



Влада на Република Северна Македонија  
Government of Republic of North Macedonia

**TITLE OF INFORMATION AND CONTENT**

INFORMATION  
FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN ENTRE-  
PRENEURSHIP  
IN REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA  
2019 – 2023

This Information has been prepared in order to inform the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia about the undertaken activities in order to implement the Strategy for Development of Women Entrepreneurship in the Republic of North Macedonia 2019 - 2023, which was adopted on 04.12.2018.

The basis for preparing this information is the Conclusion from the one hundred and sixth session of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia held on 04.12.2018 with which:

“3. The Ministry of Economy shall inform the Government once a year on the course of implementation of the Strategy for Development of Women Entrepreneurship in the Republic of North Macedonia 2019 - 2023”.

The information was prepared through a process of consultation with the members of the Working Group for implementation of the Strategy for Development of Women Entrepreneurship. The information incorporates the answers for the implemented activities in accordance with the measures envisaged in the Action Plan by the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Fund for Innovation and Technological Development, Agency for Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness of the Republic of North Macedonia, the State Statistical Office, Central Registry, Association of Chambers of Commerce and the Association of Business Women.

Integral part of this information is the Action Plan for implementation of the Strategy for Development of Women Entrepreneurship in the Republic of North Macedonia 2019 - 2023, supplemented with implemented activities under the individual measures of the Action Plan, as of 31.11.2021.

The Covid pandemic affected some of the envisaged measures and activities of the Strategy not to be implemented within the envisaged time frame, but still in the previous period, through Government anti-crisis measures were envisaged and implemented measures to support women entrepreneurship and competent institutions despite reduced annual budgets and limited human resources, managed to implement number of activities aimed at achieving the strategic priorities defined by the Strategy.

In summary, the following activities have been implemented into direction of achievement of the set strategic priorities.

**Strategic priority 1: Creation of favorable business environment (business climate) for the development of women entrepreneurship.**

Into direction of achievement of this strategic priority, the following activities have been implemented and initiated in order to coordinate the creation and implementation of policies for the development of women entrepreneurship, analysis of regulations affecting women's entrepreneurial activity and creation of statistics for monitoring entrepreneurship (business) women's activity:



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- Inter-Ministerial working group has been established, consisting of representatives from the competent Ministries and bodies listed in the Action Plan, as well as representatives from Chambers of Commerce, Chambers of Crafts and associations working on the development of women entrepreneurship. The members of the working group are in constant electronic communication for better monitoring of all undertaken activities in the direction of realization of the action plan.
- Every year in December, the Ministry of Economy regularly submits to the Government the Information on the implementation of the Strategy for Development of Women Entrepreneurship in the Republic of North Macedonia 2019 - 2023.
- In order to actively involve all stakeholders in the implementation of the activities envisaged by the Action Plan of the Strategy for Development of Women Entrepreneurship and raising the level of cooperation, the Ministry of Economy in October 2021 signed Memorandum of Cooperation with the National Platform for Women Entrepreneurship established by the Association of Business Women, the Association of Chambers of Commerce of Macedonia, the National Federation of Farmers and the Foundation for Management and Industrial Research MIR.
- At the end of 2019, the Ministry of Economy conducted "Analysis of Parafiscal Levies for SMEs". This analysis identifies the parafiscal levies at central and local level from the aspects of competent authorities for the different PFLs and their structure, exposure of companies by sector and size, cost and method of calculating the parafiscal levies, different aspects of the burden of parafiscal levies and burden of companies with parafiscal levies towards the central and local Government. This analysis is also the basis for further determination of the regulation that affects the entrepreneurial activity of women.
- The Ministry of Economy in cooperation with the Delegation of the European Commission at the beginning of 2021 prepared a project proposal "Guidelines for the use of parafiscal levies" which was submitted to the DEU for expert support through IPA funds. The project envisages the realization of: increasing the transparency and predictability of the levies that have the character of parafiscal taxes; abolition, optimization and rationalization of at least 100 parafiscal levies for business operations; strengthening the capacity of public institutions (i.e. Ministries) in charge of policy making and implementation of rules and policies aimed at eliminating and preventing unjustified parafiscal levies. The project has been accepted by DEU and is in the phase of selection of consultant for its implementation.
- State Statistical Office in March 2021 published the twelfth edition of the publication "Women and Men in North Macedonia", prepared on the basis of data collected by the State Statistical Office through its increasingly developed gender statistics. In this edition, continued the updating of the published data, but new contents were presented that give picture of the demographic characteristics of women and men in the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as their representation in the social and economic life of the country.
- Significant number of institutions has introduced a gender criterion in the sources of information and official registers they maintain. Each institution increasingly integrates the gender component in the strategic plans, policies and budgets and respects the principle of equal opportunities for women and men. In the process of gender responsive budgeting are involved 13 line Ministries and 2 state agencies that are obliged to conduct basic gender analysis of a specific sector program and to develop gender output indicators, as well as to continue to monitor the progress in the implementation of selected programs and their impact. The institutions prepare Annual Report on the activities undertaken and the progress achieved in establishing equal opportunities for women and men.



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**Strategic priority 2: Providing systemic support for the development of women entrepreneurship.**

The realization of this strategic priority envisages the implementation of activities to improve access to favorable forms of financing, the transition from social assistance to self-employment, the transition from employment to employer, providing the necessary knowledge and skills and strengthened presence of women in policy development of the entrepreneurship.

In the past period, the following activities have been realized and initiated:

- In order to encourage the economic activity of women, the Government instructed the competent state institutions in creating their Programs/measures/public calls to provide incentive criteria for evaluation of applications/projects if they are submitted by women or to introduce new measures for support exclusively of women (Draft-minutes from the 169<sup>th</sup> session of the Government held on 10.12.2019, item 34).
  - The Ministry of Economy, in addition to a specially designed measure for financial support of enterprises owned and operated by women, which it has been implementing since 2012, in the annual Program for Competitiveness, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for 2020 and 2021 introduced incentive criteria if the applicant is a business entity owned and run by a woman and it has being implemented.
  - The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management from 2019 started with the implementation of a measure specially designed for active female member in agriculture. This measure was implemented in 2020 and 2021 and as a result of the measure the number of women registered in ERZS as holders of agricultural holdings is constantly growing, which is especially evident in the last three years.

The Fund for Innovation and Technological Development in the Public Call - Co-financed grants for technological development to overcome the consequences of COVID-19, introduced incentive measure where applicants who have manager or female owner in the professional scoring receive additional 5 points. In 2020, within the instrument "Co-financed grants for technological development to overcome the consequences of COVID-19", as sub-criterion for evaluation introduced balanced regional development and balanced gender stagnation. Incentive measure with the possibility of additional points in the evaluation of applicants who have manager or female owner, was introduced with the public call under the instrument Co-financed grants for technological development for accelerated economic growth which was announced in early 2021. As a result of these incentives, the share of women entrepreneurs in the total portfolio of the Fund increased from 33 to 41%.

As part of the third anti-crisis package of measures to deal with the COVID pandemic, the Development Bank of North Macedonia implemented the measure - interest-free loans with 30% grant to support women, youth and companies that introduce digitalization in business or are export-oriented, whereat from 2.703 entities supported by the measure, 1062 entities are founded by women or run by women.

- Within the frames of the Development Bank of North Macedonia, Guarantee Fund was established as a separate organizational unit - Guarantee Fund Unit within the Sector for Lending and Guarantees. The guarantee fund is the pillar of the credit-guarantee scheme through which the private sector is supported, by providing part of the collateral for loans approved by banks and savings houses.
- The Ministry of Economy within the Competitiveness, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Program for 2019 implemented a measure, Financial Support to Micro, Small and Medium





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Enterprises for participation in domestic, regional and international fairs. This measure financially supported MSMEs for participation in domestic, regional and international fairs by co-financing 60% of the proven costs for renting a stand.

- The Ministry of Economy and the USAID Business Ecosystem Development Project organized an info meeting in 2020 and 2021 to present the measures to support MSMEs in the Competitiveness, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Program.
- FITD implements a multimedia approach to informing the public. In 2020, especially due to the Covid-pandemic, more emphasis was placed on digital communication and online presentation of all information related to the operation of the Fund.
- In order to improve the financial literacy of both companies and the population, the "Strategy for Financial Education and Financial Inclusion 2021-2025" has been prepared and adopted. Also, the National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Ministry of Finance are continuously conducting educational campaigns to reach all segments of society.
- Institutionally supported national online platform for web seminars and advisory services has not been created yet, but there is a web educational platform <https://pretpriemacedu.mk/> which aims to contribute to increasing the competitiveness and innovation of small and medium enterprises, providing opportunities for their online education on relevant topics in the fields of entrepreneurship, innovation, industrial policy and circular economics. The creation of the platform is supported by the project "Capacity building of small and medium enterprises through improved support for innovation", funded by the European Union, under the IPA program for strengthening the competitiveness of the national economy, and implemented by the Foundation for Youth Entrepreneurship Service.
- AESRNM participates in the implementation of the regional project "Establishment and Promotion of Mentoring Services for SMEs in the Western Balkans - Phase 2", supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency - JICA. The main goal of the project is to design a sustainable "System" of standardized mentoring services in the Republic of North Macedonia, involving the existing network of Regional Centers (RCs), as initial instance from which future mentors are recruited. During 2019 and 2020, total of 20 mentors were recruited, of which 11 are women and total of 69 SMEs were mentored.
- The Fund for Innovation and Technological Development, in addition to financial support, also provides mentoring training for its users. For the active users of FITD, mentoring is provided by domestic experts according to the individual specific needs of each user and therefore they are provided with individual mentoring. In 2021, 168 beneficiaries of FITD financial support were included in the mentoring trainings, 78 of which have woman as owner or manager.
- In May 2021, the National Platform for Women Entrepreneurship was established by the Association of Business Women, the Association of Chambers of Commerce of Macedonia, the National Federation of Farmers and the Foundation for Management and Industrial Research MIR. The purpose of the platform is to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to create public policy proposals and advocacy in the field of women entrepreneurship, by merging existing networks into a single platform that will be of interest to women entrepreneurs at all levels. NPWE is a member of the World Association of Business Women (FCEM), the Balkan Coalition of Business Women (B-WCo), the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) and numerous other international organizations in which partner organizations are members and thus offers the opportunity to connect businesses at local, national, regional and wider level.

**Strategic priority 3: Creation of infrastructure for support and development of women**



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## entrepreneurship

In order to achieve this strategic priority, the following activities have been implemented and initiated in order to develop new/modern programs for education and training for entrepreneurship with a special focus on women entrepreneurs, strengthening the capacity to provide training and counseling services for women, providing capacity for use of incubators, accelerators and technology parks by women entrepreneurs, cooperation with the local Government to include the development of women entrepreneurship in local/regional development programs, cooperation with educational institutions and establishment of databases/register of women entrepreneurs:

- AESRNM in its annual programs has provided a special program activity - Trainings to Support Women Entrepreneurship that are implemented in different cities. In addition to these trainings, AESRNM within its program activities every year organizes various trainings on different topics intended for various target groups.
- In 2020, within the Fund for Innovation and Technological Development, started awarding of innovation voucher for the purpose of overcoming the weaknesses in the transfer of knowledge between the public and private sector as well as in the cooperation between the academic community and industry. Innovation vouchers are financial incentive used by companies to cover part of the cost of services offered by academic and research institutions.
- The Fund for Innovation and Technological Development and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) North Macedonia developed the free mentoring program The Catalyst which aims to strengthen the capacity of startups on topics and areas that are important for everyday work, gaining new knowledge and skills, and facilitating of access to potential investors. This mentoring program will be realized at the end of 2021.
- AESRNM has developed a partnership infrastructure with regional business centers and Universities for providing training services. This cooperation is realized annually after conducted procedures for public procurement of educational services and professional development services in accordance with the Law on Public Procurement.
- FITD with the support of the World Bank, provided financial support in the amount of EUR2 million through the Public Call for financing technological accelerators in order to faster development of innovative ideas, market validation and building of scalable and sustainable business models for Macedonian startups, for three accelerators: Business-Technological Accelerator UKIM DOO Skopje, Seavus Accelerator in Skopje and X Factor in Veles.
- In the Republic of North Macedonia, within the units of local self-government in the period from November 2017 to October 2021, 80 Commissions for equal opportunities for women and men were established, except in Tearce. After the local elections in October 2021, the process of establishing new Commissions for equal opportunities for women and men for the period 2021-2025 is underway.
- The Ministry of Education and Science has planned and implemented within the classroom life skills programs that include topics on gender equality for which programs and manuals have been prepared by the Bureau for Development of Education. Also, the civic education curriculum covers topics and contents for gender equality, acceptance and respect for diversity. Within the extracurricular activities, the project "Support to Entrepreneurship Education in Eastern Europe and Eurasia" is implemented in order to increase the recognition of entrepreneurship education in the country, as well as to build partnerships between the



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education sector and the business sector to improve the relevance of education increasing the impact of education, as well as the modernization of high school boys and girls and their entry into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- Higher education institutions, as being autonomous, have the freedom to sign memoranda and agreements for cooperation with various associations, companies. According to the Law on Higher Education, Article 86, Paragraph 1, the University establishes at least one career center, which among other activities has the task of giving students guidance and advice in choosing a vocational training and career, without prejudices and discriminatory attitudes.

**Strategic Priority 4: Promotion, Networking and Representation**

In order to achieve this strategic priority, the following activities have been implemented to promote women entrepreneurship and increase the capacity of women business associations:

- In May 2021, the National Platform for Women Entrepreneurship (NPWE) was established as the main social partner for policy making and reform processes; facilitating structural dialogue, networking and consultation between WE stakeholders at national and local level; improving the capacity of CSOs for WE for policy, advocacy and cooperation with national and local authorities; promoting women entrepreneurs as drivers of change in public politics.
- On November 18 and 19, 2021 was held the first annual Summit of the National Platform for Women Entrepreneurship on the topic "New Perspectives for Women Entrepreneurship". The summit aimed to increase the visibility of the platform and the benefits it provides to stakeholders and women entrepreneurship, to share best practices and ideas, and to promote policies that support women entrepreneurship.
- In July 2021, the Government adopted Decision on allocation of funds from the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2021 for financing the program activities of associations and foundations ("Official Gazette of RNM" No. 166/21), which allocates MKD19.800.000 from the planned funds in the state budget of 33 civil society organizations for projects in 7 priority areas. Of the 33 supported projects, three have specific activities related to women entrepreneurship (Stem Education and Career - Challenge for Girls and Young Women (WomenInStem), Economic Empowerment of Rural Women and Youth that is Key to Sustainable Development, and Rural Women's E-Market).
- The Ministry of Economy as institutional sponsor and the National Platform for Women Entrepreneurship for the first time, on November 18, 2021 organized "Selection of Woman - Entrepreneur of the Year", within the two-day Summit for Women Entrepreneurship. The selection of the most successful women entrepreneurs in the category of micro, small and medium enterprises is made according to predetermined criteria and based on official data from the final accounts of enterprises owned and operated by women provided by the Ministry of Economy from the Central Registry.

In the following period, the realization of the remaining planned activities from the Action Plan of the Strategy for Development of Women Entrepreneurship 2019-2023 will continue.