

## **Bulgarian Development Agency's most recent activity report for the period 2013-2014**

"Bulgarian Agency for Development" is a non-profit association that aims to support the development of the business sector, the sector of education and culture, as well as to promote the democratic and integration processes in the society. Association's main activities are focused on the provision of consulting services, provision of trainings, undertaking research, development, dissemination and publication of studies, analysis, information, newsletters, providing access to sources of economic and scientific information. BDA provides technical and operational assistance to public and private organizations and institutions of central and local government; implementation of projects under EU and national programs in collaboration with international and national public and private organizations, educational institutions; establishing networks for information exchange for cooperation with international organizations; organizing national and international conferences, seminars, courses and other activities related to the objectives of the association; development of innovative materials for training and education; organizing training programs in civil, environmental, health education and more. We also promote entrepreneurship education in order to develop active citizenship, employability and new business creation (including social entrepreneurship).

Bulgarian Development Agency's most recent activities are related to:

- Publishing of the BDA's electronic magazine "ICT for regional development and education" which has currently around 7 000 subscribers from schools, community centres, universities, municipalities, local government administrations and private individuals. The main topics of the magazine cover innovation, entrepreneurship and use of ICT in regional development and education/training process. The magazine is free of charge and it is available in Bulgarian on our website: <http://bg-da.eu/en/ict4rde> .
- Bulgarian Development Agency undertakes researches focused on the entrepreneurship processes in Bulgaria. Our research teams work in core areas of fostering the entrepreneurship that combine and enhance topics of national interest, social and economic policy and EU integration and cohesion. The main aim of the research is to identify the conditions and possibilities for starting an own business and setting of a start ups in our country.

- Providing consultancy services to potential start-up entrepreneurs and SMEs in Bulgaria related to the identification of obstacles and challenges of starting up and developing their businesses; existing possibilities for funding (EU and national programs).
- Establishment and promotion of contact and business networks of SMEs aiming to disseminate and popularize innovative techniques and processes as well as innovative business management and procedures.
- Bulgarian Development Agency also provides trainings to potential new entrepreneurs preparing them in starting their own small business including preparing successful business plan, leadership and management, financial planning, communication, teamwork etc.

In 2013, Bulgarian Development Agency successfully completed work as a partner in the implementation of the four projects in the centralized EU program "Lifelong Learning", namely:

- ***Y.U.S.S - Addressing Youth Unemployment through Soft Skills Coaching Programmes (2011-1-ES-LEO05-35958)***

The general objectives of the project were to support young people in transition from the educational system to access to employment, through the acquisition and use of knowledge, competences and qualifications that promote their personal development and their active participation into the labour market; contribute to develop social and interpersonal competences in changing working environments. During the project BDA took active participation in development of the main project products and their translation in Bulgarian. BDA also tested the developed program with 12 youths from Bulgaria

- ***T.I.K.C.I. - Tools to Improve the Key Competences of Teacher (2011-1-ES1-LEO05-35887)***

During the project lifetime Bulgarian Development Agency took active participation in the project main activities. In collaboration with 4 more partners BDA has established a work plan whose main results were: a map of key competences of instructors, a portfolio that allows them to analyze their level of competence and different tools for self-education, to improve those skills which have been detected more deficiencies.

- ***Transfair (LLP-LdV-TOI-2011/DK-1106)***

The main aim of the project was to adapt and disseminate a FAIR start training program in few new countries taking into account their specific characteristics. After the introduction, adaptation and testing of the training program FAIR Start in Denmark, Poland, Bulgaria,

Romania and Turkey, the project consortium created online learning platform available to a broad range of stakeholders. The educational content was translated into Bulgarian and sensitized to the national context. TransFair program was successfully tested by BDA in the Social Services complex "Ludogorie" in Ispirih (Bulgaria).

- ***BROWNTRANS Brownfield Regeneration Know-How Transfer (2011-1-SK1-LEO05-02876)***

The aim of the project was to prepare an educational material based on the Brownfield Handbook that was prepared within the BRIBAST project. Handbook was updated with the recent international brownfields reuse trends, supplemented with the specifics of Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Romania. Within the project BDA trained more than 40 representatives of local authorities and universities in Bulgaria. Educational materials (freely available) were developed and translated into Bulgarian.

In 2013 Bulgarian Development Agency became a partner in six new projects related to the promotion of entrepreneurship within the centralized EU program "Life Long Learning", namely:

- ***Soufflearning 2 - Expanding the innovative approach of On-the-job Training and Qualification for small and very small companies (DE/13/LLP-LdV/TOI/147674)***

The project aims to assist SMEs by using innovative methodologies tailored to the needs of the enterprise, enhance employee skills. Participating organizations from Germany, Bulgaria, Spain and Greece. Within the project activities Bulgarian Development Agency hosted and took a part in the train-the-trainers workshop which was held in Sofia, Bulgaria. During the workshop were explained the main principals of the soufflearning methodology and its main benefits. BDA also took part in different role playing games and simulations in order to use the soufflearning method in practice. After the successful accomplishment of the train-the-trainers workshop BDA organized on-the-job trainings with two SME working in the food sector in June 2014. Regarding the good results from these trainings and the positive feedback the two enterprises, where the training were held in, expressed their willingness to take a part in further trainings.

- ***DIAMEE: Dialogical Methodologies for Entrepreneurs (2013-ES1-LEO05-66380)***

As a result of many studies concerning cooperative learning, it is found that effective learning and teaching require better than normal skills in dialogue, especially when dealing with

entrepreneurs, which are normally involved in individual projects and processes. Dialogical competences include many sub-skills which support shared thinking and performing. The goal of the project is to develop the dialogical competences of entrepreneurship trainers and coaches through concrete methods. The development work is based on extensive research and a web service provided in the language of the transference (EN), Spanish (ES) and other local languages in accordance with partners assessment that supports the training of dialogical competence. So far Bulgarian Development Agency in collaboration with the other project partners took a part in the development of these methods and adapted them according to the national context. In March 2014 BDA also organized national pilot workshop. In the workshop took part 18 managers from different educational organisations providing entrepreneurship trainings. All participants had the possibilities to test the developed methods. The feedback provided by them was very positive and the methods were highly evaluated. This feedback will be also used by BDA for further adaptation of the dialogical methodologies.

- ***EWC - Effective Writers & Communicators (540346-LLP-1-2013-1-GR-LEONARDO-LNW)***

Much needed soft skills like professional writing, communication and networking in English are missing from young SME (Small and medium enterprises) workers and entrepreneurs in Europe. In its Europe 2020 strategy, the EU has recognized this challenge for SMEs' international competitiveness and youth's future employability in globalized labour markets. For this reason a network of experienced SMEs, consultants, social partners and educators in life-long learning, business consulting and professional networking, aims to develop and pilot an innovative ICT based training course on business writing and communication for young workers and entrepreneurs, thus encouraging international competitiveness and employability. It will also develop & disseminate strategic guidelines and recommendations for SMEs, employer organisations, HEI (a higher education institution) and VET providers and educators, who wish to incorporate the course within their formal curricula, competence development and appraisal practices. Within the EWC project activities, Bulgarian Development Agency prepared a situation analysis and needs assessment report related to the current practices and programs on professional writing and communication training for SME professionals in Bulgaria. BDA also held several in-depth interviews with middle and senior level managers / executives of private sector SMEs (HR managers etc) with previous experience in formal competence development processes regarding professional writing and communication skills development in. The main aim of these activities was to identify gaps in formal competence development processes of SMEs in relation to professional writing and communication skills.

BDA elaborated also a report related to the provisions and standard operating procedures on online tool requirements for accessibility and usability by people with disabilities and special needs in Bulgaria.

- ***BIOINNO – A knowledge alliance in biotechnology (539427–LLP-1-2013-1-IT–ERASMUS-EKA)***

The goal of BIOINNO is to develop an accelerated route to entrepreneurship education to ready the next generation of talents to turn vision into reality. Besides, BIOINNO proposes an innovation transfer model between Industry and Academia to foster a bi-directional flow of knowledge, research and innovation. BIOINNO will also provide the educational prerequisites needed to enable students to develop their own ideas and build self-confidences, and to foster the successful birth and development of innovation-driven ventures in Europe. The project will develop innovative platform (under the name BIOINNO2GO which will support the entire learning process through various advanced ICT and multimedia tools). Like project partner Bulgarian Development Agency took a part in the two-day Facilitator Training Course followed by the three-day Entrepreneurial Training Course which took place from the 23rd March to 28th March 2014 at Cambridge Judge Business School. Currently BDA act as a responsible partner for developing the BIOINNO2GO platform and works for its development.