

BEST PRACTICE PROGRAMME

for Local Government in Bulgaria

With the support of

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Council of Europe

Ministry of Regional development and Public Works

National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria

PROSPECTUS

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On behalf of the Council of Europe, I have great pleasure to express support to the launching of the Programme Best Practice in Local Government in Bulgaria. This is a positive competition, identifying and sharing best practice in local communities, celebrating excellence and innovation in local governance.



The Programme has been successfully implemented in a number of European countries. Bulgaria has already demonstrated excellence as a pilot country in implementing the Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance at Local level. The present Programme aims at promoting leadership in responding to challenges and finding appropriate solutions, as well as in supporting innovative ideas and developing new approaches for improving the quality of citizens' lives. A best practice is the optimal method of solving a given problem or accomplishing a certain goal that can be shared and used by others.

I therefore encourage the Bulgarian municipalities to participate in this competition and to spread their good examples. The Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform of the Council of Europe stands ready to support more generally the Bulgarian municipalities in delivering good democratic governance at local level.

Alfonso Zardi

Head of Democratic Institutions and Governance Department

Council of Europe

1. Description of the Best Practice Programme



Best Practice in Local Self-Governments Programme in Bulgaria applies a systematic approach to choose the best practices implemented by municipalities in Bulgaria in the last 18 months, on identified in advance thematic areas.

The competition involves practices implemented under the models and initiatives of the participating municipalities. The competition does not encourage the application and there will not be evaluated practices implemented by models / schemes funded by national and/or European programs in groups of municipalities. Participating in the contest practices are assessed, distinguished and distributed among the other municipalities in the country.

The programme aims to detect and distinguish those municipalities in Bulgaria that have implemented successful initiatives and/or management models in three thematic areas of its activities with a significant impact on the local community. Each municipality can apply in more than one thematic area, but with only one best practice in that particular area.

The Programme has been developed by the Council of Europe's Centre of Expertise on Local Government Reform and is implemented in Bulgaria with the support of the Ministry of Regional development and Public Works and the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria.

The Programme has been implemented successfully in a number of European countries: Armenia, Greece, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine, Switzerland.

In Bulgaria the Programme is implemented in the period October 2016 - May 2017 and aims at identifying, achieving public recognition and dissemination of best practices among municipalities in Bulgaria.

Implementation and adaptation of best practices is a creative application of the experience of others in the development of communities. Municipalities can learn from the experience of others by analyzing both the strengths and weaknesses and

alternative approaches. With the positive experience of other municipal leaders can learn to:

- municipal development in a planned and effective manner;
- improving the quality of services provided to local people and organizations;
- introduction of modern methods in the management of the administration;
- minimizing the risks associated with the implementation of new approaches;
- stimulation of greater progress in the community.

The most important elements of Best Practice in Local Self-Governments Programme in Bulgaria are:

- identification of best practices through a formal process;
- use of a standardized method of describing practices;
- assessment of each participating practice according to established criteria;
- support for dissemination of practices among other municipalities, using a variety of methods; and
- realization of a new round of the Programme with different themes every year.

2. Structures for Implementation of the Programme

Steering Committee

Consists of representatives of CoE, Government, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, National Association of Municipalities in Republic of Bulgaria, Foundation for Local Government Reform and independent experts.

Selection Panel

Consists of 4 independent experts in the field of local self-government.

Selection Panel assesses practices and presents practices finalists for approval by the Steering Committee.

3. Implementation of the Programme

All local authorities are eligible and invited to participate in the competition. The launching of the programme takes place at the 1st Steering Committee meeting. At the same time the themes of the competition and the selection criteria are set up.

The local authorities are informed about the programme through regional meetings organised by the national partner (FLGR), the FLGR website and FLGR e-weekly.

The participating local governments fill in and send the completed APPLICATION FORM to flgr@flgr.bg by **February 15, 2017**. The form can be downloaded from the website of FLGR www.flgr.bg.

The assessment of best practices takes place in two steps:

1. Evaluation of all applications and pre-selection;
2. Presentation of practices finalists for approval by the Steering Committee.

The programme is completed by an Awarding ceremony.

Activities to be performed by the national partner (FLGR) with the assistance of the CoE:

- Organisation of 2 meetings of the Steering Committee;
- Design of the prospectus for the launching and its dissemination afterwards;
- Organisation and animation of 3 regional information meetings with local authorities;
- Organisation of 2 meeting of the Selection Panel;
- Organisation of the award ceremony;
- Draft of the final evaluation report and preparation of a brochure with selected best practices;
- Help awarded to local authorities to disseminate their BP.

Stages of implementation of the Programme:

<i>Nº</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Period of implementation</i>
1.	Information campaign	November - December 2016
2.	Gathering practices contest	January - February 2017
3.	Evaluation and awarding of best practices	March - May 2017

4. Themes of Best Practice Contest 2016/2017



In the first edition of the Best Practice in Local Self-Governments in Bulgaria Programme thematic areas are three:

I. Municipal support for civic initiatives

In this thematic area practices will compete that led to the introduction of new solutions at local level as a result of proposals from citizens and NGOs. Also practices supporting the initiatives of socio-economic partners through institutional and other support for projects of citizens, schools, community centres, NGOs, public and

consultative councils and other forms of participation of citizens in decision-making process and more. Especially will be welcomed the participation of practices with and for young people.

II. New management technologies and solutions

It is expected in this thematic area practices to be presented introducing new technologies and solutions in municipal management, administrative services, infrastructure and spatial development, transport, public services, parking, tourism and others. Incl. mobile applications, open data, internet based platforms or advanced green technologies and solutions and more.

III. Social innovation and partnerships

In this thematic area is expected to achieve the participation of examples of social innovation such as: solving the demographic problem, elderly care, social services, social enterprises, ensuring equal access to education and health and social support, active involvement of consumers and etc., highly will be valued integrated approaches, synergy of participation and interaction of various institutions, organizations and citizens in the realization of practice.

5. Criteria for Selecting Best Practices



The criteria for practices evaluation are:

1. Relevance and Impact

The initiative solves existing local issue of great importance to the local community, which lowers the quality of life of many people and exists for a long time. The realization of the practice led to solve the problem and to improve the quality of life of the local community.

2. Openness and transparency

The practice should be public in all its aspects - there should be involved all stakeholders in the preparation and realization, there had been hold a broad consultative process. Stages of implementation and the results had been widely announced and publicized.

3. Innovation

The practice should demonstrate implementation and enforcement of a new product, practice, service, process or a new way of organization for solving specific problems of the local community.

4. Sustainability

The practice should be sustainable management innovation, ie not a one-time event, and should have led to sustainable results.

Best practices, implemented and proven in a given context, must first be tested in the local conditions. The more relevant they are, the higher is the value of best practice as a tool to disseminate experience and improve the environment in another municipality.

The possibility of multiplication of the best practice is determined by factors such as:

- Natural, social and economic environment;
- Compliance with local laws and regulations;
- Access to resources, level of expertise required, as well as other technical and infrastructural factors.

**ALL BULGARIAN MUNICIPALITIES HAVE THE
RIGHT AND ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE
COMPETITION FOR BEST PRACTICES 2016/2017!**

Get Involved! Promote Your Achievements!

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