

The step under review	Reform 5.2.2. Adoption and implementation of a new Action Plan for the Prevention of Corruption in the Judiciary for 2026-2029
Baseline	Baseline (2024) is 0.
Deadline of the step	(December 2025)
Actual results	<p>The Judicial Council took a leading role by adopting the first Anti-Corruption Program and Action Plan covering the period 2022–2025. This was a landmark step in institutionalizing anti-corruption efforts in the judiciary. The Program identified risk areas, introduced preventive and corrective mechanisms, and promoted a culture of integrity, while aligning with both national and international frameworks.</p> <p>Starting from April 2025 the Judicial Council took the lead in the process of preparation of the new Anti-corruption program and the Action Plan 2026-2029 based on the principles of inclusiveness and with providing feedback from the judicial authorities, but also from all other important stakeholders within and outside the judiciary.</p> <p>The first step was to conduct an evaluation of the implementation of the 2022–2025 Program and the Action Plan and provide recommendations to develop the new Action Plan for the Prevention of Corruption in the Judiciary for 2026-2029. The evaluation was based on wide consultations made by a team of experts with the representatives from the judiciary (meetings held with the Appellate courts Skopje, Bitola, Stip and Gostivar, Criminal Court Skopje, Supreme Court, the Public Prosecution Office, Ministry of Justice, State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, the professional associations of judges and prosecutors, the Bar Association, the NGOs in charge with the judicial reforms and trial monitoring. It was finalised in July 2025.</p> <p>The independent evaluation report on the implementation of the Program and Action Plan for Prevention and Monitoring of Corruption in the Judiciary 2022–2025 highlighted partial success : 13 out of 23 measures (56.5%) were either implemented or in progress. Key progress areas included merit-based promotion procedures, improved transparency of Council decisions, better coordination with court presidents in addressing complaints and performance monitoring and the adoption of a communication strategy. Much of this was spurred by the 2023 EU Peer Review mission and subsequent reforms in 2024.</p> <p>The report identified the following reasons for the partial implementation of the 2022–2025 Action Plan: The objectives were sometimes too broadly defined, indicators poorly operationalized, and financial planning largely absent. Reporting obligations and timelines were insufficiently defined, while monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were weak. Moreover, participation of implementing institutions and civil society was limited, undermining ownership and accountability. Gender-sensitive approaches were</p>

underdeveloped, and visibility strategies for promoting judicial integrity were missing altogether. These lessons inform the design of the 2026–2029 Program, ensuring stronger structures, clearer indicators, and more effective implementation.

The development of the 2026–2029 Program was based on this assessment taking into account the identified shortcomings and was marked by conducting a thorough analysis on all relevant national and international framework and a broad consultation and inclusion. Four regional roundtables were held at the level of the courts of appeal on 28.10.2025 at the Court of Appeal in Shtip, on 31.10. 2025 at the Court of Appeal in Bitola, on 04.11.2025 at the Court of Appeal in Gostivar and on 06.11.2025 at the Court of Appeal in Skopje, complemented by national consultations attended by judges, prosecutors, lawyers, civil society organizations, academic circles, and representatives of the State Commission for prevention of corruption (SCPC). These discussions helped to assess the current strengths and weaknesses of the judiciary and to identify priority areas for reform and the Program and Action Plan.

The new Anticorruption Program and Action Plan has been conceived and structured into two distinct parts to ensure clarity and targeted implementation. The first part (Chapter 1) is dedicated to the Judicial Council, as the governing body of the judiciary, and sets out the specific goals, objectives, and measures directly related to its mandate, responsibilities, and institutional role. The second part (Chapter 2) focuses on the judiciary as a whole, with measures aimed at strengthening integrity, transparency, and accountability across courts and judicial institutions. Together, these two areas provide a comprehensive framework for addressing corruption risks both at the governance level and within the day-to-day functioning of the judiciary.

The consultations confirmed the need for shared ownership of anti-corruption reforms. They also underlined the importance of close cooperation with the SCPC, alignment with the forthcoming National Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest (2026–2030), and integration with other reform processes under the 2024–2028 Judicial Development Strategy and the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans (2024–2027). Since the SCPC is foreseen as the equal partner in the preparation and the implementation of this document, the representatives from the SCPC were actively involved in all processes.

The independent evaluation report on the implementation of the Program and Action Plan for Prevention and Monitoring of Corruption in the Judiciary 2022–2025 and the new Anti-Corruption Program were developed on the basis of a comprehensive desk review and analysis of the national legal and strategic framework, reports by civil society organizations monitoring the judiciary, EC Progress Reports and EU Rule of Law Reports for the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as relevant international standards on judicial independence and efficiency, including UN instruments (Bangalore Principles), ENCJ guidelines, CCJE Opinions, CEPEJ documents, and relevant Venice Commission Opinions. In a recent opinion of the Venice Commission, published on 15 May 2025, the Commission addressed the proposed changes, highlighting the need for balanced representation, depoliticization of appointments and strengthening of guarantees of judicial impartiality. The Commission highlighted the key contribution of the Judicial Council to the consolidation of the rule of law and

	<p>democratic governance in North Macedonia, particularly in the context of its aspirations to join the European Union.</p> <p>The plan is structured into four main parts. Section 1 provides an introduction, outlining the context and rationale. Section 2 consists of two substantive chapters dedicated to goals, objectives, and measures, tailored to two distinct areas of intervention. The first chapter focuses on the Judicial Council, with measures linked to its mandate, particularly in the areas of transparency, accountability, merit-based appointments, and protection of judges from undue influence. The second chapter extends to the judiciary as a whole (including courts and the Judges and Prosecutors Academy) and covers a broader range of measures such as ethics training, oversight and integrity standards, IT security, case-flow monitoring, corruption detection, inter-institutional cooperation, and initiatives to rebuild public trust. Section 3 sets out the methodological framework, covering implementation, reporting, and monitoring mechanisms. Finally, Section 4 addresses transparency and visibility.</p> <p>The proposed Action Plan 2026–2029 therefore aims to offer a dual perspective: on the one hand, it reinforces the governance of the judiciary through stronger accountability and transparency of the Judicial Council, while on the other, it embeds integrity and anti-corruption practices in the daily functioning of judicial institutions. It is designed not as a static program but as a dynamic, participatory, and adaptable model, one that allows institutions to prioritize and adjust according to their evolving context.</p> <p>The Program for prevention and monitoring of corruption in the judiciary and the Action plan 2026-2029 were adopted by the Judicial Council of the Republic of North Macedonia at the session held on 03.12.2025 and published on the website of the Judicial Council. (Annex 1 The Program for prevention and monitoring of corruption in the judiciary and Annex 2 the Action plan 2026-2029)</p> <p>http://www.vsrn.mk/wps/portal/ssrm/sud/vesti/031da180-b40d-47d3-8fb2-8b7d9f2f862f</p>
<p>Evidence provided</p>	<p>-Annex 1: THE PROGRAM FOR PREVENTION AND MONITORING OF CORRUPTION IN THE JUDICIARY-(Annex 2)</p> <p>http://www.vsrn.mk/wps/wcm/connect/ssrm/c25a9c62-024d-4140-81de-e5fd47026909/%D0%90%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%B8+%D0%BA%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%83%D0%BF%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0+%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B3%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B0+2026-2029+%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B2.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18_L8CC1J41L0B520APQFKICD0CR4-c25a9c62-024d-4140-81de-e5fd47026909-kZargVy</p> <p>-Annex 2: ACTION PLAN 2026-2029</p> <p>http://www.vsrn.mk/wps/wcm/connect/ssrm/892412e0-5fa9-4eab-a11e-f32108a9e5fa/%D0%90%D0%BA%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B5%D0%BD+%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%BD+%D0%BD%D0%B0+%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B3%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0+2026-</p>

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Checks performed in the verification of the step and related findings	The Judicial Council was leading and monitoring the entire process of analysis and evaluation of the Anti-Corruption Program and Action Plan 2022-2025, as well as entire process of preparing the new anti-corruption program 2026-2029 including through the coordination and verification of the inputs of the various stakeholders, reporting, coordinating and monitoring the consultation process, up to its finalization and adoption by the Judicial Council in December 2025.
Compliance with general principles and DNSH principle	The implementation of the steps does not contravene the general principles outlined in Article 4 and 11(4) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1449 and Article 3 of the Facility Agreement. The implementation of the steps does not contravene the ‘Do No Significant Harm’ principle (DNSH).
Double funding	The technical support provided by the Anti-corruption fund of the French Development Agency was used only for drafting of report for evaluation of the status of implementation of the Programme and Action Plan for 2022-2025 and recommendations to develop new Action plan for the period 2026-2029.
Clear conclusion on the achievement of the step	Fully achieved
