

1. Title of the project,
MODERNIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR A MORE ATTRACTIVE AND QUALITY ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING AND INNOVATION
2. Description of the project (objectives, main activities).
<p>The provision of quality education for all is achieved through a set of measures, including the creation of a modern educational environment. Investments in the material base are essential for the transformation of educational institutions in an attractive environment and for the improvement of the educational results, the motivation for learning and the increase of the learning outcomes.</p> <p>In Bulgaria, the educational environment is not equally developed among schools and pre-school institutions and there are differences between regions. The country is lagging behind OECD countries compared to training support infrastructure. This accordingly affects the quality of educational outcomes.</p> <p>In order to provide such and create more attractive conditions for learning, activities of interest, sports and recreation of children, pupils and students will be carried out activities for repair, reconstruction, rehabilitation, construction of installations for the use of alternative energy sources, heating, ventilation and cooling of the building stock. Full refurbishment and construction of kindergartens, schools and hostels and campuses will also be funded as a matter of priority to provide favorable living conditions, study, education, socialization and student development. The project addresses recommendation 4 of the country-specific recommendations issued by the European Commission in the 2020 European Semester country report for Bulgaria: assessment of progress on structural reforms, prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances, and results of in-depth reviews under Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – to strengthen employability by reinforcing skills, including digital skills. – to improve the quality, labour market relevance, and inclusiveness of education and training, in particular for Roma and other disadvantaged groups. <p>The project responds to Council Recommendation 3 of 20.05.2020 on 2020 National Reform Programme of Bulgaria, in its part “to focus investment on the green and digital transitions, in particular on clean and efficient production and use of energy and resources, green infrastructure and sustainable transport.”</p> <p>The Ministry of Education and Science has carried out a mapping of the repairs carried out and the need to upgrade the infrastructure. the analysis of the repairs carried out over the last 10 years shows the following results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. External repairs carried out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full external repairs were carried out in 9.7 % of kindergartens, 8.44 % of schools and 0.44 % of dormitories in the country; - Partial external repairs were carried out in 64.78 % of kindergartens, 59.09 % of schools, 4.68 % of hostels and 65.22 % of personal development support centres; - There was no external repairs in 25.53 % of kindergartens, 32.47 % of schools, 3.93 % of hostels and 34.78 % of personal development support centres. 2. Internal repairs carried out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full internal repairs were carried out in 16.47 % of kindergartens, 11.98 % of schools and 0.66 % of hostels in the country; - Partial internal repairs were carried out in 55.61 % of kindergartens, 60.05 % of schools, 4.33 % of hostels and 73.91 % of personal development support centres;

- There was no internal repairs in 27.92 % of kindergartens, 27.97 % of schools, 4.06 % of housing and 26.09 % of personal development support centres.

Additional funds are needed to improve the educational environment and educational infrastructure, as there are differences between regions and an uneven level of development of facilities in educational institutions. These investments aim to provide even more favorable conditions for quality education and training and for learners to be included in the education process.

The upgrading of existing and the construction of new educational infrastructure is particularly necessary in major cities such as Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, etc., where a larger proportion of the country's population is concentrated as a result of labour and social migration and the lack of places in kindergartens is most noticeable.

The aim is to establish facilities that guarantee health and quality conditions for training in educational institutions and are aimed at building new, extension and reconstructing existing kindergartens and schools in the Republic of Bulgaria. The construction of new kindergarten buildings and the extension and reconstruction of existing ones will reduce shortages of available places and create conditions for a healthy living environment and normal physical and mental development of children. The construction of new kindergarten buildings and the extension and reconstruction of existing ones will reduce the shortage of available places and pave the way for the successful introduction of compulsory pre-school education for children over the age of 4. The legal framework for school education activities provides for the organization of the school day in one shift mode. This identifies the need, as a matter of priority, for the gradual construction of new schools and the extension and reconstruction of existing schools which do not have the conditions for such an organization.

The plans drawn up by the municipalities and heads of state and municipal schools to create the necessary conditions for the organization of the one-week school day set deadlines and stated the need for the construction of new school buildings, reconstruction, upgrading and upgrading of existing ones.

The ultimate objective of this project is to create the conditions for equal access to education by building a favorable, inclusive, innovative, supportive and motivating educational environment. It should also help to increase motivation for learning/self-tuition. The aim is to achieve a comprehensive refurbishment of educational institutions, underpinned by investment in building a secure, environmental, attractive and healthy environment for training, development, education and socialization.

With the implementation of the project activities, the Ministry of Education and Science will significantly improve the conditions for conducting the education process. The renovation of educational institutions, modern specialized equipment and the renewal of education infrastructure will enable the provision of modern education and training that responds to societal transformations in the 21st century and the changing demands of the labour market.

Education for sustainable development is closely linked to international discussions on sustainable development, the UN agenda and the set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030. this is a transition to a new model that looks at economic, social and ecological systems interlinked. In the context of this perspective, a learner-minded attitude towards sustainable development will be built. Civic, financial, health, environmental and sports culture, road safety knowledge will be strengthened.

In September 2020, Regulation No 24 of 2020 of the Minister of Education and Science and the Minister of Health on the Physical Environment and Information and Library Provision of kindergartens, schools and personal development support centres was promulgated. The Regulation introduces uniform minimum and binding rules and standards necessary for the effective conduct of the educational process. The aim of this regulation is to create a modern physical environment with integrated educational technologies for the education, socialization, education and care of children

and students. The aim of the project is to ensure that all activities related to the modernization of the educational infrastructure comply with the requirements set out in the Regulation.

The implementation of the requirements and standards laid down in the Regulation ensures safe and health conditions for the education of children and pupils; building and operating an ergonomic environment for their education; development of the material and cultural environment and surrounding space in kindergartens, schools and personal development support centres; creating the conditions for developing the interests and meeting the individual needs of children and pupils; ensuring that all children and students have access to kindergarten facilities and buildings, schools and personal development support centres.

The information to be collected in the framework of this project will be used to update the database of the National Electronic Information System for Pre-school and School Education. This will allow for better use of existing opportunities and step up reform efforts for digital and green transformation.

Road safety education and training are essential to protect the life and health of children and pupils in their interaction with the road system. Effective RS training also supports risk prevention with a view to reducing incidents involving children and students on the road. It should be considered and implemented as a comprehensive process of "lifelong learning" in accordance with the objectives set in the National Road Safety Strategy in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2021-2030, and in the implementation of activities set in the Action Plan to the Strategy for 2021-2023. In line with these documents is the Sector Strategy for RS for the period 2021-2030 developed by the Ministry of Education and Science. The implementation of this project is directly related to the goals set in it and will contribute to development of a socially responsible organizational culture for RS and for the development of the respective competencies in the system of pre-school and school education.

At the same time, the implementation of the project will help develop the interests, abilities and needs of children and pupils in the fields of physical activity, physical education and sport, promoting healthy lifestyles, developing and improving motor skills, creating opportunities for expression in the field of sport. As a final result of this project, an overall positive impact on the education system is expected — increased quality of education and training, sustainability of investment, increased effectiveness and efficiency of the public education resource. Some of the activities of the modernization project will be carried out in educational establishments where no external renovation work has been carried out so far.

There is a need to create facilities and conditions for the integrated learning of children and pupils with disabilities and special educational needs in all pre-school and school education institutions. It is necessary to build an accessible architectural environment in every building used for the needs of the educational system.

The use of a dormitory is a form of state and institutional student support policy that allows for autonomy at a socially acceptable cost. Improvements in this direction facilitate access to quality education and training for a number of pupils, especially those from smaller localities.

Improved residence conditions in dormitories are a prerequisite for increasing admission to educational institutions by providing a supportive environment for living and learning/self-education, leisure and sport. This will help to increase motivation for learning and educational outcomes.

To date, it is necessary to provide more places in the dormitories and to carry out repairs and purchase of new furniture/equipment for a large part of the dormitories. In addition to common areas and rooms, it is important to renovate and provide communal social and domestic premises to ensure that residents need everything they need — learning reading rooms, service rooms and others. By carrying out repairs and purchasing new equipment in most of the dormitories, living conditions will be significantly improved.

The creation and establishment of campus as part of the country's educational and scientific infrastructure is a practice in modern European universities and institutes and is a measure to provide an environment that keeps and attracts students and scientists, as well as motivating young people to choose studies and scientific activities for their professional career. This increases opportunities for mobility, internationalization and international cooperation.

The purpose of existing dormitories and their development in campus is to establish them as a modern residential complex in line with the different functional requirements of the various activities — occupation, recreation, public services, communications, public works, etc.

The overall renovation and upgrading of the buildings will provide quality living conditions in dormitories in line with the criteria of sustainable development and cleaner environment, in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal for a carbon-neutral and circular economy by 2050. To this end, it is necessary to renovate the facilities of dormitories, equipment and furnishing of accommodation base, the creation of contemporary and modern furnished and equipped premises for learning, recreation, activities of interests and sport.

For this reason, part of the project activities will focus on carrying out comprehensive repairs and construction of dormitories to provide living conditions and training in areas of strategic importance for the development of the economy.

The project activities for the upgrading of educational institutions will complement and follow up a policy of the Ministry of Education on the upgrading of educational infrastructure and the renewal of facilities.

Project objectives:

1. Modernising of the buildings for education and training and building and upgrading on a secure, environmentally sustainable, inclusive, attractive, healthy and safe learning, education and socialization environment for pupils to develop their potential.
2. Provision of facilities ensuring healthy and quality conditions for training in pre-school and school education institutions, including the construction of new and the extension and reconstruction of existing kindergartens and schools in the Republic of Bulgaria.
3. Embodiment of a sports culture, raising motor activity and pupils' awareness of road safety. Making the educational institution a centre where values and attitudes are formed, including those for sustainable resource management.
4. Providing quality and modern living and learning/self-tuition conditions outside the pupils' place of residence by repairing and reconstructing existing dormitories for students from grades 8 to 12 and dormitories for students whose place of residence is outside the place where they are studying. At the heart of the idea is the transformation of existing dormitories into a modern attractive centre for life, studies and socialization, equipped with innovative technologies enabling the learning process to be self-prepared.
5. Attracting and retaining students, teachers and researchers to work and study in the country — a renewed and upgraded socio-domestic environment and further infrastructure, infrastructure, development, learning, leisure, public service, communication, in campus will increase the quality of the social environment for students and their motivation, as well as the attractiveness of Bulgarian higher education and the research community.

• **Activities:**

1. The acquisition of an overall renovated image of educational institutions. Activities will include renovation, repair of roofs, joinery, construction of installations for the use of alternative energy sources, heating, ventilation, cooling and other repairs to provide a complete refurbishment of educational institutions, both externally and internally, and to save energy, water and other resources.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Design, construction and commissioning/granting of permission for the use of a new kindergarten building and new school education buildings in municipalities with shortage of places. 3. Design, construction and commissioning/granting of permission for the use of the extension, superstructure, reconstruction of an existing kindergarten building and extension, superstructure and reconstruction of existing buildings for school education in the municipalities with a shortage of places and for passing a one-shift training mode. Activities will also include optimizing and aesthetising the indoor space in educational institutions, in the context of COVID -19 and future pandemic/emergency situations to reduce student concentration, move to one shift mode of learning and ensure safe access to education, including through networking of educational institutions to provide access to educational resources and environments. 4. Construction of accessible built environment, construction and repair of open sports grounds, playgrounds, road safety sites. 5. Repairing and rehabilitating student dormitories and creating them as a modern lifestyle complex, taking into account the different functional requirements of the various activities — occupation, recreation, public service, construction of the necessary communication links, public works, etc. The provision is made for the renovation of dormitories to ensure living conditions and training in areas of strategic importance for the development of the economy. 6. Rehabilitation of student dormitories and construction and/or separation of campus in order to improve the socio-domestic environment of students. In addition to the scarcity of places in the dormitories, there is also a need to renovate and modernize housing conditions in a large part of student dormitories, including social housing. The activity also includes an area adjacent to an existing group of student dormitories to be defined as a modern complex adapted to the different functional requirements of the different spaces and activities — accommodation and learning, sport and leisure, public service, parking, landscape, etc. The necessary communication links, internet provision, parking, public works, open and closed sports grounds, new environmentally-friendly and energy-efficient solutions are envisaged in the separate campus, as well as public facilities. Building an accessible built environment that provides the needs of people with special needs is a sine qua non when building campus. 7. Project management and monitoring — the management and monitoring of the project will be carried out by the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) through a structure designated by the Minister (internal or external). This activity will be carried out through guidelines, guidelines, setting up a common information system and carrying out controls, analyses, checks, verification, communication activities, etc.
<p>3. Beneficiary.</p>
<p>Kindergartens, schools and personal development support centres (independent dormitories) under the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Youth and Sport, Ministry of Defence, municipalities, state higher education institutions;</p>
<p>4. Timetable for project implementation, including activities, milestones¹.</p>
<p>2021-2026</p>

¹The timetable will be relevant for setting milestones under the Recovery and Resilience Plan and has a direct bearing on the release of tranches of financial support from the Recovery and Resilience Fund.

Implementation of activities by month		2021		2022				2023				2024				2025				2026	
		by quarter		by quarter				by quarter				by quarter				by quarter				by quarter	
		3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2
Activity 1: Engineering (design and construction) in active school																					
1	Development and publication of application guidelines	X	X																		
2	Project selection, ranking and contracting			X	X																
3	Conduct of the procedure under the Public Procurement Act (PPA)					X	X	X	X												
4	Preparation and implementation of the project						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Activity 2: Design, construction and commissioning of a new building																					
1	Development and publication of application guidelines	X	X																		
2	Project selection, ranking and contracting			X	X																
3	Conduct of the procedure under the Public Procurement Act (PPA)					X	X	X	X												
4	Preparation and execution of the project						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Activity 3: Design, construction and commissioning/granting of permission to use upgrading, superstructure, reconstruction of an existing building																					
1	Development and publication of application guidelines	X	X																		
2	Project selection, ranking and contracting			X	X																
3	Conduct of the procedure under the Public Procurement Act (PPA)					X	X	X	X												

[illegible]

4.1. When can implementation of the project start at the earliest after its approval?
Within two months of its approval
5. Indicative financial resources by activity, including sources of funding (BL, European funding, private finance, IFIs).
<p>No national co-financing is envisaged</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Activity 1: The project envisages the construction of a complete refurbishment of around 350 kindergartens and schools that have ready investment projects for renovation/energy efficiency/refurbishment and construction permit and for which no financing contracts have been concluded after successful application. Educational institutions which have already carried out a constructive/energy audit and passport will also be eligible to apply. Their number is currently around 700. The implementation of this action requires BGN 300,0 million. 2. Activity 2: The project foresees the construction of 20 new kindergartens and schools and requires BGN 60,0 million to implement this action. 3. Activity 3: The project foresees the implementation of upgrading, upgrading and reconstruction work in 20 existing kindergartens and schools, including the transition to a single regime, and requires BGN 40,0 million to carry out this activity. 4. Activity 4: The project provides for the full renovation of 20 student dormitories, with a financial contribution of BGN 50,0 million. 5. Activity 5: The project envisages the construction/renovation of an accessible architectural environment, sports grounds / playgrounds and road safety sites in 500 educational institutions, as the financial resource required for this purpose is BGN 30.0 million. 6. Activity 6: The project plans to renovate completely 20 student dormitories, with a financial contribution of BGN 100,0 million. 7. Activity 7: Funding is foreseen for the construction of 5 student campus, requiring BGN 15,0 million. 8. Activity 8: Management and monitoring of the project, providing for the development of guidelines for applications, guidelines on project requirements and implementation, the announcement and implementation of the project procedure, the evaluation of proposals, the setting up of an information system and the carrying out of controls and analysis of project implementation, on-the-spot checks, verification of expenditure, receipt of funds periodically paid by the European Commission (every 6 months) and payment to beneficiaries of the results achieved. Also, information and communication activities — BGN 9,6 million. <p>100 % of the financial resources will be agreed by the end of the second quarter of 2022. The total amount of funding required is BGN 604 597 000.</p>
5.1. Indicatively allocate the financial resources according to the type of expenditure:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Infrastructure construction/rehabilitation (CRW) — 80 % - Physical capital (purchase of plant and equipment), 15 % - Labour (wage costs, consultancy services...) — 5 %
6. Indicators
6.1. Result indicator (s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of fully renovated educational institutions — 350 kindergartens and schools;

- Number of new kindergartens and schools built — 20;
- Number of kindergartens and schools with upgrading, upgrading and reconstruction work carried out — 20;
- Number of pupil dormitories refurbished — 20;
- Number of educational institutions with accessible built environment, sports and budget grounds — 500;
- Number of student dormitories refurbished — 20;
- Number of campus built — 5;

Table 1:

* Read as follows: 3/2021 as “third quarter 2021”

Activity	Activity indicators	Starting value	Base year	Intermediate value (without accumulation)
	Developed application guidelines and selection criteria	0	2021	4/2021
	Share of educational institutions that have developed and submitted a project idea	0	2021	4/2021 – 100%
	Selection of project proposals and ranking of projects carried out	0	2021	1/2022 – 100%
	Share of funds contracted under the programme	0	2021	2/2022-100 %
	Percentage of educational institutions performing the works	0	2021	4/2022 – 15% 4/2023 – 18% 4/2024 – 24% 4/2025 – 28% 2/2026 – 15%
	Percentage of educational institutions that purchased furniture	0	2021	4/2022 – 15% 4/2023 – 18% 4/2024 – 24% 4/2025 – 28% 2/2026 – 15%

6.2. Effect indicator (s)

- Increasing the coverage of primary, lower and upper secondary students as a result of improved educational structure and the optimisation of indoor spaces in educational institutions;
- Increase the coverage of children in KG as a result of renovation, reconstruction, upgrading and modernization of the buildings;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher proportion of students trained in vocational schools and classrooms as a result of the renovation of dormitories and their transformation into a modern residential complex; - Number of schools that have undergone one mode of training after the end of the project as a result of renovation, renovation, renovation and/or completion of spaces. - Increasing the performance of science students as a result of a modern physical environment with integrated educational technologies; - Dormitories and campus — Enhanced acceptance, satisfaction and prestige among students, doctoral candidates, young scientists, teachers and employers according to the annual surveys of the Bulgarian Rating System, publicly available with databases and indicators at https://rsvu.mon.bg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • satisfaction with socio-household and administrative services; • satisfaction with student dormitories; • importance of socio-household and administrative services for teachers; • prestige among students; • satisfaction with the choice; • prestige among employers; • prestige among teachers;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial value —..... [year] - Interim value —..... [year] - Final value —..... [year]
7. Does the implementation of the project require a procedure under the Public Procurement Act to be carried out?
YES
7.1. If a PPA procedure is required, what part of the activities and financial resources will be subject to the public procurement?
Both activities will be implemented after procurements have been carried out. 90 % of the total financial contribution will be subject to PP.
7.2. If a PPA procedure is required, what is the indicative timetable for its implementation?
When PPs are announced in the third quarter of 2022, PPs can be completed by mid-2023.
8. Demarcation and additionality.
8.1. If similar projects have been implemented (regardless of their source of funding), describe how this project builds on/complements the achievements of previous projects.
The activities of this project complement and build on the implementation of national programmes in terms of building the overall image of educational institutions by improving educational infrastructure, optimizing and anesthetizing indoor spaces in educational institutions. By implementing several of the national programmes being implemented, the aim is to improve the conditions for equal access to education by building an accessible, favorable, innovative, supportive and motivating educational environment. A national programme “Providing a modern educational

environment” was developed with several multi-faceted modules and aimed at enriching and optimizing activities in the school education system. The implementation of the programme aims to improve the conditions for experimental work in Bulgarian schools regarding the acquisition of basic competences in the field of natural sciences. Implement an effective educational process, in a full-day learning environment.

A national programme ‘Creating accessible built environment and security at school’ creates facilities and conditions for the integrated learning of children and students with special educational needs, building/refurbishing a number of facilities. It also provides an effective throughput in the buildings, ensuring the life, health and safety of pupils, teachers and staff in school buildings and their surroundings and terrain.

The Recovery and Resilience Plan and REACT-EU complement each other.

The REACT-EU initiative focuses on short-term crisis management actions related to labor markets, healthcare and SMEs (support for liquidity and solvency), as well as major investments in environmental and digital transition. It will provide immediate and direct support to the economies of the Member States.

The Recovery and Resilience Plan will support long-term reforms and investments, in particular in the field of green and digital technologies, with a lasting impact on the productivity and sustainability of the Union economy.

It also complements the set of measures already prepared in response to the current coronavirus pandemic, such as the amendment of the Cohesion Policy Regulation, the investment initiatives in response to the coronavirus and the SURE instrument.

This project also complements the activities funded under the Operational Program "Growing Regions" 2014-2020 for the overall modernization and renewal of educational infrastructure.

Activities will also be complemented by working on international, municipal environmental projects and programmes aimed at improving the educational environment and at involving teachers and students in a more environmentally-friendly lifestyle.

The project does not allow the financing of already implemented activities, purchased equipment under another project, program or any other financial scheme arising from the national budget, the budget of the European Union or another donor program. Projects approved for funding and/or having a financing contract will not be ranked and financed.

There will be no duplication of the target groups and activities both at the application stage and during the project implementation through double funding checks, etc.

This project can only have a complementary effect, but not duplicate and overlap the implementation of national programmes, as well as European and international programs and projects.

8.2. If similar projects are envisaged for the implementation of similar projects under the Partnership Agreement programs, the centrally managed instruments of the EU or the Fair Transition Fund, outline the demarcation with this project.

Projects envisaged for implementation under the Partnership Agreement programs, the centrally managed instruments of the EU or the Just Transition Fund, as well as the projects financed from the national budget will be demarcated with this project, as the educational institutions included for funding to provide a complete renewed look will not be eligible for funding under other instruments. The activities of this project will be complemented by the activities foreseen under the Education Programme 2021-2027. more broadly, the project complements the targeted efforts of the Education Programme 2021-2027 for early childhood development and broadening the scope of the education system while ensuring equal access, modernizing curricula and content, supporting teachers’ professional development. Efforts are aimed at increasing the employability of education and will also support education reforms to strengthen links between education, science and dynamic labour market needs and facilitate the transition from education to employment.

The activities under this project will be complemented by the activities foreseen under the Regional Development Programme 2021-2027. the RDP under Priority 1 “Integrated Urban Development” for 10 urban municipalities in Bulgaria, the main growth centres according to the updated National Spatial Development Concept (Vidin, Pleven, Ruse, Veliko Tarnovo, Varna, Burgas, Stara Zagora, Plovdiv, Sofia Municipality and Blagoevgrad) provides for support for the Education Infrastructure: — infrastructure for pre-school, school and higher education, including kindergartens; — supply and installation of specific and innovative tools and equipment for the supported infrastructure.

The RDP under Priority 2 “Integrated Territorial Development of the Regions” for a total of 40 urban municipalities to be covered by Priority 2 foresees support for education infrastructure for pre-school, school and higher education, including kindergartens and vocational training.

Appropriate complementarity and demarcation will also be made with the interventions under the Strategic Plan for Agriculture and Rural Development 2021-2027, which will provide support for “Improving the state of education infrastructure to increase the share of the population having access to improved services” under Specific Objective 8 “Promoting employment, growth, social inclusion and local development in rural areas, including the bio economy and sustainable forestry”.

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

The project will help to implement **recommendation 4** of the country-specific recommendations issued by the European Commission in the 2020 country report for Bulgaria in the context of the 2020 European Semester: Assessment of progress on structural reforms, prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances, and results of in-depth reviews under Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011”.

- to strengthen **employability by reinforcing skills**, including digital skills.
- to improve the **quality, labour market relevance, and inclusiveness** of education and training, in particular for Roma and other disadvantaged groups.

This project is aimed at implementing Council Recommendation 3 on Bulgaria’s 2020 National Reform Programme, 20.05.2020, in its part “to focus investments in the field of green and digital transition, in particular in the field of clean and efficient production and use of energy and resources, environmental infrastructure and sustainable transport”

The EC report for Bulgaria for the European Semester 2020: assessment of progress in structural reforms, prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances and results of in-depth reviews in accordance with Regulation (EU) No. 1176/2011 states that Bulgaria still lacks a circular economy strategy, waste management remains a challenge, there are still serious threats to nature and biodiversity, and we are still not sufficiently prepared for the consequences of climate change.

Bulgaria should make progress in implementing green policies and the principle of environmental sustainability, including improving land use, finding climate solutions and protecting water resources.

The activities under this project are aimed directly at implementing the EC recommendations for stimulating the transition to a circular and green economy with a focus on technological innovation, development and introduction of innovative products, low-carbon technological solutions aimed at permanent reduction of resource and energy intensity.

The activities of this project are also in line with Priority 1 “Education and Skills” of the National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2030.d as regards policies aimed at facilitating access to education, inclusion in the educational process and increasing their motivation to learn. Investment in material base will be essential to make educational institutions an attractive environment and to improve educational outcomes and learning outcomes.

The project activities will have a positive impact on the implementation of the objectives and measures of the Strategic Framework for the Development of Education, Training and Learning in the Republic of Bulgaria (2021-2030).

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

The implementation of the project activities are closely linked to the objectives set out in the Strategic Framework for the Development of Education, Training and Learning in the Republic of Bulgaria (2021-2030) and will lead to an increase in the share of investment in the development and upgrading of skills that create new and better conditions for education and training.

To improve the quality and applicability of education, a comprehensive and multifaceted educational reform is being implemented, strengthening the focus on building skills and key competencies from an early age. By applying the competent approach at all levels and stages of education and by developing a culture of innovation in all aspects of the education process, higher quality education will be achieved and education will become more responsive to dynamic labour market requirements. The implementation of the project activities will contribute to increasing the attractiveness of the educational environment, to the inclusion of pupils in the educational process and to the formation of competences for success in current and future occupations. Ensuring a comprehensive refurbishment of educational institutions and creating favorable conditions for learning, interest, sport and leisure activities will have a positive impact on health and environmental education and on the formation of values and attitudes towards sustainable resource management. Civil, financial, health and sport culture, road safety knowledge will also be developed.

Successful implementation of the activities should also help to increase the attractiveness of Bulgarian higher education institutions and scientific units as places of preparation and training and the motivation of young people to choose them for their professional fulfilment and acquire not only knowledge and skills but also a sense of community.

Protecting the environment, reducing the harmful impact of human activities on nature, raising awareness of sustainable development is a priority of the economic and social reforms included in the European Green Deal. They support reform aimed at the successful inclusion of children and pupils in education, the development of wealth, social and emotional intelligence and the development of key competences for lifelong learning. The reform will contribute to better educational outcomes for children at school and, in perspective, to successful personal and professional fulfilment.

The implementation of the activities will increase the share of investment to develop and upgrade skills, creating new and better conditions for education, training and research.

Rehabilitation and repair actions will also reduce energy and water consumption and costs, creating an opportunity to free up more financial resources for additional investment to improve the learning process, training, supplies and materials, and scholarships.

From a strategic perspective, this is expected to contribute to improving the quality of the workforce and creating the conditions for improving the welfare of Bulgarians.

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

The European Commission has started to integrate the UN Sustainable Development Goals into the European Semester as part of its strategy to put sustainable development at the heart of economic policy. The Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy in 2020 was the first step in guiding the European Semester towards competitive sustainability in order to build an economy that works for people and the planet in line with the European Green Deal.

The project activities aim at improving the quality of living and learning through energy efficient renovation of learning buildings, reducing waste, improving energy consumption to address, prevent drop-out and increase educational outcomes in school education, attract and retain young people and young scientists and researchers to get professionally fulfilled in the country.

Green ideology as a way of thinking requires a certain maturity of society in order for it to focus on improving its quality of life. Climate change, environmental protection and the pursuit of a "green economy" are among the main topics to which society and education, respectively, are becoming increasingly sensitive. Over the next decade, the Green Deal is expected to fundamentally change the way business is done, the way energy is produced and, in general, the way people live. We will have to invest in innovation and research, transform our economy and update our industrial policy. And a prerequisite for all this is education for sustainable development.

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

The project will contribute to the implementation of the National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030, where Priority 1 "Education and Skills" sets goals to increase the scope and quality of education and training with an emphasis on acquiring analytical skills and developing creative thinking, as well as investments in the educational infrastructure and modernization of the material base in the kindergartens and schools, which will help to turn the kindergartens and the schools into an attractive social environment and to improve the educational results. The implementation of the proposed project related to increasing the energy efficiency of educational institutions in support of the transition to a green economy will contribute to the main goal of the priority - improving the quality of human capital through the formation of highly educated, innovative and active individuals are realized successfully as professionals and citizens, thus contributing to their personal well-being and sustainable development in all social spheres.

The project will also contribute to the objectives set out in Priority 4 "Circular and Low Carbon Economy" and priority "Clean Air and Biodiversity", where policies are laid down for the sustainable management of natural resources, enabling the current needs of the economy and society to be met while maintaining environmental sustainability, so that these needs can continue to be met in the long term.

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

The project contributes to the implementation of Axis 4 of the Integrated National Plan "Energy and Climate" - "Energy Efficiency". According to Directive (EU) 2018/844 of the European Parliament and of the Council, adopted on 30 May 2018, amending Directive 2010/31/EU, Member States should develop a long-term remediation strategy to support the redevelopment of the national housing stock from residential and non-residential buildings. buildings, both public and private, to achieve a highly energy efficient and decarbonized building stock by 2050, facilitating the cost-effective transformation of existing buildings into buildings with close to zero net energy consumption.