

Bulgaria - country profile

1.1 General background and who's who. In Bulgaria there is a general awareness of the importance of SDGs for libraries; nevertheless, library activities are still finding their orientation and connections with relevant entities and national authorities. A key role in Bulgaria is being played by the [Global Libraries — Bulgaria Foundation](#), which has different roles: a) project manager in some of the SDG-oriented library projects, b) create awareness on SDG-related activities and c) provide expertise for libraries. Many of these activities are organised in collaboration with the [Bulgarian Library Association](#).

Libraries are mentioned in National Voluntary Report presented to the United Nations in 2020 (“Националната програма за развитие БЪЛГАРИЯ 2030”, [National Development Program 2030](#)); Axis 5 “Spiritual and vital Bulgaria” and Priority 13 mention, respectively, “Libraries” and “access to information” as an objective. They are included in the axe “Culture, heritage and tourism” with a view to supporting “Local development” and “Social inclusion”.

The report says that “cultural policy, culture and related creative industries” are a factor of identity and cohesion, aimed at creating cohesive and inclusive societies and improve the quality of life of the individual citizen and the stimulation of creative and innovative thinking. Activities will be carried out in support of local cultural centers, including theaters, community centers, libraries, museums, galleries, etc., using the achievements of modern (digital) technologies to increase the accessibility of creative cultural products.”¹

1.2 SDG priorities and policies in Bulgarian libraries

The Global Libraries Foundation and BLIA consider that the focus of SDG-oriented projects in Bulgaria should be the following:

- debates on SDGs with citizens,
- projects in co-creation with partners/citizens (digital inclusion; digital citizenship),
- pursuing green library objectives (such as energy saving infrastructure, waste management, SDG policy with staff).

Also taking into account the priorities of the NVR report in Bulgaria, The Global Libraries Foundation and BLIA deemed it possible to promote SDG-related projects within the scope of the following SDGs:

SDG 1. No Poverty: Access to basic human needs of health, education, sanitation,
SDG 3. Good Health and Wellbeing: Better, more accessible health systems to increase life-expectancy,

SDG 4. Quality Education: Inclusive education to enable upward social mobility and end poverty, SDG 5. Gender Equality: Education regardless of gender, advancement of equality laws, fairer representation of women,

SDG 6. Clean Water and Sanitation: Improving access for billions of people who lack these basic facilities,

SDG 7. Affordable and Clean Energy: Access to renewable, safe and widely available energy sources for all,

SDG 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth: Creating jobs for all to improve living standards, providing sustainable economic growth,

¹ <https://www.minfin.bg/upload/42211/Bulgaria+2030+proekt.pdf>

SDG 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: Generating employment and income through innovation,
SDG 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities: Making cities safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable,
SDG 12. Responsible Consumption and Production: Reversing current consumption trends and promoting a more sustainable future,
SDG 13. Climate Action: Regulating and reducing emissions and promoting renewable energy,
SDG 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: Inclusive societies, strong institutions and equal access to justice.

1.3 SDG-oriented projects

1. "Construction and development of the Center of Excellence Heritage BG",² funded by OP NEIR 2014-2020, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (SDG 11).

The main objective of the project is to build a modern infrastructure for research and innovation in the creative and recreational industries involving integrated teams for interdisciplinary research, policies and practices (representatives of the "St. Cyril and Methodius" National Library of Bulgaria and 11 other cultural, scientific and academic institutions).

Objects of the Bulgarian cultural heritage are being studied, processed, described and catalogued in the specialised laboratories. Samples of cultural heritage are also being examined for their potential social, economic and environmental effects at regional, national and local levels. The results will be directly applicable libraries, the educational and scientific institutions, and in the business organisations.

2. "Sustainable development goals and migration"³ (SDG 16). The project aims to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the countries of the European Union by raising the awareness of EU citizens and decision-makers. By the end of the project, 26,000 people and 980 journalists from at least 7 EU countries should be aware of and able to inform the public about the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the links between them and migration processes, and will aim to cover the most at least 2,800 representatives of institutions and raise the awareness of at least 6.5 million European citizens on the subject.

3. "The Written Treasures of Lower Danube"⁴ (SDG 11). The project "Written Treasures of the Lower Danube" (ROBG-290) is funded by the cross-border cooperation program INTEREG Romania — Bulgaria V-A, Priority Axis 2: "Green Region". The aim of the project is to promote the joint preservation, protection, promotion and development of the written cultural heritage of the cross-border region through diversification of tourist services and development of literary tourism. The outcome will be a new integrated tourist product "Cross-border destination for literary tourism Lower Danube", with activities aimed at building a cross-border partnership network. Partners in the project are the Global Libraries — Bulgaria Foundation, which is also a leading beneficiary, the Alexandru and Aristya Aman District Library — Dolj (Alexandru & Aristia Aman Dolj County Library) and Lyuben Karavelov Regional Library, Ruse. The project lasts 24 months. The total value of the project is EUR 486,029.02.

² <http://www.nasledstvo.bg>

³ <https://bpid.eu/product/faces-of-migration>

⁴ <http://litdanube.eu>

4. “Financial Literacy Through Public Libraries”⁵ (SDG 4). The overall objective of the project is to upskill librarians to provide basic financial literacy support to adult users. This age group (55+) needs further support to cope with a rapidly changing and complex financial environment where financial products and services are becoming more numerous, complex and risky. Special emphasis is placed to librarians in small cities and rural areas where different educational activities and lifelong training on key competencies are so necessary. The FINLIT project supports also the implementation of specific growth, education, and cohesion policies related to EU 2020 Strategy and Digital Agenda for Europe.

5. Gender Identity: “Child Readers and Library Collections” — G-BOOK⁶ (SDG 5). The project “Gender Identity: Child Readers and Library Collections” aims to promote gender positive children’s literature in terms of roles and models, a literature that is open-minded, plural, varied, free from stereotypes, that encourages respect and diversity. G-BOOK is one of the 66 winning projects selected among 430 proposals presented for the call Creative Europe. It involves 6 European partners: the project leader is Centro MeTRa (Department of Interpretation and Translation of the University of Bologna — Forlì Campus, Italy). Project partners are: the University Library “Livres au Trésor” and the Research Centre “Pléiade” of the University of Paris 13 (France), the Research Centre Anilij (National Association for Research in Children and Youth Literature) of the University of Vigo (Spain), the School of English — Dublin City University (Ireland), the Regional Public Library “Petko Rachev Slaveikov” (Bulgaria), and Biblioteka Sarajeva (Bosnia Herzegovina).

6. Global Libraries — Bulgaria Foundation (FSBB) is also a partner in:

- “Get Your Facts Straight! Media Literacy for All” — a program co-funded by the European Commission which provides media literacy training to students and young people from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as to their parents and / or grandparents; (SDG 8)
- “E-skills for E-inclusion” project, whose main purpose it is to develop a computer literacy training program for vulnerable groups and facilitate their access to the labour market. This project is being implemented in partnership with 5 other organisations from Northern Ireland, Spain, Italy and Romania and is funded by the European Erasmus + program (SDG 8).

1.4 Funding sources and evaluation. These projects as well as others do not fall within the remit of ordinary library budgets and enjoy additional funding provided by international organisations (European Commission, Structural Funds, etc), ministries, national or international foundations, Non-Governmental Organisations, commercial enterprises. This funding is normally allocated to the cultural and education departments, which are closely collaborating with SDG-related governmental agencies. Evaluation is carried out according to the rules set up by the funders.

⁵ <https://finlit.eu/edu/?redirect=0>

⁶ <https://g-book.eu>