



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FORESTRY

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

**NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF A KINDERGARTEN
AND SCHOOL FRUIT, VEGETABLES, MILK
AND MILK PRODUCTS SCHEME IN THE
REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
FROM THE 2017/2018 TO THE END OF THE
2022/2023 SCHOOL YEAR**

19/7/2017, last amended on May 2020

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1. ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL

Article 23(8) of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 (hereinafter referred to as the Basic Act) and Article 2(1)(a) of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/39 (hereinafter referred to as the Implementing Regulation)

National	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	- The scheme will be applied nationwide, throughout the whole country.
Regional	<input type="checkbox"/>	

2. NEEDS AND RESULTS TO BE ACHIEVED

2.1. Identified needs

Article 23(8) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(b) of the Implementing Regulation

An important factor in the development of a growing body is the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables, together with a balanced consumption of high-quality milk and milk products.

Habit and behaviour formation in children begins in early childhood in the family environment, and the development of conscious food preferences begins after the age of three or four, when the child is allowed to make his or her own informed food choices.

The scheme for the provision of fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products in kindergartens, schools and special educational support centres encourages the consumption of a variety of foods needed to build a healthy and thriving body during the most intense period of its development. This allows the acquiring of knowledge and the formation of habits that contribute to a sustainable adherence to and endorsement of healthy eating principles.

The accompanying measures provided for in the applicable European legislative framework, which are implemented in parallel with the supply of fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products, provide an opportunity to learn more about agricultural processes, thereby providing knowledge that helps create a comprehensive picture about growing fruit and vegetables and milk production. Introducing children to the process of growing healthy products serves to form in the adult, at a later stage, a sustainable attitude and involvement with the source of high quality food – agriculture.

In terms of healthy eating, children are divided into two age groups and specific consumption of fruit and vegetables, as well as milk and milk products, is recommended for each group.

With children aged 3-7, milk and milk product consumption is ensured by including at least 350 g of milk or plain yoghurt and at least 25-30 g of cheese in their menu per day. Milk and plain yoghurt with a fat content of 2% is recommended at least two days per week and between 3% and 3.6% the other days of the week.

With children aged 7-10, milk and milk product consumption is ensured by including at least 400 g of milk or plain yoghurt with a fat content not exceeding 2% and at least 30 g of cheese in their menu per day.

Nutritionists' recommendation for healthy eating is to consume about 400 g of fruit and vegetables daily, and it is vital to ensure a diversity of products.

2.2. Objectives and indicators

Article 23(8) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(c) of the Implementing Regulation

The general objective of the scheme for the provision of fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products in kindergartens, schools and special educational support centres is to provide legal and financial conditions for a long-term increase in the share of these products in children's diets, especially at the age when their nutritional habits are formed.

The implementation of the scheme enables children and adolescents to familiarise themselves with the diversity of the products under the scheme, and the benefit from their consumption. This will encourage targeted searching for these products in the future, and their presence in the daily diet will be strengthened.

Introducing children in Bulgaria to the idea of healthy eating and the sustainable building of habits and knowledge in the area of agriculture and nutrition is especially important for the socio-economic development of the country.

General objective(s)	Impact indicator(s)	Specific objective(s)	Result indicator(s)	Output indicator(s)
Increase share of fruit/vegetables/milk consumption in children's diets and achieve healthy eating habits	% change in direct and indirect consumption of fruit/vegetables/milk by children six years later (the survey will be part of the report evaluating the implementation of the six-year strategy, Article 8(2) of Regulation 39/2017)	Increase in fruit/vegetables/milk consumption by children in schools	% of children participating in the school scheme per school year in relation to the total number of children in the target group	Number of children participating in the school scheme per school year
			% of schools participating in the school scheme per school year in relation to the total number of schools in the target group	Number of schools participating in the school scheme per school year
				Average consumption of school fruit and vegetables/milk per child and per school year (quantity or portions)

		Increase in children's knowledge in schools about the variety of agricultural products and about healthy eating habits	% of children involved in accompanying educational measures per school year in relation to the total number of children in the target group	Number of children participating in educational measures per school year Expenditure on educational measures per school year
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2.3. Baseline

Article 23(8) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(d) of the Implementing Regulation

Data from the national survey of nutrition carried out by the National Centre of Public Health and Analyses (NTsOZA) in 2014 shows that milk is consumed daily by 36.7% of children aged 7-10, while milk products (white and yellow cheese) are consumed respectively by 27%. Milk consumption in children aged 3-7 is 230 ml and is even lower in children aged 7-10, at 186 ml. Milk product consumption (white cheese, curd, yellow cheese) in children aged 3-7 is 31.5 g daily, and 29.2 g per day in children aged 7-10.

Data shows that the average daily consumption of fruit and vegetables in children aged 3-7 is 442.8 g, of which fruit accounts for 298.6 g. The average daily consumption of fruit and vegetables in children in the 7-10 age group is 384.6 g, of which fruit accounts for 238.7 g.

The consumption of fresh fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products among adolescents increased in comparison with the data from the previous survey carried out in 2010. However, this trend is mainly seen in large populated areas where the range of goods on offer is larger and allows for a variety of flavours and quality. The higher purchasing power of people in cities is also a factor.

The implementation of the scheme for the supply of fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products in kindergartens, schools and special educational support centres in Bulgaria aims at the sustainability of the results achieved throughout the country, and continues to ensure regular access to healthy food for children from the earliest age. In order to build lasting healthy eating habits, the long-term implementation of measures (including the school scheme) is needed to ensure generational renewal.

3. BUDGET

3.1. Union aid for the school scheme

Article 23a of the basic act and Article 2(1)(e) of the Implementing Regulation

	Period 1.8.2017 to 31.7.2023		
	School fruit and vegetables	School milk	Common elements, if applicable
Distribution of school fruit and vegetables/school milk	12 126 004.00	5 749 622.00	
Accompanying educational measures	1 000 000.00	500 000.00	
Monitoring, evaluation, publicity[1]	20 000.00	20 000.00	
Total	13 146 004.00	6 269 622.00	
Overall total	19 415 626.00*		

The budget allocation is for a period of six years starting with the 2017/2018 school year in accordance with Article 2(3) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/40 of 3 November 2016.

EU aid is in EUR, whereby the amount of EUR 2 677 109.00 for fruit and vegetables and EUR 1 167 367 for milk and milk products for the 2017-2018 period is taken from the Commission Implementing Decision of 23.03.2017, while an indicative allocation is established for the remaining 5 years, namely EUR 2 093 779.00 annually for fruit and vegetables and EUR 1 020 451 annually for milk and milk products.

The allocation of funds by category of expenditure is also indicative, based on the experience of the School Fruit and School Milk schemes, so as to maximise the financing of all deliveries of fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products and to cover the costs of accompanying measures, evaluation and monitoring of the scheme.

3.1.1. National aid granted, in addition to Union aid, to finance the school scheme Article 23a(6) of the basic act and Article 2(2)(d) of the Implementing Regulation			
No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
If yes, amount (in BGN)			
	Fruit, vegetables	Milk/milk products other than those listed in Annex V	Annex V products
Supply/distribution	BGN 44 398 461.13	BGN 69 643 855.88	
Accompanying educational measures	BGN 3 551 876.89	BGN 5 571 808.46	
Monitoring, evaluation, publicity	BGN 710 375.38	BGN 1 114 301.69	
Total	BGN 48 660 713.40	BGN 76 329 966.03	
Overall total	BGN 124 990 679.43		
Financial assistance is granted for six years and in accordance with national legislation.			

National funding is granted in addition to the European financing in order to achieve an optimal implementation of the stated objectives. The allocation of funds is indicative, based on the experience of the School Fruit and School Milk schemes, so as to achieve full financing of all deliveries of fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products and to cover the costs of accompanying measures, evaluation and monitoring of the scheme.

The calculations are made on the basis of the number of children and of schools participating in the School Fruit and School Milk schemes during the 2016/2017 school year, whereas the allocated national funding is tailored to the needs of the scheme for the supply of fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products in kindergartens, schools and special educational support centres.

3.2. Existing national schemes Article 23a(5) of the basic act and Article 2(2)(e) of the Implementing Regulation		
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
- Extension of the target group		<input type="checkbox"/>
- Extension of the range of products		<input type="checkbox"/>
- Increased frequency or duration of product distribution		<input type="checkbox"/>
- Enhanced educational measures (increased number or frequency or duration or target group of the measures concerned)		<input type="checkbox"/>
- Other: please specify (e.g. where products are initially not free of charge, those that are provided free of charge)		<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment/explanatory text		

4. TARGET GROUP(S)

Article 23(8) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(f) of the Implementing Regulation

The scheme for the provision of fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products in kindergartens, schools and special educational support centres is an instrument to improve nutritional culture and build healthy eating habits in children by adding fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products to their diet. Kindergartens, schools and special educational support centres are an appropriate environment for influencing the eating habits of children.

The beneficiaries under the scheme are children from the first to the preparatory group in kindergartens, pupils in the preparatory group and the first to fourth grades in schools, and children in the preparatory group and the first to fourth grades in special educational support centres.

The scheme will be applied nationwide, throughout the whole country.

School level	Age range of children	School fruit and vegetables	School milk
Nurseries		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-school	3-6 years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Primary	6-10 years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Secondary		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. LIST OF PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTED UNDER THE SCHOOL SCHEME

Article 23(9) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(g) of the Implementing Regulation

5.1. Fruit and vegetables

5.1.1. Fresh fruit and vegetables – Article 23(3)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013

<u>Apricots, cherries, peaches, nectarines, plums</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>Carrots, turnips, salad beetroot, salsify, celeriac, radishes and other edible roots</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Apples, pears, quinces</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cabbages, cauliflowers and other edible brassicas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bananas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Berries	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cucumbers, gherkins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Figs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lettuces, chicory and other leaf vegetables	
Grapes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lentils, peas, other pulses	<input type="checkbox"/>
Melons, watermelons	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tomatoes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Citrus fruits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other vegetables: please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tropical fruit	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Kiwis	<input type="checkbox"/>		
.....			

Size of fruit/vegetable portions:

Item No	Fruit/vegetables	Min. quantity per portion (in kg)	Max. quantity per portion (in kg)	Manner of distribution		
				Schools/special educational support centres		Kindergartens
				Manner of distribution	Type of packaging	
1.	Apples	0.140	0.220	Whole – 1 piece	Individually packaged	May be delivered jointly packaged
2.	Pears	0.170	0.220	Whole – 1 piece	Individually packaged	
3.	Grapes	0.150	0.200	Whole	Individually packaged	
4.	Peaches/nectarines	0.150	0.220	Whole – 1 piece	Individually packaged	
5.	Plums	0.120	0.160	Whole – 4-5 pieces	Individually packaged	
6.	Bananas	0.150	0.220	Whole – 1 piece	Individually packaged	
7.	Oranges	0.150	0.250	Whole – 1 piece	Individually packaged	
8.	Mandarins	0.140	0.210	Whole – 2-3 pieces	Individually packaged	
9.	Tomatoes	0.140	0.200	Whole – 1-2 pieces	Individually packaged	
10.	Cucumbers/gherkins	0.150	0.200	Whole or sliced	Individually packaged	
11.	Carrots	0.120	0.150	Whole or sliced	Individually packaged	

With the switch to standard scales of unit costs from the 2020/2021 school year, a variation is allowed in the weight of the fruit or vegetable portion of $\pm 20\%$.

Item No	Fruit/vegetables	Quantity per portion (in kg)	Schools/special educational support centres	
			Manner of distribution	Type of packaging
1.	Apples	0.180	Whole – 1 piece	Individually packaged
2.	Pears	0.195	Whole – 1 piece	Individually packaged
3.	Grapes	0.175	Whole	Individually packaged
4.	Peaches/nectarines	0.185	Whole – 1 piece	Individually packaged
5.	Apricots	0.1755	Whole – 2-4 pieces	Individually packaged
6.	Cherries	0.150	Whole	Individually packaged
7.	Plums	0.140	Whole – 4-5 pieces	Individually packaged
8.	Bananas	0.185	Whole – 1 piece	Individually packaged
9.	Oranges	0.200	Whole – 1 piece	Individually packaged
10.	Mandarins	0.175	Whole – 2-3 pieces	Individually packaged
11.	Tomatoes	0.170	Whole – 1-2 pieces	Individually packaged
12.	Cucumbers/gherkins	0.175	Whole or sliced	Individually packaged
13.	Carrots	0.135	Whole or sliced	Individually packaged, properly cleaned

* The type of packaging in which fruit and vegetables are to be supplied/distributed in kindergartens, schools and special educational support centres shall be determined by the applicable national legislation.

5.1.2. Processed fruit and vegetables – Article 23(4)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013

There are no plans for the provision of processed fruit and vegetables.

5.2. Milk and milk products

5.2.1. Milk – Article 23(3)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013

Drinking milk and lactose-free versions thereof.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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5.2.2. Milk products – Article 23(4)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013

Products distributed under the school scheme		Added salt			Added fat			Comments (optional)
		No	Yes		No	Yes		
Cheese and curd	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Up to 3.5%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Plain yoghurt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Fermented or acidified milk products without added sugar, flavouring, fruits, nuts or cocoa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Description of milk and milk products provided

CN code	Product
040120	Milk, not containing added sugar/honey, of a fat content not exceeding 2%
04031011	Yoghurt, not containing added sugar/honey, of a fat content of 2%
0406	*White brine cheese with added salt up to 3.5% *Yellow cheese with added salt between 1.8% and 3%

Maximum quantity of milk and milk products per child or pupil per day:

- 250 ml pasteurised milk with a fat content of 2%;
- 200 ml yoghurt with a fat content of 2%;
- 30 g white brine cheese or yellow cheese

5.2.3. Milk products – Annex V to Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013

No delivery of products under Annex V is planned

5.2.4. Prioritisation of fresh fruit and vegetables and drinking milk

Only fresh fruit and vegetables included in the list under point 5.1 above are eligible under the scheme, subject to the requirements on portion size and ensuring their diversity.

The distribution of genetically modified fruit and vegetables in kindergartens, schools and special educational support centres is prohibited.

Under Article 23(b) of Regulation 1308/2013, in order to encourage consumption of other healthy milk products typical of our country, drinking milk and milk products of the following categories shall be eligible under the scheme:

- Fresh pasteurised milk under nomenclature code CN 040120;
- Yoghurt under nomenclature code CN 04031011;
- White brine cheese and yellow cheese under nomenclature code CN 0406.

Priority shall be given to fresh pasteurised milk. Information on how priority is given may be provided to the Commission on request. The milk and milk products distributed under the scheme may not be used to prepare other foods with added salt and vegetable fat, and may not be incorporated into heat-treated products.

From the 2020/2021 school year, organic products will also be provided under the scheme for the supply of fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products in kindergartens, schools and special educational support centres.

5.3. Other agricultural products in the educational measures

Article 23(7) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(g) of the Implementing Regulation

Yes	No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Honey	<input type="checkbox"/>

5.4. Criteria for the choice of products distributed under the school scheme and any priorities for the choice of those products

Article 23(11) of the basic act and Article 2(2)(a) of the Implementing Regulation

Health considerations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Environmental considerations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seasonality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Variety of products	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Availability of local or regional produce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The fruit and vegetables distributed must comply with the quality requirements for fresh fruit and vegetables under Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 543/2011 and with the safety requirements under the Food Act and its implementing regulations.	

Fruit and vegetables shall be stored, cleaned, washed and packed in facilities registered in accordance with Article 12 of the Food Act and provided to children in compliance with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and the Council of 29 April 2004, Regulation No 37 of 2009 on healthy diets for schoolchildren, Regulation No 6 of 2011 on healthy diets for children aged 3–7 in childcare facilities and Regulation No 8 of 2018 on specific safety and quality requirements for foods provided in childcare facilities, school canteens and retail outlets on the territory of schools and childcare facilities, as well as foods provided at organised events for children.

Milk and milk products must:

1. be produced from raw milk which complies with the requirements of Annex III, Section IX, Chapter I, point 3 of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and the Council of 29 April 2004;

2. comply with the requirements of the Regulation on specific requirements for milk products adopted by Council of Ministers Decree No 119 of 2012 and Article 15 of Regulation No 8 of 2018;

3. be produced in approved facilities on the territory of the European Union (EU) and delivered in intact individual or non-individual packages which comply with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1935/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 October 2004 on materials and articles intended to come into contact with food. Non-individual packages may be opened, cut or poured out in kindergartens and schools whose facilities for preparing or distributing food have been registered under Article 12 of the Food Act

4. be delivered by applicants with their own or hired vehicles equipped with devices capable of maintaining a specific temperature regime in order to ensure the cold chain in line with Article 4(3)(d) of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004. Delivery must be organised in such a way as to be accepted immediately by the responsible staff of the educational establishment and arranged in storage without interrupting the temperature regime until distribution to the children;

5. be labelled in accordance with the requirements of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011.

Any priority(s) for the choice of products:

Local or regional purchasing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Organic products	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Short supply chains	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental benefits (please specify: <i>e.g. food miles, packaging ...</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Products recognised under the quality schemes established by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fair-trade	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: please specify	
Any comments	

6. ACCOMPANYING EDUCATIONAL MEASURES

Article 23(10) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(j) of the Implementing Regulation

Title	Objective	Content
Visits to farms/dairies/agricultural museums	To introduce children to agricultural processes for growing and producing agricultural produce	Organising visits to the nearest farm/dairy/agricultural museum, where children in the first to fourth grade can acquire practical knowledge on essential processes in agriculture.
Setting up and maintenance of gardens	Children acquire knowledge and build good habits through direct care and responsibility for setting up and maintaining gardens.	Setting up, building and maintenance of small garden spaces near the school/kindergarten or in the kindergarten/school yard. All children from the target group fall under the scope of this measure.
Tasting classes/cooking workshops	To build good habits and get to know the uses of fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products in human nutrition.	Holding tasting classes and cooking workshops in schools and special educational support centres (in canteens or facilities for preparing school food), where children in the first to fourth grade may participate in the processes of preparing their own healthy food.
Lessons, lectures, workshops	To educate children about agriculture, healthy eating habits and environmental protection	The events will be carried out on the territory of the kindergarten/school/special educational support centres and/or other premises in the community (community centres, halls, cinema halls).
Competitions and games	To acquire knowledge through fun	Organising events on the territory of schools or special educational support centres or elsewhere in the community where all children from the target group can have fun.
Provision of honey	To introduce children to the taste and beneficial qualities of honey as a healthy agricultural product.	Providing honey to children in kindergartens, schools and special educational support centres.

7. ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

7.1. Price of school fruit and vegetables/school milk

Article 24(6) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(h) of the Implementing Regulation

The fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products in kindergartens, schools and special educational support centres are made available to children free of charge. Their delivery is financed with EU funds and funds from the national budget.

7.2. Frequency and duration of distribution of school fruit and vegetables/milk and of accompanying educational measures

Article 23(8) of the basic act and Article 2(2)(b) of the Implementing Regulation

Envisaged frequency of distribution:

	School fruit and vegetables	School milk
Once per week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Twice per week	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Three times per week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Four times per week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daily	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: twice per year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any comments: n/a

Envisaged duration of distribution:

	School fruit and vegetables	School milk
≤ 2 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 and ≤ 4 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 and ≤ 12 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 12 and ≤ 24 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 24 and ≤ 36 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entire school year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Envisaged duration of accompanying educational measures during the school year:

Each school must implement at least one accompanying measure during each reported period.

7.3. Timing of distribution of school fruit and vegetables/school milk

Article 23(8) – and Article 23a(8) if other foods are also delivered – of the basic act and Article 2(2)(b) of the Implementing Regulation

Envisaged timing of distribution during the day:

	School fruit and vegetables	School milk
Morning/morning break(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lunchtime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Afternoon/afternoon break(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Any comments:

- **Fruit and vegetables are distributed on the day of delivery during the morning/afternoon break between classes, separately from the main meals, in the form of an individual portion per child.**
- **A mandatory requirement for milk and milk products is to ensure a constant cold chain through appropriate storage facilities.**
- **The distribution of the products shall be carried out in accordance with a schedule agreed with the director of the educational establishment.**
- **Control of the storage and distribution of the products shall be carried out by the director of the establishment concerned, the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BABH) and the State Fund for Agriculture.**

7.4. Distribution of milk products in Annex V to Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013

Article 23(5) of the basic act, Article 5(3) of the determining regulation (Regulation No 1370/2013) and Article 2(2)(f) of the Implementing Regulation

No

Yes

7.5. Selection of suppliers

Article 23(8) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(l) of the Implementing Regulation

Kindergartens, schools and special educational support centres may participate in each scheme individually (as applicants) or through an applicant from the following categories:

- Individual traders, commercial companies and cooperatives which have committed to supply fruit and vegetables and/or milk and milk products to one or more educational establishments;
- Fruit and vegetable producers, including organisations and groups of fruit and vegetable producers and milk and milk product producers.
- Municipalities, on behalf of educational establishments within their territory.

All applicants are subject to the approval of the State Fund for Agriculture.

7.6. Eligible costs

7.6.1. Reimbursement rules

Article 23(8) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(i) of the Implementing Regulation

The expenditure incurred is reimbursed on the basis of invoices, payment documents and other documents accompanying the deliveries. On the basis of a methodology developed by the State Fund for Agriculture and approved by its Executive Director, price caps have been fixed for the costs to be reimbursed to applicants for fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products delivered.

The price caps are established taking into account the average market prices in the country of the products provided under the schemes, the logistics and transport costs of the supply and distribution of the products in educational establishments and a percentage allowance that will partly meet the need for a minimum profit. The methodology for calculating the price caps is presented in a public document that can be found at:

http://www.dfz.bg/bg/selskostopanski-pazarni-mehanizmi/school_milk/

From the 2020/2021 school year, the eligible expenditure of approved applicants under the scheme will be reimbursed on the basis of standard scales of unit costs determined in accordance with a methodology approved by the Executive Director of the State Fund for Agriculture.

To establish product prices, analyses shall be made of the monthly average prices per product in the last school year for the months in which deliveries took place using data from the Agricultural Market Information System (SAPI). Where necessary, and where data is unavailable in the SAPI, other official sources of market information may also be used.

To calculate the final price for products under the scheme, allowances for the logistics and transport costs of the supply and distribution of the products in educational establishments and a percentage allowance that will partly meet the need for a minimum profit are added to the determined average prices for products under the scheme.

This methodology ensures a reasonable, comparable and verifiable pricing method in line with the relevant rules of European law.

The methodology for defining the standard scales of unit costs is presented in a public document that can be found at:

https://dfz.bg/bg/selskostopanski-pazarni-mehanizmi/school_milk/metodika-ceni/

7.6.2. Eligibility of certain costs

Article 23(8) of the basic act and Article 2(2)(b) of the Implementing Regulation

Please indicate whether the cost of the fruit and vegetables and the school milk provided under the school scheme includes the cost of purchasing, renting and borrowing equipment used in the delivery and distribution of the products.

Indicate any specific eligibility conditions established at national level above those contained in EU regulations (e.g. limits for certain categories of costs such as transport, where these are invoiced separately, or the exclusion of certain costs).

N/A

7.7. Involvement of authorities and stakeholders

Article 23(6) and (9) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(k) of the Implementing Regulation

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health, the State Fund for Agriculture and the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency are involved in the organisation of the scheme.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry is responsible for coordinating the scheme's implementation. It submits the national strategy and any changes thereto to the European Commission and declares the amounts referred to in Article 23a(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013, and participates in information campaigns to promote the scheme.

The Ministry of Education and Science assists with the implementation of accompanying measures; together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry and the Ministry of Health it may organise and carry out training of teachers and staff at kindergartens, schools and special educational support centres involved in the scheme, including for the implementation of the accompanying measures; it informs kindergartens, schools and special educational support centres concerning the objectives of the food delivery schemes and the arrangements for participation, including through the provision of printed materials and instructions; it organises the promoting of the schemes among parents on the basis of received instructions and printed materials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry and the Ministry of Health.

The Ministry of Health drafts instructions on compliance with specific health requirements in the distribution of milk and milk products at kindergartens, schools and special educational support centres and approves the list of eligible milk products pursuant to the requirements of Regulation No 6 of 10 August 2011 on healthy diets for children aged 3–7 in childcare facilities (promulgated in SG issue 65/2011), Regulation No 37 of 21 July 2009 on healthy diets for schoolchildren (promulgated in SG issue 63/2009) and Ordinance No 8/2018.

The Ministry of Health takes part in the development of health information materials.

Important functions concerning the implementation of the scheme have been entrusted to the State Fund for Agriculture, which is accredited as a paying agency in Bulgaria and therefore has been entrusted with the functions of granting, refusing or withdrawing approval to applicants under the scheme, including the drafting of all types of template applications for approval of applicants and requests for payment of support. As a paying agency, the State Fund for Agriculture carries out administrative and on-the-spot checks of any payment requests submitted and grants the aid. On the basis of the checks carried out, the State Fund for

Agriculture grants or refuses, in whole or in part, the payment requests. The State Fund for Agriculture holds an information campaign to promote the scheme. It performs annual monitoring of the implementation of the scheme and notifies the monitoring results to the European Commission. It also assesses the efficiency of the implementation of the scheme in Bulgaria. The State Fund for Agriculture ensures the centralised application of the accompanying measures with an adequate budget for all the educational establishments participating in the schemes. The Bulgarian Food Safety Agency controls the safety and quality of the products distributed under the scheme by entering into an agreement on cooperation in the course of its inspections with the State Fund for Agriculture.

7.8. Information and publicity

Article 23a(8) of the basic act and Article 2(1)(m) of the Implementing Regulation

The implementation of information activities is centralised, whereby the State Fund for Agriculture implements the activities and events for raising awareness of and promoting the scheme:

- Setting up and maintenance of a website;
- Preparing information posters, leaflets each year;
- Organising public information fora.

7.9. Administrative and on-the-spot checks

Article 2(2)(g) of the Implementing Regulation

The State Fund for Agriculture is responsible for the administrative and on-the-spot checks.

Administrative checks:

The relevant documents are submitted to the regional units where their completeness and legitimacy is checked. The initial (source) data is entered following the ‘four eyes’ procedure.

The eligibility and authorisation of costs is assessed at central level through the ‘four eyes’ procedure. The initial accounting documents, product delivery, average weights, diversity requirements and compliance with price caps are checked.

From the 2020/2021 school year, the eligible expenditure of approved applicants under the scheme will be reimbursed on the basis of standard scales of unit costs, and the number of distributed portions, average weights, diversity requirements and compliance with accepted prices will be examined.

The administrative checks are performed via a specialised integrated system for administrative control, which is automated from the entry of data to the payment of the financial aid.

Information used in the implementation of on-the-spot checks is generated through risk analysis. On-the-spot checks are performed by the State Fund for Agriculture with the participation of the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency. The quality of fruit/vegetables and milk/milk products is monitored, the weight of the delivered products is measured, and documentary checks are performed, including of the number of children in the target group.

7.10. Monitoring and evaluation

Article 2(2)(g) of the Implementing Regulation

The implementation of the schemes is subject to a centralised annual monitoring and evaluation at national level, carried out by the State Fund for Agriculture. The State Fund for Agriculture carries out a public procurement procedure for the implementation of an additional evaluation on a five-year basis.

8. Period of implementation

This strategy is for the period referred to in Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 and Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/40, and on the basis of Article 47a(3) of the Implementing Act on the Common Organisation of Markets in Agricultural Products of the European Union, it replaces the National Strategy for the distribution of fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products in kindergartens and schools in the Republic of Bulgaria from the school year 2017/2018 to the school year 2022/2023 approved by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Forestry.