



UNITED NATIONS
NORTH MACEDONIA



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NORTH MACEDONIA *ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT*

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UNITED NATIONS NORTH MACEDONIA



CREDITS

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For additional information, please contact: **UN RCO North Macedonia** rc-northmacedonia@un.org

Cover photo: Winning drawing of the Children's Poster Contest organized ahead of UN Day 2023 as part of the Human Rights (HR75) campaign. ©UN RCO

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** For a story-based presentation of the detailed 2023 results per UN entity, please see the report Supplement*

Foreword



We will devote ourselves collectively to the pursuit of sustainable development including through international cooperation and partnership on the basis of mutual trust and the full benefit of all, in a spirit of global solidarity, for the common future of present and coming generations."

SDG Summit 2023 Political Declaration



Throughout 2023, the United Nations (UN) and North Macedonia continued building on the already strong cooperation and partnership, despite difficult circumstances caused by lingering energy and price crisis, intensified with the war against Ukraine with detrimental effect on the living standard of the people.

The continuously growing partnership comes largely as a result of the country's firm commitment to sustainable development and multilateralism, demonstrated through the successful Chairpersonship of OSCE under the motto "It is about the people" and the country-based commitments on Agenda2030 elaborated at the SDG Summit 2023.

In 2023, the country successfully completed the EU screening process receiving valuable input and advice on the reforms that remain ahead to become fully functional society that upholds EU and international standards. More than 5,000 citizens of which 1,000 young people and over 200 national experts, with UN assistance, informed the twenty-year National Development Strategy setting out the sustainable development vision of the country that incorporates EU accession priorities.

The 2021-2025 Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (SDCF), as the key strategic document for the work of the UN in North Macedonia is strongly linked to these priorities. This is ensured through a planning and review process undertaken jointly with the national and international stakeholders, under the strategic guidance of the Joint Steering Committee, with strong commitment to openness and transparency.

The implementation of the Joint Work Plans 2023 contributed to many important achievements for the country, including in creating quality jobs and skills, a more robust agricultural and rural development, modern social services that enhance inclusion of the vulnerable groups, better monitoring, and management of climate change, environment and natural resources. It also resulted with intensified cooperation with

the international and European human rights mechanisms, and enhanced capacities of the state institutions and municipalities for a gender-responsive, human rights based and consultative policy making and implementation.

In 2023, together with our partners, we marked the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Broad consultations and dialogues, involving the Government, the Parliament, National Human Rights Institutions, and civil society addressed key human rights challenges and actions to be taken. This inclusive process and takeaways resulted in new firm human rights pledges by the Government and by other national actors. It also ensured solid preparations for the 4th Universal Periodic Review of the country by the Human Rights Council in 2024. Moreover, North Macedonia is now close to achieving complete eradication of statelessness.

This report summarizes our key results throughout the year, achieved jointly with our national partners, with strong financial and political support from our donors, globally and in the country. It also notes our joint efforts to ease the effects of the crisis, especially for those who are the most affected.

In the three years since the start of the SDCF implementation, we have been working within a strained economic context, with consecutive and interconnected crises that impacted our development work. But this report, such as those before, will demonstrate that we were able to learn and adjust to remain relevant and useful, remaining true to the UN values and principles and our strong commitment to leave no one behind.

Our key goal is to create a decent world for all of us, and for all future generations.

Rossana Dudziak

UN Resident Coordinator in North Macedonia

Bujar Osmani

Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia

UN Country Team



21
UN entities engaged in operational activities for development in North Macedonia

The United Nations in North Macedonia implements its activities in alignment with the country's development priorities, human rights and gender equality commitments, the EU accession agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Agenda 2030.

The UN has been working to achieve the priorities outlined in the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025, created jointly with the Government of North Macedonia, through provision of technical assistance, capacity development, knowledge exchange, and innovative pilot programs.

A total of 21 United Nations entities were engaged in operational activities for development in North Macedonia in 2023, working together through the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator (RC), the designated representative of the UN Secretary General for development operations in the country. 16 of these entities had a physical presence in North Macedonia, while five conducted their activities remotely. The UN team in North Macedonia in 2023 included more than 283 country-based personnel and support staff, as well as experts from around the world.

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITU	<i>International Telecommunications Union *</i>
IMF	<i>International Monetary Fund</i>
IOM	International Organization for Migration
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction *
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme *
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe *
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization *
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNV	<i>United Nations Volunteers *</i>
UN RCO	<i>Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator</i>
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WB	<i>The World Bank Group</i>
WHO	World Health Organization
	<i>* no physical presence not SDCF signatory</i>



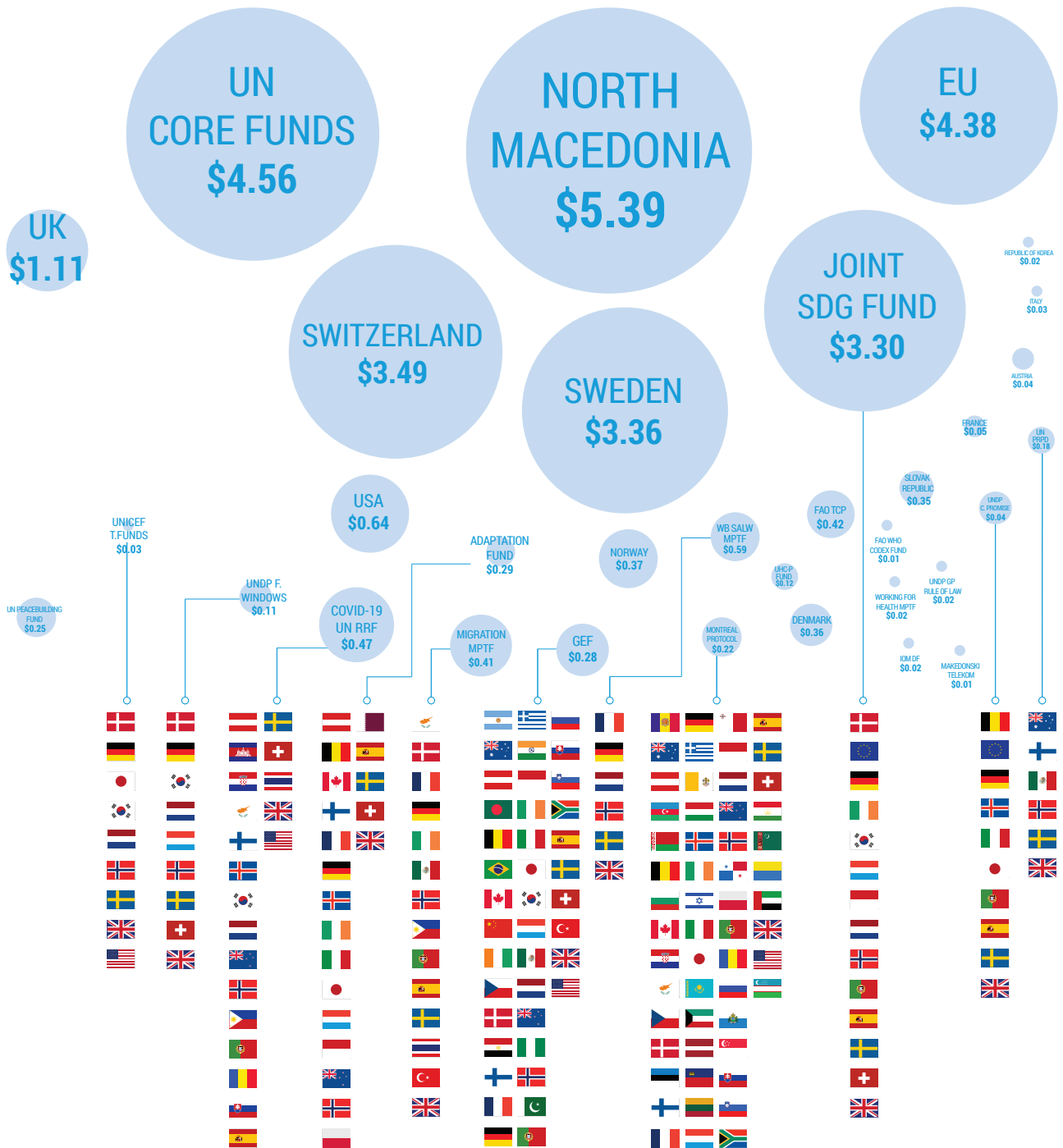
Key UN development partners

During 2023, the UN continued to work closely with over 260 partners – national and local governments, civil society, international partners, private sector, academia and all other stakeholders – to ensure the relevance and impact of its

action for the people in North Macedonia. A detailed list of stakeholders the UN has partnered with in 2023 is provided in the annex.

Partners that provided generous contributions to UN North Macedonia activities in 2023*

Based on effective expenditures in 2023, data as of 9 March 2024, for 1 January -31 December 2023, in million US\$



* Public contributors to pooled, vertical and thematic funds that supported UN activities in North Macedonia in 2021, indicated in alphabetical order.

Key developments in the country and regional context

Political polarisation over the legislative agenda, low confidence in the institutions and the lingering economic crisis that strongly impacted the living standard remained among the key features of the past year.

While **EU screening** of all clusters was finalized by early December, the start of accession negotiations remains contingent on delivery of preconditions established in the Negotiating Framework i.e. the required amendments of the Constitution. This deepened the political and social divides and continued to decrease the support for EU accession.

The quality of **legislative process** was affected by the increased number of fast-track procedures in Parliament, sometimes used to overcome frequent blockades from the opposition. However, in certain instances, such as the amendments to the Criminal Code, shortcutting the procedure was considered highly controversial. **People's confidence in the governance system and the rule of law** continued to erode due to prevalent corruption and insufficient accountability.

The finalization of the gender-responsive and consensus based **National Development Strategy** is an important milestone that will provide a long-term visionary framework, unifying the EU accession priorities and SDGs. This widely inclusive process is also one of the rare examples of multi-party engagement and participation.

North Macedonia's OSCE Chairpersonship pursued **multilateral and regional initiatives** towards rebuilding dialogue and security in the OSCE region. The country maintained constructive relations with other enlargement countries and other initiatives, including the high-level Prespa Forum Dialogue, Open Balkan initiative, Brdo-Brijuni and Berlin processes.

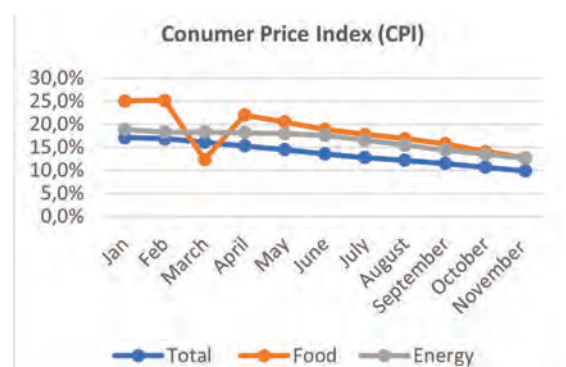
Cooperation with **international and European human rights mechanisms** intensified, including with the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism. Broad consultations with the Government, the Parliament, the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and CSOs for the occasion of the fourth Universal Periodic Review by the UN Human Rights Council were a positive step forward. The Council of Europe monitoring bodies GREVIO and GRETA have issued evaluation reports on gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings respectively. Integration of recommendations remains challenging. On a positive note, the Law on Prevention and Protection of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence was operationalized with the necessary bylaws in 2023.

Economic recovery was undermined with energy and food prices' spike, which intensified due to the war in Ukraine disproportionately affecting poorer households. The 2023 growth remains subdued and projected by IFIs between 1.8% to 2.3%, while the growth in 2024 is expected to be somewhat higher, subject to intensified capital investments.

Despite Government measures, increased prices remain an acute problem for the Macedonian economy and the living standard. Monetary policy continued tightening, requiring more ambitious fiscal consolidation and prudent fiscal policies, which is uncertain in the context of the coming elections. Major reforms are undertaken in the area of budget and tax policy. However, workers' rights have somewhat deteriorated due to some recent regulatory changes.

Despite slightly improved labour market data, eroding **human capital** remains among the key challenges, based on the latest demographic analysis. Apart from the regular pensions increase, Youth Guarantee and the new € 662 Million worth package of 26 anti-crisis measures implemented at the end of 2023, there were no major changes in the **social protection** during the year. **Health system** continued to struggle with lack of resources and medical staff, while the citizen's confidence in the (public) health was seriously undermined due to serious allegations investigated by the public prosecutor, which also provoked social protests. On the positive side, access for gynaecological services in underserved areas was improved with tripled budget in 2023, along with somewhat improved national (2022) rates for routine childhood vaccines (though still below targets for herd immunity). There was some progress in the **education** primarily on the inclusion of children with disabilities, who now attend regular primary schools, as well as with an enhanced pay and capacity of education staff. However, recent PISA results showed alarmingly deteriorated results. **Municipalities** continue to be strongly affected by the

North Macedonia Consumer Price Index



2023 quarterly GDP growth rate



Source: SSO, 2023

massive increase of electricity and heating expenditures and declining population. This has led to a slowdown of local investments and municipal councils' re-organisation.

In the area of **climate change, environment and natural resources**, the positive changes on green energy transition are starting to be visible through investments in renewables which have also decreased energy dependency. Further support from EU is also announced. The Government adopted a Just Transition Roadmap and signed a partnership with international finance institutions at the CoP28 in Dubai for an ambitious implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions. Although the air pollution somewhat decreased, the level of PM 10 and PM 2.5 during winter remains very high in urban areas, mainly due to inappropriate heating sources, transport, and industry. Despite legislative alignment in the area of waste management, enforcement remains a serious challenge due to insufficient human and financial resources, and deficient public awareness. While the official protected areas increased significantly, effective

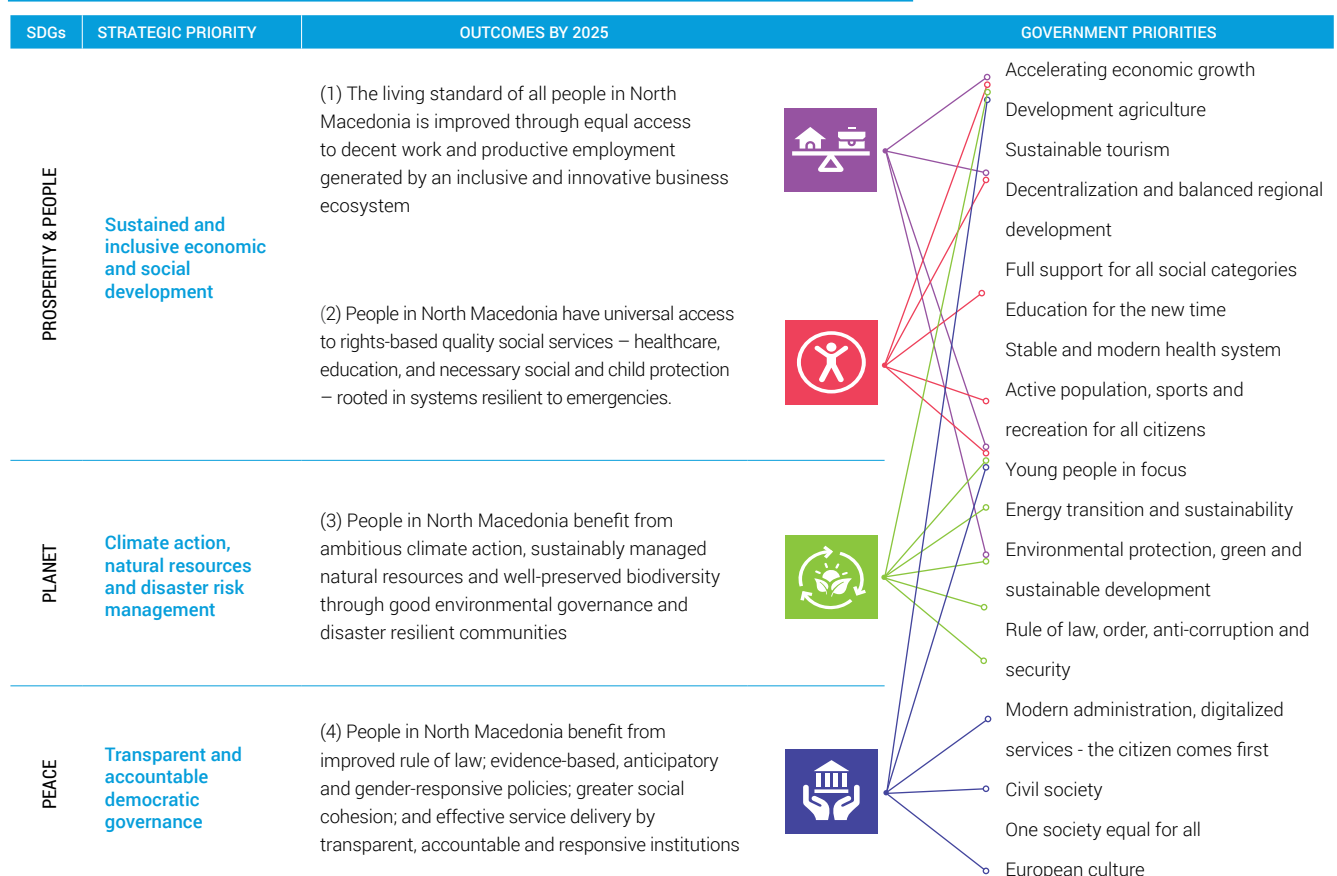
management and protection is limited. Further focus is also needed on the protection of the major lakes and rivers. The country is facing increased occurrence of fires, however capacity to respond to fire and manage flood risks is continuously improving.

The mixed migratory movements continue over North Macedonia's borders with 14,000 irregular arrivals recorded by the end of 2023, a substantial decrease from 27,000 irregular arrivals in the previous year. More than 74,000 Ukrainian refugees entered the country since February 2022 out of which 405 were granted temporary residence for humanitarian reasons. The country took decisive efforts to **eradicate statelessness** by granting every child born in the country the right to immediate registration in the birth register, irrespective of the parents' citizenship or personal status. As a result, 511 stateless individuals received their first ID cards. The remaining 275 individuals are still in procedure.

2023 Human Development Index (HDI)

Human Development Index (HDI)										Change in HDI rank	Average annual HDI growth			
Country	1990	2000	2010	2015	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 - 2021		1990 - 2000	2000 - 2010	2010 - 2021	1990 - 2021
North Macedonia	..	0,675	0,738	0,762	0,779	0,784	0,774	0,770	5	..	0,90	0,39	..	

UN support to national development priorities through SDCF



This section highlights UN North Macedonia contribution and results from working with partners in four areas – inclusive prosperity, quality services for all, healthy environment and good governance – in 2023.

Within the 2021-2025 SDCF, UN and partners are addressing three national strategic priorities and seek to contribute to four intended outcomes.

Building on the strong tradition of UN work in North Macedonia, SDCF supports the shift from direct implementation towards a more targeted UN support as an enabler and provider of anticipatory policy advice, innovation, and expertise.

UN action is strongly anchored in the human rights, prioritizing the most vulnerable groups. The UN action is also evidence-based, which requires strengthened statistical capacity, better collection of disaggregated data, and improved coordination and information sharing at all levels. All activities are done jointly with national and local authorities, civil society, private sector, international partners, and other stakeholders.

Across the four outcomes, programmes are strongly linked to the **six key transitions**, that can have catalytic and mul-

tiplier effects across the SDGs: (1) food systems; (2) energy access and affordability; (3) digital connectivity; (4) education; (5) jobs and social protection; and (6) climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. UN collective actions at country level are streamlined within the Joint Work Plans in particular through data-based interventions that support policy and regulatory frameworks; identify and develop pipeline of bankable and market-ready national projects; promote and facilitate innovative and more inclusive approaches for development financing and provide capacity-building at scale to assist all stakeholders to implement and sustain these transitions.

2023 Global Sustainable Development Report, offers Member States an analysis and recommendations to “unlock the rapid and deep transitions needed to deliver the Goals by 2030”



Six Transitions that can have catalytic and multiplier effects across the SDGs

2023 results per outcome

OUTCOME 1

Inclusive prosperity



By 2025, the living standard of all people in North Macedonia is improved through equal access to decent work and productive employment generated by inclusive and innovative business ecosystem

Contribution to



- Accelerated and sustainable economic growth with a better standard of living
- Development agriculture
- Social inclusion (care for all vulnerable categories) and development of human capital .
- Modern administration, digitalized services



- Fundamentals first: Economic Development and Competitiveness
- Cluster 1: Fundamentals: (EU Acquis Chapters: 23, 24)
- Cluster 3: Competitiveness and inclusive growth (EU Acquis Chapters: 10, 19, 20, 26)
- Cluster 4: Green agenda & sustainable connectivity (EU Acquis Chapters: 27)
- Cluster 5: Resources, agriculture & cohesion (EU Acquis Chapters: 11, 12)

2023 UN expenditure

\$6,027,282

Development partners:

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy; Ministry of Education and Science; Ministry of Economy; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Information Society and Public Administration; Ministry of Transport and Communications; Employment Service Agency; Agency for Real Estate Cadastre; Agency of Youth and Sport; Food and Veterinary Agency; Fund for Innovation and Technological Development; National Extension Agency; State Labour Inspectorate; State Statistical Office; Employers organizations of North Macedonia; National Federation of Farmers; Rural Development Network; Trade Unions; Economic and Social Council of North Macedonia; Faculty of Agriculture and Food Science; Municipalities of Gostivar, Prilep, Shtip, and Shuto Orizari



2,420 individuals were capacitated in entrepreneurial and business skills through the Self-employment program. Photo credit UNDP

In 2023, UN contributed to important results in the area of Inclusive Prosperity, such as reduced informal economy . Unfortunately, lingering inflation and subdued economic output kept the living standard of the people increasingly stretched, despite anti-crisis measures provided by the Government.

In this area, UN supported the authorities to create sustainable enterprises as generators of employment. A total of 946 SMEs were either created or benefited from support and mentorship

programmes through the online platform: www.bizz4all.mk , focusing on digitalization, digital marketing, online sales management, new market entries and green transformation to adapt to evolving market demands. Moreover, 2,420 individuals were capacitated in entrepreneurial and business skills through the Self-employment program. Of these, 19 persons with disabilities successfully started their own businesses. Through innovative approach, 115 SMEs received co-financing for green investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy

sources, employing 186 people who were trained to operate the latest technologies. In total, the active labour market measures, supported by UN, led to the creation of 645 full-time and 497 part-time jobs, particularly within SMEs and NGOs across 50 municipalities. In addition, 223 received some type of compensation during the trainings, making a total of 1,365 people who benefited from income support that helped them to escaped multidimensional poverty.

Social partners, such as the Organization of Employers of Macedonia (OEM) and the Business Confederation of Macedonia (BCM) were capacitated by UN to apply a participatory and data-based methodologies in assessing the business environment. BCM focused on digitalization, as to promote and advocate for a more enabling business environment that supports digital transformation among the companies. OEM used a tailored methodological approach for assessing the impacts of the energy crisis on companies, to advocate for additional mitigation measures, including energy subsidies.

2,324

Roma benefited from employment activation services

Three public Institutions and civil society organisations received support to access financial resources for the cultural and creative sector through an [inclusive and participatory approach](#), which was used to foster effective cultural policies, strengthen regional cultural cooperation, promote mobility and circulation of artists and creative goods and protect cultural heritage.

UN invested substantial efforts to **Leave no one behind by facilitating jobs for women and vulnerable people**. A total of 2,324 Roma benefited from employment activation services where Roma mentors played crucial role. As a result, 353 Roma gained employment (327 full-time; 26 part-time) and 384 Roma returnees obtained identification documents enabling them to enrol children in school and accessing social protection system, while 57 returnees started formalizing their primary education and 37 ultimately secured formal employment.

In the Care Economy sector, 639 unemployed (85% women) increased their employability by gaining skills and working experience in providing diverse home-based care services to over 9,517 people (5,131 women and 432 persons with disabilities) across 50 municipalities. As a result, 514 women benefited from recognitions of unpaid work and got employment (89 full-time and 425 part-time). To create an enabling environment for quality care-service delivery, UN also assisted Ministry of Labour and Social Policy to establish protocols, standards, and guidelines for service delivery, while 23 NGOs were assisted to become licensed care-service providers.

UN also worked on initiatives to strengthen women and persons with disabilities, including through supporting girls in STEM and empowering female students in innovation and technologies. Through private public partnership in the Municipality of Gostivar a multi-functional centre was established, offering Vocational, Educational and Training (VET) to enhance the livelihood of young people and persons with disabilities. Organizations of Persons with Disabilities were sensitized about the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in order to strengthen their voice and choice in the society. Assistive tools (IOS developed speech synthesis KIKO and HANA) have been made accessible to around 5,000 people with visual impairments and disability, while inclusive policies for persons with disabilities in Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery were developed for the first time, and public

institutions were adequately capacitated to implement them. The “Sport for All” fair featured a High-Level Public Debate, showcasing various inclusive, adaptive, and mainstream sports activities that would enhance inclusion of people of with disabilities in sports.

8,038 persons

employed through the Youth Guarantee

To increase employability of youth, UN facilitated a peer-learning and triangular cooperation with the line ministries, public employment services and other relevant stakeholders from the region and the EU, helping authorities to adopt a new Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (2023-2026), which is in line with the Recommendation of the EU Council. This plan also introduces an innovative application of a statistical profiling model for client segmentation in the Employment Service Agency (ESA). As a result of these actions, a total of 23,619 persons (11,675 women) young people were registered for Youth Guarantee in 2023, out of whom 8,038 (4,109 women) were employed. Of these, 2,786 (1,616 women, 190 Roma and 186 persons with disabilities) were registered for the Youth Guarantee with UN support through youth umbrella NGOs engaged to facilitate outreach and activation. Almost 200 people, of which at least 20 women and over 70 youth attained skills requested at the labour market such as digital skills, vocational textile sector skills, building Information Modelling (BIM) technology, including through 15 meticulously crafted courses, tailored to cater to both high school and university students provided by the iCan Center.

To facilitate opportunities for labour migration, authorities benefitted from joint UN-OSCE research aimed at understanding complex factors that shape people’s attitudes toward migration and migrants, pooling lessons learned from communication initiatives.

UN also worked on **enhancing policies and regulatory environment and on capacitating institutions**. Based on this, the country continued a fully inclusive and consultative process of drafting a new Labour Relations Law, aimed to fully align with international and EU labour standards. The first General Collective Agreement for the Public Sector was also signed, after 15 years. A UN developed tool was used for self-assessment of the labour disputes resolution mechanisms, upon which, an Action Plan 2023-2025 for enhancing amicable settlement disputes process was developed.

In 2023, UN continued to work on **reducing informalities and strengthening quality of work**. On 14 June 2023, following the recommendation by the Economic and Social Council and the Government, which was assisted by UN, the Parliament of North Macedonia ratified ILO Convention No. 190 on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. Also, a senior inspector who participated in the UN Labour Inspection Academy cascaded his knowledge to 25 labour inspectors from the Labour Inspectorate.

Focus was also put on introducing new measures for women empowerment, digitalization, and green transition of SMEs. For example, a novelty was introduced in the Employment Operational Plan 2023 which now incorporates a “green measure”, with metrics that track GHG emissions reduction in the companies covered by this measure. A comprehensive set of policy recommendations and practical plans for just transition were also provided by UN for coal-dependent Pelagonija.

Based on a thorough evidence-based analysis, a comprehensive

framework was developed for formulation of North Macedonia's first National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy, including for setting out an inclusive and inter-sectoral food security coordination mechanism led by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy. Analysis and support were also offered on the aspects of abandoned agricultural land, which makes about 32 percent of arable agricultural land in the country, to inform the amendments of the Law on Agricultural Land, Law on Privatization of State-Owned Land, and other related laws.

In the context of the lingering food prices' spikes, to inform the decision making, UN offered analysis and measures in addressing food insecurity challenges, particularly related to food accessibility and affordability. In response to the multifaceted challenges presented by COVID-19 and potential other shocks, capacities were strengthened in price and market information systems and policy monitoring for food commodities and value chains, including with a dedicated national [tool](#), which is a dynamic resource, providing real-time information on domestic prices of essential food items. Link to the FAO'S global Food Price Monitoring and Analysis Tool was also enabled.

Employment Support Agency (ESA) benefited from the statistical profiling model which will enhance information on determining the timing and intensity of support to the jobseekers at risk of becoming long-term unemployed, in a cost-effective way. Furthermore, ESA was able to provide more online services to the companies which improved the overall communication among companies, job-seekers and ESA, as well as the efficiency of the active labour market measures.

A total of 50 officials from the national institutions and municipalities were strengthened in engagement and service provision to Diaspora members in order to map and facilitate transfer of skills and knowledge from Diaspora. To facilitate trade, the customs office and other related institutions benefited from a capacity building to operate a Single Window facility for companies.

To enhance sustainable and competitive rural economy, UN

supported the authorities on three specific aspects. First, the Food and Veterinary Agency (FVA) was assisted to enhance the National Animal Health and Food Safety System in line with the EU standards, to ensure a modern, sustainable, and long-term solution that will enable efficient recording, analysis, and utilization of vital animal data throughout the entire animal lifecycle.

742 ha of farmland

with improved drainage and road network

Secondly, following UN thorough analysis, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy initiated the preparation of the new National Strategy for Agricultural Land Consolidation 2024-2034, backed with capacity building for land consolidation. The National Land Consolidation Programme, was further advanced with drafted land Re-allotment Plan and technical design of agricultural infrastructure improvements for 156 hectares in [Chiflik](#) village, [consulting 404 landowners in the process](#). Work also started in the village of [Dabjani](#) to improve drainage and road networks for 742 hectares of farmland, benefiting 85 agricultural landowners. Various communication activities were carried out to raise public awareness of the benefits of land consolidation, as well as the support provided by the EU and UN to enhance the National Land Consolidation Programme, and to encourage interest from other local communities in North Macedonia.

Finally, to improve gender equality in the rural areas, the Faculty of Agricultural Science and Food (FASF) and UN helped the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (MAFWE) to apply gender responsive budgeting in policy making, doubling the budget allocation for more responsive gender specific measures (Measure 115) aimed for women agricultural producers. The Faculty also enhanced gender responsiveness of rural and agricultural policies by updating the Women's Empowerment Index and [assessing](#) the impact of existing policy measures for supporting women agricultural producers.



Work started in the village of Dabjani to improve drainage and road networks for 742 hectares of farmland, benefiting 85 agricultural landowners. *Photo credit: FAO*

OUTCOME 2

Quality services for all



By 2025, people in North Macedonia have universal access to rights-based quality social services – healthcare, education, and necessary social and child protection - rooted in systems resilient to emergencies

Contribution to



- Social inclusion (care for all vulnerable categories) and development of human capital
- Modern education system
- Stable and modern healthcare system
- Youth in the focus



- Cluster 1: Fundamentals (EU Acquis Chapters: 18, 23, 24)
- Cluster 2: Internal market (EU Acquis Chapters: 28)
- Cluster 3: Competitiveness and inclusive growth (EU Acquis Chapters: 19, 26)

2023 UN expenditure

\$3,312,296

Development partners:

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education and Science; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Justice; Bureau for Development of Education; Health Insurance Fund; E-health directorate; National Public Health Institute; State Statistical Office; Professional Associations; Association for Research, Communications and Development; Civil Society Organizations; Health Education and Research Association; Medical Faculty Skopje



The worsening mental health of the younger population was addressed by producing a detailed mapping report on mental health services with recommendations for improvements, as well as establishment of a National Multi-sectoral Working Group for Child and Adolescent Mental Health. *Photo credit: WHO*

Under the Outcome Quality Services for all, UN supported essential services in the area of health, education and social protection, and assisted in eliminating any form of violence, especially gender and family violence during 2023. Unfortunately, despite a few positive developments, such as somewhat increased vaccination rate and increased attendance rate in an early childhood education program of children between 36-59 months, these services continued to be particularly stretched and, at certain level, even producing deteriorating results.

In the area of health, the focus was put on primary health care, developing clinical protocols for the most prevalent ambulatory care-sensitive conditions and capacitating 803 health professionals, 623 doctors and 179 pharmacists in the new models and protocols, which also led to a facilitated process of preserving these medicines. Critical evidence through the cost benefit analysis was also generated for investment in home-visiting services.

The worsening mental health of the younger population was addressed by producing a detailed mapping report on mental health services with recommendations for improvements, as well as establishment of a National Multisectoral Working Group for Child and Adolescent Mental Health. About 550 professionals in Skopje, Tetovo, Bitola, Prilep, Veles, and Strumica were trained in providing health services for mental and behavioural disorders, expected to assist 65,000 children and adolescents.

Having in mind the growing mental health concerns, 649 school professionals received mentorship, and were equipped with strategies, and practical activities to work with children, while 521 school support were skilled to response to bomb threats in the schools. To ensure system level support, gap analysis was conducted and used to draft the first National Action Plan for the mental health of adolescents in the country, followed by a new counselling programme for parents and students who may display violent behaviour

or, for various reasons, are not reaching their full academic potential.

The Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) model, initially introduced by UN, with mobile gynaecological clinics, continuously receives increased funding. As result of this, within the national Cervical Cancer Screening Programme, 53,340 women that have not been screened in the past 3 years, were screened in 2023, which is a seven-fold increase from 2022 alone. This was also supported with comprehensive training that reached more than 1,200 students between the age of 15 to 18. In addition, based on analysis of the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children, UN advocated for introducing a Comprehensive Sexuality Education in the educational process, so that youth can receive age-appropriate and credible information for critical life decisions. Furthermore female leaders contributed to awareness building campaigns, followed with debates and strategies development at municipality level.

The Master Plan for Perinatal Care 2020-2030 was reviewed and audited, providing evidence-based recommendations to address system errors and barriers, including due to the changing demographic dynamics. Some 60 health professionals that deliver services to the most vulnerable women and girls in the country across all maternities, were capacitated in methods for family planning and modern contraceptive methods.

In cooperation with EU, UN supported the Ministry of Health in a wide door-to-door catch-up campaigns for immunization, covering 40 municipalities, administering over 5,000 doses of missed routine vaccines, 2,630 seasonal flu and COVID-19 vaccines. Institutions were also equipped with enhanced standardized procedures for handling vaccines and capacitated in vaccination promotion and occupational

health, as well as in better reporting procedures on immunization in digital format. An analysis of immunization services has identified key gaps and challenges, putting forward a proposal to optimize the resources and network of vaccination points.

Ministry of Health was strengthened with a Policy Analysis team, critical in designing data-based health policies. The Nursing system was also advanced by introducing a Government Chief Nursing Officer at the Ministry. The development the first Human Resources for Health Strategy was launched. In 2023, North Macedonia's National Health Accounts system was recognized as the most advanced in the WHO European Region (outside the EU and OECD).

UN also initiated an assessment on barriers to health in rural, remote, and small urban areas in North Macedonia to identify strategies for health equity across the country. In addition, a Behavioural and Cultural Insights survey of healthcare workers and an analysis on the costs of tobacco consumption was conducted to strengthen implementation of tobacco control.

Initiative for health-promoting schools, aligned with Global Standards, was also promoted with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education.

6,000 teachers

skilled for high-quality teaching

Addressing the problem of declining learning outcomes, UN advocated and invested in the ongoing **education** curricula reform, primarily by support in aligning the Primary Education Concept with the national learning outcomes and assessment standards. The children's [takeover](#) of Parliament, organised



In cooperation with EU, UN supported the Ministry of Health in a wide door-to-door catch-up campaigns for immunization, covering 40 municipalities, administering over 5,000 doses of missed routine vaccines, 2,630 seasonal flu and COVID-19 vaccines. *Photo credit: WHO*



The children's takeover of Parliament, organised on World Children's Day, allowed a highly visible opportunity for children and youth to express their concerns about the lack of access to and quality of education and to advocate for the fast adoption of the amendments to the necessary laws. Photo credit: UNICEF

on World Children's Day, allowed a highly visible opportunity for children and youth to express their concerns about the lack of access to and quality of education and to advocate for the fast adoption of the amendments to the necessary laws.

UN continued to provide technical support to Ministry of Education and Science and ten model municipalities in developing a mid-term vision for transforming the primary school network and improving the allocation of limited resources. In this context, UN advocated with municipalities to transform free primary school spaces into pre-school facilities to support of school network optimization. In 2023, the Bureau for the Development of Education was capacitated to take over complete ownership and management over the national education platform EDUINO. Close to 6,000 teachers were skilled for high-quality teaching and equipped with learning resources with increasing quality of extracurricular, experiential learning and community engagement opportunities. In pre-school education, with UN support, 109 trained caregivers from across the country reached 1,097 more caregivers, introducing them to children's social and emotional learning (SEL) and various practical strategies that can be applied in their work. In addition, 30 preschools (38%) were visited to analyse the SEL programme's implementation in practice and highlight areas that require further attention. Training programme for pre-school staff healthy lifestyles was developed to address growing trends of childhood obesity and overweight.

UN also supported access to school for vulnerable groups, by deploying Roma mediators in each of the municipalities to improve school readiness and early childhood development outcomes of Roma children, aged three to six. Suggestion was made to amend the Law on Primary Education to ensure continued certified education in correctional facilities. In addition, 1,283 teachers were sensitized to working with refugee, migrant, and asylum seeker children and 42 staff from the five resource centres were trained to facilitate the inclusion of refugee, migrant, and asylum seeker children

in education. To support early inclusion of children with communication difficulties, 25 professionals at the five resource centres were skilled to introduce alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) in 2023, and AAC was introduced as a topic in the Programme for Professional Development of Educational Assistants. This was backed with 11 local open events organised in preschools, to familiarise parents and professionals in the benefits of AAC. As of September 2023, all children with disabilities are enrolled in mainstream primary schools. To facilitate this, the Ministry of Education and Science established a collaborative working group led by UN tasked to come up with recommendations for the support required to assist teachers in developing and implementing the modified programme.

In the area of **social protection**, a functional analysis of Centres for Social Work identified key gaps and challenges in organizational setup, resource allocation and workforce capacity, which initiated an enhanced integration of the case management and an advanced module on case management incorporated in the electronic platform for educating social work professionals.

UN also supported parents. Bebbio parenting application reached 16,700 application users by the end of 2023 and provided parents and caregivers with information on childcare and healthy nutrition, selfcare, and with expert advice on managing stress while best supporting the child's well-being. The National Parenting Helpline, now sustainably operated by a national social worker and psychotherapist, reached out to 219 parents/caregivers, only in the first half of the year, while ten mothers enhanced positive parenting skills through online Mellow parenting program. This was backed with a comprehensive promotion on positive parenting approach in the (social) media, kindergartens, and primary schools. In partnership with the University Clinic of Psychiatry and Institute for Social Activities, 60 professionals from the centres for social work and small group homes, gained knowledge on psychosocial support for children in

ЕФЕКТИТЕ НА КРИЗАТА СО ХРАНА И ЕНЕРГИЈА ВРЗ ДЕЦАТА И СЕМЕЈСТВОТА



UN worked with the State Statistical Office and line ministries to bring closer the concept of multi-dimensional child poverty, including through calculation of multi-dimensional child poverty index. *Photo credit: UNICEF*

the social protection system. In addition, 47 social service professionals gained the same knowledge through the Digital Learning Platform managed by the Institute, along with additional 1,430 professionals who benefited from this platform in areas important for children.

12,500 persons

received various support in the Temporary Transit Centres

An evidence-based policy recommendation on the steps for introduction of a new multi-disciplinary, family-oriented Early Childhood Intervention system for children with disabilities and developmental delays was developed in a participatory way, along with draft standards and procedures. In support to this, 54 professionals were capacitated in delivering family-oriented early childhood intervention services. Standards and norms for licensed providers of counselling services, and adjustment of pricing models were enhanced introducing quality assurance mechanisms for service provision to children. Moreover, a human-rights based, Rulebook on ICF-based disability assessment, supported by UN was adopted by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Science and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, along with an electronic registry of assessed children and youth.

UN also worked with the State Statistical Office and line-ministries to bring closer the concept of multi-dimensional child poverty, including through calculation of multi-dimensional child poverty index. Moreover, UN analysis on the effects of energy and food price increases on vulnerable children informed and influenced some of the Government anti-crisis measures, such as a top-up to single parents-recipients of the Guaranteed Minimum Allowance and changes in the electricity pricing model beneficial to poorer

households and households with multiple children.

More than 12,500 migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in the two Temporary Transit Centres, the vast majority of whom are men, received medical support, psychosocial support, assisted voluntary return and reintegration, educational support, cultural mediation, recreational activities, language assistance and other support based on their needs, enhancing their access to reception and protection services. In addition, 110 asylum seekers in Reception Center Vizbegovo benefitted from UN supported psychosocial support, 85 people studied Macedonian language and attended various events that contributed towards their inclusion in the Macedonian society. Thanks to UN advocacy, the amendments of the Law on Foreigners were adopted in 2023 allowing all remaining refugees from Kosovo, regardless of their current status, to apply for permanent residence. The 194 persons remaining in the country received legal aid and counselling.

UN further assisted the Government for inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers, by creating a Digital Literacy and Modernization of Training Module, aimed to improve didactical skills of the Institute for Social Activities staff and enhance digital content tailored for professional service providers within the social protection system. Revised Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Unaccompanied and Separated Children and Vulnerable Foreigners was also revised and expected to be adopted in early 2024. Two additional SOPs for the border police on Protection Sensitive Entry Systems and on Immigration Detention were initiated expected to be finalised and adopted in early 2024, a major breakthrough in managing mixed migration movements and access to territory.

With a view to fully operationalize the Law on **Prevention and Protection of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence**, UN assisted the authorities to inclusively develop



Community events were organized to show appreciation to professionals who are providing immediate and long-term support to the GBV victims and survivors. *Photo credit: UNFPA*

and adopt a New Protocol for a victim-centred multi-sectoral response to Violence Against Women/ Domestic Violence (VAW/DV), as well as to create the first roster of 33 certified GBV/DV trainers from all institutions and CSOs and to validate an improved GBV Information Management System, based on integrated data collection model. As one of the first steps, these certified trainers cascaded their knowledge to more than 25 professionals from the Ministry of Interior and the Academy of Judges and Prosecutors.

Based on UN supported assessment, the three SOS lines enhanced operations through regular monthly meetings of the coordinators and operators in order to exchange (confidential) information and react accordingly, and 20 operators and coordinators from three organizations were trained. Furthermore, a total of 16 professionals were trained and certified according to the developed standards and educational curriculum for working with perpetrators, backed with mentorship provided by the most experienced CSOs. A program for reintegration of victims was also finalized. In cooperation with a local CSO, UN supported a social mentoring programme, facilitated employment of 13 women survivors and increased employability of 15 in total.

Awareness was raised by a number of communication campaigns with strong outreach among GBV survivors, especially from the vulnerable groups, ethnic minorities groups and young people. The campaign “There is help for a life without violence” and related community events addressed the dominant obstacles to report violence such as shame, fear, and misconceptions. Community events were also organized to show appreciation to professionals who are providing immediate and long-term support to the GBV victims and survivors. A variety of communication products were developed and published with the Institute of Communication Studies (ICS), not only promoting the

available services to GBV victims, but also providing an analysis on ethical journalist reporting on GBV. A BodyRight social media campaign and localized glossary was organized to raise awareness about Technology facilitated Gender Based Violence, reaching 27,554 people, with special focus on people with disability. Support was also provided by assessing the accessibility of 23 facilities of service providers and by capacitating health practitioners who work with persons with disabilities, while aligning the “Guidebook for Prevention of and Response to GBV against Persons with Disabilities “ with the latest legal frame.

The multi-stakeholder cooperation model was replicated in the municipalities of Gostivar and Shuto Orizari, while CSOs from three communities were trained to replicate it further in ethnic minority communities including Albanian and Roma communities. Moreover, supported by UN and with municipal financing, one CSO from Gostivar opened the first shelter in the region and a CSO from Shuto Orizari opened the first counselling centre for psycho – social support in the Roma municipality. This concept was further promoted during the 16 days of activism campaign, with educational workshops in the rural areas of both municipalities.

Communications activities were also utilized to achieve awareness about gender equality and women empowerment, crowned by the High-level event, “The Power of Choice: Realizing Bodily Autonomy for Women and Girls”, with regional and global speakers and esteemed participants from the country and the region.

During 2023, in cooperation with INTERPOL and ECPAT International, UN also initiated a research project, based on the Disrupting Harm methodology, that aims to obtain comprehensive evidence on online child sexual exploitation and abuse collecting cross-sectoral data.

OUTCOME 3

Healthy environment



By 2025, people in North Macedonia benefit from ambitious climate action, sustainably managed natural resources and well-preserved biodiversity through good environmental governance and disaster resilient communities.

Contribution to



- Protection of environment, green and sustainable development
- Energy transition and sustainability



- Cluster 1: Fundamentals (EU Acquis Chapters: 18, 23, 24)
- Cluster 2: Internal market (EU Acquis Chapters: 28)
- Cluster 3: Competitiveness and inclusive growth (EU Acquis Chapters: 19, 26)
- Cluster 4: Green agenda & sustainable connectivity (EU Acquis Chapters: 27)
- Cluster 5: Resources, agriculture & cohesion (EU Acquis Chapters: 11, 12)

2023 UN expenditure

\$9,534,030

Development partners:

Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Economic Affairs, Coordination of Economic Sectors and Investments; Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Education and Science; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; National Public Health Institute; Crisis Management Center; Directorate for Rescue and Protection; E-health directorate; Food and Veterinary Agency; State Statistical Office; Balkan Foundation for Sustainable Development; Civil Society Organizations; Connecting Natural Values and People - Office; Macedonian Ecological Society; Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts; Faculty of Agriculture and Food Science; Faculty of Forest Sciences; Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics; Institute of Agriculture; Swedish Environmental Protection Agency; United Nations Institute for Training and Research; municipalities through the country



Mapping of youth organizations and the model for establishing Youth Climate Hubs in Skopje and Ohrid were completed, laying the groundwork for targeted training and collaboration within a newly established Regional Youth Network. Photo credit: UNDP

In support of development and implementation of national climate change policy, preparatory activities were undertaken to facilitate the operationalization of the **National Coordinating Council for Climate Action (NCMCA)** in alignment with the new Law on Climate Action, which is expected to be adopted in 2024. Additionally, mapping of youth organizations and the model for establishing Youth Climate Hubs in Skopje and Ohrid were completed, laying the groundwork for targeted training and collaboration within a newly established Regional Youth Network. Pre-COP28 events were organized in collaboration

with the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and the President of the country to present its positions for the COP (Ministers of Environment, Economy and Health), and to open a dialogue with the youth organization about their expectations from COP 28.

In collaboration with various partners, significant strides were made in increasing access to **climate finance**. UN facilitated North Macedonia's access to Green Climate Fund (GCF) through projects aimed at enhancing national capacities

for climate resilience. Meanwhile, the Green Finance Facility (GFF), started providing financing for SMEs towards green transition, supporting investments in renewable energy (RE) and energy efficiency (EE) technologies. Two private banks (Sparkasse and ProCredit Bank) and one leasing company (Sparkasse Leasing) now offer GFF loans to SMEs in North Macedonia, accompanied with ex-post grant component and free technical assistance on RE and EE technology. The Green Finance Facility blends financing from the Government of North Macedonia, Joint SDG Fund, EBRD and several commercial banks.

UN continued to play a pivotal role in advancing **environmental education and awareness**, reaching 1,038 teachers across the country and 35,722 children from primary schools and kindergartens. Building on the already integrated environment and climate change curricula in select grades of primary school and previously established Science Learning Network, hands-on learning opportunities were provided, integrating environment and climate change education into curricula and extracurricular activities. Further, a Biohacking Lab and Innovation Camps for youth were established, to stimulate interest of young people in research and science on environmental sustainability, climate change and biodiversity. Moreover, 141,134 people were reached and engaged with campaigns on environmental protection and climate change mitigation and 623 start-ups and SMEs received mentoring support for clean climate friendly technologies.

UN's initiatives aimed at enhancing **climate change adaptation measures for agricultural resilience** focused on enhanced seed quality management and conservation. The National Seed System was evaluated, and comprehensive set

of recommendations was developed. An assessment of state-owned irrigation and drainage systems in Radovish area was carried out to help authorities identify areas for improvement and modernization. To improve food safety, UN extended support to the National Codex Structure within the Food and Veterinary Agency of North Macedonia, including translation of Codex Alimentarius Manuals, and facilitating participation in international meetings concerning residues of veterinary drugs in food.

Efforts to address **ozone depletion and control substances**, such as refrigerants, continued with a focus on waste management, legislative review, and capacity building. In 2022, 10,681 kg of refrigerants were recovered, and 14,082 kg of refrigerants were recycled. Bylaws on sustainable certification system on refrigerants were drafted and 55 representatives from the Customs Administration, State Environmental Inspectorate and Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning were capacitated to enforce control and monitoring of the Montreal Protocol substances. Also, preparatory steps for the granting scheme for recovery and recycling equipment for entities/service shops were completed.

Interms of **integrated, sustainable, and inclusive management of natural resources**, the UN in collaboration with municipal authorities and representatives of the institutions-members of the National Council for Sustainable Development, initiated capacity-building activities on sustainable land management (SLM) and sustainable forest management (SFM). The work on developing the Strategy and Law on Soil Protection continued, including legal and institutional framework analysis, and updating Local Environmental Action Plans, as well as land utilization analysis and ecosystems valuation of forests and



The National Seed System was evaluated, and comprehensive set of recommendations was developed. *Photo credit: FAO*

grasslands for targeted municipalities. UN collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy and academic institutions to launch a project strengthening the Macedonian Forest Service and its role in the economy and rural development. Key activities included enhancing forest damage monitoring, restoration planning, and regional cooperation discussions. Drafting policy assessments on forest damages in North Macedonia as well as potential investments in reforestation were key components of UN's support. The Umbrella Programme to Support Development of Biodiversity Finance Plans (BIOFIN) was approved, and it is expected to bring new tools and instruments that will improve the financing of protected areas.

The Eurasian Lynx and the Critically Endangered subspecies Balkan Lynx were listed under the appendixes (II and I, respectively) of the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS/Bonn Convention), thanks to the multi-country initiative led by the Government of North Macedonia and supported by UN.

A team of independent experts mandated by UN started to work on the preparation of a Feasibility Study for Coastal Urban Plan for the Ohrid Region. The Feasibility Study should provide a basis for informed decision-making on urban planning as well as a more coherent framework for the protection of cultural and natural heritage of Ohrid region using innovative digital tools.

With UN support, regional workshops on waste management, climate change, and disaster risk reduction policies and practices based on the Environmental Performance Reviews

(EPRs) were organised in Skopje to enhance experience exchange between representatives from relevant institutions through the region.

In terms of air pollution, after a drop in annual mean levels of fine particulate matter in 2021 and 2022, PM10 is slightly increased in 2023 at 37.44 µg/m³, but still below the UNSDCF baseline value of 51.32 µg/m³. This slight increase from 2022 levels is explained by the return to pre-Covid levels of activity, and the value remains under the five-year target of 40 µg/m³. New sizable multi-year initiatives have started in 2023 in eight cities throughout the country (Skopje, Bitola, Kumanovo, Tetovo, Kavadarci, Strumica, Gostivar, and Struga). To assess the sources and level of air pollution in these cities, four seasons ambient air quality data collection and monitoring have been initiated. Also, first air quality monitoring station and meteorological station in Struga, was installed, and basic technical equipment provided to municipalities, while municipal staff and local inspectors were trained on air quality monitoring. For the first time in the country, indoor air quality monitoring is conducted in ten schools and kindergartens in line with the guidelines of the World Health Organization. The air pollution platform was enhanced to provide real time data from the monitoring of air quality.

Awareness on air pollution was also strengthened through variety of activities on behavioural change with CSOs, the Association of Journalists of Macedonia and youth. In terms of youth, 980 young people were engaged on air pollution in partnership with the Agency for Youth and Sports. Youth councils in three municipalities designed detailed work plans for improving air quality, and the Air Care Ambassadors



The Eurasian Lynx and the Critically Endangered subspecies Balkan Lynx were listed under the appendixes (II and I, respectively) of the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS/Bonn Convention), thanks to the multi-country initiative led by the Government of North Macedonia and supported by UN. *Photo credit: UNEP/Dime Melovski*

program produced media products and engaged policymakers. UN initiated a greening revision of VET curricula in partnership with the Vocational Training and Education Centre, promoting green skills development in students. A scoping study on the interlinkages between air pollution and human mobility in Tetovo provided evidence for improved spatial planning and mitigation measures. UN supported mapping and analysis of environmental policies, legislation, and strategies in North Macedonia, supporting compliance efforts with the UNFCCC's human mobility program.

Overall, collaborative efforts and capacity building initiatives have contributed to advancing **disaster risk management**, although challenges remain in achieving optimal institutional capacity and compliance with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The disaster risk is decreased and assessed as low (INFORM Risk Index score for North Macedonia in 2023 is 2.5, slightly down from 2.6 UNSDCF Baseline). Several results were achieved by the UN team in 2023 in building disaster resilience through implementation of combined non-structural and structural measures. First, UN's support in updating the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) country study for North Macedonia culminated in key recommendations to strengthen DRR in the agriculture sector. These include integrating DRR into legal frameworks, enhancing early warning systems, optimizing information systems, addressing vulnerabilities, harmonizing assessment methodologies, and promoting agricultural insurance. Second, the National Action Plan for Health Security 2024-2025 was developed, reinforcing disaster risk management in North Macedonia's health sector.

Enhanced biosafety measures in public health laboratories ensure timely medical interventions and create safer healthcare environments. Third, the subnational INFORM Risk Index for Southeast Europe, focusing on Albania, Montenegro, and North Macedonia was updated in a collaborative effort led by UN, DPPI SEE, the Directorate for Protection and Rescue of North Macedonia, and other partners. The Index aids in identifying high-risk areas, facilitating proactive disaster risk management, and guiding resource allocation. Fourth, rehabilitation of 6km of Sateska river, including automation of a sluice gate facility, and diversion of the river in its natural riverbed will improve the flood resilience of the Drim basin, and protect Lake Ohrid from the sediment load. Fifth, seven priority landslides in the Polog region were stabilized thus reducing the risk for the local communities. Finally, 623 civil servants from relevant institutions on central and local levels were supported to enhance their understanding of risk financing, gender mainstreaming, and flood rescue techniques, while hydrology department of HydroMet has increased knowledge in hydrological modelling. Flood risk mitigation investments, thanks to flood risk management or other relevant DRR plans, increased to 5.5 million USD.

In terms of waste, in 2023 two basins of the old chemical industry complex (OHIS) were cleaned. This resulted in a clean-up of 1,250 tons of hexachlorocyclohexane (HCH) waste and HCH contaminated soil. UN launched the Regional E-Waste Monitor for the Western Balkans Report, including an E-waste country profile for North Macedonia, providing e-waste statistics, and fostering discussions on its implications.



In terms of waste, in 2023 two basins of the old chemical industry complex (OHIS) were cleaned. This resulted in a clean-up of 1,250 tons of hexachlorocyclohexane (HCH) waste and HCH contaminated soil. *Photo credit: UNOPS*

OUTCOME 4

Good governance



By 2025, people in Whole country benefit from improved rule of law; evidence-based, anticipatory and gender-responsive policies; greater social cohesion; and effective service delivery by transparent, accountable and responsive institutions.

Contribution to



- Rule of law, good governance, and anticorruption
- Promoting democracy and freedom
- EU integration
- Decentralisation and balanced regional development
- Modern administration, digitalized services
- One society for all



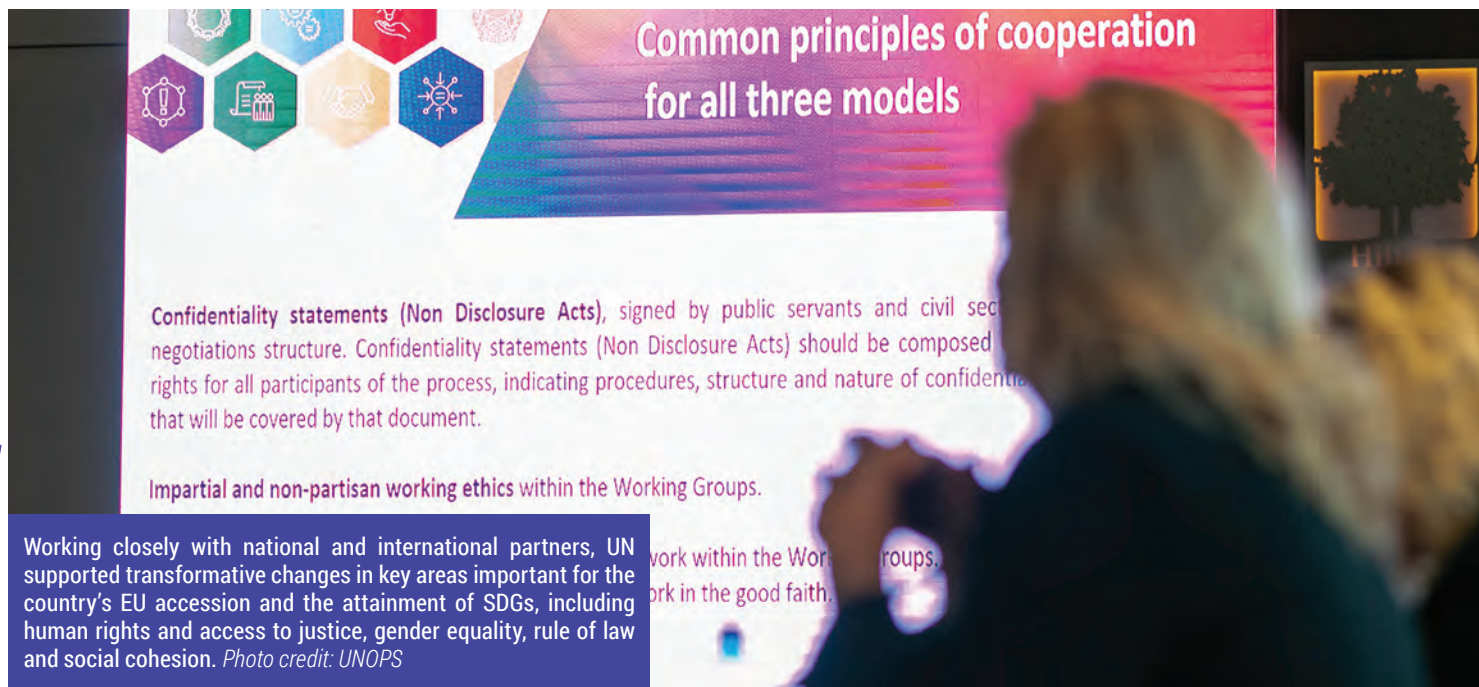
- Cluster 1: Fundamentals (EU Acquis Chapters: 18, 23, 24, 32)
- Cluster 2: Internal market (EU Acquis Chapters: 1, 28, 10)
- Cluster 3: Competitiveness and inclusive growth (EU Acquis Chapters: 16, 17, 19, 25, 26)
- Cluster 4: Green agenda & sustainable connectivity (EU Acquis Chapters: 15, 27)
- Cluster 5: Resources, agriculture & cohesion (EU Acquis Chapters: 11, 22, 33)
- Cluster 6: External relations (EU Acquis Chapters: 30)

2023 UN expenditure

\$ 11,636,683

Development partners:

President's cabinet, Parliament; Prime Minister's Cabinet, Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Economic Affairs, Coordination of Economic Sectors and Investments; Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Good Governance; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Education and Science; Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Information Society and Public Administration; Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Ministry of Local Self-Government; National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia; State Commission for Prevention of Corruption; Agency of Youth and Sport; Association of Local-Self Government Units; Bureau for Regional Development; Customs Administration; Judiciary; Public Prosecution Office; Public Prosecution Office for Organized Crime and Corruption; Public Revenue Office; Secretariat for European Affairs; State Audit Office; State Statistical Office; Ombudsman; Commission for Promotion and Protection Against Discrimination; National Commission for Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Migrants; National Council for Gender Equality; National Coordination Body for Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Macedonian Young Lawyers Association; Youth Educational Forum, Faculty of Law Iustinianus Primus, La Strada, Institute for Human Rights, European Policy Institute; Macedonian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights; Coalition of NGOs Against Violence against Women; Blue Print Groups; Akcija Zdruzenska; Association of Finance Officers; Association of Journalists Organizations and Groups of Persons with Disabilities; Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe; German Agency for International Cooperation; Interpol; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe; City of Skopje; Municipalities of Aerodrom; Bitola; Gjorce Petrov; Makedonska Brod; Bogdanci; Bogovinje; Centar; Chashka; Delchevo; Gazi Baba; Gevgelija; Gostivar; Karposh; Kavadarci; Kisela Voda; Kochani; Kriva Palanka; Kumanovo; Makedonska Kamenica; Mavrovo-Rostushe; Novaci; Ohrid; Shtip; Staro Nagoricane; Struga; Strumica; Sveti Nikole; Tetovo; Veles; Vinica, and others.



Working closely with national and international partners, UN supported transformative changes in key areas important for the country's EU accession and the attainment of SDGs, including human rights and access to justice, gender equality, rule of law and social cohesion. *Photo credit: UNOPS*

Working closely with national and international partners, UN supported transformative changes in key areas important for the country's EU accession and the attainment of SDGs, including human rights and access to justice, gender equality, rule of law and social cohesion. Forward-looking and data driven policies were developed in a broadly inclusive and transparent processes, engaging relevant stakeholders, especially people left behind and youth. As a result, 11 national policies and 113

laws and bylaws were adopted or revised in line with the EU acquis and international standards.

The Law on the National Development Strategy 2024-2044 (NDS) adopted with a consensual vote in the Parliament, paved the way for adoption of the NDS. Developed in the course of two years of consultations with a wide range of national stakeholders and experts, NDS sets the long-term vision for a sustained, inclusive, green, and transformative development



42 central and 277 local government representatives were capacitated on gender responsive policy making and budgeting. Photo credit: UN Women

of the country for the next twenty years. The NDS governance structure has been established and the first programme for its implementation has been prepared.

UN also supported the development and consultations of two important policy documents - the **National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2023-2030** that is grounded on rights-based approach and inclusive equality, and the new **National Youth Strategy 2023-2027** that promotes youth activism and participation in decision making in a gender, age and disability responsive manner.

UN promoted the engagement of the Government, Parliament, National Human Rights Institutions, and civil society, to contribute to the **fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of the country**. For the first time, open and inclusive consultations were organised including a wide range of stakeholders, which ensured different perspectives and commitments to advance the rights of all people, resulting into an increased number of UPR submissions. UN also supported the country visit of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism. The abilities of national partners to engage and follow up with other human rights mechanisms continued to increase. Commemorating **UN Day and the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, the fourth UN Annual Conference brought together government, civil society and international partners to take stock and discuss solutions to challenges with discrimination, disinformation, fake news and hate speech that weaken equality and human rights.

733 persons in the transit centres and the asylum seekers centre received legal counselling and representation. A **Guide for state funded free legal aid** in asylum procedures was developed, as well as two basic training modules on international refugee protection for judges, prosecutors, and lawyers. Five local mobile teams reached out to **562 vulnerable people at risk** of human trafficking, contributing to identification and assistance to four victims and 39 potential victims, mainly women and girls. SDG Insights Report for North Macedonia revealed SDG-related trends for the country, its current priorities as well as interlinkages between different Goals.

Women's empowerment and gender equality remained high on the UN agenda. A National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022-2024 was endorsed, along with [Country Gender Profile](#) and [Gender Data Platform](#) promoting gender-disaggregated data and analysis. 50 administrative officers increased their capacities to integrate gender perspective in the EU related policy documents in several specific sector areas. [42 central and 277 local government representatives](#) were capacitated on gender responsive policy making and budgeting. One additional counselling centre for GBV survivors has been opened in Gostivar and local police trained. Gender mainstreaming intensified in [auditing practices](#) focusing on labour inclusion of rural women and decentralization.

In the justice area, a stronger protection of children in conflict or in contact with the law was ensured. To sustain **justice for children reform**, UN supported a new two-years action plan for implementation of the Strategy on Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence 2020-2025. The draft Justice for Children Law and its supporting expenditure analysis were discussed in the Parliament. 69 professionals, including judges, prosecutors and education workers upgraded knowledge on a child-sensitive and trauma-informed approach, whereas 100 professionals were trained on reintegration, rehabilitation, and socialization of these vulnerable children. A comprehensive assessment of the national legal framework and capacities on environmental justice was undertaken, especially with respect to the rights of vulnerable groups and defined priorities that were integrated into the NDS.

The criminal justice response against organized crime and corruption was reinforced because of more harmonized criminal legislation and judicial practices, improved interinstitutional, regional, and international cooperation, capacity-building and exchange of experiences. 340 professionals increased specialized skills needed to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate serious crimes, including online gender-based violence, digital sex crimes, human trafficking, smuggling of migrants, money laundering, financing of terrorism, border control, illicit firearms, while respecting the rights and dignity of victims. New SOPs improved registration, profiling, and referral at the borders.

Contributing to the country's **anti-corruption initiatives**, UN assisted in the development of the first Anti-corruption Programme (2024-2025) for public enterprises and commercial entities. Over 400 civil servants and officials enhanced their capacities in oversight, corruption prevention, gender mainstreaming, and cyber-security. Journalists were sensitised on gender misinformation and Media Integrity Guidelines.

In collaboration with other international partners, the UN continued to **support capacities of the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) and digitalized the key tool in support of the EU accession negotiations** – the National Programme for Adoption of the Acquis Communautaire (NPAA). The volume of Macedonian acquis has increased five times in 2023 compared to 2018. UN contributed to drafting of 16 laws or amendments to laws and 87 rulebooks or bylaws. Methodological support was provided for the two roadmaps for the opening of the first cluster - Roadmap for the Rule of Law containing the priorities for action for achieving full compliance in Chapters 23 and 24 and Roadmap for Public Administration Report. **Fiscal efficiency** and discipline in public goods and services improved based on the increased knowledge of 84 representatives from the Ministry of Finance, Public Revenue Office, and State Audit Office.

144 national stakeholders increased their knowledge of forward-looking policies based on evidence and data. A recalculation of total population estimates between the last two census rounds was undertaken, offering insights into demographic changes and socio-economic impact for the next 50 years. A recalculation of the total population estimates was undertaken before computing population projections. In addition, recalculation of major statistical indicators like GDP per capita, indicators based on the Labour Force Survey, SDG indicators. The 2024-2044 Demography Policies Strategy was drafted, and the first Migration Module in the Labour Force Survey was piloted providing grounds for demographic projections. Around 170 representatives of national partners learned about the benefits of using remittances and big data as a comprehensive and innovative data source. Around 200 representatives of government and non-governmental partners were trained in the use of these innovative methods. The use of data related to children in contact with the law and child victims increased among justice institutions.

The UN continued to support **decentralization** by improving the legal environment, digital services and citizens participation. As a result, the EU recommendations for improvement of the normative and financial framework for local communities were integrated into the Sustainable Local Development and Decentralization Action Plan for 2024-2026. The Methodological Guidelines for Integrated Local Development Plan were aligned to the principle of EU Green Deal emphasizing gender sensitivity and integrated strategic planning. **Digital transformation** has been supported with preparation of a Digital Readiness and Digital Gap Assessment that provided insights into the current state of readiness of institutions, and priority areas for intervention or investment. Five more municipalities (totaling 24) now use inter-municipal cooperation to offer digital services to over 470,000 people. Citizens' participation increased in ten municipalities, where over **2,600 citizens engaged** in 40 community forums. Additionally, three new municipalities institutionalized community forums as part of their Statutes. 1,150 councillors and other stakeholders had access to the e-learning platform. On the top of previous 34 municipalities, 10 additional municipalities increased transparency and accountability with IT solutions. Capacities of 36 CSOs' were strengthened for local governance oversight and project implementation.

Engaging with local communities, **youth** and grass-root organizations, UN contributed to **strengthening social cohesion and positive narratives**. Four municipal youth councils were supported, while **ten local initiatives** encouraged youth participation and constructive narratives. **1,500 women were empowered to actively engage in decision making at grass-root level**. UN worked closely with eight local governments and CSOs on **30 projects for vulnerable groups** promoting women in rural tourism, digitalization, and involving youth in environmental protection. UN collaborated with five CSOs to advance inter-ethnic dialogue and conflict resolution. Additionally, UN supported multiple youth initiatives against violence, **cyberbullying, disinformation, misinformation** and hate speech. These initiatives took place at schools, social media, at the event "**Children taking over the Parliament**" and other local platforms. Positive narratives towards refugees, stateless and other vulnerable people were promoted by stories of young journalists and renowned artists that has been changing public attitudes for their inclusion in society.



Ten more municipalities (totaling 24) now use inter-municipal cooperation to offer digital services to over 470,000 people. Photo credit: UNDP

SDG financing & partnerships

UN implemented several interventions related to enhancing SDG financing in 2023, both from public and private resources, and strengthened partnerships with various actors.

In terms of **SDG financing**, UN efforts in 2023 focused on: i) optimising the allocation of public finance towards SDGs, via SDG mainstreaming in budgeting and strengthening budget transparency, ii) introducing innovative financial instruments to leverage private finance; and iii) increasing transparency of private financial flows and reducing tax evasion.

In order to further align **public finance at national level to SDGs**, discussions on an integrated Financing Framework to the twenty-year National Development Strategy have been started with experts and policy makers as part of the NDS preparation process. The NDS Integrated Financing Framework should provide the provide guidance on financing approaches for optimal delivery of the NDS, including through targeted use of innovative sources of financing. Further, systemic institutional measures for mainstreaming financing for SDG 5 or gender-responsive budgeting were supported by the UN. Bylaws for establishment of a first Resource Centre of Gender Responsive Policy Making and Budgeting as a separate organizational unit embedded within the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy were adopted. Also, as part of the PFM reform, the Ministry of Finance drafted a bylaw for systematic application of gender-responsive budgeting in the state budget and 13line ministries and eight state agencies engendered sectoral programmes.

The State Audit Office's capacities for SDG, value for money and gender auditing were strengthened. As a result of this the country's first SDG Audit was prepared. An in-depth specific gender audit on SDG 5 was conducted by the State Audit Office in partnership with the UN, with thematic focus on inclusion of rural women in the labour market, a component of the SDG Target 5.4. and a key issue in the region. Moreover, the UN supported capacity building activities for the State Audit Office on auditing practices, value for money audits and SDG auditing. UN also facilitated the adoption of the Accrual Accounting Strategy and Action Plan (2023-2027) and robust capacity building on the same. The Accrual Accounting Strategy provides a comprehensive roadmap for transitioning to international accrual accounting standards, increased financial transparency, and increased efficiency and accountability in budget management. These activities are important milestones in ensuring effective oversight of public spending and strengthening the accountability of the institutions to advance SDGs.

UN supported the country with several initiatives towards improving quality and transparency of financing for municipalities as well as gender responsiveness. First, the Ministry of Finance in developing improved Criteria for allocation of funding from central to local budgets (block and capital transfers) were drafted with UN support and regular Reports on Fiscal Decentralisation were supported. The aim of the proposed Criteria is to improve transparent and efficient allocation of funding to municipalities and enhance programme budgeting for more targeted financing of local development priorities. Moreover, municipal officials and

staff, including mayors, were trained in effective public finance management, transparency and accountability standards, budget planning and budget execution. Second, in 2023, ten new municipalities (a total of 56 out of 81) started reporting via the E-dashboard on Municipal Budget Execution – a UN transparency tool available via the Ministry of Finance website. Third, gender-responsive initiatives were mainstreamed in municipal budgets, through adoption of relevant strategic documents in seven municipalities and engendering of 89 municipal sectoral programmes.

To increase the volume of financing flows available for SDGs, UN also supported measures for **reduced tax evasion**, with focus on reduction of cash payments and informal economy and improved transfer pricing. A Strategic Plan to Minimize Cash Payments was supported by the UN, which promotes digital and transparent payment methods. UN is also working on strengthening the capacities of the Ministry of Finance for monitoring and detecting informal economy (including informal economy measurement) and reinforcing controlling mechanisms. Public awareness on informal economy was raised through the website www.vnesibojja.mk. The Public Revenue Office was supported to issue its first ever transfer pricing reports for three international companies. A new draft Law for Automatic Exchange for Tax Purposes was by the Ministry of Finance with UN support.

In terms of **partnerships**, UN continued its wide inclusion of various stakeholder groups, with specific initiatives on further strengthening partnerships with youth and private sector. On greater youth engagement by government, the UN supported the preparation and adoption of the National Youth Strategy 2023-2027. More than 1,000 youth and youth related stakeholders from throughout the country participated in the Strategy's preparation. A UNCT Youth Group for internal coordination was established and a decision was brought to establish a UN Youth Consultative Group for systematic consultation of youth by the UNCT. Both Groups should enable a strengthened and systemic engagement of the UN North Macedonia on youth mainstreaming and achievement of the UN Youth 2030 Strategy. Further, partnerships with several new private sector partners were forged including with companies from the pharmaceutical, construction and banking sector. Also, UN organised the regular annual consultation on the UNSDCF with relevant government, CSO and international partners (Annual UN Joint Workplan Stakeholder Workshop), in which the Mid-term Review of the UNSDCF 2021-2025 was also discussed.



In terms of leveraging SDG financing through innovative finance, in 2023 the Green Finance Facility (GFF) started extending loans to SMEs via banks and a leasing company. The GFF is a finance instrument blending funding from Government, IFI, private finance institutions and from international partners via a global multi-purpose trust fund aiming to accelerate achievement of six SDGs (SDGs 5, 7, 10, 11 and 13). Photo credit: UNDP

UN coherence, effectiveness & efficiency

In strong partnership with national and international partners, in 2023, UN North Macedonia continued implementing the UN development system reform focused on achieving greater coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency of its in-country work, through coordinated joint planning, monitoring, and reporting.

Programmatic alignment and coherence

The main instruments to operationalize the SDCF in a coherent manner are the outcome based Joint Work Plans, focused on the UN collective action towards shared inter-agency results and goals. [The third North Macedonia annual plan](#) was developed in the established practice of meaningful consultation with national and international partners and reviewed during the year.

In addition, the UNCT undertook a Mid-term review of the implementation of the SDCF including an indicators assessment, which concluded that, despite strong impact from the consequent crises and lack of access to quality data, the SDCF remains valid and relevant, and the implementation should continue without changes of the outcomes and only few potential refinements. Moreover, in the first half of the year, UNCT submitted the 2022 report on 28 global indicators from the framework for measuring UN contribution to SDGs achievement, which made North Macedonia among the 20 UNCTs early adopters whose country snapshots were presented at 2023 ECOSOC.

Dedicated efforts to develop joint programmes of multiple UN agencies, continued with six joint programmes in implementation during 2023, including on green finance, green entrepreneurship, youth and social cohesion in the region, migration policy, empowerment of persons with disability, and policy response to multiple crises. Although not a formal joint project, the UN assistance on the development of a consultative and forward-looking National Development Strategy 2024-2044 demonstrates a strong cooperation of the UN entities in a coherent manner on the most important development aspects of the country.



Transparency and accountability

The narrative JWP and a detailed spreadsheet with all operational details, were not only shared with the partners, but also published on UN website contributing to greater transparency of the UN work and enhanced coordination with partners. In addition, UN prepared and published key contextual changes and developments that serve as guidance for UN joint work-plans and as resource for national policy making ([2023 Common Country Analysis update](#)).

The funding framework information – key for UN accountability and transparency through providing a single reference and overview of the SDCF funding situation and required, available and projected financial resources, including the amount, source, duration, and sequence – continued to be regularly collected and embedded in the Joint Workplans in 2023. Significant efforts were invested to ensure quality of financial data, cross-checking, and validation within UN and with all donors.

Regular updates on the work, of activities and of the results achieved are being provided through the UN website (<https://northmacedonia.un.org>) and social media, as well as via the UN Sustainable Development Bulletin, which is a quarterly newsletter being sent to over 2,000 partners.

In addition, the UN North Macedonia also continued to strengthen roll out UN-INFO, as UNCT's key digital platform for online planning, monitoring, and reporting on the joint results frameworks, strategies and other operational coordination tools. The UN Info was also promoted as one-stop shop for all information on UN's work in the country available on the corporate country website.

Joint governance and coordination

The streamlined and regularized internal SDCF governance structure continued to enhance coherence and alignment of UN work across SDCF outcomes and mandates, as well as country-level implementation of the UN Development System reform, supporting also global processes such as the SDG 2023 Summit. In March 2023, the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) provided strategic guidance and endorsed the 2023 JWP. This was followed by continuous and regular bilateral and multilateral interaction and coordination between UN entities and partner ministries and other institutions.

Four SDCF Outcome Results Groups (OGs), with entities' representatives at technical level continued to actively plan and monitor SDCF results, ensuring technical coordination, coherence, relevance, and effectiveness in cooperation with



Commemorating UN Day and the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the fourth UN Annual Conference brought together government, civil society and international partners to take stock and discuss solutions to challenges with discrimination, disinformation, fake news and hate speech that weaken equality and human rights. *Photo credit: UN RCO*

stakeholders. Comprised of senior programme staff, the Programme Management Team (PMT) provided an internal quality assurance mechanism for the implementation and monitoring of the SDCF and ensured quality feedback on SDCF implementation to UNCT and advice on opportunities and challenges in the evolving local and regional environment. The Communications Group, the Management, Evaluation and Learning Group and multiple internal thematic groups enriched this advice and provided opportunities for learning, development, and joint advocacy throughout the year, including through the UPR consultations and report, as well as SWAP Gender Equality Score card.

As the main UN mechanism in country for inter-agency coordination and decision-making, UNCT, led by the RC, remained the backbone for UN in-country alignment carrying out strategic and operational guidance for development in North Macedonia, irrespective of their physical presence in the country. The UN RC leadership role strengthened with active support for the UN development system reform by the North Macedonia Government, and political support and resources invested globally by donors since 2019, including through the UN Special Purpose Trust Fund.

Joint advocacy

Efforts to increase communication results were focused on enhancing joint advocacy and public outreach activities within the UN family, as well as together with key development partners. During 2023, a significantly increased number of joint advocacy initiatives were organized, in addition to regular campaigns, such as the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender – Based Violence.

Improved coordination mechanisms were established with the UN Communications Group (UNCG) monthly meetings, and quarterly meetings of the UNCG with communications colleagues from development partners.

To further strengthen cooperation and coordination with the EU Delegation, a joint regional communications retreat was organized in Skopje, hosting communication officers from UN and the EU Delegations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia.

To enhance UN visibility and bring its work closer to people continued to rely on storytelling on the in-country corporate website (<https://northmacedonia.un.org>), social media, the web-based Sustainable Development Bulletin, dispatched regularly to more than 2,500 subscribers.

Communications were significantly strengthened during the UN day marking, which this year included the UN Annual Conference, an exhibition of children's drawings and a formal reception, all focused on Human Rights (Considering the 75th anniversary of the Human Rights Convention)

The United Nations North Macedonia has made significant strides in strengthening its social media presence and outreach in 2023, growing the fanbase on Facebook and Twitter by more than 8% on a year-to-year basis.

Efficiencies

Fully represented of UN entities with operational presence in the country, the Operations Management Team (OMT), led on the UN's global Efficiency Agenda focused on the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) 2.0, which is estimated to save \$1.3 million through eliminating transaction costs, saving staff time, and benefiting from economies of scale over the five-year period.

In 2023, key initiatives of OMT included: leveraging accessibility assessment results to enhance the organization of events; initiating discussions on sign language interpreter fees to accelerate the creation of inclusive events; exploring joint procurement of evacuation equipment to improve internal accessibility.

Significant improvement of the participation at the OMT meetings, led to better coordination and increased efficiency in completion of tasks such as DSA survey, Common Premises Review, Gender Parity analysis and better management of the procurement processes.

Flexible and remote working arrangements remained in place in select instances, paired with transition back-to-office. At the end of 2023, UN resident workforce in North Macedonia consisted of 283 national and international personnel – 57% female and 43% male.

Evaluation and lessons learned

UNSDCF Medium-Term Review (MTR)

In the period end April - end June 2023, the SDCF governing groups: the PMT, the four Outcome groups and the MEL group, supported by the RCO team, undertook a mid-term self-assessment on the implementation of the UNSDCF 2021-25.

Key findings:

The SDCF 2021-2025 was designed at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and largely implemented in a context of interconnected global and regional crises that severely impacted the steady progress of the country's development until 2020 and some of the SDCF outcome areas.

Given significant lack of data and influence from external factors e.g. labour data in the context of strong outmigration, the indicators assessment should be seen only as an indication of where the country stands on the selected list of indicators providing a good basis for discussion and further programming.

At \$124 million of required \$178 million at end 2022, resource mobilization for the SDCF is satisfactory, with good probability that above 90% of the required resources for the five-year SDCF will be mobilised by 2025. Further efforts on resource mobilization would be relevant in Outcomes 2 and 3. In terms of quality of funding, funding sources were diversified through increase in government co-financing and funding from multi-partner trust.

Overall, there is positive progress in all four outcome areas, but each at a different pace. Specifically:

Inclusive Prosperity – likely to achieve the expected results, even when the living standard is under pressure for the

economic crisis, looming inflation, and the uncertainty due to the war in Ukraine.

Quality Services for All – likely to partially achieve the expected results, being the area that suffered significantly from the interconnected crises.

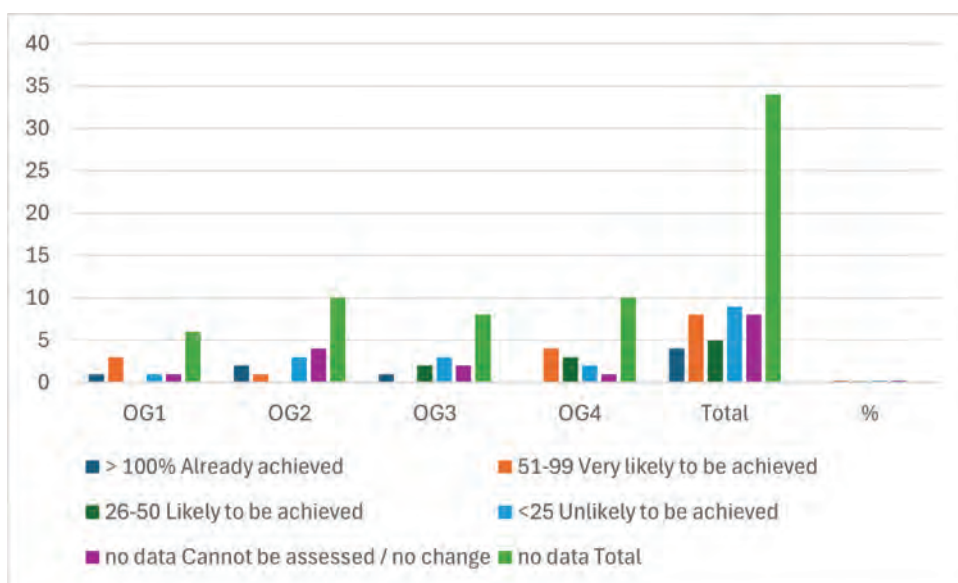
Healthy Environment –well set to partially achieve the expected results, despite unfavourable context/changed assumptions due to the crises.

Good Governance - likely to achieve the expected results, with several sub-results lagging. Despite the start of the EU screening process, significant previous delays and concessions expected from the country intensified the political polarization and reduced overall support for EU accession.

Lessons learned

The SDCF is valid and relevant, the implementation should continue without changes of the outcomes, with few potential adjustments:

- Some of the outputs may benefit from further formulation improvement, should the Outcome groups conclude it would benefit the joint work planning for the remaining two years. Approve merging of output 4.5 into 4.1
- Consider a few additional outcome indicators for the areas that lack measurable indicators to inform the SDCF progress.
- Bring MTR discussion to the attention of the Joint Steering Committee and relevant topics to the attention of the national counterparts for in-depth discussions during the October JWP 2024/APR workshops. Identify areas for joint work that could potentially accelerate the results in the outputs.



Finance & resource mobilization

Financial overview

In 2023, \$32.4 million was made available to the UN North Macedonia, of which \$30.5 million was expended, resulting in 94% delivery rate. Looking at SDCF outcomes, good governance (\$11.6 million expended) and healthy environment (\$9.5 million) were the most resource-intensive, followed by inclusive prosperity (\$6.0 million) and quality services for all (\$3.3 million).

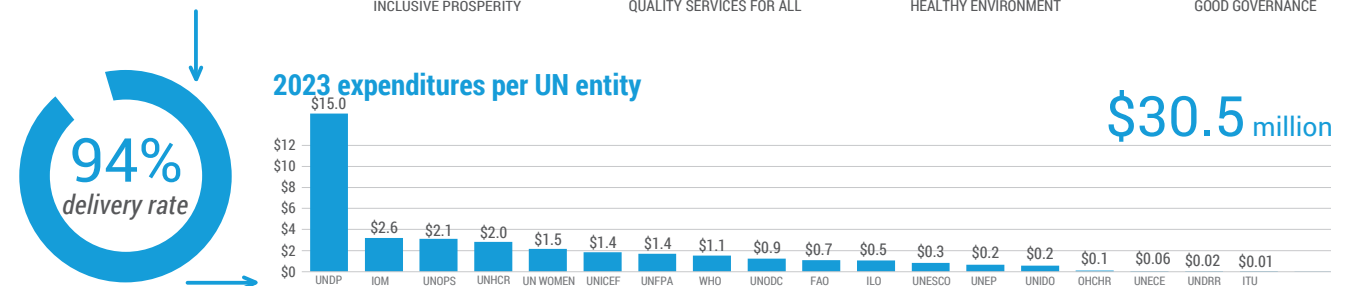
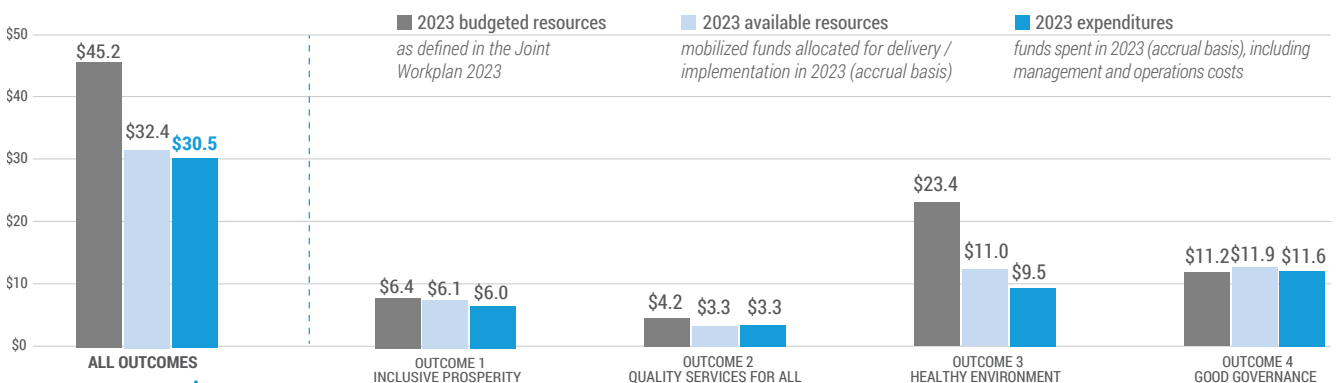
UN successfully mobilised 72% of the required (budgeted) resources for the year three of SDCF, enabling smooth implementation, compared to planning at year begin. In 2023, funding for UN North Macedonia activities were received from 32 sources. Most of the available funding was received in the form of project- and programme-specific funding (46%), followed by pooled funds (17%), government

(17%) and core funding (16%), and by thematic (2%) and vertical funds (2%).

The top ten non-core/non-thematic funding sources based on expenditures in 2023 for UN work in North Macedonia were North Macedonia, European Union, Switzerland, Sweden, Joint SDG Fund, United Kingdom, United States, WB Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Roadmap Multi-Partner Trust Fund, Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund and Norway.

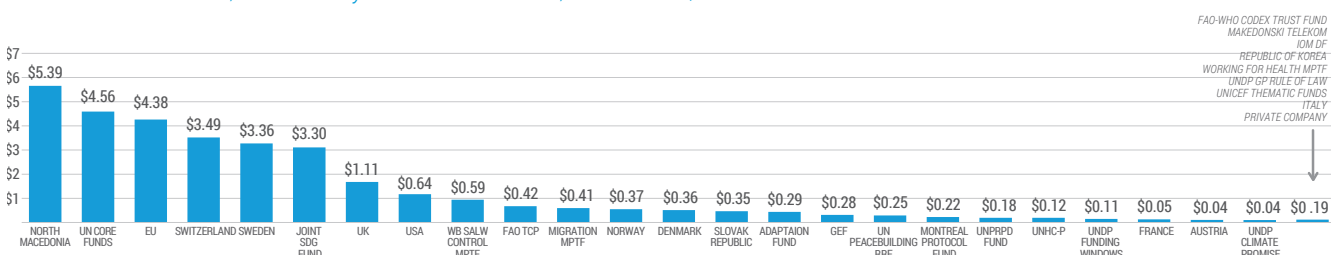
2023 required and available resources and expenditures

Data as of 9 March 2024, for 1 January – 31 December 2023, in million US\$



2023 expenditures per funding source

Data as of 9 March 2024, for 1 January – 31 December 2023, in million US\$



Source: UN North Macedonia 2024. Available funding and expenditures are based on UN entities; financial system or financial statements information as at 9 March 2024. In view of later cycle of financial reporting ending in March, UNHCR expenditures for 2023 are accounted for as of November 2023.

Resource mobilization

The UNSDCF Resource Mobilisation and Partnership Strategy (RMPS), outlines the objectives of the UN team in joint resource mobilization and partnership and defines focus activities and approaches to ensure a more coherent, streamlined and transparent approach. On resource mobilisation, four quantitative targets and two approaches have been defined. Reporting on progress in achieving these targets for the UNSDCF 2021 – 2025, as at end of year 3 of implementation of the UNSDCF is provided below.

The UN North Macedonia is largely on track in mobilising the needed finance for the planned results under the UNSDCF 2021-2025 (RMPS Objective 1). At end 2023, USD 150.3 million were available for activities in the five-year period, or 84% of the USD 178.2 million required funding. At annual level, 72% of the required resources for 2023 were mobilised and made available, and 58% of the required resources for 2024 have been mobilised before the year begin. For the five-year duration of the SDCF, an overall funding gap of 27.9 million or 16% of the overall required funding remains to be mobilised.

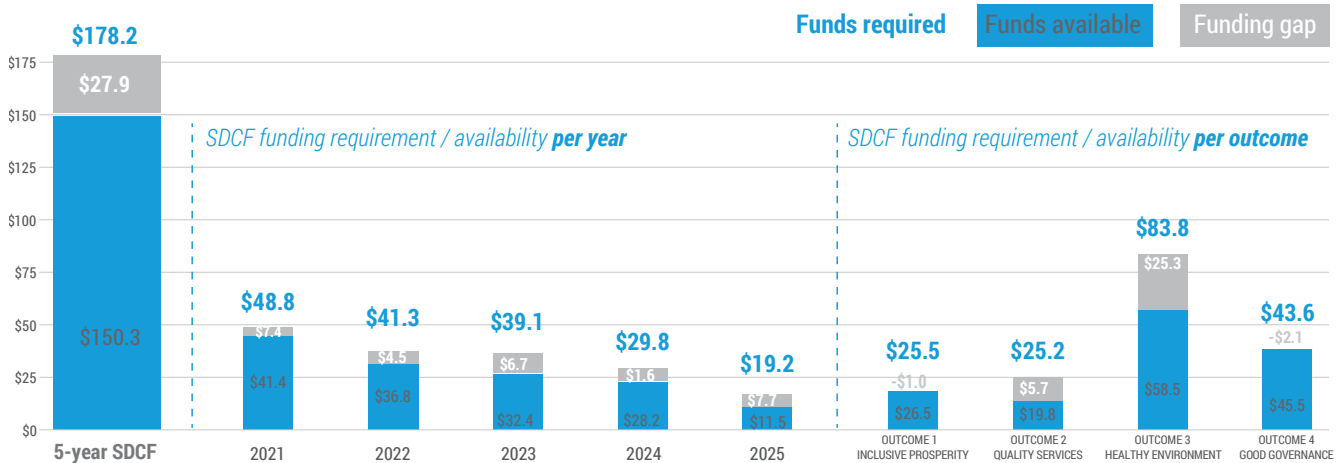
In terms of quality of funding / funding mix, most of the funding that has been received so far is in the form of non-core resources (\$133.3 million, 89%). Among non-core funding sources, most contributions come from project and programme specific funding (54%), followed by government funding (16%), pooled funds (9%), vertical funds (6%), thematic funds (4%), and sym-

bolic private sector funds (less than 1%). The UN has already succeeded in increasing government co-funding and pooled and vertical funds funding and reduced reliance on earmarked project and programme funding, resulting in an improved funding mix. The top 10 non-core funding sources for the period 2021-2025 as at end 2023 are European Union, North Macedonia, Switzerland, Sweden, Joint SDG Fund, United Kingdom, Global Environment Facility, United States, Norway, and Adaptation Fund.

UN North Macedonia continued its dedicated work on resource mobilisation for joint (multi-agency) programming. With 7 funded joint programmes to date under the 2021-2025 UNSDCF, it has already achieved the cumulative five-year target under RMPS Objective 3. In terms of new concepts in 2023, four joint programme concepts were developed (two related to human security one on peace and human rights / youth and one of pandemics preparedness and response), raising the cumulative 2021-2025 number of joint programme concept notes developed to 13. No new joint programmes were funded/started in 2023. This reflects the more limited availability of funding for joint programmes, especially in terms of significantly fewer calls of multi-partner trust funds. Among the six joint programmes implemented, two were youth specific programmes with funds utilised of USD 0.48 million for youth in 2023. Mainstreaming of gender- and disability aspects is assured throughout joint programmes, with significant contribution on these topics.

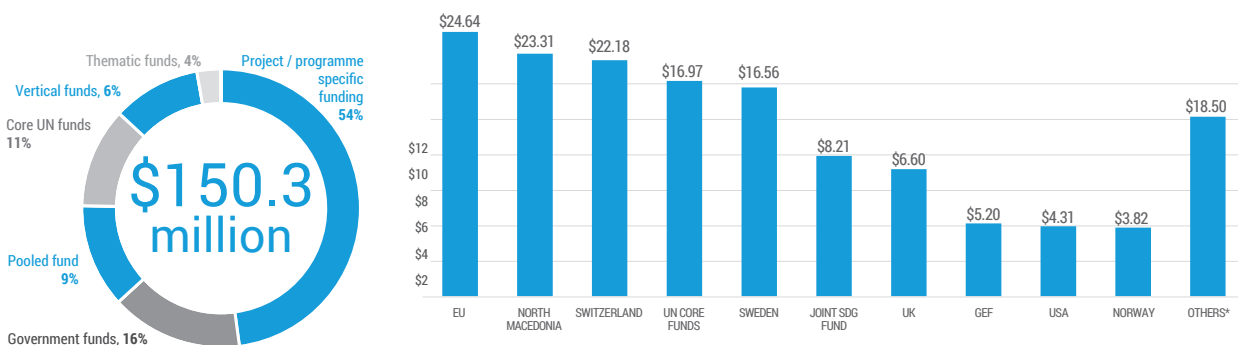
2021-2025 SDCF required and available resources

Data as of 9 March 2024, for 1 January 2021 – 31 December 2025, in million US\$



2021-2025 mobilized funds per funding modality and funding source

Data as of 9 March 2024, for 1 January – 31 December 2023, in million US\$



Source: UN North Macedonia, 2024; available funding and expenditures are based on UN entities' financial systems or financial statements information as of 9 March 2024

UN in North Macedonia in 2024

In 2024, UN North Macedonia will operate within the Joint Work Plans developed in cooperation with national and international partners. Across all four outcomes UN interventions will be strongly linked to one or more of the six transition areas, with strong focus on leaving no one behind principle as a cornerstone of UN engagement.

To enhance inclusive prosperity, UN will continue to assist the Government to create jobs and reduce unemployment by enhancing modernization, resilience and competitiveness of the micro, small and medium enterprises, including in the cultural and creative sectors and based on just transition and circular economy. As a prerequisite, UN will enhance skills and employability of vulnerable groups, such as youth and hard to employ people with focus on women, through implementation of the Youth Guarantee, active labour market measures, life-long learning models and social reform for people with disabilities. Gender-responsive and forward-looking business environment, regulations and services will be enhanced in line with international and EU standards, favouring green growth, occupational safety and health and future market needs, exploring also alternative models for transformative employment. In the light of strong outmigration, UN will continue to support initiatives for productive engagement of diaspora in the country. The work on animal health management and land consolidation will continue, while mainstreaming gender in the agricultural and rural development policies, including the national strategy for digital transformation of the agricultural sector.

To address erosion of human capital, UN will support activities within health, education, and social-protection areas. Specifically, UN will address health equity, streamline health aspects in education and support development of health policies, including primary health reform, national workforce strategy, elderly programmes, maternal and newborn health. Primary school curriculum and regulations for secondary schools will be strengthened and students will be sensitized on gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and disabilities. Digital literacy and digital learning products will be enhanced, while strengthening online protection for children, social cohesion and community engagement in schools. Teachers and school staff in (pre)school education will be capacitated including on mental wellbeing, support of refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants. Risk-informed approaches and emergencies response are planned to be adopted with UN help in 2024, as well as full implementation of the ICF-based functional assessment system for children and youth. Childcare system, including foster and kinship care will be further strengthened and the Law on Prevention and Protection of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence will be further operationalized, with enhanced capacities for multi-sectorial response to all forms of violence.

UN will continue supporting policy development and monitoring on climate change; enhancing access to finance to accelerate renewable energy and energy efficiency; strengthening multi-sector resilience and integrating climate change in national education policies and curricula. Management of natural resources will be strengthened with improved access to finance; protection of land, forest and waters including lakes and waste and wastewater infrastructure; greening of local agriculture with sustainable tourism and strengthened transboundary cooperation.

Advisory assistance will be rolled out in eight cities facing substantial air pollution with cleaner public building heating, transport, industry, agriculture and waste management, air pollution monitoring and air quality management. Targeted education, awareness and mobilization activities on air pollution are also planned with children and youth. Flood risk reduction in Polog and Drim River Basin will be supported, as well as activities for greater health emergency preparedness. Sizeable support on cleaning waste in environmental hotspots and to improve wastewater and solid waste management in Prespa Lake region and in Temporary Migrant Reception Centers will continue.

Assistance in aligning national laws and policies with international and EU standards will continue, streamlining positive public attitudes towards gender and vulnerable groups, while consolidating institutional capacities to effectively promote and protect fundamental rights, as well as to end statelessness. Reforms in the criminal and juvenile justice system will ensure a victim- and child-centred approach while law enforcement will be equipped with specialized skills to proactively address digital sex crimes, firearms domestic violence cases, trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants and other transnational and organized crime. Forward-looking and data driven approach in migration governance will continue and central and local government will be assisted in applying gender responsive budgeting and auditing and in enhancing fiscal efficiency. Local governments will improve inter-municipal cooperation, digitalize their services, and able to implement transparent and merit-based CSOs and youth projects. Communication for census results will be stepped-up, as well as work with youth councils and media to address divisive narratives, hate speech, masculinities, and gender norms.



One of the winning drawings provided by children on the UN Human Rights children's drawing contest ahead of the UN Day

Annexes

[1] UN North Macedonia partners

Government and state agencies

Academy of Judges and Prosecutors
 Administrative Court
 Agency for Real Estate Cadastre
 Agency for Spatial Planning
 Agency of Youth and Sport
 Anti-Discrimination Commission
 Association of Local-Self Government Units (ZELS)
 Bureau for Development of Education
 Bureau for Regional Development
 Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Economic Affairs, Coordination of Economic Sectors and Investments
 Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of European and Euro-Atlantic Integration
 Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Political System and Inter-ethnic Relations
 Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Good Governance Policies
 Centres for Development of the Planning Regions
 Centre for Social Work
 City of Skopje
 Crisis Management Center
 Customs Administration
 Directorate for Protection and Rescue
 E-health directorate
 Employment Service Agency
 Food and Veterinary Agency
 Fund for Innovation and Technological Development
 Health Insurance Fund
 High Administrative Court
 Institute of Social Activities
 Inter-ministerial Working Group for the Adoption of Migration Policy
 Interministerial Working Group on the Coastal Urban Plan of the Ohrid Lake
 Judiciary
 Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
 Ministry of Culture
 Ministry of Defence
 Ministry of Economy
 Ministry of Education and Science
 Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning
 Ministry of Finance
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Ministry of Health
 Ministry of Information Society and Administration
 Ministry of Interior
 Ministry of Justice
 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
 Ministry of Local Self-Government
 Ministry of Transport and Communications
 Municipal Centres for Social Welfare (MCSW)
 Municipalities
 National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia
 National Commission on Cervical Cancer Prevention and Early Detection
 National Committee for Countering Violent Extremism and Counterterrorism and Inter-Agency Working Group on Reintegration
 National Coordination Body on Implementation of the CRPD
 National Extension Agency
 National Public Health Institute
 Office of the National Coordinator for Countering Violent Extremism and Counterterrorism
 Parliament
 President's Cabinet
 Prime Minister's Cabinet
 Public Prosecution Office
 Public Prosecution Office for Organized Crime and Corruption
 Public Revenue Office
 Regional Employment Offices

Safe Motherhood Committee
 Secretariat for European Affairs
 State Audit Office
 State Labour Inspectorate
 State Statistical Office
 Vocational Training Institutes

Civil society organizations

Akcija Zdruzenska
 Association of Finance Officers
 Association of Journalists (ZNM)
 Association of Social Workers
 Association of Special Educators
 Association of Units of Local Self Government (ZELS)
 Association ZMAI
 Association for development and improvement of Roma community – ROMANO CACIPE
 Association for development of community responsibility and development of the quality of life - MOJOT PAT Skopje
 Association for integration, development and education – PROGRES 23 Lipkovo
 Association for protection and education of Roma children and youth - PROGRES
 Association of parents and persons with disabilities
 Association of persons with cerebral palsy and other disability - Veles
 Association of persons with disabilities - Bravura Kooperativa
 Association of persons with physical disability - Mobilnost Makedonija
 Association of persons with intellectual disability - PORAKA Negotino
 Association of social providers - STARTER PLUS
 Association of blind and persons with visual impairment
 Association of deaf and people with hearing impairment
 Balkan Foundation for Sustainable Development
 Centre for Research and Policy Making (CRPM)
 Chambers of Commerce
 Civil Society Organizations
 Connecting Natural Values and People - Office
 Council for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency - SPPMD
 Ecologic Society - ZDRAVEC 2002
 Employers' organizations of North Macedonia
 ESSA Synergy Skopje
 Farmers' associations
 Healthy Options Project Skopje (HOPS)
 Helsinki Committee for Human Rights
 IZBOR STRUMICA
 Macedonian Association of Gynecologists and Obstetricians
 Macedonian Ecological Society
 Macedonian Medical Association
 Macedonian Red Cross
 Macedonian Young Lawyers Association - MYLA
 National Federation of Farmers
 National Roma Centrum
 National Youth Delegate to the UN General Assembly
 Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe
 NGO SEGA PRILEP
 Ombudsman
 Open the Windows
 Organizations and Groups of Persons with Disabilities
 Polio Plus
 Professional Associations
 Rural Development Network
 Trade Unions
 National Youth Council of Macedonia
 Youth Educational Forum

Academia

Association for Research, Communications and Development

Faculty of Agriculture and Food Science
 Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering
 Faculty of Forest Sciences
 Faculty of Law Justinianus Primus
 Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics
 Faculty of Veterinary Medicine - Skopje
 Health Education and Research Association
 Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts
 Medical Faculty Skopje
 South-East European University
 State Institute of Agriculture
 University Clinic of Gynaecology and Obstetrics
 University Clinic of Psychiatry
 University Goce Delcev, Shtip
 University of Southampton

Multipartner councils

Economic and Social Council of North Macedonia
 National Commission for UNESCO
 National Coordination Body for Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect
 National Council for Gender Equality
 State Council for Prevention of Child Delinquency

International partners

German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)
 Government of Austria
 Government of Canada
 Government of Denmark
 Government of Estonia
 Government of France
 Government of Germany
 Government of Italy
 Government of Norway
 Government of Slovak Republic
 Government of Sweden
 Government of Switzerland
 Government of the Netherlands
 Government of the Republic of Korea
 Government of Ukraine
 Government of the United Kingdom
 Government of the United States of America
 European Union
 European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
 Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean
 International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)
 International Union for Conservation of Nature, Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (IUCN - ECARO)
 Interpol
 Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI)
 Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS)
 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
 Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
 UNECE Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency
 United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Private sector and others

A1 Telekom Macedonia
 Makedonski Telekom
 Business Confederation of Macedonia
 Diaspora
 Doctor's Chamber
 Media
 Primary health care facilities
 Roche North Macedonia Office
 Various companies

[2] UN joint programmes implemented in 2023

Evidence-based migration policy planning and discourse in North Macedonia

funded by the Migration MPTF, implemented by IOM, UNHCR and UNFPA, \$1.5 million, 30 months (October 2020 – October 2023)

From Knowledge and Engagement – to Empowerment and Participation (KEEP)

funded by UN PRPD and implemented by UNDP, UNICEF, and UNFPA, \$400,000, 36 months (February 2021 – February 2024)

Green Financing Facility to Combat Climate Change and Air Pollution,

funded by Joint SDG Fund, implemented by UNDP, IOM and UNECE, \$7.97 million / total financing of \$46 million (April 2022 – March 2026)

Youth for Inclusion, Equality and Trust

funded by UN Peacebuilding Fund, implemented by UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNICEF, USD 4.5 million, of which \$0.65 million for North Macedonia activities (May 2022 – May 2024)

Bio-hack My World

funded by Green Shark Challenge, implemented by UNDP and UNICEF, USD 0.25 million, May 2022 – May 2023.

Identifying Systemic Pathways for Responding to the Global Crisis on Food, Energy and Finance in North Macedonia

funded by Joint SDG Fund, implemented by UNDP, UNICEF and FAO, USD 0.25 million, July 2022-February 2023

[3] SDCF outcome indicator trends

OUTCOME INDICATOR	CATEGORY	BASELINE	BASELINE YEAR	TARGET(2025)	ACHIEVED (2022)	LATEST VALUE	TREND
Inclusive prosperity							
<i>Employment rate (20-64)</i>	Total (20-64 years)	59.2	2019	63.1	61.8	57.1	↘
	Female	48.4	2019	49.2	51.7	50.2	↘
	Male	69.8	2019	74.3	71.8	64.1	↘
	Youth (15-29) Total	34.4	2019	34.9	34.4	33.0	↘
	Female	28	2019	28.2	28.5	26.8	↘
	Male	40.4	2019	41.8	40.2	38.9	↘
<i>Proportion of informal employment in total economy</i>	Total	16.1	2019	14	12.3	12.3 (Q3)	↔
	Female	13	2019	not set	9.2	11.97	↘
	Male	18.1	2019	not set	14.5	4.77	↗
	Youth (15-24) total	24.01	2019	not set	17.8	17.8	↔
<i>Percentage of young people neither in employment nor in education and training</i>	15-29 years	24.5	2019	22	22.8	24.63	↘
	Female	28.3	2019	28.2	24.5	20.3	↗
	Male	20.9	2019	20	21.1	21.93	↘
	15-24 years	18.1	2019	15.8	18	20.56	↘
	Female	19.2	2019	19.1	18.4	27.48	↘
	Male	17.1	2019	16.9	17.6	21.05	↘
	25-29 years	34.9	2019	33.3	31.6	41.16	↘
	Female	43.1	2019	43	35.8	47.07	↘
Male	27.1	2019	25.6	27.6	35.55	↘	
<i>Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person</i>		-1.3	2019	2.7	2.4	1.22 (Q3)	↘
<i>Global Competitiveness Index 4.0</i>	Rank	82/141	2019	67	Not pub-lished	82	↔
	Points	57.3	2019	not set		/	↔
<i>Working Poverty rate</i>	Total	8.8	2019	7	12.5	/	↔
	Female	6	2019	not set	8.9	/	↔
	Male	10.6	2019	not set	15.1	/	↔
Quality services for all							
<i>Percentage of children age 36-59 months attending an early childhood education program (attendance rate)</i>	Total	39.8	2019	60	41	44	↗
	Girls	47.76	2019	60	47	not avail-able	↗
	Boys	52.24	2019	60	53	not avail-able	↗
<i>Proportion of children and young people at the end of lower secondary education, achieving at least minimum proficiency level</i>	Reading	45	2018	55	45	26	↘
	Numeracy	39	2018	49	39	34	↘
<i>Self-reported unmet need for medical examination and care, % of population aged 16 and over</i>	Total	2.3	2018	2	1.7 (2020)	1.7 (2020)	↔
	Female	2.6	2018	2.2	1.8	1.8	↔
	Male	2	2018	1.8	1.7	1.7	↔
<i>Proportion of the target population covered by all vaccines included in their national programme</i>	All vaccines coverage	95	2018	>95	<90 (2021)	<90	↗
	3 doses of DTP3	92.5	2018	95	80.9	83.9	↗
	Second dose of MCV2	74.8	2018	95	80.4	89.2	↗
<i>Probability of dying from any of cardiovascular diseases (CVD), cancer, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases (CRD) between age 30 and exact age 70</i>		20.3	2016	18.5	22.73	22.73	↔
<i>Modern contraceptive prevalence rate</i>		14	2018	next survey in 2023	No data	No data	↔
<i>Neonatal mortality rate</i>		3.8	2019	3.5	4.5 (2021)	1.4	↗
<i>Proportion of households covered by social protection cash transfers</i>		8	2019	14.5	44.4	not avail-able	↔

OUTCOME INDICATOR	CATEGORY	BASELINE	BASELINE YEAR	TARGET(2025)	ACHIEVED (2022)	LATEST VALUE	TREND
Human Development Index	Index points	0.759	2019	0.78	0.77	0.77 (2022)	↔
	Rank	82/189	2019	not set	78	78 (2022)	↔
Proportion of population living below the national poverty line	Total	21.9	2018	15.5	21.8 (2020)	21.8 (2020)	↔
	Female	22	2018	16.8	21.9	21.9	↔
	Male	21.8	2018	14.2	21.7	21.7	↔
	0-17 years old	29.3	2018	not set	30.3	30.3	↔
	Youth (15-24)	29.7	2018	not set	28.6	28.6	↔
	Adult (16+)	20.6	2018	not set	20.1	20.1	↔
	25+	19.2	2018	not set	21.1	21.1	↔



Healthy environment

Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Gg CO2-eq)		8,021	2016	6196	Biannual data	N/A	↔
Proportion of a country designated total area that is protected		10.34	2019	15	13.9	13.9	↔
Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter PM10 (µg/m3)		51.32	2019	<40	35.91	37.44	↘
INFORM Risk Index (2020) (on a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is very low and 10 is very high)	Points	2.6	2020	2	2.4	2.5	↘
	Risk level	low	2020	very low	Low	Low	↔
System for integrated pest management in place		no system in place	2020	system fully functional	no	no	↔
Average use of pesticide per area of cropland (kg/ha)		0.22	2017	EU average: 3.14	0.3	N/A	↔
Degree of integrated water resources management implementation (0-100)	Points	33	2020	60	40	40	↔
	Level	medium-low	2020	medium-high	medium-low	medium-low	↔
Renewable energy share in the total gross final	Energy consumption	18.18	2018	29	17.29	31.45	↘
	Electricity consumption	24.84	2018	46	21.53	31.45	↘



Good governance

Rule of law index (overall, on a scale from 0 to 1)		0.53	2020	not set	0.53	0.53	↔
Gender equality index		62	2019	65	64.5	64.5	↔
Level of establishment of permanent national child rights coordinating mechanism		weak	2020	established	weak	In pro-cess	↔
The country has a system in place to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment		no	2020	yes	No	No	↔
Worldwide Governance Indicators	Average	49.72	2018	>60	52.36	52.36	↔
	Voice & accountability				52.17	/	↔
	Political stability & absence of violence/terrorism				50	/	↔
	Government effectiveness				50	/	↔
	Regulatory quality				66.35	/	↔
	Rule of law				52.4	/	↔
	Control of corruption				43.27	/	↔
Open Budget Index	Transparency	41	2019	>=45	36	36	↔
Percentage of official statistics aligned with EU acquis		67	2019	95	67	64	↔
Level of general satisfaction with public services at the local level (on a scale from 1 to 5)	Total	3.07	2020	3.5	3.2	3.04	↘
	Female	3.12	2020	3.6	3.21	3.1	↘
	Male	3.02	2020	3.4	3.19	3	↘
	Urban	3.09	2020	3.5	3.26	3	↘
	Rural	3.05	2020	3.5	3.16	3	↘
The level of the alignment of the refugee protection and migration systems with the international and EU standards		partially aligned	2020	fully aligned	Mostly aligned	Mostly aligned	↔
Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive		19.8	2020	25	23.6	24	↗

Global indicators

SDG	#	GLOBAL INDICATOR	BASELINE (2021)	TARGET (2022)	ACHIEVED (2022)	TARGET (2023)	ACHIEVED (2023)	TREND
SDG1	IN1.1	Number of new or revised national social protection policies to extend coverage, enhance comprehensiveness and/or increase adequacy of benefits, with UN support	11	5	7	7	3	↘
SDG1	IN1.4	Number of people accessing basic services, with UN support	30,495	26,642	38,114	27,842	23,530	↘
SDG1	IN1.5	Number of people benefiting from income generating activities with UN support	10,967	7,284	17,086	10,982	9,587	↘
SDG2	IN2.2	Number of rural organizations, government institutions and other relevant stakeholders with enhanced capacities for designing and implementing policies that improve productivity, net income and working conditions within the agrifood system	7	7	7	7	7	↔
SDG2	IN2.3	Number of governmental and non-governmental institutions having increased capacity to design, implement and fund policies preventing and reducing malnutrition and promoting healthy diets, with UN support.	2	3	4	8	16	↗
SDG3	IN3.1	Number of national policies on health (including overall health or specific health areas such as sexual and reproductive health, non-communicable and communicable diseases), in accordance with human rights standards are developed and adopted, supported by the UN	5	4	4	5	5	↗
SDG4	IN4.2	Number of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions with improved capacity to deliver training and assessments with UN support	29	40	79	20	48	↘
SDG4	IN4.3	Number of people directly benefiting from improved access to skills and lifelong learning programmes, including for comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), developed and implemented with UN support	2,012	215	1,115	533	3,297	↗
SDG5	IN5.1	Number of laws and regulations, based on international human rights norms and standards, developed with UN support to: a) Eliminate violence against women and girls (EVAWG) including harmful practices (HP); b) promote equal access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) care, information and education	0	8	8	3	4	↘
SDG5	IN5.2	Number of measures implemented with UN support to: a) Eliminate gender-based discrimination and segregation in labour market; b) Increase women's access to and use of digital technologies, digital finance, e-commerce and digital value chains; c) Ensure women's economic security and empowerment; d) Address discriminatory gender and social norms, stereotypes and practices; and e)	3	8	8	11	12	↗
SDG5	IN5.3	Extent that measures developed/implemented with UN support advance women's and girl's leadership and equal participation in decision-making, with UN support, in: a) Public institutions; b) Elected positions, including parliaments; c) Judiciary; d) Private sector; e) Mediation, reconciliation and peacebuilding mechanisms; and f) Natural resource management	3	4	4	5	0	↘
SDG5	IN5.4	Existence of national or subnational mechanism to address discriminatory gender and social norms, stereotypes, practices and power relations at the individual, social and institutional levels related to gender equality and the empowerment of women, with support of the UN	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	↔
SDG5	IN5.8	Number of children and adults who have access to a safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian, development, protection and/or other personnel who provide assistance to affected populations, with UN support	20,000	23,000	30,207	25,500	13,949	↘
SDG6	IN6.2	Number of transboundary water bodies in which cooperation and joint management is strengthened with UN support: a) River and lake basins; and b) Aquifers	1	2	2	3	1	↘
SDG7	IN7.1	Amount of energy saved (in megajoule), with UN support	0	/	/	8,280,000 MJ (2,300 MWh)	/	↔
SDG7	IN7.2	Capacity (in megawatt) in installed renewable energy capacity per technology, with UN support: a) Solar; b) Wind; c) Biomass; d) Hydro; e) Geothermal; f) Other	0	/	/	0	/	↔
SDG1	IN7.3	Number of people who, with UN support: a) Gained access to clean, affordable, and sustainable energy; and b) Benefitted from services from clean, affordable, and sustainable energy	0	0	0	30	0	↔

SDG	#	GLOBAL INDICATOR	BASELINE (2021)	TARGET (2022)	ACHIEVED (2022)	TARGET (2023)	ACHIEVED (2023)	TREND
SDG8	IN8.1	A legal framework giving effect to international human rights norms and standards in the world of work, including fundamental principles and rights at work, is developed with UN support	1	1	1	4	1	↔
SDG8	IN8.2	Number of private sector entities (including micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)) with improved performance, business transactions, and/or income generation as a result of UN support	500	500	502	300	737	↗
SDG8	IN8.3	Number of cases in which business support organizations, workers' organizations and employers and business membership organizations have increased capacity to provide services to their members/clients to promote economic development, productive employment and decent work, as a result of UN support	4	4	4	5	3	↘
SDG8	IN8.4	Number of people that benefited from programmes to prevent and address child labour, trafficking, and forced labour strengthened by the UN	48	9	9	7	7	↔
SDG9	IN9.2	Number of private sector entities (including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)) that innovated their business practices, by mainstreaming environmental, social or economic sustainability elements, with UN support	0 (2022)	/	/	3	115	↗
SDG9	IN9.3	Number of additional people with improved access to quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure/infrastructure-related services (including digital infrastructure), with UN support	8,624	214	214	0	369	↗
SDG10	IN10.1	Number of local financial institutions that provide financial services by integrating Poverty-Environment and Gender Nexus considerations with a human rights approach, supported by the UN	0	/	/	2	0	↔
SDG10	IN10.2	Bilateral, national, and local development and sectoral policies that integrate migration and recognize migrants as contributors to sustainable development developed with UN support and implemented by the Government	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	↔
SDG10	IN10.3	Number of people who are internally displaced, migrants, refugees or part of the host communities, or communities left or affected populations, benefiting from integrated and targeted interventions, including on strengthening social cohesion, with UN support	20,000	21,300	28,399	23,500	12,686	↘
SDG12	IN12.2	Hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment, with UN support	0	690,000	957,250	525,000	525,000	↘
SDG15	IN15.1	Number of entities at the national level that have developed integrated approaches and tools for enhanced coordination, cooperation, and synergies for the coherent implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, supported by the UN	1	2	2	13	/	↔
SDG16	IN16.3	Number of gender-responsive, conflict-sensitive development institutions, policies, plans, or cross-border initiatives in place, with UN support that, promote and protect human rights, prevent systemic human rights violations to: a) Address conflict drivers; b) Strengthen social cohesion; c) Prevent risk of conflict, including climate security; and d) End all forms of violence, promote the rule of law, and ensure equal access to justice for all	2	7	10	31	24	↗
SDG16	IN16.5	Number of new people registered with legal identity, with UN support	420	120	190	453	204	↗
SDG16	IN16.6	Number of people supported, who have access to justice, with UN support	0	1,010	3,264	2,420	444	↘
SDG17	IN17.2	Degree of alignment of national budgeting system with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that enable tracking of budget allocation for the SDGs, including through gender-responsive budgeting, supported by the UN	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	↔
SDG17	IN17.3	Data collection and analysis mechanisms/initiatives providing disaggregated data to monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development, established/implemented with UN support	Low	Low	Low	Moderate	Low	↔

[4] Acronyms & abbreviations

AAC	Alternative and augmentative communication	MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
ALMM	Active Labour Market Measures	MSME	Micro, small and medium enterprises
BOS	Business Operations Strategy	MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy	MoEPP	Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	MRV	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification
COP	Conference of Parties	NDS	National Development Strategy
CSA	Climate-smart agriculture	NEET	Youth Not in Education, Employment or Training
CSE	Comprehensive sexuality education	NES	National Employment Strategy
CSW	Centres for social work	NHRIs	National Human Rights Institutions
DV	Domestic violence	OBL	Organic Budget Law
DRR	Disaster risk reduction	OG	SDCF Outcome group
DPPI SEE	Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South-East Europe	OPDs	Organizations of persons with disabilities
eNDC	Enhanced nationally determined contribution	PAs	Protected areas
4th NC	4th National Communication to UNFCCC	PMT	UN Programme Management Team
ECI	Early childhood intervention	PSD	Partnership for Sustainable Development
EPC	Effective perinatal care	PWD	Person with disabilities
EPR	Environmental Performance Review	RE	renewable energy
ESA	Employment Support Agency	EE	energy efficiency
ESC	Economic and Social Council	RC	Resident Coordinator
EU	European Union	RCO	UN Resident Coordinator's Office
GCF	Green Climate Fund	RMPS	Resource Mobilization and Partnership Strategy
GFF	Green Finance Facility	SDCF	Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
GHG	Greenhouse gas	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
GRB	Gender-responsive budgeting	SEEU	South-East European University
GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence	SEL	Social and emotional learning
HCFCs	Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (refrigerants, ozone depleting substances)	SSO	State Statistical Office
HCH	Hexachlorocyclohexane (lindane)	UN	United Nations
HDI	Human Development Index	UNCT	United Nations Country Team
HORECA	Hotels, restaurants, and cafes	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
HOTAM	Association of employers in hotel and catering	VAW	Violence against women
HWS	Health Workforce Strategy	VET	Vocational education and training
ICF	International classification of Functioning, Disability and Health		
IFMIS	Financial Management Information System		
ILS	International Labour Standards		
JSC	Joint Government-UN SDCF Steering Committee		
MAFWE	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy		
MAP	Modified atmosphere packaging		



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2023

**Our results,
our stories**



BETTER PRODUCTION, BETTER NUTRITION, A BETTER ENVIRONMENT AND A BETTER LIFE



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Radica and Martin are first cousins who inherited agricultural land from their mothers and now jointly cultivate wheat and sunflowers. As a family, they have 284 hectares (ha) of land in Dabjani village, half for each one of them. Until recently, their land was broken into 278 separate and scattered parcels of about 1.02 ha each, making their farming inefficient and challenging. Everything changed when support from the European Union (EU) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) helped to consolidate the land into 48 larger and better-shaped parcels, each averaging 5.91 ha, up from just 1.02 ha before land consolidation, which significantly enable improved productivity. Radica and Martin's land also has better access to agricultural infrastructure, now that an ongoing EU-funded

project, implemented by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (MAFWE), is improving agricultural infrastructure in Dabjani. Work is being done to upgrade and construct access roads to facilitate transportation and improve access to fields. Radica and Martin expect that these improvements will boost land use efficiency and help to revitalize their agricultural production.



©FAO/Martin Savevski



©FAO/Radica Gruevska

HOW FAO WORKS

SUSTAINABLE AND COMPETITIVE RURAL ECONOMY ALIGNED WITH THE EU STANDARDS

FAO promotes inclusive economic and social development by empowering small-scale farmers and supporting evidence-based policies. Efforts have focused on enhancing agricultural land structures, agricultural market mobility, and productivity, aimed at raising rural living standards and fostering competitiveness.

KEY 2023 RESULTS:

- A comprehensive framework for the first National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy developed and a national inter-sectoral food security coordination mechanism established.
- Analysis conducted on abandoned agricultural land, (accounting to 32% of the country's arable land), informing amendments to the Laws on Agricultural Land, on Privatization of State-Owned Land and to other related laws.
- The Macedonian Food and Veterinary Agency was supported to align the National Animal Health and Food Safety system with EU standards.
- MAFWE was assisted to initiate the preparation of the new National Strategy for Agricultural Land Consolidation 2024-2034, and boost capacity building. Progress was made in the National Land Consolidation Programme. Land Re-allotment Plan was drafted, including agricultural infrastructure improvements for 156 hectares in [Chiflik](#) village, [benefitting 404 landowners](#). Construction works began in [Dabjani](#) village to upgrade drainage and road networks for 742 hectares of farmland, benefiting 85 agricultural landowners.



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Chiflik current situation



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Dabjani agricultural infrastructure improvements

ENHANCING CLIMATE ACTION, SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, AND AGRICULTURAL RISK REDUCTION

FAO supports national climate action, enhancing sustainable resource management, agricultural resilience, and disaster risk reduction. Priority is boosting smallholder farmers' climate resilience through sustainable practices, data access, and irrigation upgrades.

KEY 2023 RESULTS:

- Government access to climate finance from the Green Climate Fund was facilitated, aiming to boost national capacities for a climate-resilient, low-carbon economy.
- Climate change adaptation in agriculture was supported through [improved seed system sustainability](#), seed quality management and conservation, and an evaluation of the National Seed System.
- State-owned irrigation and drainage systems in Radovish region were evaluated to assist modernization efforts, aiming to enhance local farmers' capacity to adapt to climate change.
- FAO collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy and the Faculty of Forest Sciences to augment forest damage monitoring, restoration planning, and regional cooperation.



©FAO/Silvana Manastevska Simikj

Transplanting peppers on a demonstration field in Kocani

KEY RESULTS

KEY FACTS

2,550

smallholder farmers involved in land consolidation support (2017-2023)

Amendments to the Laws on Agricultural Land, on Privatization of State-Owned Land supported

2

national strategies supported to address agricultural land management, food security, disaster risk reduction, irrigation systems, seed systems, reforestation

11

Policy papers & assessments produced tackling agricultural land management, food security, DRR, irrigation, seed systems and forestry

Access to GCF funding supported

Transforming agrifood systems for people and the planet

The rural municipality of Dolneni is situated in Pelagonia, the largest grain producing region in North Macedonia, known for its abundant production of cereals, vegetables, industrial crops, and milk. At its heart lies the village of Dabjani, the site of the largest ongoing land consolidation project in the country that involves 742 hectares of agricultural land, owned by 85 private landowners (435 ha) and the State (307 ha). Satki Miftaroski, Head of the Inspectorate Department at the Municipality of Dolneni, highlights the significant benefits awaiting local farmers and the rural community in Dabjani village. Through EU and FAO support, Dabjani's agricultural landscape underwent a remarkable transformation. The land consolidation process reduced the number of land parcels from 602 to 127, resulting in larger and better-shaped parcels averaging 5.84 hectares, a substantial increase from the previous 1.23-hectare average. Additionally, an ongoing EU-funded project, implemented by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture is reinforcing Dabjani's agricultural infrastructure, including rehabilitating existing access roads and constructing new ones to improve transportation and accessibility to the agricultural fields. Satki emphasizes



©FAO/Satki Miftaroski

that these developments will boost agricultural efficiency, allowing for more modern and mechanized farming practices to increase farms productivity. Furthermore, he anticipates that these improvements will attract young farmers to bring abandoned land back into production, fostering local community development and providing opportunities to diversify and expand agricultural production, ultimately accessing new markets.

NABIL GANGI

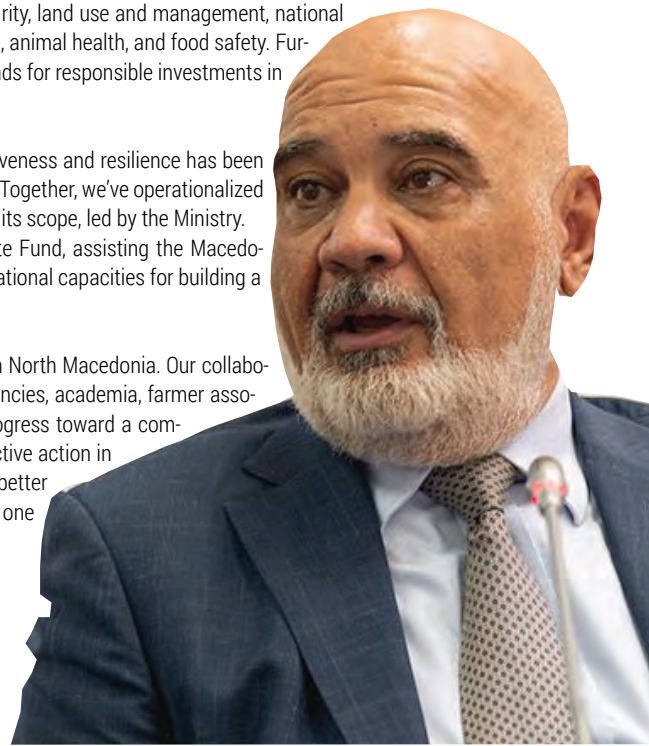
FAO Deputy Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia and De facto Head of FAO North Macedonia

As a specialized UN agency leading international efforts addressing global food and agriculture challenges, FAO has supported North Macedonia in transforming food systems and aligning agriculture with EU standards and the Sustainable Development Goals. Working hand-in-hand with the Macedonian Government, our efforts focus on advancing agricultural development, empowering smallholders and family farms, and investing in a sustainable and resilient rural economy.

In 2023, FAO worked on fostering a competitive rural economy by supporting the Government in improving policies, legislation, and measures in various areas including food security, land use and management, national seed systems, forestry, disaster risk reduction in agriculture, animal health, and food safety. Furthermore, in collaboration with our partners, we secured funds for responsible investments in rural transformation.

Enhancing Macedonian agriculture's productivity, competitiveness and resilience has been central to our collaborative efforts with the EU and MAFWE. Together, we've operationalized the National Land Consolidation Programme and expanded its scope, led by the Ministry. FAO has strengthened collaboration with the Green Climate Fund, assisting the Macedonian Government in accessing GCF resources to enhance national capacities for building a low-carbon, climate-resilient society.

I thank and congratulate all FAO colleagues and partners in North Macedonia. Our collaboration with the Government, as well as with the EU, UN agencies, academia, farmer associations, the private sector, and civil society, has driven progress toward a competitive and resilient rural economy. Let's sustain this collective action in transforming our agri-food systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind. The future of food is in our hands!



PROTECTING VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN NORTH MACEDONIA

AMIRA'S STORY



A 14-year-old Amira* that came from a dysfunctional family and was previously registered as a street child was forced into extramarital union with an adult male by a family member. The IOM supported mobile teams for identification, assistance and referral of victims and potential victims of trafficking identified the girl during their field work in her community.

She was placed in the Centre for victims of human trafficking and provided with all the necessary support, including psychosocial support, educational activities, and other. Amira was included in the resocialization programme and is awaiting her placement in a foster family.

*Name changed for identity protection

HOW IOM WORKS

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

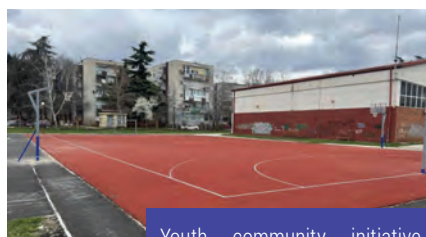
IOM has responded to the needs of crisis-affected populations through the provision of humanitarian assistance to 12,842 vulnerable migrants. The assistance included health care, mental health and psychosocial support, COVID-19 prevention and protection, education support, as well as Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration. IOM continued to support the capacity building of the relevant stakeholders in the area of migration management and protection of vulnerable categories of migrants.



Provision of health assistance to vulnerable migrants.

RESILIENCE

IOM strived to improve migrants' resilience in situations of vulnerability, through supporting the institutional capacities, knowledge, skills, and resources to protect the rights of migrants in vulnerable situations, including migrant children and actual and potential victims of trafficking. This included the support of the five mobile teams for identification, assistance, and referral of 562 actual and potential victims of trafficking and other vulnerable categories. IOM has actively worked on diaspora engagement through transfer of knowledge and skills. IOM has strengthened youth resilience against violent extremism through critical thinking, life skills, media literacy and youth-led initiatives in 6 local communities. Also, evidence of the impact of air pollution on different migratory population groups has been collected through the conducted scoping study on the interlinkages between air-pollution and human mobility.



Youth community initiative in the Municipality of Butel.

MOBILITY AND GOVERNANCE

IOM has supported the Government in the development and implementation of migration governance policies. Almost 100 institutional stakeholders were supported by IOM in addressing of transnational organized crime, such as migrant smuggling and human trafficking, and the protection of the vulnerable categories of migrants. IOM has been working to strengthen the national capacities and systems for effective and comprehensive migration data collection, exchange, analyses, and alignment with the EU standards including the piloting of the first ever Migration Module in the Labour Force Survey. IOM assures the availability, access, and analysis of migration data through the ongoing IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix Initiative to track mobility and evolving needs of the population groups on the move. IOM has also worked with the national partners for mainstreaming of the opportunities associated with human mobility in the context of climate change through the established Green Financing Facility.

Stakeholders' training on combating human trafficking and smuggling of migrants



KEY RESULTS

KEY FACTS

11,248
migrants provided
with humanitarian
support.

Safe return and reintegration through IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme

Daniela and her family have returned to North Macedonia with support from IOM through the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) Programme.

"I have faced numerous struggles in my life," said Daniela. "First, living with a parent who was battling addiction, and then experiencing poverty and the daily struggle to survive with my husband and child in a foreign country."

The AVRR programme assisted us in safely returning to our country, and, more importantly, facilitated our child's reintegration into formal education.



562
victims, potential
victims of trafficking
and other vulnerable
categories identified,
assisted, and re-
ferred.

Youth-led community initiative in municipality of Butel



Sara, Muhamed, and Aleksandar attend the same school in the municipality of Butel, where the sports field was renovated with support from IOM through their youth initiative.

Sports offered a powerful and positive outlet for them and their peers, enabling them to cultivate vital life skills and values. Beyond the physical health benefits, having the space to engage in sports helped them develop social and communication skills, emotional well-being, and other positive values such as sportsmanship, fair play, and respect for others.

The sports field brought them together, provided opportunities for social interaction, and strengthened their sense of belonging in the community.

6
youth community
initiatives supported.

SONJA BOZHINOVSKA PETRUSHEVSKA

IOM Head of Office in North Macedonia

As a leading inter-governmental organization in the area of migration IOM in North Macedonia has been supporting the country in provision of humanitarian support to the vulnerable migrants, support in identification and referral of victims of trafficking in human beings as well as capacity building on migration management, migration statistics and digitalisation in the area of migration management. We have been proud to support the youth as leaders of many community initiatives in North Macedonia, as well as to launch environmental and development initiatives that support the engagement of Diaspora.

IOM will continue supporting North Macedonia in promoting comprehensive, sustainable, and solutions-oriented approaches to effectively manage migration and harness its development potential towards reaching the SDG goals and leaving no one behind.

Up to
100
stakeholders with
build capacities in
different migration
management areas.



PROMOTING WORKERS' RIGHTS IN NORTH MACEDONIA

ILO SUPPORTED RESULTS IN 2023



International
Labour
Organization

“ Macedonian Government, trade unions, employers' organizations and the ILO have signed the new [Decent Work Country Programme \(DWCP\) for the period 2023-2025](#). Creating more and better jobs, improving employment prospects for young women and men, and fostering an inclusive labour market through strengthened social dialogue are the key priorities of the DWCP.

The Government and the social partners focused on the implementation of the 2021-2027 National Employment Strategy (NES), which entails a series of concerted policy actions touching upon education and training, economic and enterprise development and labour market policies, to tackle the challenges instigated by the multiple crises. ILO remains the only institutional partner of North Macedonia in the introduction and implementation of the Youth Guarantee. New [Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan 2023-2026](#), adopted on 5 April 2023, builds on the results of the previous Plan, which led to decline in the number of the young NEETs, increase of the employment rate and decrease of the unemployment rate in the country, despite the adverse effects of the COVID 19 crisis, the war in Ukraine and the economic and energy crises.

More prominent role of the Trade Unions as defenders of the workers' rights was evident. They were strong opponents of certain Government actions to undermine the position of the Economic and Social Council, such as the working time amendment to the Labour Relations Law that were adopted without prior consultations with the social partners. These changes were strongly opposed by all Trade Unions as a flagrant violation of the right to a decent working time and are challenged in front of the Constitutional Court.

On 14 June 2023 [Macedonian Parliament ratified ILO Convention No. 190 on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work](#), following the recommendation by the Economic and Social Council and the Government. On bipartite level, after 15 years, the first [General Collective Agreement for the Public Sector](#) was signed on 18 July 2023.

Amicable settlement of several high-profile cases of collective labour disputes has demonstrated the importance of the established mechanism for amicable settlement of labour disputes (ASLD) and has increased the trust in the effectiveness of the system. These cases have revealed some of the shortcomings of the existing system. Therefore, Macedonian constituents decided to use the new ILO tool for self-assessment of the labour disputes resolution mechanisms. They identified the strengths and weaknesses of the ASLD mechanism, and based on the findings, subsequently developed Action Plan for reform and advancement of amicable settlement of labour disputes for the period 2023-2026.



KEY RESULTS

YOUTH GUARANTEE

8038 (4109 WOMEN) YOUNG PEOPLE

got employed within 4 months from their registration with the Youth Guarantee.

DIALOGUE IMPROVES LIVES

131,009 WORKERS

in the public sector benefited from increase of the wages and better working conditions through the signing of the General Collective Agreement for the Public Sector.

ACCESS TO LABOUR JUSTICE

10,534 WORKERS

received legal assistance through the mobile app of the Federation of Trade Unions of Macedonia.

1,729 WORKERS

affected by cases of labour disputes benefited from the amicable settlement of the disputes in 2023.

THE WAIT IS OVER – LEGAL IDENTITY FOR ALL IS BECOMING A REALITY

UNHCR SUPPORTED RESULTS IN 2023



A solemn atmosphere at the headquarters of the Civil Registry Office in Skopje, the capital of North Macedonia, before an event organized to mark the progress made in the field of ending statelessness in North Macedonia and to present a new batch of birth certificates.

One of them is Ms. Zulfija Amza, a fifty-five-year-old woman born in Skopje who had never visited a doctor in her life. Statelessness has forced her to beg for food and bare survival all her life, as she has not even been able to access social funds without an ID or a passport. Zulfija's sister passed away and left her children orphans and in the same predicament to go through life without a legal identity.

Even before PM Kovachevski spoke, Zulfija let out a loud gasp and very emotionally thanked all the people responsible for finally giving them birth certificates.

PM Kovachevski said that these people, who had so far been outside of the labour market, would now be able to be employed, to open their own companies, to use all the benefits extended to them by the Constitution and the Laws of the country, to legally get married, and their children to be registered in the Civil Registry without any problems.

Getting here was never an easy mission. Mr. Gabriel Gualano de Godoy, Representative of UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency which has been entrusted with helping states end statelessness around the world, said: "This great breakthrough is in line with key international standards: the 1954 and 1961 UN Conventions related to statelessness, as well as the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goal 16.9, on universal birth registration and legal identity for all. Those smiles and the possibility for these children to say #IBelong are the result of the Parliament and Government working together to leave no one behind".



©UNHCR/Brashnarska

Some 20 persons who have lacked personal identification numbers and consequently any documents for their whole lives have been patiently waiting since early in the morning even though the ceremony would not start in the next three hours. UNHCR and partner staff ask them if they can make them more comfortable during the wait, and they say in one voice "We've been waiting for our whole lives, so waiting for a couple more hours is nothing for us."

KEY RESULTS

218

statelessness cases have been resolved during the course of the year.

511

of 786 known persons at risk of statelessness acquired their first ID card in North Macedonia through the resolution of their cases

1,743

persons received free legal assistance for the asylum procedure and for obtaining legal identity and citizenship by stateless individuals.

235

persons with specific needs supported with psycho-social, cultural, language and skill-building activities.

Gabriel Gualano de Godoy

Representative of UNHCR in North Macedonia

I am truly thankful for the wide alliance we have created to make a strong push to end statelessness in North Macedonia. UNHCR has worked hand in hand with the Parliament, Government institutions and ministries, EUD, OSCE, Council of Europe, USAID, embassies, and civil society organizations.

Statelessness might have continued to hamper people's lives if it were not for the important work done by the Parliament, led by three particularly dedicated MPs – Ms. Sonja Mirakovska, Ms. Snezana Kaleska – Vancheva and Ms. Ljatife Shikovska – who made sure that all legislative gaps are filled and corrected across several laws.

The implementation of the amended laws is a historic contribution to the ending of statelessness in South Eastern Europe, a pledge from the Global Refugee Forum held in 2023.



SECURING THE FUTURE OF THE BALKAN LYNX

UNEP SUPPORTED RESULTS IN 2023



With the unanimous voting at the Conference of Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) in February 2024 in Uzbekistan, the CMS is enriched by the Eurasian Lynx in Appendix II and the Critically Endangered subspecies Balkan Lynx in addition in Appendix I. The proposal was received very positively by all CMS member and range countries, including a very positive statement from

of the IUCN SSC Cat WG, as well as to all national institutions, domestic and foreign experts and the public for supporting our initiative”, says the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning.

Mid 2023, the Macedonian Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, together with the relevant environmental ministries of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Uzbekistan, have submitted a proposal for possible listing of the Eurasian Lynx in Appendix II and the Critically Endangered subspecies Balkan Lynx in addition in Appendix I to the Convention for Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS/Bonn Convention).

The listing proposal was initiated and coordinated by the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention/UNEP Vienna Team together with the IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group.

“The acceptance of the Balkan lynx into the CMS means, among other benefits, a clear commitment between the range countries to work together and build a conservation strategy that will focus on the immediate actions to safeguard the population. I am very proud that North Macedonia was the main proponent because it shows that small countries can also contribute towards global conservation - the case with the Eurasian lynx being listed on Appendix 2 of the Convention”, says Dime Melovski, national expert.

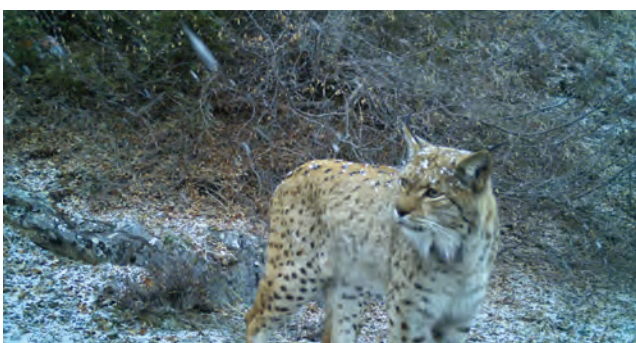
The entire process was a unique cooperation experience that has already helped bringing national authorities, scientists and conservation organizations together at national and international level to review the present status and discuss possible ways forward. It is expected to increase the range-wide awareness of the conservation status of the species and sub-species, contribute to fulfilment of the objectives set forth with national nature protection strategies, SDGs, the Carpathian Convention, the Global Biodiversity Framework, the Convention on Biological Diversity, other Multilateral Environmental Agreements. It also , has potential to attract more funds to implement further conservation measures, as well as to improve transboundary cooperation between neighboring range countries, especially in the Korab/Koritnik/Mavrovo NP/Shar Mountain NP region – the natural habitat of the critically endangered Balkan Lynx.



the EU and many international conservation organizations.

“The Balkan Lynx subspecies is the national symbol of North Macedonia, protected by law. The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Nature Department is very proud that the latest Conference of the Parties to the CMS has accepted our proposal to list the Eurasian lynx in Appendix II and the Balkan lynx (as subspecies of the Eurasian lynx) as well as in Appendix I of the CMS Convention. This is expected to greatly contribute to the conservation of these species, especially in terms of protection at political level, improving cross-border cooperation between neighboring countries and has potential to attract more funds to implement further conservation measures. We express sincere gratitude to UNEP/Vienna Programme Office, experts

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Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention



INVESTING IN WOMENS' RIGHTS IS AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY

Marking Desertification and Drought Day

With inspiring stories from women farmers, and under the moto #HerLand, June 17 the world day dedicated to combating desertification in countries facing severe drought and/or desertification was marked in Skopje, North Macedonia.



Women have a vital stake in the health of the country, but they often have no control over it. In all parts of the world, women face significant barriers to securing land rights, limiting their ability to advance. When land becomes degraded and water is scarce, women are often the most affected. Investing in women's equal access to land and related assets is a direct investment in

their future and the future of humanity. It is time for women and girls to be at the forefront of global land restoration and drought resilience efforts.

Under the moto #HerLand. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of North Macedonia, joined their forces together with the support of the National Federation of Farmers and the Center for Climate Change on celebrating the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought in the City Park.

The global focus for Desertification and Drought Day in 2023 was on women's land rights – essential to achieving the interrelated global goals of gender equality and land degradation neutrality by 2030 and contributing to the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The main goal of the event was to present the products of more than 40 inspiring women farmers from all over the country such as: honey, madjun, family wineries, brandies, natural teas, dairy products from family farms, culinary products according to the recipes of our ancestors and much more, other products created by the diligent hands of these women that were exhibited in the City Park in Skopje.



Нејзина земја. Нејзини права.

Фросина Горгиевска
Координатор на Мрежата на жени фармери во Националната федерација на фармери

Ако неј од државата создаде услови треба да се земе и во внимание да не се третираат како деца. Делот е да се третираат како полнолетни, а не како деца. Делот е да се третираат како полнолетни, а не како деца. Делот е да се третираат како полнолетни, а не како деца.

Многу е важно да се третираат како полнолетни, а не како деца. Делот е да се третираат како полнолетни, а не како деца. Делот е да се третираат како полнолетни, а не како деца.

#HerLand




Нејзина земја. Нејзини права.

Ирена Балиска
Жена фармер од Будимарци, Беровско

Многу е важно да се третираат како полнолетни, а не како деца. Делот е да се третираат како полнолетни, а не како деца. Делот е да се третираат како полнолетни, а не како деца.

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#HerLand




Нејзина земја. Нејзини права.

Тања Оршкова
Мала семејна викарија Оршкови

То е само фармер, не само два километра од Скопје, се кај ја стигнала викарија. То е само фармер, не само два километра од Скопје, се кај ја стигнала викарија.

То е само фармер, не само два километра од Скопје, се кај ја стигнала викарија. То е само фармер, не само два километра од Скопје, се кај ја стигнала викарија.

#HerLand




Нејзина земја. Нејзини права.

Васка Мојсовска
Првата жена претседател на Националната федерација на фармери

Само неј третираат како полнолетни, а не како деца. Делот е да се третираат како полнолетни, а не како деца. Делот е да се третираат како полнолетни, а не како деца.

Само неј третираат како полнолетни, а не како деца. Делот е да се третираат како полнолетни, а не како деца. Делот е да се третираат како полнолетни, а не како деца.

#HerLand



NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY TRIUMPH

Building Tomorrow Together - Unity in Diversity Shapes Our Nation's Destiny



Working alongside our partners, we achieved success in garnering broad support for this visionary document, shaping the trajectory of the country for the forthcoming decades. The National Development Strategy stands as a testament to collaborative excellence, uniting MPs from both opposition and government parties, representatives of institutions, ministries, citizens, marginalized groups, experts, think tanks, chambers of commerce, NGO's and civil society groups.

The most notable achievement was the recent unanimous adoption of the NDS law by Parliament, backed by 62 present MPs, transcending party lines. This milestone reflects a shared vision and consensus on our nation's trajectory for the next 20 years, highlighting the power of inclusive governance and collaborative efforts.

In its essence, the NDS serves as a model for strategic planning, showcasing the strength of our democracy and the potential unlocked when diverse perspectives unite for a collective vision. The success

of the NDS is not just a story of policymaking; it's a testament to the transformative impact of unity in shaping a more inclusive and promising future for our country.

The overwhelmingly positive feedback on the strategy and the green light for Parliament adoption is a fact for the achieved consensus.

A decision was made to establish the supportive bodies of the National Council for development: Working Committee with four subgroups (based on the quadruple helix model) and an Advisory Board, showcasing the commitment to a collaborative approach in line with diverse perspectives.

The NDS Unit, part of the General Secretariat, is fully equipped to guide the implementation process, strategy monitoring, and evaluation.

Last month marked the inaugural meeting of the National Council for Development, chaired by the Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia. The Council is a hub of diverse perspectives, bringing together stakeholders from various sectors, including the government, President's Cabinet, Assembly, regions and municipalities, Macedonian Academy, universities, chambers of commerce, unions, civil society, and youth.



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HOW UNDP WORKS

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

The Democratic Governance (DG) unit of UNDP is dedicated to enhancing governance reforms through collective actions, a system transformation approach, and resilience building. This unit facilitates and coordinates policy-making processes across different policy domains, government levels (national and local), and stakeholders (public, private, civil organizations, and development partners). The DG flagship program focuses on supporting the country in adopting the National Development Strategy (NDS), a visionary document outlining the development path for the next 20 years.



We build institutional and civil sector capacities to prevent violence, promote violence-free environments, and support survivors.

INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY

UNDP works to enable socially excluded women and men, to improve their lives by helping to expand their opportunities and increase their access to quality services and employment in multiple areas. The greatest efforts are placed on creating decent jobs and reducing unemployment as an essential step in increasing social inclusion. Much of the support has been focused on developing measures for sustainable economic growth, boosting youth capital by introducing new innovative mechanisms for (re)integration of long-term unemployed persons and other vulnerable groups.



Loreta Roguzarova, 48-year-old woman from Veles, was a long time unemployed with no formal previous professional experience. After obtaining the training for caregivers of persons with disabilities within the Care Economy programme, for the first time in her life she is formally employed and financially independent.

ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

UNDP energy, environment and disaster risk management unit is dedicated to help decision makers to incorporate action against climate change, biodiversity loss, energy dependence, into the work of their institutions. Investing today promotes people's health, food security, and quality of life but could also deliver financial benefits in the future. We are assisting the country in fulfilling and enhancing its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC's) under the Paris Agreement on climate change. One of the cornerstones of the unit remains its commitment to disaster risk reduction.



The stabilization of landslides is just one aspect of the Swiss funded project "Improving resilience to floods in the Polog region" worth 12 million Swiss francs, which UNDP is implementing in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and the 9 municipalities in the Polog region.

GREEN PORTFOLIO

The Green Portfolio combines diverse program elements to facilitate holistic planning and implementation. It focuses on innovative financing mechanisms to advance the green agenda, particularly in providing opportunities for SMEs and households in North Macedonia to access renewable energy and reduce their greenhouse emissions. It supports national and local institutions in addressing development and environmental challenges, focusing on improving air quality. This includes gender-sensitive and inclusive development planning, transparency, and increased involvement of the private sector and CSOs in community development pathways.



The project aimed to demonstrate a multi-pronged intervention to tackle air pollution in the City of Skopje linked to the residential sector. Monitoring system for the pilot area in the settlement of Lisice was developed, along with a set of policy changes and measures to address the causes of pollution.

KEY RESULTS

New “green” loan options for SMEs and underserved individuals in North Macedonia

New loan options with Performance-Based Payments (PBPs) will be made available to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and seven target groups of creditworthy but underserved individuals/households from North Macedonia. The loans are to be used for investments in renewable energy (RE) and energy efficiency (EE) solutions, such as: photovoltaics, heat pumps, inverters, solar panels, efficient

heating systems, etc. The “Green Finance Facility” project is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), together with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).



Breaking the Chains of Domestic Violence



“At first, I thought those were only temporary outbursts of aggression. I thought he wasn’t going to lose his temper again. But it started to happen more and more often and eventually turned into a routine. You hope that one day it will stop, but you are wrong, it is never going to stop, it just gets worse and more serious. And you end up suffering more and more violence.” The young woman hesitated for several weeks before deciding whether to share her story of the violence at the hands of her husband. Eventually, she called us expressing her willingness

to do so because she wanted to [send a message to women trapped](#) in the “cage of the domestic violence”. “The violence happened constantly and kept getting worse.” She faced victimization outside the home as well. She was made fun of, gossiped about, and some of the attempts to report the violence were met with ridicule. This woman is one of the thousands in North Macedonia who suffer gender-based violence. Official data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs says that in 2022, a total of 1,117 crimes related to domestic violence were registered, which is a 6% increase compared to 2021.

Renovation of the landslide in Pirok - no need for „house on wheels“

Twice in his life, Nagip Fetahu, retired teacher from Pirok, and his family, have experienced the fear and trepidation caused by dangerous landslides. He vividly recalls the first time, in 1985 when they lived in constant fear that their house, which was significantly damaged by a landslide, will collapse. The house cracked, but not the memories. More than 33 year later, the teacher’s house was once again threatened by a landslide. „If it happens again, if these two houses collapse, then we thought of building a house on wheels, to be able to move it,

because we have enough space” – says Fetahu half-jokingly. The retired teacher of over 10 generations of students from the elementary school „Sami Frasheri” in Pirok, in the interventions for stabilization of landslides sees a hope for a safer future for himself, his neighbors and most importantly, the young children who attend the classes in the school where he left his mark as one of the most beloved educators.



BioHack my World



UNDP together with the City of Skopje and UNICEF established a state of the art biohacking laboratory that is open to the public and brings science closer to the community of entrepreneurs, private sector, young researchers and startups. The biohacking lab offers a shift in narratives about biowaste and acts as a system transformation initiator that will inspire young people to shift their focus of interest to STEAM research

and in near future create economic opportunities including startups, private sector, spin offs that will employ highly skilled labor, especially youth and high school students. The BioHack MyWorld project is just one of many managed by the #AcceleratorLab team from North Macedonia, that has been established in October 2020, and since then has worked as a team within the UNDP country office.

KEY FACTS

35

women received assistance at the counseling centre for GBV in Radovich.

14,000

people consulted for the NDS via dream labs.

129

households in Lisice replaced old heating system with new energy efficient ones.

ARMEN GRIGORYAN

UNDP Resident Representative

As UNDP we actively support development processes in key aspects of the country’s social, political, and economic life. A notable achievement is our collaboration in creation of the National Development Strategy, securing widespread support for this forward-looking document, shaping the nation’s trajectory for decades to come.

Our continued focus encompasses empowering youth, women, and people with disabilities, safeguarding nature, enhancing local governance, upholding the rule of law, addressing climate change, combating air pollution, digitalization and reducing disaster risks. With a commitment to innovative approaches, we aspire to improve living conditions and foster inclusive and equitable societies.

UNDP North Macedonia is building strong partnerships with the Government, Parliament, municipalities, Academia, private sector, civil organizations, and other stakeholders, uniting efforts to advance a sustainable, inclusive agenda for social and economic development, working towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.



CHANGING THE LIVES OF WOMEN SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE IN NORTH MACEDONIA

UNFPA supports the Government of North Macedonia with the implementation of an integrated policy against gender-based violence.



“In the shelter, we found peace and were able to have a good night’s sleep,” said Ana, who stayed for a year with her two children at one of the shelters for survivors of gender-based and domestic violence in North Macedonia.

“Thanks to the team from the shelter center, I feel stronger and more confidence and my children walk proudly, heads high.”

UNFPA works to promote the services available for the prevention of gender-based and domestic violence against women and the protection of survivors contributing to the improvement of the lives of women.

The UN agency supports the Government of North Macedonia to embed and implement state-wide integrated policies

against gender-based violence in compliance with the Istanbul Convention principles and promoting the services available to women and girl survivors.

“Violence against women often remains unspoken and unreported. It is a problem of society as a whole and the state and the institutions have the commitment to prevent and provide protection to survivors, support their reintegration into society, punish the perpetrators, and help their resocialization”, said Svetlana Cvetkovska, Head of the Sector for Equal Opportunities at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

In 2023, Shelter Center’s multi-stakeholder cooperation approach to mobilize local community support was replicated in two municipalities - Gostivar and Shuto Orizari, thus supporting Roma and Albanian women leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first. “With our partners – the British Embassy and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy – we’re supporting the Government to operationalize the legal framework, expand services, and improve data collection and analysis,” said Zhaklina Geshtakovska-Aleksovska, UNFPA Gender Programme Analyst, North Macedonia.



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HOW UNFPA WORKS

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH PROGRAMME

The mobile gynecological clinics established with UNFPA support in response to Covid-19 have been recognized by the Ministry of Health as the best option for reaching to the most vulnerable women and girls; for a third year in a row, the Ministry of Health is increasing the funding for cervical cancer screening services through the mobile clinics. The latest increase is 18% (2,000,000 MKD in 2024, compared to 1,700,000 MKD in 2023).

POPULATION DYNAMICS PROGRAMME

UNFPA spearheads the integration of demographic resilience principles into future policy development in North Macedonia, shaping the Draft of the new 2024-2044 Demographic Strategy focusing on active aging, migration, and human capital development. The completed population projections offer valuable insights into demographic changes and their impact on the country’s socioeconomic landscape over the next 50 years, and a recalculation of total population estimates between the last two census rounds was undertaken for the first time after 25 years.

YOUTH PROGRAMME

The National Youth Strategy 2023-2027 was developed incorporating Comprehensive Sexuality Education topics in the formal educational process, the introduction of youth indices, mental health, and overall well-being of youth and others. National and regional cooperation on youth was strengthened through the exchange of experiences and capacity-building initiatives such as working with Local Youth Councils, partnership with Special Olympics, institutional cooperation, and training of trainers and local youth workshops.

GENDER PROGRAMME

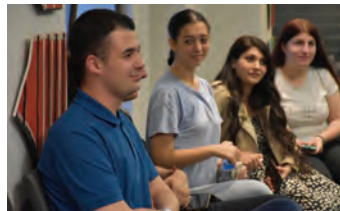
To fully operationalize the Law on Prevention and Protection of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, UNFPA supported the authorities to inclusively develop and adopt a New Protocol for a victim-centered multi-sectoral response to violence against women/ domestic violence, as well as to create the first roster of 33 certified GBV/DV trainers from all institutions and the CSOs. The Protocol ensures the operationalization of the victim-centered multi-sector response to gender-based violence.



Mobile clinics established with UNFPA support continue to visit underserved areas.



Population projections for the next 50 years completed – Bitola, North Macedonia



Training of young educators on peacebuilding



Promotional material for GBV prevention and protection was distributed in the local communities in North Macedonia.

KEY RESULTS

560 women in remote areas received SRH services

"The feeling when you save yet another life is greater than any award in this world. That is my principal motivation", said Dr. Jasminka Ajtovska, a family medicine specialist in Village Cheshinovo, who has tirelessly been mobilizing the women in the village to have a check-up on cervical cancer prevention in the mobile clinics.

Through the mobile gynecological clinics established with UNFPA support, 560 women in remote areas without a gynecologist, including 40 women in prisons, psychiatric clinics, and drug users have received SRH services and cervical cancer screening in 2023.

"These women rarely schedule gynecological examinations, because their municipality has never had any gynecologist", said Dr. Ajtovska.

The Sexual and Reproductive Care (SRH) model, initially introduced by UNFPA, with mobile gynecological clinics, continuously receives increased state funding, including 18% in 2024. Also, within the National Cervical Cancer Screening Programme, 53,340 women who have not been screened in the past 3 years, were screened in 2023, a seven-fold increase from 2022. UNFPA continues to be a steady partner, in advancing Cervical Cancer prevention in the country



@bodyright glossary promotion - own your body online



"When I was 16 years old I first faced online harassment. I didn't know how to react and then I thought it was my fault", young activist Rita Behadini from Tetovo, North Macedonia, begins her story at the @bodyright glossary promotion event. "What have I done for this man to write to me like this?", she added. "After several years I realized that it was harassment, it was violence, and that I had consequences from it."

[@bodyrightglossary](#) in the local languages aimed to raise awareness about technology-facilitated gender-based

violence within the UNFPA's global campaign @bodyright. It was promoted as part of the localized [campaign in North Macedonia](#) where around 11 national influencers took part in the social media activities presenting a new copyright for the human body.

"A glossary can help because when you talk about something, you overcome shame. Each conversation is one step towards overcoming the shame, and if the shame is overcome, then reporting the violence and all other processes will go faster", said Ana Vasileva, feminist and activist.

UNFPA among the founders of the resource group for employees with disabilities

UNFPA envisions a world of inclusion and equal opportunity, safeguarding lives free from violence. At the heart of these efforts in North Macedonia stands our colleague, Vangel Trkaljanov, himself a person with disabilities. "Success is evident when workplaces actively foster an inclusive culture where the unique talents and perspectives of employees with disabilities are valued and leveraged", says Vangel.

Recognizing the power of shared experience, he contributed to the creation of a resource group for employees with disabilities,

highlighting a collaborative approach to accessibility, and awareness-building throughout the workplace.

"Success is real, when organizations prioritize accessibility, provide necessary accommodation, and actively support professional development opportunities tailored to the needs of employees with disabilities," he explains. Vangel's work shifts the narrative – persons with disabilities are not just included, they drive progress.



KEY FACTS

265

young people discussed inclusion, equality, and trust, in 13 local workshops in 10 municipalities.

AFRODITA SHALJA

UNFPA Head of Office in North Macedonia

Our mission to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled, is a critical contributor to the global, regional, and national priorities. We made significant progress in combating gender-based violence and providing sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services to women and girls in underserved areas. Implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2023-2027, particularly comprehensive sexual education, mental health, and overall well-being was a high priority.

UNFPA is at the forefront of integrating demographic resilience into the National Development Strategy 2024-2044 and the development of the new Demographic Strategy 2024-2044. Our 50-year population projections and data analysis provide critical insights for evidence-based decision-making on issues related to aging, migration, and human capital development.

Our collective successes in 2023, alongside our partners, demonstrate our tireless commitment to building a more just and equitable future for all.

They would not have been possible without the unwavering support of the Government, the President's Office, the Parliament, and the strong strategic partnerships with the CSOs, academia, the private sector, UN agencies, and other supporters. We remain strongly committed to continue shaping our country into a place of choice for many.



30 YEARS FOR EVERY CHILD

TOGETHER WITH PARTNERS, UNICEF REMAINS EVEN MORE COMMITTED TO ADVANCE RIGHTS AND RESULTS, FOR EVERY CHILD



One of the priorities of the Network, now including the Biotechnology lab, is to bring science and environment related hands-on activities closer to students and teachers.



Experiential Learning Network brings science and hands-on activities closer to students and teachers.

In close collaboration with the Bureau for the Development of Education and with UNICEF support, the Experiential Learning Network was officially established in 2023 – a network of institutions to bring science and environment closer to children and adolescent learning.

The network, which includes the Macedonian Ecological Society, Botanical Garden – Skopje, Hydrobiological Institute – Ohrid, Educational Centre – Negrevo, Narodna Tehnika, and the National Park – Galichica, has developed and implemented an extracurricular education programme that covers all school grades in primary and secondary education.

To date, close to 6.000 teachers have been reached through continuous support on experiential learning and professional development opportunities, over 1200 students from across the country have participated in workshops delivered by the Experiential Learning Network.

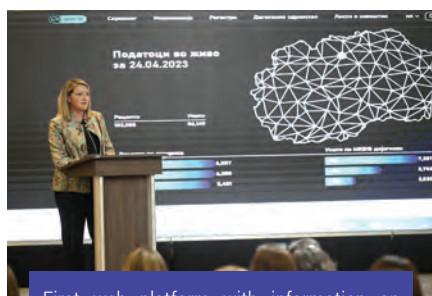
Recently, the BioTechnology Laboratory managed by the City of Skopje and Drisla, have agreed to join the Network and efforts are on the way to include their bio-waste specialty in the educational programme offered to students on a regular basis.

HOW UNICEF WORKS

NURTURING AND CAREGIVING

Expected result: children and families have equitable access to quality social and health services, nurturing care, and protection from adversity. Key results in 2023 include:

- National routine immunization coverage increased by four points thanks to continuous health system strengthening.
- 17,000 active users of parenting app Bebo and ensured sustainability of Parenting Helpline offering counseling services
- Services for foster care families strengthened and over 500.000 people reached through social media campaign, to increase the interest of new foster families.



First web platform with information on health services and routine childhood immunization in one place launched.

DEVELOPMENT FOR FLOURISHING

Expected result: children and young people develop and flourish through quality, trauma-informed and inclusive education, protection, and participation. Key results in 2023 include:

- 1,000 professionals and development of national action plan set the foundations for improving adolescent mental health.
- Around 1,000 children and youth participated in skills building programmes and created 139 products, policies, and community actions.
- 69 additional school psychologists, judges, prosecutors, and mediators acquired trauma-informed knowledge, through training of trainers, thus ensuring sustainability.



Young people awarded seed funds to implement digital solutions to protect water, air, soil and energy resources.

EQUITY AND EMPOWERMENT

Expected result: child-centered enabling environment that advances children's rights and addresses the effects of poverty, adversity, and exclusion. Results in 2023 include:

- 80 plans for optimizing the primary school network and a new funding framework developed in consultation with municipal and national stakeholders.
- Critical evidence and policy reform guidance generated to improve immunization and home visiting services.
- Policy framework established to integrate Misinformation Management System in Ministry of Health.



Need for reforming primary education funding and school network optimization endorsed and included in the national Fiscal Strategy.

REAFFIRMING COMMITMENTS TO CHILD RIGHTS

KEY FACTS

Find out more about the Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

KIDS TAKEOVER THE ASSEMBLY

"Ladies and gentlemen MPs, I am opening the Parliament Session ["Children take over the Assembly"](#) – Anisija Ugrinovska, in the role of the President of the Assembly of North Macedonia, officially opened the session dedicated to children's rights where some 50 children across the country, led the discussion on their most pressing issues and concerns. The event was organized on World Children's Day, to mark 30 years since North Macedonia ratified the CRC and it was an opportunity for the Assembly to reaffirm its cross-party commitment to work towards realizing child rights.



BEING A FOSTER PARENT MEANS CARING FOR A CHILD AS PART OF THEIR OWN FAMILY



Majlinda and her husband Doncho are among the few carers in North Macedonia fostering babies. For a period of couple of months, they ensure the baby grows up in a loving family environment while the system finds a permanent solution such as reuniting the child with their biological family or finding an adoption family. [Find out more about UNICEF support to alternative family based care.](#)

Foster and kinship care, together with small group homes, have become the main family-like alternatives for children without parental care following the successful deinstitutionalization of children from the large-scale institutions in 2019

WHY PRIMARY SCHOOL RESOURCES NEED TO BE REORGANIZED

Zivko independently learns side by side with his peers at the primary school "Risto Shuklev" in v. Negorci, thanks to the resourcefulness of the school to find solutions to improve accessibility. However, most primary schools have insufficient funds for recurrent costs of updating and keeping facilities in good condition and enabling inclusion of all children. UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Education and Science, municipalities, local school communities, students, parents and teachers to develop detailed municipal plans which will adjust the school network in line with the students' population, ensure a better allocation of staff and create adequate conditions for learning. UNICEF also supported

overhauling the system of financing schools, to ensure provision of adequate conditions for learning in every school and efficient use of resources.



Only 13 municipalities (16%) in the country meet the legal standard of classes with at least 20 students. - 43% of children in satellite schools are in small classes that combine children of different grades, resulting in suboptimal learning

PATRIZIA DIGIOVANNI

UNICEF Representative in North Macedonia

2023 marked an important year for children in the country – it was a year to celebrate 30 years since the country ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and 30 years since UNICEF officially established cooperation after the country became an independent state.

As we reflect on the progress achieved for children, we want to thank the government and all partners for their commitment to ensure every child has a better future and a fair chance to develop their full potential.



TACKLING DRUGS AND ORGANIZED CRIME NATIONALLY AND BEYOND

ACTION AGAINST CORRUPTION AND ECONOMIC CRIME



To strengthen the asset recovery capacities of the relevant authorities from North Macedonia, UNODC has supported the development of Fast Action Response Guide (FARG) on asset recovery. The guide provides relevant national authorities with a simple tool enabling them to quickly have an overview of the legal and operational elements that need to be considered to conduct criminal and parallel financial investigations.

The developed guide will enable the relevant practitioners to identify more efficiently the practical options available to them upon detection of an offense and to determine the appropriate actions, resources, and tools needed to conduct the investigations and recover the proceeds of crime. The guide is focused on the specific legal, regulatory, and operational needs required to effectively seize assets with a view to their future

confiscation. To that end, the guide outlines the steps that will need to be taken at the operational level, cross-referencing it with the relevant legal and regulatory provisions.

The asset recovery process is complex, resource-intensive, and time-consuming work for specialized practitioners. It requires permanent cooperation and coordination among the relevant national authorities (e.g., intelligence agencies, law enforcement authorities, and prosecutors), as well as with their foreign counterparts. Efforts are often inhibited by, among others, the challenge of identifying the proceeds and instrumentalities of crime, overcoming inconsistent or cumbersome legal requirements that may exist nationally or across borders, and the lack of coordination and cooperation locally and internationally. Many of these challenges can be mitigated with a consistent and harmonized approach at the national level with existing legislation and regulations.

This activity was conducted as a part of the national "Strategy for strengthening the capacities for conducting financial investigation and asset recovery 2021-2023", which implementation is coordinated by the Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Good Governance Policies, through the National Commission in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Strategy, with the support of UNODC.

HOW UNODC WORKS

KEY RESULT

UNODC implemented 16 national and regional conferences, workshops, trainings, and simulations involving 128 multidisciplinary stakeholders from North Macedonia. The country now possesses enhanced capacity for victim-centered and trauma-informed identification, investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of trafficking in person cases and smuggling of migrants, coupled with improved protection and assistance at the national level.

RESPONSES TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MIGRANT SMUGGLING

Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section supports countries and the international community in developing and implementing effective responses to human trafficking and migrant smuggling, in line with international law and within full respect for human rights.

Sofce Gavrilova Efremova, has been active in the judiciary in North Macedonia for more than 11 years. For the past six years, she has worked as a criminal judge in a specialized department that handles case of organized crime and corruption.

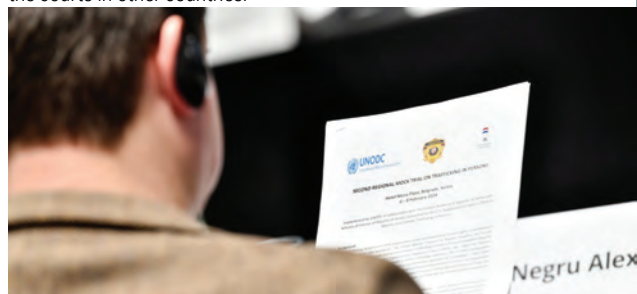
We are constantly dealing with cases of human trafficking. We are seeing an increase in cases involving children, especially those that involve their parents or other relatives. There are also trafficking cases that are committed online and through the use of social media.

As a court that deals with cases of organized crime, it is very important for us to cooperate with international organizations, such as UNODC. The experts there help us to improve our knowledge in the field of human trafficking.

This is important because this crime is very specific and different from other forms of crime. We are dealing with young people and children and need to be very careful in our approach to working with them.

The cooperation is also very helpful because through the events UNODC organizes, we get to meet other stakeholders and our counterparts from other countries. This way we learn how other countries respond to the crime of human trafficking. We have a chance to meet and exchange experiences with colleagues and share knowledge.

These events are essential for making contacts. In some cases we need to request legal mutual assistance from another country. Sometimes a victim has returned home and we need to arrange a testimony via video link, and for this we need to cooperate with the courts in other countries.



KEY RESULTS

SECURING SKIES AND BORDERS A DYNAMIC APPROACH TO COMBATING CRIME

Since 2020, UNODC has been leading the process of establishing and operationalizing joint airport inter-agency groups composed of Joint Airport Interdiction Task Forces (JAITFs) focusing on passengers and Air Cargo Control Units (ACCU) focusing on cargo at the international airports of Skopje, Sarajevo and Belgrade the framework of the joint EU-UNODC action on promoting rule of law and good governance through targeted border control measures at ports and airports in South-Eastern Europe, generously funded by the European Union. The action is implemented by the UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme (CCP) and UNODC-INTERPOL-WCO Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP) in cooperation with the Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe and is aimed at enhancing the capacities of authorities in the Western Balkans to fight organized crime by supporting more effective and coordinated responses to illicit trafficking implemented by border law enforcement at land and port border crossing points and international airports in the region.

In North Macedonia, the first project led AIRCOP/CCP airport inter-agency group named the Border Interagency Unit (BIU) was officially opened in April 2022 at the Skopje international airport and is a recognized entity within the security structure of the country.



Since the beginning of the action, UNODC has been supporting the border police and customs officers to be part of the inter-agency groups with continuous capacity building, mentorship and boosting regional cooperation. As part of this support, UNODC conducted a joint one-week mentoring visit to the BIU at Skopje airport in March, delivered together with WCO and the Customs Administration of the Czech Republic. During this activity, in cooperation with Customs, the BIU seized 43 kg of gold jewelry from a passenger arriving on a flight from Istanbul. With overall estimate of 2,3 mil. Euro of seized goods, the seizure is registered as the biggest one in North Macedonia.

TACKLING FINANCING OF TERRORISM AND MONEY LAUNDERING



The UNODC's project assisted North Macedonia's judges and prosecutors to more effectively investigate, arrest, prosecute, convict and disrupt terrorists, terrorist networks and organized crime groups linked to Money laundering. Throughout the course, participants are trained using localized scenarios reflecting the issues that would typically arise in North Macedonia's jurisdiction.

Course materials also incorporate the domestic legislative framework used when prosecuting and seeking convictions of terrorists and terrorist networks. Prosecutors can better establish money laundering and terrorist financing offenses in court, and judges are better equipped to adjudicate such cases.

COMBATING ILLICIT FINANCIAL FLOWS RELATED TO ORGANIZED CRIME

In a bid to fortify the collective defenses of Member States against criminal threats stemming from organized crime, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) conducted a series of comprehensive training courses to enhance participants' skills in combating money laundering (ML) and disrupting organized crime groups (OCGs).

UNODC equipped participants with advanced skills and knowledge to enhance their effectiveness in combating money laundering and disrupting organized crime groups, with a focus on analyzing parallel financial investigations and utilizing financial profiles, identifying indicators of effectiveness in disrupting criminal activities, fostering international cooperation and law enforcement efforts.



COMBATING DRUGS & ORGANIZED CRIME



UNODC continues to liaise with the national and international counterparts in the area of drug trafficking, drug treatment, and drug prevention through numerous initiatives at both strategic and operational level, including research of the latest trends and modus operandi of the Balkan route and organised crime groups involved in the illegal trafficking of heroin, cocaine, cannabis and ATS and future planning on LE capacity building in the area of NPS and the threat of fentanyl. Through the UNODC Paris Pact Initiative, the country is actively involved in the effort to

fight against drug trafficking by providing information for the Country Fact Sheets and through data sharing for the Annual Report Questionnaires, Individual Drug Seizures, and World Drug Report. The country is strengthening its strategic capacities through the relevant institutions via active participation at the Paris Pact Initiative Global Expert Working Groups (EWG's) on IV Pillars of the Vienna Declaration and at the Policy Consultative Group meeting (PCGM) where the EWG's recommendations are being endorsed.

TACKLING ONE OF THE MOST PRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL HOT-SPOTS IN SKOPJE

LOCAL ENGAGEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT ADDRESS HAZARDOUS CONTAMINATION



In Skopje, buried beneath the earth, lies a silent threat: 50,000 tons of hazardous lindane, contaminating the city's soil, water, and air. Goran Stojanovski, a farmer from Drachevo, was always fearful of receiving the question from his customers: "Where was this produced?" He tests his products regularly, and the quality of his produce is always good, but as his farm is only 5 km away from OHIS, his customers sometimes refuse to buy from him. "I can understand them as we cannot ignore the danger lurking beneath our feet. So it is good that finally this issue is being resolved," Goran remarked. The clean-up efforts, now supported by the EU and the Government of North Macedonia, will contribute to solving the longstanding problem of exposure to this toxic substance for the densely populated urban areas in the capital. After previous preparatory infrastructure activities, UNOPS organized the effective removal of 525 tons of HCH waste and 210 HCH contaminated soil in 2023, with remediation efforts set to continue in 2024 with further support from the EU.

HOW UNOPS WORKS

SUPPORT TO EU ACCESSION OF NORTH MACEDONIA

The project "Support to European Accession of North Macedonia," funded by Sweden and the Government of North Macedonia over 14 months, aims to facilitate North Macedonia's accession to the European Union. It focuses on activities supporting the bilateral screenings, aligning legislation with EU standards, providing technical assistance, and advancing fundamental reforms. The project seeks to strengthen institutional capacities, enhance the functions of the Secretariat for European Affairs, promote good governance, combat corruption, and improve public communication to support North Macedonia's EU integration efforts. Pollution and human mobility.



Representatives of CSO's discussing modalities for their participation in the EU accession process

EU 4 CLEAN AIR

The EU for Clean Air Project, funded with EUR 10 million by the European Union, aims to improve air quality in North Macedonia's four urban centers over 36 months. It addresses health and economic impacts of pollution, supporting green development priorities. The project contributes to meeting EU accession criteria and UN Sustainable Development Goals, focusing on improving heating systems, procuring eco-friendly buses, planting trees, exploring preconditions for expansion of the heating network, and installing air quality monitoring stations.



Inspection to planned locations for improving heating systems.

OHIS MULTI PARTNER ENVIRONMENTAL FUND

Established to address the pressing environmental challenges posed by the former OHIS factory near Skopje, the MPEF aims to support the Government's efforts in remediating this critical pollution hotspot. By mobilizing financial resources from both national and international sources, the MPEF serves as a crucial financial and management tool for the systematic cleanup of hazardous Lindane contamination at the site. Through activities such as excavation, transport, and disposal of waste using thermal decomposition techniques in line with international best practices, the MPEF aims to eliminate or minimize the severe impact of the contaminated site on ecosystems and human health.



HCH waste and contaminated soil being prepared for transport to incineration sites.

KEY RESULTS

KEY FACTS

500+
civil servants trained
on the EU accession
process.

15
journalists trained
on reporting on the
EU accession process

103
legislative
documents prepared
in support of EU
harmonization.

735
tons of HCH waste
and contaminated
soil remediated.

Reporting from the spot - the importance of media in the EU Accession Process

The coverage of the EU is inherently difficult for journalism, especially due to complex accession processes hard to grasp by ordinary people. It is also challenging to convey news which will significantly impact our everyday life, decisions which can affect a community in a positive or negative way, or measures that will take years to enter into force. It is a bit different when you are able to report directly from the spot, said Nermin Mulaki, a seasoned journalist, one of the 15 journalists who underwent training for reporting on the EU accession process in Skopje and in Brussels. "This experience has been eye-opening. Meeting with EU officials and diplomats, hearing their insights firsthand, it's given me a new lens through which to view our role in this process." Indeed, each conversation, each encounter, was a testament to the power of journalism to translate a very complicated message into simple words, to bring closer to their public the complexities of the EU accession

process, but also generate public debate for the details that matter. And as they returned home, armed with knowledge and inspiration, these journalists knew that they carried with them not just stories, but the responsibility for providing trustworthy information on their country's path towards EU membership.



Together for clean air!



Air pollution touches everything. In the city of Skopje, North Macedonia, Ana woke up to another foggy morning. As she looked out her window, she couldn't help but notice the thick blanket of smog enveloping the city. Ana remembered the

countless times she had coughed due to polluted air. And how she cannot enjoy her morning runs during the winter, due to the high levels of air pollution.

The EU for Clean Air Project offers support to four cities, Skopje, Tetovo, Bitola and Kumanovo in addressing air pollution. With initiatives to introduce clean heating sources in public buildings and creating green belts there's a spark of optimism for a healthier future. As the Minister of Environment and Physical Planning Ms. Shukova said when the project was launched, "Only together can we achieve the goals and reduce air pollution." However, the 10 million Euros support from the EU through this project will contribute to a certain extent, but will not solve the air pollution problems. That is why combating air pollution needs to be a constant, joint effort of institutions, organizations and citizens. As we all breathe the same air.

MICHELA TELATIN

UNOPS Representative

Our initiatives in 2023 were two-fold, focusing on addressing environmental challenges and supporting North Macedonia's EU accession process. By consolidating expertise in key reform areas, we bolstered the country's readiness and positioned it favorably for EU membership negotiations. We continued to facilitate the remediation of the hazardous waste site in the former OHIS factory, and initiated a project to reduce air pollution in four major cities.

These endeavors not only enhance livelihoods, but also foster a cleaner and healthier environment. We are proud to collaborate with the EU, the Kingdom of Sweden, and the Government of North Macedonia to address pressing needs and contribute to the strategic priorities outlined in the current UN Cooperation Framework.



MAKING WOMEN'S VOICES HEARD IN LOCAL DECISION MAKING IN NORTH MACEDONIA

STRENGTHENING THE ADVOCACY AND NETWORKING CAPACITIES OF LOCAL WOMEN



©Akcija Zdruzenska

Lejla Asanovska, a young woman from Mal Papradnik, a village consisting of a Turkish minority in Centar Zhupa, was among the first activists who recognized the need for women's voices to resonate in local decision-making. Supported by the local grassroots organization Radika De and civil society organization Akcija Zdruzenska, she led the establishment of the Women's Center, a symbol of empowerment in her community. Initially met with modest attendance, the Center soon became a rallying point for women from diverse backgrounds, united by shared challenges and aspirations. Through collaborative efforts and supported by initiatives like UN Women's project "Promoting Gender-responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia," thousands of women across 25 villages gained access to vital resources and networking opportunities. For Asanovska, the Center represents more than just bricks and mortar, it embodies solidarity and progress.

HOW UN WOMEN WORKS

NATIONAL PLANNING AND BUDGETING

Between 2018-2023, UN Women was implementing the project, "Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia" funded by Switzerland and Sweden. Its goal was the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups, through mainstreaming gender, at all stages of national and local policymaking and budgeting processes. From 2023, UN Women is implementing the project "Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia – Phase 2," funded by Switzerland, and the programme "Promoting Gender Responsive Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia" funded by Sweden. They focus on supporting gender mainstreaming in fiscal policies and budgetary processes, enhancing capacities of line ministries and state institutions in gender-responsive policymaking, promoting gender-responsive budgeting tools in municipalities, advocating for gender equality accountability in Parliament, and strengthening civil society organizations.



Representatives from Akcija Zdruzenska discussing the needs, priorities and challenges facing women in Municipality of Centar Zhupa.

GENDER EQUALITY FACILITY

The goal of the project "Gender mainstreaming advisory services to North Macedonia's administration at central level" – Gender Equality Facility (GEF) funded by Sweden, is to support the Government of North Macedonia in transposing the EU Gender Equality acquis and facilitating North Macedonia's accession to the European Union. It is focused on key initiatives such as the National Programme for Adoption of the Acquis and EU-funded IPA programmes, enhancing gender mainstreaming in planning and implementation processes. Main outcomes included are equipping relevant units and decision-making bodies with skills for gender-inclusive programming and empowering national gender mechanisms to mainstream gender in planning processes and implement EU gender equality legislation. Through policy dialogue, technical expertise, and strategic partnerships, the GEF project supports the implementation of gender equality standards and legislation in line with EU regulations and international obligations. This support now continues as part of the programme "Promoting Gender Responsive Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia" funded by Sweden.



Participants working on gender data visualization at the Gender Data Bootcamp in Izmir, Türkiye.

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The programme "Implementing Norms, Changing Minds" funded by the European Union aimed to achieve three objectives: aligning legislative and policy frameworks with international standards to combat violence against women and discrimination, promoting societal attitudes to prevent gender-based violence, and empowering women, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds, to access and advocate for quality services. The programme was implemented primarily through women's organizations, especially those serving disadvantaged groups, aiming to create an environment conducive to gender equality and the protection of women's rights. Following the programme's implementation, North Macedonia amended its Criminal Code in February 2023 to further align with the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention. This has increased protection for women against various forms of violence.



Closing event of the regional EAW programme "Implementing Norms, Changing Minds" in North Macedonia with partners and beneficiaries.

KEY RESULTS

KEY FACTS

42

state administration members trained on Gender Responsive Budgeting.

277

public administration representatives and municipal councilors from 33 municipalities strengthened their capacities on GRB.

50

researchers, journalists, gender advocates, and activists have increased their capacities to use gender data.

40

representatives from CSOs and municipalities from Albania and North Macedonia exchanged knowledge and experience on engendering participatory budgeting processes.

Every hand extended to a woman survivor is a life saved

Stojne Miteva's journey embodies resilience and dedication in the fight against domestic violence. As a psychologist at the Shelter and Counselling Centre managed by Sky Plus, her efforts have been aided by the EU-funded and UN Women-implemented programme, "Implementing Norms, Changing Minds." With this aid, the Center expanded its services, by hiring more specialists and increased its capacity to house more women and children fleeing violent situations. Miteva, a journalist and civil society activist, currently runs North Macedonia's largest shelter centre, providing a safe refuge for up to 12 women and their children. In a world where victims often navigate their paths alone, the Shelter and Counselling



Centre serves as a beacon of hope, thanks to Miteva's persistent commitment and the support of initiatives aimed at ending violence against women.

Data enthusiasts to lead transformative change



Stefan Tanevski, a teaching assistant, envisioned a future where his newfound knowledge could enlighten his students, uncovering the impact of gender data in the classroom. For

Elena Kochoska, a gender and disability advocate, gender data emerged as a potent tool for social change, shedding light on societal inequities and paving the way for a future where every individual, regardless of their differences, enjoys equal rights. The Gender Data Bootcamp created a wave of empowerment among its participants, causing a wave of change for its participants fostering data literacy and harnessing the power of gender data to achieve gender equality. With a broad group of local activists, scholars, and civil society members, the bootcamp became a hub for collaboration and skill sharing. Participants delved into the domain of data analysis, drawing on ideas from a variety of sources, including the state statistical office. They refined their storytelling skills in engaging sessions, translating raw data into appealing narratives that highlighted gender inequities and areas for improvement.

VESNA IVANOVIKJ-CASTAREDE

UN Women North Macedonia Head of Office/Programme Specialist

We, at UN Women reaffirm our unwavering commitment to further advancing women's empowerment and gender equality in the country. Deeply rooted gender stereotypes and related challenges persist, as well as prevalent violence against women and gender-based violence, while women's representation in decision-making positions is low. We welcome the country's commitments towards achieving gender equality and gender parity, ratification of important conventions and the formulation of action plans are very important steps, so we encourage further improvement and investment to have sustainable progress. Our continued activities are focused on gender responsive governance and budgets, policy integration, alignment with EU standards on gender equality, prevention of violence against women, and empowering women in fields historically occupied mostly by men. We work with the government and civil society to achieve meaningful change, ensuring that women's rights and empowerment in every field of life remain at the top of national agendas.



HEALTH IS A HUMAN RIGHT

WHO PROMOTES HEALTH FOR ALL



Zurija Memedova, woman activist from BIOM Skopje, said about our community forums on mental health in children and adolescents: “Engagement of female leaders in community-based actions concerning children’s mental health and immunization is decisive. We raise awareness in the entire community and advocate for adequate solutions. We join every aspect of communal life, having direct access to the youngest population in way of motherhood, teaching, advising, administrative work and leadership. WHO community forums at municipal level empower local leaders for community-driven change from the bottom up. By being vocal ourselves, we give voice to our communities!”

HOW WHO WORKS

STRENGTHENING UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

Recent Primary Health Care intervention in North Macedonia, supported by WHO, now enables GPs to diagnose and prescribe medications for common conditions, reducing referrals. This reform, coupled with training programs, aims to enhance efficiency and accessibility in primary care. It is a significant step towards evidence-based interventions and basal quality standards in health service delivery. With the Ministry of Health of the Republic of North Macedonia we also prioritize patient safety and care quality evidenced by the completion in July 2023 of the comprehensive National Plan for Patient Safety, aiming to enhance patient safety nationwide. Subsequent capacity-building training delivered by WHO provide healthcare professionals and managers with the necessary knowledge and tools to strengthen patient safety practices in North Macedonia.



National Health Forum 2023.

HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

WHO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and over 40 stakeholders, have developed a comprehensive National Action Plan for Health Security spanning 2024-2025, integrating previous risk assessments and adopting a “One Health” approach. We now have in place a coordinated emergency response to health threats. The Preparation, Readiness, Response, and Recovery Plan for pandemics caused by respiratory pathogens has been established, with a focus on prioritizing pathogens within the framework of Health Emergency Preparedness and Response. As a direct result of our work Biosafety and Biosecurity Action Plans have been implemented in 11 Public Health laboratories, thereby reducing the risk of laboratory-acquired infections and improving diagnostic accuracy. In the public health laboratories we have introduced the Laboratory Information Management System, enhancing real-time data tracking and investigation management within the e-Health framework.



Biosafety and biosecurity action plans implemented in 11 public health laboratories.

BETTER HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Substantial progress was made in enhancing the skills and knowledge of health care professionals and organizations in vaccine surveillance, vaccine coverage and management, including for COVID-19 vaccines. Two extensive catch-up “Door-to-door” campaigns were carried out to improve access to immunization services and the overall vaccination coverage. This campaign took place in 40 different municipalities, in mixed urban and rural areas. Over 5,000 doses of previously missed routine vaccines, 2,630 seasonal flu vaccines and COVID-19 vaccines were administered. To raise awareness and understanding about the importance of immunization more than 14,000 brochures were disseminated to people’s homes within communities.



Door-to-door vaccination campaigns

KEY FACTS

803

health care professionals were trained in the implementation of five clinical protocols for prevalent ambulatory care-sensitive conditions, including 623 primary care doctors and 179 pharmacists.

562

primary health care professionals had been trained in using WHO's own Mental Health Gap Action Plan Intervention Guide.

Over

45,000

children and adolescents positively impacted by mental health community forums.

Over

5,000

doses of missed routine vaccines administered.

2,630

seasonal flu vaccines and COVID-19 vaccines administered.

HOW WHO WORKS

MENTAL HEALTH IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

WHO's collaboration with UNICEF in North Macedonia has significantly advanced mental health outcomes for children and adolescents in 2023 through our joint program implementation. This effort was crowned by the completion of the country's first comprehensive Assessment and Mapping Report on mental health services, laying the groundwork for

a national multisectoral strategic plan to enhance mental health outcomes. Furthermore, WHO organized the training and supervision of 563 primary health care professionals accompanied by a nationwide series of community forums to address prevalent mental health issues, garnering support from municipal institutions.



ANNE JOHANSEN

WHO Special Representative to North Macedonia

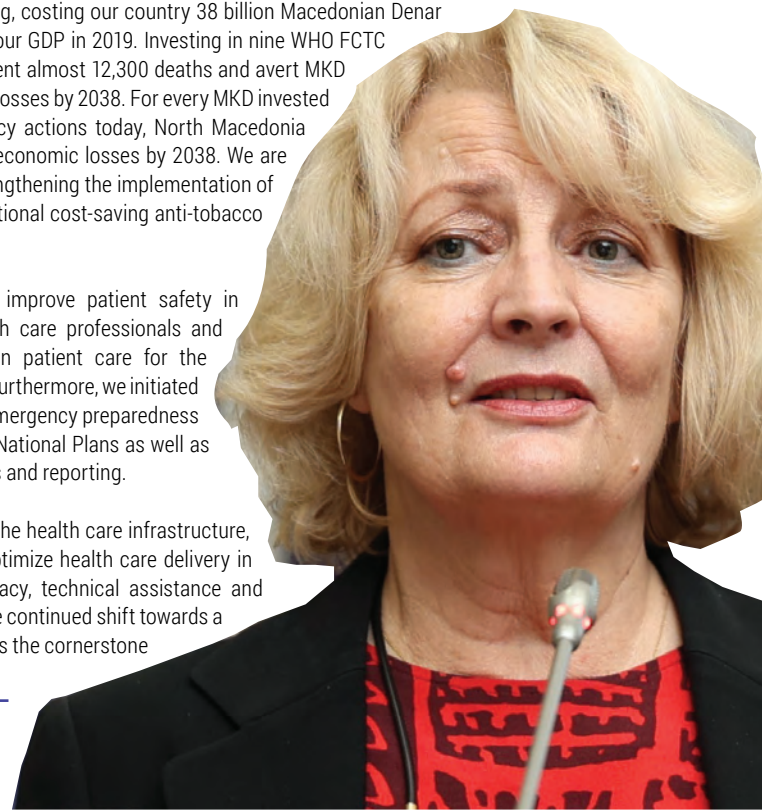
Leaving no one behind is what drives our work, day in day out.

In 2023, we supported a number of activities aim at strengthening the stewardship and governance functions of the Ministry of Health. We provided ongoing technical support to the Ministry as part of its effort to improve the performance of the health system, including the launch of efforts to establish planning and management system for human resources for health. In the area of immunization, we supported the Ministry's effort to increase in overall vaccination rates in 2023 as well as in the number of trained health care providers administering vaccines. In addition, we raised awareness of the importance of mental health and wellbeing of children and adolescents at the municipal level and equipped primary health care providers with WHO's original mhGAP diagnostic tool for efficient monitoring and intervention.

Having fielded a behavioral insight survey, we learned of alarmingly high rates of tobacco and nicotine use in the country, which led us to complete the study of the economic cost of tobacco to the country's economy. The economic impact of tobacco use in North Macedonia is staggering, costing our country 38 billion Macedonian Denar (MKD) annually, equivalent to 5.6 percent of our GDP in 2019. Investing in nine WHO FCTC tobacco control policy actions now can prevent almost 12,300 deaths and avert MKD 131 billion in health care costs and economic losses by 2038. For every MKD invested in the nine WHO FCTC tobacco-control policy actions today, North Macedonia will gain back MKD 19 in averted costs and economic losses by 2038. We are now supporting the Ministry of Health in strengthening the implementation of existing anti-tobacco laws and initiating additional cost-saving anti-tobacco measures.

WHO also supported concerted action to improve patient safety in hospitals. As a result of our actions, health care professionals and hospitals administration are now trained in patient care for the purpose of improving health care outcomes. Furthermore, we initiated activities to lay the foundation of a resilient emergency preparedness health system, putting in place an adequate National Plans as well as nationwide standards for laboratory practices and reporting.

Collectively, these efforts aim to strengthen the health care infrastructure, to improve the workforce capacity and to optimize health care delivery in North Macedonia. Through strategic advocacy, technical assistance and inclusive consultations, our work supports the continued shift towards a modern primary health care system serving as the cornerstone of a health system that leaves no one behind.





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