

STUDY OF THE SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT



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I. SUMMARY

The current study of the social impact assessment since the establishment of the social enterprise in the field of waste management has been developed within the project: *“Green” employment in the management of biowastes (Green_Crew) project, under Priority Axis 4: “Social inclusive Cross-border area”, Thematic objective 09: Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination, Investment priority 9c: Providing support for social enterprises, Specific objective 9: To Expand social entrepreneurship in the cross-border area, under the Cross-border Cooperation Program INTERREG VA “Greece-Bulgaria” 2014-2020.*

The main goal of the project *„“Green” employment in the management of biowastes“* (Green_Crew) is to promote social entrepreneurship as a model for local development and decentralization by informing and raising public awareness about the implementation of the concept of biodegradable waste at the local level.

The Municipality of Blagoevgrad is a project partner with the Municipality of Serres (Greece), the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Faculty of Chemistry) and the Municipality of Nstos (Greece).

The activities set out in the project are related to the promotion and presentation of alternative ways of composting biodegradable waste, social entrepreneurship and exchange of experience and good practices in the field of composting "green waste".

The study of social impact assessment aims to accelerate the creation of a social enterprise in the field of "eco-innovation" in the wider area of Bulgaria - Greece by creating certain conditions to support certain types of entrepreneurship.

At the same time, developing this impact assessment of social enterprise will be used as a means of reducing costs, while creating new opportunities for growth of the regional and local economy.

II. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

ABBREVIATION	FULL NAME
EPL	ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LAW
WMA	WASTE MANAGEMENT ACT
LTS	LAW ON TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE
LESSE	LAW ON ENTERPRISES OF THE SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY
SAL	SOCIAL ASSISTANCE LAW
DEEE	DISCONTINUED ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT
UMV	USED MOTOR VEHICLES
NWMP	THE NATIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN
EU	EUROPEAN UNION
ESF	EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

EC **EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

ERDF **EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND**

SC **SOCIAL SERVICE**

SE **SOCIAL ENTERPRISES**

III. GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED

Bio-waste is part of biodegradable household waste, in particular waste from parks and gardens, food and kitchen waste from households, restaurants, catering establishments and shops, as well as similar waste from the food industry.

Biodegradable waste is all waste that has the ability to be degraded anaerobically or aerobically, such as food and vegetable waste, paper, cardboard and others (§ 1, item 3 of the Additional Provisions of the WMA).

Compost is a humus-rich product containing at least 15% and no more than 50% dry organic matter of the total weight obtained as a result of the composting process.

Composting is a process of controlled aerobic, exothermic, biological decomposition of separately collected biowaste in order to obtain compost.

Separate collection is the collection in which a waste stream is separated by type and nature of the waste in order to facilitate specific treatment (§ 1, item 34 of the Additional Provisions of the WMA).

A social and solidarity economy is a form of entrepreneurship aimed at one or more social activities and / or social objectives pursued by enterprises, including through the production of various goods or the provision of services, in cooperation with state or local authorities or independently.

A social enterprise is an enterprise which, regardless of its legal organizational form, has as its object the activity of producing goods or providing services, combining economic results with social goals, achieving measurable, positive social added value, being managed transparently with the participation of members, workers or the employees in making management decisions, carries out their economic activity, as part of the average number of staff are persons under Art. 7, item 4 and / or as the profit is mainly spent for carrying out social activity and / or social purpose, according to the constituent contract or statute. (§ 1, τ. 5 LESSE)

A cooperative enterprise, as defined by the International Cooperative Union (ICA), is “an independent association of people who voluntarily come together to meet common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned enterprise and democratic governance.”.

Social entrepreneurship is a form of entrepreneurship that combines economic activity with the pursuit of social goals, as a result of which social added value is produced. (§ 1, τ. 6 of LESSE).

Social added value is the achieved social effect for the target group as a result of the activity performed by the social enterprise, taking into account both positive and negative changes

and the accompanying effects as a result of other actions or lack of actions by the social enterprise.
(§ 1, τ. 7 LESSE).

Vulnerable groups are all those who fail to gain access to or take advantage of the opportunities offered by society and the economy and fall victim to or are at risk of social exclusion. The following are usually classified as vulnerable groups:

- young people: due to the lack of professional experience and the difficulties in combining work and education;
- people with disabilities: due to lack of accessible environment and objective restrictions on possible employment options;
- minorities: due to public prejudices and negative attitudes;
- people living in remote areas: due to the limited choice of employment opportunities, especially in difficult times for the local economy.

Social services are activities in support of people for social inclusion and independent living, which are provided in the community and in specialized institutions.

Sustainable development is achieving a balance between social and environmental principles, such as socially justified and environmentally friendly economic development.

IV. INTRODUCTION



The current study of impact assessment of the establishment of a social enterprise in the field of waste management in the municipality of Blagoevgrad aims to have a positive impact on the

process of development of social entrepreneurship at the local level. It is expected that it will also be crucial for the growth of the regional and local economy.

The impact assessment includes a description and analysis of existing European, national, regional and local documents in the field of waste management, social services, social entrepreneurship and the assessment of the social impact of the activities of social enterprises. The aim is to prepare an analysis of the available conditions (legislation, practices, local policies and resources) for the establishment and development of local social enterprises, including those aimed at waste management as part of the regional and local economy. The document also draws attention to the importance of possible special regulation in relation to the social and solidarity economy - the availability of approaches to assess the social impact of the social enterprise, opportunities for their application and their possible impact on social entrepreneurship. The topic of the need and opportunities for assessing the social impact of social enterprises is valid for SPs with different areas of activity, including in the field of waste management.

The evaluation also draws attention to the possibility for the actual application and implementation of regional and local strategic, tactical and operational documents in the field of waste management through social entrepreneurship.

The development of the current impact assessment of the establishment of a social enterprise in the field of waste management in the municipality of Blagoevgrad aims to promote social inclusion, the fight against poverty and discrimination, to provide support to social enterprises and to expand social entrepreneurship. in the cross-border area.

1. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BLAGOEVGRAD MUNICIPALITY

Blagoevgrad Municipality is the largest in population and the third in territory within Blagoevgrad District (with an area of 621 sq. Km). It is located in southwestern Bulgaria, in the westernmost part of the Rila-Rhodope massif and consists of 26 settlements (with a total of 77,441 inhabitants - data from February 2011). The municipal center of Blagoevgrad is located in the

valley of the river Struma, at 360 m above sea level near the southwestern slopes of Rila, on the main road E-79, 100 km south of Sofia. The city is 27 km from the border with the Republic of Macedonia, 80 km from the border with the Hellenic Republic and 200 km from Thessaloniki. The river Blagoevgradska Bistritsa passes through the town.

The region borders with two neighboring countries (Greece and Macedonia), while the municipality only with the Republic of Macedonia, which is a prerequisite for the effective development of cross-border cooperation. The connection with Macedonia is through Zlatarevo border checkpoint and Stanke Lisichkovo border checkpoint.



Fig. 1. Territorial scope of Blagoevgrad municipality

Characteristics and specificity of the geographical area, indicated in the annual report for 2014 of RIEW Blagoevgrad on the state of the environment are determined by: Strategic location in the directions of the European transport corridors, border with the well-developed network of regional and local transport infrastructure; The built Struma Motorway; Accessibility to railway transport and the presence of four border crossings for the district and 2 for the municipality. The

transport connections are mainly on the main road E-79 and the electrified railway line CE-855, which are part of interstate corridors; The gas supply infrastructure under construction is a major factor for sustainable development of the region. A main gas pipeline to Greece passes through the territory; The diverse climatic, geological and hydrological conditions, the unique flora and fauna, the rich diversity of species, communities and natural habitats, as well as the fact that the territory includes National and Natural Parks of great importance.

On the one hand, the demographic trends in the municipality are identical to those for the country - relatively low birth rate, high mortality, unfavorable age structure. These processes are more pronounced in the villages of the municipality.

On the other hand, the demographic situation in the Municipality of Blagoevgrad is a result of the action of factors specific to the municipality and determined by its demographic, historical, cultural and socio-economic development. Birth and death rates, marriage, divorce, migration, gender, age, ethnicity, religion and education have a significant impact. They influence the formation of human resources in the municipality, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

According to data of GRAO-Blagoevgrad, as of 15.12.2019 the number of the population at permanent and current address in the municipality of Blagoevgrad is 72 435 people. Of these, in the town of Blagoevgrad are 67,341 people and 5,094 in the small settlements in the municipality.

As a result of the temporary migration / residents without permanent address registration, a large number of students studying at SWU "Neofit Rilski", the American University and specialized high schools in Blagoevgrad, as well as the tourist flow there are periods of temporary population growth. These are some of the reasons for the discrepancy in the number of residents of Blagoevgrad municipality with a permanent and current address. As of December 15, 2019, the residents of Blagoevgrad Municipality at the current address are 81,228.

2. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The main goal of the project "Green employment in biodegradable waste management" (Green_Crew) is to promote social entrepreneurship as a model for local development and

decentralization by informing and raising public awareness about the implementation of the concept of biodegradable waste at the local level.

The activities set out in the project are related to the promotion and presentation of alternative ways of composting biodegradable waste, social entrepreneurship and exchange of experience and good practices in the field of composting "green waste".

The aim is to study the possibilities for social impact assessment and its significance for the development of social enterprises:

- Creating conditions for the development of social enterprises in the municipality of Blagoevgrad and their recognition by the local community as an opportunity to solve social problems, create sustainable jobs, facilitate social and labor integration, fight poverty and social exclusion.
- Optimization of the system for separate collection and disposal of waste on the territory of Blagoevgrad municipality through development of local social entrepreneurship.
- Directing social entrepreneurship on the territory of Blagoevgrad municipality in the field of waste management.
- Using the opportunities of local social entrepreneurship for:
 - Effective and sustainable management of biodegradable waste by stimulating and introducing home composting.
 - Reducing the amount of generated and disposed biodegradable waste on the territory of Blagoevgrad municipality by preventing their formation and encouraging their reuse.
 - Raising public awareness about the recycling and recovery of biodegradable and green waste.
 - Raising public awareness and activity on topics related to increasing the amount of recycled and recovered biodegradable waste by creating conditions for building a

network of facilities for treatment of all generated waste, which will reduce the risk to the population and environmental protection.

The development of this evaluation aims to promote social inclusion, the fight against poverty and discrimination, to provide support to social enterprises and to expand social entrepreneurship in the cross-border area.

The assessment clearly shows the social nature of the project, which is crucial for the growth of the local and regional economy through an integrated framework for waste management in the municipality of Blagoevgrad, which will reduce the environmental impact caused by the generated waste, improving resource efficiency, increasing the responsibilities of polluters, stimulating investment in waste management.

V. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH



The following methods were used in preparing the current social impact assessment of the social enterprise:

- **Study** - review and analysis of available information and documents from official and other sources that give a detailed picture of the situation regarding waste management, including biodegradable and green waste in the municipality of Blagoevgrad and providing adequate content framework in which to carry out the necessary assessment.

The desk survey included the following sources of information:

- Project documents;
- Databases from the National Statistical Institute;
- National Waste Management Plan 2014-2020;
- Municipal Development Plan of the Municipality of Blagoevgrad 2014-2020;
- Waste Management Program Blagoevgrad Municipality 2015-2020;
- National strategic plan for gradual reduction of the quantities of biodegradable waste intended for landfill 2010-2020;
- EU Europe 2020 strategy;
- Pre-investment studies for a composting plant for separately collected biodegradable and / or green waste, a pre-treatment plant for mixed municipal waste and an anaerobic plant for separately collected biodegradable waste.

Other public documents related to waste management and social entrepreneurship are:

- Law on Environmental Protection;
- Law on Waste Management;
- By-laws related to waste management;
- Law on Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy;
- Municipal strategy for development of social services 2016 -2020;
- National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2020;
- National concept for social economy;

- National Youth Strategy 2010-2020;
 - Long-term employment strategy for people with disabilities 2011-2020;
 - Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on "Cooperatives and Restructuring";
 - Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on "Measuring social impact" (own-initiative opinion);
 - Opinions on a published draft Methodology for assessment of social added value in connection with the LESSE.
- **Workshops with stakeholders** - regular workshops with stakeholders are organized during the study period to discuss issues, share expectations and forecasts related to the expected social impact of stakeholders as a result of the creation / development of existing social enterprise in the municipality of Blagoevgrad with a subject of activity oriented to waste management. The assessment covers and takes into account the views of all participants in the workshops regarding the expected social impact.
 - **A Consultation through a survey** was conducted among employees in social services in the municipality of Blagoevgrad and other institutions, serving mainly representatives of vulnerable groups. The survey is aimed at obtaining additional information about their expectations related to the creation / development of an existing social enterprise in the municipality of Blagoevgrad with a subject of activity focused on waste management..
 - **In-depth interviews (through meetings and by telephone)** - during the evaluation period in-depth interviews were conducted with stakeholders and various social groups.
 - **Site visits (operating social enterprises on the territory of Blagoevgrad municipality)** - to prepare an assessment of the expectations for social impact as a result of the creation / development of an existing social enterprise in Blagoevgrad municipality with a subject of activity oriented to waste management.

Representatives of NGOs, existing social enterprises in the municipality, institutions, people from vulnerable groups were involved in collecting some of the information included in this assessment. Their inclusion was entirely voluntary, motivated by the importance of the topic and the effect that the creation of a social corporate enterprise in the field of the use of "green waste" would have for the local community.

VI. PRESENTATION OF THE EVALUATION



Achieving a positive social impact on society is a major goal of the social enterprise and is an integral part of its activities.

The Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on "Measuring social impact" states that "when measuring the social impact of the creation / operation of a social enterprise in any field of activity, social performance is assessed and impacts due to certain activities of the SP, and no assessment is made of the enterprises themselves, even if the very structures of the enterprises in the social economy sector contribute to the creation of social value. Measurement is a continuous process that is an integral part of the company's activities and is an important strategic planning tool."

The document also states that “Social impact assessment is a challenge, as it can be difficult to establish the links between an activity and a result. The positive effects often have a qualitative expression and sometimes appear only after a longer period has passed. The desire to present an activity in numerical form carries the danger that the data thus obtained will not measure what needs to be measured or be measured incorrectly. Therefore, social enterprises should not be forced to equate measurement and quantification by focusing only on activities quantified and recognized by external authorities. ’

Another important point of the Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on "Measuring social impact" is that in measuring the social impact of the creation / activity of a social enterprise it is necessary to involve all stakeholders - social enterprises themselves, users, public bodies and social partners, social service providers, funding bodies, policy makers in the field. The aim is to achieve an overview of the impact.

In order to put such an approach into practice, it is necessary to involve the listed stakeholders first in:

- acceptance of the need to measure the social impact of the establishment / activity of social enterprises;
- understanding the basic concepts related to the measurement of social impact: invested resource, quantitative result, result, impact. These concepts are usually given a different interpretation by stakeholders, which would prevent the measurement of social impact;
- sharing the understanding that if only quantitative results are taken into account, the measurement of the real impact of the activity could be omitted. That is, measuring social impact is moving from measuring quantitative outcomes to measuring impact.

The topic of the achieved positive social impact from the establishment / activity of the social enterprise is also covered in the Law on the Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy. There are mandatory requirements for entry in the Register of Social Enterprises. They are specified in Art. 7, item 1 of the AAS, which states that the SP should “carry out social activity

that produces social added value”. The legal definition of the term “social added value” defines that it is “the achieved social effect for the target group as a result of the activity performed by the social enterprise, taking into account both positive and negative changes and concomitant effects as a result of other actions or lack of action by the social enterprise ” (par.1, item 7 of the Additional Provisions of the LESSE).

Despite the developed documents, the available practice and the analyzed results from it, the topic of measuring the social impact of the work of social enterprises remains a challenge not only in Bulgaria.

At the same time, all stakeholders share the understanding that the existence of a mechanism for assessing the social impact of the activities of the SE will promote the development of social entrepreneurship, will support its positive acceptance by society.

Addressing the challenge of measuring the social impact of the work of social enterprises is invariably linked to the SEs themselves. The specificity of their activity presupposes a different approach in the development of some normative framework for measuring the social impact, which would provide the necessary dose of objectivity inherent in each assessment. In order to take due account of this specificity, there should be sufficient practice in the various areas of activity of interest to the SE. At the same time, the development of the necessary regulatory framework is important for promoting the development and contribution of social enterprises to the achievement of socially significant results.

Given the current lack of clear rules for measuring the impact of the SE's activities, it may be useful to use basic criteria that can be applied not only to social enterprises. An example of this is the following criteria:

- Application of the legislation - the national legislation is observed, as well as the international treaties, conventions and agreements, which the country has signed.
- Workers' rights, working conditions, opportunities for their social inclusion - maintaining and / or improving the social and economic well-being of workers,

providing an opportunity for their participation in the development and management of the social enterprise.

- Public relations - providing a contribution to maintaining and promoting the social and economic well-being of the local community.

Benefits related to waste management - waste management activities ensure the efficient use of the full range of products and services, which maintains and improves long-term economic stability and a wide range of environmental and social benefits.

- Ecological values and impacts - maintenance, protection and / or restoration of the ecosystem services and the ecological values is ensured and the negative ecological impacts are not allowed.
- Management planning - Planning documents are available and applied, serving to guide the work of staff, informing the community.
- Monitoring and evaluation - the development of the social enterprise is monitored and the set goals are achieved.

The Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on "Investing with a social impact" (11 September 2014) also draws attention to the need to measure social impact. It is argued that "even with adequate funding (social impact investments or others), this market will not function fully without a built-in capacity to measure social impact and investment readiness programs".

At this stage, the key performance factors that need to be taken into account when measuring the social impact of the social enterprise's activity, set out in a number of documents analyzed in the preparation of this study, overlap. The highlights of their wording in the Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on "Measuring social impact" are as follows:

- a distinction must be made between the result for society and the result for the enterprise, ie to measure the impact on society and not to evaluate the organization as such.

- the measurement of the created value does not necessarily have to be expressed in a numerical result, rather it should be a combination of text evaluation and numerical results;
- Methods for measuring social impact should help social enterprises.

Compliance with the requirements of national law, with regard to the assessment of the social impact of the work of social enterprises, is, of course, mandatory. It is expected that the new legislation will effectively regulate the activities of the JV and will create a favorable environment for their support at national and local level. This includes the understanding that in the design and implementation of such specific regulation, important emphasis should be placed on the available favorable environment for the development of social enterprises and its importance for achieving maximum efficiency and social impact of their activities.

VII. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Over the last decade, there has been an increasing need to find ways for collective societies to benefit collectively from the innovative solutions available to address the many social challenges that accompany modern society: poverty, aging, environmental problems, depopulation, lack of integration of vulnerable groups, access to resources. One of these innovative solutions is the social enterprise. The goals of social entrepreneurship do not depend on the sphere of activity of the enterprise and are aimed at: strengthening social solidarity and cohesion; strengthening the ability to solve social and other important problems for society; provision of products and services that are in the public interest; promoting social innovation; developing new employment opportunities; additional jobs for vulnerable groups in the labor market.

Despite the great variety of organizational forms of social enterprises and the existing definitions of SE (in Bulgaria since 2019 there is a current Law on Enterprises of Social and Solidarity Economy) social entrepreneurship is still not sufficiently recognized as an opportunity to solve social problems. Most of the existing social enterprises prefer their familiar spheres of activity, despite the fact that they report difficulties related to securing their activity.

The Law on Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy aims at the development of the social and solidarity economy as an economic sector with special rules. It creates the necessary conditions for the social and solidarity economy to be realized in the form of entrepreneurship, subject to the following principles:

- advantage of social over economic goals;
- association in public and / or collective form;
- publicity and transparency;
- independence from state authorities;
- participation of members, employees in management decisions.

The expected effect of the implementation of the Law on Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy is in several directions:

- Improving the access of people from vulnerable groups to employment and training for acquiring or improving professional qualifications, in order to raise their standard of living;
- creating conditions for providing support to people from vulnerable groups for social inclusion and independent living;
- reduction of social inequality;
- sustainable territorial development;
- creating opportunities for cooperation and closer cooperation between the social enterprises themselves, between the social enterprises and other stakeholders (municipalities, the state, investors, citizens, etc.).

From the report "“Green” employment in the management of biowastes" (Green_Crew) Report on the evaluation of the effectiveness of the establishment of a social cooperative enterprise in the field of "green waste" it is clear that in the municipality of Blagoevgrad social entrepreneurship as an opportunity to deal with significant social problems.

Currently, the enterprises that act as social in the municipality of Blagoevgrad are engaged in the provision of social services and services for labor integration of disadvantaged groups. Despite the change in the national legislation in the field and the interest in expanding the scope of activities with which social enterprises can engage (provision of public services, including in the fields of culture and environment), what is currently observed in the municipality Blagoevgrad is that stakeholders rather gather information about existing practices from the standpoint of observers and researchers of foreign experience. No specific local initiative in the field and with activities other than the usual ones has been registered yet. At this stage, the normative change is relied on by local organizations as opportunities for support from local authorities to existing activities. However, the options for the practical implementation of this support have not yet been specifically formulated. Nevertheless, stakeholders share the view on the importance and need to create conditions and opportunities on a local basis to expand the scope of social entrepreneurship.

Local development should take into account European trends in recent years in the field of social economy and social entrepreneurship, which are aimed at building businesses based on social inclusion, the development of a collaborative economy and the development of a circular economy.

The new opportunities provided by the Law on Enterprises of Social and Solidarity Economy to the municipalities should be used to support and encourage initiatives in the field of social entrepreneurship (establishment for remuneration in favor of social enterprises of the right to build on municipal property or the right to use of municipal property and belongings without a tender or competition, but only with a decision of the Municipal Council, financial support for raising the qualification of employees from vulnerable social groups within municipalities where the unemployment rate is higher or equal to the average for opportunity for participation of local authorities in forms of cooperation with social enterprises).

Not so popular among local organizations is still the topic of the need to measure the impact of the work of social enterprises as a tool that will strengthen their position and a tool to support the development of the sector as a whole. However, everyone shares the opinion that one of the effects of measuring the social impact of the activities of social enterprises is to increase the motivation of SPs to focus their activities on less popular areas at the moment - businesses based on social inclusion, development of collaborative economy. and the development of a circular economy

The study conducted within the project "Green employment in biodegradable waste management" (Green_Crew) can be concluded that in the municipality of Blagoevgrad there are real conditions for the establishment of a social enterprise to focus its activities on different from the usual activities, including the management of biodegradable waste. The following facts give grounds for this:

- The local government recognizes that increased awareness of waste management and the motivation of different social groups and business organizations is critical to improving waste management results, as well as the need to expand the scope of information activities for the public and business related to the topic.

So far, the municipality is implementing measures in this direction: participation in a number of national and local campaigns for waste disposal through the participation of volunteers, participation in the annual competition for municipalities "For a clean environment", participation in regular information campaigns of recovery organizations, support for conducting mini-campaigns in educational institutions at the local level and other similar initiatives organized by non-governmental organizations.

These activities could be complemented by periodic organization of thematic information and volunteer campaigns, the provision of information by the NSI on municipal waste by municipalities, etc.

- The municipality ensures sustainability and complementarity at the local level of national policies in the field. At this stage, the measures implemented by the municipality take into account the degree of effectiveness in terms of subordination between the individual activities, so as to derive a synergistic effect and improve the overall effectiveness of them..

The municipality ensures sustainability and complementarity at the local level of national policies in the field. Efforts at local level are aimed at the interconnected implementation of:

- long-term national communication strategy for waste management;
- the practical application of the legislation in the field of waste management, which imposes as an obligation on municipalities to conduct regular information campaigns on activities related to environmental protection and waste management;
- inclusion in the municipal waste management programs of measures for informing the public and the business;
- The municipality takes measures to carry out public consultations, survey the opinions and attitudes of citizens at the local level in the development of municipal waste management programs. The aim is to take into account the opinion of citizens and businesses and directly involve them in the management decision-making process. The ways in which the opinion of the residents is surveyed and the opportunity for their

initiative is provided are mainly surveys, surveys, meetings initiated by the municipality, the opportunity to submit opinions and suggestions electronically.

The activity of the municipality should be continued and supplemented with active participation in national programs for improving the awareness and participation of the population and business regarding the waste management activities.

The information activities could be supplemented by publishing on the website of the municipality, information on the location, type and conditions for delivery of separately collected waste from households and legal entities, conducting training programs for business to prevent waste and its effective use. as a resource, creating Internet platforms for the exchange of good business practices, etc.

- In order to improve the ecological situation on the territory of Blagoevgrad Municipality, two projects are being implemented under priority axis 2 “Waste” of the Operational Program “Environment” 2014-2020 in the field of waste management. In 2019, the regional landfill for non-hazardous waste was built and put into operation, which is implemented under the project "Construction of a regional system for waste management, Blagoevgrad region, serving the municipalities of Blagoevgrad, Simitli, Rila, Kocherinovo and Boboshevo - 1st stage “, Financed from the state budget through the Enterprise for Management of Environmental Protection Activities (EMEPA). The landfill is built on an area of 106 ha, located in the Teketo area, the land of the village of Buchino and the Tsalenite locality in the land of the village of Balgarchevo, Blagoevgrad municipality.

The regional waste management system, Blagoevgrad region includes:

- Construction of new cells for non-hazardous waste on the site of the regional landfill - 2 pcs. with an average annual capacity of 20,566 t / year. (average forecast for annual landfilled waste for the period 2015 - 2040, after the commissioning of the separation and composting plants);

- Construction of an installation for heap composting of the collected green waste from the municipality of Blagoevgrad with a capacity of 2,300 t / year. green waste on site;
- Construction of a separation plant with a capacity of 24,000 t / year. on the site;
- Construction of an installation for container composting of the separated biodegradable waste from the municipality for 3 200 t / year. biodegradable waste on the Site;
- Construction of a site for gratuitous delivery of separately collected household waste for the municipality of Blagoevgrad, sized for a capacity of 4,400 t / year. in LPR XX618.21, within the regulatory boundaries of the town of Blagoevgrad;
- Reclamation of the old landfill of Blagoevgrad municipality (located on the site of the regional landfill).

The capacity of the constructed regional landfill is about 574,240 m³ of waste.

A composting plant for separately collected biodegradable and green waste, an installation for pre-treatment of household waste and an anaerobic installation for separately collected biodegradable waste are to be built on the territory of the regional landfill and in a neighboring property. The site of the regional waste management system is located on land owned by the Municipality of Blagoevgrad.

- Available experience in the municipality of Blagoevgrad in the field of social entrepreneurship and sharing the understanding that for social enterprises are factors for regional development. The reasons for the lack or unsatisfactory sustainability of project-funded activities related to social entrepreneurship in the municipality are considered and the important factors for achieving successful and lasting results in the field are defined. The current picture of the level of development at the local level of the SP requires the conclusion that both options are possible for the development of social entrepreneurship in the field of waste management - creating a new social enterprise or expanding an existing social enterprise (s).
- The community's attitude towards the role and importance of social enterprises has changed.

- Increased sensitivity of the local population on the topic related to waste management. Taking action to establish or develop a social enterprise in the field of waste management in the municipality of Blagoevgrad will meet the approval and support of the community, which is already largely aware of the environmental benefits of such action. Opportunities to reduce the amount of landfilled biodegradable waste and increase its recovery, recycling or disposal in a way that does not endanger human health and the environment excite the population more and more seriously.
- □ The topic of a clean environment, including waste management, naturally unites local communities. Finding effective and up-to-date solutions in the individual municipalities is of regional and national importance. It is understood that the sharing of good practices, ideas and resources between SE`s with a similar subject of activity is a mandatory element of the strategy for action and sustainable results that every social enterprise that focuses on waste management should have.

Before formulating the benefits of the development of a social cooperative enterprise in the field of use of "green waste" in the municipality of Blagoevgrad, it is important to clarify that the goals of social entrepreneurship do not depend on the scope of the enterprise and are aimed at: strengthening of social solidarity and cohesion; strengthening the ability to solve social and other important problems for society; provision of products and services that are in the public interest; promoting social innovation; developing new employment opportunities; additional jobs for vulnerable groups in the labor market.

The expectations are that the efficiency of the development of a social cooperative enterprise in the field of the use of "green waste" on the territory of Blagoevgrad municipality could be summarized as follows:

- Strengthening the role of the local community in developing new approaches and models for tackling poverty and social exclusion, mainly due to the lack of opportunities for professional engagement and realization of vulnerable groups.

- Achieving increased competitiveness and sustainability of the social enterprise, oriented to the field of waste management.
- Formulation of new knowledge and attitude in the local community to the nature and content of the contributions of social enterprises to the quality of people's lives.
- Acceptance of social enterprises as a new opportunity to mobilize additional resources, including local ones, for development of entrepreneurial potential and innovations in vital areas.
- The acceptance of social enterprises by the local government as a partner in solving problems of critical importance to the community (including waste management).
- Improving the model of work of the social enterprise, which has accepted the challenge to develop activity in a new field and opportunities for its multiplication.
- Providing an opportunity, including through significant commitment of local resources for the separate collection of biodegradable and green waste, in order to treat in an environmentally safe way and obtain the final product - compost, which can be used for own needs and in agriculture.
- Additional resource and opportunity for effective implementation of the municipal waste management programs and the measures set for their implementation regarding the management of biodegradable waste.
- Use of home composting as a method for recycling of biodegradable waste on the territory of Blagoevgrad municipality.

VIII. INFORMATION USED



- 1. Directive 2006/12 / EC on waste*
- 2. Directive 1999/31 / EC on the landfill of waste*
- 3. National Waste Management Plan 2014-2020*
- 4. Municipal Development Plan of the Municipality of Blagoevgrad 2014-2020*
- 5. Waste Management Program Blagoevgrad Municipality 2015-2020*
- 6. National strategic plan for gradual reduction of the quantities of biodegradable waste intended for landfill 2010-2020.*

7. *EU Europe 2020 strategy*
8. *Pre-investment studies for the installations*
9. *Guidelines for applying for funding under OPHRD 2007-2013.*
10. *Guidelines for applying for funding under OPHRD 2014-2020.*
11. *Guidelines for applying for funding under OPE 2014-2020.*
12. *Law on Environmental Protection*
13. *Waste Management Act*
14. *Law on the Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy*
15. *Law on Social Assistance*
16. *Municipal strategy for development of social services 2016 -2020*
17. *National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2020*
18. *National concept of social economy*
19. *National Youth Strategy 2010-2020*
20. *Long-term employment strategy for people with disabilities 2011-2020*
21. *Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on 'Cooperatives and Restructuring' (own-initiative opinion)*
22. *Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on "Investing with a social impact"*