The Regional Urban Development Fund AD ("the Fund") herewith launches a call for project proposals under the JESSICA (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas) initiative. The funds under the initiative shall be available in the form of low-interest loans with tenor of up to 23 years, enabling the implementation of projects with substantial social impact, but with more moderate economic returns.

The Fund has been allocated total of BGN 36.9 million under JESSICA, complemented by additional BGN 73.8 million committed by Societe Generale Expressbank AD, the majority shareholder in the Fund. Thus the total amount available for financing reaches almost BGN 111 million and each approved project will be co-financed by the Fund and Societe Generale Expressbank AD.

The process of selection and evaluation of projects will be administered by the Fund, which will be the single point of contact for the interested parties.

The Fund is seeking to finance under JESSICA urban development projects sponsored by private investors, municipalities, and public-private partnerships in the following cities: Burgas, Varna, Pleven, Plovdiv, Ruse and Stara Zagora.

The Fund will finance projects that improve the life, image and sustainability of the six major Bulgarian cities. Examples of such projects include, among others:

- Rehabilitation of existing or creation of new social infrastructure:
  - Education facilities;
  - Healthcare facilities;
  - Facilities providing social services;
  - Cultural and entertainment facilities;
  - Sport facilities.

- Engineering infrastructure and risk prevention:
  - Rehabilitation of existing or development of new recreation areas;
  - Projects that generally improve the physical environment;
  - Projects related to provision of utility services and development of infrastructure, whereas investments in waste, water and/or energy should be part of an integrated urban project;
  - Construction of new, as well as redevelopment and rehabilitation of dilapidated industrial, business, trade and other city areas.

- Improvement of the urban mobility and transport infrastructure:
  - Traffic management systems and parking facilities;
  - Development and improvement of urban transport management systems;
  - Mobility services, vehicles and infrastructure that promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.

- Sustainable energy (as part of integrated urban projects):
  - Improvement in energy management and energy efficiency;
  - Increase of the use of renewable energy.

The main eligibility criteria of the Fund for financing urban development projects are:

- Rehabilitation of existing or creation of new social infrastructure:
- Engineering infrastructure and risk prevention:
- Improvement of the urban mobility and transport infrastructure:
- Sustainable energy (as part of integrated urban projects):

Conformity with the priorities of the Strategic Development Plans and General Urban Masterplans in the respective municipality and subsequently, after their completion, with the priorities of Integrated Plans for Sustainable Urban Development and Regeneration;

Tangible social impact and general public support;

Income generation potential and overall financial viability and sustainability;

Motivated and competent project promoter;

The Fund cannot refinance already completed projects; projects, whose implementation has commenced prior to their submission to the Fund can be financed subject to compliance with certain conditions;

Projects need to abide by Bulgarian and European State Aid regulations (http://www.jessicafund.bg/en/about-jessica/legislation).

Additional information on the eligibility of projects and costs under JESSICA, as well as on the indicative phases of the project selection and financing approval process, can be found in Fund’s Investment Policy paper (http://jessicafund.bg/en/about-jessica).

The project proposals will be considered on a “first come - first served” basis, until the exhaustion of the available financial resource. The deadline for investing of Fund’s resources in approved projects is June 30th 2015.

All interested parties should send their project proposals for Fund’s funding to the following email addresses: martin.zaimov@jessicafund.bg and todorina.doctorova@jessicafund.bg.

Regional Urban Development Fund AD, www.jessicafund.bg