



Republic of North Macedonia and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025

Joint Workplan 2022

1. Country Context¹

Throughout 2021, COVID-19 continued to stretch institutional capacities and finances, with a lingering high toll on public health, but a reviving economy. The continued delays with the start of EU accession negotiations were disappointing and led to decrease in support for EU integration, both in the region and in the country, though with differences across the political and ethnic spectrums.

Despite that, the country has continued to play a positive role in the region, including through the high-level Prespa Forum Dialogue and “Open Balkan” initiative aimed at creating single market of goods, services, people and capital for Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia. Insisting that this initiative is not a substitute, but a booster to the EU integration, the leaders of the three countries and the EU continue to encourage their Western Balkans neighbours to join the initiative.

Progress was made with legal and institutional reforms and widely recognized fundamental rights and freedoms, but corruption in the country persisted², intensifying the citizens’ distrust in institutions and political parties, with low scores against key governance indicators (political stability, rule of law and accountability). The dynamics of the policy and legislative process has accelerated, ensuring compliance with key international and EU acquis requirements. The country has initiated the process of developing a long-term sustainable development vision (National Development Strategy) and other policies through consensus-building that could restore legitimacy and public trust in institutions.

Local elections (October 2021) resulted in significant gains in favour of the opposition and leading to the resignation of the incumbent prime minister and endangering of the coalition’s parliamentary majority. The revamped cabinet under the new leadership assumed office in early 2022, with prospects of finalizing the term in 2024 largely depending on the immediate ability of the Government to successfully conduct negotiations with Bulgaria, its management the intensifying energy crisis and response to other acute challenges.

In economic terms, 2021 started with a continued recession due to the spill-over effect of the lockdowns across Europe at the end of 2020. The economy went out of recession in the second quarter with a strong growth that continued in the next quarter though at much more moderate pace. Annual growth projections of IFIs, the National Bank and the Government for 2021 range between 3.9%-4.6%. The Government response measures, and social safety net helped alleviate the impact on most vulnerable groups and businesses, however increasing the public debt substantially.

The labour market has picked up, resuming the declining unemployment trend, but the growing youth unemployment (2020-2021) is a critical issue to follow up. The recent labour market reform has set Sunday as a non-working day and increase of the minimal wage was agreed. Both measures are predominantly considered controversial by economists, especially having in mind that the lingering economic effects of the COVID19 and the mismatch between the minimal wage and (low) productivity levels.

The health and education sector continued to suffer due to scarce human resources and modest digital capacities. The vaccination rate remains low, especially among the younger population. Yet, the education sector managed to switch swiftly to online classes and re-establish physical presence in 2021, though impact

¹ Based on [2021 UN Common Country Analysis \(CCA\) update](#)

² In early 2022, [Transparency International Index](#) showed improved ranking of North Macedonia up for 24 levels (87/180)

on learning outcomes and mental health is yet to be measured and fully addressed. Despite challenges, important reforms were started in health and education in 2021.

The 2022 growth projections resemble 2021, with increasing inflation and energy crisis among the key risks that may impact the living standard in the country. The latter also impacts public finances, though gradual fiscal consolidation is expected in 2022. The economic recovery relies highly on the ambitious investment programme, though remaining under threat due to traditionally low capacity to implement capital expenditures.

The country's ambitious pledge for National Development Contribution (NDC) of 51% reduction of GHG emissions by 2030, the proclamation of a new National Park Shar Mountain and the announcements of sizable investments in new renewable energy capacities were the highlight achievements of 2021, albeit partially offset by the challenges with ensuring sufficient electricity supply due to the outdated and mostly coal-based energy production in the country. Several sizable new investments in renewable energy production were announced – five new or extended wind parks (Bogdanci, Bogoslovec, Demir Kapija, Stip, Kumanovo area), two new solar power plants (Stip "Stipio" and Oslomej) and a construction of the new major station in Ohrid, which is a key component of the electricity interconnection between North Macedonia and Albania. The country has increased the overall area under protection by 4.4%.

There were some positive developments in improving wastewater treatment, but major cities, including Skopje, remain uncovered. Some 26% of country's population is covered with wastewater treatment services at present. Activities for finalisation of Bitola, Kichevo and Tetovo wastewater treatment plants are ongoing, with EU support; and three major investments in new Wastewater Treatment Plants (Skopje, Stip and Veles) as well as a connection for Vinica from existing Kochani wastewater treatment plant have been announced, also supported by EU.

Addressing solid waste issues, disaster risk reduction and protection of waters, Prespa and Ohrid lakes in particular, remains critical. On solid waste, limited progress was made in 2020-2021 period, except for the development of the National Waste Management Plan 2020–2026, which is pending approval, and the announcement of waste sorting and processing plants in East and Northeast region.

Challenges remain in the systemic approach to manage disaster risk in the country, including by anticipating and addressing global challenges. Meanwhile, the revived economic activity and the cold weather have returned the high pollution in larger cities, especially in Skopje, while the new local Government is yet to demonstrate environment-related commitments presented in the local elections campaign.

2. About the Joint Workplan

Joint Workplans (JWPs) are an annual tool that operationalizes the Republic of North Macedonia and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 (SDCF) – the key strategic document that guides the work of UN development system entities in North Macedonia.

All UN entities' country programmes (whether already developed or still to be developed) derive from SDCF and are consolidated annually in joint workplans, one per SDCF outcome (see below).

SDCF strategic priorities and outcomes

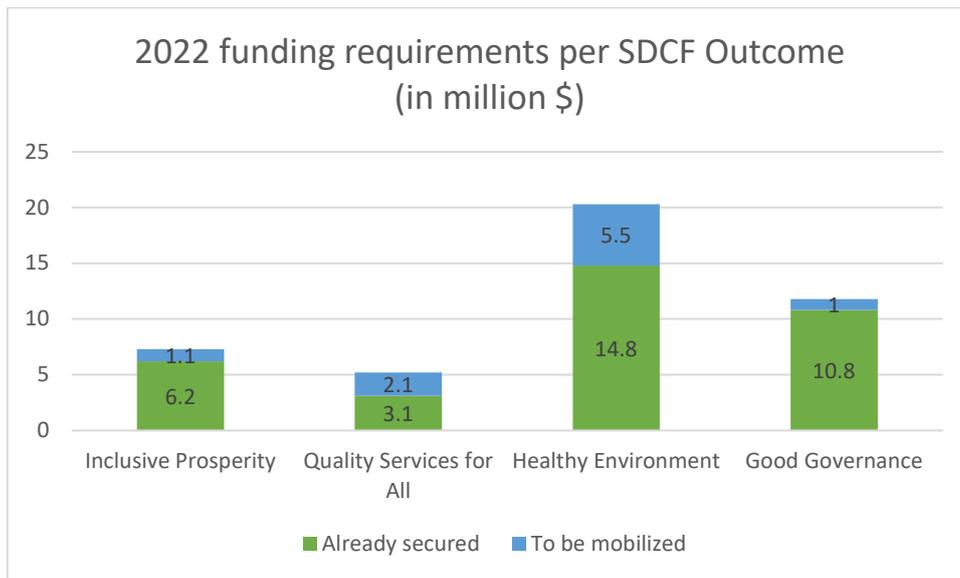
| SDGs | Strategic priority | Outcomes by 2025 |
|---------------------|---|--|
| Prosperity & People | 1. Sustained and inclusive economic and social development | 1. The living standard of all people in North Macedonia is improved through equal access to decent work and productive employment generated by an inclusive and innovative business ecosystem |
| | | 2. 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. |
| Planet SDGs | 2. Climate action, natural resources and disaster risk management | 3. 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 |

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Peace SDGs | 3. Transparent and accountable democratic governance | 4. People in North Macedonia 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 |
|-----------------------|---|---|

The 2022 JWPs thus consolidate the activities that will be undertaken by 17 UN entities during 2022. The four outcomes and 19 outputs are implemented through 195 sub-outputs (sum of activities aimed to achieve certain result) as planned by UN entities through their ongoing and pipeline projects or programmes.

2022 funding requirements

The total estimated budget for all activities is \$44.7 million, of which \$34.9 million (78%) is already secured and \$9.7 million (22%) still needs to be mobilized. This is initial estimated budget, that will slightly change, once 2021 accounts are closed and unspent budgets transferred into 2022 workplans. The total amounts will be adjusted throughout the year, and with the mid-year progress review.



Review and monitoring of the JWPs

SDCF and JWPs are digitized through the [UN INFO](#), which is the online planning, monitoring and reporting platform. The UN INFO reflects the UN development system's effort to improve coherence, transparency and accountability, and to better address the needs and priorities of UN Member States.

The tool encourages more regular monitoring of joint workplans so that all development activities are on track to deliver results. This enables senior leadership to make corrections to programming or shift resources in real-time. The public can also see a full picture of UN development system activities through public dashboards linked to UNCT websites.

OUTCOME 1: INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY

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| Corresponding outcome: | By 2025, the living standard of all people in North Macedonia is improved through equal access to decent work and productive employment generated by an inclusive and innovative business ecosystem. |
| Chairing United Nations entity: | ILO |
| Results Group Members: | FAO, ILO, UNDP, UN Women, IOM, UNHCR, UNESCO, ITU, |
| National Partners: | Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy; Ministry of Education and Science, Employment Services Agency; Fund for Innovation and Technological Development; Trade Unions; Chambers of Commerce; Economic and Social Councils; Employers organizations; Farmers Associations, Producer organizations |
| Work plan duration: | 1 year |
| Anticipated start/end dates: | 1 January 2022 – 31 December 2022 |

SUMMARY OF 2022 ACTIVITIES

(for detailed activities of the UN entities under this Outcome, please review the attached excel file)

Throughout 2022, UN will continue with interventions aimed at accelerating equal access to quality job opportunities within a conducive business environment that supports innovation and inclusion.

To achieve this, UN will focus on the **private sector development**, by supporting the growth and job creation within SMEs, making them more innovative and resilient to shocks, as well as by strengthening the skillset of workers in alignment with the modernized market needs. Interventions will be also carried out in the rural economy, by providing a know-how for modernizing the cattle value chains, as well as in the culture and creativity industries which have been substantially affected by the COVID19 pandemic.

Within its core mandate that streamlines the **LNOB approach in all interventions**, UN will continue to increase employability of vulnerable persons by introducing contemporary life-learning models in particular for the women, youth and hard to employ people. This will include a youth guarantee to offer chances to each young woman and man to be integrated into the labour market, as well as a policy and administrative service support that will create an enabling environment to fight stereotypes and prejudice and thus include more people within the labor market (activation).

Focus will be also put on **policy environment and institutional services** in a gender-responsive, transformative and digitalized manner. This will particularly include the labour related regulations and services in line with the international labour standards, but also the social services, as part of the whole package to enhance equal access to labour market, including through existing opportunities such as social contracting and PPPs. Assistance will be provided to improve employment related administrative services and social dialogue on employment in an anticipatory and forward looking way.

UN will also support the **quality of employment** by strengthening the inspection services in the area of labour and ratification of conventions in the area of Occupational Safety and Health. Having in mind that the significant share of informal economy is one of the key economic challenges in the country, UN will assist the Government to address informalities in the HORECA sector.

Special focus will be put on enhancing the **rural economy**, focusing on the key identified challenges such as land consolidation and mobility, as well as enhancing the regulation of the animal health. Given the particularly challenging situation of the rural women, the UN will assist the Government to formulate and implement policies in a gender-sensitive and empowering way.

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| Total estimated budget (in USD):* | | \$ 7,269,460 |
| <i>* Total estimated budget includes both direct program costs and indirect support costs.</i> | | |
| Out of which: Funded | | \$ 6,187,360 |
| Unfunded | | \$ 1,082,100 |
| Estimated budget per output (in USD) | | |
| By Output: | Output 1.1. | \$ 972,643 |
| | Output 1.2. | \$ 3,530,420 |
| | Output 1.3 | \$ 1,435,067 |
| | Output 1.4 | \$ 343,838 |
| | Output 1.5 | \$ 987,492 |

OUTCOME 2: QUALITY SERVICES FOR ALL

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| Corresponding outcome: | 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. |
| Chairing United Nations entity: | UNFPA |
| Results Group Members: | IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, WHO |
| National Partners: | Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Health Institutes, Associations or Directorates; Vocational Training Institutes; Trade Union of Health Workers; Civil Society; Academia, Private Sector |
| Work plan duration: | 1 year |
| Anticipated start/end dates: | 1 January 2022 – 31 December 2022 |

SUMMARY OF 2022 ACTIVITIES

(for detailed activities of the UN entities under this Outcome, please review the attached excel file)

Building on the progress made and results achieved in 2021, UN entities in the country will continue working with national partners on improving the social and child services in the country, thus contributing to improved quality and achieving universal access to the social services for all citizens.

In **health**, UN entities will support the implementation of the national primary health care reform through reorganization and strengthening of the quality of health services through policy analysis, design, testing and implementation, as well as capacity building and awareness raising activities, at systemic level, but also focus on specific segments of the system, including support to development of regulatory framework and capacity development of health workforce at PHC level will also be provided. Implementation of the national mental health strategy, integration of mental health in PHC, including development of tools for health workers and generation of evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on mental health will also be initiated.

Maternal and newborn health will further be improved through the support on strengthening perinatal health care system - building capacities of the perinatal networks of care across the country, review of nearly missed maternal lives and review/audit of perinatal deaths and development of SRHR Action Plan.

Programmes for HIV treatment & testing, TB programme review and support to the implementation of the national action plan on hepatitis surveillance will be developed. Capacity building for improving surveillance, coverage and management of vaccines including COVID will continue during 2022 as well. Systemic level support will include strengthening the health system to address social determinants of health across the life course; health financial protection analysis and reduce health financial hardship; strengthened NCDs surveillance and monitoring, as well as strengthening national capacities for introducing health promoting schools and support to the efforts for achieving the targets of the WHO 2020 Strategy on Eliminating Cervical Cancer as a public health issue.

In **education**, UN will provide continued support in developing education policies and associated programmes conducive to safe, healthy, gender-responsive, inclusive and adequately resourced environments by supporting development of the primary education curricula, development of a new concept for general secondary education including curricula and other relevant activities. It will provide support in development and implementation of comprehensive and quality in-service and pre-service professionals' capacity building; and support the design and implementation of evidence-based communication for development initiatives in the area of education and child protection (including CWDs and minorities) as well as creation of quality and inclusive learning tools and resources (also to address COVID-19), including digital resources, that are in line with the pre-primary, primary and secondary education curricula. Efforts will continue to ensure that children left behind, including children of refugees and asylum seekers are included in the education process.

Support to the implementation of **social protection** reform will continue with activities in several areas. Integration of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers will be support through capacity building to the Centers for Social Work and other relevant entities on asylum, refugee protection and processing of vulnerable individuals and support to municipalities and private sector on improving protection opportunities for persons of concern through capacity development and operational engagement. In addition, UN will support the national partners to ensure that persons with specific needs are protected and incorporated in the national assistance programmes and provision of social protection services to vulnerable categories of migrants is improved.

Child protection remains high on the agenda of UN work in 2022. Activities will include design and deployment of services that support parents and caregivers to stimulate child development and nurturing care and prevent adversity accessible to all families and caregivers. Childcare system is strengthened to effectively address family separation, adversity and exclusion, by establishing mechanisms and services, and development of capacity of the social service

workforce. Support the further implementation of the assessment model for additional educational, health and social protection support to children and youth, based on the International Classification of Functioning (ICF) will continue as well as support to the social work case management implementation. Analyzes of multi-dimensional poverty will continue along with advocacy for policy improvements, including enhancement of the national statistical system. Evaluation on UNICEF interventions for inclusion of children with disabilities to examine the extent to which programmes supported by UNICEF will provide valuable lessons learned and would guide further programming related to inclusive education, inclusive and child-sensitive social protection, child poverty measurement and analysis and more equitable public finance for children.

Violence prevention and fight against domestic and gender-based violence continues to be high on UN agenda. Civil Society Organizations' capacities will be strengthened to promote favorable social norms, attitudes and behaviors to prevent violence against women and girls; providers of general and specialist support services, including primary health care professionals, for victims of all forms of violence will be capacitated to implement the standards enshrined in CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention. Assessment of the accessibility to (GBV/DV) essential services on national level will be carried out and technical support to the Ministries to develop IMS on VAW and DV provided. National Helplines system will be deployed. By-laws and SOPs for comprehensive and coordinated multi-sectoral response to VAW and DV, with participation of all relevant partners, including CSOs will be supported, as well as capacity building resources and mechanisms for relevant public institutions and CSOs will be provided to improve comprehensive VAW/DV services in a multi-sectoral coordinated manner. Programme for domestic and sexual violence perpetrators will be developed and campaigns and events to raise awareness of available services (with a focus on vulnerable groups) initiated, including targeted with journalists and editors.

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| Total estimated budget (in USD):* | \$ 5,244,493 |
| <i>* Total estimated budget includes both direct program costs and indirect support costs.</i> | |
| Out of which: Funded | \$ 3,122,985 |
| Unfunded | \$ 2,121,508 |

Estimated budget per output (in USD)

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|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| By Output: | Output 2.1 | \$ 2,361,800 |
| | Output 2.2 | \$ 1,038,000 |
| | Output 2.3 | \$ 1,110,787 |
| | Output 2.4 | \$ 733,906 |

OUTCOME 3: HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

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| Corresponding outcome: | 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. |
| Chairing United Nations entity: | UNDP |
| Results Group Members: | FAO, UNDP, UNEP, UNECE, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIDO, WHO, IOM, UNOPS, ITU, UNITAR |
| National Partners: | DPM for Economic Affairs, Ministries of Environment and Physical Planning, Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Education and Science, Health, Economy, Finance, and Culture. Further partners include the National Hydrometeorological Service, National Extension Agency, Crisis Management Centre, civil protection agencies, Institute for Public Health, Food and Veterinary Agency, City of Skopje, municipalities in the Skopje and Polog regions and municipalities around Ohrid and Prespa lakes, civil society organisations, academic institutions, schools, commercial banks and international organizations/IFIs. |
| Work plan duration: | 1 year |
| Anticipated start/end dates: | 1 January 2022 – 31 December 2022 |

SUMMARY OF 2022 ACTIVITIES

(for detailed activities of the UN entities under this Outcome, please review the attached excel file)

In the period 2021-2025, the UN entities contribution to healthy environment will focus on policy support, capacity building and community actions for low-emission development and multi-sector resilience to climate change, sustainable and inclusive management of natural resources, prevention and response to air pollution threats, effective disaster risk reduction and response, and waste reduction and efficient waste management.

On **climate change (Output 3.1)**, in 2022 the UN plans to support to country in **policy development and monitoring** (finalization of a National Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System on Climate Change, development of the National Adaptation Plan and accompanying institutional, planning and programing aspects, preparation of the 4th National communication to UNFCCC, development of National Plans on phase-out of HCFC and phase-down of HFC), in **access to finance** (favorable loans for SMEs and households for renewable energy and energy efficiency through the Green Financing Facility (pipeline), access to Green Climate Fund, performance-based payments for SMEs and green entrepreneurs for innovations in clean technologies and seed funding for youth for modeling innovative climate-friendly solutions), and **multi-sector resilience to climate change (climate change and education: integration of climate change in national education policies and curricula, climate change and urban resilience: various activities to strengthen urban resilience in Skopje region – Water Management Strategy, Biotope Map, green corridor on Vardar and Serava rivers, analysis of possible transmission paths and impact of six-valent chrome on Rashche Spring, climate change and disaster risk: mainstreaming disaster risk-reduction in City of Skopje and Polog municipalities strategic planning documents and development of modules on losses and damages for the E-assessment for multi-risk hazards, climate change and agriculture: improved irrigation infrastructure and efficient management of land and water resources, development of high-quality data for decision making in the context of climate- smart agriculture and agroecology and climate change and world heritage sites: strengthened capacities of world heritage sites for climate change adaptation and disaster risk management, with Ohrid Lake region as case-study).**

In terms of **improved management of natural resources (Output 3.2)** in 2022 the UN will provide support to a diverse set of activities related to **water (Bregalnica River: Feasibility Study for improved Irrigation and Drainage System balancing environmental with agricultural needs, Prespa Lake Region: support to improved nature protection and greener local agriculture and private sector activities, transboundary: strengthened cooperation on water-environment - climate nexus), land and forest** (various measures focused on **land degradation neutrality** / sustainable land and forest management including capacity building on these topics for natural resource managers and farmers, strengthened capacities for policy and legislative development, and preparation of Local Environmental Action Plans and valuation of forests and grassland ecosystems in 6 pilot municipalities) and **heritage protection** (strengthened capacities for implementation of decisions of the World Heritage Committee on Ohrid).

On **reducing air pollution (Output 3.3.)**, in 2022 the UN's support will focus on a multi-pronged approach combining implementation of measures, policy, research, monitoring, and public awareness to **reduce air pollution linked to household heating** in Skopje. These activities are planned to be upscaled / implemented in 5 additional cities (pipeline). Further, analysis of the inter-linkages between **human mobility and air pollution** will be conducted.

Disaster Risk Reduction (Output 3.4): Important UN support to **flood risk reduction** in **Polog region** and **Drin River Basin** will continue in 2022. Planned activities include restoration of riverbed, stabilisation of priority landslides, establishment of early warning system and knowledge and public awareness activities in Polog and development of hydrological and hydraulic model for flood risk management, comprehensive capacity building programme, restoration of Sateska River and and implementation of non-structural measures in the Drin River Basin. Also, activities for greater **health emergency preparedness** through various activities for strengthening the Public Health Emergency Operating Center and Network, real-time early warning system including rollout of digital IT system in all Public Health Centers and development of strategies and mechanism for prevention of epidemic-prone diseases. Further, capacity building on **human displacement caused by disasters** is envisaged.

Waste (Output 3.5): In 2022, the UN will continue to provide sizable support in the cleanup of **hazardous waste** in environmental hotspots (OHIS Factory Complex: HCH waste, small waste basin), improved **wastewater and solid waste management** in Prespa Lake region and monitoring of **e-waste**.

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| Total estimated budget (in USD):* | | \$ 20,364,973 |
| <i>* Total estimated budget includes both direct program costs and indirect support costs.</i> | | |
| Out of which: Funded | | \$ 14,829,867 |
| Unfunded | | \$ 5,535,106 |

Estimated budget per output (in USD)

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|-------------------|-------------|--------------|
| By Output: | Output 3.1. | \$ 4,355,014 |
| | Output 3.2. | \$ 5,069,553 |
| | Output 3.3. | \$ 3,600,000 |
| | Output 3.4. | \$ 3,843,906 |
| | Output 3.5. | \$ 3,496,500 |

OUTCOME 4: GOOD GOVERNANCE

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| Corresponding outcome: | By 2025, people in North Macedonia 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. |
| Chairing United Nations entity: | UNHCR |
| Results Group Members: | UNDP, UN Women, UNHCR, IOM, UNODC, UNICEF, UNFPA, OHCHR, UNOPS, UNESCO |
| National Partners: | Prime Minister's Cabinet, Mol, MLSP, MFA, MoIS, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Science, National Bank, SSO, Academy of Judges and Prosecutors, Ombudsman, National Non-Discrimination Coordination Body, NHRIs, MFA – National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow up, OPDs, Inter-ministerial WG for adoption of Migration Policy, Parliament, BAR association, MYLA, MoJ, SFA, Judiciary, Mol, Public Prosecutors Office, Prosecution on Organized Crime and Corruption, Customs Admiration, WCO, INTERPOL, Customs Agency; National Commission for UNESCO, Association of Finance Officers (AFO), Association of Units of Local Self Government, Network of Associations of Local Authorities of SE Europe, local government units, National Council for Gender Equality, Akcija Zdruzenska, other CSOs and Academia |
| Work plan duration: | 1 year |
| Anticipated start/end dates: | 1 January 2022 – 31 December 2022 |

SUMMARY OF 2022 ACTIVITIES

(for detailed activities of the UN entities under this Outcome, please review the attached excel file)

The UN in North Macedonia works towards **effective, accountable and inclusive institutions** at all branches and levels of government, and promotion and protection of **human rights for all, focusing on groups left behind**, or are at risk of being left behind, including women, children, youth not in education, employment or training (NEET), persons with disabilities, Roma and other ethnic communities, refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and stateless, LGBTI persons, people in rural areas and small farmers, older persons.

Throughout 2022, the UN will continue strengthening its partnership and capacity of state and non-state actors to accelerate **policy, legislative and institutional reforms advancing the rule of law, gender equality and access to justice** and services. Following the UN-supported methodology, a whole of government and whole of society approach will be applied in conceptualizing the first National Development Strategy, which will set the development trajectory of the country for the next 20 years in pursuit of its EU accession and attainment of SDGs. Disaggregated data collection and analysis mechanisms will be strengthened as a key precondition for evidenced-based and result-oriented policy and decision making.

The UN will particularly contribute to developing and implementing a broad range of sectoral policies and legislation in line with international and EU standards in **areas of non-discrimination, gender equality, migration management, judicial reform, with a particular focus on justice for children and restorative justice models, disability inclusion, anti-corruption**, arms control and countering various forms of transnational organized crimes such as trafficking in persons and firearms, and assets recovery. In parallel, implementation capacities of government, judicial and other responsible authorities and independent institutions will be enhanced to meet their human rights obligations, backed up with sufficient budget allocations to perform effectively. Also, the government and Parliament **EU accession negotiations skills** will be stepped up, along with the continued support to the **EU acquis approximation process**.

The UN will continue promoting an enabling environment for active participation in policy and decision making of civil society, diverse communities, excluded groups and people left behind, as well as non-traditional partners like academia, opinion or community leaders, influences, etc. The agency and engagement of young people, women, persons with disabilities, invisible people and others that live on the margins of the society will be systematically encouraged. Empowerment of people left furthest behind to seek and avail of legal and judicial protection and free legal aid, especially to those in humanitarian context, and reduction of statelessness will be an integral part of these efforts.

Gender-responsive, age- and disability-sensitive planning and budgeting are central to good governance. To this end, public expenditure analysis on justice for children and primary and secondary education and monitoring of justice system for children will be amplified with a multi-media campaign to address the underlying societal barriers preventing children from accessing and enjoying their rights in the justice area. Administrative capacities for gender responsive planning and budgeting, and transposition and implementation of the EU Gender Equality Acquis in national legislation

and strategic documents will be enhanced. Public oversight of gender responsive budgeting and new gender machinery will be further strengthened.

At central and local level, the UN will accelerate **efficient delivery of quality and people centered services**, responsive to excluded groups and their social and economic vulnerabilities, with a view to strengthening accountability and restoring public trust and confidence in institutions. Innovative and digital solutions, along with strengthened inter-municipal cooperation, community grants to CSOs and youth initiatives, will contribute to increased transparency and meaningful participation in decision making in selected municipalities and better fiscal planning, budgeting and monitoring.

With a view to **improving societal cohesion and respect for diversity**. The UN will support multiple mutually reinforcing actions aiming to strengthen municipal youth councils and introduce youth dialogue platforms with policymakers; reduce divisive and hate speech among young people of different backgrounds; and advocate for the establishment of no hate speech pledges and their inclusion in youth policies. Furthermore, cooperation between regional, public media and local youth media networks and engagement with young social media influencers will be promoted. All these interventions in support of good governance, civil society, human rights, gender equality, the agency of women and youth, inclusion and participation of people left behind will ultimately contribute to strengthening the social cohesion and leading to more sustained and equitable development.

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| Total estimated budget (in USD):* | | \$ 11,810,400 |
| <i>* Total estimated budget includes both direct program costs and indirect support costs.</i> | | |
| Out of which: Funded | | \$ 10,837,996 |
| Unfunded | | \$ 972,404 |
| Estimated budget per output (in USD) | | |
| By Output: | Output 4.1. | \$ 2,133,701 |
| | Output 4.2. | \$ 6,128,675 |
| | Output 4.3. | \$ 2,710,492 |
| | Output 4.4. | \$ 485,288 |
| | Output 4.5. | \$ 352,244 |