

ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE REHABILITATION PROJECT

Key Dates:

Approved : June 26, 2007

Effective: December 13, 2007

Closing: June 30, 2013

Financing in million US Dollars*:

<i>Financier</i>	<i>Financing</i>	<i>Disbursed</i>	<i>Undisbursed</i>
IBRD Loan	122.5	38.3	90.6
Government of Bulgaria	73.5		
Total Project Cost	196		

*** As of August 4, 2011.**

Note: Disbursements may differ from financing due to exchange rate fluctuations at the time of disbursement.



Bulgaria has a road network of over 41,000 km that reaches all communities, including 19,000 km classified as national republican roads and more than 21,000 km of municipal roads. Only 36 percent of the country's population lives in large cities. The rest of the population lives mainly in medium and small sized towns or in rural areas, often separated by sparsely populated mountainous areas, and therefore very dependent on road transport for their livelihoods. About one-third of the national road network is estimated to be in poor condition. The poorest conditions are with the secondary roads. Furthermore, a considerable portion of the core national road network still needs to be upgraded to European technical and safety standards. Each year, nearly 1,000 people die and around 10,000 are injured in road accidents, and some may be disabled for the rest of their lives. With close to 140 deaths per one million inhabitants, Bulgaria's road fatality risk is two times higher than the EU average.

The Project Development Objective is to assist Bulgaria to reduce road transport costs by improving the condition and quality of its roads network during the first years of EU accession. The project objectives will be achieved by: improving the condition of selected roads in the national road network; enhancing the Roads Infrastructure Agency (RIA) capacity to adopt efficient planning policies and effective management of maintenance, rehabilitation, and construction programs; and assisting Bulgaria in articulating a road safety strategy and identifying priority activities to improve road safety.

Key Expected Results and Current Achievements:

- **Road rehabilitation component:** Rehabilitation and repair of selected Class I, II, and III roads across the country, totaling about 307 km. Construction works are ongoing on about 300 km. At the end of the project the rehabilitation will cover around: 117 kilometers of Class I roads; 127 kilometers of Class II roads; 63 kilometers of Class III roads
- **Road asset management system:** Bulgaria now has a functioning Road Management System – developed under the Project – with all the key elements: software, hardware, data, and, more importantly, trained Bulgarian experts in the road laboratory and in RIA's headquarters. The Road management and data systems are used to develop budget-constrained programs for maintenance and rehabilitation of roads for the entire national road network using up-to-date data, to evaluate efficiency and effectiveness of road programs, and transparently monitor the condition of road infrastructure. In particular, the Road Asset Management System was developed and extensive training provided to Bulgarian experts. Pilot performance-based maintenance contracts were also prepared. International experience shows that the cost to maintain and preserve road infrastructure could be reduced by 15 to 40 percent if the road agency had technical systems in place to monitor the condition and the level of usage of road infrastructure, and if performance-based maintenance contracts were used
- **Roads safety:** The Government – with support from the World Bank – conducted a Road Safety Management Capacity Review and developed a Road Safety Improvement Action Plan. RIA is now in the process of identifying road safety “black spots” and on designing solutions to improve traffic safety at these locations. Works at these locations are envisaged under the Project. In addition, the Project provided extensive training to Bulgarian experts on road safety.

Key Partners: The Road Infrastructure Agency (RIA) which is the project implementing entity; the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW) which is the parent ministry of RIA; the Ministry of Transport (MOT) which is responsible of transport policy. Road safety dialogue involves in addition to RIA, MRDPW, MOT the following stakeholders: the Traffic Police (Ministry of Interior), the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education.

Key International Partners are the European Commission, the European Investment Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.