



PODUENE CENTRE ESTATE

Vision and Program for Urban Regeneration

2009 – 2014



December 2009



Green
Safe
Diverse

Abstract

The preparation of the Urban Regeneration Plan for the pilot housing estate Poduene Centre (quarter 166) is done within the framework of the international project The Making, Implementation and Execution of an Urban Regeneration Plan led in partnership between the Dutch Housing Corporation Woonbron, the Bulgarian Housing Association, the Union of Homeowners' Associations in Bulgaria and Sofia Municipality – Oborishte District. The main project goal is the introduction and implementation of contemporary European approaches and practices in the process of sustainable urban planning, development and regeneration. An innovative contribution of the project is the active involvement of local communities in identifying the problems, choosing the approaches and creating an integrative plan for the urban regeneration of the common public spaces in Bulgarian cities. Thus, the project reaches the objective to build the necessary capacity and good practices in support of the successful implementation of the measures in the Operative Programme Regional Development 2007-2013 related to the housing policy and the improvement of the physical environment in Bulgarian cities. The project is implemented with the active support of the local administration of Sofia Municipality – Oborishte District. The project partners strongly believe in the urgent need to professionally work on the participation of citizens in the overall process of decision making especially when it concerns the integrative housing and urban development. The establishment of the Residents' Platform EcoCulture as a civil society initiative is among the main outcomes of the project.

The urban regeneration plan for the pilot housing estate Poduene Centre (quarter 166) includes analysis of the pilot area identity and description of all stages in the process of plan making. Important part of the plan is the area survey as a reliable basis for the detailed SWOT analysis of the pilot housing estate. The core part of the plan is the elaborated vision on the urban regeneration of the pilot zone with specification of the main goals, critical success factors, urban regeneration priorities and measures with exact design extrapolation on the location map. An important part of the plan is the description of the process from the vision to the implementation with precise strategy definition, formulation of scenarios for financing and description of the necessary executive programme with clear distribution of responsibilities within the agreed time frame.

Plan of Actions				
Urban Regeneration Project Stage	Duration			
	2009	2010	2011-2012	2013-2014
Inception Phase				
Content and Capacity Training				
Feasibility Study Stage				
Establishment of Residents' Platform				
Determination of UR Plan				
Implementation Phase				
Submission of UR Programme				
Application for Financing				
Design Stage				
Tendering and Subcontracting Stage				
Developing Phase of UR Plan Execution				
First Phase - UR Upper Pilot Zone				
Second Phase - UR Lower Pilot Zone				

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1 Introduction

The preparation of the Urban Regeneration Plan for Poduene Centre Estate is a result of the successful implementation of the project 'The Making, Implementation and Execution of an Urban Regeneration Plan'. The Dutch housing corporation 'Woonbron' and the Bulgarian Housing Association as leading project partners aim to introduce innovative approach to the regeneration of the inner city urban space in close cooperation with the pilot 'Oborishte' district municipality and the local community represented by the Residents' Platform, a civil society entity newly established under the project. The goal is to create a program for urban regeneration of inner city public spaces in one of the central districts of Sofia through the active participation of residents in cooperation with all stakeholders involved in the integrative and sustainable regeneration and development of the urban living environment. The project implementation is based on the extensive transfer of know-how from the Dutch housing associations that are the leaders in the process of urban regeneration in the Netherlands. The project results will support the successful implementation of priority axis 'Sustainable and Integrative Urban Development' of the Operative Program 'Regional Development 2007-2013'.

1.1 Area Identity

Poduene Centre Zone is located on the south-east territorial administrative border of 'Oborishte' District Municipality. The land of the pilot housing estate No. 166 is a private municipal property. The total surface of the pilot zone is 37,220 m², which is spatially divided into two parts – northern (upper) part with total surface of 20,840 m² and southern (lower) part with total surface of 16,380 m². The total population of the area is 1060 inhabitants of which 650 live in the northern part and 410 live in the southern part.



The pilot zone is located on the border of the large city centre. The pilot estate is characterised by the predominant housing function and the rich greenery with differentiated places for the recreation of residents. The building environment is mainly from the 60s and consists of twenty buildings of two main types – limited number of high rise large surface shuttering system condominiums and predominant share of four-floor monolithic construction condominiums.

Administrative Map
Oborishte District Municipality

The pilot area is bordered by two traffic lines – Sitniakovo Boulevard with six roadways plus a tramway and Cherkovna Street with four roadways, both infusing into Slivnitsa Boulevard, which connects the east and west parts of the city. The intensive traffic next to the housing estate causes serious noise and air pollution. On the north, the pilot estate is bordered by a large construction site where a big centre with mixed commercial and office function is almost to be ready for exploitation.



Typical for the area is the image of the housing estate as a green 'peninsula' within the traffic flow. The greenery determines the living environment in the housing estate and serves as a natural 'shield' against the noise and air pollution. In the same time, it creates the basis for the provision of amenities for the residents. The permanent vegetation is from the early 60s. The grassing and the low vegetation are changing over time. The maintenance of the greenery is obligation of the district municipality due to the type of property on the land. The permanent lack of sufficient municipal funds is the reason for the partial and mostly emergency care for the public green spaces. In the same time, the municipal property on the land creates confusion in the proper distribution of rights and responsibilities and thus, hampers the active involvement of the residents in the maintenance of the public spaces around their residential buildings. The same refers to all physical amenities in the pilot area.

The pilot housing estate is built simultaneously mainly in the 60s. Therefore, the predominant part of the local residents inhabited the area also simultaneously. This fact results in two main characteristics of the local community. First, the proportion of the elderly population is getting higher, and second, the settled for couple of decade local population is informally structured with clear identification and higher level of communication than the average. In the north part of the estate there are two six and nine floor multi-section condominiums from the 70s, where a bigger portion of relatively younger people is concentrated. This fact is among the objective reasons for the observed higher degree of civil society participation in the upper part of the estate where bigger diversity of amenities is concentrated.

Street	No.	Age 12-18		Age 3-12		Age < 3		Total
		boys	girls	boys	girls	boys	girls	
Zemen	1-3	3	5	7		3		18
Sitniakovo	50-58	4	3	4	3	1		15
Cherkovna	> 75	11	11	20	17	4	1	64
Kalimantzi	2-7-9	2	2		1			5
Popova shapka	1, 5, 2-10	3	3	1	1			8
Sultan tepe	10-22, 1-23	8	7	4	9			28
Total	Quart. 164-166	31	31	36	31	8	1	138

The summary of the main feature of the area profile is the central location with good accessibility, compact simultaneously constructed building environment, prevailing residential function with an aging population, rich greenery as a distinctive mark, and heavy traffic air and noise pollution.

1.2 The Process of Making of an Urban Regeneration Plan

The process of making an urban regeneration plan for the pilot housing estate Poduene Centre (quarter 166) considers the complexity of tasks to be executed and the continuity of steps to be undertaken. The emphasis is on the integrative approach to the range of problems to be solved and the participation of all stakeholders to be involved. Thus, the process is characterized by three main directions of work:

- To analyze the pilot area profile,
- To identify the stakeholders concerned, and
- To elaborate a program of urban regeneration measures to be undertaken.

Dissemination and lobbying campaign is an inherent part of the implementation strategy for the urban regeneration plan to be executed.

1.2.1 Survey of Residents' Needs

An extensive survey on the problems and needs of the residents from the pilot housing estate is executed in the period February-March 2009. The survey questionnaire is aimed to reveal the residents' profile, typology of built environment, characteristics of living environment, level of organization at building and community scale, communication with district municipality, and to access the residents' needs. The questionnaire is disseminated among the residents from the pilot housing estate during a field work, which is executed by experts from the Union of Homeowners' Associations in cooperation with the district municipality. The results from the conducted survey are based on the analysis of the questionnaire forms filled in by the residents participating in the research as well as on the additional empirical information provided by the pilot district municipality. The results give the basic start point for the integrative urban planning and regeneration of the inner estate public spaces.

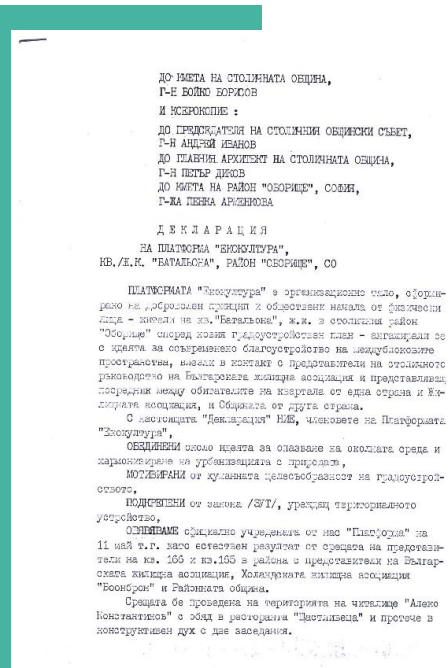
1.2.2 Establishment of Residents' Platform 'EcoCulture'

The key issue in the process of making of an urban regeneration plan for the housing estate Poduene Centre (quarter 166) is the active involvement of the residents during the overall process of planning. The first meeting with the residents from the pilot housing estate took place on 11 May 2009 in the premises of the Community Centre 'Aleko Konstantinov'. The meeting agenda included a presentation of results from the survey of the residents' needs and vision for urban regeneration in the pilot zone, information about the urban regeneration practices, organization of stakeholder participation and negotiating with authorities in the Netherlands, as well as presentation of municipal vision for urban regeneration activities in the pilot zone. The emphasis was on the extensive discussion about the main pillars of the urban regeneration program. After the discussion the participants in the debates reached a common vision about the distinctive features of the living environment in the neighbourhood that determines its identity and should be preserved during the process of urban



Participation, Energy, Challenge, Organisation

regeneration planning. The participants shared the common understanding about the necessary changes and improvements that should be incorporated in the urban regeneration plan for renovating the inner spaces between the condominium buildings. The representatives of the residents from the pilot housing estate took a unanimous decision to establish a Residents' Platform as an active counterpart of the district municipality in the process of making, implementation and execution of the urban regeneration plan for their neighbourhood. This is a pioneer for Bulgaria civil society initiative for the active involvement and capacity building of local communities in the process of urban regeneration and the renovation of inner estate public spaces.



Constituent Declaration

On 5 June 2009 the members of the Residents' Platform 'EcoCulture' officially announced their establishment as a civil society body with a Constituent Declaration, which was sent to the Mayor of Sofia, the Chairman of Sofia City Council, the Chief Architect of Sofia and the Mayor of Oborishte District Municipality. The residents announced their platform as an organisational body established on a voluntary principle and in public favour in order to get united in their efforts to protect, develop and harmonise the living environment in their neighbourhood. The residents expressed the priorities of their platform:

- To preserve the green ecosystem in their estate as a natural filter within the intensively developing urban conditions,
- To self organise as an active partner in the process of urban regeneration of the inner estate public spaces,
- To get united with national and international partners for improving the living environment in accordance to European standards and with the financial support of the EU programs.

The Residents' Platform as representative civil society body of the local community in the pilot housing estate is actively working in cooperation with the district municipality and the professionals during all stages of the process of making an urban regeneration plan for their neighbourhood.

1.2.3 Capacity Building

There is a strong demand in Bulgaria for learning from the Dutch experience in housing management and integrated urban planning to support urban regeneration. In this respect, objective and innovative contribution of the process of making of an urban regeneration plan is to contribute to the long-term improvement of the living conditions in the urban areas in Bulgaria by initiating the process of urban regeneration. The goal is to increase awareness and to build capacity in support of the active civil society involvement of homeowners and their associations as well as of municipal authorities. The overall planning process involves a transfer of knowledge and experiences gained in the Netherlands on housing management and urban regeneration projects, development of training programmes for residents and municipal administration in regard their active participation in the process of integrated urban planning and regeneration.

1.2.4 Elaboration of Area SWOT Analysis



The next major step in the process of making of an urban regeneration plan for the pilot housing estate Poduene Centre (quarter 166) is the elaboration of the area SWOT analysis. It is done by the project team of professionals from the Dutch housing corporation Woonbron, the Bulgarian Housing Association, the Union of Homeowners' Associations and the District Municipality in cooperation and with the active participation of the members of the established Residents' Platform. In July '09 the final version of the SWOT analysis and confrontation matrix are



successfully finalized in couple of working sessions. The need for cooperation between the district municipality and the residents with clear distribution of roles and responsibilities is among the most important conclusions from the discussions during the common work on the elaboration of the plan. An agreement among the participants on the steps to be undertaken in order to guarantee the successful finalization and the subsequent realization of the urban regeneration plan for the pilot zone is reached.

The participatory approach in elaborating the area SWOT analysis and confrontation matrix guarantees the relevance of the urban regeneration plan to the needs and vision of the local residents. Thus, the reliable ground for the future involvement

of the local community in the area management and maintenance is provided as well as the opportunity for a permanent dialogue between the residents and the district municipality on the problems of the pilot area.

Working together and taking the responsibility

1.2.5 Making the Strategy for Implementation

In October '09 the stage of making the strategy for implementation of the urban regeneration plan for the pilot housing estate reveals that all parties involved already form a motivated working team, which bases its efforts on a common vision and clear distribution of roles and responsibilities. This is the crucial moment when goals, priorities, map, strategy, scenarios, and measures are defined and agreed. The parties set as the main identity features of the housing estate to be preserved and developed within the urban regeneration process. The pilot housing estate has to be preserved and intensively regenerated as *Green, Safe and Diverse* neighbourhood for its residents. The common understanding is to use all available opportunities to finance the implementation of the regeneration plan and to integrate the area development within the existing plans for the commercial centre on the north border.



2 Area Survey

The survey analysis is based on the replies of 20% of the residents in the pilot UR zone. The respondents' profile shows that the most active in participating in the survey are the elderly people (80%) with 1-2 member/s households and without children in the household at the moment of the survey. Most of respondents live for more than 40 years in the UR pilot zone. According to the respondents (80%) the common parts of the buildings are in a relatively good condition. However, the respondents replied that some partial or major repairs are needed:

Type of repairs needed	% of respondents*
Roof insulations	60%
Staircases	40%
Other common parts	20%

According to 60% of respondents the maintenance of common parts is satisfactory and if any problems they are mainly due to the lack of funds (40%) and lack of maintenance culture (20%). In the same time, the survey revealed that there is no in any of the condominiums a properly established maintenance fund but simple collection of instalments for the everyday maintenance.

The UR pilot zone is predominantly residential and is located on the edge of Oborishte District Municipality bordering with one of the main city boulevards that is a source of permanent noise and pollution. This fact was raised in the survey as a problem for the quality of the living environment in the neighbourhood by 20% of respondents. They claimed for the provision of shrubby vegetation as a noise protection tool for the upgrading of the existing living environment in the area.

Only 40% of respondents consider the area maintenance as satisfactory. The respondents mentioned as insufficient the playgrounds for children (60%), the sport facilities (100%), the parking place (80%), and the everyday services (60%). According to all respondents there is a need for repairs and replacements of existing amenities. Additionally, all respondents took the opportunity to describe the needed measures for upgrading the existing living environment:

Type of repairs/ replacements needed	% of respondents*
Disappearing children playgrounds	40%
Damaged pavements	40%
Missing sport facilities	20%
Missing small gardens	20%
Missing equipment for public cleanness	20%
Damaged street surfaces	20%
Insufficient parking places	20%

According to respondents the reasons for the insufficient maintenance of the area are the lack of maintenance culture (80%), the lack of municipal attention (60%) and the lack of public funds (20%).

The survey analysis shows that only 20% of the respondents replied that there is an elected chairman/chairwoman of their condominium buildings. In fact, according to the preliminary information from the pilot municipality this percentage is higher. Possible explanation of this fact is the formality and the lack of proper functioning of this organizational form at building level. In fact,

* The sum is more than 100% because the respondents selected more than one of the provided options in the questionnaire

no one of the elected chairmen/chairwomen of condominium buildings in the pilot UR area took place in the survey in providing feedback through the questionnaire.

Still, the individualistic approach is prevailing. In the same time, the residents know their neighbours from the same staircase (100%) and the same building (40%). The respondents replied that common activities are organized among neighbours only in case of urgent problems (100%) and never as part of existing tradition. In fact, no organization exists at neighbourhood level in order to represent and protect common needs and interests. The above conclusions are supplementary supported by the analysis of the answers of the last question regarding the readiness of residents to participate in the preparation of a plan for improving the living environment of the UR pilot zone:

Type of resident' participation	% of respondents [†]
Public discussions	80%
Trainings	20%
Residents' platform	40%

40% of the respondents confirmed that they have regular contacts with the district municipality:

Reason for regular communication with district municipality	% of respondents*
To obtain information about municipal plans	40%
To get the municipal support in regards to their interests	40%
Other reasons	20%

According to the survey results 100% of respondents confirmed that they like living in the area by choosing 'yes' from the four scaled range of possible answers.

The empirical data shows that the main almost equal as number age groups of children are the 3-12 years old and the teenagers 12-18 years old. There are two playgrounds for children and no recreation/ sport facility for teenagers except the school sport playground situated at 200 meters from the UR pilot zone. The data about the number of children is in conformity with the results of the survey that the population of the UR pilot zone is predominantly aging.

Period of living in the area	5-10 years	>20 years	>40 years	>60 years
% of the respondents	20%	20%	40 %	20%

The assessment of residents' needs reveals the following:

Type of needed new premises	% of respondents*
Recreation facilities	60%
Playgrounds for children	60%
Sport facilities	80%
Parking facilities	80%
Upgrading of places for garbage collection	80%
Small facilities for everyday services	40%
Safety facilities	40%
Places for elderly to meet	40%
Public green spaces	80%

[†] The sum is more than 100% because the respondents selected more than one of the provided options in the questionnaire

3 Area SWOT

Strengths of the pilot area

- The greenery and the green inner city public spaces within the pilot housing estate,
- The central location of the pilot housing estate,
- The richness and diversity of the existing vegetation in the neighbourhood,
- The greenery of the area serves as a green 'shield' against the air and noise pollution, and
- The informally established local community at neighbourhood level

The most important strength of the pilot housing estate is the greenery of the area that serves as a green 'shield' against the air and noise pollution. This reveals to be the most positive and distinctive feature of the area that should be preserved as a land mark and inherent peculiarity of the existing living environment. The central location of the neighbourhood also shows to be among the top strengths of the pilot zone. This is an objective precondition that is sufficiently giving an added value for attractiveness of the area. In the same time, this is among the reasons for the increased developers' interest that at this moment is in contradiction with the vision and needs of the residents. Therefore, special emphasis has to be put on the future development of the housing estate in regard to the new housing construction elaborating the strategy for urban regeneration of the zone. The richness of vegetation is also listed among the major strengths of the area. This is a result from an active environmental and urban planning policy from the past that is maintained over time. However, the last two decades this policy is neglected due to the scarce public funding, the unclear responsibilities of local residents and their insufficient involvement. The analysis reveals as a priority strength the established neighbourhood community though informally organized. The active involvement of residents and the establishment of their civil society representation body prove this advantage of the pilot housing estate. This is to be further developed in the regeneration strategy in order to guarantee the sustainability of the urban regeneration process and the transformation of the local community into strong and proactive partner of the district municipality during the implementation and execution of the urban regeneration plan and subsequent management and maintenance of inner estate public spaces. The strengths of the area are complemented with the good transport access, the attractiveness and positive image of the area, the relatively good physical condition of condominium buildings and the newly provided modern playground for children.

Weaknesses of the pilot area

- The disrupted levelling of the green public spaces within the pilot housing estate,
- The destroyed walking paths that cross the green public spaces,
- The misplacement of the lighting on the main inner quarter streets,
- The lack of proper draining of public green spaces and inner quarter streets, and
- The destroyed inner quarter main streets

The most important weakness of the pilot housing estate reveals to be the unsatisfactory maintenance of the inner public spaces, which causes the displacement in the green parts and the disrupted levelling of the area. In addition, all walking paths are destroyed due to the continuous lack of maintenance and regular repair works. Among the serious weaknesses of the pilot area is the

lighting of the public spaces, which hampers the safety of the housing estate. The recently installed lighting on the main street of the area is misplaced and functionally useless. The green areas lack a proper draining after the repair works of the utility companies. The internal main streets in the pilot are destroyed. This set of most important weaknesses is complemented by the permanent lack of maintenance and cleaning of the inner estate public spaces and greenery. The rapidly decreasing safety in the area is related to the old and dangerous playgrounds and equipment, the bad pedestrian access through the underpass on Cherkovna Street, and the danger for accidents as a result from the heavy traffic. There is no any recent attempt to reorganize the traffic in accordance to the new developments in the neighbouring urban areas. A serious problem of the pilot zone is the noise and air pollution. Among the weaknesses of the pilot estate is the lack of sufficient places for parking that additionally hampers the green public spaces. There is an obvious and continuous lack of maintenance of all inner estate public spaces that heavily jeopardize the quality and safety of the living environment in the pilot area. Therefore, the emphasis in the vision for the urban regeneration and development of the estate has to be put on the maintenance and upgrading of the greenery, the integrated repair of internal streets and walking paths, the restoration of the levelling of the green parts, the replacement of the lighting, the provision of parking spaces and adequate amenities in accordance to residents' needs.

Opportunities for the pilot area

- The EU operational programs for the neighbourhood regeneration,
- The dialogue with the municipal authorities especially in regard to the construction site on the North-east part of the area,
- The civil society initiative for participation in making an urban regeneration plan for the area,
- The improvement of the social cohesion and communication at community level, and
- The reorganization of the traffic in regard to the new realities

The proactive and substantial dialogue with the district municipality is among the top opportunities according to the residents from the pilot housing estate. There is a serious trust in the opportunities for urban development projects given by the current availability of targeted EU structural funds under the Operative Program 'Regional Development 2007-2013' of the Ministry for Regional Development and Public Works. In the same time, the established Residents' Platform as a proactive civil society initiative is considered among the top opportunity for the regeneration of the pilot housing estate. The empowerment of this platform and its planned social activities for the improvement of the social cohesion and communication is also set as important opportunity for the area development. The reorganization of the traffic in regard to the new realities, the provision of a pedestrian path on Cherkovna Street, tram stop on Sitnyakovo Blvd, and the upgrading the bus stop next to buildings 50 and 50A are also listed as a serious opportunity in regard to the safety of the living environment. This set of important opportunity is complemented by the opportunities to renovate the condominium buildings with the help of the existing subsidy mechanisms, the provision of safety measures on the external streets, the continuous dissemination of the achieved results as well the inclusion in the Civil Platform of Oborishte District. It is obvious that the strategy for urban regeneration of the pilot housing estate has to emphasize on the communication with the different levels of public authorities, the capacity building that will enable local residents and their organization to actively participate in the overall process of making, implementing and execution of the plan for urban regeneration of their housing estate.

Threats for the pilot area

- The planned construction between blocks 50 and 50A as a threat for the whole housing estate,
- The night club with the trade of drugs, the noise from the cars and the indecent behavior of visitors,
- The commercial centre and the requirements to provide safety for the entrances to the estate,
- The rapidly increasing traffic with still missing reorganization, and
- The lack of police presence during night time

The SWOT analysis identifies the planned construction in the upper part of the pilot housing estate as a serious threat, which leads to the distortion of the balance between the green public spaces and the built up area, the existing physical homogeneity, and the integrity of the local community. This new development provokes the local community to get united in its objection and determination to fight for keeping the identity of the neighbourhood. A grave threat is the night club on the border between the upper and the lower parts of the pilot estate. The consequences especially for the neighbouring buildings are related to the trade of drugs, the noise from the cars and the indecent behaviour of visitors. A contradictory threat is the new commercial centre on the north border of the pilot area. This is mainly related with the expected much higher flow of visitors and cars that will threaten the safety of the area. For the moment, the local residents are not willing to consider the ready for exploitation commercial centre as an opportunity for the economic upgrading of their neighbourhood despite the fact that the developer has already provided a newly constructed playground for children in the upper part. Other serious threat is the ongoing increase of the traffic on the main traffic lines bordering the pilot estate. The new commercial centre will close the traffic triangle also from North on Popova Shapka Street. In this regard the lack of police presence in night time, which is other important threat, will worsen overtime the safety of the neighbourhood especially after the new commercial centre starts functioning. The set of grave threats is completed by the deepening economic crisis and the age structure with prevailing elderly population.

Confrontation matrix

PROJECT TEAM (11 July 2009)											
STRENGTH						WEAKNESSES					
	57	40	38	35	29	51	51	47	42	40	
OPPORTUNITIES	54	45	17	30	20	10	44	35	28	43	35
	45	13	25	18	18	13	21	20	44	33	22
	44	15	4	27	15	20	35	15	21	17	15
	42	12	1	11	3	45	2	5	1	7	2
	38	2	15	1	5	8	2	20	2	2	10
THREATS	48	15	4	9	9	1	7	3	4	1	2
	48	2	13	8	8	1	1	3	8	5	10
	47	2	11	4	6	2	4	7	3	4	4
	45	2	25	9	19	2	2	12	2	2	14
	34	2	4	2	4	1	4	8	12	8	4

SWOT Confrontation Matrix

The SWOT confrontation matrix discovers positive balance between the four important fields of mutual relations between the major strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the pilot housing estate Poduene Centre (quarter 166). The biggest concentration of points is in the green cross-section of the strengths and opportunities that gives the ground to estimate as strong and reliable the neighbourhood capacity for a continuous and substantial urban regeneration. In the same time, the grave red cross-section is the less influencing with the smallest portion of impact on the potential development of the area. The two yellow cross

sections are relatively balanced with slight prevailing of impact of the interrelations between the internal for the area strengths and weaknesses. The SWOT analysis and confrontation matrix firmly proves the potential of the pilot zone for regeneration and sustainable development.

4 Vision on Urban Regeneration

The overall work during the process of making of an urban regeneration plan for the pilot housing estate Poduene Centre (quarter 166) logically leads to the proper and contextual formulation of a regeneration vision that relies on the inherent features of the area, the needs of local community and the municipal plans for urban development of the entire zone including the potential impact of adjacent parts especially on North where the new big construction site of the commercial centre is located. The potential and internal capacities of the pilot housing estate reveal the following main characteristics that have to form the basis of the vision for urban regeneration:

- Green** To preserve, maintain and further develop the rich greenery of the pilot housing estate as a green shield against the air and noise pollution and a prerequisite for the environmentally friendly quality of the living environment in the area;
- Safe** To increase and strengthen the safety of the pilot urban zone with predominant housing function especially in the context of ongoing developments in the adjacent urban areas and thus, to support the integrity of the local community;
- Diverse** To provide diversity of the living environment in the pilot housing estate with emphasis on the variety of amenities in order to meet the residents needs for a contemporary living standard;

4.1 Goals

During the process of making an urban regeneration plan for the pilot housing estate the definition of goals to be achieved is among the priority tasks. The main goals to be achieved are:

- Improving the physical public space within the pilot urban regeneration zone,
- Improving the safety situation in the pilot urban regeneration zone,
- Improving the living conditions pilot urban regeneration zone.

These goals will be supported by the achievement of the following middle term goals:

- Improving the condominium buildings pilot urban regeneration zone, and
- Improving the property management and maintenance of the condominiums.

4.2 Critical Success Factors

The goals of the urban regeneration plan can be achieved within the following success factors:

- Working together on making an urban regeneration plan for the pilot zone,
- Working on capacity building of the local community and the district municipality,
- Working on strengthening of public confidence and trust between stakeholders involved,
- Exchanging information about possible approaches to urban regeneration planning, and
- Improving the cooperation between the district municipality and the citizens.

According to local residents the participatory approach of working together and improving the cooperation with the district municipality is of vital importance.

4.3 Urban Regeneration Priorities

The set of measures to be undertaken in order to achieve the goals of the urban regeneration plan for the pilot housing estate have to be in conformity with the identity of the pilot area to be preserved as main distinctive features of the living environment:

- Preserving the children playground in the North-East part of the housing estates,
- Preserving the trees between the seven condominium buildings situated on Kalimantzi, Zemen, Popova Shapka streets and Sitnyakovo Blvd.,
- Preserving of existing green areas that provide the calmness, tranquillity and safety of this urban territory,
- Preserving the places for recreation that provide the basis for the social communication and building up the relations among neighbours,
- Preserving the detached inner city public spaces as “nests” for communication, tranquillity and safety,
- Preserving all public green areas that refresh the air especially having in mind the noise and the pollution from the traffic on the two main arteries – Sitnyakovo Blvd and Cherkovna Street.

The regeneration priority measures of the inner spaces between the condominium housing buildings in the pilot estate has are formulated on the basis of the SWOT analysis results and include the following main changes in the current living environment:

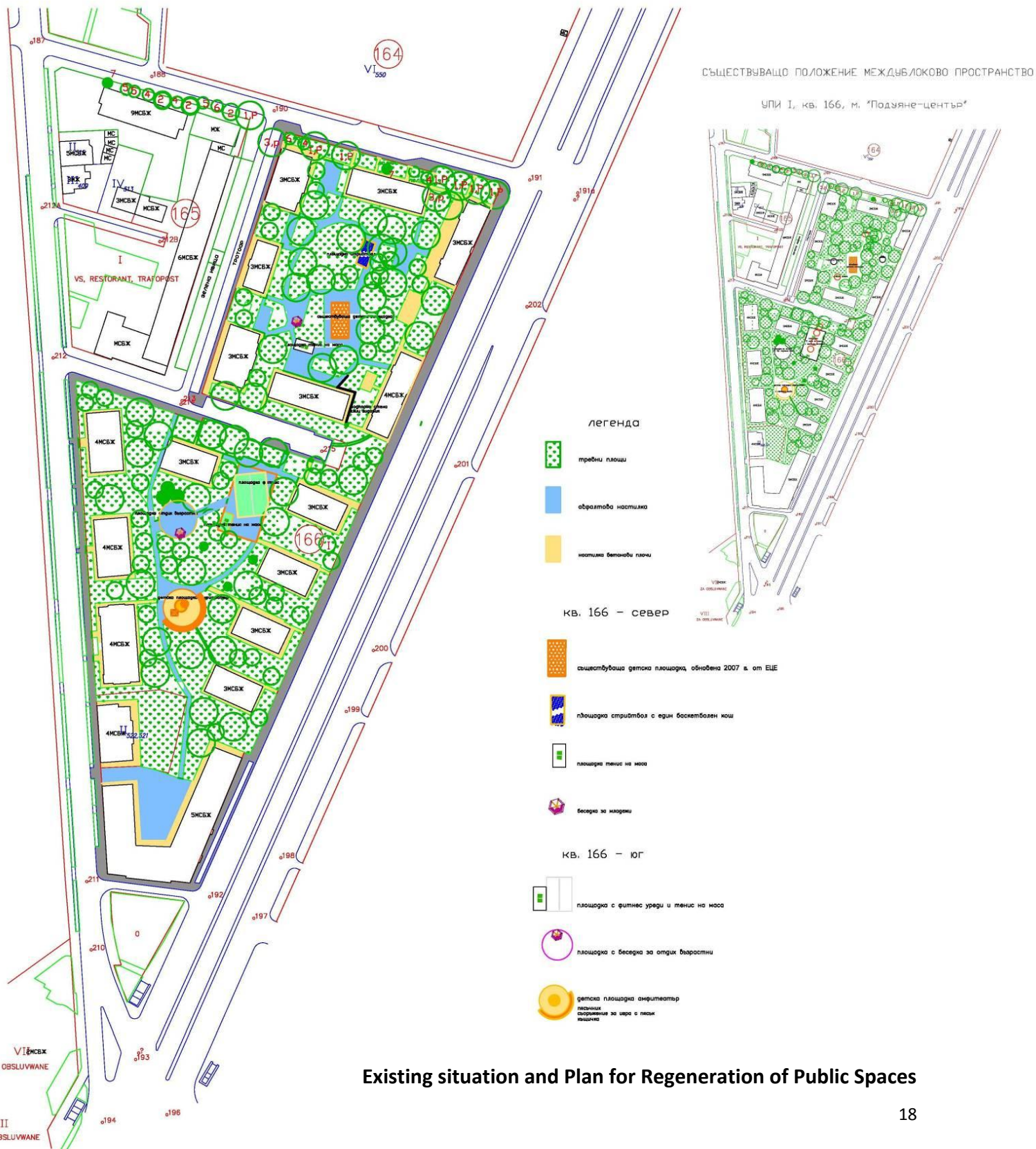
- Levelling of the inner spaces between the condominium buildings – geodesic surveying, vertical planning and improvement of inner spaces between the condominium buildings,
- Vertical planning of adjacent areas and repair of the pavement for draining the condominium buildings and fortification of public green spaces,
- New pavement of the inner pedestrian paths,
- Replacement of the old lighting pillars,
- Building up a new sport amenity for basketball and/ or volleyball with soft pavement in the North-East part of the housing estate,
- Renovation of the existing ground in the central part of the housing estate in order to transform it in a meeting and recreation point for elderly,
- Renovation of existing amphitheatre ground with incorporation of playing facilities for the young children from the estate,
- Provision of covered harbour for gathering of residents instead of the old boat,
- Improvement of the garbage collection system – provision of more bins for separate waste collection and of bigger containers that could not be removed by the workers from the construction site in near proximity,
- Optimization of the parking places.

These measures are coordinated with the municipal vision for development of the area and extrapolated into concrete actions of an urban regeneration project. The actions are formulated separately for the two parts of the pilot estate and planned for implementation in two phases with priority for the upper part where an investment support is present in relation with the construction site from the North. The regeneration plan is supported by renovation activities on the bordering Popova Shapka Street where the developer is planning to fully repair the street pavement and the sidewalks and to redevelop the green fillets.

4.4 Map of Location

РЕКОНСТРУКЦИЯ НА ПАРКОУСТРОЯВАНЕТО НА МЕЖДУБЛОКОВО ПРОСТРАНСТВО

УПИ I, кв. 166, м. "Подуяне-център"



4.5 Urban Regeneration Measures

4.5.1 Physical Measures

The detailed specification of the physical urban regeneration measures relies on the definition of the urban regeneration priorities for each of the two main parts of the pilot housing estate.

Upper part of the pilot housing estate – concrete urban regeneration actions

- Laying of new asphalt covering with milling and levelling of walking paths and amenity grounds,
- Replacement of garden curb stones of the green public spaces,
- Installing of street basketball playground with acrylic covering,
- Installing of tennis table with acrylic covering,
- Installing of arbour with lanterns – teenagers,
- Replacement of the destroyed garden curb stones of the green spaces in front of condominiums,
- Introduction of shadow resistant vegetation,
- Planting of decorative trees and law vegetation,
- Removing of old equipments and tracing of parking slots.

Estimated total amount of the investment: BGN 189 110 including VAT

Lower part of the pilot housing estate – concrete urban regeneration actions

- Laying of new asphalt covering with milling and levelling of walking paths and amenity grounds,
- Replacement of garden curb stones of the green public spaces,
- Installing of arbour with lanterns – elderly,
- Installing playground with sands for children,
- Installing of small children lodge,
- Installing of fitness playground,
- Replacement of the destroyed garden curb stones of the green spaces in front of condominiums,
- Introduction of shadow resistant vegetation,
- Planting of decorative trees and law vegetation,
- Removing of old equipments and tracing of parking slots.

Estimated total amount of the investment: BGN 248 390 including VAT

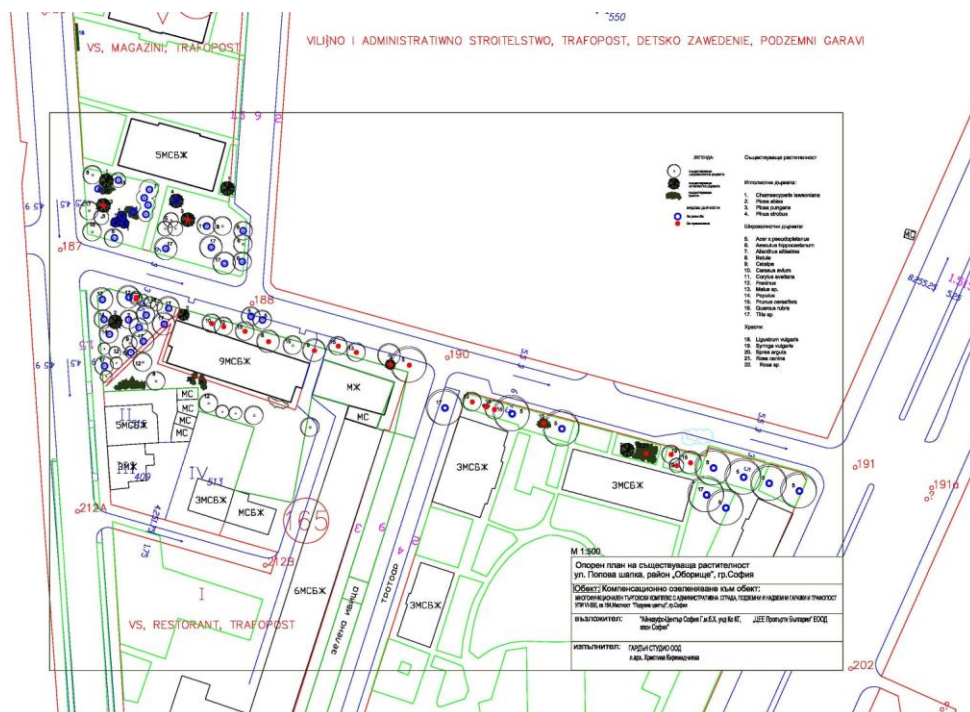
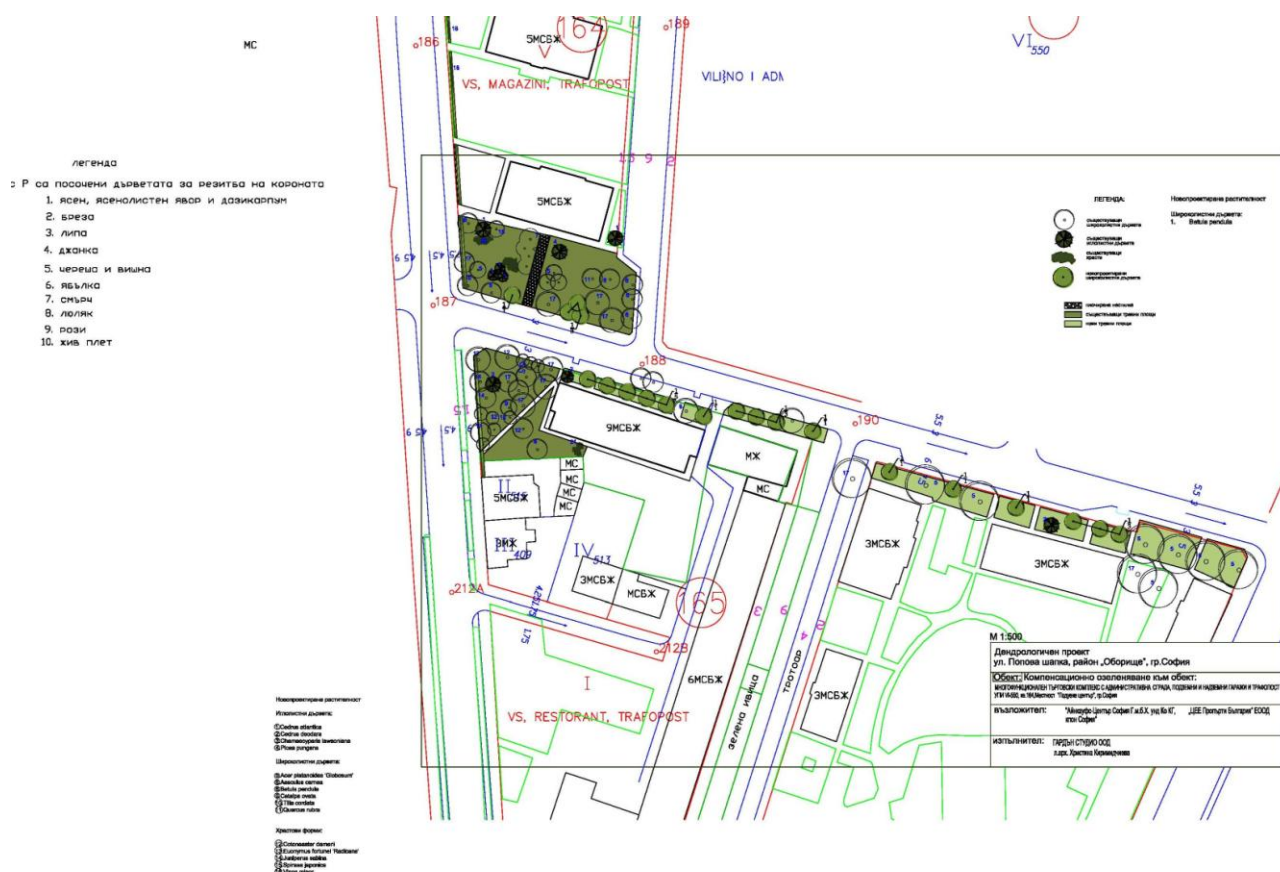
4.5.2 Social and Communication Measures

No urban regeneration plan can be successfully implemented and executed without a clear and contextual formulation of the necessary social and communication measures to be undertaken in order to secure the sustainability of the overall urban regeneration process especially at the stage of the maintenance of the already provided or improved physical public amenities. It is crucial:

- To obtain the support from the majority of residents as a continuous task during the implementation and execution phases of the urban regeneration plan for the pilot estate,
- To regularly inform the local community about the ongoing activities as other continuous task,
- To improve the social coherence and create a welcoming committee informing about the already established rules in the regenerated pilot housing estate.

A socially coherent and strengthened local community as well as a properly targeted communication strategy are among the decisive prerequisites for the successful urban regeneration process.

Program for redevelopment of the greenery on the border with the Commercial Centre

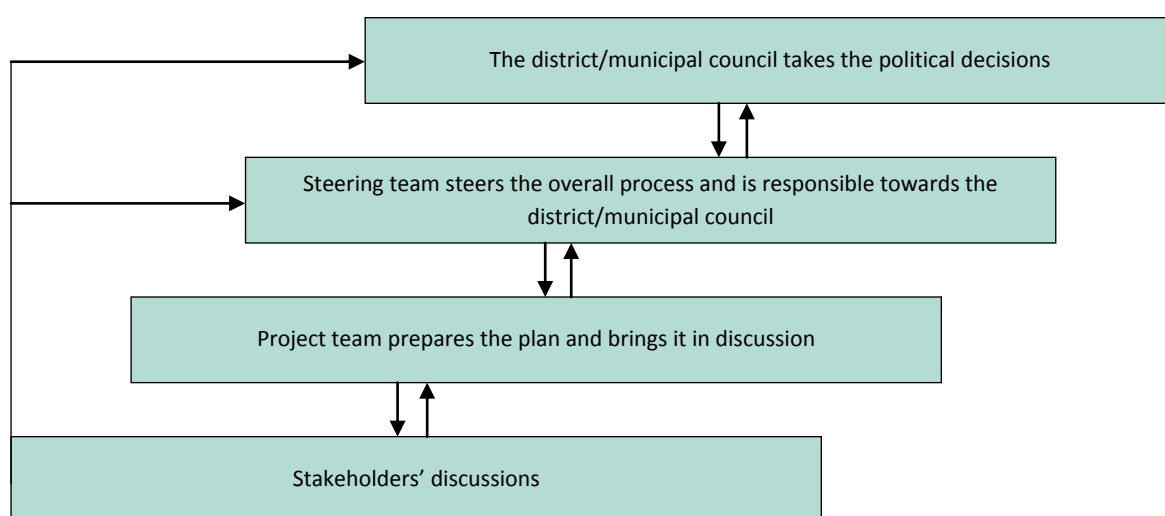


Existing situation of the greenery on north of the pilot housing estate

5 From Vision to Implementation

5.1 Strategy Definition

The project for making, implementation and execution of an urban regeneration for the pilot housing estate Poduene Centre (quarter 166) represents an innovative for Bulgaria approach towards the integrative urban development and planning with an proactive involvement of the residents and their civil society organization. The implementation of such regeneration project firmly relies on the continuous involvement and enabling of the local community as well as on the clear distribution of roles and responsibilities of all parties involved such as local authorities, residents and professionals. Therefore, the communication and cooperation between the different levels of decision making is a prerequisite for the success of the overall urban regeneration process.



In addition, the social task in enabling the local community to proactively participate during the different stages of the process is a must. All concrete physical, environmental and safety measures and actions have to be combined with continuous social work and consultation with the local residents who are the 'end users' of the urban regeneration results. Thus, the strategy for implementation of an urban regeneration plan has to contain substantial social and communication component and practical tools such as general meetings of the Residents' Platform and the Project Team, web-site, exhibitions, thematic meetings, target group meetings, consultations, etc.

The project team together with the residents' platform define two possible strategies for the successful implementation of the urban regeneration plan for the pilot housing estate:

Strategy 1 Work on a complete urban regeneration plan for the whole pilot area. Apply for funding in May 2010, and

Strategy 2 Start now with some smaller actions and measures, for which the municipality has operational budget, and start improving the area as well as the trust and cooperation between the district municipality and the citizens. Work on complete plan at the same time.

The common agreement is for the second strategy with emphasis on the integrative approach.

5.2 Scenarios for Financing

The definition of potential scenarios for implementing an urban regeneration plan for the pilot housing estate is related to the determination of different possible developments and conditions for the implementation process. At this planning stage all objective circumstances are to be carefully taken into consideration and estimated in their capacity to influence the practical implementation of the regeneration plan and to guarantee its feasibility and chances for success. The scenario definition has to be based on the critical analysis of the financing opportunities, the time planning and the urban regeneration project organization and management. The critical analysis reveals three potential scenarios for the implementation of the urban regeneration plan:

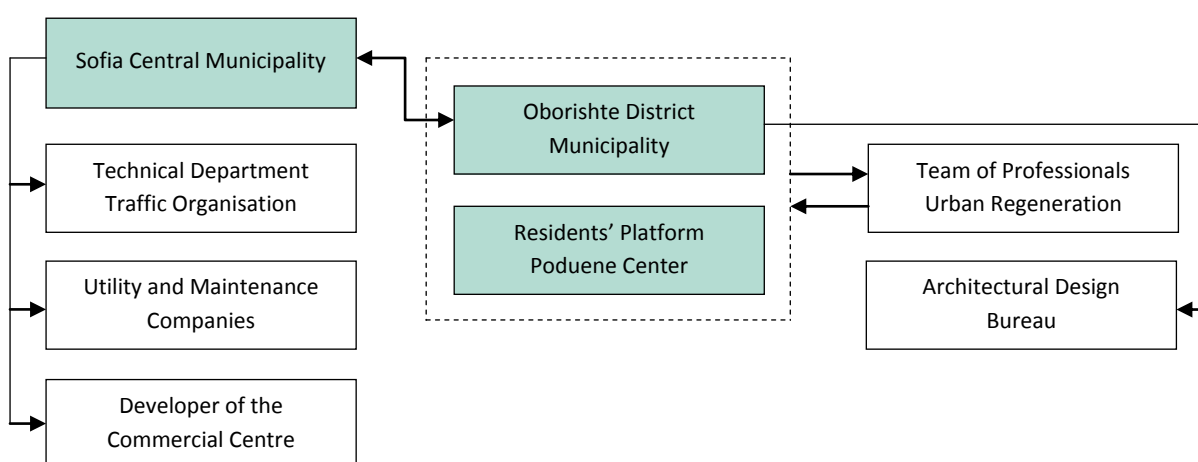
5.2.1 Scenario 1

The first scenario considers a project financing to be provided from the budget of Sofia Municipality.

Project phasing

Project application	May 2010
Technical project design from external architectural bureau	December 2010
Execution 1 st Phase in the upper part of the pilot housing estate	2011-2012
Execution 2 nd Phase in the lower part of the pilot housing estate	2013-2014
Small actions financed from the operational budget of the district municipality	End of 2009

Project organisation



Project investment

The total investment from the municipal budget is for Phase 1 BGN 189 110 and Phase 2 BGN 248 390. The operational district budget will finance few small priority actions by the end of 2009.

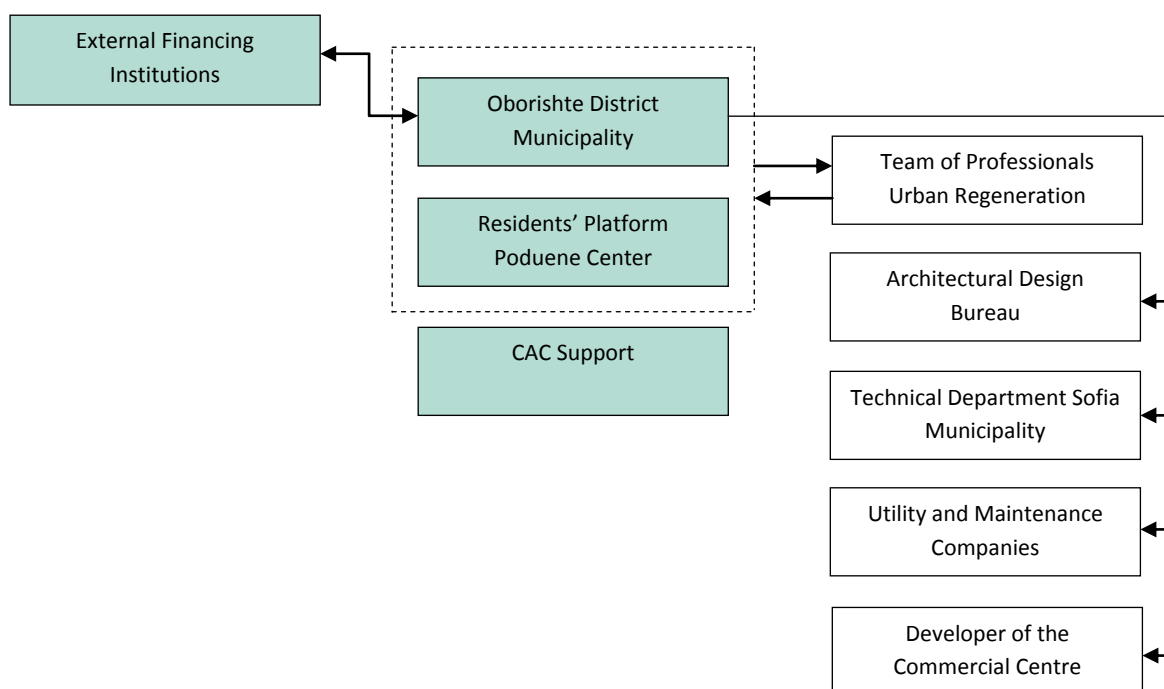
5.2.2 Scenario 2

The second scenario takes into consideration the ongoing economic difficulties related to the impact of the world financial crisis and the shortage of public fund. This scenario takes as a presumption that the municipal budget will not finance the urban regeneration project for the pilot housing estate. Then, the district municipality will apply for other targeted financing from external sources like EU funds, international programs and projects, etc.

Project phasing

Feasibility study, lobbying and project application	September 2010
Technical project design from external architectural bureau	December 2010
Execution 1 st Phase in the upper part of the pilot housing estate	2011-2012
Execution 2 nd Phase in the lower part of the pilot housing estate	2013-2014
Small actions financed from the operational budget of the district municipality	End of 2009

Project organisation



Project investment

The total investment from the external financing institutions is for Phase 1 BGN 189 110 and Phase 2 BGN 248 390. The operational district budget will finance few priority actions by the end of 2009.

5.2.3 Scenario 3

This is the pessimistic scenario, in which the presumption is that the elaborated urban regeneration project for the pilot housing estate will not be financed from the municipal budget or from external financing institutions. This scenario limits the planned urban regeneration only to execution of some urgent measures to be financed by the operational budget of the district municipality. In this case the actions to be undertaken will be selected in cooperation between the district municipality and the residents' platform in the pilot housing estate in accordance to the scarce financial means.

5.3 Executive Programme

The executive programme aims to identify the clear distribution of responsibilities in the process of implementing and executing the elaborated plan for urban regeneration of the pilot housing estate. The executive programme describes who is doing what and when in order to mobilise the capacities and financial resources and thus, to guarantee the successful cooperation of all parties involved in the urban regeneration process.

The main principles of the executive programme are defined and agreed as follows:

- The Vision and the Urban Regeneration Plan are leading for the cooperation between all stakeholders involved during the implementation and execution phases;
- During the implementation and execution phases the project team consists of two main parties: the District municipality and the Residents' Platform. The District Municipality appoints the landscape architect to be the contact person during the overall execution process;
- It is an obligation of each party to inform the other on all undertaken activities;
- The project team provides regular information for stakeholders and local community;
- PDCA principle is applied in monitoring the project implementation and execution;
- The District Municipality and the Residents' Platform come to an agreement about the maintenance during and after the execution of the urban regeneration measures based on a mutual understanding about each other's responsibilities;
- The District Municipality invests and constructs. The maintenance, preservation and safety care after the execution of the urban regeneration plan is split between the District Municipality and the Residents' Platform. Both parties start negotiations how to implement this policy.

Upper part of the pilot housing estate – main urban regeneration activities					
Goals: Improving the physical space, Improving the safety, Improving the living conditions					
Measure/ Action	Initiator	Partner(s)	Pre-phase 2010	First phase 2011-2012	Second phase 2013-2014
Laying of new asphalt on the inner streets and walking paths	District Municipality		Application	Execution	
Covering with milling of amenity grounds	District Municipality		Application	Execution	
Levelling of walking paths and amenity grounds	District Municipality		Application	Execution	
Replacement of garden curb stones in public green spaces	District Municipality		Application	Execution	
Installing of street basketball playground with acrylic covering	District Municipality		Application	Execution	
Installing of tennis table with acrylic covering	District Municipality		Application	Execution	
Installing of arbour with lanterns for teenagers	District Municipality		Application	Execution	
Replacement of destroyed garden curb stones in front of the condominiums	District Municipality		Application	Execution	
Introduction of shadow resistant vegetation	District Municipality		Application	Execution	
Planting of decorative trees and law vegetation	District Municipality		Application	Execution	
Removing of old equipments and tracing of parking slots	District Municipality		Application	Execution	
Furnishing with park equipment (benches and garbage bins)	District Municipality		Application	Execution	
Cutting of old vegetation and garbage removal	District Municipality		Application	Execution	
Total Investment				BGN 189 110 (incl. VAT)	

Upper part of the pilot housing estate					
Other activities to improve the project management and the social communication					
Measure/ Action	Initiator	Partner(s)	Pre-phase 2010	First phase 2011-2012	Second phase 2013-2014
Project management	District Municipality	Residents' Platform	PDE principles	Execution	Execution
Participation of residents	District Municipality	Residents' Platform	Capacity strengthening	Execution	Execution
Dissemination of project progress and results	District Municipality	Residents' Platform	Information campaign	Execution	Execution
Communication and welcoming committee	District Municipality	Residents' Platform	Communication program	Execution	Execution
Lower part of the pilot housing estate – main urban regeneration activities					
Goals: Improving the physical space, Improving the safety, Improving the living conditions					
Measure/ Action	Initiator	Partner(s)	Pre-phase 2010	First phase 2011-2012	Second phase 2013-2014
Laying of new asphalt on the inner streets and walking paths	District Municipality		Application		Execution
Covering with milling of amenity grounds	District Municipality		Application		Execution
Levelling of walking paths and amenity grounds	District Municipality		Application		Execution
Replacement of garden curb stones in public green spaces	District Municipality		Application		Execution
Installing of arbour with lanterns for elderly	District Municipality		Application		Execution
Installing playground with sands for children	District Municipality		Application		Execution
Installing of small children lodge	District Municipality		Application		Execution
Installing of fitness playground	District Municipality		Application		Execution
Replacement of destroyed garden curb stones in front of the condominiums	District Municipality		Application		Execution
Introduction of shadow resistant vegetation	District Municipality		Application		Execution
Planting of decorative trees and law vegetation	District Municipality		Application		Execution
Removing of old equipments and tracing of parking slots	District Municipality		Application		Execution
Furnishing with park equipment (benches and garbage bins)	District Municipality		Application		Execution
Cutting of old vegetation and garbage removal	District Municipality		Application		Execution
Total Investment				BGN 248 390 (incl. VAT)	
Lower part of the pilot housing estate					
Other activities to improve the project management and the social communication					
Measure/ Action	Initiator	Partner(s)	Pre-phase 2010	First phase 2011-2012	Second phase 2013-2014
Project management	District Municipality	Residents' Platform	PDE principles	Execution	Execution

Participation of residents	District Municipality	Residents' Platform	Capacity strengthening	Execution	Execution
Dissemination of project progress and results	District Municipality	Residents' Platform	Information campaign	Execution	Execution
Communication and welcoming committee	District Municipality	Residents' Platform	Communication program	Execution	Execution