



Cohesion Fund
European Regional
Development Fund



**OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME ON TRANSPORT
COMMUNICATION PLAN
FOR THE PERIOD 2007-2013**

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I. INTRODUCTION

As of 1 January 2007 Bulgaria is a full member of the European Union. Bulgaria has elaborated seven operational programmes for utilizing the assistance from EU's Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund for the various economic sectors. The Ministry of Transport shall be responsible for the implementation of the Operational Programme Transport 2007-2013, which has the largest budget of all the seven operational programmes of Bulgaria – more than EUR 2,003 billion.

Operational Programme Transport 2007-2013 was approved by the European Commission on 7 November 2007. The document was signed on 27 November 2007 by the Minister of Transport – Mr. Petar Mutafchiev, and the Commissioner for Regional Policy – Mrs. Danuta Hubner.

The Managing Authority of Operational Programme Transport 2007-2013 (MA of OPT) – Coordination of Programmes and Projects Directorate in the Ministry of Transport, taking into consideration the information needs of the target audiences and the requirements of the European regulations, elaborated this seven years Communication Plan.

The Communication Plan of Operational Programme Transport (CP of OPT) for the period 2007-2013 was elaborated in keeping with Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006, in terms of the requirements of the information and publicity measures which the Member States have to fulfil during the corresponding programme period.

In elaborating the CP, the priorities set in EC's White Paper on Communication of 2006, the European Transparency Initiative of 2007, as well as the good practices in the public relations sphere was taken into consideration.

The Communication Plan of OP Transport is consistent and synchronized with the guidelines provided by the Communication Strategy of the National Strategic Reference Framework /NSRF/ - national strategic document, providing the framework for the efforts to promote the goals and priorities set in NSRF and OP, and ensure coordinated communication policy in relation to EU structural funds. The strategy defines the main goals and priorities of communication at national level in order to achieve optimal publicity and information synergy at all levels.

The Strategy's main goals are set in this Communication Plan – by means of proactive communication and transparency to promote increase in the information and the motivation of the society and the target groups, for efficient and effective utilization of the resources from the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund, promotion of public recognition of EU's role for the development of the regions and in particular – for the achievement of the NSRF goals. Taking into account the fact that the Communication Plans of the separate OPs are the tool for implementation of the goals of NSRF's National Communication Strategy, the Communication Plan of OP Transport is based on the main principles of NSRF's National Communication Strategy – informativity, positivity, flexibility, adaptivity, coordination with national and EU policy and requirements.

CP's task is to create a clear framework for the work which has to be done for the promotion in the public space of the priorities and goals set in OPT, the course of implementation of the programme, to ensure transparency in the utilization of the resources from the Structural

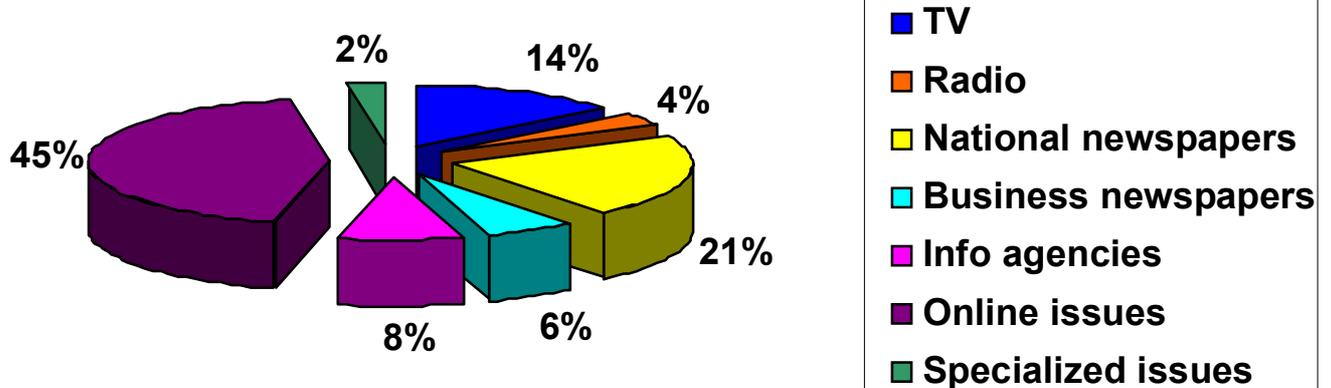
Funds and the Cohesion Fund, and to highlight the role of the Community for the realization of the large infrastructure projects in the transport sector.

In view of the long-term planning of the communication goals and measures for the 7-year period, the document contains elements which are in line with the Communication Strategy, and the main required elements of a Communication Plan separated into indicative stages.

In 2007 the Managing Authority implemented a series of communication measures for promotion of OP Transport and for familiarization of the beneficiaries with the possibilities and the regulations for applying for funding from EU Regional Fund and Cohesion Fund. Funding from various sources was provided for conducting two seminars for the regional media and the local authorities in the cities of Plovdiv and Sandanski, six information and training seminars for the beneficiaries, and a discussion forum for presentation of the OP Transport projects at national level with participation of the socio-economic partners, representatives of the branch organizations, national media and other interested parties.

On 9 December 2007 in the city of Sofia a special forum was organized for the official presentation of the EC-approved OP Transport. The event was opened by the Minister of Transport, and the Head of EC's Permanent Representation in Sofia and the Minister of Finance delivered greeting speeches. In front of more than 120 participants, lecturers from the Managing Authority and the beneficiaries presented in detail the programme, the projects planned to be funded, and the positive effects expected for the transport system and the country's economic development in result of their implementation. The official presentation of EC approved OP Transport received exceptionally good coverage from all kinds of media – TV, radios, national and business daily and weekly papers, informational agencies and on-line issues. 84 materials regarding OP Transport were published. Most of the materials were positive – 70 %. The major event presentation approaches excellent results in term of key messages media penetration. 70 of media materials were focused exclusively on OP Transport. The print materials, produced for the forum, were developed according to EC information and publicity measures requirements, including the visualized symbol of EU and the slogan 'Investing in your future' in accordance with Regulation (EC) 1828/2006. Before the event press release was sent to the media and was published on the Ministry of Transport web site.

OP Transport Major Event Media Coverage



II. SHORT DESCRIPTION OF OPT

OP Transport is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), EU's Cohesion Fund and the state budget of the Republic of Bulgaria. The main goal is **development of sustainable transport system**. The specific goals are the integration of the national transport system into the European Union transport network and the achievement of balance between the transport modes. Its total budget is more than EUR 2,003 mln.

- Integration of the national transport system into the European Union transport network

One of the most essential aspects in the national and the European Union transport policies is to complete the Trans-European transport network. Taking into consideration that from 2007 the Republic of Bulgaria is an external border of the European Union, this programme concentrates on: eliminating the bottlenecks on the Danube River, completing the priority roads and railways for absorbing the traffic flows; improving the quality of the main road and railway arteries, promoting the multimodal transport and the transport by sea and inland waterways; developing high-quality intermodal passenger transport.

With an interoperable Trans-European transport network gradually being completed and traffic growth expected to rise, the implementation of this programme is expected to bring better integration of the national transport network with those of the EU and the neighbouring countries.

- Achievement of balance between the transport modes

Most passengers and goods traffic in Bulgaria goes by road. Saturation is a serious problem on the main road arteries and on the main boulevards in the capital city. Simultaneously, the greatest competitive advantage of railroad transport is its capacity to carry goods all over the country with flexibility and at low price. The incomplete and low-speed railway infrastructure, the lack of built infrastructure for combined transport and the low traffic capacity in the

terminals on the sea and Danube River ports hinder the development of alternative transport modes.

Turning intermodality into reality, revitalizing the railway sector, promoting the sea and inland waterway transport, developing of metropolitan railway in the capital city could provide means of coping with the congestion of the main road infrastructure and will support the achievement of better balance between the transport modes.

OPT specifics are related to the fact that the programme has precisely identified beneficiaries and pre-agreed with the EC list of priority projects, which will be funded by the European Regional Development Fund and EU's Cohesion Fund. The fifteen projects are separated in four main priority axes, as follows:

- **Development of railway infrastructure along the Trans-European and the major national transport axes, with budget of EUR 580 mln.**
- **Development of road infrastructure along the Trans-European and major national transport axes, with budget of EUR 989.59 mln.**
- **Improvement of intermodality for passengers and freights, with budget of EUR 211.09 mln.**
- **Improvement of maritime and inland waterway navigation, with budget of EUR 156.85 mln.**

III. ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

3.1. Legal Basis

In compliance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, Article 69, laying down the general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund, Bulgaria is obliged to provide information on and to publicize cofinanced programmes and operations. During the new programming period 2007-2013 the rules for implementation of the information and publicity measures are included in the Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 (Implementing Regulation), setting out the detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006. In accordance with the implementation rules OPT's MA shall be responsible for the publicity and the implementation of the requirements set in the Regulation.

The information shall be addressed to the European citizens and to the beneficiaries. It shall aim to highlight the role of the Community, and to ensure that assistance from the Funds is transparent.

In compliance with Article 2 of the Implementing Regulation, OPT MA shall elaborate a Communication Plan to provide the strategic framework for the envisaged publicity and communication actions. The Communication Plan shall cover the entire programming period 2007-2013. The MA shall submit the elaborated Communication Plan to the European Commission within four months of the date of OPT's adoption. As a minimum the Communication Plan shall include the following points:

- Goals and target groups;

- Strategy and content of the publicity measures which the MA shall undertake in relation to the potential beneficiaries and the general public, taking into account the contribution of the Community's assistance at national, regional and local level;
- Indicative budget for the CP's implementation;
- Administrative departments, responsible for the management of the Communication Plan;
- Presentation of the method of evaluation of the information and publicity measures, and their contribution to the visibility and the promotion of the Operational Programme and the role of the Community.

In relation to the requirements of the Implementing Regulation OPT's MA shall ensure that the information and publicity measures are implemented in accordance with the Communication Plan (CP) aiming at the broadest possible media coverage using all suitable forms and methods of communication at the appropriate national or regional level.

The Managing Authority shall be responsible for organizing as a minimum the following information and publicity measures, in compliance with Item 2, Article 7 of the Implementing Regulation:

- Organizing a major information activity upon the launch of the OP, even in the absence of a final version of CP;
- Organizing at least one major public event a year, presenting the achievements of the OP including the large infrastructure projects;
- Publication of the list of beneficiaries, the names of the operations and the amount of public funding;
- Flying the European flag in front of the premises of the Managing Authority for one week starting on 9 May;
- Publication (electronically or otherwise) of the list of beneficiaries, the names of the operations and the amount of public funding.

As a minimum, the Managing Authority shall provide potential beneficiaries with clear and detailed information on the following, in compliance with Item 2, Article 5 of the Implementing Regulation:

- The possibility of financing offered jointly by the Community and the Member State through the OP;
- The eligibility criteria and the requirements to be met in order to receive financing under the OP;
- The procedures for examining applications for funding, and their duration;
- The criteria for selecting the operations to be financed;

➤ The contacts at national, regional and local level that can provide information on the OP.

The Communication Plan also takes into account the requirements of the legal basis of the Republic of Bulgaria: Art. 41, Chapter II of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria; the Access to Public Information Act; the Communication Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the European Union, in relation to the information and publicity measures, citizens' right to information and access to public information.

3.2 Analysis of the Public Attitudes and Level of Information

This part presents a short analysis of the general public's attitude towards Bulgaria's European membership, the European regional and transport policy, the forthcoming utilization of the resources from the European Funds with an emphasis on the transport sector. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are presented /SWOT analysis/.

During the entire period of Bulgaria's accession preparation public opinion polls indicated that the majority of the Bulgarian citizens approved of Bulgaria's EU membership. Generally, the level of approval is high; although a slight decrease is noticeable in the last years before the country's accession. The level is highest in 2001 (91%), and lowest – in 2006 (69%).

In the end of March and the beginning of April 2007 a national representative quantity survey of the population, commissioned by OPT's MA, was carried out regarding the level of information about OPT.

A total of 1,016 citizens aged 15 and above were interviewed throughout the country. For the purposes of the survey the respondents were separated into two groups:

- Respondents living in the proximity of the routes, where the projects funded by OP transport will go – target group;
- Respondents living outside the territories in the proximity of the routes, where the projects funded by OP transport will go – non-target group.

The results indicate that the large part of the respondents is familiar with the transport infrastructure in their region, especially in the context of connectedness and its significance as a part of the Trans-European transport corridors. 90% of the respondents live in immediate proximity to an important road or railway.

A fifth of the respondents from the target group state that they “do not get acquainted with the building of transport routes in the proximity of their town/village. In the non-target group the corresponding share is 25% (every fourth one).

Familiarity in detail or in part (according to the opinion of the respondents themselves) with the OPT is significantly higher in the target group (*diagram 1*). The main conclusion from the results obtained from the sociological survey is for a very low level of information in terms of the OPT. Three quarters of all respondents have not even heard of the Operational Programme. Less than 1% have any, even if vague or quite incorrect idea of the amount of the resources to be utilized.

Only a few respondents indicated that they knew of specific projects within OPT's framework. In view of their small number and the consequent lack of basis for statistical processing, no conclusions can be made about the level of information about the specific projects. Their very listing is a sufficient indicator for the very poor familiarity with OPT's priority projects and axes. The respondents have pointed the following as priority projects for funding from OPT:

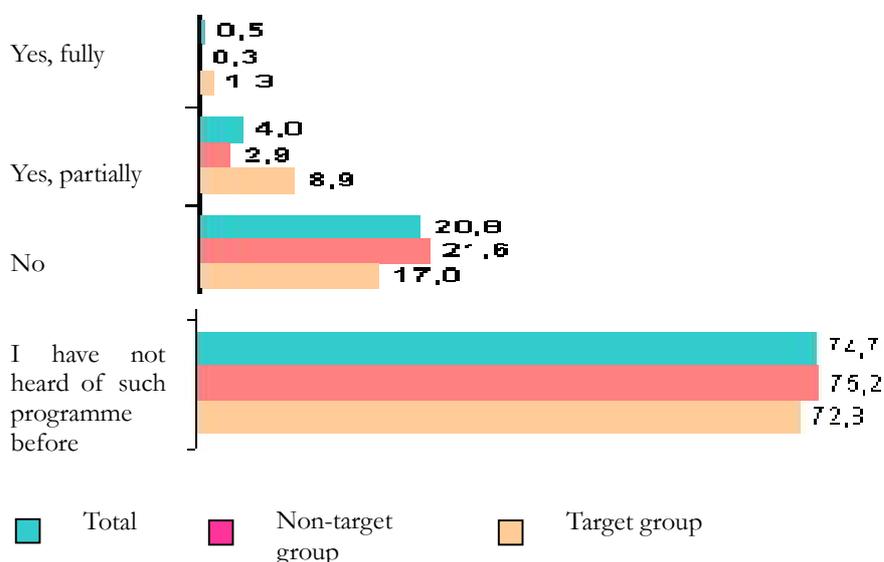
- Trakia Motorway;
- Struma Motorway;
- Danube Bridge 2;
- Batak-Dospat-Gotse Delchev Roadway;
- Corridor VIII;
- Ruse-Sofia Road, etc.

The listed projects lead to the conclusion that as a whole the general public only has information and expectations towards projects related to the road infrastructure. In relation to the projects planned under the other priority axes, any information regarding their connection to the OPT is lacking. Recognition as part of OPT of projects, such as Trakia Motorway and Danube Bridge 2, which will be funded by means of respectively public-private partnership and the ISPA pre-accession instrument, indicates that the public does not differentiate between projects financed from the various operational programmes and ones financed by other sources of funding.

In this connection, it is necessary to work for identification of OPT and its standing out against the other operational programmes, as well as the promotion of the separate projects, with emphasis on the sources of funding – the European Regional Development Fund and the EU Cohesion Fund.

Diagram 1

Level of Familiarity with OPT 2007-2013 (subjective evaluation)



- 65% of all respondents think that the resources from the EU funds for the projects under OPT are insufficient;
- 77% doubt that the resources are used efficiently and appropriately;
- 83% define the utilization mechanisms as non-transparent.

The survey shows that in general the audience prefers to receive information through the following information channels:

- Television – pointed out by 43%;
- Media – 13%;
- Newspapers – 12%;
- Internet – 8%;
- Radio – 6%;
- Local media – 4%;
- Others – 4%;

Television stands out as the unquestionable favourite among the information sources. On the other hand, we notice a certain difference in the definition of television as the main and as a preferred information source. Undoubtedly it is the most accessible source but the development of preferences towards other information sources may be indicative of one thing only – people look for consistency, thoroughness and comprehensiveness of information. In that sense, the most interested will hardly be satisfied only with television.

Another important conclusion we can make is that it is absolutely imperative to carry out initiatives and measures in relation to information and publicity of the OPT. A serious and professional approach is necessary in the overall process of communication, both of the OPT in general and of the separate priority axes and projects of the programme.

Communication shall be focused, both in terms of the level of information of the separate target groups and in the level of trust in the units responsible for utilization of the resources from the European Regional Development Fund and the EU Cohesion Fund.

3.3. Analysis of Bulgaria's Media Environment and the Media Representation of OP Transport in the Period June-December 2007

Bulgaria's media environment is characterized by a significant number of audio-visual media but out of them only 4 TV stations /from a total of 188/ and 18 radio stations broadcast nationwide. Only 6 of the abovementioned radio stations broadcast news and publicistic programmes.

The printed media market also offers a rich selection. 17 national and 33 regional dailies are published, as well as 7 national and 27 regional weeklies.

Over the last 3 years Internet-based media have also been developing significantly, with the largest popularity enjoyed by the information agencies, followed by traditional media which use the global network as an additional communication channel. The major national printed and audio-visual media maintain their own web portals or web pages.

A deepening is noticeable in the negative trend of regional media following the main topics published in the central media, without taking into account or putting a regional emphasis on the specific information.

The analysis of the media representation of OP Transport in the period June-December 2007 shows good and balanced coverage of the topic by most national printed and electronic media, but it should be noted that depth is lacking. The organized public events are covered

by a wide range of media once, but in most cases that does not lead to the elaboration of certain sub-topics and to follow-up comprehensive materials aimed at specific target groups.

It must be noted that the public events initiated by OPT MA enjoy high level of journalistic interest. The two regional /in Plovdiv and Sandanski/ and the two national public events were covered in 153 journalistic materials, 9 out of which were TV reportages, 13 materials broadcast on radios, 60 publications in the Internet-based media, and 59 in the printed ones. Among the Programme's separate priority axes the largest attention is attracted by the projects under the priority axis for improvement of the road infrastructure, followed by the projects related to the railway infrastructure. All national electronic and printed media covered the forum for the official presentation of the EC-approved OP Transport held on 9 December 2007.

The tone of the materials related to OP Transport is generally positive. Nearly 60% of the publications are positive, while more than 1/3 are neutral. In the cases when the materials contain negative overtones, they are not directly related to the OP or the actions of the managing Authority, but are related to problems in the transport sector, which have arisen as of the date of publication of broadcast.

It must be noted that the lack of depth in the materials and the predominantly positive tone are due to the great expectations on the part of the media representatives in relation to the OP Transport, the transparency in MA's work and the promptness in providing information, and the lack of knowledge on the part of the journalists in the sphere of structural funds. It is also necessary to take into consideration the fact that the actual construction of the infrastructure projects has not begun yet, and that upon their start in the future more profound interest will arise.

3.4. Analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT analysis)

SWOT ANALYSIS	
STRENGTHS:	OPPORTUNITIES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established traditional connections with national media; • Established stable institutional connections with the beneficiaries; • Experienced team of specialists in the Information and Communication Unit, who have learnt the professional terminology and are familiar in depth with the rules of EU's Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of the top management for work with the media; • Training of MA's Information and Communication Unit; • Building an information network of the experts responsible for information and publicity in the structures of OPT's beneficiaries; • Training of the experts responsible for information and publicity in the structures of OPT's

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement of the actions with the institutions directly related to the utilization of EU funds; • Possibility for planning and coordination of the public events; • The country's political stability; • Accumulated experience from communication of EU's preaccession instruments; • Positive attitude of the general public towards EU in general; • Significant financial assistance from EU for development and modernization of the transport infrastructure after Bulgaria's accession; • Existence of a unified national website concentrating the general information about the European Funds; • Positive attitude of the public towards the construction of new and the improvement of current infrastructure projects 	<p>beneficiaries;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration of Manual for OPT's information and publicity measures and the projects funded by the Programme; • Establishing lasting and efficient media partnerships; • Close work with the media in the form of working meetings and trainings; • Forming public interest to the topic; • Development of specialized web page of OPT, which can also be entered via links from other relevant portals and sites; • Attracting highly qualified staff in the MA, and increasing the employees' administrative capacity; • Securing the necessary equipment and materials in order to improve working conditions; • Securing relevant remuneration for the experts in the MA and the beneficiaries, working on OPT and the projects funded by the Programme.
<p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESSES:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THREATS:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "General talk" on the part of all state institutions on the issues of EU's Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund, without providing the necessary specific and practical information to the separate target groups; • Insufficient usage of experts and "speakers" for media events on the issues of the EU Funds; • Lack of preparation of the beneficiaries on information and publicity issues; • Lack of experience if OPT's top management in public and media events; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of interest in the topic, due to over saturation of the public media space with general information; • Distrust on the part of the public to the information provided by the managing Authority and the beneficiaries; • Lack of sense for the common governmental policy in relation to the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund; • Usage of specialized terminology, incomprehensible to the general audience; • Unclear and incompetent external talk

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject matter hard to understand and too specialized for the journalists; • Need to “decode” the specialized information; • Lack of specialized web page of the OPT; • Lack of good contacts with representatives of the regional media; • Lack of information and knowledge in relation to the essence and the goals of EU’s Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund on the part of the external target groups; • Lack of experience for work with the European funds on the part of the MA and the beneficiaries; • Significant number of newly appointed employees in the structures responsible for managing and implementing the OPT, who need additional training; • Distrust on the part of the public for the future efficient and effective spending of the resources from the European funds. 	<p>on the topic;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding of the goals and tasks of the Communication Plan on the part of the Ministry of Transport and the beneficiaries; • Sending out varying messages and signals /Contradictory information/ on the part of the MA, the beneficiaries and other parties participating in the OPT’s management and implementation; • Late implementation of priority infrastructure projects; • Lack of experience of the Bulgarian public relations agencies in the implementation of campaigns compliant with the requirements of the EU Regulations; • Shortage of human resources for management and implementation of OPT’s Communication Plan; • Risk of fluctuation of qualified staff; • Problems with environmental non-governmental organizations; • Insufficient transparency in carrying out the tender procedures; • Establishing irregularities during implementation; • Loss of European resources because of non-compliance with the n+2 and n+3 rule.
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IV. STRATEGY AND COMMUNICATION MEASURES FOR ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS

4.1. General Goal of the Communication Plan

On the basis of the analysis of the current situation, the pre-accession experience and in view of the specifics of Operational Programme Transport itself, the strategy of the CP sets itself the general goal:

To promote and to present the Operational Programme on Transport, as well as the Community's contribution in developing the transport infrastructure in Bulgaria.

Firstly, this means providing the necessary specific and practical information to the beneficiaries and general public, including in print and online. The predominant “general talk” will gradually be replaced by concrete information coming from reliable expert sources. The factual information about the projects' development shall be promoted. ‘Specific’ will be interpreted in two ways: a) concerning the transport modes in OPT; b) concerning the projects themselves.

Secondly, this means that not only will the beneficiaries receive adequate information, but they will also themselves be coached and trained on information and publicity issues, so that they serve as further communicators for OPT. Special attention will be paid to newly recruited employees without thematic or communication experience. Training on information and publicity issues will be used as a tool for overcome the identified weakness regard the lack of the beneficiaries' preparation in the field of information and publicity and the threat regard the insufficient transparency in caring out the tender procedures.

Thirdly, the involvement of the higher level management will be sought and encouraged, by means of supporting their public and media events, and even offering training in this sphere. These often are the leaders of opinion and need to be acquainted not only with the issues of OP Transport, but also more generally with the goals and achievements of the EU Cohesion Policy. The trainings of the OPT and beneficiaries management in the field of public communications, their active participation in public events and regular contacts with the media representatives will have significant contribution for the minimizing of the following threats: usage of specialized terminology, incomprehensible to the general audience; lack of understanding of the goals and tasks of the Communication Plan on the part of the Ministry of Transport and the beneficiaries; sending out varying messages and signals /contradictory information/ on the part of the MA, the beneficiaries and other parties participating in the OPT's management and implementation.

Finally, in order to achieve outreach to society the communicators will be encouraged to use less formal and technical language, while media representatives will be trained in the themes of the OPT. The logic followed is that the two sides have to make an effort to come together – the administration to learn to apply less technical and specialized language and terminology, while media tries to enter the field of transport polity and cohesion funding. The process can be further enhanced by joint events and other ways to bring together and establish good contacts between administration and media, with an emphasis on regional media, which has less access and resources, while being closer to the population and the local level concerns.

Having in mind that the OPT will support major infrastructure projects for different modes of transport there will be an individual approach to every project appropriate with the mode of transport, the geographic location, the characteristics of the region, the public interest and not at least the technical specifics of each project and the phase of its implementation.

The road projects are on common interest, but the motorways projects are the most important for the wider public in all parts of Bulgaria. First class roads projects as Kardjali – Podkova are more important and interesting for the population in the respective region and the transport and logistic companies. The general conclusion is that the public as a whole and the business are interested on the development on the national transport network. The level of the campaigns for Priority Axes 1 will be national in mixture with regional information campaign along the road-bed of the separate projects. The OPT website, the national and

regional media and the public events, such as seminars, information days and discussion forums, will be the most used communication channels. Excellent media relations will be one of the success keys to ensure long-term public support. During the construction works special attention will be paid on the target group of the transport and logistic companies and the private drivers. On daily basis update information for the alternative roads will be published on the OPT and Ministry of transports websites and press messages will be send to the national and respective regional media. Special billboards will inform the drivers that on this road are carried out repairs and will display the alternative way.

On this stage the railway projects are not so popular in comparison with the road infrastructure, but they are also on common interest for the general public. The consumers of the railway transport are more interested on the quality of the rolling stock and the service and after this on the safety and the speed of the trains. The target group of the passengers includes mostly students, pensioners and people with low income. Regard this general communication campaigns for the railway will be on national level and the specific campaigns will be targeted to the consumers. For the litter will be used billboards on the railway stations along the project axis, stickers in the rolling stocks, distribution of leaflets among the passengers and other relevant communication channels and instruments. In the regions where the projects will be implemented should be organized information days for the media, regional and local authorities and other interested parties.

The development of the intermodality is presented in the OPT trough the construction of two projects in the region of the capital Sofia. The communication on the extension of Sofia metropolitan will stress on the improvement of the traffic and environmental conditions in the city, timesaving's and comfort for the passengers. The core target group for the campaigns will be the citizens of Sofia, the guests of the city and the municipality. The activities will include metro media advertising, public events, media relations and elaboration of information and marketing materials. For the sake of route changes because of the construction works, there will be execute the same approach as to the road projects. The construction of the intermodal terminal in Sofia is a specific project that needs national communication, but the main efforts shell concentrate on the main stakeholders – the transport and logistic companies and the social-economic partners. The most suitable communication channels to reach this group are the specialized media, the round tables and the internet.

The projects bound up with the improvement of the maritime and inland-waterway navigation are the most difficult for communication to the wider public. The strategy includes elements for national communication for the public, but as a part of the general communication campaigns for OPT. The interested target groups are the citizens of Rouse and Varna, because of the geographic location for the projects implementation. The core target groups are the companies that provide river and/or maritime transport services and the Bulgarian port and navigation administrations on the Danube river valley and the Black see coast. Local media, specialized media, seminars and internet will be the most effective communication channels to attract the core target group. Regard the project for the improvement of the navigation on the Danube in joint Bulgarian – Romanian parts, the OPT MA shell initiate joint communication campaigns with the Romanian party.

In compliance with the requirements set out in Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006, this whole process will be highlighting the role of the Community and will ensure that providing assistance from the Funds is fully transparent.

To a large extent the CP's general goals are predetermined by the requirements set out in Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006. These are:

- The Member State and the Managing Authority shall provide information and promote the operations and the cofinanced programmes;
- The information shall be addressed to the European citizens and to the beneficiaries, aiming to highlight the role of the Community and to ensure that providing assistance from the Funds is transparent;
- Potential project contractors shall be informed of the possibilities for application, the rules and the procedures;
- The factual information about the projects' development shall be promoted.

4.2. Specific Goals

The general goal of the Communication Plan can be achieved by means of the realization of several specific goals, which cover all communication levels.

- **Specific goal 1** – To communicate the assistance from the European Regional Development Fund and EU's Cohesion Fund provided by means of the OPT, the application possibilities given by the Programme, and the public benefit from its implementation.
- **Specific goal 2** – To facilitate OPT's successful implementation by means of efficient internal and external communication.
- **Specific goal 3** – To ensure the projects' successful implementation by familiarizing the beneficiaries with their responsibilities in the process of utilizing the EU Funds and by means of timely, understandable, and quality communication with the beneficiaries, the project contractors, and the basic stakeholders.
- **Specific goal 4** – To communicate the benefits from the separate projects funded by OPT, as well as the improved modes of transport, emphasizing the specific contribution to the country's infrastructure development and to the economy and society as whole.
- **Specific goal 5** – To ensure the transparency in utilizing the resources from the European Regional Development Fund and EU Cohesion Fund and disseminate information about the results from the Programme's monitoring and evaluation and about the progress realized throughout OPT implementation.

4.3. Stages and Priorities of the Communication Plan

In view of the long-term period covered by the CP, the seven years period was separated into three main stages with specific priorities:

a) Stage I

- Preparation and introduction – 2007-2009

Priorities:

- Preparation and dissemination of information regarding OPT priorities, goals and measures.
- Active explanatory work with the beneficiaries and project contractors under EU's Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund.

b) Stage II

- Communication of the intermediate results and speeding up the separate measures – 2010- 2012

Priorities:

- Transparency in spending of the resources from the European funds, dissemination of information about the progress under the priorities and projects set in OPT.
- Encouragement of the activity of the beneficiaries and the contractors for the realization of the projects.

c) Stage III

- Presentation of the achievements – 2012-2013/2015

Priorities:

- Presentation of the achieved results and effects from using the European funds, in pursuance of the priorities and projects set in OPT, as well as the influence they will exercise in the future.
- Launch of discussions about OPT's priorities and goals during the next programming period.

In addition to time schedule of the communication process, in view of the resources utilization course the Strategy stipulates two more parallel communication levels.

The first level is connected to the work of the beneficiaries and the tender procedures they shall carry out. In addition to the general strategic goal to be followed in the communication process as well as the specific goals, this communication level shall be aimed mostly at active cooperation and communication in the project preparation period and transparency of the procedures.

The second level is connected to the separate sectors of economy and public life, which will benefit from the projects to be funded – road infrastructure, railway infrastructure, intermodality in passengers and freights transportation, maritime and inland waterway transport.

During the entire seven years period of the Operational Programme the messages and the visions in the communication process shall be unified. It is necessary to elaborate a main message based on the answers to several questions:

- Who is it aimed at?

- Who needs information?

The choice of a main message is an important issue. The message shall be short and clearly formulated, positive, easy to remember and corresponding to the level of the target audiences. The development of logo and slogan of the OPT is an important issue for the Communication Plan's implementation. In order to achieve a double effect by collecting the widest range of ideas and proposals for logo and slogan, and simultaneously promoting the OPT, the method of highest quality and efficiency will be to organize a national competition. Additional effect from the competition's organization will also be achieved by the media coverage, which is an indirect way to promote the Operational Programme itself.

It is of utmost significance to apply a flexible and adaptive approach in the elaboration of the communication measures, in view of the possibility for changes which will be required in the course of the work and will be based on the accumulated experience.

4.4. Indicative Measures

The measures, which will be undertaken during the seven years period, shall be aimed at achieving the general and specific goals of the Communication Plan. In view of the quality monitoring and evaluation of the performance they shall have to be measurable.

- Development of logo and slogan of the OPT
- Information and advertising campaigns according to transport modes or concrete projects

Every year the OPT MA will organise Information and Advertising Campaigns for the wider public on national level to promote the OPT and EU Funds. The stress will be on the benefits of programme implementation for the Bulgarian people and for the economic development of the country and on the fact that EU funds support these important national infrastructure projects. The relations with the national media during these campaigns will be a priority.

- In parallel with this there will be such campaigns on regional and local level with stress on the project that will be or that is implemented in the region. The aim is to stimulate the public support for the project, to explain the benefits for the local community and to promote the EU support; close work with the representatives from local and regional media and authorities is a key factor for the successful implementation; elaboration of information and marketing materials
- Building and maintaining an information network among the interested organizations and units; Manual for the MA, the beneficiaries and project promoters on the implementation of the information and publicity measures

The manual will be a guideline for how to communicate with the different target groups, giving advice on the most effective tools and channels. They will be information about EU documents regard publicity and communications and the main principles of public relations. There will be checklists for preparation of press messages, organising press conferences and public events. It will include practical advices for the elaboration of communication plans. As an Annex will be include a visual guideline that is very important tool for the beneficiaries and the project promoters. As stipulated in the National Communication Strategy of NSRF, the logo of the NSRF, representing the overall EU structural policy interventions in Bulgaria,

will be used in conjunction with the OPT logo. In general the manual will be separated in three main parts for the three main actors for the CP of OPT: the OPT's MA, the OPT beneficiaries and the project promoters.

- Elaboration of documentary for the major projects, financed by OPT

The OPT MA will support the elaboration of documentaries for the major projects, financed by the EU funds. The beneficiaries and the project promoters will be closely involved in this process. The documentaries will be presented to the wider public by a national TV channel. They will be put on the OPT website so that every body who has interest will have the opportunity in any time to see the story of the construction of the major projects in Bulgaria,

- Public events

The OPT MA will organize at least one major information event, presenting the achievements of the programme, including the major projects and the Community support for the development of the national transport infrastructure. The yearly major event will be organized as a discussion forum with the participation of the stakeholders, media representatives and members of the Representation of the European Commission in Bulgaria.

This type of events can be adjusted to the different type of target groups. A wide range of participants can be invited: experts from the OPT MA and the Beneficiaries, project promoters, socio-economic partners, politicians, media representatives and other. All public events organized by the OPT MA will be announced through the media, the OPT internet site and personal invitations. During the events information and marketing materials will be disseminate.

Experts from the OPT MA will take part in public events organized by mostly by the beneficiaries, but also by other institutions or organizations with the aim to present the programme and the projects co-financed by the EU funds. They will make presentations or taking part in Q&A sessions and discussions and disseminate information materials.

Special attention will be paid to events with topic on the different modes of transport. For this type of conferences special presentations will be elaborated with stress on the main topic of the event /e.g. road, or railway, or intermodality/. If it is relevant experts from the respective beneficiary will perform presentations.

- Media relations

The media are the key information channel to reach the wide public. They require special attention and approach, specialized training and regular contact with those responsible for transport issues. That is why the media representatives will be coached and communicated with as a separate target group. Study visits of media representatives in the European Commission and EU Member States. Press conferences and briefings will be organized, press releases will be disseminated. Media representatives will be supported by the elaboration of documentaries or publications regard the OPT and the projects financed by OPT.

- Internet and Web site

Regard the requirements set out in Article 7, p. 2, d) of the Implementing Regulation the MA of OPT has published electronically the list of beneficiaries, the names of the operations and

the amount of the public funding allocated to the operations. The information is available on the website of the OPT www.optransport.bg, on the website of the Ministry of transport www.mt.government.bg and on the national website for the Structural and Cohesion funds www.eufunds.bg. On the OPT website is published additional information for the projects e.g. scope of the projects and main activities.

The publication data of the OPT beneficiaries are presented in Annex 1 and are to be found with the following link:

http://www.optransport.bg/upload/docs/table_list_beneficiaries__OPT_may_2008.pdf

The list of the beneficiaries will be updated every six months – before the 1 June and after the 1 October of each year. After the completion of each project and after the final payment, the initial figure on commitments will be replaced by amounts effectively paid.

The OPT MA has published information on beneficiaries in a spatial brochure elaborated for the major event publicising the launch of the programme in December 2007.

Regarding Council of Minister's Decision №121/31.05.2007 the OPT MA is obliged to publish electronically the indicative working program of the OPT for the current year till the 31-th of January. The MA of OPT took the decision to update the information minimum twice a year if there is a need. The format and the contents of the indicative working programme of OPT is presented in Annex 1. The indicative working program for year 2008 is published on the website www.optransport.bg at the following link <http://www.optransport.bg/page.php?c=126&d=120>

The information and communication measures, implemented by the OPT MA, with active participation of the beneficiaries, will guarantee transparency and openness with respect to funds from ERDF and the CF, as well as the public support for the projects, financed by OPT.

V. TARGET GROUPS

For the purposes of the Communication Plan and on the basis of a national representative sociological survey conducted in the period April-May 2007, the following main target groups were identified, which represented specific audiences:

- Internal target groups;
- External target groups;
- Mediators' target groups.

This separation is based on the specific role of each separate group in relation to OPT, as well as on the difference in the level of information, the level of interest, and the preferred communication channels.

5.1. Internal Target Groups

➤ Managing Authority of the OPT – Coordination of Programmes and Projects Directorate in the Ministry of Transport;

- Beneficiaries – National Railway Infrastructure Company; National Road Infrastructure Fund; Executive Agency Maritime Administration; Executive Agency Exploration and Maintenance of the Danube River; Metropolitan JSC;
- Central Coordination Unit – Management of European Union Funds Directorate, Ministry of Finance;
- Audit of European Union Funds Directorate, Ministry of Finance;
- Certifying Authority – National Fund Directorate, Ministry of Finance;
- Members of the OPT Monitoring Committee;
- The Managing Authorities of the Operational Programmes in the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, the Ministry of Economy and Energy, the Ministry of Environment and Water, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of State Administration and Administrative Reform, and the Ministry of Finance;
- Employees of the Ministry of Transport.

In relation to the internal target groups, special attention needs to be paid to the beneficiaries group. According to the traditional approach this group should be put together with the external target groups. Taking into consideration the limited number of OPT beneficiaries – five, as well as the nature, frequency, and informal information exchange between them and the Managing Authority, we shall consider, that it differs significantly from the way information shall be exchanged with the other audiences indicated as external. Work with the beneficiaries shall require serious activity in the internal communications sphere at all levels.=

5.2. External Target Groups

- Potential project contractors;
- Project contractors;
- European Commission;
- Socio-economic partners;
- Non-governmental organizations;
- Academic circles;
- General public - a heterogeneous group consisting of the country's population;
- Basic stakeholders– national and international transport organizations, transport operators, construction and consultant companies from the sector, etc.

5.3. Mediators' Target Group

- Media representatives;
- Politicians;

- Public opinion leaders;
- Information and Communication Unit in OPT MA;
- Central Information Office for the Structural Funds, Ministry of Finance;
- 28 regional information centres of the Central Information Office;
- Experts or units in the Managing Authorities of the Operational Programmes, responsible for the information and publicity measures;
- Information Centre of the Representation of the European Commission in Bulgaria;
- Information centres of the public institutions – beneficiaries of the OPT.

VI. COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

The choice of communication channels was conformed mainly with the target groups' specifics, and also to the type and the topicality of the message to be conveyed. The results from the sociological survey commissioned by OPT MA, which pointed out the communication channels most preferred by the target groups, were also taken into account. It is of utmost significance to use actively the channels which best guarantee that the message shall reach the desired audience. In the planning of the communication campaigns and activities, in particular the media mix part, it is of special importance to also take into account the preferences of the separate groups to be informed by means of corresponding channels, and the development in the prioritization of the communication channels. This information shall be updated annually by means of conducting sociological surveys, in order to take into account the changes in the target audiences' preferences in due time.

The basic communication channels to be used for the external target groups are as follows:

- Television stations;
- Radio stations;
- Daily newspapers;
- Weekly newspapers;
- Magazines;
- Specialized publications;
- External advertising /billboards, posters, advertising on vehicles/;

- Information brochures /flyers, foldouts/;
- Internet;
- Participation in fairs and specialized exhibitions;
- The 28 district info points managed by the Central Information office in the Ministry of Finance
- Europe Direct Information Points
- External communication instruments.

On the basis of the conducted Survey of the level of information and the information needs of the target groups of the Operational Programme on Transport 2007-2013, the usage of communication channels in relation to the internal and external target groups was prioritized.

External Target Groups

Sub-group	Communication channels (arranged by priority)
Potential project contractors and project contractors	Web site E-portals Meetings Seminars Mailing Printed materials Television Radio Other media Discussions
European Commission	Meetings Official correspondence Mailing Web site Media Europe Direct Information Points
Socio-economic partners	Meetings Discussions Seminars Official correspondence Web site Printed materials Mailing Television Radio Other media

Non-governmental organizations	Meetings Seminars Discussions Mailing Web site Printed materials E-portals The 28 district info points Europe Direct Information Points Television Radio Other media
General public - heterogeneous group consisting of the country's population	Television National newspapers Internet Regional electronic media Regional printed media Public events Printed materials The 28 district info points Europe Direct Information Points Municipal structures
Basic stakeholders – national and international transport organizations, transport operators, construction and consultant companies from the sector	Web site Meetings Seminars Official correspondence Mailing Printed materials E-portals The 28 district info points Television Radio Other media

Internal Target Groups

Sub-group	Communication channels (arranged by priority)
Managing Authority	Web site / Intranet site Meetings Seminars Mailing Team building
Central Coordination Unit	Meetings Mailing Official correspondence Seminars

Beneficiaries	Meetings Mailing Official correspondence Web site / Intranet site Seminars Discussions Information materials
National Fund Directorate – Certifying Authority	Official correspondence Meetings Web site / Intranet site Seminars
Managing Authorities of the Operational Programmes	Meetings Official correspondence Web site / Intranet site Mailing
Civil servants and managers directly involved in OPT management	Meetings Official correspondence Mailing Web site / Intranet site
Members of the OPT Monitoring Committee	Mailing Monitoring Committee sessions Seminars Advertising and information materials Discussions Official correspondence
Employees of the Ministry of Transport	Web site / Intranet site Intranet site of the Ministry of Transport Mailing Advertising and information materials
Audit of European Union Funds Directorate – Auditing Authority	Official correspondence Meetings Mailing

VII. ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNICATION PLAN

The responsibility for CP's preparation and implementation rests with MA of OPT. In order to achieve the goals of the Communication Plan, active joint work of the responsible institutions and organizations is necessary, as well as the building of information network, which is also required by Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006. The contact person

responsible for the information and publicity measures is Ms. Magdalena Dimitrova, Head of Unit Communication and Information within the Coordination of Programme and Projects Directorate in the Ministry of Transport. Contact details: phone: ++3592 9409 610; fax: 3592 9409 795; e-mail: mtdimitrova@mt.government.bg; address: 9 Dyakon Ignatiy Street, 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria.

As stipulated in the National Communication Strategy of NSRF the *units for information and publicity of the OP MAs* are responsible for the implementation of the measures for information and publicity in the following aspects:

- Contents of the Operational Programmes and their relation to the NSRF;
- Information to the potential beneficiaries about the possibilities and requirements for financing from the respective Operational Programme;
- Activities of the Intermediate Bodies;
- Preparation and implementation of the Operational Programmes;
- Presentation of the achievements of the Operational Programmes;
- Promotion of the European Cohesion Policy and the European policies, which are implemented via the respective Operational Programme.

The OP MAs have leading role as to the coordination of the measures for information and publicity of the IBs to the respective OP. Each OPMA shall maintain a specialized website with information about the activities of the respective OP, which also includes information about the activities of the respective IBs and links to their websites, the unified website about the SCF, supported by the CIO and the website of the Commission. Each MA has to identify its own specific target groups, most effective communication channels and messages. The OP CPs will provide the opportunities for updating the information, messages and tools corresponding to the variety of the information levels of the target groups and the public support of the different priorities and topics.

7.1. Information and Communication Unit with the OPT MA

The Information and Communication Unit is part of MA. The main function of this unit is to implement OPT Communication Plan and to achieve the goals set in it. The tasks of this unit include mainly:

- Elaboration of CP of OPT;
- Assisting the management of MA of OPT in negotiating CP with EC;
- Coordination of CP of OPT with the Communication Strategy of NSRF;
- Management and implementation of CP of OPT;
- Preparation of reports on the implementation of the information and publicity measures;
- Elaboration of information and marketing materials;
- Dissemination of information about the financial opportunities provided by EU and the national cofinancing by means of OPT;
- Monitoring and control of the compliance with the EU information and publicity requirements on the part of the beneficiaries and the project contractors;
- Providing information about the allowed expenditures rules;
- Check-up of the beneficiaries' draft contracts with the contractors for existence of provision for implementation of the information and publicity measures, in compliance with EU Regulations;

- Preparation of reports to the Monitoring Committee on the progress in the implementation of OPT Communication Plan;
- Dissemination of information materials about OPT and the Community's Convergence policy;
- Organization of sociological surveys;
- Organization of the production and maintenance of OPT web site;
- Building and coordination of information network consisting of information and publicity experts from the beneficiaries' structures;
- Coordination of OPT planned communication measures with the communication activities planned by the other Managing Authorities.

The Information and Communication Unit /IC/ shall have a staff of at least three civil servants, directly involved in communications, with the following functions and responsibilities:

- **Head of Unit and Press Officer:** manages IC unit; communicates directly with the media; maintains relations and coordinates activities with the relevant units in the other MAs; elaborates, implements, and evaluates CP of OPT for the period 2007-2013; initiates and prepares tender procedures for selection of contractor of activities under CP; represents OPT MA in the INFORM structures at DG Regional Policy of the European Commission and in the National network of information and publicity experts of the Operational Programmes.
- **Information, Publications and Event Management Officer:** responsible for the contacts with the beneficiaries in relation to information and publicity measures, as well as for monitoring and control of their implementation by beneficiaries and contractors; prepares and disseminates information materials; prepares and implements public events.
- **Internal Communications and Website Officer:** updates the content of OPT web site; manages the activities outsourced to external contractors; responsible for the activities related to the monitoring of CP 2007-2013; coordinates MA's internal events and trainings.

The specifics of some of the information and publicity measures require that they be outsourced to external contractors /design, prepress, print, sociological surveys, evaluation, etc./. Information and Communication Unit shall be responsible for managing these contracts, for controlling the high-quality and timely provision of services and delivery of goods, as well as for ensuring contracts are concluded in compliance with the Public Procurement Law.

7.2. Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries will be responsible for the communicating the projects they are responsible for. They have to guarantee the transparency and highlight the role of the Community on project level. They have to support, coordinate and control the implementation of the project level communication plans, which will be responsibility of the project promoters.

The responsibility for the implementation of CP of OPT rests with MA, but in view of the Operational Programme's specifics the successful implementation of the communication activities is at risk without the active and responsible participation on the part of the beneficiaries.

In order to minimize this risk, each beneficiary shall designate at least one expert who shall be directly responsible for the implementation of the information and publicity measures, which are the beneficiaries' responsibility. MA on its part shall provide the training and the permanent increase of these experts' qualification, and shall elaborate a Manual for OPT information and publicity measures. For the purposes of coordination, exchange of experience, and strengthening of capacity it is planned that every three months working meetings shall be held between the experts responsible for communications in OPT MA and in the beneficiaries' organizations.

The beneficiaries nominated in May 2008 their publicity officers as follows:

- Nedyalka Boneva, chief expert, Bulgarian Maritime Administration, Executive Agency;
- Natalia Chertoyanova, Chief Expert, Programming and Strategy Development Department, National Railway Infrastructure Company;
- Iliia Tzvetkov, Head of "Preparation, tendering and contracting" Unit, "ISPA Programme" Department, National Road Infrastructure Fund;
- Dafinka Todorova – advertising expert, Metropolitan JSC

The first official coordination meeting between the MA of OPT and the publicity officer pointed by the beneficiaries hold on the 26-th of May 2008. The main topics were the needs of coordination and training in the field of communication, as the design of the billboards and the most appropriate positions where they have to be placed.

It is MA's responsibility to coordinate the planning of public events and information campaigns which the beneficiaries plan to organize in relation to the projects financed under OPT. The experts responsible for the information and publicity measures in the beneficiaries' structures shall be obliged to inform the project contractors that the project is co-financed by the European Funds, to work jointly with the contractors in relation to publicity, and to control the implementation of the information and publicity measures, in compliance with the requirements of the Implementing Regulation.

The MA will elaborate till October 2008 a detailed Manual for implementation of the publicity and information measures of OPT. It will include an Annex with visual guidelines /graphical standards/ for the EU logo and the logo and slogan of OPT.

7.3. Coordination of the Publicity Actions between the OPT MA and the OPTA

The Central Information Office /CIO/, whose task is to communicate NSPF, EU Cohesion policy, as well as general information about the assistance from EU's Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund, is situated in the Ministry of Finance. One of CIO's main functions is to build information network at national level, and to coordinate the communication campaigns of the separate MAs in order to avoid overlapping of activities and for efficient spending of the financial resources planned for information and publicity.

As stipulated in the National Communication Strategy, the Central Information Office is responsible for the development and maintenance of an information network, encompassing the experts, engaged with the information and publicity /I&P/ measures within the OP MAs.

The main purpose of the National Network of Communicators is to establish communication and coordination between all planned communication activities and ensure coordinated and more efficient use of the resources for the dissemination of information and transmission of unified messages, to raising the public awareness with regards to the EU, NSRF and the OPs. The OPT publicity officers are part of the Network and take part in all the coordination meetings and discussions. On regular basis the IC Unit informs the CIO about the planned activities and send news for the website www.eufunds.bg.

Local Level Information Network

A network approach of resource centres has been adopted to ensure geographical coverage for the territory of Bulgaria. In view of achieving equality and transparency and further ensuring close and appropriate access to information concerning the objectives of the EU Cohesion Policy and NSRF, a network of 28 District Info Points (DIPs) is envisaged to be set up and coordinated by CIO. They will guarantee the right to fair and full access to information about the funding opportunities for all social, ethnic and age groups all around the country, providing wide range of opportunities to obtain that information. Their establishment will further enhance the transparency and promotion of the EU-funded.

The DIPs will function as **“one-stop-desk”**, where general public can go for general advise on Structural Funds, NSRF and OPs scopes and interventions, mechanisms of functioning, implementation and management of the SF financing, EU and national legislation of the matter, etc.

The network will work in close cooperation with other similar structures within other OPs (network of beneficiaries, IBs, information and publicity officers), who have different nature – i.e. support of co-operation between beneficiaries, development of capacity-building, expert advice and consultations and deal only with issues and activities in regard to their own OP.

As contrast, the DIPs will be able to handle **questions of general nature about all of the OPs**, informing visitors on principle procedures and rules, related to the SF projects funding and implementation processes, issues and legislative and normative framework.

All DIPs will also allow access to information by answering to enquiries made by phone, by post, e-mail, facsimile or through Internet. Additionally, each DIP will have specific equipment for Self-information services, available to the visitors 24/7.

The OPT MA plans to use the 28 DIPs as one of the useful communication channels for dissemination of information to reach the non-governmental organizations, the basic stakeholders and the general public. The OPT MA will provide the DIPs with general information and printed advertising and information materials about OPT and the funded project with the support of the CIO. The MA will provide the full contact details for the experts of the “Information and Communication” unit and will update on regular basis the information for the progress of the implementation of the 14 projects defined in OPT.

The five significant beneficiaries of the OPT are expressly determinate with their roles and responsibilities in the programming document and the MA has established strong communication with them on a daily basis. That is to secure beneficiaries with information about possible funding of projects even if they do not create specific information offices or points.

VIII. PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership development is one of the priorities of European regional policy. Partnership is an exceptionally efficient instrument in the sphere of communications.

Attracting partners ensures higher level of transparency and support on the part of the most active target audiences, which are directly related to OPT. Partners shall be widely represented and with good image in the public space and enjoying high level of social trust. It is necessary to be very precise about the number of partners and their experience in the communications sphere, in order to avoid the “slow decision-making” effect and difference in the messages which will have negative effect.

8.1. Partnership and Communication with Mass Media Representatives

The media is the main communication channel for efficient information coverage and an important instrument for implementation of the information and publicity measures. The media shall have access to the information they need, and it has to be accurate and timely. In order to have correct coverage of the course of the Operational Programme, the main media representatives shall be trained and familiarized in detail with the EU resources utilization process. Thorough familiarity with the subject matter on the part of the journalists shall ensure correct coverage of the entire process.

8.2. Potential Partner Organizations

According to the analyses, the structures which can be used as communication channels in relation to the transport sector and can assist the large-scale dissemination of information towards the mass audience are:

- Transport and commercial associations and organizations;
- Economic and social partners;
- Non-governmental organizations;
- Educational institutions;
- Organizations representing the business;
- European information centres and the Representation of the European Commission in Bulgaria;
- Basic stakeholders in relation to the various Priority Axes.

MA of OPT shall cooperate with the abovementioned partners for dissemination of information about OPT and the European transport and cohesion policies.

8.3. Building Information Network

The formalization of the information networks is a new aspect of the communication policy of the European Commission regarding the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund. MA of OPT has designated a contact person directly responsible for the information and publicity measures and EC has been notified of that. The designated person is also a member

of the INFORM network coordinated by DG Regional Policy of the European Commission at EU level.

The Central Information Office at the Ministry of Finance has also structured an information network at national level, similarly to the European Commission model. The Information and Communication Unit team of OPT's MA actively participates in the work of the national network, in the official sessions and meetings, and regularly exchanges information with its members.

Informal communication network of OPT is planned to be built by the end of March 2008. Members of the said network shall be experts from MA of OPT and representatives of the Programme's beneficiaries. The main goals of the network shall be to inform and train the members regarding the information and publicity requirements of the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund /SCF/; to strengthen their capacity in the public communications sphere; to ensure the exchange of good practices, and to achieve high level of coordination in relation to the communication activities related to OPT and the projects funded by it. By means of this network MA of OPT shall assist the beneficiaries in the implementation of EC's requirements regarding the information and publicity measures. Simultaneously the network shall create better conditions for monitoring and control of the communication activities implemented by the beneficiaries.

IX. INDICATIVE BUDGET ALLOCATION

The budget for the period 2007-2013/2015 for the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of OPT's Communication Plan is EUR 12 mln. The amount of the financial resource has been determined on the basis of the budget of the Technical Assistance Priority Axis of OPT, the low level of information of the general public in relation to the Operational Programme, and the high level of activity of the non-governmental sector in relation to the implementation of the large infrastructure projects.

Budget allocation of the CP of OPT per years:

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Budget, EUR mln	0.2	1.7	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.9	2.4
Total:							12,000,000

The resources allocated for 2013 exceed the budgets allocated during the previous periods, due to the necessity of preparation of a Communication Plan for the next programming period and the possible arising of necessity to transfer financial resources to 2014 and 2015, in view of the fact that the final implementation of the Operational Programme shall be concluded in the end of 2015. Also from the budget for 2013 resources shall be allocated for elaboration of analysis and evaluation of CP's implementation during the entire programming period, as well as recommendations for the forthcoming communication activities for the period 2014-2021.

	Year	% (per stage)	TOTAL €	Resources from ERDF	National cofinancing	Total € per stage
N+3	2007	31.7%	200 000	170 000	30 000	3 800 000

	2008		1 700 000	1 445 000	255 000	
	2009		1 900 000	1 615 000	285 000	
N+2	2010	48.3%	2 000 000	1 700 000	300 000	5 800 000
	2011		1 900 000	1 615 000	285 000	
	2012		1 900 000	1 615 000	285 000	
N+2	2013	20.0%	2 400 000	2 040 000	360 000	2 400 000
	2014					
	2015					
	Total	100.0%	12 000 000	10 200 000	1 800 000	12 000 000

It is responsibility of the Information and Communication Unit to determine the annual priorities and the budgets necessary for their implementation, taking into account what is set in the Communication Plan, the analysis and evaluation of the performance during the previous periods.

X. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Carrying out monitoring and evaluation of CP's implementation is an obligatory requirement of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006. Monitoring includes systematic and permanent collection, analysis and utilization of the data for the needs of OPT's internal management for undertaking corrective actions, updating plans, and monitoring in due time the progress of CP's implementation. Evaluation is essentially a periodic assessment of the efficiency, effectiveness, stability, and impact of a project in relation to the planned goals. The usual practice is evaluation to be made by an independent consultant who shall evaluate the quality of the performed work impartially and without conflict of interests.

The indicators, on the basis of which implementation of the Communication Plan of OP Transport shall be evaluated, are of the "programming" indicators type, namely output indicators, result indicators, and impact indicators. Each of the given programming indicators shall also be defined according to the evaluation method as quantitative or qualitative.

- *Output indicators* – information about the quantity of produced and delivered products and services (for instance, number of implemented public events);
- *Result indicators* – provide information about the direct and immediate benefits from the Programme's implementation (for instance, number of disseminated materials about OP Transport);
- *Impact indicators* – describe the long-term effect from the Programme's implementation, other than the direct and immediate influence on the target groups (for instance, formation of positive attitude towards OPT and EU structural instruments).

Product/Service	Indicator			Information source
	1. Output	2. Result	3. Impact	

Printed advertising and information materials (manuals, brochures, foldouts, others)	- Print run and type of the information materials	-Information materials, provided to the target groups - Level of satisfaction with the information materials	- Higher level of visibility and recognition of OPT - Increasing the level of information about OPT and SCF - Increasing the trust in OPT's MA as guarantor of the transparency of utilization of the resources from SCF	1. Copies of the materials 2. Report on the provided information materials. 3. Survey – qualitative methods
Audio-visual materials	- Produced advertising spots - Produced films about the infrastructure projects	- Number of broadcasts of the advertising spots and films - Rating of the media /programs/, broadcasting the materials	- Increasing the level of recognition of OPT - Increasing the level of information about OPT SCF - Increasing the level of information of the population about projects funded by OPT - Increased positive attitudes towards OPT and SCF	1. Copies of the produced advertising spots and films 2. Media monitoring and reports. Rating statistics. 3. Survey – quantitative and qualitative methods
Messages to the media, and publications and interviews initiated by MA	- Number of messages sent to the media - Number of initiated publications and interviews	- Publications in printed and Internet media, and broadcasts in electronic media - Ratio between positive, neutral, and negative materials in the media	- Level of information of the population about OPT and SCF - Increased positive attitudes towards OPT - Higher level of visibility and transparency	1. Copies of the messages and publications 2. Media monitoring and content analysis 3. Survey – quantitative and quantitative methods
Organized events (forums, conferences, seminars, press conferences, etc.) for the external target groups and the mediators	- Number of organized public events	- Number of participants in the events for the external target groups and the mediators - Events coverage in the media - Satisfaction of the participants with the event	- Increased level of information and formation of positive attitudes in the participants - Improved dialogue with the interested parties and the partners -Higher level of trust regarding the procedures - Increased positive attitudes towards OPT and the projects	1. Agendas, presentations, lists of invited participants, pictures and information materials 2. List of participants. Media monitoring and content analysis. Filled in questionnaires, analysis of the results 3. Survey – qualitative methods
Organized events (forums, conferences, seminars, press conferences) for the internal target groups	- Number of organized events	- Number of participants - Satisfaction of the participants with the event	- Increased level of information and formation of positive attitudes in the participants - Improved dialogue with the target groups - Improved coordination and work of the participants in the process of managing, implementing and monitoring OPT.	1. Agendas, presentations, lists of invited participants, pictures and information materials 2. List of participants. Filled in questionnaires, analysis of the results 3. Survey – qualitative methods

Web site	- Development of web site	- Web site visits - Documents downloaded from the web site - Representatives of the target audience who have visited the site	- Increasing and deepening the level of information of the target groups - Increasing the trust regarding the transparency in OPT's management.	1. Active web site 2. Web site statistics and analysis of the log files. 3. Survey – qualitative methods
Information network between the publicity experts of MA and the beneficiaries	- Building an information network - Held meetings and conducted trainings of the members	- Satisfaction of the members - Increasing the quality of work regarding the information and publicity measures	- Improved work of the beneficiaries and MA in ensuring the transparency of utilizing EU resources - Increasing the level of information and public support for the projects funded by OPT	1. Number of members of the information network. Number of conducted events and participants. 2. Minutes from meetings, agendas and presentations. Filled in questionnaires, analysis of the results 3. Survey – qualitative methods

Timing of Monitoring and Evaluation Measures

Monitoring or evaluation measure	Timing /frequency	Minimum numbers for the programming period
Survey /opinion pool/	Yearly	7
Media monitoring /press clipping/	Daily	2 000
Content analysis	Monthly	79
Qualitative methods /Focus groups/ for testing of printed and audio-visual materials	Yearly /depends of the number of the needed new information an advertising materials/	6
Survey – qualitative methods for the OPT website	Yearly	6
Web site statistics and analysis of the log files	Yearly	6
Filled in questionnaires, analysis of the results for the organized events	Depends on the number of the organized events	18
Filled in questionnaires and analysis of the results for the satisfaction level of Information network members	Yearly	6
Reports for the CP implementation at OPT Monitoring committee meetings	Yearly	7
Elaboration of evaluation reports	Yearly	6

The progress made in the implementation of the Communication Plan shall be monitored permanently during the entire programming period. For the purposes of CP and for making evaluations comparable on annual basis, as well as for ensuring transparency and impartiality of the monitoring and evaluation of the performance, an independent party shall perform

them. This shall be a hired specialized consulting company not connected to the organizations participating in CP's implementation.

The implementation analysis is necessary not only in order to fulfil the Commission's requirements, but it is also useful for in-house purposes – for evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the implemented measures, followed by making the necessary corrections and updates, and distributing the good practices.

Carrying out monitoring, evaluation and reporting are compulsory requirements of the implementation of the publicity measures set in OPT's CP.

The progress realized in CP's implementation shall be reported at the meetings of OPT's Monitoring Committee. MA shall inform the Monitoring Committee about the implemented information and publicity measures and the resources spent for the purpose. MA shall present evidence of their implementation.

The annual report and the final reports to the European Commission about OPT's implementation shall contain as a minimum the following information, in compliance with Item 2, Art.4 of the Implementing Regulation:

- Examples for information and publicity measures of the Operational Programme undertaken in implementation of the Communication Plan;
- The arrangements for information and publicity measures concerning the publication (electronically or otherwise) of the list of beneficiaries, the names of the operations, and the amount of public funding allocated for the operations;
- The content of the main amendments to the Communication Plan.

The annual report for 2010 and the final implementation report shall contain information about the evaluation of the publicity measures implementation.

Annex 1

INDICATIVE ANNUAL WORKING PROGRAMME OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME ON TRANSPORT FOR YEAR 2008

Project	Concrete grant goal	Granting method (procedure projects/procedures selection for direct granting)	Beneficiaries (allowed/concrete)	Month or period of the procedure implementation (procedure implementation for direct granting)	Funding (grant maximum amount) in EUR			Maximum % of co-financing, provided by MA
					Total	EC grant	National co-financing	
PRIORITY AXIS „Development of railway infrastructure along the Trans-European and major national transport axes”								
Reconstruction and electrification of Svilengrad-Turkish border railway line	Construction of transport infrastructure	Direct granting procedure	NRIC	Forth quarter	35 000 000	28 000 000	7 000 000	
PRIORITY AXIS „Development of road infrastructure along the Trans-European and major national transport axes”								
Kurdjali – Podkova	Rehabilitation and construction of transport infrastructure	Direct granting procedure	NRIF	Forth quarter	32 000 000	25 600 000	6 400 000	
Connection of Hemus motorway to Sofia road ring	Construction of transport infrastructure	Direct granting procedure	NRIF	Forth quarter	32 000 000	25 600 000	6 400 000	
PRIORITY AXIS „Improvement of intermodality for passengers and freight”								
Extension of Sofia metro: Nadejda conjunction - Central Station – Sveta Nedelya Square – Cherni Vruh Blvd	Construction of transport infrastructure	Direct granting procedure	Metropolitan	Forth quarter	145 000 000	123250000	21750000	

Intermodal terminal in Sofia	Construction of transport infrastructure	Direct granting procedure	NRIC	Forth quarter	25 900 000	22 015 000	3 885 000	
Priority axis "Improvement of the maritime and inland-waterway navigation"								
River information services system in the establishment of the Bulgarian part of Danube river	Construction and equipment supply	Direct granting procedure	Maritime Administration Executive Agency	Forth quarter	15 000 000	12 750 000	2 250 000	

Legend:

NRIC – National Railway Infrastructure Company

NRIF – National Road Infrastructure Fund

Annex 2

**LIST OF BENEFICIARIES FOR OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME ON TRANSPORT 2007-2013 /BULGARIA
(MAY 2008)**

NAME OF THE BENEFICIARIES	OPERATION/PROJECT	PUBLIC FUNDING PAID TO BENEFICIARY INCLUDING ERDF, CF AND NATIONAL CO-FINANCING		
	NAME OF THE OPERATION/PROJECT	YEAR OF ALLOCATION/YEAR OF FINAL PAYMENT	AMOUNTS COMMITTED EUR MLN	TOTAL AMOUNTS PAID AT THE END OF THE OPERATION
NATIONAL RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE COMPANY	Modernization of Vidin-Sofia railway line		320,00	
NATIONAL RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE COMPANY	Electrification and Reconstruction of Svilengrad – Turkish border railway line		35,00	
NATIONAL RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE COMPANY	Modernization of Sofia-Plovdiv railway line		125,00	
NATIONAL RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE COMPANY	Modernization of Sofia-Pernik-Radomir railway line		100,00	
NATIONAL RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE COMPANY	Construction of intermodal terminal in Sofia		25,90	
NATIONAL ROAD FUND INFRASTRUCTURE	Modernization of road E 79 Vidin - Montana		32,00	
NATIONAL ROAD FUND INFRASTRUCTURE	Modernization of road I-5 Kardjali - Podkova		32,00	
NATIONAL ROAD FUND INFRASTRUCTURE	Upgrading of road I-1 (E-79) Vratza - Botevgrad		85,00	
NATIONAL ROAD FUND INFRASTRUCTURE	Construction of Struma Motorway		600,00	
NATIONAL ROAD FUND INFRASTRUCTURE	Connection of the Hemus Motorway to the Sofia Ring Road		32,00	
NATIONAL ROAD FUND INFRASTRUCTURE	Construction of Maritza Motorway – from km 5 to km 72		208,59	
“METROPOLITAN” JSC	Extension of the Metropolitan Sofia sections: Nadejda junction - Central Station and Central Bus Station – Sveta Nedelia square – Tcherni Vrah blvd. and “Drujba” –new terminal at the Sofia Airport.		185,19	
MARITIME ADMINISTRATION EXECUTIVE AGENCY	Establishment of River Information Services System in the Bulgarian part of Danube River		15,00	
MARITIME ADMINISTRATION EXECUTIVE AGENCY	Vessel Traffic Management Information System – phase 3		3,85	
AGENCY FOR EXPLORATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DANUBE RIVER	Improvement of the navigation on the Danube in joint Bulgarian-Romanian parts: rkm 530 to rkm 520 – Batin and from rkm 576 to rkm 560 - Belene		138,00	

