

MEDIA INFORMATION

BCause Foundation launches “Drop by Drop” for sustainable access to water with the support of JTI

Sofia, March 26, 2025 – The official launch of the “*Drop by Drop*” program, a project by the **BCause Foundation**, took place at 2020 Event Space in Sofia. The program is funded by the **JTI Global WASH Initiative**, with the support of **JTI Bulgaria**. The initiative, with a total budget of **1.5 million USD**, is part of JTI’s global program for water, sanitation infrastructure, and hygiene, and will be implemented in Bulgaria between **2025 and 2027**. Its main goal is to improve access to clean drinking water and sanitation in areas affected by water scarcity, as well as to support vulnerable social groups.

The launch event was attended by representatives of BCause Foundation, JTI Bulgaria, the **Bulgarian Water Association**, as well as institutional stakeholders, NGOs, and municipalities, who will have the opportunity to participate in the program’s grant scheme.

The event was opened by **Elitsa Barakova**, Executive Director of BCause Foundation, and **Márton Pataki**, General Manager of JTI Bulgaria. They emphasized the importance of the program as a tool to address one of Bulgaria’s pressing environmental and social challenges – access to clean drinking water.

Gergana Boneva from JTI presented the key components of the initiative, which include a grant mechanism for NGOs and municipalities, the construction of public water fountains, and support for social organizations providing hygiene services to vulnerable groups.

Teodora Pakuleva from the **Bulgarian Water Association (BWA)** briefed attendees on water supply processes and the roles of various institutions involved.

A core component of the “Drop by Drop” initiative is the **grant program**, which will fund projects through an open call for proposals, with the first application deadline set for **April 29, 2025**. NGOs and municipalities will be eligible to apply, with evaluations conducted by an expert panel including representatives from various stakeholder groups. Additional calls will be held in **2026 and 2027**.

With the support of the grant program, municipalities can plan and actively work to improve water supply through specific measures, expert assessments, and investment plans. NGOs and community groups will be able to directly provide access to drinking water, engage local citizens in volunteering, and create and maintain initiatives and traditions related to local water resources. They will also be able to draw the attention of institutions and accelerate the resolution of critical issues.

“*Drop by Drop*” is an initiative with long-term impact – it not only provides financial support to improve access to water but also fosters partnerships between institutions, civil society

organizations, and the business sector. Through this collective engagement, the program aims to deliver sustainable and lasting solutions that improve access to clean drinking water.

For more information and application guidelines: www.kapka.bcause.bg

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JTI, a member of the JT Group of Companies, is a leading international tobacco company, selling its products in more than 130 markets. It is the global owner of both Winston and Camel, respectively the second and third largest cigarette brands in the world. Other global brands include MEVIUS and LD, and in Bulgaria - Sobranie. JTI is also a major player in the Reduced-Risk Products category with its heated tobacco brand, Ploom, vaping brand, Logic, and Nordic Spirit nicotine pouches. Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, the Company employs over 46,000 people and was awarded Global Top Employer for the eleventh consecutive year in 2025. For more information, visit www.jti.com.