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STUDY ON THE WASTE MANAGEMENT SITUATION IN BULGARIA

Recently, the European Environment Agency, which brings together 32 countries of the continent, announced its latest five-year report on the state of the environment. The main conclusion is that there is progress, but it is not enough. A consistent policy in all spheres of life is needed to achieve the desired state of the environment. By 2009, European countries have managed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 17.3% and are now very close to the target of 20 % by 2020. There is a lot to be desired in terms of waste utilization, as only half of the collected 3 billion tons per year are being utilized.

Where is Bulgaria in the general picture?

Bulgaria is one of the average level countries in terms of the environment, according to that report.

According to the latest report from the European Environment Agency, the most serious problem in Bulgaria is poor waste management in which indicator Bulgaria takes one of the last places among all European countries. Over 90% of the waste is going to landfills instead of being used. Compared with other countries, applying more advanced technologies for utilization and recycling of waste, in Bulgaria this process has just started. It is worth noting also that although other European countries overcome the direct correlation between GDP growth and growth in packaging waste, this is not the case in Bulgaria. The increase of living standard is still associated with increased amounts of packaging waste, due to the very low utilization.

However, Bulgaria has made one of the biggest declines in reducing greenhouse gas emissions – 42% against an average of 17% for the EU.

According to a report by the Bulgarian Industrial Association about the **management of hazardous waste**:

- There are no solutions to old problems of hazardous and industrial waste;
- Short period for storing in place of formation and the lack of infrastructure for treatment block the fulfillment of the obligations;
- It is necessary to consider the application of foreign experience to create one or several public private organizations (eg, in the six planning regions of the country) for public services and administration of all major activities of collection and treatment of hazardous waste.

According to the statement of the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce the complex legislative framework for waste management forces companies to devote almost as many resources as necessary to carry out their core production activities.

We can report that companies have a high degree of awareness and they are becoming more active in the requirements for the legislative framework and its implementation.

However, landfilling is the major method for waste management in Bulgaria. Eurostat data show that very little waste is recycled, as is the practice in most European countries. In this way precious resources and potential economic benefits are lost.



Policy for sustainable waste management in Bulgaria until 2020

Priority activities

- + Building a comprehensive infrastructure for waste management in the country** - regional systems, including pre-treatment facilities, recycling, utilization and disposal of various types of waste generated in the country. Achieving the ambitious targets for recycling of household and construction waste by 2020 is a challenge for Bulgaria. Accelerate preparation for reuse and recycling of waste materials, including paper and cardboard, metal, plastic and glass from households and similar waste from other sources (at least 50% of their total weight), not later than 2020
- + Adoption and implementation of new law on waste management and development of appropriate regulations**
- + Development of legislative and strategic documents for construction waste management.** To start the implementation of a National Strategic Plan for Management of waste from construction and demolition on the territory of Bulgaria for the period 2011 – 2020 in order to achieve the high targets for recycling waste from construction and demolition of almost 0% in 2010 to 70% by 2020 and to reduce the adverse impacts of construction waste. Development and adoption of Regulation for the management of waste from construction and demolition, and Guide for management of construction and demolition waste.
- + Development of legislation to regulate the management of bio-waste in the country,** in particular: creating a model for the separate collection of bio-waste and providing clean raw materials for obtaining high quality compost; setting standards and minimum requirements for the techniques and technologies for composting, regulating the requirements for the compost (final product obtained by treatment of biowaste) and establishing a system for ensuring the quality of the final product. Requirements for reduction of the amount of biodegradable municipal waste disposed through landfilling are introduced in order to reduce the environmental impact of landfilling of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW).

Legislative framework in Bulgaria

- Waste management law (last update: 13.07.2012 г.)
- Law for the environmental protection (last update: 13.07.2012 г.)
- Law on ratification of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their treatment
- National Waste Management Programme 2009-2013
- Regional programs for waste activities for the period 2009 to 2013
- Municipal programs for waste activities for the period 2009 to 2013
- Regulation on packaging and packaging waste from 8 April 2011



- Regulation on Determining the terms and conditions for payment of product fees for products after which use wide spread waste is generated from 2008 as revised in April 2011
- National Strategic Plan for waste management from construction and demolition on the territory of Bulgaria for the period 2011-2020

Institutions Responsible for Waste Management in Bulgaria

- Ministry of environment and water of Bulgaria www.moew.government.bg
- EMEPA - Enterprise for Management of Environmental Protection Activities

Measures in support of SMEs and Institutions responsible for these Activities at National Level

Funding projects in the field of waste management is supported by funds from the **Enterprise for Management of Environmental Protection Activities (EMEPA)** in the form of:

- grants that can be awarded to municipalities and regional associations of municipalities, up to 100%;
- interest-free loan that can be granted to municipalities of up to 100% and to companies and sole traders up to 70% of the total project cost;
- providing funds raised from product fees in order to ensure operation of systems for collection, transportation, recycling and / or disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous waste;
- providing funds for projects that are public state property and on territories that are public state or municipal public property and ensure the implementation of the commitments of Bulgaria under international agreements and in connection with the country's membership in the EU.

Eligible for funding are:

- Projects included in the National Waste Management Programme, including construction of new or renovation of existing facilities for waste management (incl. subprojects, components, equipment and / or facilities).
- Projects of National Waste Management Programme realized by donor programs (EU funds, state budget and other sources of funding) requiring additional financing from the Bulgarian side.
- Projects under program for introducing a system of collection and transportation of waste from the settlements. Funding for the proposal must be consistent with the priorities set out in the NWMP.
- Funding of projects under the National Campaign "For a cleaner environment."
- Projects in ecologically threatened areas.

- Projects to reduce the risk and danger of old contaminations - by priority, according to the National Programme for the reduction of the danger of old landfills and polluted sites.
- Purchase of specialized equipment, construction of facilities and installations for waste processing to produce raw materials for the manufacture of finished products



or finished products as an integral part of the line for processing, recycling or disposal of waste, the need for which is proven.

- Preparation of project documentation for implementation of projects, set in the NWMP.
- Building systems for management of hazardous and ordinary waste generated by products for which product fees are being paid in the EMEPA.
- Waste collection, rewrapping, temporary storage, transportation, export to the EU for final disposal of pesticides by incineration in a licensed facility and remediation of the areas

In most cases, the Ministry of Environment and Water (MOEW) and its subsidiaries require the necessary information and permits from any company that wants to realize an investment proposal. To a set of mandatory documents required by the state, the company is highly recommended to have certification under ISO 14000, Responsible care and other voluntary schemes.

In general the terms that must be met by a green company are as follows:

- Compliance of the activity with all environmental legislation;
- Prediction of the necessary measures to prevent pollution;
- Protection of water and other natural resources and energy;
- Reducing the amount of waste;
- Control of hazardous materials and chemicals;
- Tracking the use of natural resources;
- Training of employees and customers;
- Introduction of "green" practices.

Environmental Service organisations (ESP)

In Bulgaria there is a relative large number of consulting firms and non-governmental organizations that have built their capacity to provide quality consultancy services on environmental waste management and introduction of new standards, schemes and other requirements associated with this type of activity. According to our study the number of organizations that have the capacity and are active in this field at the end of 2012. are at least 40. The relationship between them is 28% - NGOs and 72% private consulting firms.

It is not typical for the country this type of consulting services to be provided by private, self employed consultants. The explanation for this is that the matter is too specific and dynamic and requires teamwork, but also if SMEs want to use consulting services for environmental waste management they prefer to rely on specialized consulting firm or organization.

Within our study we found that in Bulgaria there is no unified database with all consulting firms and organizations that provide services for environmental waste management in the private and public sectors. It is not typical for the country this type of services to be provided by government institutions.

Local, regional, national and European initiatives in Bulgaria for ecological waste management in the business sector

At local level there are no specific organized initiatives to promote environmental waste management in the business sector. There is no organization that specializes in that



direction. The municipalities are responsible to organize the waste management at local level.

At regional level, there are structures of the Ministry of Environment and Water, called Regional Inspectorates of Environment and Water, responsible for control of the environment as a result of industrial activity. There are no specific initiatives to encourage businesses for environmental waste management.

National level:

- NATIONAL CAMPAIGN "FOR A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT - 2013", "I love nature and I participate" which is funded by the [Ministry of environment and water of Bulgaria](#) and EMEPA (<http://pudoos.bg>). It is intended for municipalities, schools and kindergartens. The goal is to create new, better habits among the young generation and to increase the environmental awareness of the public in entering the modern trends in the field of environmental protection.
- Conducting of the National Conference "Challenges to Bulgaria to prevent and reduce waste generation" on 22 November 2012., Sofia, within the European Week for Waste Reduction.
- National Forum for green business practices (Green HR Forum) aiming to present the current trends in the management and development of sustainable business in Bulgaria, which are related to the imposition of sustainable "green" practices in companies. Organizer of the event is Cleantech Bulgaria. The forum was held on 24 October 2012 and briefed managers of companies with innovative and unusual ways to create and implement green practices in the corporate environment.
- Bulgaria participates in international emissions trading under Art. 17 of the Kyoto Protocol through National Green Investment Scheme

European level:

- The European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR), launched as a 3-year project supported by the LIFE+ Programme of the European Commission until July 2012. It continues taking place in the following years. The 2012 edition of the EWWR took place from the 17th to the 25th of November 2012 under the patronage of Mr Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for the Environment.
- The Green Business Europe Congress, **promoted by the** Federation of Young Entrepreneurs Association of the Basque Country. Its main objective is to join forces and enhance the work of business locally, regionally, nationally and all over Europe.

Financial support for businesses to promote environmental management of waste and the introduction of innovative solutions

I. Financing programs for SMEs in Bulgaria oriented towards environmentally responsible business

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME "DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE BULGARIAN ECONOMY" 2007-2013

The program provides support to promote the productivity of enterprises, developing innovations and new technologies to improve the business environment. It annually



publishes calls for proposals that may be submitted mainly by small and medium-sized companies, and for some schemes, by large enterprises.

Priority axis 1 of the program is directed towards the development and implementation of innovations in enterprises, and three main areas of support are outlined:

- Information Technologies
- Eco and energy saving technologies
- Technologies, related to health

Within **Priority axis 2** the program supports technological renovation and quality management, and improving energy efficiency in enterprises. In it small and medium enterprises can apply for new machinery and equipment. It provides support for the implementation of internationally recognized standards, incl. **ISO 14001 and EMAS preparation and certification.**

In 2011, two new schemes were launched under this priority aimed at financing activities for the introduction of energy saving technologies and renewable energy sources.

More information at: <http://www.opcompetitiveness.bg>

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2007 – 2013

The program is aimed at the agricultural sector and encourages the development of small communities and rural areas. Many of the measures within which projects are being financed are designed to protect the environment and in particular:

- protection and restoration of important habitats and ecosystems;
- improve water quality and prevent pollution from agricultural sources;
- prevent the processes of land degradation;
- preservation of soil diversity and fertility;
- sustainable management of forests and forest lands;
- development of the potential for producing renewable energy in accordance to the national goals and objectives of the EU.

Companies in the agricultural sector, food and forestry can receive funding for projects under **Priority Axis 1** of the program, for activities related to:

- introduction of new products, processes and technologies, and improvement of the existing production capacities;
- environmental protection, including the reduction of emissions and waste;
- increasing the use of renewable natural resources and improve the efficiency of the production materials;
- improvement of working, hygiene, veterinary, phytosanitary, environmental and other conditions of production;
- compliance with the standards;
- improvement of opportunities for production of organic food and bioproducts.

Within the framework of **Priority axis 3** of the program, farmers and micro companies can apply for projects connected with production and sale of energy from renewable energy sources, using up to 80 % of the total project cost.

More information on: <http://prsr.bg/>; <http://prsr.government.bg/>

GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES FOR GREEN JOBS

From the beginning of 2011 within a joint initiative the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy provide subsidies for employers who hire workers for “green” jobs. This instrument aims to encourage environment friendly activities in businesses



and it is implemented for the first time in Bulgaria. Moreover, it is approved a list of jobs that can be subsidized. For every new work place created, the government will recover minimal monthly remuneration, money for paid leave and temporary incapacity for work but without insurances. The green jobs are listed in 39 economic activities among which are water and waste collection, manufacture of paper and glass articles, electronics, machine-building, etc. Documents shall be submitted to the National Employment Agency.

More information on: <http://www.moew.government.bg>

NATIONAL TRUST ECOFUND

The National trust ecofund (NTEF) is created in 1995 through the first “Debt-for-Environment Agreement” between the government of the Swiss Confederation and the government of the Republic of Bulgaria. The goal of the Fund is managing funds provided under debt-for-nature and debt-for-environment swaps, funds generated from international trade with greenhouse-gas Assigned Amount Units (AAUs), from sale of aircraft greenhouse-gas emission quotas, as well as funds provided under other types of agreements with international, foreign or Bulgarian sources aimed at environmental protection in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Within the workframe of the National green investment scheme is provided funding of projects in three priority areas:

Axis 1 – Partially funded projects

Axis 2 - Projects funded on the basis of actually reduced greenhouse gas emissions

Axis 3 - "Slight/ Soft greening" projects

More information on: <http://www.ecofund-bg.org/>

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE SOURCES FUND

Energy efficiency and renewable sources fund manages financial resources, received by the Global Environment Facility through the World Bank for Reconstruction and Development and through other donors. The fund supports energy efficiency investment projects and offers financial products in three main categories:

- loans
- partial credit guarantees
- portfolio guarantees

EERSF funds mainly projects for: energy efficiency in industrial processes, building sanitation, improvement of heat engines and preinsulated bonded pipe systems, control systems for energy management, transition to another fuel, as well as projects for usage of renewable energy sources.

More information on: <http://www.bgeef.com/displaybg.aspx>

„**INNOVATIONS FOR GREEN INDUSTRY**” is one of the programme areas within the workframe of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the period 2009-2014. The main aims of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism is to reduce of economic and social disparities in The European Economic Area and to strengthen bilateral relations between Norway and the Beneficiary States.

The programme “Green industry innovations” in Bulgaria aims to increase competitiveness of Bulgarian enterprises through “green” innovations, practices and technologies. Eligible activities are: 1) Investments in environmental technology and processes, education, research and development activities; 2) Capacity building on environmental issues within the private sector; 3) Remote monitoring related to the environment. The partnership between private companies from Norway and Bulgaria is compulsory and aims to strengthen the



cooperation and exchange of experience between Bulgarian and Norwegian institutions and business entities.

The state agency “Innovation Norway” administrates the programme, receives and assesses the project proposals, signs grant agreements, monitors the projects and reports for their implementation. The programme is implemented in cooperation with the National coordinating body for management of Norwegian Financial Mechanism, directorate “Monitoring of EU funds”, part of the Ministry council, as well as with the sector ministries.

II. EU Programmes, in which candidates can be Bulgarian companies

COMPETITIVENESS AND INNOVATION FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME (CIP)

CIP is an EU programme mainly for innovation activities including eco innovations, which fosters the wider usage of renewable energy, as well as energy efficiency. CIP is divided into three operational programmes. Each programme has its specific objectives, aimed at contributing to the competitiveness of enterprises and their innovative capacity in their own areas.

Within the workframe of CIP for funding of eco-projects are submitted the following programmes and grant schemes:

PROGRAMME “INTELLIGENT ENERGY-EUROPE” (IEE)

The programme funds projects from the following areas:

- Energy efficiency and rational use of energy resources (SAVE)
- New and renewable energy sources (ALTENER);
- Transport energy (STEER)
- Integrated initiatives

Also supported projects are those who are initiated by at least three partner organizations from three different eligible countries, which can prove European added value.

More information on: <http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/>

ECOINNOVATION GRANT SCHEME

The programme supports introduction of innovative products, services and technologies, which foster usage of natural resources.

The initiative aims to protect the environment through funding “green” projects from all spheres of economy.

More information on: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eco-innovation/index_en.htm

PROGRAMME LIFE +

The programme funds environmental and nature conservation projects, as well as projects from the energetics and transport areas. It is divided into three components:

- Nature and biodiversity
- Environment policy and governance
- Information and communications

The component “Environment policy and governance” aims to contribute to the development, implementation and actualization in policy and legislation in the environmental area, including integration of the theme for environment in the sector policies within the Community. This component funds innovation and demonstration projects in accordance with the priorities of European strategy for sustainable development, Lisbon strategy and Strategy “Europe 2020”.

More information on: <http://ec.europa.eu/life/> or <http://www.moew.government.bg/life/index.html>