**1. Basic Information**

1.1 **CRIS Number:** PHARE 2003/005-701.06

1.2 **Title:** Joint Small Project Fund

1.3 **Sector:** Social Economic Development (SO)

1.4 **Location:** Romanian and Bulgarian border regions

The Joint Small Project Fund will finance small projects for the following NUTS III regions (so-called “judets”): Mehediniti, Olt, Dolj, Teleorman, Calarasi, Giurgiu and Constanta.

A mirror Joint Small Project Fund will be financed by the Bulgarian CBC Programme for the following NUTS III regions: Vidin, Vratza, Montana, Veliko Tarnovo, Pleven, Rousse, Silistra and Dobrich.

**2. Objectives**

**2.1 Overall Objective**

The Joint Small Projects Fund (JSPF) supports the key objectives of the Romanian-Bulgarian CBC Programme, namely to help the border regions to overcome specific development problems resulting from their relative isolation in the framework of national economics; the JSPF also supports the establishment and development of co-operative networks on both sides of the border and the creation of linkages between these networks and wider European Union networks.

**2.2. Project purpose**

- Strengthening of local co-operation across the border;
- Stimulation and support to creation of permanent structures among the local and regional organisations in the border regions;
- Building and development of specialist resources of local and regional institutions involved in regional development and cross-border co-operation;
- Development of local/regional economic and employment;
- Development and strengthening of an effective implementation structure.

**2.3 Accession Partnership and NPAA priority**

The JSPF plays a key part in the process of preparation of the Romania and Bulgaria for accession, in particular through the improvement of the administrative capacity of local/regional actors. These funds are part of a process of creating “integration-minded” border regions. The project represents thus an important element in the preparation of Romania and Bulgaria for the adoption of Structural Funds. In addition, the project supports the social and economic integration between the border regions of candidate countries.

**2.4 Contribution to the National Development Plan**

The JSPF system meets the requirements of NDP relating to axis 1 and axis 7:

*Axis 1. Developing the productive sector and related services, strengthening competitiveness of economic activities & promoting the development of the private sector.*
The main objective of supporting regional development within Axis 1 is to develop the most adequate economic structures in line with the demands of the market economy, which aid the creation of competitive jobs in all regions of the country. In particular, in those regions, areas or judets negatively affected by structural change and restructuring. The strategy includes emphases that apply broadly at national level but also others that are targeted at the regional or sub regional levels.

Axis 7. Improving the economic structure of the regions and supporting balanced and sustainable regional development

In the context of economic and political changes that have occurred all over Europe, as well as in Romania, after 1989, a new regional development concept was developed and related policies were progressively designed and implemented.

Regional development policy in Romania represents an important component of the Government Programme. It is defined in line with the new concept developed nowadays within the European Union, as it also represents a stage in the overall process of accession to the EU structures.

2.4. Cross-border Impact

The Programme will contribute to the removal of existing disparities between regions on both sides of the border and thus to the gradual alignment of economic and social development. This is particularly important in view of future integration into the European Union. Full membership will require the approximation of levels of economic activity and living standards in particular in border regions in order to avoid undue problems connected to the removal of borders and the introduction of the principle of free movement.

The JSPF promotes the elaboration of projects with a cross-border impact and encourages the development of linkages between the communities /organisations/ institutions on both sides of the border. In general, the “people-to-people” aspects of the individual projects and the general direction of the fund guarantee a high degree of cross-border relevance of the scheme.

According JPD 2004-2006 JSPF is in line with priority no. 4 – people to people actions. Special provision has always been made for small projects because of their special place in the empowerment of local communities and NGOs / NPOs and in their use as vehicles for people-to-people contacts across the border.

The Joint Small Project Fund will facilitate productive face-to-face contacts between the people living in the cross-border region. All projects financed by the Joint Small Projects Fund will focus on personal and communal contacts across the Bulgaria – Romania border.

Procedures for the management and implementation of the CBC 2000 Joint Small Project Fund have been prepared and are being implemented. These procedures will be reviewed before each call for new projects to ensure that they reflect the policies and objectives of the Managing Authorities.

3. Description

3.1 Background and justification

With a view to strengthen the local cross-border co-operation of the two border regions, Romania and Bulgaria decided in early 2000 to start to implement a JSPF. This scheme will finance “soft” projects: business co-operation, enterprise development, technology transfer and marketing for small and medium size enterprises, training, employment, measures for health and cultural exchanges, improvement of information flow and communications between border regions etc.

In order to reach a sufficient impact, these schemes need to be implemented in a multi annual perspective.
The inclusion of the JSPF into the programme is a logical step forward in the overall context of Romania and Bulgaria future accession to the EU, and in the specific context of the development of cross-border co-operation and evolution of the Phare CBC Programme in the pre-accession context.

3.2 Linked activities

This project is a continuation in a multi-annual perspective of the first JSPF, which was financed under the Phare CBC RO/BG 2000 programme (Phare allocation of 0.5 MEUR for each border region). The implementation of this project is ongoing. This project is also a continuation of JSPF, which were financed under the Phare CBC RO/BG 2001 and 2002 programmes (Phare allocation of 1 MEUR, 0.5 for 2001 and 0.5 for 2002, for each border region).

Under the BG 2000 CBC programme, a contract on the “Preparation of Co-operation Development Plan between Bulgaria and Romania” is currently in the phase of implementation. Under the expected contract, the axes of development for the whole period of CBC will be reviewed. On a more practical level, the selected consultant will assist the JSPF Committee in operating the Joint Small Projects Fund (JSPF) and will further elaborate the existing guidelines for the operation of the JSPF. The work will include the development of:

- a set of precise eligibility criteria for projects,
- a set of selection criteria for eligible projects,
- a clear administrative system including appropriate application and other administrative forms and identification of the roles and responsibilities of different institutions involved in the process,
- workshops if necessary to introduce basic ideas of project management and project proposal writing,
- a promotion campaign of the JSPF,
- a clear timetable for implementation and criteria for evaluation of success,
- a first pipeline of project for both border regions.

3.3 Results

- Financial support to small-scale “people-to-people” actions in the border regions in the field of economic development, environment, tourism, local employment, cultural exchanges, local democracy, planning and development studies etc.
- Small scale project in the fields above agreed with the counterpart according JSPF package rules and guidelines.

3.4 Activities

The project will support:

- The financing of the selected small-scale “people-to-people” projects (project located in the Romanian border region, or Romanian contribution to common Bulgarian-Romanian projects) (Phare contribution 0.744 Meur and co-financing 0.083 Meur)
- Administrative costs for operating the fund.

Up to 7% of the PHARE contribution (maximum 56,000 EUR for each country) may be used for expenditure relating to the preparation, selection, appraisal and monitoring of the assistance.

The grants will only be made for projects whose immediate objective is non-commercial and strictly non profit-making. Under no circumstances may grant give rise to profits (i.e. it will be restricted to the amount required to balance income and expenditure for the project).

**General Criteria for Eligibility**

Projects already part-financed by another EU funded programme may not be granted support from this PHARE programme.

In general terms the eligible actions in the framework of the JSPF should meet the following conditions:
have a strong and evident cross-border aspect (joint projects, especially where co-financed jointly by Romanian and Bulgarian project partners, will be particularly prioritised),
be financially assessed realistically and transparently, be ready for implementation, the Phare contribution has to be between € 10,000 and € 50,000, availability of co-financing. Minimum co-financing will be 10% of the cost of projects in cash, under no circumstances be in contradiction with the long-term development plans of the municipality or the region (projects that are part of an overall strategy/plan for the development of the region/town/municipality will be prioritised), if possible, contain innovative approaches (e.g. pilot projects).

On this basis, the Romanian Implementing Agency and the Bulgarian Implementing Agency will develop more detailed operational guidelines, including specific project support level/country (minimum/maximum) in consultation with the appointed JSPF Committee.

Priority areas

The Fund will support small-scale people-to-people actions across the following priority areas:

**Economic Development:** Support for small projects focusing on economies, which enhance the economic base of the border region. For example proposals for the development of small-scale enterprise, marketing initiatives, markets, exhibitions and advertising events, and so forth; the creation of cross-border co-operation structures and partnerships among supporting organisations;

**Environment:** Projects focusing on specific problems of the environment of the region, such as the drafting of studies, assessment of problems, environmental training, actions aiming at increasing public environmental awareness and so forth.

**Tourism:** The JSPF will provide funding for a range of "soft" actions for tourism development - studies, planning, institutional strengthening measures, specific SME training and related HRD programmes.

**Cultural Exchanges:** Those cultural exchanges that already exist and that are being newly established between local groups on both sides of the border region. Meetings and exchanges among youth; artistic and supporting activities; folk events and similar actions with the emphasis on the establishment of traditions and long-term co-operation;

**Local Democracy:** Schemes will be supported that help create and intensify the skills of organisational structures in local and regional public administration and other elements of a democratic society (chambers of commerce, trade associations, trade unions, NGOs). Relevant training courses and information will be provided supporting exchange visits, project preparation and procedural matters. Joint projects may also involve the elaboration of materials for distance learning and so forth. Exchange of know-how and experience in education at various levels will also be supported.

**Planning and development studies:** Projects providing a basis for planning within a border region. Projects can be supported that create the preconditions for joint planning in a border region, for framing joint research programmes, for drawing up joint strategies for regional development in a border area with the aim to jointly define the development priorities and so forth. Development of project applications and feasibility studies are also included;

Selection process

The Romanian and Bulgarian IAs will issue a call for proposals that must be open and fair to all eligible organisations. The submitted applications will be assessed by an appropriate Team of Assessors for each country. On the basis of these recommendations, a joint evaluation will be performed and the final decision will be taken.

The project applicants will, in many cases, need considerable development assistance. Training and information workshops may be organised to inform and assist would-be participants, so as to ensure high transparency and encourage good quality proposals. The Secretariats will also appoint experts to visit would-be project applicants in order to provide assistance, especially in relation to matters such as project cost assessment.

3.5 Lessons learned

According to the Interim Evaluation Report no R/RO/CBC/03037 issued by EMS Romania, in July 2003, regarding the Cross Border Cooperation programmes, namely the JSPF, the capacity of beneficiaries to
prepare project proposals was overestimated and preparatory training activities (under a parallel Phare programme) did not significantly improve the quality of the proposals. Co-financing was conditional and no problems were encountered by grantees. The efficiency was adversely influenced by poor cooperation and coordination between all partners involved. Additional skilled staff is required and improvement in communication is expected.

As a consequence Regional Office in Arad was moved under the umbrella of the RDA 5 in order to involve the regional level as much as possible in the implementation. The solution for the EBI is that the RDA 1 and RDA 5 should be responsible for JSPF implementation.

The effectiveness of the JSPF programmes is largely dependent on the success of the individual projects supported. As a whole the programme was welcomed by the beneficiaries as it facilitates activities that otherwise would be difficult to fund. For the future projects more effectiveness is to be expected due to horizontal integration with other activities within the local RDAs.

The prospects for sustainability of the JSPF programmes are evaluated as good.

The partnership and networking supported by the projects should endure as long as the relationship remains productive. The activities undertaken by the organizations should raise their profile and therefore should help secure further support both internally through recruitment and externally by attracting donors.

4. Institutional Framework

1. The key institutions of the Joint Small Projects Fund are the Bulgarian and Romanian Contracting Authorities (CA) for the Phare cross-border co-operation programme, the Joint Co-operation Committee (JCC), the Joint Evaluation Committee (JEC), the Secretariats for the Joint Small Projects Fund, the Team of Assessors for the assessment of project applications (Expert Panel), and the European Commission (EC) represented by the EC Delegations in Bulgaria and Romania. Under the 2000, 2001 and 2002 Phare CBC RO-BG Programme, the CBC Regional Office for JSPF has been appointed by the Implementing Authority, Ministry of European Integration, within the “Sfântul. Gheorghe” Foundation, Giurgiu.

2. The Joint Small Projects Fund will be implemented as much as possible on a decentralized basis. The selection of projects to be supported by the JSPF shall be carried out with ex-ante approval of the EC according to PRAG. The projects shall be implemented with ex-post control of the EC. The publicity, evaluation/selection of projects, and contracting will be carried out in accordance with PRAG.

Operation of the JSPF

1. The Contracting Authority in Bulgaria (CABu) is the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW), CBC Implementation Agency. The Contracting Authority in Romania (CARo) is the Ministry European Integration (MIE) through its CBC Department.

2. In line with the Phare CBC Regulation (1596/2002), the JCC, composed of representatives of Bulgaria, Romania and the European Commission, has agreed to allocate 10% of the annual CBC budgets on both sides of the border to the Joint Small Projects Fund. The JCC is also responsible for the Joint Programming Document (JPD) which will provide the framework within which the JSPF will be implemented. The JCC will receive reports on the implementation of the JSPF, and on an annual basis will agree the future implementation framework as part of the approval of the allocation of funds (in line with the appropriate Project Fiches for the JSPF).

The Joint Evaluation Committee (JEC), the Secretariats for the Joint Small Projects Fund, the Team of Assessors for the assessment of project applications are defined in the Special Guidelines for Management for Joint Small Project Fund.

The Annex 4 provides additional detail regarding Implementing Agencies (IAs)/Contracting Authorities (CAs) for the Phare Cross Border Cooperation Programmes, the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC), the Joint Evaluation Committee (JEC), the CBC Regional Office for the Joint Small Project Fund acting as Secretariat in the border region, the Teams of Assessors for the assessment of the applications and the European Commission (EC) represented by the EC Delegations in Romania and Bulgaria.
Eligible beneficiaries

It will in principle, it will include all non-profit-making decentralised, local organisations, such as:
- Municipalities and Communities within the defined border region
- County and district level organisations
- Inter-communal co-operation organisations
- Euro-regions
- Chamber of Commerce
- Professional associations
- Trade Union Organisations
- NGOs, etc...

Profit making organisations and national organisations without a distinctive role in the border region will not be eligible.

5. Budget (in MEUR):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Romanian Allocation</th>
<th>Investment</th>
<th>Institution Building</th>
<th>Total Phare (I+IB)</th>
<th>Recipient (*)</th>
<th>IFI</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joint Small Project Fund</td>
<td>0.744</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.744</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional office – Administrative costs</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.800</td>
<td>0.800</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.883</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*) co-financing is needed and will be one criterion for eligibility of projects. Minimum co-financing will be 10% of the cost of soft projects in cash only.

6. Implementation arrangements

6.1 Implementing agency

The Implementing Agency will be the Ministry of European Integration, through its Cross Border Co-operation Directorate, which will retain overall responsibility for the implementation of the programme, including: approval of tender documents, evaluation criteria, evaluation of offers, signature of contracts, authorisation of invoices. The payments of invoices will be made by the Payments Directorate within the same ministry.

The CBC Directorate also includes a unit for the National Co-ordination of CBC programmes nominated as CBC Programme Co-ordination Unit (CBC – PCU) which will support the beneficiaries in their activities concerning the preparation of tender dossiers and related documents.

Under the 2000, 2001 and 2002 Phare CBC RO-BG Programmes, the CBC Regional Office for JSPF was set-up in the border region, at Giurgiu, ensuring the day-by-day contact and co-operation with the counties and local authorities as well as with the project beneficiaries in the Romanian – Bulgarian border region. The office has specific tasks as set-up in the Guidelines for the JSPF including management, monitoring and evaluation of the selected projects under JSPF.

6.2 Twinning arrangements

NA

6.3 Non-standard aspects

There are no non-standard contracts or tender procedures envisaged within this project. "Practical Guide to contract procedures financed from the general Budget of the European Communities in the context of external actions" will be strictly followed.
6.4. Contracts

Grant Contracts will be signed according to the "Practical Guide to contract procedures financed from the general Budget of the European Communities in the context of external actions" rules.

7. Implementation schedule

Co-ordination with the Bulgarian authorities will be ensured so that the call for proposals are launched in the same time with identical deadlines.

| Updating the JSPF Guidelines | 11/2003 |
| Establishment of the JEC, Team of Assessors | 3/2004 |
| First calls for proposals: | |
| Completion of projects | 12/2005 |

8. Equal opportunity

In the whole process of preparation and implementation of the projects no discrimination between men and women will be made.

9. Environment

Environmental aspects will be assessed individually for each of the proposed projects.

10. Rates of return

N/A

11. Investment criteria

11.1. Catalytic effect:
Without PHARE assistance, the project would not be implemented in the near future, because of the lack of funds.

11.2. Co-financing
The beneficiaries of the JSPF will contribute with at least 10% of the total budget of the total cost of the projects.

11.3. Additionality
No other financing sources from the private sector or from IFIs were available for financing this project.

11.4. Project readiness and Size
The project can be launched according to the implementation chart (Annex 2).

11.5. Sustainability
The development of the border region is part of both governments’ strategy of maintaining good relations with their neighbours.

11.6. Compliance with state aids provisions
The project respects the state aids provisions.

12. Conditionality and sequencing

The CBC Directorate of the Ministry of European Integration and the CBC Regional Office will make certain that the final recipients make their contributions as planned.
Annexes to project Fiche

1. Logical framework matrix
2. Detailed implementation chart
3. Contracting and disbursement schedule by quarter
4. Template for the institutional framework/implementation arrangements for JSPF between Romania and Bulgaria
## ANNEX 1 - LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX

**Joint Small Project Fund**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contracting period expires:</th>
<th>30.11.2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disbursement period expires:</td>
<td>30.11.2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Budget:** 0.88 MEUR  
**Phare Allocation:** 0.8 MEUR

### Overall Objectives

Helping the border regions to overcome specific development problems resulting from their relative isolation in the framework of national economics; establishment and development of cooperative networks on both sides of the border and the creation of linkages between these networks and wider European Union networks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectively Verifiable Indicators</th>
<th>Sources of Verification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A minimum of 10 local projects financed;</td>
<td>CBC Implementing Agency (Bg) and CBC Implementing Agency (Ro);</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Project Purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


<p>| • Strengthening of local co-operation across the border; | • Intensity of cross-border links, number of cross-border actions; | • CBC Implementing Agency (Bg) and CBC Implementing Agency (Ro); monitoring and assessment reports; reports of the PCU (Ro) and PMU (Bg). | • Efficient programme management (implementation, monitoring assessment); continued commitment of the Government towards the priorities of the programme and regional development; continued commitment of regional and local actors; availability of qualified staff and institutional support; functioning co-operation between all relevant partners; functioning co-ordination between CBC-RO and CBC-BG; sustained interest of the border region population in development and co-operation. |
| • Stimulation and support to creation of permanent structures among the local and regional organisations in the border regions; | • increase in regional / local capacities to design and implement development programmes and projects; | | |
| • Building and development of specialist resources of local and regional institutions involved in regional development and cross-border co-operation; | • growth of tourism sector in border regions. | | |
| • Development of local/regional economic and employment; | | | |
| • Development and strengthening of an effective implementation structure. | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results of Project</th>
<th>Indicators of Achievement</th>
<th>Sources of Information</th>
<th>Assumptions and Risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Development of Small Projects Fund package;</td>
<td>• JSPF in operation and used;</td>
<td>PCU (Ro) and PMU (Bg) reports;</td>
<td>Availability of qualified experts and contractors;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. strengthened co-operation between local authorities and NGO in border regions</td>
<td>• Regional (Development) authorities’ personnel trained, regional institutions qualified;</td>
<td>project completion reports; monitoring and assessment reports; programme evaluation.</td>
<td>well functioning co-operation and co-ordination between PCU (RO) or PMU (BG), JSPF Committee, CBC Regional Office, beneficiaries and other involved parties;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. enhanced economic base of the border region</td>
<td>• number of people-to-people actions carried out;</td>
<td></td>
<td>CBC Regional Office well staffed with competent personnel;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. People-to-people cross border links increased and intensified</td>
<td>• number of economic actions carried out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. enhanced cross-border tourism attraction and linkages between the tourism support on either side of the border.</td>
<td>• number of tourists/visitors in border regions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. established permanent structures within the local and regional organisations in border regions, qualified in regional development</td>
<td>• 2% increase in local/regional employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Means</td>
<td>Assumptions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1, 1.2, 1.3 Up to 7% of the PHARE contribution (maximum 56 000 EUR for each country) may be used for expenditure relating to the preparation, selection, appraisal and monitoring of the assistance</td>
<td>• Call for proposals</td>
<td>Well functioning co-operation and co-ordination between Romanian and Bulgarian Authorities;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4, 2.5 Financing the selected small-scale “people-to-people” projects located in the relevant border region.</td>
<td>• Selection of projects</td>
<td>Continuity of staff and policy in MIE and other involved institutions enabling preparation and implementation of the projects without delays.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Training for staff</td>
<td>• Grant contracts</td>
<td>Availability of necessary information to prepare good quality documents for the preparation of the projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## ANNEX 2 - Implementation Time Chart

**Joint Small Project Fund**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Joint Small Projects Fund</td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Regional Office Contract</td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D = Design/preparation  C = Contracting  I = Implementation/works  R = Review/evaluation
ANNEX 3 - Cumulative Quarterly Commitment Schedule in EUR

**Joint Small Project Fund**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Cumulative contracting schedule by quarter in EUR (planned)</th>
<th>Total Phare Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>III</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Projects Fund (investment/service)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Office (service)</td>
<td>56.000</td>
<td>56.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total contracting</strong></td>
<td>56.000</td>
<td>800.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Cumulative disbursement schedule by quarter in EUR (planned)</th>
<th>Total Phare Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>III</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Projects Fund</td>
<td>186.000</td>
<td>279.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Office (service)</td>
<td>28.000</td>
<td>28.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total disbursement</strong></td>
<td>28.000</td>
<td>214.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National Authorities Responsible of the Programme

As per Romanian Financing Memorandum, the Romanian authorities defined as responsible at different levels w/ this programme are as follows:
Ministry of European Integration – MIE Programme Co-ordination Unit (the Directorate for Cross Border Co-operation) and Implementing Agency (IA)
CBC Regional Office for JSPF – in charge of launching and advertising the call for proposals and day-to-day technical management of the projects, appointed by the MIE

As regards the Bulgarian Financing Memorandum, the overall responsibility for programme coordination and financial management will rest with the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, which will be the Implementing Agency (IA).

The Bulgarian and Romanian IAs (Implementing Agency): Retain full responsibility for programme implementation respectively in Bulgaria and in Romania.

Two Secretariats shall be identified: for the Romanian side, CBC Regional Office for JSPF appointed by the Ministry of European Integration; on the Bulgarian side, the Secretariat will be appointed by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works. The two Secretariats will undertake in their respective country, the task of day-to-day technical management of implementation of projects and monitoring activities under the authority of the Bulgarian and Romanian IAs.

Rules, procedures and formats: New Specific Guidelines based on the grant section of the Commission Practical Guide and approved by both EC Delegations will be strictly followed.

PREPARATION OF THE PACKAGE OF CALL FOR PROPOSAL, GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS AND APPLICATION FORM ACCORDING TO THE PRACTICAL GUIDE

The IAs (RO MIE and the BG MRDPW) draft the call for proposals, the guidelines for applicants and the application form and other documents related to the implementation of the JSPF in line with Phare procedures.

Each IA submits the final version of the documents to the respective EC Delegation for approval

EC Delegations approve the documents

PUBLICATION OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSAL

The IAs with the assistance of their Secretariats take all appropriate measures to ensure that the nationally and regionally publicised call for proposals reaches the target groups in line with the requirements of the Practical Guide.

PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

The Secretariats collect and register incoming project proposals.

The BG and RO IAs select and approve the assessor teams (one for each country) for the assessment of administrative compliance, eligibility and assessment of technical and financial quality of proposals.

The IAs will nominate the Joint Evaluation Committee (non-voting chairman, secretary, and voting members).
The BG and RO IAs nominate the members of the assessment team and evaluation committee exclusively on the basis of technical and professional expertise in the relevant area.

The EC Delegations endorse the teams of assessors and the composition of the Joint Evaluation Committee. The EC Delegations nominate an observer to follow all or part of the proceedings of the Joint Evaluation Committee. Prior approval is needed from the Delegations for the participation of other observers.

The Joint Evaluation Committee draws up its recommendations and decisions following the assessor team's written assessment of each proposal on the basis of the published evaluation grid.

The IA of each country approves the evaluation report prepared by the Joint Evaluation Committee and forwards the evaluation report and any award proposals to the EC Delegations.

The EC Delegations approve (ex-ante) the evaluation report on the selection process and the final list of grants to be awarded.

The IAs notify each applicant in writing of the result of the selection process.

**CONTRACTING (PAO DESIGNATED IN THE RESPONSIBLE IMPLEMENTING AGENCY) FOR EACH COUNTRY :**

The format of the grant contract is drafted by each IA according to the Practical Guide using the standard grant contract format and its annexes.

The format of the grant contract is to be approved by the EC Delegations (in cases where the call for proposals results in the award of a large number of grants which all have the same grant contract conditions).

The EC Delegations only approves the evaluation report, the list of proposed projects (budget, duration, beneficiaries etc as per Phare Practical Guide), and the standard contract format, not the contracts themselves irrespective of the budget.

The IAs sign the grant contracts with the selected beneficiaries based on the final list of grants approved by the EC Delegation. The language of the grant contract is English and an official Bulgarian / Romanian translation of the contract is attached to the signed English language contract.

Copy of the signed grant contract will be respectively available at the Bulgarian MRDPW and the Romanian MIE.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SELECTED PROJECTS BY THE BENEFICIARIES**

Beneficiaries subcontract suppliers of goods or services in line with Phare procurement regulations annexed to the Grant Contract and under the Practical Guide.

The projects will be subject to ex-post control by the EC Delegation pursuant to the Practical Guide.

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF THE SELECTED PROJECTS**

The BG IA receives and verifies the invoices and requests payment to the National Fund.

The RO IA with the technical assistance of the Secretariat (CBC Regional Office for JSPF) verifies and approves the technical reports and requests payments to the National Fund.
MONITORING OF THE PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED BY THE BENEFICIARIES

Standard Phare monitoring instruments will be used for monitoring purposes. Attention is drawn to the special duty of the Secretariat with regard to the day-to-day monitoring of the selected projects.
The EC Delegations reserve the right to organise field visits and to monitor on a case-by-case basis the projects selected under the JSPF exercise.