**DRAFT**

**National Campaign: Challenges and Approaches to Tobacco Harm Reduction to the Benefit of Public Health**

1. **GOAL**

The project addresses the current issues related to tobacco harm reduction and public health. Smoking, unhealthy diet, lack of physical activity, and alcohol abuse are some of the key factors contributing to the development of many chronic non-communicable diseases – cardiovascular diseases, malignant tumors, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes. These diseases cause 60% of the deaths worldwide. In Bulgaria they are the reason for 80% of the deaths with the blood circulation diseases ranking first with 67.5% followed by malignant tumors with 15.1%.

The project aims to provide information to the public with regards to the frequency and social awareness of the prevalence of risk factors associated with the diseases such as smoking, to highlight the importance of prophylactics, prevention and harm reduction as a public health strategy designed to decrease the morbidity and hence the disease burden for society.

Smoking has been proven to be one of the leading preventable causes of morbidity and mortality. Bulgaria is among the EU countries with the highest smoking incidence which according to Eurobarometer data has remained stable in the period 2007-2017 – about 36%. Data, published in August 2020, from the National representative survey on the perceptions, attitudes and use of all available traditional and novel tobacco products and e-cigarettes in Bulgaria for the past 12 months show that 46% of the Bulgarian adults aged 19-64 are daily users of tobacco and related products and 89% of those smoke only cigarettes. The results of the survey also show that 59% of the adults (19-64 years) in Bulgaria say that they have used tobacco and related products in the past 12 months with 56% using mainly tobacco products for smoking (mostly cigarettes). The most alarming result is that 44% of all smokers do not plan to quit.

The Innovations Institute is willing to contribute to disseminating information about the harm from smoking and the benefits of smoking prevention, and to promoting smoking cessation by providing information to the public about the existing less harmful alternatives for the smokers which in turn would result in improved public health.

1. **ABOUT US AND OUR PARTNERS**

The Innovations Institute is a non-governmental organization that has implemented a series of projects, including EU funded, in the areas of health care, and innovations and education. It is a public benefit entity registered pursuant to the Non-Profit Organizations Act and its objectives are: to promote innovation in all priority areas, including healthcare, with a view of achieving economic growth and improving the quality of life through enhancing the dialog and partnership between all stakeholders; to promote and introduce innovative, high-quality and cost effective solutions in the social infrastructure and ensure that such solutions are financed and implemented be means of budget funds, European programs, donor organizations, public-private partnerships, Bulgarian and international investors, etc; to improve the collaboration with the businesses, academic institutions and universities towards fulfilling the innovation potential of the country; to encourage investment and transfer of good practices from the EU to Bulgaria in the development of innovative products and services; the Innovations Institute to take part in international and European projects focusing on innovations and their introduction in Bulgaria; to organize events, conferences and forums aimed at fostering innovation; to establish partnerships with European and Bulgarian organizations and institutes having similar goals to promote innovations in Bulgaria.

Partners:

* Patients’ organizations „Together with you“– a public benefit non-governmental organization with a network of structures nationwide which is actively involved in regulating the health policies in Bulgaria.
* Health and Culture information portal

The health forum in the website „е–Zdrave i kultura” (e-Health and culture) - <http://e-zdravey.com/> (having 8 617 000 unique visitors and 12 381 000 pages visits as of November 2020, about 4500 visits per day), is designed to provide information and education to the citizens.

* The public health faculties of the medical universities
* Leading experts from different medical fields

1. **ACTIVITIES**

The Innovations Institute intends to run a one-year national awareness campaign on tobacco harm reduction in the period March 2021 – February 2022 with the help of leading experts from the country and from the Ministry of Health as well as from the lung, endocrinology, cardiovascular and dental clinics of the university hospitals.

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| **Activities** | **Timeline** | | **Comments** |
| Draft and disseminate via the social media survey questionnaires on the knowledge of and attitudes to tobacco harm reduction, the less harmful alternatives, and smoking cessation.  The questionnaires will be disseminated on Facebook and in the forums of students, medical professionals, pharmacists, and journalists. | August –September –October –November -December 2021 -January 2022 | | The results from each of the 6 surveys of the month will be disseminated by email in the form of a press release to 250 organizations. |
| Online training for journalists, editors, producers, and reporters on the diseases posing public health risks.  Subject matter: tobacco harm reduction, less harmful alternatives, and smoking cessation. | September 2021 | | 30 participants |
| Develop an internet based attractive platform for publishing training materials\* on tobacco harm reduction, questions and answers on less harmful alternatives and smoking cessation. | Development – August 2021  Uploading content: for the duration of the project | | The topics of the training materials are listed below. |
| Quarterly e-newsletter on health aimed at providing information and educating society and the regional structures of the organizations which includes the opinions of leading experts engaged in tobacco harm reduction, economic analyses on the benefits of harm reduction and using less harmful alternatives. | August 2021 - July 2022, quarterly | | The newsletter will be published on the website and disseminated by the regional structures of the organizations, by professional associations, business associations, and in the social media. |
| Develop, print, and disseminate to the students in the university cities and to the citizens in the pharmacies banners, posters, leaflets and brochures on public health issues: the harmful effects of smoking. | September-November 2021 | | 4 banners  100 posters  4000 brochures  1000 leaflets |
| Publication of articles containing analysis of the situation by medical experts on the website of the health forum е – Здраве и култура (E-zdrave I kultura (E-health and culture))  <http://e-zdravey.com/bg/e-zdraveopazvane/>  Topics: the harm from smoking and the less harmful alternatives | 12 months – 2 articles per month (total 24 articles) | | The health forum Е – zdrave I kultura (E-health and culture) has  more than 6 409 000 visitors  with more than 9 670 000  visited pages (the data is avaialble on the website) |
| Deploy an active project page in the social media. | August 2021 - July 2022 | |  |
| Popularize the days for free medical consultations in physicians’ practices, hospitals, and medical centers, popularize the health campaigns promoting tobacco harm reduction. | August 2021 – July 2022 | Active engagement of lung physicians to provide up-to-date information | |
| A contest for the best story related to tobacco harm reduction, using an alternative or quitting.  Online participation of citizens with their personal stories – smoking history, emotional stress when attempting to quit, the response of the relatives, problems encountered in the process of quitting, access to and information about less harmful alternatives, sharing positive experiences.  Presentation of certificates - May 2022 | August 2021 – May 2022  May 2022 | Launching the contest, jury selection, popularization, and collection of stories  Announcing the winners | |
| Announce the results on the web-based platform and issue a press-release – summary of the surveys and the contest on tobacco harm reduction and communicating the less harmful alternatives.  An analysis of the citizens’ attitudes to public health, and what they know about the less harmful alternatives and the harmful effects from smoking will also be presented. | July 2022 |  | |
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**\*Training materials drafted by leading experts, representatives of academia, medical students, and patients’ organizations**

Topics of the training materials to be published on the internet-based platform:

1. Institutions and regulations related to tobacco harm reduction
2. What and how to demand from the government?
3. Tobacco harm reduction policy in Bulgaria

- national policy elements;

- performance indicators – do we have them and what is the practice in other countries?

1. Difference between effectiveness and efficiency: real world data.
2. **Budget – August 2021 – July 2022**

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| **Activities** | **Unit price $** | **QTY** | **Total $** |
| 1. Draft and disseminate via the social media survey questionnaires on the knowledge of and attitudes to tobacco harm reduction, the less harmful alternatives, and smoking cessation.   August – September - October – November – December 2021 -January 2022 | 250 | 6 | 1500 |
| 1. Online training for journalists, editors, producers, and reporters on the diseases posing public health risks.   Recruitment of participants, selection of training topics, organization of discussions | 900 | 1 | 900 |
| 1. Develop an internet based attractive platform for publishing training materials – IT expert in charge of the development, assistants for uploading content | 3200 | 1 | 3200 |
| 1. Quarterly e-newsletter on health aimed at providing information and educating society and the regional structures of the organizations   August 2021 - July 2022 – quarterly | 250 | 4 | 1000 |
| 1. Develop, print, and disseminate banners, posters, leaflets and brochures   September - November 2021 | 500 |  | 500 |
| 1. Publication of articles containing analysis of the situation by medical experts on the website of the health forum е – Здраве и култура. Maintenance of the website.   <http://e-zdravey.com/bg/e-zdraveopazvane/>  12 month – 2 article per month (total 24 articles) | 450 |  | 450 |
| 1. Deploy an active project page in the social media.   August 2021 - July 2022 | 250 |  | 250 |
| 1. Popularize the days for free medical consultations in physicians’ practices, hospitals, and medical centers, popularize health campaigns promoting tobacco harm reduction.   August 2021 – July 2022 | 100 |  | 100 |
| 1. A contest for the best story related to tobacco harm reduction, using an alternative or quitting.   Collection, organization, evaluation. August 2021 – May 2022  Presentation of certificates – May 2022 | 300 |  | 300 |
| 1. Announce the results on the web-based platform and issue a press-release – summary of the surveys and the contest   Organization, publication | 100 |  | 100 |
| 1. Consultant for initial collection of medical information | 250 |  | 250 |
| 1. Fees for physicians, Health forum participants and contributors to the quarterly e-newsletter on health | 600 | 6 | 600 |
| 1. Project coordinator | 500 |  | 500 |
| 1. Accounting, overhead, communications costs | 250 |  | 250 |
| TOTAL |  |  | 9700 $ |