

ANNEX VI

Template of a programme for the AMIF, the ISF and the BMVI - Article 21(3)

CCI number

Title in English	[National Programme of the Republic of Bulgaria under the Internal Security Fund] ¹
Title in the national language	[Национална програма на Република България по фонд „Вътрешна сигурност“]
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1. Programme strategy: main challenges and policy responses

Reference: points (a) (iii), (iv), (v) and (ix) Article 22(3) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 (CPR)

This section explains how the programme will address the main challenges identified at the national level based on local, regional and national needs assessments and/or strategies. It provides an overview of the state of implementation of relevant Union acquis and the progress achieved on Union action plans, and describes how the Fund will support their development through the programming period.

Text field [15 000]

¹ Number in square brackets refer to number of characters without spaces

Recent development and baseline situation

The geographic location of Bulgaria as external border of the European Union (EU) makes it part of the foreign fighters' routes and of one of the most affected migration routes - the Eastern Mediterranean. This puts its internal security under the influence of the existing crises in the Middle East and North Africa region.

Infiltration into migration flow of individuals with terroristic ideology remains constant risk.

Bulgaria is also a transit territory (and in some cases final destination) for criminal routes attractive to local, regional and global organised crime groups (OCGs). Its territory is part of the 'Balkan Route', which is a trade and transportation corridor between the Middle East and Europe used for trafficking of drugs, people, arms and transportation of licit and illicit goods and assets and of large volumes of cash across the borders to and from Europe.

Bulgaria still remains mainly a country of origin (but it is also a transit and destination country) of trafficking in human beings (THB) victims.

There are tendencies for intensification of the smuggling activity in support of the attempts for illegal crossing of the state border. In 2018 2851 persons were detained at the state borders, in 2019 the number was 2184 and in 2020 3487.

Various surveys and studies rank Bulgaria among the first places in terms of perception of corruption. Confidence in police and business sector's expenses related to the crime shows that business do not believe that police is able to enforce laws and to ensure security and maintenance of public order.

The statistics for 2019 reports the following:

- one of 21 foiled jihadist attacks and 11 terrorist arrests (14 terrorist arrests and one concluded court proceeding for terrorist offences are reported for 2018)*

- detention of 43 Bulgarian and foreign nationals on Bulgarian territory, who were involved in a scheme for illegal financial transfers from the Middle East to Western Europe for the purposes of supporting terrorist activity. 6 persons were indicted for financing terrorism*

- an increase of 11% of the observed OCG compared to 2018. The highest number were OCGs dealing with drugs followed by OCGs in the field of terrorism. Trafficking in human beings (THB), violent actions related to usury, drug trafficking and distribution and smuggling of excise goods were the dominant criminal activities*

- the activities of 113 OCGs were disrupted - a decrease of 6% in comparison with 2018*

- investigations against OCGs were conducted on a total of 618 pre-trial proceedings. The newly formed proceedings increased compared to 2018. 61 investigative cases were formed by investigative magistrates. A total of 671 individuals have been indicted*

- an increase of 10% of identified perpetrators of narcotic substances crimes (3965) compared to 2018 (3560), an increase by 9.5% of registered crimes related to narcotic*

substances (4189) compared to 2018 (3737) and slight decrease of 2.17% as regards registered crimes with narcotic substances (5588) compared to 2018 (5712)

- slight growth regarding the detected OCGs dealing with drugs compared to 2018

- stabilisation of the positive trend of increase of the number of monitored pre-trial proceedings for organised crimes and for crimes related to narcotic substances and precursors, as well as of the prosecutorial acts submitted to the court and of the persons brought to the court

- an increase of 68% in the number of money laundering OCGs monitored and of the neutralized OCGs (5) compared to 2018

- 28% increase in investigated criminal groups in the field of cybercrime compared to 2018. Cyberattacks and financial crime groups are the biggest contributor, followed by those dealing with illegal content

- relative stability in the level of criminal activity in sexual and labor exploitation due to the considerable interest in the 'services' offered in Western European countries. There is an increase of about 15% in detected groups compared to 2018

- an increase of 15% of the monitored groups in the field of corruption and misuse of EU funds compared to 2018. The OCGs dealing with corruption in the state and local authorities formed the largest share, followed by healthcare system, the judiciary system, and the abuse of EU funds.

Since 2016 the number of signals for committed cybercrimes has increased 4 times. The signals for cyber incidents have increased with 45 % for the last 3 years. The increase for those of high priority is 29 %. In 2020 the influence of COVID-19 and the expanded capabilities of the perpetrators impacted at greatest extend the trends as regards threats in cyber space.

Main national strategic challenges and policy responses

Targeted and coordinated set of legislative, administrative and operational measures was undertaken on national level to tackle the security risks and threats challenging the country as outlined in the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria which was updated in 2018.

Strategies in the area of prevention and counteraction of terrorism and radicalisation, drugs and THB were adopted. Laws in the area of money-laundering and terrorist financing were amended.

Following the legislative amendments National unit for Passenger name records, National Counterterrorism Centre and Financial Intelligence Unit were set up. In 2019, the first for

Bulgaria overall National Risk Assessment of Money-Laundering and Financing of Terrorism was completed.

Competent structures at Ministry of Interior (MoI) apply the existing channels/instruments for exchange of information and for law enforcement cooperation under the coordination of the relevant National Contact Points that were set up.

Unified Administrative Register for the Control of Generally Dangerous Goods (EAR-KOS) for legal firearms has been established in General Directorate National Police - intended for control of the production, trade, storage, carrying, use and transportation of weapons, ammunition, explosives and pyrotechnic articles. The system enables to make a reference for the ownership of each registered weapon and track the change in its ownership and to generate reports on a natural or legal person for issued permits.

Steps are under implementation for setting up the National Firearms Focal Point.

Bulgaria has participated in all priorities outlined in the Council Conclusions on setting the EU's priorities for the fight against organised and serious international crime between 2018 and 2021 (9450/17).

The National Mechanism for Referral and Support of Trafficked persons in Bulgaria has been developed, consisting of the state institutions such as MoI, Prosecutor's Office, National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (NCCTHB), which is the coordinating body, State Agency for Child Protection, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and local government actors, which are assisted by NGOs.

Following the recommendations and considerations under the EC Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) Bulgaria carried out a comprehensive reform of its legal and institutional anti-corruption frameworks, including the establishment of the Commission for Counteracting Corruption and Illegal Assets Forfeiture. National Council on Anti-Corruption Policies monitors and coordinates the current anticorruption strategy (a new one is under preparation).

Following the CVM recommendations, anti-corruption measures of MoI continued to be applied and developed. Annually, the Internal Coordination Council for Combating Corruption in the MoI prepares an Anti-corruption plan, the aim of which is the practical implementation of the Concept for Prevention and Counteraction of Corruption in the MoI 2016-2020 and the commitments of the MoI set in the national anticorruption strategy.

Based on European and National Cyber Security Strategies Bulgaria has adopted the necessary legislation to transpose Directive (EU) 2016/1148 on measures for a high overall level of security of networks and information systems in the EU through the Law on Cybersecurity. Competent authorities have been identified and a comprehensive system of coordination and interaction between administrations has been established. Cyber Security

Council was established. The Head of Cybercrime Department in GDCOC was assigned as National Cybercrime Coordinator who is also a Secretary of Cyber Security Council. New national cybersecurity strategy is in the process of public consultation.

In addition to the national budget, Police component of the Internal Security Fund (ISF-P) National Programme (NP) 2014-2020 contributed for the implementation of the priorities in the described policy issues by supporting projects aimed at increasing the effectiveness to prevent and combat terrorism, cross-border, serious and organised crime (in particular drugs trafficking and THB) and corruption.

With the implementation of the projects funded under the ISF-P NP and Norwegian Financial Mechanism (NFM) significant progress has been achieved in the area of strengthening operational and administrative capacity of the national competent authorities, exchange of information and development of the operational cooperation in compliance with the EU requirements and priorities. Other sources of support were ISF Union actions and Swiss Cooperation Programme (SCP).

Significant investments were made under the ISF-P NP to strengthen capabilities to protect critical infrastructure for managing effectively security-related risks and crises.

With support of the current programme National Cybercrime Centre is established. The National Cyber Security Coordinating Organizational Network and the National Cyber Situational Centre are envisaged to be set up by the end of 2022. Thus, a coherent national cybersecurity system on strategic and operative level will be developed.

National budget provided the major part of investments for addressing the priority related to prevention of THB, awareness and sensitivity raising, early identification and provision of support to the victims. Other sources such as SCP, ISF-P NP, NFM, etc. also contributed to its implementation.

The participation of the national authorities and organisations in partnership projects under the ISF Union Actions, Hercules III, Horizon 2020, Rights and Values, Justice and Interreg Programmes also contributed to the implementation of the priorities funded under the ISF-P NP.

Lessons learned

The result of Mid-Term Review of the ISF-P NP showed disproportion between the identified needs and the available resources. The need for enlarging the scope of priority areas and for inclusion of new ones was highlighted. In light of the limited resources the programme had to be implemented by applying the flexibility mechanisms, including the reprioritisation and reallocation of resources for other or new actions.

Given the specifics of the security sector and the significance of ISF for addressing the challenges in different priority areas, as well as the interdependency between them, no clear prioritisation will be beneficial.

However, for the next programming period more strategic approach will be applied, which requires direction of investments to more long-term and sustainable results.

Synergies with other funds and programmes will be sought and better exploited. Areas with clear demarcation with other instruments will be supported by priority, opposite to the ones with greater possibility to be financed under other programmes.

State of implementation EU acquis and action plans

Bulgaria actively contributes to the development and implementation of the EU security policies and priorities through participation of the competent authorities in the cooperation mechanisms on strategic, political and operational level, including joint projects and initiatives under the agreed Action Plans.

In addition to the need to continue this participation, for the next period Bulgaria faces the challenge to fulfil its commitments to ensure proper and timely implementation of the interoperability and SIS II Regulations on national level by the end of 2021.

A working group on the new SIS legislative framework was set up with a view to coordinate the technical construction of the new functionalities of the system, the elaboration of proposal for legislative amendments and the preparation of the responsible authorities.

With regard to the envisaged new legislation/legislative amendments in the area of SIS II, Prüm, Europol, on-line sexual exploitation of children and the approval of the continuation of the EU Policy Cycle for organised and serious international crime: EMPACT 2022+, Bulgaria has to analyse the needs of amendments/developments in its legislative, strategic and operational framework.

The envisaged new requirements are supposed to result in increase of the workload of the national contact points and the related need for their development.

ISF Programme is considered a useful tool for the implementation of measures in this regard.

Strategy for the period 2021-2027

In the context of increased security risks and cross-border threats, following the Strategic Analysis of Socio-Economic Development of Bulgaria 2007-2017 for determining the national priorities for the 2021-2027, the security and migration are among three

horizontal areas in which the government's policies will implement targeted measures during the next period.

The main priorities in the area of security outlined in the strategic document are related to the enhancement of the capacity for countering crime in particular organised crime, terrorism and corruption.

Considering the partnership principle as underlying for the preparation of the next programming period a Thematic Working Group was set up in December 2019 with the aim to propose adequate responses to the security challenges that to be addressed under the ISF Programme.

Project ideas were gathered and broad discussions were held resulting in the following considerations:

- Increase in scale and size, diversity and complexity of security threats as well as the developed capabilities of criminal groups continue to represent challenges, that require unified and coordinated response

- Lack of sufficient and/or modern systems, tools and equipment, as well as insufficient expertise and qualification in some areas (e.g. cybercrime) and the need to upgrade the established ones represent challenges for the effective application of cooperation mechanisms in compliance with the national and EU requirements, priorities and the set standards

- Actions funded under the current period related to prevention and combating terrorism and radicalisation, cross-border, serious and organised crime, cybercrime and corruption are considered necessary and relevant for addressing security challenges and have to be continued and developed.

ISF Programme will cover all three Specific Objectives of the ISF Regulation and will focus on:

- increasing the effectiveness and active use of national and EU security-related tools, systems and data bases and ensuring that they are fed with high quality data

- strengthening the operational cooperation through participation in joint operations, /establishing conditions for/ joint trainings, exercises and exchange programmes

- enhancing the administrative and operational capacity and technical capabilities of Law Enforcement Authorities (LEA) through trainings, exchange of experiences and best practices and delivery of specialised equipment/transport means/devices.

ISF Programme will continue to provide support for the implementation of the priorities addressed under the current period in complementarity to the national funding.

Support for enhancement of learning environment and cost-effectiveness of the National Contact Point (NCP) of CEPOL is envisaged with the aim to achieve European standards and established practices in the training of law enforcement agencies within the EU, as well as harmonization, internationalization, and interoperability of training programs and materials. NCP of CEPOL will start an annual international research and science conference in the field of law enforcement to support the dissemination of innovation and the common efforts to achieve a high level of security in the Union.

With a view to address the main needs and policy developments at national and EU level new actions aimed at SIS II development, establishment of specialised cybercrime training centre will be included and the scope of current actions related to implementation of joint operations will be expanded to include new priorities such as migrant smuggling.

The envisaged measures and in particular the ones related to anti-corruption will contribute to addressing the country specific recommendations and observations of the European Semester, according to which corruption remains among the main obstacles to investments and an area of serious concern and that the risk of it needs to be better addressed.

Complementarity and coordination with other EU Funds will be ensured at national level in particular in the area of digitalisation, cybersecurity/cybercrime, protection of citizens, public spaces and critical infrastructure, drugs policy, victim protection and radicalisation. Measures related to cybersecurity of IT systems and networks and enhancing the capacities of the sectorial CERTS, facilitation of citizens access to public services and other elements of e-governance, prevention of conventional crime, protection and maintenance of public order at national level and management of risks and reaction to natural disasters and crisis, community led local development strategies and social prevention and integration measures shall be financed under other sources.

ISF actions in the field of ICT and anti-corruption will be implemented in coherence, demarcation and complementarity with a project with similar topic proposed for funding under the Recovery and Resilience Plan.

Administrative capacity of competent authorities and stakeholders is of major importance for the proper implementation of the programme. A number of trainings for enhancing the professional qualification of the staff are conducted for improving the performance of the staff's work – acquiring new knowledge and developing skills, regular trainings on project preparation, reporting, financial reporting, public procurement, use of specific information systems for project submission and reporting, etc. were implemented in 2014-2020 period. These measures are to be continued.

The diverse thematic scope of the programme and the broad scope of potential beneficiaries and stakeholders are challenges that the investments in the administrative capacity could address.

Following Art. 47 CPR Bulgaria will use the contribution from the Funds under all SO of ISF Programme to provide support to beneficiaries in the form of grants.

Desired outcomes are:

- enhanced effectiveness of the prevention, investigation and counteraction of crime, which will be measured by increased number of monitored/disrupted OCGs, number of police operations, newly formed pre-trial proceedings and resolved cases

- increased and improved interoperability of national competent authorities' resources, technologies, skills and practices with those available and used by the partner services in other MS and by EU agencies, which will be measured by increased information exchange and increased number of joint operations.

2. Specific objectives (repeated for each specific objective other than technical assistance)

Reference: Article 22(2) and (4) CPR

2.1 Title of the specific objective [Improving and facilitating the exchange of information between and within competent authorities and relevant Union bodies, offices and agencies and, where relevant, with third countries and international organisations]

2.1.1 Description of a specific objective

This section describes, for each specific objective, the initial situation, main challenges and proposes responses supported by the Fund. It describes which implementation measures are addressed with the support of the Fund; it provides an indicative list of actions within the scope of Articles 3 and 5 of the AMIF, ISF or BMVI Regulations. In particular: For operating support, it provides an explanation in line with Article 21 of the AMIF Regulation, Article 16 of the ISF Regulation or Articles 16 and 17 of the BMVI Regulation. It includes an indicative list of beneficiaries with their statutory responsibilities, main tasks to be supported. Planned use of financial instruments, if applicable. Text field (16 000 characters)

In recent years, competent structures at MoI have intensively applied the existing channels/instruments for exchange of information and for law enforcement cooperation. New bilateral and multilateral agreements for police cooperation and exchange of classified information have been signed and entered into action and the scope of partners has been enlarged. The exchange of information in MoI is coordinated by the International Operational Cooperation Directorate (IOC-MoI), designated as National Europol Unit, SIRENE Bureau, National Central Interpol Bureau. The Bulgarian Firearms Focal Point

is set up in the Directorate. Due to the large scope of competences and functions carried out, it comprises also other structures of MoI – National Police General Directorate, Combating Organized Crime General Directorate and the National Forensic Institute. The main function of the NFFP is to coordinate the cooperation between all stakeholders, as well as to exchange information with international partners.

The need to tackle the increased security threats and the implementation of the EU acquis led to intensive international exchange of information. IOCD which integrates Europol, SIRENE, Interpol and bilateral cooperation channels every year exchanges a big amount of information documents between foreign and national competent authorities. The numbers for 2017 is 203 659, 2018 – 213 102 and for 2019 – 203 232. Most of the files refer to wanted persons and objects, investigation of criminal groups and thus supports the law enforcement authorities regarding fight against illegal cross-border activities.

With support under the ISF-P IT systems, databases and registers in MoI were developed, upgraded and maintained to contribute to the effective implementation of mechanisms of operational cooperation. Funding from national budget and other EU sources (Good Governance Operational Programme) complement the efforts for development of IT systems in the areas falling beyond the scope of ISF. Support was provided under ISF-P NP for the development of the necessary IT solutions to increase the exchange of information and to improve the interoperability.

A continuous process of optimisation of the information management processes under the international police cooperation is ongoing. The implemented and forthcoming changes in the legal framework lead to the need of introduction of more modern information and communication tools to support law enforcement and international cooperation.

The constantly changing and the new requirements for exchange of information and data with other Member States (MS) and EU impose high requirements on the operability, security and reliability of the Automated Information Systems (AIS) of the MoI and their maintenance at the respective technological level.

Investments in modernisation of the communication networks of the MoI and setting up of modern communication systems in accordance with the development of technologies and innovations are also needed, including for uninterrupted operation of the systems.

Due to the lack of funding, the pace of modernisation and digitalisation of the network for voice and data transmission in MoI is lagging behind. There is still analogue equipment, that is technologically and functionally obsolete and whose service life has expired. In most of the sites of the structures of the MoI no communication infrastructure has been built, necessary for the commissioning of modern systems and networks.

The introduction of comprehensive communication solutions for the exchange of information and the development of means of protection that ensure reliable operation and minimise the possibilities for unauthorised access has to be ensured.

National Forensic Institute in MoI (NFI) maintains three information systems for regular exchange of dactyloscopic, DNA and ballistic data with EU MS. They were built and developed with support from national budget and ISF-P NP.

NFI experts participate

In 2009, in connection with the implementation of the provisions of the Prüm Treaty and Council Decision 2008/615/JHA, the national dactyloscopic identification system AFIS was expanded with a new module with possibilities for automated search and exchange of dactyloscopic information with EU MS. Since 2010, Bulgaria has started regular exchange of dactyloscopic data with MS (currently with 22 MS).

In 2017 the national automated dactyloscopic identification system was renewed. Currently, the AFIS system stores more than 650,000 fingerprints of persons with criminal records and more than 100,000 traces of unsolved crimes. Between 25,000 and 30,000 people are introduced into the system annually. More than 15,000 fingerprints and more than 9,600 traces of unsolved crimes are exchanged between MS under Prüm.

New challenges such as global terrorism and illegal immigration reinforce the need to expand the AFIS functionalities by inclusion of new module (facial recognition) enabling entering, storing, automated checking and exchange of facial images with other MS to identify individuals who pose a threat to national security and safety.

The national DNA database was set up and put into operation in 1999. A regular international exchange of DNA data with MS began in 2010. Bulgaria currently exchanges DNA data with 12 MS.

In 2017, the hardware was updated, the database was migrated to the CODIS system developed by the FBI and a specialised software product was developed to maintain the demographic database and enter the newly obtained DNA profiles into the CODIS system. The database stores the profiles of over 40,000 people. The number of new police registrations per year and the volume that must be entered in the database is between 25,000 and 30,000. Under Prüm, more than 10,000 DNA profiles are exchanged between MS. The capacity of the system is insufficient for the storage of the profiles of people subject to police registration.

The Automated Ballistic Identification System (ABIS) has been in operation since 2005. Cartridges and bullets - samples of illegally possessed firearms seized on the territory of the country are introduced in it in order to identify whether crimes have been committed.

In 2017 the system was renewed and Bulgaria was included in the international network of INTERPOL - IBIN, for international exchange of ballistic data. A specialised ballistic database has been created and introduced in the system. Since 2020 the introduction of cartridges and bullets from lost and stolen weapons on the territory of the country has started. In order to ensure the interoperability of the international exchange of ballistic data with other countries, as well as the reliable and trouble-free operation 24 /7, it is necessary to increase the functionality of the system and to ensure its constant updating and maintenance for the period after 2023.

The link with the National Firearms Focal Point is established through the NFI's experts who participate in it and provide data from ABIS.

In accordance with the Directive (EU) 2016/681 (PNR Directive) and Council Directive 2004/82/EC Bulgarian Passenger Information Unit (PIU) was set up with the financial support of the Prevention of and Fight against Crime (ISEC) Programme of the EU and was developed under the ISF-P NP and Union Actions. Both directives are transposed on national level by the Law for State Agency for National Security provisions, which enables the application of a single window approach for the collection of API and PNR data.

In the conditions of increased security risks, PIU has multiplied almost 10 times the exchange of information both with the national competent authorities and with the other units for data processing of passengers in the MS.

There is also a tendency for increasing data exchange with third countries. In accordance with bilateral agreements, the Bulgarian unit exchanges information with the competent US authorities. The EU has already signed agreements allowing EU carriers to transmit PNR data to the US and Australia. Negotiations to revise the envisaged agreement with Canada on passenger reservation data have been completed and are to be finalised. In

2020 the Council adopted a decision authorising the opening of negotiations between the EU and Japan.

Bulgarian PIU needs to continue to develop its analytical and technical capabilities for processing and use of passengers' data, which requires additional investment in IT equipment and in enhancing staff skills for efficient information processing, including in compliance with the EU requirements on common protocols and data formats.

In this regard, an action aimed at development BGPIU is envisaged to be implemented under the ISF Programme. It will be financed in 2024 after the Mid-term review of the Programme.

According to EC reports for Bulgaria, corruption remains among the main obstacles to investments and the risk of it needs to be better addressed. Most of the acts of corruption are committed with the participation or complicity of other employees of the MoI, citizens or employees of other institutions. 61% of respondents to the Eurobarometer are of the opinion that bribery and abuse of power for personal gain are widespread among law enforcement and customs authorities.

According to the reports on the implementation of the Anti-corruption Plans for 2018 and 2019 Internal Security Directorate at MoI (ISD-MoI) processed 562 reports for alleged criminal offenses, including corruption crimes committed by officials from MoI in 2019 and 172 in 2018. 81 pre-trial investigations for police misconduct have been carried out in 2019 and 98 in 2018. Most of the judgments on corruption-related cases delivered by the Supreme Court of Cassation in 2019 concerned the offering/giving/demanding/receiving of bribes to/by officers from the MoI (ten convictions out of 28 corruption cases).

With support under the current programme an automated system for active monitoring was built, which includes constant audio and video surveillance, information exchange, access to data, control, storage of information, operational analysis and evaluation, proposals for appropriate measures. A system for information exchange, data access, control, information storage, operational analysis and assessment of the corrupt environment was established. Under Norway Financial Mechanism support was provided for increasing the analytical capacity in MoI through building information exchange system, access to data, control and storage of information, operational analysis and assessment of the corruption environment.

Fast and reliable exchange of information is needed for the effective investigation of acts of corruption (including the implementation of tactical and specialised operations). Competent authorities in charge of anticorruption should be provided with access to all registers and databases in the MoI, and in other state institutions. In order to improve the detection and investigation of corruption cases connected to MoI officers, mechanisms for facilitation and streamlining the flow of information between the institutional actors should be applied.

ISF Programme will continue to support actions implemented under the current period such as: setting up, development, maintenance and upgrade of AIS and networks in the MoI; improving the exchange of information and interoperability; development and implementation of the PNR system in Bulgarian PIU; extension, upgrade and maintenance of the national forensic databases maintained by NFI-MoI; analysis and exchange of financial-intelligence information; development of systems to prevent illegal activities and corrupt behaviour of MoI officials.

They will be continued and further elaborated based on the lessons learned and the best practices by expanding the scope and capacity of ICT systems, including connection to

other systems, establishment of new systems, enlarging the scope of partners and channels for exchange of information.

The ISF Programme will contribute to achieving the specific objective set out in Article 3(2)(a), by focusing on the implementation measures such as those listed below:

- *Ensuring the uniform application of the Union acquis by supporting the exchange of information via Prüm, EU PNR, SIS II, etc.*

The following indicative actions/projects are envisaged:

- Extension, upgrade and maintenance of three national forensic databases maintained by RIFS. Strengthening the operational cooperation with Member States and the international information exchange of dactyloscopic, DNA and ballistic information

Support will be provided, inter alia, for the following types of actions:

- setting up, adapting and maintaining ICT systems
- financing of equipment that is directly linked to the setting up, adapting and maintaining ICT systems

- *Supporting relevant national measures including the interconnection of security-relevant national databases*

The following indicative actions/projects are envisaged:

- Building up and development of automated police information systems

- Ensuring the effective and continuous connection to the secured Union information systems

- Establishing an intelligent system for data collection, systematisation, analysis and visualisation to prevent and counteract corruption.

Support will be provided, inter alia, for the following types of actions:

- setting up, adapting and maintaining ICT systems

- financing of equipment and communication systems that are directly linked to the setting up, adapting and maintaining ICT systems

- education and training provided that they are directly linked to the setting up, adapting and maintaining ICT systems

- providing support to thematic or cross-theme networks of specialised national units and national contact points to improve mutual confidence, the exchange and dissemination of know-how, information, experience and best practices if it is directly linked to the setting up, adapting and maintaining ICT systems.

All training activities will be coordinated with CEPOL, in order to enhance synergies and avoid duplication.

The implementation of the envisaged actions will contribute to addressing the following policy issues and priorities:

- ensure the full and uniform implementation of SIS II (police)

- support the development of the National Single Point of Contact for international police cooperation in the exchange and management of criminal intelligence linked to cross-border crime

- ensure the effective connection to security relevant Union information systems and communication networks, including their interoperability

- implement and upgrade the law enforcement access to European Search Portal (ESP) and the large-scale European Information Systems.

Desired outcomes:

- speedier access to information needed for effective investigations of serious and organised crime, including corruption
- developed analytical capabilities for receiving and processing data
- increased use of systems and databases at national and EU level
- fast and timely exchange of information and ensured continuity, including in case of emergencies
- improved interoperability and security in the exchange of data and information
- more effective exchange of information and cooperation between relevant authorities on anti-corruption issues.

Quantified targets

- new database with facial images of persons with police registration established
- DNA database increased with 40 000 profiles
- ABIS increased with about 2 000 objects

Operating support

In connection with Bulgaria's commitments to the implementation of the EU legislation regarding the instruments and systems for exchange of information in the field of security, it is necessary to ensure a reliable and smooth functioning and maintenance of the systems used for law enforcement purposes.

Operating support is envisaged for the following public authorities in relation to their tasks and services that constitute a public service for the EU:

IOCD-MoI - is the national contact point for Interpol, Europol and SIS

Communication and Information Systems Directorate at MoI - is responsible for construction, maintenance and development of ICT systems of the MoI, including TETRA Radio system. It is charged with the technical provision and security of ensuring information exchange of data with national, EU and international structures

NFI-MoI - three information systems have been set up in NFI providing exchange of dactyloscopic, DNA and ballistic data with EU MS

State Agency for National Security - national PIU and Financial Investigation Unit are established/located in the Agency

Internal Security Directorate at MoI - is specialised unit of MoI for operative search and information-analytical activity related to the prevention, detection and investigation of criminal offences committed by MoI employees. It coordinates and directs the activity at national level regarding the fight against fraud, corruption and other crimes, committed by MoI employees.

Operating support shall cover: maintenance and helpdesk of Union and national ICT systems and networks.

The following actions/projects for Operation support are envisaged:

- Maintenance of automated police information systems
- Providing support from the producer of licenses for Database Management System (DBMS), system software and operating systems
- Post guaranty support of built TETRA systems of MoI
- Payment of annual fees for maintenance of a specialised software system for analysis of Financial Intelligence received under the Law on Measures against Money Laundering (LMML) and Law on Measures against Financing of Terrorism (LMFT).

2.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e) of Article 22(4) CPR

Table 1: Output indicators

Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator [255]	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
SO 1		<i>Number of participants in training activities</i>	Number	0	50
SO 1		<i>Number of expert meetings/workshops/study visits</i>	Number		
SO 1		<i>Number of ICT systems set up/adapted/maintained</i>	Number	98	103
SO 1		<i>Number of equipment items purchased</i>	Number	20	115

Table 2: Result indicators

Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator [255]	Measurement unit	Baseline	Measurement unit for baseline	Reference year(s)	Target (2029)	Measurement unit for target	Source of data [200]	Comments [200]
SO 1		<i>Number of ICT systems made interoperable in the Member States/with security-relevant EU and decentralised information systems/with international databases</i>	Number	101	Number	2021	107	Number		

SO 1	<i>Number of administrative units that have set up new, or adapted existing, information exchange mechanisms/ procedures/tools/ guidance for exchange of information with other Member States/Union bodies, offices or agencies/third countries/international organisations</i>						Number		
SO 1	<i>Number of participants who consider the training useful for their work</i>					50	Number		
SO 1	<i>Number of participants who report three months after the training activity that they are using the skills and competences acquired during that training activity</i>					50	Number		

2.1.3 Indicative breakdown of the programme resources (EU) by type of intervention
Reference: Article 22(5) CPR; and Article 16(12) AMIF Regulation, Article 13(12) ISF Regulation or Article 13(18) BMVI Regulation

Table 3: Indicative breakdown

Specific objective	Type of intervention	Code	Indicative amount (Euro)
SO 1	ICT systems, interoperability, data quality (excluding equipment)	001	2 295 000

Specific objective	Type of intervention	Code	Indicative amount (Euro)
SO 1	Networks, centres of excellence, cooperation structures, joint actions and operations	002	22 500
SO 1	Training	005	52 500
SO 1	Exchange of best practices, workshops, conferences, events, awareness-raising campaigns, communication activities	006	7 500
SO 1	Equipment	008	3 982 295,61

2.2 Title of the specific objective [Improving and intensifying cross-border cooperation, including joint operations, between competent authorities in relation to terrorism and serious and organised crime with a cross-border dimension]

2.2.1 Description of a specific objective

This section describes, for each specific objective, the initial situation, main challenges and proposes responses supported by the Fund. It describes which implementation measures are addressed with the support of the Fund; it provides an indicative list of actions within the scope of Articles 3 and 5 of the AMIF, ISF or BMVI Regulations.

In particular: For operating support, it provides an explanation in line with Article 21 of the AMIF Regulation, Article 16 of the ISF Regulation or Articles 16 and 17 of the BMVI Regulation. It includes an indicative list of beneficiaries with their statutory responsibilities, main tasks to be supported.

Planned use of financial instruments, if applicable.

Text field (16 000 characters)

Cross-border crime is characterised by a high degree of organisation and

considerable financial and technical resources at disposal of perpetrators. The participation of citizens of different nationalities falling under different legislations makes it extremely difficult to investigate and detect it. General Directorate at MoI (GDCOC-MoI) participates in international activities related to the fight against serious and organised crime through different forms: international police cooperation agreements, international investigations and ad-hoc operations in accordance with the operational necessity. One of the most widely used models for effectively combating cross-border organised crime is the establishment of and/or participation in Joint Investigation Teams (JITs).

In 2018 56 joint operations with foreign partners were conducted – 22 internationally and 34 operations based on parallel investigations, signals, exchange of information, etc. and 12 OCGs on Bulgarian and European soil were documented. Participation in 11 JITs was implemented. Information has been provided upon 1624 /5,5 % more compared with 2017/ requests made by Interpol, Europol, partnership officers, etc. In 2019, 231 specialised police operations were conducted in response to organised crime, 59 of which with foreign partner services. In the course of the operations, significant quantities of drugs, cultural and historical values, weapons, money, smuggled goods, false official documents and money, etc. were seized, and 6 cross-border channels for drug trafficking, 7 for smuggling and 3 for cultural and historical values were disrupted. An OCG that commits crimes related to the financing of terrorist organisations has been neutralized. Two cross-border channels for trafficking of arms have been identified. Bulgarian LEA took part in 6 JITs, 5 of them in the area of THB with Norway, Great Britain, Switzerland, Sweden and France.

With the Cyber Security Act, the Cybercrime Department of the GDCOC has been designated as a specialised centre for cybercrime at the national level. It is actively cooperating with Europol, more intensively since the establishment of the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3). Employees of the department participate in the EU working groups on cybercrime (European Union Cybercrime Task Force) and in the preparation of annual plans for the implementation of policies within the EU. Since 2010, the staff of the department has been participating in the EU Policy Cycle in the priority area "Cybercrime" (EMPACT), forming strategic action plans to combat cybercrime in the sub-priorities "Cyber attacks", "Sexual exploitation of children" and "Intellectual Property".

Transnational nature of cybercrime requires participation of different countries in joint investigations. A delay by one country would lead to a delay in the overall investigation of a computer crime, which, given the rapidly changing digital world, could be crucial for the successful detection of the case.

For tackling effectively the common security threats the national competent authorities have to be provided with the relevant means, tools and conditions that will enable them to contribute to the implementation of the agreed EU priorities in the field of combating organised crime and to participate effectively in the operational actions under the EMPACT.

Most of the cross-border crimes related to corruption are committed in complicity with employees of MoI and citizens, including from other countries. With regard to the frequency of such cases, operations have been conducted, including with partner organisations from neighbouring countries to combat corruption in border areas. Operational information received under the cross-border cooperation contributed to their implementation.

In 2016, Regional Network for Enhanced Cooperation of Internal Security Units -

NERCISU was established as a platform for active operational regional cooperation with a 24-hour hotline for coordination and exchange of operational information. A number of operations have been successfully carried out, incl. to disrupt channels for trafficking in cultural property and trafficking in migrants.

The successful cooperation under the Regional Network NERCISU should be strengthened and developed by increasing the capacity of the structures for conducting cross-border joint operations in the fight against corruption and cross-border crime.

The envisaged activities continue and upgrade the projects implemented/being in process of implementation under the ISF 2014-2020 and other financial instruments such as Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, Bulgarian-Swiss Development and Cooperation Program, etc.

ISF-P NP provided funding for projects in support of Operational Action Plans related to the EU crime priorities “Cannabis, Cocaine and Heroin”, “Cybercrime” and “Environmental Crime”.

Actions supported under the current programme such as conducting joint investigations with foreign partner services into people trafficking will be continued and further elaborated based on the lessons learned and the best practices by expanding the scope of the joint operations and of the partners involved and by targeting also other crimes. Joint national/ interdepartmental and international specialised operations, inspections and investigations of organised criminal structures dealing with trafficking and distribution of firearms and dangerous means of common character, people/migrant smuggling, THB, drug trafficking, trafficking of cultural goods, cybercrime, skimming and counterfeit, money laundering, assisting foreigners to reside or cross the EU illegally and terrorism are envisaged.

Further to the identified needs and priorities related to the cross-border cooperation in the area of combating corruption, new action will be included, which will be aimed at building up of contact points/centres for operational support in joint operations. The centres will be established with the aim to promote and develop measures for implementation of joint tools and practices in the course of joint operations in the border areas with the neighbouring countries.

The ISF Programme will contribute to achieving the specific objective set out in Article 3(2)(b), by focusing on the implementation measures such as those listed below:

- Increasing the number of law enforcement operations involving two or more Member States, in particular through facilitating and improving the use of joint investigation teams and other operational cooperation mechanisms*

The following indicative action/project is envisaged:

- Improving and intensifying cross-border cooperation including joint operations in the area of combatting serious and organised crime.

Support will be provided, inter alia, for the following types of actions: EU policy cycle/EMPACT operational actions; participation in seminars, joint exercises and events to improve mutual confidence, the exchange and dissemination of know-how, information, experience and best practices, the pooling of resources and expertise; financing of equipment and means of transport, etc.

- Improving the coordination and increasing the cooperation of competent authorities within and between Member States and with other relevant actors*

The following indicative actions/projects are envisaged:

- *Increasing the operational capacity of the Internal Security Directorate's officers to conduct cross-border operations with the structures of the Western Balkan countries in the field of prevention of and counteraction to corruption*

- *Strengthening the coordination and cooperation of national law enforcement authorities dealing with prevention of vehicle and organized crime and creating national SPOC network*

Support will be provided, inter alia, for the following types of actions:

- *providing support to thematic or cross-theme networks of specialised national units and national contact points to improve mutual confidence, the exchange and dissemination of know-how, information, experience and best practices, the pooling of resources and expertise in joint centres of excellence – conducting of annual working meetings of the responsible structures from the partner countries, round tables and seminars*

- *coordination of participation in joint operational actions*

- *financing of equipment and means of transport*

- *trainings*

- *actions empowering communities to develop local approaches and prevention policies, and awareness-raising and communication activities among stakeholders and the general public on Union security policies – awareness raising and information campaigns in some universities in Bulgaria and in partner countries, etc. All training activities will be coordinated with CEPOL, in order to enhance synergies and avoid duplication.*

The actions that are proposed to be supported under the ISF Programme will contribute to addressing of policy issues and priorities such as:

- *facilitate and improve the use of joint investigation teams, joint operations and other operational cooperation mechanisms in the context of the EU Policy Cycle*

- *support participation in the Joint Cybercrime Action Taskforce (J-CAT)*

- *enable efficient cross-border cooperation in the fight against child sexual abuse, including in investigations and the exchange of best practices*

- *support participation in Operational Task Forces (OTF) to identify High Value Targets (HVT) posing the highest risk to the internal security of the EU*

- *facilitate operational cooperation, including with third country authorities for a more effective investigation of cross border corruption cases*

- *facilitate information exchange and training on best practices in investigating cross-border corruption cases*

- *enhance strategic and operational cooperation to fight drug and firearms trafficking and migrant smuggling.*

Desired outcomes:

- *active participation in JITs and EMPACT cross border police cooperation*

- *increased effectiveness of counteraction, detection and disruption of organised criminal groups*

- *improved coordination and interaction and faster exchange of experience, know-how and information as regards joint investigations of serious and organised crime, including corruption*

- *increased confidence at national and transnational level with partner LEA*

- *increased number of international operations resulting in increased number of detected and disrupted OCGs*

- high level of security in conducting cross-border joint operations and higher efficiency in the investigation of corruption in border areas

Operating support

In order to ensure effective participation of Bulgaria in the EMPACT, operating support shall be provided to the national specialised police structure for combating organised crime (GDCOC) in connection with its tasks and services which constitute a public service for the EU: performing the functions of a specialised cybercrime centre at national level; participation in the implementation of the Operational Action Plans within the EMPACT, etc.

Operating support could be also provided to Internal Security Directorate at Ministry of Interior, which is the only body with competencies for prevention, interception, investigation and detection of crimes committed by employees of the MoI and with the powers to develop and implement measures to combat corruption in police structures. It has coordinating functions at national level regarding the fight against fraud, corruption and other crimes, committed by MoI employees.

Potential beneficiary of Operating support is also International Operational Cooperation Directorate at MoI, which is the national contact point for Interpol, Europol and SIS.

The operating support shall cover: maintenance of technical equipment and means of transport.

2.2.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e) of Article 22(4) CPR

Table 1: Output indicators

Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator [255]	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
SO 2		Number of cross-border operations, separately specifying: 1.1. the number of joint investigation teams	Number	3	10

SO 2		Number of cross-border operations, separately specifying: 1.2. the number of EU policy cycle/EMPACT operational actions	Number	2	8
SO 2		Number of expert meetings/workshops/study visits/common exercises	Number	10	43
SO 2		Number of equipment items purchased	Number	300	800
SO 2		Number of transport means purchased for cross-border operations	Number	15	37

Table 2: Result indicators

Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Measurement unit for baseline	Reference year(s)	Target (2029)	Measurement unit for target	Source of data	Comments
SO 2	[5]	The estimated value of assets frozen in the context of cross-border operations	[255]				4 200 000	EUR	[200]	[200]

SO 2	Quantity of illicit drugs seized in the context of cross-border operations, by type of product					400	Kg	GDCO C statistics	
SO 2	Quantity of weapons seized in the context of cross-border operations, by type of weapon					15	Number		

SO 2	Number of administrative units that have developed/adapted existing mechanisms/procedures/tools/guidance for cooperation with other Member States/Union bodies, offices or agencies/third countries/international organisations								
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SO 2	Number of staff involved in cross-border operations					410	Number		
SO 2	Number of Schengen evaluation recommendations addressed								

2.2.3 Indicative breakdown of the programme resources (EU) by type of intervention
Reference: Article 22(5) CPR; and Article 16(12) AMIF Regulation, Article 13(12) ISF Regulation or Article 13(18) BMVI Regulation

Table 3: Indicative breakdown

Specific objective	Type of intervention	Code	Indicative amount (Euro)
SO 2	ICT systems, interoperability, data quality (excluding equipment)	001	78 750
SO 2	Networks, centres of excellence, cooperation structures, joint actions and operations	002	3 000
SO 2	Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) or other joint operations	003	300 000
SO 2	Training	005	7 500

Specific objective	Type of intervention	Code	Indicative amount (Euro)
SO 2	Exchange of best practices, workshops, conferences, events, awareness-raising campaigns, communication activities	006	793 462,50
SO 2	Equipment	008	610 959, 83
SO 2	Means of transport	009	958 500

2.2 Title of the specific objective [Supporting the strengthening of Member States' capabilities in relation to preventing and combating crime, terrorism and radicalisation, as well as managing security-related incidents, risks and crises, including through increased cooperation between public authorities, relevant Union bodies, offices or agencies, civil society and private partners in different Member States]

2.2.1 Description of a specific objective

This section describes, for each specific objective, the initial situation, main challenges and proposes responses supported by the Fund. It describes which implementation measures are addressed with the support of the Fund; it provides an indicative list of actions within the scope of Articles 3 and 5 of the AMIF, ISF or BMVI Regulations.

In particular: For operating support, it provides an explanation in line with Article 21 of the AMIF Regulation, Article 16 of the ISF Regulation or Articles 16 and 17 of the BMVI Regulation. It includes an indicative list of beneficiaries with their statutory responsibilities, main tasks to be supported.

Planned use of financial instruments, if applicable.

Text field (16 000 characters)

Security environment featured serious change in 2019 regarding the counteraction of terrorism, extremism and their financing. Several cases of direct terrorist threat were registered in Bulgaria. Criminal group providing logistic support to international terrorist organisation was dismantled. Bulgarian citizen was arrested following the collected data about his intention to commit terrorist act influenced by the Islamic State ideology.

NGO reports and data on radicalisation and violent extremism show that all forms of extremism need to be addressed, including right-wing extremism and hate crime

through prevention and better monitoring².

2019 survey data on the influence of far-right narratives on young people showed that extremist narratives online, disinformation and propaganda that promote polarisation, hate and radicalisation are affecting young people in Bulgaria³.

Freedom of movement of people and goods, of religion and belief and of economic and civil initiatives, entail risks of conflicts incited by radicalisation and self-radicalisation that are often connected to the use of violence, including explosive and pyrotechnic substances and devices.

MoI report for 2019 noted that 96 checks for countering bomb terrorism have been conducted to ensure protection of state, governmental and other events. Special forces responded to the 8 calls for blasts on the territory of Bulgaria.

In response to the increased terrorist threats MoI staff (first responders) has passed a lot of trainings -200 officers were trained with the support of ISF-P NP. Interaction with the special forces of other MS (including joint trainings for sharing experience, elaboration of common operational procedures to respond to man-made crisis, etc.) was implemented under the ATLAS initiatives.

In 2007, in accordance with the implementation of the Budapest Convention in local legislation, a National Contact Point 24/7 was established within the Department for Prevention, Interception and Detection of Cybercrime of General Directorate Combatting Organised Crime, serving for direct contact between cyber experts in 180 countries.

At the moment, there is no digital laboratory of computer-expert reports, which creates preconditions for delays in the preparation of computer-technical expertise and risks of hindering the effective investigations. In 2019, the activity of 9 OCGs in the field of cybercrime was dismantled. 125 pre-trial cases were formed, as well as 9 pre-trial cases led by an investigator 64 operations were conducted. 8 Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) requests from the USA, 4 European Investigation Orders (EIOs) (from France, Austria and Germany) and 1 EIO (from Austria) were implemented. In 2019, more than 2,800 files were received by the Cybercrime Department, and 2,049 of them were closed and sent to the Prosecutor's office.

Actions have been taken to triple the number of the department, and a new department "Digital Analysis and Open Sources" will be created.

With the Cyber Security Act, the Cybercrime Department of the GDCOC has been designated as a specialised centre for cybercrime at the national level. The Cybercrime centre was established with the support under the ISF-P NP.

Illegal migration, smuggling of goods, arms and drugs and THB are source of serious threats for the national security and significant economic losses. The increase in smuggling activities in 2019 resulted in 122 application materials under the Criminal Code, of which 103 pre-trial proceedings have been instituted for committed crimes. 108 people have been prosecuted as defendants. Since the beginning of 2020, 134 application materials have been registered, of which 107 pre-trial proceedings have been instituted, 111 people were prosecuted. Attempts have been made to transfer 622 people. The active and timely exchange of information and cooperation with partner services from other MS, Europol, Interpol and Frontex is crucial for effective prevention and counteraction of crime across borders.

² <https://csd.bg/publications/publication/radicalisation-in-bulgaria-threats-and-trends/>
<https://csd.bg/publications/publication/situational-assessment-of-extremist-trends/>

³ [https://csd.bg/fileadmin/user_upload/events_library/files/2020_07/Propaganda - Article_V3_.pdf](https://csd.bg/fileadmin/user_upload/events_library/files/2020_07/Propaganda_-_Article_V3_.pdf)

Balkans and in particular Bulgaria are key regions for international crime since their territory is used for drug trafficking and storage. Cocaine continues to be trafficked to Europe from the producer countries by air and sea. Trafficking of marijuana from Macedonia and Albania to Turkey through Bulgaria and Greece has increased. Acetic anhydride, the main heroin precursor is increasingly imported from Serbia, Netherlands and Belgium to Bulgaria and Turkey.

Recently there has been a dramatic growth in the new psychoactive substances (NPS) market, new chemicals for their manufacturing, ways of trafficking and innovations in distribution channels, including Darknet.

The variation of molecules in the composition of illicit NPS and the lack of fully equipped laboratory and technical devices for the detection of new psychoactive substances, their metabolites and their determination in biological samples make difficult to determine whether the substance belongs to the group of legal or illicit drug. The specifics of the “designer drug” requires preliminary operational information to be made available for its identification and seizure.

The illicit drug production is situated in difficult-to-access areas, which requires good mobility and remote surveillance.

The significance of forensic examination, including the DNA analysis, for the pre-trial investigations and prosecution requires investments in the relevant technical equipment and technologies that are constantly evolving.

The necessary accreditation of laboratories according to EN ISO/IEC 17025 standards (pursuant to Council Framework Decision 2009/905/JHA and Council Decision 2008/616/JHA) sets high requirements to the equipment and to the staff. The establishment and development of the relevant forensic infrastructure to ensure the highest quality of forensic service providers is set as a requirement towards MS in the Council Conclusions on the vision for European Forensic Science Area 2020.

Most of the main technical means and equipment at national level were renewed with the support of EU financing, including under ISF-P NP. Their warranty will have expired during the next period.

The annual number of DNA examinations carried out at national level is smaller compared to that of other countries with similar population. The capacity of the DNA laboratories has to be maintained and expanded, which includes also establishment of new and modernization of the existing ones.

The fast transfer of data and intensified mobility of persons and objects that feature the process of globalization increase the significance of interception of communications and surveillance for the purposes of prevention and fight against crime.

New tools for countering crime require the relevant technical means for processing, analysis and decryption of big data (text and voice) of digital information to be made available to LEA.

The requests for the application of SIM to serve as evidence have continuously and significantly increased during the last 3 years in the following areas:

- terrorism, extremism, radicalisation, migration, trafficking in human beings (THB), destructive activities against strategic and critical infrastructure: 131 (for 2017), 138 (for 2018) and 173 (for 2019);

- corruption, economical and financial security, internal security: 71 (for 2017), 223 (for 2018), 355 (for 2019).

Due to its geographic location near to the border with Serbia, Sofia is part of the “Balkan route” with significant flow of citizens and goods passing from Asia to

Europe. Annually significant number of citizens visit the capital (according to the national statistics 1 160 162 tourists in 2019, which is an increase of 3,5% compared to 2018; Sofia is ranked on 2nd place in Europe in the annual ranking of Mastercard Global Destination Cities Index 2018 regarding the foreign tourists growth). Sofia is a host of a lot of events of different nature - many of them international and outdoor. Steady decrease was noted in registered criminal offences in Sofia according to Sofia Metropolitan Directorate of MoI (SMD-MoI) statistics – 23 102 for 2018, 20 562 for 2019. Comparison of the figures for the first six months in 2019 and 2020 also showed a decrease - 11 128 and 9 414 respectively.

However, the values still have a relatively high share in the overall numbers of the registered criminal offences in the country for 2019 – 89 472 as per the Report on the implementation of law and activity of the Prosecutor's Office and investigating bodies.

To effectively protect citizens and visitors of the capital there is a need of investments in increasing capabilities of LEA to prevent, detect and investigate crime committed/with a tendency to be committed on its territory.

According to the Second report of the EC on the progress made in the fight against THB (COM(2018) 777 final) for 2015-2016 Bulgaria is among the top five EU countries of citizenship of registered victims of THB. The most prevalent form has been that for the purpose of sexual exploitation, followed by trafficking for labor exploitation. Bulgaria marked considerable share of internal trafficking of children (around 45%).

Supreme Prosecutor's Office of Cassation reported 280 numbers of victims of sexual abuse actions for 2019 accounting for 69,3% of total number of registered victims of THB (404).

The number of formally identified victims who took part in pre-trial proceedings was 443 in 2018. In addition, the Secretariat of the NCCTHB collects alerts about presumed victims detected by NGOs, international organisations, citizens and other sources. The number of such victims was 155 in 2018 and 94 in 2019.

For 2019 the number of newly initiated pre-trial proceedings have increased with 45 % compared to the 2018. Statistics show slight increase in the number of persons brought before the court, although the number of prosecutorial acts submitted to the court have diminished from 53 to 41.

Despite the positive trends, the number of convicted persons and the number of newly initiated proceedings for THB as an absolute value remains small compared to the scale of crime at national and European level.

More actions should be envisaged to inform vulnerable groups about the risks associated with the crime and the ways to prevent them.

To ensure successful investigations and prosecutions of THB offences and counter the culture of impunity, early identification of victims is needed as well as provision of specific treatment during the criminal investigations and proceedings.

To address effectively the needs and challenges mentioned above, LEA have to be provided with sufficient, adequate and state-of-the-art means and tools to be applied in the prevention and investigation of crimes, reliable and secure channels for obtaining, analysis and exchange of information, know-how and experience, and sufficient and modern conditions for upgrading and maintaining of their capacity, professional qualification and skills.

Support for different projects provided under the ISF-P contributed to the improvement of the national technical resources and capabilities in the field of

terrorism, countering serious, organised and cross-border crime in particular in the area of drugs, THB and money laundering and corruption, which led to increasing the effectiveness of their investigation (including forensic examinations) and counteraction. In complementarity to the national financing, projects were funded under ISF-P targeted at awareness-raising campaigns to step up the prevention of THB and radicalisation and early identification and provision of support to the victims.

Actions will be continued and further elaborated based on the lessons learned and the best practices by acquisition of new equipment/technologies/devices/transport means, maintenance of the equipment/systems that were put into operation under the current period, expanding the scope and capacity of ICT systems, establishment of new IT systems, modernization and extension of training programmes and tools, inclusion of new partners, target groups and stakeholders, including civil society.

The scope of support will be broadened to include new priorities/actions such as:

- increasing law enforcement (joint) trainings, exercises, mutual learning, specialised exchange programmes and sharing of best practice through development and upgrade of training programmes, means and infrastructure of the relevant training institution in particular Academy of MoI (AMoI), which is a CEPOL National Unit for Bulgaria, in coordination with CEPOL*
- enhancing the effectiveness of investigation, including through digitization of forensic activities, application of SIM and collecting and preparation of physical evidences in the context of prevention and fight against serious and organised crime.*

The ISF Programme will contribute to achieving the specific objective set out in Article 3(2)(c), by focusing on the implementation measures such as those listed below:

- Increasing training, exercises and mutual learning, specialised exchange programmes and sharing of best practices in and between Member States' competent authorities, including at local level, and with third countries and other relevant actors*

The following indicative actions/projects are envisaged:

- Development of the capacity of CEPOL National Unit for Bulgaria*
- Improvement and upgrading the training facilities and increasing the quality and effectiveness of the shooting, tactical and specialised training of the Specialised Operations and Combating Terrorism Directorate's staff*
- Enhancing the professional training of Sofia Metropolitan Directorate of Interior's officers through modernisation of the infrastructure and security related trainings*
- Enhancement of the operational capacity and the specific skills and competences of the SATO employees, seminars with the authorities under Art. 13, 15 and 20 of Law for special investigative means, conferences, exchange of experience and good practices with partners from other MS*
- Developing and upgrading the capacity of LEA in the area of combating THB with a view to achieve more effective identification of victims, protection of their rights and referral mechanisms.*

Support will be provided, inter alia, for the following types of actions: education and training, financing of equipment and security-relevant facilities, exchange and dissemination of know-how, information, experience and best practices, etc.

- Acquiring relevant equipment and setting up or upgrading specialised*

training facilities and other essential security relevant infrastructure to increase preparedness, resilience, public awareness and adequate response as regards security threats

The following indicative actions/projects are envisaged:

- *Countering organised crime by upgrading/modernisation of the National Cybercrime Centre*
- *Enhancing the capacity of police officers in the area of prevention and counteraction of production, distribution and trafficking of drugs*
- *Digitization of forensic activities and processes related to police registration*
- *Enhancing the GDBP capacity for countering the crime across the state border, including trafficking and migrant smuggling, in cooperation with the competent authorities on European and national level*
- *Participation of GDBP officers in activities related to improvement of cross-border cooperation*
- *Enhancement of the capabilities in the area of forensic examinations of digital evidence and increasing the capacity and ensuring sustainable development of forensic examinations through maintenance, expansion of laboratories capacity and implementation of new technical means in NFI*
- *Strengthening the capabilities for increasing the internal security as well as for timely and efficient actions related to countering organised crime, corruption, terrorism, extremism, radicalisation, THB, drugs, firearms and other threats for the national security*
- *System for 3D printing of specific objects and for protected marking, identification, verification and unambiguous authentication of objects, documents and other information carriers used for special investigative means implementation*

Support will be provided, inter alia, for the following types of actions: education and training, financing of equipment and security-relevant facilities, exchange and dissemination of know-how, information, experience and best practices, etc.

- *Promoting and developing measures, safeguards, mechanisms and best practices for the early identification, protection and support of witnesses, whistleblowers and victims of crime and developing partnerships between public authorities and other relevant actors to this effect*

The following indicative actions/projects are envisaged:

- *Awareness and sensitivity raising of the society to THB issues*
- *Assistance, support and protection of victims of THB*
- *Building resilience in young people to radicalisation and extremist propaganda*

Support will be provided, inter alia, for the following types of actions: actions empowering communities to develop local approaches and prevention policies, and awareness-raising and communication activities among stakeholders and the general public on Union security policies – information and awareness-raising campaigns, seminars, round-tables, etc.

- *Exploiting synergies by pooling resources and knowledge and sharing best practices between Member States and other relevant actors, including civil society, through, for example, the creation of joint centres of excellence, development of joint risk assessments, or common operational support centres for jointly conducted operations*

The following indicative action/project is envisaged:

- *Assessment of threats of organised crime and corruption in Bulgaria.*

Support will be provided, inter alia, for the following type of action: risk assessments, etc.

All training activities will be coordinated with CEPOL, in order to enhance synergies and avoid duplication.

Desired outcomes:

- increased effectiveness of operational-search activity and of investigations*
- increased capacity, scope and reliability of forensic examinations and ensured compliance with the requirements for the common European Forensic Area*
- enhanced capacity for prevention and fight against THB and for providing support to the victims of crime.*

Operating support will be provided to the following public authorities regarding their responsibilities to accomplish tasks and services which constitute a public service for the Union:

General Directorate Combating Organised Crime is the national specialised police structure for combating organised crime

General Directorate Gendarmerie Special Operations and Combating Terrorism - is charged with the prevention and disruption/deterring of terrorist acts, detection, identification and neutralisation of explosives and explosive devices (ED), setting up technical means and methods, physicochemical examination and expert opinions of explosives, ED and their elements, documents and unknown substances. GDGSOCT participates in ATLAS

National Forensic Institute at Ministry of Interior is responsible for the elaboration of examinations of forensic examinations under the Penal Procedure Code, expert opinions for the purpose of operative search activities and international operational police cooperation; Its laboratory has EN ISO/IEC 17025:2018 accreditation pursuant to Council Framework Decision 2009/905/JHA requirements

State Agency for National Security performs counterintelligence activities related to the surveillance, detection, counteraction, prevention and neutralization of plotted, prepared or perpetrated encroachments against national security; ensures counterintelligence security and protection of facilities or activities of a strategic nature for the country; prepares and stores material evidence and presents them to the relevant judicial authorities; houses the National Counterterrorism Centre; is in charge of the cryptographic security of classified information and monitoring of the radio frequency spectrum; is designated as a contact point for GALILEO Public Regulated Service

General Directorate Border Police - in connection with its functions for implementation of operational-search activities to counteract illegal migration, smuggling and trafficking in human beings.

Operating support shall cover maintenance of technical equipment and means of transport.

2.2.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e) of Article 22(4) CPR

Table 1: Output indicators

Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator [255]	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
SO 3		Number of participants in training activities	Number	3 380	7 732
SO 3		Number of exchange programmes/workshops/study visits	Number	44	604
SO 3		Number of equipment items purchased	Number	162	1331
SO 3		Number of transport means purchased	Number	32	32
SO 3		Number of items of infrastructure/security-relevant facilities/tools/mechanisms constructed/purchased/upgraded	Number	2	9
SO 3		Number of projects to prevent crime	Number	0	2
SO 3		Number of projects to assist victims of crime	Number	2	2

SO 3		Number of victims of crimes assisted	Number	0	270
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Table 2: Result indicators

Specific objective	ID [5]	Indicator [255]	Measurement unit	Baseline	Measurement unit for baseline	Reference year(s)	Target (2029)	Measurement unit for target	Source of data [200]	Comments [200]
SO 3		Number of initiatives developed/expanded to prevent radicalisation					0	Number		

SO 3	Number of initiatives developed/expanded to protect/support witnesses and whistleblowers				0	Number		
SO 3	Number of critical infrastructure/public spaces with new/adapted facilities protecting against security-related risks				7	Number		

SO 3	Number of participants who consider the training activity useful for their work				6850	Number		
SO 3	Number of participants who report three months after the training activity that they are using the skills and competences acquired during that training activity				5740	Number		

2.2.3 Indicative breakdown of the programme resources (EU) by type of intervention
Reference: Article 22(5) CPR; and Article 16(12) AMIF Regulation, Article 13(12) ISF Regulation or Article 13(18) BMVI Regulation

Table 3: Indicative breakdown

Specific objective	Type of intervention	Code	Indicative amount (Euro)
SO 3	ICT systems, interoperability, data quality (excluding equipment)	001	5 693 788, 95
SO 3	Secondment or deployment of experts	004	715 521
SO 3	Training	005	2 002 665
SO 3	Exchange of best practices, workshops, conferences, events, awareness-raising campaigns, communication activities	006	2 689 307,40
SO 3	Studies, pilot projects, risk assessments	007	187 500
SO 3	Equipment	008	4 334 858, 88
SO 3	Means of transport	009	585 000
SO 3	Buildings, facilities	010	4 771 012,91

2.3 Technical assistance

2.3.1 Description

Reference: point (f) of Article 22(3), Article 36(5), Article 37, and Article 95 CPR

Text field [5 000] (Technical assistance pursuant to Article 36(5) CPR)

The Technical assistance shall support actions of the Managing Authority (MA) of the Internal Security Fund (ISF) for effective and efficient implementation of the objectives and indicators, set in the Programme.

The International Projects Directorate is a structure within the Ministry of Interior (MoI) for the management of programs and projects funded by the European Union and other international programs and contracts, including the Norwegian Financial mechanism. Functions of the Directorate are described in the Regulations for the Structure and the Activity of the MoI and in the Management and Control Systems (MCS). The Directorate consists of three departments with clearly defined and differentiated responsibilities, which ensures the effective implementation of the activities, related to the management and control of European funds.

The International Projects Directorate has a significant background in managing programs and projects from the previous programming periods.

With Decision № 712 from 6th of October 2020 of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, the International Projects Directorate was designated as Managing authority (MA) of the Programme under the Internal Security Fund for the 2021 – 2027 programming period.

The investments envisaged under the Technical Assistance shall continue to provide a good working environment and expert and motivated human resources in order to achieve a high standard of effective management and control of the program.

This will be achieved through the implementation of the following actions:

- providing the necessary technical equipment (hardware and software), including office equipment as in need to ensure the management, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and control of the ISF Programme;
- strengthening the capacity of the personnel through trainings, seminars, workshops, study visits, exchange of good practices and experience, and others.
- ensuring official trips of the personnel;
- ensuring remuneration costs of the personnel, including insurances and all other expenses according to the national law;
- hiring external consultants and experts, if necessary;
- communication and visibility measures.

These activities assist to strengthen the capacity and efficiency of the MA, contributing to the successful implementation of the European asylum and migration policy.

Expected results:

- achieving a high standard of implementation, monitoring, evaluation and control of the Programme;
- ensuring a good working environment and an improved culture of work aimed at achieving results;
- having an intensified and active dialogue with stakeholders and the general public in order to promote the program, its objectives and results, as well as the EU's contribution.

Text field [3 000] (Technical assistance pursuant to Article 37 CPR)

2.3.2. Indicative breakdown of technical assistance pursuant to Article 36(5) and Article 37 CPR

Table 4: Indicative breakdown

Type of intervention	Code	Indicative amount (Euro)
Information and communication	001	66 715
Preparation, implementation, monitoring and control	002	934 009
Evaluation and studies, data collection	003	66 715
Capacity building	004	266 860

3. Financing plan

Reference: point (g) Article 22(3) CPR

3.1. Financial appropriations by year

Table 5: Financial appropriations by year

Fund	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total

3.2. Total financial allocations

Table 6: Total financial allocations by fund and national contribution

Specific objective (SO)	Type of action	Basis for calculation Union support (total or public)	Union contribution (a)	National contribution (b)=(c)+(d)	Indicative breakdown of national contribution		Total e=(a)+(b)	Co-financing rate (f)=(a)/(e)
					public (c)	private (d)		
SO 1	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(1) of ISF Regulation or Article 12(1) of BMVI Regulation or Article 15(1) of AMIF Regulation		14 517 883	4 839 294	4 839 294	0	19 357 177	75 %

SO 1	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(2) of ISF Regulation or Article 12(2) of BMVI Regulation or Article 15(2) of AMIF Regulation		0	0	0	0	0	0
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Specific objective (SO)	Type of action	Basis for calculation Union support (total or	Union contribution (a)	National contribution (b)=(c)+(d)	Indicative breakdown of national		Total e=(a)+(b)	Co-financing rate (f)=(a)/(e)
					public (c)	private (d)		
SO 1	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(3) of ISF Regulation or Article 12(3) of BMVI Regulation or Article 15(3) of AMIF Regulation		0	0	0	0	0	0

SO 1	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(4) of ISF Regulation or Article 12(4) of BMVI Regulation (excluding Special Transit Scheme) or Article 15(4) of AMIF Regulation		0	0	0	0	0	0
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Specific objective (SO)	Type of action	Basis for calculation Union support (total or public)	Union contribution (a)	National contribution (b)=(c)+(d)	Indicative breakdown of		Total e=(a)+(b)	Co-financing rate (f)=(a)/(e)
					public (c)	private (d)		
SO 1	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(4) of BMVI Regulation (Special Transit Scheme)							
SO 1	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(5) of ISF Regulation or Article 12(6) of BMVI Regulation or Article 15(5) of AMIF Regulation		0	0	0	0	0	0
	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(5) of BMVI Regulation							
Total for SO 1			14 517 883	4 839 294	4 839 294	0	19 357 177	75 %

Specific objective (SO)	Type of action	Basis for calculation Union support (total or public)	Union contribution (a)	National contribution (b)=(c)+(d)	Indicative breakdown of national contribution		Total e=(a)+(b)	Co-financing rate (f)=(a)/(e)
					public (c)	private (d)		
SO 2	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(1) of ISF Regulation or Article 12(1) of BMVI Regulation or Article 15(1) of AMIF Regulation		3 395 710	1 131 903	1 131 903	0	4 527 613	75 %
SO 2	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(2) of ISF Regulation or Article 12(2) of BMVI Regulation or Article 15(2) of AMIF Regulation		0	0	0	0	0	0
Specific objective (SO)	Type of action	Basis for calculation Union support (total or public)	Union contribution (a)	National contribution (b)=(c)+(d)	Indicative breakdown of national contribution		Total e=(a)+(b)	Co-financing rate (f)=(a)/(e)
					public (c)	private (d)		
SO 2	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(3) of ISF Regulation or Article 12(3) of BMVI Regulation or Article 15(3) of AMIF Regulation		0	0	0	0	0	0

SO 2	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(4) of ISF Regulation or Article 12(4) of BMVI Regulation (excluding Special Transit Scheme) or Article 15(4) of AMIF Regulation		0	0	0	0	0	0
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Specific objective (SO)	Type of action	Basis for calculation Union support (total or public)	Union contribution (a)	National contribution (b)=(c)+(d)	Indicative breakdown of		Total e=(a)+(b)	Co-financing rate (f)=(a)/(e)
					public (c)	private (d)		
	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(4) of BMVI Regulation (Special Transit Scheme)							
SO 2	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(5) of ISF Regulation or Article 12(6) of BMVI Regulation or Article 15(5) of AMIF Regulation		0	0	0	0	0	0
	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(5) of BMVI Regulation							
Total for SO 2			3 395 710	1 131 903	1 131 903	0	4 527 613	75 %

Specific objective (SO)	Type of action	Basis for calculation Union support (total or public)	Union contribution (a)	National contribution (b)=(c)+(d)	Indicative breakdown of national contribution		Total e=(a)+(b)	Co-financing rate (f)=(a)/(e)
					public (c)	private (d)		
SO 3	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(1) of ISF Regulation or Article 12(1) of BMVI Regulation or Article 15(1) of AMIF Regulation		25 191 216	8 397 072	8 397 072	0	33 588 288	75 %
SO 3	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(2) of ISF Regulation or Article 12(2) of BMVI Regulation or Article 15(2) of AMIF Regulation		0	0	0	0	0	0
Specific objective (SO)	Type of action	Basis for calculation Union support (total or public)	Union contribution (a)	National contribution (b)=(c)+(d)	Indicative breakdown of national contribution		Total e=(a)+(b)	Co-financing rate (f)=(a)/(e)
					public (c)	private (d)		
SO 3	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(3) of ISF Regulation or Article 12(3) of BMVI Regulation or Article 15(3) of AMIF Regulation		0	0	0	0	0	0

SO 3	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(4) of ISF Regulation or Article 12(4) of BMVI Regulation (excluding Special Transit Scheme) or Article 15(4) of AMIF Regulation		0	0	0	0	0	0
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Specific objective (SO)	Type of action	Basis for calculation Union support (total or public)	Union contribution (a)	National contribution (b)=(c)+(d)	Indicative breakdown of		Total e=(a)+(b)	Co-financing rate (f)=(a)/(e)
					public (c)	private (d)		
	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(4) of BMVI Regulation (Special Transit Scheme)							
SO 3	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(5) of ISF Regulation or Article 12(6) of BMVI Regulation or Article 15(5) of AMIF Regulation		0	0	0	0	0	0
	Actions co-financed in line with Article 12(5) of BMVI Regulation							
Total for SO 3			25 191 216	8 397 072	8 397 072	0	33 588 288	75 %

Specific objective (SO)	Type of action	Basis for calculation Union support (total or	Union contribution (a)	National contribution (b)-(c)+(d)	Indicative breakdown of national		Total e=(a)+(b)	Co-financing rate (f)=(a)/(e)
					public (c)	private (d)		
Technical assistance pursuant to Article	Technical assistance		1 334 298	0	0	0	1 334 298	100%
Technical assistance pursuant to Article			0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand			1 334 298	0	0	0	1 334 298	100%

Table 6A: Pledging plan

Category	Number of persons per year						
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Resettlement							
Humanitarian admission in line with Article 19(2) AMIF Regulation							
Humanitarian admission of vulnerable persons in line with Article 19(3) AMIF Regulation							
Transfer of applicants for or beneficiaries of international protection ('transfer in')							
Transfer of applicants for or beneficiaries of international protection (Transfer out')							
[other categories]							

3.3. Transfers

Table 7: Transfers between shared management funds

Receiving fund / instrument Transferring	AMIF	ISF	BMVI	ERDF	ESF+	Cohesion Fund	EMFAF	Total
AMIF								
ISF								
BMVI								
Total								

Table 8: Transfers to instruments under direct or indirect management

	Transfer amount
Instrument 1[name]	
Instrument 2 [name]	
Total	

4. Enabling conditions

Reference: point (i) of Article 22(3) CPR

Table 9: Horizontal enabling conditions

Enabling condition	Fulfilment of enabling condition	Criteria	Fulfilment of criteria	Reference to relevant documents	Justification
		Criterion	Y/N	[500]	[1 000]
		Criterion			

5. Programme authorities

Reference: point (k) of Article 22(3) and Articles 71 and 84 CPR

Table 10: Programme authorities

	Name of the institution [500]	Contact name and position [200]	e-mail [200]
Managing authority	International Project Directorate – Ministry of Interior	Maya Petkova Director of Directorate and Head of Managing Authority +359 29827412	dmp@mv r.bg

Audit authority	Internal Audit Unit – Ministry of Interior	Ivan Petkov Head of Audit Authority +359 29822656	zvo.18@ mvr.bg
Body which receives payments from the Commission	Interantional Projects Directorate – Ministry of Interior	Maya Petkova Director of Directorate and Head of Managing Authority +359 29827412	dmp@mv r.bg

6. Partnership Reference: point (h) of Article 22(3) CPR

<p>Text field [10 000]</p> <p><i>The partnership principle is a key element in the implementation of the European Funds, which enables a wide range of stakeholders (public authorities, economic and social partners, bodies, representing civilian society on a national, regional and local level, research institutions and universities, etc.) to participate in the whole process of preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programs, funded by the EU.</i></p> <p><i>The principle is widely used in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ISF Programme. The partnership is implemented in several areas: cooperation with the competent bodies, including participation in the Thematic Working Group (TWG) for the preparation of the Program and the Monitoring Committee (MC); consultations on the Programme and on other funds and programs with similar areas of support and participation in the inter-institutional working groups for the elaboration of the other programmes, funded by the EU and close cooperation with the European Commission (EC) at each stage of the process.</i></p> <p><i>With Decision № 196 from 11th of April 2019 of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) was designated as the leading institution for the elaboration of the three programs in the Home Affairs area.</i></p> <p><i>In this regard, the International Projects Directorate of the MoI has started a procedure for establishing a Thematic Working Group for the preparation of the Programme under the ISF for the 2021 – 2027 programming period.</i></p> <p><i>In accordance with the partnership principle, based on Art. 6 of the Common Provision Regulation (CPR), an invitation to participate in the TWG was extended to the competent bodies at national level in the field of internal security. Another invitation was extended to the non-profit organisations, participating in the Monitoring Committees under the Program 2014 – 2020.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, on the newly created webpage of the financial instrument for the 2021 – 2027 period there was published a call for the selection for participation in the Thematic Working Group of non-profit legal entities of public benefit; and of international organisations and institutions, prevention and combating crime.</i></p>

With ordinance of the Minister of the Interior, there was set up a TWG for the preparation of the Programme under the ISF for the 2021 – 2027 period, chaired by the Deputy Minister of Interior with competence to manage European Funds. The Thematic Working Group includes representatives of the relevant stakeholders working in the field of internal security – public authorities, international and non-governmental organisations, the academic community.

In the period January – March 2020 two attendance meetings of the TWG were held. Due to the state of emergency in Bulgaria after March 2020 and the subsequent restrictions imposed in relation to the spread of COVID-19, non-attendance discussions on the Programme were also held and decisions were taken by written procedure. The members of the TWG participate in the process of preparation of the Program by submitting proposals for strategic priorities to be addressed through the funding provided under the Programme, examine and provide comments and remarks on the drafts of the Programme before sending them to the EC.

With Decision № 712 from 6th of October 2020 of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, the International Projects Directorate was designated as Managing authority (MA) of the Programme of Bulgaria under the ISF for the 2021 – 2027 programming period.

In accordance with the provisions of Art. 34 of the CPR, there shall be organized a Monitoring Committee (MC) through a transparent process and in compliance with the principle of balanced representation of the relevant public authorities and the representatives of the partners.

The Monitoring Committee of the Programme on ISF shall be established by an ordinance of the Minister of Interior and shall be chaired by the Deputy Minister of Interior with competence to manage European Funds. The Deputy Chairman shall be the head of the Managing Authority of the Programme. The Committee members and their deputies shall act as representatives of the relevant stakeholders – Council of Ministers' administration, the agencies responsible for the policies that fund activities under ISF; international organizations and non-profit legal entities working in the field of prevention and combating crime. The representatives of the respective institutions shall be designated on the basis of criteria predefined and approved by the Managing Authority, and developed in accordance with Art. 34, par. 1 of the CPR. In the establishment of the MC shall be taken into account Art. 4(2a) of the CPR regarding decentralised agencies. Representatives of the Commission and of the Audit Authority shall participate in the work of the Monitoring Committee as observers.

The list of committee members shall be published on the website, stated in Art. 44, section 1 of the CPR.

The working procedure of the Monitoring Committee shall be regulated by the Internal Rules, appended to the ordinance of the Minister of Interior, by which the Committee shall be established. These rules define the powers and responsibilities of the chairman and of the Committee members as their behaviour as well as that of the observers are based on the following principles: legality, selflessness, impartiality, independence, objectivity, publicity, responsibility and professional conduct.

The Monitoring Committee shall assemble at least ones annually (in person or not, depending on the current situation) and, if necessary, ad hoc.

The functions of the MC shall be in compliance with the provisions of Art. 35 (1) and (2) of the CPR. The Committee shall examine the program implementation and in achieving the milestones and targets as well as any issues that affect the performance of the program and the measures taken to address those issues, including irregularities. The MC shall also examine the contribution of the program to tackling the challenges identified in the relevant country-specific recommendation that are linked to the implementation of the Programme; the implementation of communication and visibility actions and last, but not least the progress made in carrying out evaluation, syntheses of evaluation and the follow-up given to findings. In addition, Committee shall approve any proposal by the MA for the amendments of a Programme as well as the annual performance report.

The implementation of the ISF Programme shall follow the same principles of partnership as in the process of its preparation. The Managing Authority shall ensure wide publicity for the partners by providing relevant information on Ministry of Interior website, as well as by holding regular information events open to all stakeholders. The Committee shall also play a primary role in monitoring the progress of the implementation of the ISF Programme and of the future development, consulting and/ or decision-making related to the revision of the program and/or the approval of the monitoring reports.

In addition, the Management and Monitoring Information System will continue to be used to monitor the indicators and information needed to trace the progress towards the objectives agreed upon in the Programme.

The complementarity of the Programme and the respective actions to other policies is carried out at the programming stage via the participation of representatives of the Ministry of Interior in the inter-institutional thematic working groups for the elaboration of the other programmes included in the CPR as well as their representatives' participation in the preparation of Home Affairs programmes. Currently, experts from the International Projects Directorate are participating in 14 thematic working groups for the elaboration of EU funded programmes and of programmes for territorial cooperation of the Republic of Bulgaria for the 2021 – 2027 period; and for the preparation of the Partnership Agreement for the 2021 – 2027 programming period.

7. Communication and visibility Reference: point (j) of Article 22(3) CPR

Text field [4 500]

The objectives of the communication approach are consistent with the objectives of the programme as follows:

- to improve and facilitate the exchange of information among and within competent authorities of the MS and relevant Union bodies and, where relevant, with third countries and international organisations*
- to improve and intensify cross-border cooperation, including joint operations among and within MS' competent authorities in relation to terrorism and serious and organised crime with a cross-border dimension*
- to support the strengthening of the MS' capabilities in relation to preventing and combating crime, terrorism and radicalisation as well as managing security-related incidents, risks and*

crises, including through increased cooperation between public authorities, the relevant Union agencies, civil society and private partners across the MS.

Among the objectives of the communication approach is to guarantee the visibility of support in activities relating to operations supported by ISF with particular attention to operations of strategic importance.

The communication approach includes communicating the funding opportunities towards potential beneficiaries; support to the beneficiaries in communicating their projects; informing the general public about the activities and results of the Programme; showing the positive impact and added value of Union intervention. These will be implemented through the following main activities:

In accordance with article 44 (1) of the CPR the Managing authority will support a website where information on the Programme is available, covering the Programme's objectives, activities, available funding opportunities and achievements.

The relevant competent institutions and potential beneficiaries are actively engaged in the process of drafting the Programme through their participation in the TWG set up with an Ordinance of the Minister of Interior. Later on they will be invited to participate in the Monitoring Committee and will be actively involved in the process of implementation, monitoring and assessment of the Programme, which guarantees transparency.

In accordance with article 44 (2) of the CPR the Managing authority guarantees communicating the funding opportunities towards potential beneficiaries through publishing on the website the information set in the above stated article. This information will also be published in a specialized information system set on national level which will also provide the potential beneficiaries with the opportunity to participate in the calls for proposals and will enable the Managing authority to evaluate them, conclude the necessary grant awarding contracts and monitor their implementation.

The Managing authority will guarantee the communication of a list of operations selected for support by the ISF publicly available on the website. This will be done in accordance article 44 (3) of the CPR.

All the above stated published documents shall be in open, machine-readable formats, which allow data to be sorted, searched, extracted, compared and reused in accordance with the requirements of art. 44 paragraphs 4 of the CPR.

Another approach for communicating of the funding opportunities towards potential beneficiaries will be the public events at the start of the implementation of the programme and the information days that will be organized on regular basis by the Managing authority. These events will be organized with the support of the Press Office and Public Relations Directorate within the MoI. It is a specialized directorate responsible for ensuring the transparency and publicity of the MoI' activities and it is actively working with the mass media on national and regional level and has established strong relations with the various communication channels including television, radio and newspapers.

Following the implementation of the Programme the Managing authority will organize a closing event on the results achieved.

In addition for every call for proposal the Managing authority shall organize an information campaign with potential stakeholders.

For the direct award procedures information days with the appointed beneficiaries will be held where clarifications and guidance for the elaboration of the project proposals will be given as well as problematic issues will be discussed.

Measures aimed at provision of support to the beneficiaries in communicating the result of the implementation of their projects will be envisaged. Guidelines on information and publicity on project level will be published on the website of the Programme and provided to the

beneficiaries. The guidelines will set the minimum requirements for visibility, transparency and communication that will be obligatory for the beneficiaries and will be in accordance with Art. 45. This will be implanted by the inclusion of this requirements in the grant awarding contracts between the Managing authority and the beneficiaries. The necessary arrangements for monitoring on the implementation of the implementation of those obligations by the beneficiaries will be set in the Monitoring and Control System (MCS) and other relevant documents.

Facebook is another communication channel where a separate page for the Programme will be used and online publications will be made. The Managing authority has chosen the Facebook platform due to its popularity and existing profile in this social media which was regularly updated with information regarding the implementation of the Home funds in the previous programming period. On the Facebook profile the Managing authority will publish the following:

- preliminary information on when, where and on what topic various events will be organized as well as information on the opportunity and way for participation in these events;
- information on organized events, funding opportunities under the Programme, results and impact of the Programme;
- information on progress, achievements, results and good practices from the implementation of selected projects.

The Facebook profile will also give the opportunity to all interested parties to contact the Managing authority and to follow in real time new events, information and news.

The main target audience of the Programme is LEA and other competent structures engaged in prevention and counteraction of crime. Other state institutions, local authorities, NGOs and private sector representatives are also determined as target audiences in relation to the topics and priorities that will be addressed under ISF Programme. The list of target audiences includes the potential beneficiaries and other relevant groups specific to the Programme. The target audience is established and defined in accordance with the objectives of the Programme as explained above.

The reasons for identifying the target audience:

The choice of the target audiences is consistent with the thematic scope of the Programme: prevention and counteraction of crime, in particular terrorism and radicalisation, cross-border, serious and organised crime, cybercrime and corruption.

The budget of the planned activities and measures envisaged in the communication approach shall be calculated after the disbursement of financial resources under the programme. It shall be equal or higher than 0.3% of the Programme's total amount. The description shall provide an indicative financial plan by activity/channel and year and other relevant information.

8. Use of unit costs, lump sums, flat rates and financing not linked to costs Reference: Articles 94 and 95 CPR

Intended use of Articles 94 and 95 CPR	YES	NO
From the adoption programme will make use of reimbursement of the Union contribution based on unit costs, lump sums and flat rates under the priority according to Article 94 CPR (if yes, fill in Appendix 1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

From the adoption programme will make use of reimbursement of the Union contribution based on financing not linked to costs according to Article 95 CPR (if yes, fill in Appendix 2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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