score of 3

**Activity 2.4.1:**

- Improving road safety management and road trauma reduction processes by road owners: technical and personnel capacity built in the 27 district road administrations to optimize national road infrastructure maintenance activities

Initial value - 0 [2021]

Interim value - 0 [2022]

Final value - 27 [2023]

- Improving processes of managing all elements of road safety and road trauma reduction by SARS as a lynchpin coordinating national road safety policy and by the Ministry of the Interior, RIA, and municipalities as key stakeholders, through timely action on alerts on road safety risks or issues: number of alerts addressed

Initial value - 0 [2021]

Interim value - 50 [2022]; 100 [2023]

Final value - 150 [2023]

- Improving road safety planning, coordination, and partnership to reduce road trauma by optimizing and prioritizing measures in general action plans at national level and in district planning programs based on conclusions of the implemented methodology for the management of road infrastructure activities: a summary action plan and district planning programs drawn up

Initial value - 0 [2021]

Interim value - 28 district planning programs [2021]; 28 district planning programs [2022];

Final value - 1 summary action plan at the national level and 28 district planning programs adopted on an annual basis [2023]

**Activity 2.4.2:**

- Improving road safety management and road trauma reduction processes: technical and personnel capacity built within SARS to carry out a comprehensive road safety assessment

Initial value - 0 [2021]

Interim value - 1 [2022]

Final value - 1 [2023]

- Improving road safety management processes by carrying out a road network safety assessment (part of the overall road network safety assessment): network kilometers surveyed

Initial value - 0 [2021]

Interim value - 0 [2022]

Interim value – 100 km [1st half of 2023]

Interim value – 1,000 km [2nd half of 2023]

Final value (referred to as final for the project and not for the purpose of the reform in general) – 1,100 km [2023]

**Activity 2.4.3:**

- Increased satisfaction of HGV drivers crossing BCPs with the improved mobility as measured by

<p>the mobile app based on a five-grade scale and a target average score of 3</p> <p>Initial value – 0% [2021] Interim value – 0% [2022] Final value – 20% [2023]</p> <p><b>Note:</b> The interim values of indicators (for 2022) are 0 because, according to the project implementation schedule, the second year of project implementation (2022) envisages the implementation of procurement contracts, the results of which are foreseen to be available in 2023.</p>
<p><b>7. Does the project require the opening of a procedure pursuant to the Public Procurement Act (PPA)?</b></p>
<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>7.1. 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?</b></p>
<p>All project activities are subject to public procurement.</p>
<p><b>7.2. If a procedure under the Public Procurement Act is required, what is the indicative schedule for its implementation?</b></p>
<p>The parallel implementation of all project activities will include the following stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prepare public procurement documents under the PPA, including inter-agency coordination, where applicable: 9 months</li> <li>- Carry out public procurement tenders (up to the selection of a contractor): 12 months</li> <li>- Implement public procurement contracts: 12 months</li> <li>- Integrate measured into existing systems upon/after implementation of contracts: 9 months</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> The duration of each stage is presented according to the most time-consuming element of the components of project activities. The weight of the time element for each of the above stages, for each individual project activity, is presented in the implementation schedule in tabular form in paragraph 4.</p>
<p><b>2.4.1 Measures to optimize national and municipal road safety management activities</b></p>
<p>Procedures under the Public Procurement Act – 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Service: software application for the management and prioritization of road activities to ensure road safety</li> <li>- Service: software application for a national electronic system for reporting and handling of road infrastructure safety-related alerts</li> <li>- Supply: 27 units of multi-functional modular specialized equipment to support road maintenance activities</li> <li>- Supply: 2 specialized vehicles for automated reversing traffic control by means of physical separators</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.4.2 Measures to support the activities of State Agency Road Safety</b></p>
<p>Procedures under the Public Procurement Act – 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supply: 2 units of specialized road safety assessment equipment (mobile laboratories)</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.4.3 Measures to improve traffic conditions in border crossing point areas</b></p>
<p>Procedures under the Public Procurement Act – 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Service: mobile application for cross-border heavy goods traffic management</li> </ul>

Activity	Procedure under PPA and contracting authority	Prepare participation documentation	Carry out a procedure under PPA	Implement a public procurement contract
2.4.1	<b>Service:</b> software application for the management and prioritization of road activities to ensure road safety  <b>Contracting authority:</b> RIA	5 months	12 months	12 months
	<b>Service:</b> software application for a national electronic system for reporting and handling of road infrastructure safety-related alerts  <b>Contracting authority:</b> SARS	3 months	12 months	12 months
	<b>Supply:</b> 27 specialized vehicles to support road maintenance activities  <b>Contracting authority:</b> RIA	5 months	12 months	6 months
	<b>Supply:</b> 2 specialized vehicles for automated reversing traffic control by means of physical separators  <b>Contracting authority:</b> RIA	5 months	12 months	6 months
2.4.2	<b>Supply:</b> 2 units of specialized road safety assessment equipment (mobile laboratories)  <b>Contracting authority:</b> SARS	3 months	12 months	12 months
2.4.3	<b>Service:</b> mobile application for cross-border heavy goods traffic management  <b>Contracting authority:</b> SARS	9 months	12 months	12 months

**Note:** It is envisaged that RIA, as a project partner, will conduct three of the contracts, as it is an autonomous contracting entity with functional competence for the use of the contract result and it has technical competence to prepare the terms of reference. For these procurement contracts, SARS will carry out a preliminary review of the procurement documents and will monitor the implementation of the contracts in order to achieve the intended results. The relationship between SARS and RIA will be governed by a specific agreement.

## 8. Demarcation and complementarity

**8.1. 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.**

No similar projects have been implemented.

**8.2. 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.**

Not applicable
<p><b>9. 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.</b></p> <p>The project will contribute to the implementation of the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>improving the efficiency of public administration (2020 recommendations):</b> one of the main shortcomings in the services provided by road owners (RIA/DRAs) is the outdated or non-existent state-of-the-art equipment to ensure a high level of services and safe conditions for road users and workers. On the other hand, fulfilling the functional tasks of SARS also requires adequate administrative and technical capacity. The integration of software applications (for the management and prioritization of road activities to ensure road safety and the provision and processing of safety-related alerts), as well as the use of specialized equipment by RIA/DRAs and SARS will increase the capacity and thus the performance (productivity) of administrations, as it will improve the level of resources available to carry out the activities. This will have a direct effect on the quality of administrative resources, which will focus on: prioritizing road safety activities; handling of alerts, including from citizens; maintaining a safe state of roads and managing their safety.</li> <li>- <b>promoting economic policy related to transport sustainability (recommendations 2019):</b> the implementation of the project will improve the conditions for a comprehensive assessment of the quality and safety of the country's road network and improve road transport connectivity among the regions, thus helping to stimulate investment and economic development in general. Each of the envisaged project activities focuses on the sustainability of transport, as it invests in its safety, attractiveness, and functionality, which directly determine the level of development of the sector. As a result, the overall mobility of the population is improved by supporting industry and trade, as transport acts as a link between producers, on the one hand, and raw materials, the labor market, and consumers, on the other. Sustainability is also measured by the fact that, as the number of travelers grows and the transport of goods and services increases, economic growth and stimulated economic activity will take place under a higher level of safety, with the inherent risks of each economic activity being mitigated by a better prepared environment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>10. Does the project contribute to the implementation of a reform in a given sector? Please describe how.</b></p> <p>Yes. This project contributes to the implementation of a road safety reform through a <b>brand new approach to the management</b> of public road safety policy within a single integrated strategic framework for the period 2021-2030.</p> <p>Chronologically, the reform can be presented as follows:</p> <p><b>REFORM PREPARATION, PHASE 1</b></p> <p>Development of a draft National Strategy for Road Safety in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2021-2030 and its Action Plan</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> National strategic planning of the new 2021-2030 road safety policy programming period under the European Commission's new road safety framework and its guidance to Member States</p> <p><b>Description:</b> In the process of preparing the Partnership Agreement, the EC took the view that road safety should be a special topic in the new programming period. The Commission paid particular attention to the development of national road safety strategies for the period 2021-2030, stressing that for the "safe system" approach to work, it is necessary that all stakeholders fulfill their obligations in a coherent manner and that public authorities in all sectors need to cooperate at all levels. In implementation of Resolution No. 16 of the Council of Ministers of 17 January 2019, by which the</p>

Government adopted a package of measures to curb road traffic trauma by 2020, and in conjunction with Article 13 (1) (7) of the Agency's Rules of Procedure, SARS initiated in 2020, together with the State Public Consultative Committee on Road Safety, the preparation of the new National Strategy for Road Safety in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2021-2030 and its first Action Plan 2021-2023.

## **REFORM PREPARATION, PHASE 2**

Consultation and coordination of a National Strategy for Road Safety in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2021-2030 and its Action Plan

**Objective:** Ensuring broad public debate and national consensus when planning the new road safety policy

**Description:** The process of developing, consulting, and adopting the Strategy and the Plan was lengthy and multifaceted. It involved a large number of institutions at central, district, and municipal levels, as well as representatives of the non-governmental sector, science and academia, which greatly contributed to the consensual nature of the strategic and planning framework prepared in a constructive partnership debate and broad societal consensus. This inclusive format clarified the vision, thematic strands, strategic objectives, and main impact areas specified in the first Action Plan.

## **ACTUAL REFORM – STAGE 1 (2020):**

Adoption of a National Strategy for Road Safety in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2021-2030 and its Action Plan

**Objective:** Expression of the political will of the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria to adopt the new road safety policy for the period 2021-2030

**Description:** By Decision 775/26.10.2020, the Council of Ministers: adopted the National Strategy for Road Safety in the Republic of Bulgaria 2021-2030 and its Action Plan 2021-2023; entrusted the implementation and reporting of the measures of the plan to the relevant competent authorities at national, district, and municipal levels; entrusted SARS Chairperson with the coordination, monitoring, and supervision of the implementation and reporting of the measures under the Plan; and instructed SARS Chairperson to report on the annual implementation of the National Strategy and Plan to the Council of Ministers by 31 March of the year following the reporting year.

## **ACTUAL REFORM – STAGE 2 (2021-2026, with the period 2027-2030 being a follow-up to the actual reform, in which the results are built upon and assessed):**

Full implementation of the National Strategy for Road Safety in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2021-2030 and its Action Plan according to the defined vision, thematic strands, strategic objectives, and impact areas.

**Description:** At the heart of the Strategy is an ambitious new vision for road safety underpinned by challenging strategic objectives and performance indicators. The European policy context in the Strategy is to halve the annual number of people killed and seriously injured by 2030, with the impact of the policy being assessed and measured on an annual basis. The Strategy reflects the priorities of national, European, and international public policies, results of the planning and implementation of previous efforts, existing good practices, and the specificity of the environment. The aim is to minimize the number of accidents and ensure that road accidents already occurred will not lead to serious injury or loss of life. The overall objective of the Strategy is to halve the number of people killed and seriously injured as a result of road accidents by 2030 compared to 2020. The vision of the 2030-2021 Strategy "Universal Safe Mobility" proposes an evolutionary approach to road safety where the impact on certain aspects of road safety changes its fragmented nature. One-off interventions are fully integrated into the "safe system" approach, where road safety is no longer a separate or stand-alone theme. The vision implies a new and holistic approach to understanding and interpreting the topic, marking the start toward building safe interaction between people and the road system in the absence of tolerance to road trauma and



focusing on all safety features. The vision of the 2030-2021 Road Safety Strategy in the forgiving road infrastructure strand is: existing and planned road infrastructure that prevents the occurrence of road traffic accidents with fatalities and serious injuries; infrastructure whose elements in the road transport system interact with each other and are sufficiently adaptable to ensure safety; infrastructure that contributes to adequate behavior of road users and is most compensating against possible errors: the interaction between man and road infrastructure is risk limiting; Bulgaria's road network is integrated into the European transport system and the intelligent transport system network; the road infrastructure is not the cause of traumatic road accidents.

**Objectives:**

- Integration of road safety into the activities of institutions at central, district, and municipal levels
- Transposition of the provisions of Directive 2019/1936 into national law
- Implementation of road safety procedures as required by Directive 2019/1936
- Improving road safety and reducing road trauma

**This project contributes to the key objectives of phase 2 of the reform as follows:**

***Integration of road safety into the activities of institutions at central, regional, and municipal levels:*** The development, adoption, and implementation of the Strategy address a number of weaknesses in road safety management over the past planning period. It should be noted that no action plan with specific timelines, measures, indicators, and responsible parties was drawn up under the previous road safety strategies. There were conceptual weaknesses related to the setting of annual targets, deadlines, and result indicators. No ongoing or annual reporting, monitoring, or evaluation of implementation was carried out. Nor was there a coordination unit in place to bring together the efforts of responsible institutions and to follow up on the implementation of road safety policy through relevant sectoral policies of ministries and departments. Until 2019, it was objectively not possible to identify or estimate what financial resources the state had targeted to road safety, or how this resource was allocated among various responsible institutions over time and for specific measures. This also made it objectively impossible to monitor the implementation of key stakeholders' commitments on an ongoing basis. The scope and content of documents are in line with the National Road Safety Strategy in the Republic of Bulgaria 2021-2030, including vision, thematic strands, strategic objectives, principles, etc., with a focus on the relevant sectoral policy. The sectoral action plan follows the format of the overall Action Plan to the National Strategy, including specification and fine-tuning of measures in the context of each calendar year for which the relevant department is designated as responsible in the overall plan for the three-year period. Sectoral and district planning documents should be made available to SARS on an annual basis in view of the regular annual update of the summary action plan. This will ensure flexibility and adaptability of the annual implementation of road safety policy according to the annual priorities and operational objectives of the national road safety policy, and as proposed by competent institutions. This project aims to **implement measures set out in the Strategy relating to the following strategic objectives in the forgiving road infrastructure strand:** (1) Integration of road safety in road infrastructure management at national, regional, and municipal levels to effectively limit the negative effects of the transport sector; (2) Maintenance and development of human error tolerant national roads ensuring universal mobility under the "safe system" approach; (3) Maintenance and development of low-conflict municipal road and street infrastructure with clear messages to road users and protection from urban risks. These strategic objectives are set out in concrete measures of the Action Plan to the Strategy and are planned to be implemented through project activities described above. They are specifically aimed at improving the performance of RIA/DRAs and SARS in the processes of management of various road safety aspects.

***Transposition of the provisions of Directive 2019/1936:***

State Agency Road Safety and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works jointly prepared a draft to amend the Roads Act to transpose the requirements of European Directive (EU) 2019/1936. The draft law introduces new and details existing road safety procedures into five categories: road safety impact assessment, road safety audit, overall road network safety assessment, targeted and periodic safety inspections. Based on these amendments, State Agency Road Safety is designated as the institution responsible for carrying out the first comprehensive safety assessment of the road network of the Republic of Bulgaria, covered by Directive (EU) 2019/1936. It is also envisaged to set up a single electronic platform where all road infrastructure users (including individuals and legal entities) will submit signals directly to the road operator. This aims to improve the operability and collection of information about infrastructure problems that may affect traffic safety. Road management administrations will be obliged to publish on the platform information on the measures they have taken in relation to the alerts received. The project envisages the **provision of the necessary specialized equipment** (mobile laboratory) for SARS to assess the state of road safety during road audits, as well as the **development of a national electronic system for submitting and processing of road infrastructure safety related alerts**.

***Implementation of road safety procedures as required by Directive 2019/1936:***

Extending the scope of application of road network safety management procedures, as provided for in Directive (EU) 2019/1936; regulating a new type of procedures: overall road network safety assessment, which periodically assesses the state of road infrastructure and its safety and targeted road safety inspections; introducing a regulatory obligation to follow up on overall road network safety assessment procedures in terms of planning and carrying out targeted road safety inspections or taking direct corrective action. This project **aims to create the conditions for the implementation of this key reform objective**. This objective of the reform is reflected in concrete measures of the Action Plan to the Strategy that are planned to be implemented through project activities described above. They are specifically aimed at improving the performance of RIA/DRAs and SARS in the processes of management of various road safety aspects.

***Improving road safety and reducing road trauma:*** This project foresees a **targeted impact on key road safety management processes**, which will help reduce the risk of road accidents and curb trauma as a result of project implementation and effects, namely: safer conditions for road users, with improved road environment recognition and visual perception; improved accident response; improved traffic flow management; improved travel safety and comfort; safer conditions for road workers; improved road safety management at national and municipal levels; extended lifetime of road infrastructure; increased productivity of the administration; improved roadside condition; improved transport connectivity; ensured conditions for increased competitiveness, sustainable development of the country's regions, and overcoming territorial imbalances.

*In this context, for the first time, the new road safety framework has already used the concept of road traffic safety in a reformed context, linking the commitments of competent public bodies into a single strategic framework, subject to standardized mechanisms for policy planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation.*

**In addition**, road safety is a complex system that includes a wide range of sectoral policies, the present project being characterized by a **special focus on the transport sector**. An Integrated Transport Strategy for the period up to 2030 and a Strategy for Road Infrastructure Development in the Republic of Bulgaria 2016-2022 have been adopted at national level, the strategic objectives of transport policy up to 2030 being: increasing the efficiency and competitiveness of the transport sector; improving



transport connectivity and accessibility; limiting the negative effects of the development of the transport sector. In addition, policy objective 3 in the Partnership Agreement: A more connected Europe by enhancing mobility and regional connectivity, is specifically aimed at providing conditions for increasing the competitiveness of the economy by improving transport connectivity and accessibility, as well as adequate transport infrastructure as a key element of the business environment.

*Therefore, the project contributes to achieving strategic objectives in the transport sector toward an integrated and competitive sustainable transport system meeting economic, social, and environmental needs, creating the necessary preconditions for improving the mobility of people and goods, thereby promoting the development of the internal market and competitiveness, territorial, economic, and social cohesion and environmental protection.*

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

Yes. The project contributes to aspects of sustainable economic development, which aims to meet the needs of the current generation without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The project is based on a holistic approach bringing together mutually reinforcing economic, social, and environmental considerations. The National road safety vision 2021-2030 embodies the desired state of play in the future, based on how the different components of the road system interact harmoniously.

More specifically, the project focuses on achieving the vision of “universal safe mobility” 2021-2030, which:

- integrates vital knowledge and skills to protect human life and health in interaction with the road system
- is not conducive to environmentally generated risk situations
- compensates human errors, reduces their severity, and mitigates their consequences
- does not burden the environment and preserves it for future generations
- safeguards the right to free movement for every member of society
- ensures access to the workplace, home, and public services
- makes mobile population culturally and socially dynamic
- incentivizes economic development and increases welfare
- engages responsibility and pools the resources of society

Transport plays a key role in the development of any modern society as a tool of economic development and a precondition for achieving social and regional cohesion. Bulgaria’s transport sector is instrumental to improving the competitiveness of national economy and providing services to the population.

The development of Bulgaria’s regions is characterized by significant territorial disparities, which are justified both historically — Bulgaria was long part of the Eastern Bloc cohort composed of more slowly developing countries, and based on the country’s geographical circumstances, e.g. complex topography and four distinct climatic seasons. These preconditions have contributed to the establishment of significant territorial imbalances, which have a strong impact on economic development and the well-being of society. Inequalities exist in the country in terms of environment, transport, social affairs, health, etc.

The project contributes to partially addressing these inequalities, with the following positive effects in terms of **economic development**:

1. The comprehensive assessment of the quality and safety of the country's road network will provide an opportunity to rank and prioritize measures to improve the quality and safety of roads located in less developed areas and will contribute to their sustainable economic development.

2. The improved road transport connectivity will contribute to increasing the attractiveness of regions, create new investment conditions for economic development, and benefit public welfare.

The project contributes to partially addressing these inequalities, with the following positive effects in terms of **social development**:

1. The comprehensive assessment of the quality and safety of the country's road network will provide an opportunity to rank and prioritize measures to improve the quality and safety of roads located in less developed areas of the country. The implementation of measures to improve road safety will contribute to improving the labor market through wider use of human resources from affected areas.

2. The improved road transport connectivity will contribute to a better employment of personnel in areas adjacent to the area where the measures are implemented.

The project contributes to partially addressing these inequalities and the following positive effects will be achieved in terms of **environment**:

1. Conditions will be created to shorten the time of stay for heavy goods vehicles in transit on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, thereby reducing the amount of harmful emissions.

2. Conditions will be created to shorten the time of stay for vehicles traveling on reversing road sections, thus reducing the amount of harmful emissions.

3. The lifespan of roads will be extended, as a quality and safety control mechanism will be put in place. This will allow for more precise planning of measures to recycle worn-out asphalt concrete layers.

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

Yes. The project contributes to the implementation of the objectives of the National Development Program BULGARIA 2030. The main objective of the policy under Priority 7 Transport Connectivity is to ensure better connectivity and accessibility of the country's settlements. Efforts to improve existing infrastructure, including in terms of road transport, will lead to improved conditions for business and trade, while contributing to a higher level of safety within the country's transport system. The priority is instrumental to the implementation of Goal 3 "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages" and Goal 11 "Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" of the UN development goals. The National Development Program BULGARIA 2030 explicitly emphasizes that efforts to improve the quality of road infrastructure in the country as well as to ensure more efficient transport services and universal safe mobility will be continued. In addition to improving the quality of the available transport infrastructure, work will continue to introduce transmission of digital freight transport information, which will contribute to reducing administrative burden and improving logistics operations.

**13. 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.**

Yes. While the implementation of the project is not directly linked to the achievement of the objectives and priorities set out in the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan, the former will reduce harmful emissions in the transport sector, as it will have a direct impact on congestion in BCP areas.