1. **Country and Sector Background**

1. Bulgaria is set to join the EU on January 1, 2007, and consequently much of the Government’s social and economic development policies are driven by this goal. Convergence of Bulgaria’s economy with that of EU countries is seen as a top priority by the Government and the population at large. EU accession will cause wide ranging transformation of the Bulgarian economy, and the Government has been working over the past years to prepare the institutional and regulatory environment to enable these transformations. The latest assessment by the European Commission shows that Bulgaria has reached an advanced level of alignment with the *acquis* in most policy areas.

2. In the field of trade facilitation, significant progress has been achieved in recent years to modernize the customs and bring them to EU standards. The newly adopted Customs Act\(^1\) for instance allows post-clearance and selectivity control processing. At the same time, the Bulgarian Customs Administration (BCA) has significantly increased its administrative and operational capacity. A business strategy for the rationalization of border operations during the period 2002-2006 has been adopted and its implementation is ongoing. The customs modernization program was partly supported by the first TTFSE project in Bulgaria\(^2\). Between 1999 and 2005, the productivity of the customs agency more than doubled when measured by revenue collected, trade volume or annual number of declarations by staff (Table A.1.1).

3. In January 2006 the Council of Ministers adopted the Bulgarian Strategy on Integrated Border Management (IBM), in accordance with the Convention for the implementation of the Schengen Agreement of June 14, 1985. The Strategy envisages improvement of the operational interaction between the border authorities, establishment of a uniform information system at national level, improvement of the system for collection, processing and in-time distribution of

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\(^1\) The Customs Act was initially adopted in February 1998, amended several times; the latest modifications were introduced in May 2005.

\(^2\) Closing date: September 30, 2005
information regarding all events at the border, and, shared use of the infrastructure and technical equipment between the agencies active at the border. The implementation of the Strategy on integrated border management will be regulated by a co-operation agreement between the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Finance on joint use of infrastructure and technical equipment at border crossing points. The joint usage of facilities, to be defined by regional plans for common activity, will enable improvement of the interaction and communication between the authorities, including quicker exchange of information and savings of resources and staff.

4. The Government also aims at enhancing the efficiency of customs, border police, and other border agencies control and discipline through a package of measures to fight the grey economy.

5. Still, the European Commission assesses that simplified customs procedures should continuously be developed and need to be actively promoted, post-clearance controls have to be reinforced, and integrated border management systems need to be promoted. In addition, the Government is of the opinion that realizing the full benefits of the customs modernization process and the trade facilitation agenda in general requires additional investments in the physical infrastructure and information technology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table A.1.1: Selected performance indicators under the first TTFSE Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Collected/Customs staff (US$000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Bulgaria Customs Agency Cost/Revenue Collected (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries/Revenue Collected %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Volume/Number of Staff (US$ thousands)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Number of Declarations/Customs staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*January-September data)

6. In the field of transport, Bulgaria has made good progress to comply with the EU transport _acquis communautaire_. On the transport infrastructure side, investments have been made in the past ten years to upgrade the transport network along the corridors of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). However, large investments are still needed, and the Government has adopted in July 2006 a National Strategy for Integrated Infrastructure Development for the period 2006-2015. For road and rail, the document gives priority to construction and modernization of major TEN-T links and envisages that these would be financed through EU Structural and Cohesion Funds and loans from International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

7. These TEN-T corridors carry the vast majority of all trade and transit in the Bulgaria. The northwest-southeast connection between Serbia and Turkey, i.e. Corridor Xc/IV is the main transport corridor as it links Western Europe and the Western Balkans with Turkey and Central Asia. On this corridor, in 2005 the Bulgaria–Turkey border at Kapitan Andreevo had an average monthly truck traffic (incoming and outgoing) of over 40,000 vehicles while at the Bulgaria–Serbia border at Kalotina average monthly truck traffic amounted to 25,000 vehicles. A comparison with 2000 shows a spectacular growth of almost 200% for Kapitan Andreevo and even 300% for Kalotina.

8. The main export industries along the TEN-T corridors are the tailoring and textile industries, which in the past five to six years had a high growth rate and together form more than 26 percent of the Bulgarian exports. Low production costs and the geographic proximity to the
main consumers – the EU Member States – are their main competitive advantages. The furniture industry is another high growth export-oriented industry with 44 percent growth in 2003. Exports in the food processing industries have also increased by 37 percent in 2003, and there is significant potential for future development in this sector, as well as in agriculture.

9. Despite these positive tendencies and the fact that the EU membership will improve greatly the access of Bulgarian products to the European market, there is still need to improve the competitiveness of the national economy on those markets. Bulgaria’s producers face an increasing competition from exporters in countries such as China or India not only for a share in European markets but also within Bulgaria’s own domestic market. High trade transaction costs and the uncertainties of uninterrupted trade is still a major issue for the Bulgarian economy.

10. The currently existing non-tariff import, export, and transit requirements, together with their associated compliance costs, are a serious burden to the business community and a barrier to the development of international trade. Namely, to comply with these requirements companies involved in international trade must submit significant amounts of information and documents to several agencies, each with their own specific (manual or automated) systems and paper forms. At the same time, inadequate border crossing control and inspection facilities as well as poor traffic management in border zones augment the already long waiting times caused by outdated document processing.

11. In summary, there is still lack of transparent data requirements resulting in many different documents and data requirements, lack of application of modern electronic data processing, and lack of modern border crossing infrastructure. Making procedures more efficient requires (i) harmonization and standardization of cargo data requirements, (ii) improvement of communication systems, and (iii) physical border crossing improvements. The proposed Second Trade and Transport Facilitation project (TTFSE II) supports the efforts of the Government to facilitate trade and transport along these three dimensions.

2. Objectives

12. The development objective of the project is to facilitate trade by improving the capacity, efficiency and quality of services at future EU external border crossings with particular focus on the Trans-European Transport Network. The project will seek to achieve its development objective through: (i) physical improvements and equipment modernization at border crossing points; (ii) modernizing communication systems to exchange information between border agencies; and (iii) enhancing coordination and cooperation among stakeholders.

13. For trade along the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) in Bulgaria, the project would lead to improved traffic throughput and reduced control and inspection time, enabled by modern physical facilities, more efficient processing of international trade and transport documentation, enhanced transparency of transactions and reduction of duplications and overlaps.

3. Rationale for Bank Involvement

14. The Government is aware of the unfinished trade and transport facilitation agenda, which is a long process. At the same time the Government rates the first TTFSE project very
satisfactory and has thus requested the Bank to continue its involvement to build on the achievements of the first project. The Government also considers that the Bank’s involvement in other TTFSE projects in the region adds great value to a national project such as the proposed TTFSE II.

15. The proposed project is consistent with several Southeast Europe (SEE) regional initiatives, undertaken by the SEE countries building upon their experience to cooperate under the original TTFSE I program and in recognition of the fact that regional trade and transport facilitation solutions bring in more value than national approaches:

- Memorandum of Understanding on the Trade and Transport Facilitation in Southeast Europe Program (MoU on TTFSE), which committed participating countries to join the TTFSE Regional Steering Committee (meeting at Customs Directors level) and to collaborate in the resolution of common problems constraining trade in the region, as well as to provide the basis for discussing best practice for the resolution of the common trade and transport facilitation problems (Skopje, February 10, 2000).
- Memorandum of Understanding on the Development of the South East Europe Core Regional Transport Network (MoU on the Core Network), signed by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and the European Commission, committing signatory countries to cooperate on enhancing the development of the Core Regional Transport Network (Core Network) in SEE. The Core Network lays down the alignments for the extension of the Trans-European Transport Network (crossing the territories of the EU Member States and accession countries) to the countries of the Western Balkans.
- Southeast Europe Regional Steering Group (RSC) and Southeast Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO) – secretariat to the RSC, established both with the MoU on the Core Network to advance the development of the Core Network and facilitate the flow of goods in the region. The Steering Committee members are senior civil servants, with the authority to represent their administrations and at the same time able to provide the continuity of commitment which may not be available from a political minister.
- High Level Meeting on Developing a Common Framework for Regional Cooperation hosted by the Croatian government, and organized by the Bank at which all TTFSE countries - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, and Moldova reconfirmed their commitment to regional coordination in trade and transport development (Zagreb, June 17, 2005).
- South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) - a non-institutionalized regional cooperation mechanism established in 1996 which gathers Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and Turkey. The SEECP is a forum of political dialog and consultations, and represents an important instrument for promoting the interest of the Participating States regarding the accession to the European and Euro-Atlantic political and economic structures.

16. The proposed TTFSE II project will also supplement the aid provided by the EU for the improvement of border procedures through its Integrated Border Management (IBM) program. Whereas the IBM program focuses on the border control aspects of passengers, TTFSE II would complement this by facilitating trade and enhancing the flow of goods and services. It will support the implementation of the EU requirements and benefit from a recent EU funded feasibility study for improvements of the border crossing infrastructure and the equipment of
strategic checkpoints on major transport corridors. The World Bank’s wide experience in promoting trade and improving logistics allows it to assist the Government of Bulgaria and the private sector on strategies, procedures and investments that will strengthen the Bulgarian producers in the global market. The broader focus of the TTFSE II on TEN-T corridors provides an emphasis on delivery to the market which extends beyond specific concerns with regards to individual routes, modes and border crossings.

17. The Bank, along with the EU and other financial partners, is in a unique position to provide support to the potential program countries because: (i) it would build on the innovative mechanisms, popularity and ownership gained under TTFSE I, applying best practices and lessons learned; and (ii) it would complement the on-going country and sector assistance from the EU, and ensure coherence in the actions of the IFIs and the Commission.

18. The proposed project will capitalize on the lessons learned from the first TTFSE projects which call for comprehensive solutions in addressing the border/clearance delays because physical investments alone are not sufficient to solve border processing problems. Another key lesson is that the success of the project depends on the availability of a high-level Government commitment and ideally a high-level Government representative able to direct concerns to the highest levels of management in the ministries responsible for the agencies engaged in border control. The existence of an efficient project implementation team and effective public private dialogue are also among the success factors.

4. Description

19. The total Project cost is estimated at EUR 54.6 million, with EUR 40.9 million from the World Bank loan and EUR 13.7 from the State Budget excluding any additional grant funding. The project includes five components: (i) improvement of physical capacity and working conditions at future EU external border crossings with particular focus on the Trans-European Transport Network; (ii) construction of the access road to Kapitan Andreewo border crossing point; (iii) sharing of relevant border crossing data, and streamlining operational procedures of border crossing agencies; (iv) project implementation; and (v) support to trade capacity building for the trade community (identifying grant funding). The Bank will not finance land acquisition.

20. The improvements at the Kapitan Andreewo and Kalotina border crossing points (BCP), proposed under Component 1, are fully consistent with the layout of transport infrastructure facilities across the border on the Turkish and the Serbian side respectively. The Turkish authorities are planning upgrades in the near months at the Kapikule BCP (across the border from Kapitan Andreewo BCP, on Corridor IV) in close coordination with the Bulgarian side to ensure mirroring BCP designs at Kapitan Andreewo and Kapikule and therefore smooth flow of traffic. At the same time, the Serbian authorities are also improving the Gradina BCP (across the border from Kalotina BCP, on Corridor Xc) in consultation with the Bulgarian authorities, and have also started works on bringing the Nis-Gradina road up to motorway standards. Cross-border coordination exists as well at the technical level - between border agencies on the two sides of the border at each of the two BCPs.

21. **Component 1: Improvement of physical capacity and working conditions at future EU external border crossings with particular focus on the Trans-European Transport Network (EUR 36.0 million).** The component comprises two main subcomponents:
Subcomponent 1.1: upgrading the physical infrastructure of selected border crossings with an estimated total cost of EUR 24.0 million; and subcomponent 1.2: improving the customs infrastructure and equipment with a total cost of EUR 12.0 million. Subcomponent 1.1 will focus on upgrading the infrastructure and improving traffic management at border crossings on the key Xc and IV TEN-T corridors at Kapitan Andreevo (border with Turkey) and Kalotina (border with Serbia) in compliance with the EU Integrated Border Management (IBM) guidelines. Several other BCPs which are expected to continue their operation following Bulgaria’s EU accession will also be strengthened on satisfying pre-defined economic criteria. This subcomponent will consist of new construction, reconstruction and repair of selected facilities, as well as provision of equipment to expedite inspection to speed up the flow of goods. The subcomponent includes civil works as well as the consultancy services for detailed design and supervision. Key recipient under this component would be the Ministry of Finance, and all border crossing agencies will benefit from the improved facilities. Main benefits will be improved traffic throughput and reduced truck control and freight inspection time, enabled by modern physical facilities that support procedural modernization.

22. Subcomponent 1.2 will benefit the Bulgaria Customs Agency and will comprise acquisition of equipment, such as X-ray scanners, and limited customs facilities infrastructure improvements which would allow improved efficiency in freight control procedures at key BCPs. Equipment and facilities improvements, which are of immediate need to the agency, are being supplied through the retroactive financing of the project.

23. Component 2: Construction of the access road to Kapitan Andreevo border crossing point (EUR 10.0 million). This component will support the construction of a 3.4 km access road linking the planned Maritsa Motorway with the Kapitan Andreevo border crossing point, which is a remaining bottleneck on TEN-T corridors IV and Xc. Currently, the entire traffic to and from the BCP pass through the Kapitan Andreevo village. The new access road, for which the final alignment will be selected at a later stage during project implementation, will by-pass the village of Kapitan Andreevo and will provide multi-lane access to the BCP. An integrated design of the access road and the border crossing facilitates provides adequate border area traffic management and avoids potential bottlenecks following the expansion of the crossing point. The subcomponent includes civil works as well as the consultancy services for detailed design and supervision. Land acquisition cost is not included in the estimated cost of this component, and the Government will finance land acquisition from the State Budget.

24. Component 3: Sharing of relevant border crossing data and streamlining operational procedures of border crossing agencies (EUR 8.0 million). This component comprises two main subcomponents: subcomponent 3.1: improvement of communication between agencies at border crossing points with an estimated total cost of EUR 5.0 million; and subcomponent 3.2: improvement of efficiency and security of data and information transmission with an estimated total cost of EUR 3.0 million. Subcomponent 3.1 will support the harmonization/integration of information flows among border agencies and harmonization of their operational procedures. It will provide for a combination of investments and procedure revisions that will assist the Government in enhancing electronic communication among border crossing agencies and the moving towards the implementation of the ‘single window’ concept. This will include: (i) necessary hardware, (ii) networking costs; (iii) software; (iv) training of users and administrators; (v) system security features; and (iv) technical services.
25. Subcomponent 3.2 will provide for the introduction of a wireless communication system to enhance communication and information exchanges between border agencies. The system will allow for passenger document checks on moving trains along the railway corridors Xc which would substantially reduce the time passenger trains spend at the borders, thus enhancing throughput capacity of single-track border crossing rail sections for both passenger and freight trains. The system will also provide the means for real-time information exchange among the border agencies, and to this end will include (i) the construction of a modern communication exchange system, and (ii) the provision of the necessary equipment for scanning of travel documents. The component is in full conformity with the strategy of national border services and supplements aid provided by the EU PHARE program.

26. The main benefit of this component will be more efficient processing of international trade and transport documentation, which will enhance the transparency of transactions and reduce duplications and overlaps. The expected significant cost savings are expected to result in lower transport costs, and finally in increased competitiveness on regional and global markets.

27. **Component 4: Project implementation (EUR 0.6 million).** This component includes incremental implementation costs as well as the services required to support the successful implementation of the Project. This covers in particular: (i) audit services for the Project and; (ii) training on Project management, procurement and financial management; (iii) procurement support; and (iv) incremental implementation costs.

28. **Component 5: Support to capacity building for the trade community (estimated cost EUR 1.0 million not included in total project cost).** The project will promote continuity in trade facilitation capacity building, supported during TTFSE I by several bilateral donors and will focus on SMEs in trade and transport-related activities. This component would cover: (i) support to BULPRO, the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Bulgarian Freight Forwarders’ Association (NSBS), the Bulgarian road transport association (AEBTRI), and the Bulgarian Industrial Association in structuring the trade and transport facilitation agenda, through a detailed review, and in sustaining a united dialogue with the Government; (ii) regular measurement of performance at border crossing points and clearance facilities as experienced by users; (iii) training for mid-level managers on logistics and supply chain management concepts, and expansion of the TTFSE training programs for border agency staff and private sector; and (iv) maintenance and expansion of the TTFSE website to offer national content in Bulgarian and English. Identified grant funding will be matched with funding by the Bulgarian partner. Capitalizing on the experience of the first TTFSE project, BULPRO provided the Bank team with a detailed proposal on the content of this component.

5. **Financing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source:</th>
<th>($m.)</th>
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<tr>
<td>BORROWER</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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3This may include a trade facilitation specialist program led by BULPRO, and potentially a Customs agent training program.
6. Implementation

29. The Loan Agreement will be established between the Bank and the Republic of Bulgaria. The proposed project will be implemented by the already established and existing Project Implementation Team (PIT) at the Ministry of Finance (MOF), which implemented the first TTFSE project and also prepared the proposed project from the Borrower’s side. This will mitigate the risk of scattered project implementation responsibilities over various border crossing agencies. The PIT has the necessary experience, professional skills and knowledge to coordinate the day-to-day preparation and implementation, accumulated during the first TTFSE project and during the Project for Improvement of the Passing of BCP Vidin-Kalafat – Ferries (PPVKF).

30. The PIT has the overall responsibility for project implementation and coordination, for all components, including planning, procurement, disbursement of funds, monitoring the use of funds, auditing arrangements, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting on the progress of implementation and use of project funds. Due to the increased volume of activities under the proposed project, the PIT will recruit additional staff in order to increase its capacity in financial management, procurement, and in monitoring of environmental and social aspects.

31. The PIT has clearly defined internal status within the Ministry of Finance established through the system of ordinances by the Minister of Finance. This allows the PIT to work under close cooperation with the existing structural Ministry units responsible for the parameters of the budget framework, the external finances and the national debt of Bulgaria, as well as for the carrying out of the necessary financial-accounting and investment control.

32. The National Coordinator of the proposed TTFSE Project is a Deputy Minister of Finance, which enables a direct and active participation of the management of the Ministry of Finance in the project implementation.

33. The achieved cooperation with the beneficiaries during the implementation of the first TTFSE project at the national and regional levels, as well as the active role of the PIT in the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee for Border Crossing (ISCBC) provide also the necessary support by the ministries, institutions and NGOs, participating in the process of trade and transport facilitation in Bulgaria.

34. Among the various border agencies, Bulgaria Customs Agency (BCA), Border Police, and the Road Executive Agency (REA)/Republican Roads Infrastructure Fund (RRIF) will have an active role in the proposed project. The PIT will involve directly each entity for matters relating to that entity in order to ensure an efficient implementation of the proposed project. REA in particular will be represented in all matters concerning the access road to Kapitan Andreevo BCP under Component 2. This covers detailed design, land acquisition, procurement and contract execution. All legal issues and the actions of the various agencies will be coordinated through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

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4 The Republican Roads Infrastructure Fund (RRIF) is the successor to the assets and liabilities, rights and obligations of the Roads Executive Agency (REA) following its restructuring.
7. Sustainability

35. The proposed project was designed and proposed by the Government and the border agencies based on real needs stemming from the pressure of continuous growth in Bulgarian and transit trade and EU accession requirements. This project ownership is the first indicator of project sustainability. However, also important to project sustainability is the fact that the reform process of border agencies is now firmly on track. The agencies have greatly improved their performance in the past five years, and the sustainability of the project will be assured by transparency in customs operations, regular cooperation among border crossing agencies including those of other countries, and the gains captured by all parties involved in trade. The investment in technology, infrastructure, and processes included in the proposed project will enable border agencies to cope with trade and traffic growth, technological advance, and continued compatibility with the EU.

8. Lessons Learned from Past Operations in the Country/Sector

36. The first TTFSE program has been successful in reducing non-tariff costs to trade and transport, but also demonstrated that further reductions can be achieved by taking a more holistic, multi-agency, corridor approach. The following valuable lessons were drawn from TTFSE and similar projects elsewhere.

37. Inter-agency cooperation. Within-country inter-agency cooperation is essential for accomplishing the objectives of regional trade facilitation. While Customs is the key agency for cargo processing, border police (passenger control), agriculture (phyto-sanitary and veterinary), health, environment and road authorities have a presence at border crossings. A high level coordination body may be the most efficient approach to bring about the needed inter-agency cooperation. While an Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee for Border Crossing (ISCBC) is operational, the project will be managed by a National Project Coordinator proposed by the Ministry of Finance. The National Coordinator will carry-out the high level coordination between the border control institutions, in order to support the implementation of the individual project components.

38. Corridor approach. The main characteristics of international cargo traffic using transnational transport corridors in the Balkan region are long distance, transiting several countries, with destinations primarily in Western and Central Europe on one side, and Turkey on the other. To optimize the benefits of trade and transport facilitation, proposed activities must be coordinated at both sides of the border and, ideally, along the full transport corridor. For example, Corridor X, the backbone of Southeast Europe’s transport system, traverses Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, and Bulgaria/Macedonia before entering Turkey/Greece. While travel time through each of these countries can add-up from 3-10 hours, border crossing waiting times frequently double these times. The project builds on achievements towards regional integration, such as the Regional Steering Committee of Customs Directors, and supports efforts for further strengthening as included in several regional MOUs.

39. Regional institutions. Under the first TTFSE program, a regional steering committee (RSC) of Customs directors was established which has proven to be a quite successful platform for discussing regional customs issues and providing an opportunity for bilateral meetings. BCA was one of the strongest participants in this platform, and the Bank supports strengthening the
role of the RSC even further by enhancing its cooperation with SEETO, recently established with EU support as the Western Balkans own transport coordination platform.

9. Safeguard Policies (including public consultation)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Safeguard Policies Triggered by the Project</th>
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<th>No</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Assessment (OP/BP 4.01)</td>
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<td>Natural Habitats (OP/BP 4.04)</td>
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<td>Cultural Property (OPN 11.03, being revised as OP 4.11)</td>
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<td>Involuntary Resettlement (OP/BP 4.12)</td>
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<td>Indigenous Peoples (OP/BP 4.10)</td>
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<td>Forests (OP/BP 4.36)</td>
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<td>Safety of Dams (OP/BP 4.37)</td>
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<td>Projects in Disputed Areas (OP/BP 7.60)*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Projects on International Waterways (OP/BP 7.50)</td>
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<td>[ X ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. List of Factual Technical Documents

- Pre-feasibility Study of Maritsa Motorway from km 114 +000 to km 117 +278, PATPROEKT EOOD, December 1995.
- Preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment of Access Road to Kapitan Andreevo Border Station, September 2006.

11. Contact point

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* By supporting the proposed project, the Bank does not intend to prejudice the final determination of the parties' claims on the disputed areas