

New modern lighting will be built in Vaptsarov Park

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The replacement of the conventional lighting in Vaptsarov park in the town of Dimitrovgrad with new solar equipment is about to be built under a projedt. Deputy Mayor Yasho Minkov shared the information at a press conference today. Together with the project team, Minkov explained the various activities that the municipality of Dimitrovgrad will implement until the end of the project (the end of April 2024).

The total value of the project is BGN 1,025,612.75, of which a grant of BGN 968,273.60 was provided by the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area 2014-2021, Program "Environmental Protection and Climate Change". Dimitrovgrad's partners are the municipalities of Zlatograd and Lyubimets, as well as the Factory for Environmental Initiatives and the Economy 2000 Club. On the Norwegian side, the partner is IOWA AS, Oslo.

The main goal of the project is to increase the ability of the municipalities of Dimitrovgrad, Lyubimets and Zlatograd to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the changing climate. This is done in several main aspects: to increase the capacity of municipal officials to plan and implement actions in the field of mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and to improve the knowledge and expertise of local communities on climate-related issues. The planned activities are: project management; creation of local public climate councils; trainings; survey of donor country good practices; analytical review of the current situation; preparation

of Sustainable Energy, Climate and Adaptation Plans; implementation of climate change mitigation measures; development of Local Climate Awareness Plans. The result of the implementation of the project activities is an increased capacity of the municipalities of Dimitrovgrad, Zlatograd and Lyubimets: to evaluate the adopted planning documents and implemented measures aimed at mitigation and adaptation to climate change, to plan future actions, taking into account: synergy of measures related with the climate, in all general and sectoral municipal policies; the latest documents at national and European level; good practices from Norway and other countries; to implement concrete climate change mitigation measures in practice; to increase the capacity of local communities and work in partnership with them for the transition to carbon- neutral and climate-resilient municipalities.

According to ***Activity 1***, within 12 months, the formation of a Central Unit for project management is planned; formation of Local Project Management Units for each partner; coordination, monitoring and control of project implementation; creation of a bilingual website of the project; printing and distribution of an information leaflet. The expected results of the activity are a successfully implemented project in accordance with the defined budget and schedule and achievement of the project indicators; informed interested parties about the results and good practices of the project and about the contribution of the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area to their implementation. Under ***Activity 2***, the creation of local public climate councils is planned, through which the municipalities of Dimitrovgrad, Lyubimets and Zlatograd will provide a mechanism for the active inclusion of civil associations and the private sector in the process of evaluating actions already taken and planning future measures in the field of the climate. The functions of the formed councils will be consultative and will mainly include: discussion and recommendations in relation to identified problems in the implementation of municipal plans and projects; review and recommendations on the prepared planning documents in the field of climate; initiating projects and local initiatives for the implementation of municipal climate policy. The expected results of the activity are: introducing an innovative practice in the three municipalities of an institutionalized form of dialogue between municipalities and local communities in the field of local policies and measures for mitigation and adaptation to climate change; improved knowledge and expertise of local stakeholders on climate-related issues; improved capacity of municipal officials to engage and work in partnership with local communities to transition to carbon-neutral and climate-resilient municipalities. Under ***Activity 3***, municipal officials and councilors and members of local public councils will be trained on climate in 4 thematic areas: mitigation and adaptation to climate change, incl. European and national program and methodological documents; integrated municipal planning and preparation of planning documents in the field of climate; financing of projects/measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to climate change; specialized training to acquire technical knowledge and skills for mitigation (energy, urban planning, transport, etc.) and adaptation (health, floods, fires, forests, etc.), with a special focus on applied good practices from Norway and countries. ***Activity 4*** envisages a study of good practices of the donor country. The aim of the activity is to explore

and disseminate good practices in the field of climate change mitigation and adaptation applied in Norway. The activity will bring benefits to the municipalities in the process of preparing and implementing climate planning documents. Representatives of the Bulgarian partners in the project will participate in a study visit to Norway. By ***Activity 5*** will be done analytical review of the current situation. Carrying out research and expert assessment of municipal planning documents, incl. sectoral, which include measures for mitigation and/or adaptation to climate change, and reports and progress reports on their implementation. The aim is to examine the current situation in the three municipalities regarding adopted strategic plans that contain measures related to mitigation and adaptation to climate change and the measures already taken, and to identify gaps and problems regarding mitigation actions and adaptation to climate change, incl. for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and actions in extreme climate events.

Activity 6 Preparation of Sustainable Energy, Climate and Adaptation Plans. The aim is to develop a municipal planning document for each of the three municipalities, based on current data and the latest documents at the European and national level, which will outline the local policy for the transition to sustainable municipal development in the conditions of the challenges and risks caused from climate change. The plans will include soft and investment measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to improve the adaptation of the territory, infrastructure, municipal sectors and ecosystems, reflecting innovative approaches and new technological solutions resulting from the cooperation with the Norwegian partner. Under ***Activity 7***, through the implementation of measures to mitigate climate change, the aim is to develop and implement measures to mitigate climate change in the three municipalities: replacement of the conventional lighting in Vaptsarov park in the town of Dimitrovgrad with new solar equipment; purchase of 360 composters to prevent the formation of biodegradable waste, which will be distributed to households in the municipality of Zlatograd; installation of equipment in two kindergartens for heating water using renewable energy sources in the town of Lyubimets; supply of electric bicycles for the needs of the control activity of the municipal inspectors in the municipality of Lyubimets. ***Activity 8*** envisages the development of a practical tool for each municipal administration in a structured and coherent way to raise public awareness of the challenges and risks posed by climate change and the actions that local communities should take, incl. at the individual level, for climate change mitigation and adaptation.