## Annex 6: Success stories

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| **AD Title** | **IPA 2016 Migration and asylum, border management and fight against terrorism and organised crime** | |
| **Project Title** | **Further upgrade of Tetra system and implementation of Tetra IV and 112 emergency call** | |
| North Macedonia has successfully upgraded its emergency communication systems through the "Migration and asylum, border management and fight against terrorism and organised crime" Action, funded under IPA 2016 Annual Action Programme. This initiative has significantly boosted the country's capacity to respond to emergencies, with the full operational status of the System E 112 as a cornerstone achievement.  Launched on the symbolic European Day of 112, February 11, 2022, the E-112 system has since become a lifeline for the citizens of North Macedonia, offering round-the-clock access to emergency services. The system's integration with the advanced Terrestrial Trunked Radio (TETRA) system ensures seamless and efficient communication, marking a new era in the country's emergency response capabilities.  The project's success is reflected in the impressive call statistics for 2023, with over 663,808 calls recorded, nearly half of which were genuine emergencies. This high volume underscores the system's critical role in safeguarding the community and highlights the trust placed in it by the public.  The operational excellence of the E-112 system is further enhanced by North Macedonia's active membership in the European Emergency Number Association (EENA), facilitating regular coordination and exchange of best practices with other European countries. | | |
| **AD Title** | | **IPA 2019 EU for Youth** |
| **Project Title** | | **Sector Reform Performance Contract for Employment, Education and Social Protection** |
| In a notable stride towards empowering the youth, the "EU for Youth" initiative under the IPA 2019 Sector Reform Performance Contract has made significant inroads into addressing youth unemployment through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. This ambitious action has not only contributed to decrease unemployment rates among young people but has also significantly reduced the number of youths not in employment, education, or training (NEET) across three targeted regions.  C:\Users\VALENTIN\AppData\Local\Packages\Microsoft.Windows.Photos_8wekyb3d8bbwe\TempState\ShareServiceTempFolder\RollUp-Ban_preview.jpeg  The Youth Guarantee, a cornerstone of the EU4Youth initiative, has been a beacon of opportunity, ensuring that young individuals aged 15-29 receive a quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship, or traineeship within a four-month period after becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. This initiative has successfully enrolled over 35,000 young persons, with an impressive 37.2% of them finding employment or engaging in active employment measures shortly thereafter.  The impact of the Youth Guarantee extends beyond these impressive figures. The Employment Service Agency has refurbished six employment centres in the targeted municipalities (Tetovo, Gostivar, Kumanovo, Kichevo, Ohrid and Makedonski Brod), enhancing their capacity to support young job seekers effectively. This strategic investment in infrastructure and human capital has been instrumental in fostering a more dynamic and responsive employment service ecosystem.  Looking ahead, the Youth Guarantee remains a priority on the government's agenda, with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and relevant stakeholders crafting a comprehensive Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan for 2023-2026. Adopted by the Government in April 2023, this new plan lays the groundwork for continued progress and expanded support through the "Job and Opportunities" Operational Programme under IPA III.  Furthermore, regarding vocational education, with the support of EU sector budget support EU for Youth three regional centres for vocational education and training (RVETCs) are being established in the country, which should further develop into centres of excellence. These structures are part of a comprehensive education reform and their specific aim is, in addition to decentralisation of the management of the VET system, to become 'agents' for regional development in the context of workforce development, skills’ supply and validation of competences, equipping the young people with the necessary qualifications in compliance with the dynamics of the labour demand, participation in local sectoral dialogue for education and employment of youth, and maintaining effective partnership with employers for successful implementation of the ‘Youth Guarantee’ on local level and in general, for regional economic growth. For this purpose, large-scale actions to prepare and establish fully functioning RVETCs were deployed with the financial support of the EU. Along with building the physical capacity of the centres (construction works and reconstructions, and supply of equipment for the selected professions according to the VET profiles of the centres), the "soft" potential of the centres is also being built in terms of institutional, organizational and human resources development, aiming to ensure the necessary competences for excellent performance of their assigned functions and roles in the VET system. The TА project supports the process of HR development in the three RVETCs in Kumanovo, Ohrid and Tetovo; the necessary competences of the staff of the centres were built within two consecutive school years - 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 and ended at the end of 2023.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | *A total of 196 people - teachers of general education and professional subjects, as well as managers and administrative staff - were involved in activities to build human potential in the three centres.* |  |   For a period of two years, personnel was included in structured training and capacity building activities, including internships and on-the-job training in companies, according to their needs, which were determined based on capacity assessment, analysis of training needs by personnel types, as well as in accordance with the state programs for continuous professional development of specialists in the education system.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | | *123 VET teachers from the three RVETCs (all the professional teachers) received training on specific professional subjects in compliance with their professional field of teaching in a total duration of 2311 full training days.*  *All of them were trained according to the SRPC requirements, while the average duration of this training was 26.83 full training days per VET teacher. (The program indicator in this category is fully reached and shows realisation of 134%).* | | *All VET teachers in the three RVETCs received in addition practical (on-the-job) training in companies in fields that are relevant to their teaching profiles. Each of them was included in a company internship for an average period of 14 full working days, which fully meets the SRPC requirements and presents 153% average achievement of this indicator.*  *The VET teachers who were trained in addition for inclusive education represent the majority of this group. In this way, the indicator for inclusive education was significantly exceeded; the results present 225% average realization of this target.* |  | |   The training which was organised for the teachers on general education subjects, managers and non-teaching administrative staff, was structured to build competences in the field of management, administration, finances, project management, psychology, pedagogy, working with student and adult learners with special educational needs, etc. Also, internships in companies were included depending on the type of trainees in this group. All the representatives of this group of personnel participated in capacity building activities for the period of the two school years with a total duration of 3818 full training/working days, with an average duration of 32 full training/working days per person.   |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | *The analysis of the realization of the HR development plans in the three RVETCs shows overall achievement of the budget support targets, and even over-fulfillment of the indicative values in criteria ​​ "inclusiveness".* |   In conclusion, we should note that this goal of the budget support program is very successful, even more so, taking into account the analysis of the assessment of the quality of capacity building services provided to increase the potential of the RVETCs’ staff. Part of these activities were implemented within the comprehensive capacity building program of the TA project, which comprises of altogether 27 different capacity building interventions targeted to all SRPC institutions, including the RVETCs. For example, for the last implementing period of this program, the average level of overall satisfaction of participants with the provided training and capacity building activities was rated 4.46 out of a maximum of 5 with 90.7% completed quality assessment questionnaires. The program is still ongoing.  The reform of the VET system implies a holistic approach of defining and implementing VET policies covering Career guidance, Expanding the scope and improving access to VET and opportunities for life-long learning, Increasing the attractiveness of VET, Developing and modernizing the structure and content of VET, Building a quality management system, Attracting and retaining teachers and trainers in vocational education and training and increasing their qualifications and competences, Achieving a dynamic match between skills’ supply and demand, Continuous development and enrichment of Professions and State educational standards for acquiring professional qualifications, Development of training systems in real working environment, implementation of a Complex approach in VET policy in the context of lifelong learning, Improvement of the vocational education management system, and training and capacity building at all levels and in all phases (planning, implementation, monitoring, financing), Partnership development and coordination in VET, Coordinating VET policies with other national policies in the socio-economic segment, Improving the functioning and final results in the VET system through targeted financial policies.  The development of human capital is a key priority of North Macedonia, identified with particular emphasis in the strategic documents for country development. In today's dynamics of working conditions, industrial development, and technological progress, the "one occupation - one workplace - retirement" model no longer exists in this static format. Individuals are faced with the need to constantly develop their competencies to be more adaptable and thus more competitive in the labor market.  The institutions must be ready to respond. Maintaining of a system for continuous professional development of the staff in the VET system in general, and in particular, in the RVETCs, must be carried out in the context of a complex program for building and strengthening the capacity of the system so that it could respond to the challenges of the external environment and the expectations of the economy, society and individuals in relation to the results, quality and effectiveness of the VET and adult training.  More information on: <https://eu4youth.mk/en/fact-sheets/> | | |
| **AD Title** | | **Amending and supplementing the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services** |
| **Project Title** | | **EU for Freedom of Expression: alignment of national media legislation with EU acquis and European media standards** |
| The draft law amending the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, aligned with the 2018 Audiovisual Media Services Directive, was successfully adopted through an expedited procedure by the Assembly in July of the previous year, marking a significant stride towards modernizing media legislation. This milestone was officially recognized with its publication in the Official Gazette No. 154 on July 20th, 2023.  In October of the same year, a pivotal workshop titled *"Towards a sustainable, diverse, and safe media sector: supporting democracy and pluralism and serving the citizens"* was convened in Skopje. This event laid the groundwork for substantial media reform discussions, drawing from the rich insights and suggestions of its participants.  The expert team, inspired by the workshop's outcomes, crafted targeted proposals for the refinement of media legislation. Among these was a comprehensive analysis of the media market, evaluating legal and policy frameworks in the context of EU acquis, European standards, and best practices, aimed at fostering competitiveness and pluralism in the media sector.  A noteworthy aspect of the proposed reforms is the introduction of mechanisms designed to elevate the social status and bolster the safety and independence of media professionals within Macedonian legislation. Specifically, amendments to the Law on Media were proposed to safeguard the social and economic interests of journalists and other media workers, setting a foundation for a more secure and equitable professional environment. These amendments, coupled with a series of policy recommendations, underscore fundamental principles such as freedom of expression, source protection, privacy rights, digital rights, and labour rights, illustrating a comprehensive approach to ensuring a thriving media landscape that supports democracy and serves the citizenry effectively. | | |
| **AD Title** | | **IPA 2018 EU Support to Public Finance Management** |
| **Project Title** | | **Strengthening budget planning, execution, and internal control functions** |
| The project is implemented by the Ministry of Finance of Republic of North Macedonia, in co-operation with MS partners from the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Republic of Croatia, Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Latvia. The project implementation was launched on February 1st, 2020, and lasts for 54 months. The budget for the implementation of the project is 3.700.000 EUR. The project team provided support to all leading partners for components in North Macedonia (in particular, Budget and Treasury departments, Central Harmonization Unit (CHU), Financial Inspection department, Public Procurement Office, Anti-fraud coordination service (AFCOS) and other stakeholders). One of the main focuses of the Twinning project was on further development of the Public Internal Financial Control (PIFC) system through implementation of new legislation and the new PIFC Policy Paper, elaboration of methodological tools in Financial Management and Control (FMC) and internal audit (IA), building up capacities of budget users on central and local level to manage efficiently public funds and enhancing the co-ordination and supervision role of the Central Harmonization Unit (CHU) in the Ministry of Finance, as well as enhancing the capacities of budget users in the fight against fraud and corruption. Also, full dedication was put on the further development/improvement of the Public Procurement system and Concession legislation and protecting EU funds via further development of the BC AFCOS Network.  The major objective of the project was to further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public spending through activities that support the implementation of the Public Finance Management (PFM) Reform Programme.  The scope of the project covers four main components in the field of budget management and control, public internal financial control and financial inspection, public procurement, and anti-fraud. Furthermore, under the auspices of the Project, a Training Department within the Ministry of Finance is in the process of being established to provide trainings to all key bodies in the sector.  Despite the COVID 19 crisis and the complexity of the project itself, up to date after 4 years of implementation, significant and tangible progress has been achieved in legal framework assessment and development (notably the adoption of the new Organic Budget Law by the BC Parliament, drafting/amending laws and development of relevant by-laws, conducting numerous trainings and workshops, organizing study visits for the beneficiary employees in MS countries, as well as strengthening of administrative capacities of the key stakeholders (such as workshops, trainings on different topics, pilot activities in various institutions).  The following major results were achieved during the project's implementation to date:   * Around 60 laws/by-laws and methodologies were developed, most important ones to mention being the new Organic Budget Law and related by-laws, multiannual Fiscal Strategy, PIFC Law (pending Parliament approval), Financial Inspection Law and overall financial inspection licensing process, comprehensive Financial Management and Control and Internal Audit Manuals, new Public Procurement Law, National Strategy for Enchaining the Public Procurement System in North Macedonia in the period 2022-2026 and Action Plan, new Law on Concessions, enhanced and fully revised internal procedures and structure of SAC ,comprehensive legal set up of AFCOS network, NAFS for the period 2022 – 2025 and Action Plan, full set up of the Public Finance Academy(PFA) (Training Programme, Training of Trainers) etc. * Over 60 trainings, workshops and round-table discussions were held. * Public Procurement Strategy and relevant methodology was prepared. * Training Department within the MoF established. * National certification programme for internal auditors being developed. * Financial Inspection was modernised, and capacity building was enhanced. * National Anti-Fraud Strategy was updated and AFCOS Network was fully enforced. * Public procurement and appeals' systems were improved. * Capacities of budget users on central and local level to implement PFM legislation and modern tools were enhanced. * 9 study visits organized in MS countries with over 100 participants attending from North Macedonia. * 15 Rolling Work Plans preparation; drafting and updating of the Communication and Visibility Plan; establishment and organisation of 16 Steering Committee meetings as per twinning contract; on-line promotional event (23rd March 2021) with a promotional video production on the project purpose and implementation; coordination conference for the 4 components on 14th June 2023 (80 participants); closing event planned for July 2024. * Total of 300 missions were implemented in all 4 project components, including 52 missions for Component 0 (horisontal activities), plus 3 conferences/events and 9 study visits. | | |