

# Interreg



EUROPEAN UNION

## Greece-Bulgaria

### Aqua-lity

European Regional Development Fund

# Aqua-lity

Application of innovative  
Techniques for improving  
Drinking water quality In urban areas

[www.aqua-lity.eu](http://www.aqua-lity.eu)

The project Aqua-lity is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and national funds of the countries participating in the Cooperation Programme INTERREG V-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020".



# Aqua-lity

## Project Beneficiaries



Δήμος Οραιοκάστρου

**Lead Beneficiary**  
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**Project Beneficiary 2**  
**Municipality of Dimitrovgrad**

6400 Dimitrovgrad, 15 "G.S. Rakovski Blvd."  
Τηλ.: 00359 391 68 203  
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Website: <https://www.dimitrovgrad.bg/>

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The existence of clean and suitable for human use of water is the obvious condition for the robust development of each community, as well as for the quality of life of its people.



I am deeply satisfied that the Municipality of Oraioikastro is leading on behalf of our country in this joint cross-border initiative with Bulgaria and is leading a project that will offer safe and safe drinking water through the use of an innovative control system and quality upgrade. Culture, not of any development, but of sustainable development is absolutely necessary in the way we make our political decisions, so that the goals of economic prosperity, environmental sustainability and high quality of life can be harmonized. From our side we transfer the know-how to the Municipality of Dimitrovgrad, while at the same time improving our own ability to deal with problems related to the quality of drinking water in our area.

**Pantelis Tsakiris**  
**Mayor of Oraioikastro**



### **The Cooperation Programme “Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020”**

Greece and Bulgaria, two neighboring countries with a rich past, since the end of the 1990s have entered an era of closer co-operation, due to the INTERREG Programme “Greece-Bulgaria”.

The main idea behind “INTERREG” is that countries have issues which can be better solved if they work together with their neighbors than if each one remains confined within its borders. So for this reason, in our Programme we promote activities that bring our people closer.

The Greece-Bulgaria cross-border cooperation area for the programming period 2014-2020 is identical to the current ETC programme. It extends to 40.202 km<sup>2</sup> and has a total population of 2.7 million inhabitants.





The settlement structure of the area is characterized by the presence of 10 medium-large cities (>50.000 inhabitants) which accumulate 38,2% of total population, and 25 small cities (10.000-50.000 inhabitants). Despite the historically relatively small amounts of funds allocated, there is a long history of cooperation in the eligible area, which started with Community initiative INTERREG I (1989-1993).

### Scope of the project Aqua-lity

The project implements the approach proposed by the Program for the promotion of innovative technologies in the field of water management and especially in the industrial areas of the Municipality of Oraioakastro and agricultural areas of the Municipality of Dimitrovgrad against pollution. In addition, it is the first time that a project focuses on drinking water quality in urban and semi-urban areas in order not only to improve local conditions but also to launch an interregional public debate on the issue by providing the necessary tools for cooperation between different authorities.



## Objectives of the project “Aquality”

The main objective of “Aquality” project is to enhance drinking water quality and reduce health hazards. This will be achieved with the implementation of an innovative early warning system for water pollution and a sanitation system. Consequently, the project will contribute significantly to the priorities set by the Programme since it will “promote innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector, soil protection etc”. It has been acknowledged that the main source of water pollution in Greece is agriculture, while in Bulgaria the main water pollution sources are industry and urban effluents. For this reason PBs have included a study which will identify and record spots of environmental pressure such as industrial or livestock units (georefering of the spots) in order to investigate the extent of their impact in water quality and make suggestions on interventions that should take place in order to limit this impact.

The rest of proposed activities also contribute to the specific object 6 “to enhance water management” by giving beneficiaries the necessary tools for providing drinking water of higher quality to their residents, improve their capacity to address water pollution incidents in a direct and cost efficient way, comply with Directive 2000/60/EC and design well targeted strategies in the field of drinking water quality.

Last but not least, the project is based on the two pillars of the Programme: the exchange of knowhow and good practices among beneficiaries; and the implementation of initiatives that foster and facilitate further cooperation among stakeholders in the cross border area.

## Structure/Action of the Project

The structure of the project is divided into 4 Work Packages that follow 4 thematic steps for the successful implementation of the project. All partners contribute to each Work Package and actions are distributed among WPs to reflect their skills and role in local communities.

**WP1:** Project Management & Coordination

**WP2:** Communication & Dissemination

**WP3:** Drinking Water monitoring and improvement systems

**WP4:** Evaluation and dissemination of knowhow

## Main expected results

The project will have significant results for both residents in the implementation area as well as beneficiaries and water management bodies in the whole CB area. First of all, the quality of drinking water in Oraiokastro will be improved dramatically and it will be appropriate for human consumption. This is expected to have a wider social impact because it will contribute to improved health status and living standards in the area (Scientific studies have proven that there is a positive interrelationship between health status and economic development). Additionally, the early warning system will assist Project Beneficiary 2- Municipality of Dimitrovgrad (PB2) in complying with Water Framework Directive 2000/60 (by addressing pollution from urban waste water and from agriculture) and protect citizens from being exposed to health hazards related to the consumption of polluted water. From an economic point of view, PB2 will achieve reduction of operational and managerial costs of drinking water management due to early identification and/or prevention of potential accidents. Additionally, the reduction of water related hygienic problems will lead to further economic benefits due to improved health conditions and thus decrease of public spending for health care provisions.

As far as beneficiaries and water management bodies are concerned, the project provides them with the opportunity to gain significant knowhow in applying innovative technologies for monitoring and improving drinking water quality. Furthermore, the development of tools to support and facilitate water monitoring could be the first step towards a joint policy for addressing common challenges. Last but not least, publicity actions will reinforce public awareness on issues of water conservation, the importance of water sanitation and the contribution of EU funds in regional development.



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