



UNITED NATIONS
NORTH MACEDONIA

2021

NORTH MACEDONIA
ANNUAL RESULTS
REPORT

APRIL 2022





UNITED NATIONS NORTH MACEDONIA



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



International
Labour
Organization



IOM
UN MIGRATION



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



UNDRR
UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction



UN
environment
programme



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

unicef



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNOPS



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World Health
Organization

UN
VOLUNTEERS



CREDITS

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Cover photo: COVID-19-related services for families. ©UNICEF/2022/Georgiev.

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Foreword

“

Humanity faces a stark and urgent choice: breakdown or breakthrough. The choices we make – or fail to make – today could result in further breakdown and a future of perpetual crises, or a breakthrough to a better, more sustainable, peaceful future for our people and planet.”

António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General



In 2021, the world and North Macedonia started overcoming COVID-19 through vaccine roll-out, economic revival and return to in-person education. Employment picked up, especially for women, who suffered the most during the pandemic, but less so for youth, which remains of concern. Despite delays in the European Union (EU) accession process, the country's commitment to implement EU reforms and priorities remained uncompromised.

At the policy level, significant progress was made on climate change and management of natural resources, and with the enhancement of legal status of vulnerable groups, including women, persons with disabilities (PwD) and migrants. Despite the challenges, the country conducted the long-awaited census and initiated the process of formulation the first ever national development vision, both key to enhance policy-making and implementation of Agenda 2030.

2021 was the first year of implementation of the joint strategy, the 2021-2025 Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (SDCF). Strong efforts were invested in reaching Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and translating the UN development system reform into practice. We continued to demonstrate that working together leads to better and more sustainable results, boosts efficiencies and eliminates overlaps.

The 2021 Joint Work Plan was the first of its kind, developed together with more than 70 UN and Government partners. As we worked together towards its implementation, the whole Macedonian society and international partners were engaged. We shared the knowledge and common understanding of 2030 Agenda with students, the business community, civil servants, members of parliament and others. With the generous support of donors, we worked together to implement sustainable development and EU reforms and enhanced local and regional development. We joined efforts with

media and partners to amplify important messages on climate, gender-based violence and accurate and fact-based reporting.

Together with national and international financial institutions we promoted innovative ways and instruments of financing that are already streamlined in the Government policies. We identified champions among businesses on incorporating environmental, social and corporate governance standards in the private sector.

Across all areas, we supported innovation and digitalization, to improve access to quality jobs, strengthen competitiveness of the economy, improve the services to the citizens and enhance their ability to use them.

Joint action continued in the form of UN joint programmes – on migration policy and quality data, on COVID-19 health response in remote areas and on advancing the rights of persons with disabilities – and more is in the pipeline, including through innovative approaches in the areas of environment and energy.

At the turn of the year, new challenges that impact the living standard in the country and region emerged. Spiking energy prices and the negative effects of the regional political crisis with deep impact on peace, stability and socio-economic development will be felt for years to come. The vulnerabilities and risks are on the rise.

Ensuring that no one is left behind will be as important as ever for our joint work. Upholding UN values and principles that continue to be tested will be key to overcome crises and to overcome our joint efforts.

North Macedonia, a strong supporter of multilateral action, and the United Nations, one of the country's key development partners, will continue its close partnership towards sustainable development and improving living conditions for the people in North Macedonia and the region.

Rossana Dudziak

UN Resident Coordinator in North Macedonia

Bujar Osmani

Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia

UN Country Team

The United Nations (UN) in North Macedonia in 2021 included 24 entities engaged in operational activities for development in the country. They work together through the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), the main mechanism in country for inter-agency coordination and decision-making, and under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) – the designated representative of the UN Secretary General for development operations in the country.

The UN work in North Macedonia is aligned with the country's national development and strategic priorities, its international human rights and gender equality obligations, and commitments towards achieving Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The UN strategic priorities are clearly defined in the joint 2021–2025 Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (SDCF), a key strategic document guiding the work over the period of five years that was agreed by the Government and UN in 2020.

UN support is provided through technical assistance, capacity development, leveraging partnerships and resources, social mobilization, brokering knowledge, and piloting and scaling up innovations.

In 2021, which marked the first year of implementation of the five-year strategy, 17 UN entities had physical presence in North Macedonia – either through a stand-alone representation office, project staff or capacity embedded in the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO). Four entities have been conducting their activities fully remotely.

The UN team in North Macedonia in 2021 was comprised of more than 250 country-based national and international professional and support personnel. They were backed by offices around the globe.

24
UN entities engaged in operational activities for development in North Macedonia

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITU	International Telecommunications Union *
IMF	International Monetary Fund
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 *
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security *
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	United Nations Volunteers *
UN RCO	Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WB	The World Bank Group
WHO	World Health Organization

* no physical presence not SDCF signatory



International
Labour
Organization



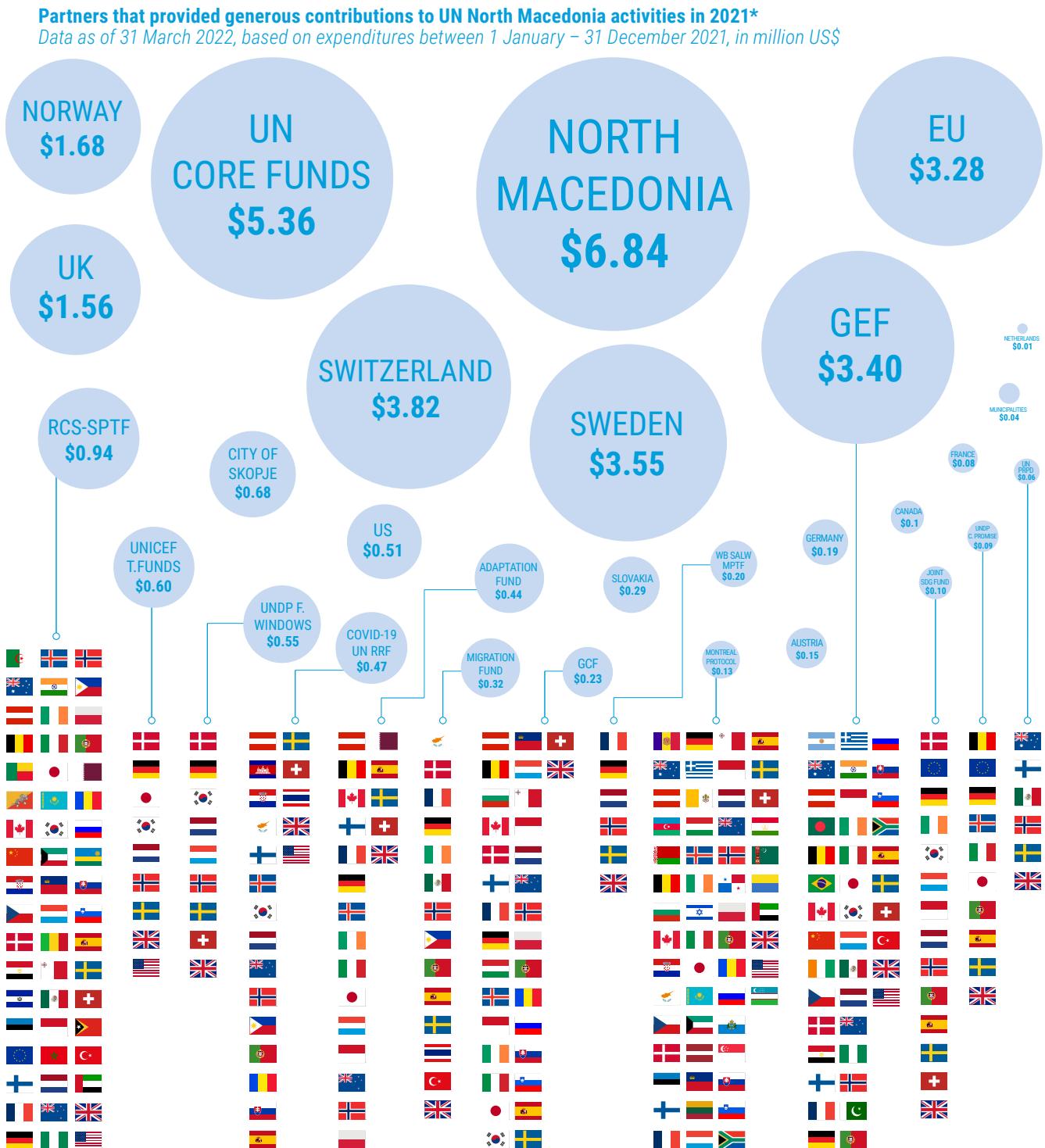
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Key UN development partners

During 2021, the UN continued to work closely with over 130 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 2021 is provided in the annex.



Key 2021 developments in the country and the region

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 European Union (EU) accession negotiations were disappointing and led to decrease in public 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 the *Open Balkan* initiative aimed at creating a single market of goods, services, people and capital for Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia. Other countries were encouraged to join.

Progress was made with legal and institutional reforms and widely recognized fundamental rights and freedoms, but corruption in the country persisted² and scores against key governance indicators (political stability, rule of law and accountability) remained low. Limited reporting and deterrence for organised crime groups persisted. However, the country enhanced the compliance with key international and EU acquis requirements and initiated the process of developing a long-term sustainable development vision and other policies through wide consultation and consensus-building. These processes have the potential to restore public trust in institutions.

October local elections resulted in significant opposition gains and prompted the resignation of the incumbent prime minister. The upgraded coalition and the revamped cabinet were formed at year-end with pending challenges such as the intensifying energy crisis and the EU accession process stalemate.

The year started with continued recession due to the spill-over effect of the lockdowns across Europe at the end of 2020, but the economy grew strongly in the second quarter and moderately in the second half of the year, reaching an estimated annual growth of around 4%. The Government response measures, and social safety net helped alleviate the impact on the most vulnerable groups and businesses, however, increasing the public debt substantially.

The labour market picked up in 2021, resuming the declining unemployment trend, but the declining youth employment (2020-2021) remained an issue of concern. The latest labour market reform that set Sunday as a non-working day and the pressure to increase the minimum wage were considered controversial by some economists, noting the lingering economic effects of the COVID-19 and the mismatch between the minimum wage and (low) productivity levels. The increasing inflation and energy crisis at the end of 2021 were among the key economic challenges to impact the living standard in the country.

The country has been seriously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The last two waves in 2021 further stretched the capacity of the health system with up to 90% of

North Macedonia GDP growth rates

2011-2021 annual growth rate



2021 quarterly growth rate



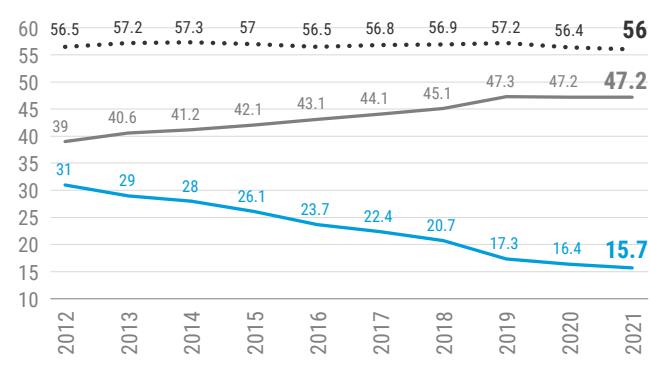
Source: SSO, 2022

hospital beds occupied. The vaccination started in February 2021, targeting to reach 60% of population by end-2021, but just under 50% were vaccinated.

Social sectors suffered the most – preschool attendance rates have decreased to 36%, while children were not in school for 52 weeks. Yet, the education sector managed to switch swiftly to online classes and re-establish physical presence in 2021, though impact on learning outcomes and mental health remains unclear. Childhood vaccination rates have decreased to under 90%, while the neonatal mortality rate increased to 4.2 per 1,000 live births. Despite challenges, important social reforms continued in 2021.

Labour market trends, 2012-2021

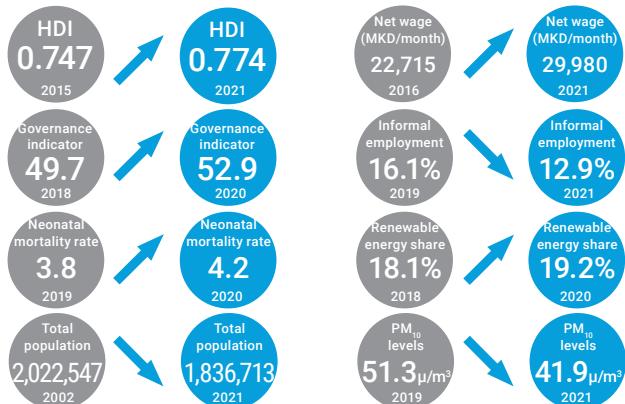
Unemployment rate — Employment rate — Activity rate •••



Source: SSO, 2022

Key national socio-economic indicators

Baseline year vs. latest value available



Sources: SSO, UNDP, IPH, MoEPP, World Bank

Social protection reform, supplemented with additional measures, resulted in more adequate distribution of cash benefits, contributing to slight decrease of poverty rates to 21.6 in 2019, except for the women above 25 years old that notes increase. Relative child poverty increased from 27.8% before the pandemic to 32.4% last year. Over 488,000 people in the country live in poverty. Human development index slightly increased.

The first multidimensional child poverty index in the country showed that 12% of children aged 5 to 17 and 9% of children under 5 were affected. Roma children were significantly more vulnerable: one in three among Roma children experienced multidimensional poverty compared to one in nine among the overall population. Deprivations in education, early child development, nutrition, safety, and love and care were among the top five contributors to child poverty, signalling areas where improvement in public finance allocations and service delivery were most needed.

The proclamation of a new National Park Shar Mountain, the country's ambitious pledge of 51% reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, 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 investments in renewables were announced – five new or extended wind parks, two solar power plants and

a major part of the electricity interconnection between North Macedonia and Albania. Area under protection increased significantly, but protection of lakes, especially Prespa and Ohrid, remains a critical need.

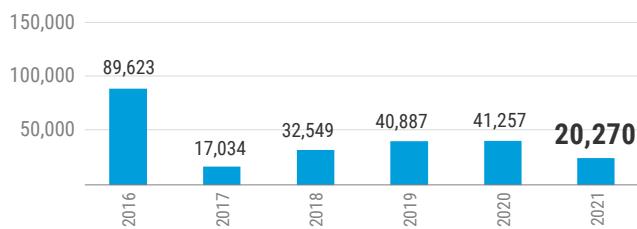
There were some positive developments in improving wastewater treatment, but major cities, including Skopje, remain uncovered. On solid waste, limited progress was made in 2020-2021 period, except at policy planning level and an announcement of waste sorting and processing plants in the East and Northeast 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.

The country is along one of the main routes for mixed migration movements to Europe, which resulted in more than 20,874 detected irregular border crossings in 2021,

North Macedonia mixed migration flows

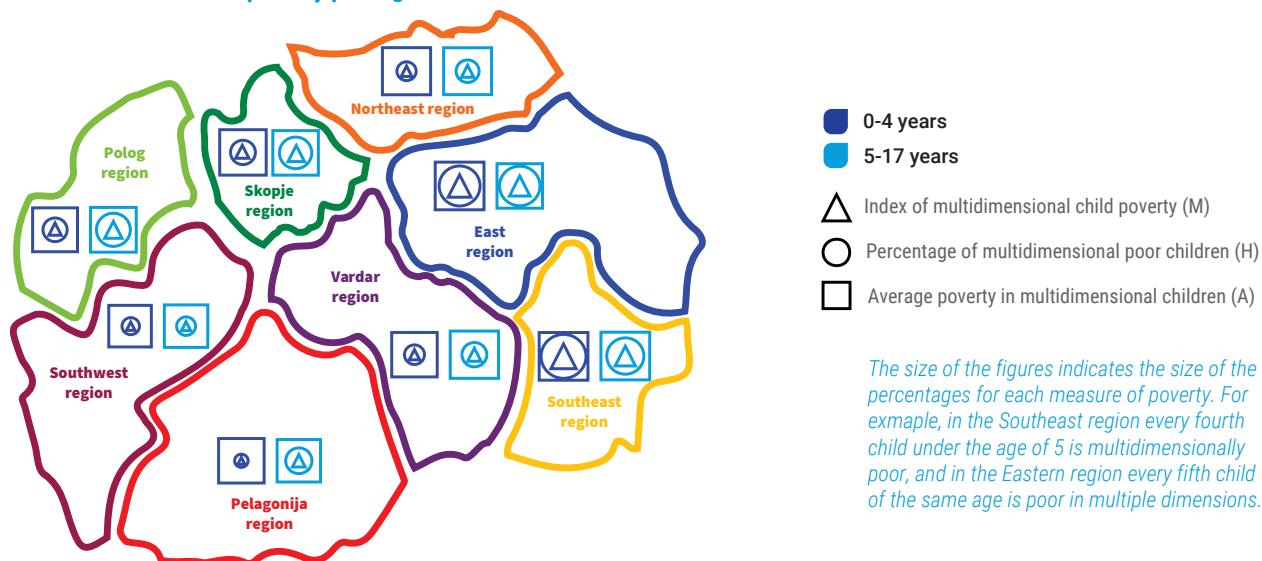
2016-2021 annual migration flows, new arrivals



Source: UNHCR (2022), Government of North Macedonia

mostly from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria and other countries. Migrants remained exceptionally vulnerable, often travelling in big groups exposed to multiple risks. Seasonal migrant workers from North Macedonia, estimated between 40,000 and 100,000, remained affected by COVID-19 travel restrictions, impacting remittances and reducing support for families left behind. Authorities developed a five-year "Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration" and continued to fight cross-border organized crime. In 2021, detected migrants' smuggling cases decreased by 33% on previous year. 91 persons were persecuted for 64 cases of smuggling.

Multidimensional child poverty per region



Source: UNICEF/FinanceThink (2021), Multidimensional child poverty in North Macedonia

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 2021.

SDCF overview

The 2021-2025 SDCF was extensively consulted during its design. Through its implementation, 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. More focus is given to urban sustainable development, addressing issues such as air pollution, and enhancing the prominence of health and education.

UN action is 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.

Programmes promote gender equality, civic engagement of youth, trust building, and equal opportunities for all to realize their human rights and full potential. Recognizing that the people are not passive recipients of services but agents of change, the UN interventions support societal transformation for more active and responsible individual and community approach to sustainable and inclusive development.

The following sub-sections detail UN contribution to development results in the first year of SDCF implementation.

SDGs	STRATEGIC PRIORITY	OUTCOMES BY 2025	GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES
PROSPERITY & PEOPLE	Sustained and inclusive economic and social development	<p>(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</p> <p>(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.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful EU accession negotiations Increased and sustainable economic growth, higher living standard and quality of life of the citizens Care for all: Investments in healthcare and efficient management of COVID-19 pandemic Reforms of the education system One society for all Environment protection Green development Reduced climate change impact Reduction of air pollution
PLANET	Climate action, natural resources and disaster risk management	<p>(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</p>	
PEACE	Transparent and accountable democratic governance	<p>(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</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Democratic, transparent and accountable governance Reforms in public administration and justice sector Fight against corruption

Strategic priority 1: Sustained and inclusive economic and social development



Outcome 1: Inclusive prosperity

In 2021, UN worked towards enhancing inclusive prosperity by creating **over 1,000 jobs** (653 for women, 391 for youth) and supporting the **Youth Guarantee**, resulting in further **6,822 new jobs for young people**.

In the context of the prolonged COVID19 crisis, **advisory and digitalized services were provided for 500 companies** to strengthen resilience and the Employment Support Agency (ESA) was capacitated to provide digitalized advice for unemployed. Some **72 start-ups were created** (20 by PWDs) and **306 people were reskilled through the Future Skills Training Centre** (SkillsNet). A virtual reality skills development model was created and implemented in five secondary vocational schools.

UN empowered hard-to-employ groups: 900 people completed at least one skill learning programme and



A training for photovoltaic panel installers at the UNDP-supported SkillsNext center in Tetovo. The center provides training services designed to prepare the country's workforce for cutting-edge and future jobs. Credit: UNDP

474 people benefited from **employment activation and support services**. New social services were delivered in 46 municipalities through **Community Works Programme, covering 8,560 people**. Support was also provided to **refugees**, unfortunately none of them was formally employed in 2021.

Key policy documents and laws were supported in employment and labour, adult education, agriculture and rural development areas, with gender being integrated within strategic priorities.

With the UN support, the **Economic and Social Council (ESC) remained an important forum for social dialogue** and social partners provided new services and digital tools to their members. The online tool to report breach of labour rights resulted in legal protection for more than 3,000 workers.

UN supported around 2,500 small farmers/landowners through the active land consolidation efforts and contributed to the **consolidation of 1,078 hectares of agricultural land**, while supporting integrated community development in parallel. **Support for women farmers increased from 100 to 250** and EU approximation was enhanced in **animal health management and food safety**.



Outcome 2: Quality services for all

The UN and partners continued to support the Ministry of Health with the **implementation of the health system reform with human rights principles** in the centre of its work. The focus was on primary health care and maternal and child health, transforming nursing into a valued health workforce, improving availability of medicines, bringing services closer to people and preparing the health system for large scale immunizations. The UN also helped with **maintaining essential health services during COVID-19 crisis, including by introduction of mobile gynaecological services** in hard-to-reach areas; procurement of medical and personal protective equipment, cervical cancer prevention, family planning, digitalization in the health system and building capacities of the health care workforce to better respond to COVID-19 challenges.

With UN **support to the National COVID-19 Vaccines Deployment Plan**, the country achieved almost 50% vaccination rate, administering over 1.5 million doses of



Land consolidation area of Egri (Municipality of Bitola) – before and after land consolidation. With land consolidation, the number of land parcels in Egri was reduced by almost fourfold, from 874 parcels to 260. The 214 landowners now have bigger, regularly-shaped parcels that allow for better farming practices. The average parcel size is now 1.30 ha, compared to only 0.38 ha average before land consolidation. Credit: FAO



NEW JOBS FOR YOUTH CREATED

with UN support in 2021

YOUTH

NEET DECREASED

from 24.5 (2019) to 24.2 (2021)

vaccines in less than a year. 523,012 doses of COVID-19 vaccines were procured through the UN-managed procurement facility COVAX (28% of the total administered doses).

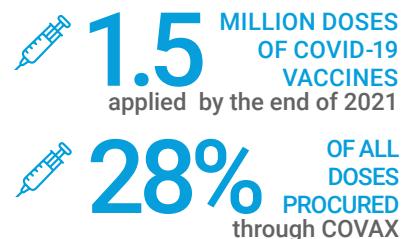
With UN support and **advocacy all schools were reopened** in September, following one of the longest school closures worldwide. The new **Concept for Primary Education** set foundational changes by incorporating climate change, gender-transformative and inclusive content and approaches. The **Eduino platform** became the single largest repository of officially verified educational resources. The national roll-out of the innovative **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programme** was completed in all public preschools, training almost all active pre-school teachers. Support for inclusive education continued with the transformation of specialised schools into resource centres to provide support to mainstream schools and education assistance as required. New partnership was agreed for piloting and **extending comprehensive sexuality education** nationally by 2025.

Improvements to functional assessment systems for children and youth with disabilities were made in Skopje, Pelagonija, South-East and Polog regions. In parallel, law amendments were drafted on social and child protection, health insurance and care, and primary education, paving that way for the creation of single entry-points for children with disabilities to access support services.

With the support of UN, central and local authorities were empowered for **inclusion and integration of persons under international protection – migrants, asylum seekers and refugees**. An effective support mechanism for refugee integration was set up and the key national strategic documents were updated. The UN continued supporting systematic efforts to resolve civil registration

and elimination of cases at risk of statelessness.

Support for the operationalization of the new Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence aligned with the Istanbul Convention was provided. Amendment to the Criminal Code that will define gender-based violence against women as criminal act was supported. These will significantly improve the regulatory environment for enhanced **multisectoral response to prevent and address all forms of violence against women**. Direct support to women victims of violence continued in cooperation with civil society.



Kindergarten children learning how to recognize and manage emotions as part of UN supported comprehensive programme on social and emotional development in all public preschools throughout the country. Credit: UNICEF.

Strategic priority 2: Climate action, natural resources and disaster risk management



Outcome 3: Healthy environment

Significant progress was made in the areas of **climate change policy** and **natural resources management**, but less so with wastewater treatment, solid waste management, air pollution and disaster risk reduction.



A new national park – Shar Mountain has been proclaimed in 2021 with UN support. Credit: UNEP

With UN support, a **new national park – Shar Mountains** – has been proclaimed, **increasing** the network of protected

13% **OF THE COUNTRY'S TERRITORY** in protected areas

3.1% **INCREASE IN 2021** with UN support

areas' (PAs) to four parks after decades. With PAs also on Albania and Kosovo side, it has become one of the largest transboundary PAs in Europe. The **area under protection increased by 30%** in 2020 and 2021, compared to 2019, and now extend across **13.5% of country's territory** or 81 protected areas, strengthening long-term conservation of nature and biodiversity. This increase also represents a 67% progress in the achievement of the overall target.

In the lead up to COP26, the country significantly strengthened its engagement on **climate change**. The UN was a key supporter of these efforts, through policy development, access to finance, awareness raising and advocacy, and mainstreaming of climate change in various areas. In April 2021, the Government adopted the **enhanced Nationally Determined Contribution (eNDC)** to the Paris Climate Agreement, setting an ambitious national

goal to achieve **51% reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030** or 82 % net emissions reduction compared to 1990 levels. This was the most ambitious commitment among countries in the Western Balkans. The reduction is to be achieved through implementation of the Green Mitigation Scenario from the National Strategy for Energy Development until 2040, which is enriched with

policies and measures in the industry, agriculture, forestry, other land use, and waste sectors.

Noting that 2021 was the first year of SDCF, important activities have been initiated in the areas of **disaster risk reduction, especially flood risk reduction, air pollution, and on hazardous waste removal**.

Strategic priority 3: Transparent and accountable democratic governance



Outcome 4: Good governance

North Macedonia continued to deliver on key reform priorities for the EU accession and achievement of 2030 Agenda. UN support prompted systemic reforms advancing good governance and the rule of law, access to justice, greater social cohesion and cooperation across the Western Balkan region. Transformative changes were initiated by a forward-looking, anticipatory and evidence-based policy making in multiple sectors. UN supported the Government in developing a comprehensive and innovative methodology that enables whole-of-society approach in formulating the first **National Development Strategy (NDS)** for the next two decades.

The UN contributed to the Government's ambitious regulatory agenda. National laws and policies have been aligned with the EU acquis and international human rights standards. This resulted in **21 polices and 98 laws and by-laws developed and revised** covering the judicial sector, revisions of civil and criminal law, justice for children, gender equality, gender-based violence, compensation of victims, international protection and addressing statelessness, anti-corruption, among others. A comprehensive [Migration Policy 2021-2025 and Action plan](#) were adopted, along with the Country Migration Profile.

UN bolstered accountable, inclusive, and transparent governance institutions, capable to deliver gender-, age-, and disability-sensitive services, at all levels. **The capacities of 1,799 state and non-state partners, including 694 marginalized people were strengthened.**



UN supported the Government in developing a comprehensive and innovative methodology that enables whole-of-society approach in formulating the first National Development Strategy (NDS) for the next two decades.

LAWS AND BYLAWS DEVELOPED with UN support

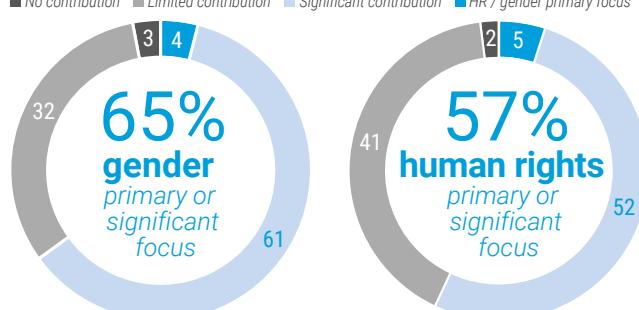
Parliamentarians, government officials and administration increased knowledge, particularly on the EU accession process and negotiation skills, and localization of SDGs. Gender perspective was mainstreamed in sectoral programmes and budgets of 13 ministries and 31 municipalities. Fiscal decentralization was advanced by an electronic payment system for taxes, updated Municipal Development Index, and a new Programme on Sustainable Local Development and Decentralization 2021-2026.

Engagement and participation of citizens and civil society was improved with digital solutions. UN promoted inclusive dialogue and cohesiveness of diverse communities, especially empowered women, youth and vulnerable groups – **3,300 women joined advocacy and local outreach initiatives**, and **1,000 young people engaged in imagining and co-creating their future**.

The UN-supported and State Statistical Office (SSO)-led 2021 Census Communication Strategy boosted the data collection process. Analytical research on the socio-economic impact of COVID19 on children, women, victims of violence, and other vulnerable people in rural communities informed the response and recovery, followed by advocacy campaigns targeting root-causes. UN support in developing **Assets Recovery Strategy and Anti-Corruption Roadmap for Western Balkans**, together with enhanced capacities of criminal justice practitioners, enabled more effective response and cross-border cooperation against organized crime.

2021 SDCF contribution to gender equality and human rights % od budgeted resources across all SDCF outcomes

■ No contribution ■ Limited contribution ■ Significant contribution ■ HR / gender primary focus



2021 results per output

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



Fundamentals first: Economic Development and Competitiveness
19. Social policy and employment;
20. Enterprise and industrial policy;
26. Education and culture

2021 UN expenditure

\$7,394,489

Development partners:

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy; Ministry of Education and Science, Secretariat for European Affairs, Employment Services Agency; Regional Employment Offices; Fund for Innovation and Technological Development; Trade Unions; Employers' associations, Economic and Social Council; Local Economic and Social Councils; Farmers Associations, Producer organizations, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine - Skopje, Ministry of Health, State Labour Inspectorate, Trade Unions, Agency for Real State Cadastre, Centre for Social Work, Faculty of Agriculture and Food Science, Food and Veterinary Agency, Fund for Innovation and Technological Development, IZBOR STRUMICA, Economic and Social Councils of North Macedonia, Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Interior, Municipality of Gostivar, Municipality of Prilep, Municipality of Shtip, Municipality of Bitola, Municipality of Cheshinovo-Oblesevo, Municipality of Dolneni, Municipality of Shuto Orizari, National Committee for CVE and CT, National Federation of Farmers, National Extension Agency, National Tripartite Social and Economic Council, NGO SEGA PRILEP, Ombudsman, South East European University, State Labour Inspectorate, State Statistical Office, The Office of the National Coordinator for CVE and CT

OUTPUT 1.1

Sustainable enterprises created as generators of employment through strengthened value chains and increased capacities to adopt new business models.

Agencies: **ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNOPS**

In 2021, **500 micro, small, and medium enterprises** (MSMEs), received UN support to build resilience and cope with the prolonged COVID19 crisis through the online [platform](#) for business mentorship, predominantly in the field of on-line and digital marketing. In addition, **72 new start-ups were created**, with 80 new jobs of which 28 for PwDs and 5 of them women. In total, with different interventions, UN assisted in **creating over 1,000 jobs**, of which 391 for youth.

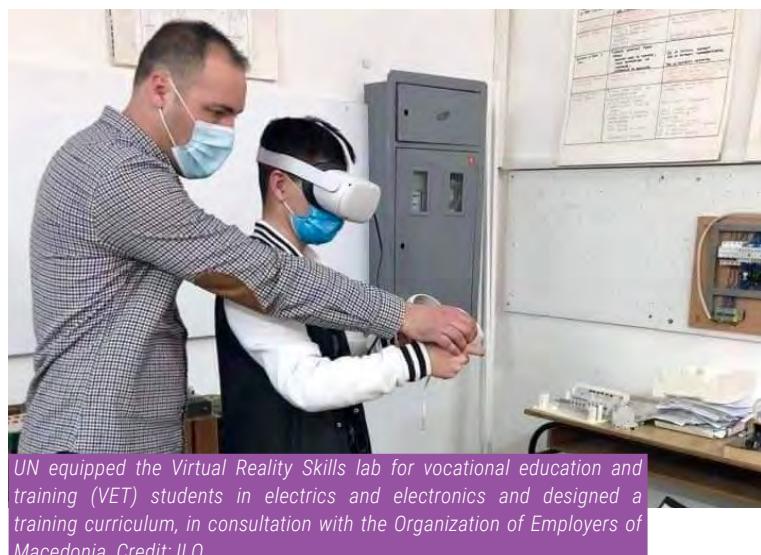
UN supported the implementation of the Youth Guarantee plan that created **6,787 jobs for young people**. Through local partnership with academia, local government, civil society and private sector, the **Youth Resource Centre – iCan** – was established, offering job, start-up and innovation support for youth in Polog region.

UN equipped the Virtual Reality Skills lab for vocational education and training (VET) students in electrics and electronics and designed a training curriculum, in consultation with the Organization of Employers of Macedonia. **"Future" skills building** was enabled through the [platform](#) gathering stakeholders to introduce new technologies, as well as the **Future Skills Training Centre (Skills Net)**, established and fully equipped in the South East European University (SEEU). Through these, **6 new occupational standards** in renewable energy sources, textile and construction industries and **6 new VET training programmes** were developed, with **306 people trained in**

digital skills. Upgraded [Occupational Outlook](#) now contains profiles of 60 occupations.

Value chains were strengthened by introducing modified atmosphere packaging (MAP) technology to extend shelf life of fresh agriculture products and contract organic farming for 30 families. **Creative industries** were also promoted as economic opportunities for the future.

 **72** NEW START-UPS CREATED in 2021
500 COMPANIES STRENGTHENED with UN support



OUTPUT 1.2

Women and vulnerable/excluded persons benefit from supportive environment through tailored employment measures and a more dynamic and inclusive skilling system that responds to labour market needs for all people.

Agencies: UNDP, ILO, IOM, UNHCR, UNOPS

The UN work focused on economic empowerment of vulnerable groups, in line with its central principle to leave no one behind (LNOB): 1,000 jobs were created – **653 for women, 52 for Roma and 42 for PwD**, mainly through the Community Works Programme that provided **social services to 8,560 beneficiaries**.

Given that unrecognized care activities are predominantly undertaken by **women**, UN assisted with the design and implementation of two new employment measures in **care economy**, worth \$1.3 million. More than **300 women, of which 70% are youth**, were trained in the Youth Resource Centre, predominantly in digital marketing.

Several policy level interventions addressed the structural gaps in the legal framework for inclusion of **PwDs in the labour market**. A programme for the capacity building



One of 50 young Roma people from Prilep to gain employment in 2021 with support from the UNDP-implemented Acceder programme. Credit: UNDP

of organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) was initiated and three respite centres for PwD, along with the Reha Centres in Skopje and Strumica, were supported.

UN worked with **hard-to-employ people, enabling 900 to complete at least one skill learning programme**, over 70% of them women. **474 people benefitted from labour activation and support services, of which 206 Roma and 150 PwDs. Completion of primary education was available to 67 inmates** (16 female) and 12 juveniles. Despite the efforts to **facilitate adequate recognition of vocational skills and specialized knowledge of refugees** and to provide them with access to employment, none of them was formally employed in 2021.

At the local level, **Local Employment Plan** was piloted in Bitola, creating 35 jobs through the municipal Startup Centre and memoranda of understanding were signed with three

municipalities for reintegration of returnees, based on assessment of their vulnerabilities.

1,374 HARD-TO-EMPLOY PERSONS
supported in 2021

OUTPUT 1.3

Enhanced and gender-responsive policy and regulatory measures that foster entrepreneurship and financing for inclusive and green growth.

Agencies: FAO, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNECE

UN supported design of policy documents, laws, measures and strategies, in line with the International Labour Standards (ILS) and EU acquis.

The **new National Employment Strategy (NES) 2021-2027** with a new **Action Plan on Employment 2021-2023** and **Working plan on Occupational Outlook 2022 - 2026** were developed and adopted with UN support. UN also contributed to the design of the first ever **National Strategy for Development of Social Enterprises (2021-2027)**, adopted in 2021.

The **Labour Relations Law** was amended to address the new realities on the labour market; the **Law on Employment and Insurance** was emended to defines instruments for social contracting model and efficient delivery of standardized and licensed services for PwDs; the **Law on Adult Education** to promote **inclusive education** and the **Law on Sale of State-owned Agricultural Land** to put the state-owned agricultural land back in function of agricultural development and food production.

Institutions were supported to provide **online services for unemployed**, along with trained business and carrier advisors at the ESA, and to design **new social services**, i.e. care economy measures at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP). In response to COVID-19 and other potential shocks, UN strengthened institutional capacity in **price and market information systems and policy monitoring for food commodities and value chains**. Capacity building was provided through the regional project aimed at enhancing the capacity of Western Balkans' economies to implement **trade facilitation measures and the single-window**.

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL DIALOGUE

This project is funded by European Union, and implemented by the International Labour Organization.

The Economic and Social Council has been repositioned as an important actor in the development of economic, labour and social policies with UN Support. Credit: ILO

With UN [support](#), the **Economic and Social Council (ESC)** was repositioned as an important actor in the development of economic, labour, and social policies. **Twelve local ESCs** were equipped with labour market analysis and enhanced visibility through [communication platform](#) and **Local Employment Action Plans** were developed in Strumica and Kumanovo. **Social partners expanded the number of digital and legal services** offered to the members, which resulted with increased membership.

OUTPUT 1.4

Improved quality of employment through measures for transition to formality and adequate protection at work in compliance with international labour standards.

Agencies: **ILO**

UN continued to address under-employment, informality and protection at work, supporting the **Strategy for Formalization of Informal Economy** with the hotels, restaurants, and cafes (HORECA) sector [platform](#), developed in partnership with the Association of employers in hotel and catering (HOTAM), a member of the Organization of employers.

Based on the UN gap analysis and [awareness raising](#) products, ESC supported the plan to ratify **ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment** and the Guide on Violence and Harassment in 2022. Two related campaigns were rolled-out, [My Labour, My Rights!](#) and [Take Care of Your Staff](#). The **virtual advisor on legal aid**, Cindy, was made available through at the Federation of Trade Unions (FTU) web-site and the [mobile application](#) to report violations of workers' rights, ensuring legal protection and advice to 3,000 workers. UN developed **Youth Rights@ Works learning materials**, approved by the Bureau for Development of Education, were used to train 500 high-school students in 12 cities.

 **3,000** WORKERS RECEIVED LEGAL PROTECTION AND ADVICE with UN support

OUTPUT 1.5

Policies and capacities strengthened for sustainable and competitive rural economy aligned with EU, with focus on small farms and women farmers

Agencies: **FAO, UN WOMEN**

Efforts to increase rural economy competitiveness and sustainability focused on land consolidation and opportunities for women and small farmers.

 **2,455** LANDOWNERS BENEFITED FROM LAND CONSOLIDATION in 2021
 **250** WOMEN AGRICULTURE PRODUCERS supported

Agricultural land consolidation advanced in eight land consolidation areas, to benefit 2,455 agricultural landowners and finalized in two villages, [Egri](#) and [Dabjani](#), with **1,078 hectares consolidated**, resulting with almost four and five-fold reduction of land parcels.



Representatives from the National Federation of Farmers and women agricultural producers present their products during the event for grant awards of women – registered agricultural producers, hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy and the Government of North Macedonia. 7 May 2021, City Park, Skopje. Credit: UN Women

Backed by UN, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (MAFWE), mainstreamed gender aspects in the new National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development 2021-2027 and secured [financial support to 250 women agricultural producers](#).

MAFWE also received evidence-based [policy guidance](#) for aligning national direct payment scheme with EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) regulations and specialized training for 40 National Extension advisors and MAFWE staff on data collection and calculation of gross margin cost of production for ten agricultural goods. Small scale investments in six villages promoted [integrated local community development](#).



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

Cluster 2, Chapter 28: Consumer and health protection
Cluster 3, Chapter 19: Social Policy and Employment; Chapter 25:
Science and Research, Chapter 26: Education and culture

2021 UN expenditure

\$9,967,640

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, State Statistical Office, Bureau for Development of Education, National Public Health Institute, Municipalities, Vocational Training Institutes; Trade Union of Health Workers; Civil Society; Academia; Private Sector; Association for Research, Communications and Development, National Roma Centrum, Centre for Research and Policy Making, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), E-health Directorate, Health Education and Research Association, Health Insurance Fund, Healthy Options Project Skopje, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, Medical Faculty Skopje, Municipal Centres for Social Welfare (MCSW), Professional Associations.

OUTPUT 2.1

Health system is strengthened to provide universal access to affordable high quality and people-centred services to promote healthy lifestyles and address population-specific health needs and risk factors, including in emergencies.

Agencies: WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNOPS

COVID-19 seriously affected the capacities of the healthcare system and stretched medical personnel between the priorities of ensuring care and treatment for the COVID-19 patients and providing regular and quality health care services to the whole population. In 2021, UN continued to facilitate the procurement of medical and protective equipment for prevention, detection and response to provide faster and better quality of diagnostic services for people in Skopje and those visiting the University hospital for tertiary treatment and care.

Universal health care coverage was improved through initiated reforms, which UN supported through pilot interventions in primary health care, capacity building of health workforce and design and implementation of the first nursing competency training. Development of long-term capacities of health and child protection practitioners contributed to improved conditions for children's better health and nutrition and improved opportunities for early stimulation and learning.

Continued provision of essential health care services in time of pandemic was critical.

UN support focused on

capacity building of health workforce and introduction of new services, including in **maternal and perinatal health** care through piloting or implementation of selected actions from the National Master Plan for Perinatal Care and Capacity Building of Health Professionals. Women and girls in remote areas gained **access to quality and safe sexual and reproductive health services** through introduction of mobile gynaecological services integrated into the national health system.

The provided evidence-based **policy support** ensured better understanding of inequity and initiated policy discussion for integrating health care for older people at service and system levels. New instruments to measure performance and quality of services for elderly were introduced, National Health Accounts institutionalized and the first ever study on financial health risk protection was initiated. Assessment of national capacities on cervical cancer prevention informed priority areas of support. Regional Alliance on Cervical Cancer Prevention was established as a platform for cooperation and exchange of information on cervical cancer prevention. The support for **accelerated digitalization of the health system** through the introduced digital mental health tools and vaccination registry system contributed significantly to better efficiency, transparency and improved communication and outreach with patients, resulting also in a more efficient vaccination process.

Foreign patients, including those under international protection, gained improved access to health care services and were able to overcome language and legal status barriers, Gevgelija Hospital and Traumatology Clinic in Skopje.



Midwife and doctor in the mobile clinics. Only in December, in Sveti Nikole (with 18,000 habitants and only 1 gynaecologist) 188 women and girls were able to conduct overdue tests and check-ups. Credit: UNFPA

OUTPUT 2.2

Quality and affordable education is provided in trauma-informed, gender-responsive and inclusive learning environments to children and young people in the country to raise learning outcomes, enable their socio-emotional development and empower them with skills for transition to the labour market.

Agencies: UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNDP, ITU

300,000

USERS ON EDUINO
LEARNING PLATFORM
in 2021

In parallel with the advocacy and support to the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) in reopening of all schools in September after one of the longest school closures worldwide, UN fully supported the initiation of the new education reform in the country.

The first practical implementation of the new Concept for Primary Education came to fruition in the new curricula for grades 1 and 4, supported by **capacity development of all 3,000 Grade 1 and 4 teachers** to apply new pedagogical approaches in implementing the new curricula, and by additional webinars on digital skills learning for the entire teaching force through the [Eduino learning platform](#), which continuously **serves over 300,000 users, with over 130,000 application downloads, and over 4 million views**. Maintaining the reform momentum, UN supported the development and printing of all textbooks for Grade 1, the development of digital interactive textbooks for Grade 4 and a platform for their offline and online use (E-Library).

Introduction of **new, per-student-based funding formula for primary education** and a study on optimization of the school network, conducted in partnership with the World Bank, resulted in optimization of primary and secondary education by increasing the budgetary allocations by \$8 million for primary and \$1.5 million for secondary education in the 2022 national budget.

The national roll-out of the innovative **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programme** was **completed in all public preschools with training close to 100% of the active pre-school teachers**. The SEL programme continues to help children develop foundational skills that support their future learning outcomes, social interactions, mental health and wellbeing.

Based on the successful **piloting of introduction of Comprehensive Sexuality Education** completed in 3 out of 4 schools, and the lessons learned, a memorandum of understanding was signed with the Bureau for Development of Education (BDE) to outline the key areas for support in full rollout at national level by the end of 2025.

The assessment of the existing situation on **child online protection** has produced recommendations to serve as basis to the Government for development of a national online safety strategy and action plan.

Full inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools and pre-schools retained its momentum. UN supported the transformation of special schools into resource centres to provide support to mainstream schools and education assistance as required. Capacities strengthening for inclusion in preschools have also continued with training on alternative and augmentative communication for early identification and intervention.

Inclusion of children of refugees, migrants and asylum



Secondary school students attending the first class after schools opening. UN supported distance education during COVID-19 pandemic and advocated for schools' opening. Credit: UNICEF

seekers has been a challenge and focus for the UN. Local schools hosting refugees' children and national institutions are now able to identify challenges in refugee education and plan actions that may include appropriate application of instruments for determining the previous knowledge of children and prepare tailor-made preparatory programs for these children.

National authorities can now provide **free and systematic language classes** (basic level of Macedonian language) through a [Digital Language Platform - Learn Macedonian](#) managed by the Faculty of Philology "Blaze Koneski" to asylum seekers and refugees and improve their language skills, essential for social and economic inclusion.

The **digital skills assessment** undertaken with UN support, provided the government with an overview of the current state in the country. The recommendations will inform the development of a digital skills strategy that will meet citizen needs and contribute to further growth of the digital economy and digital society. More details of the extensive support to the MoES in vocational and adult education support can be found under the Inclusive Prosperity outcome.

OUTPUT 2.3

Social protection system is resilient to external shocks and strengthened to deliver progressively improved services to all persons in need, especially to those left behind.

Agencies: IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP

Implementation of the social reforms deriving from the new law on social protection steadily progressed in 2021, focusing mostly on those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

UN continued to support the reform in improving social transfers, child protection, de-institutionalization and social protection of vulnerable groups including PwDs and migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

4
NEW SERVICES DESIGNED in 2021

27
SERVICES DESIGNED since 2016

27,648
USERS OF SERVICES in 2021

111,646
USERS OF SERVICES since 2016

With UN support, the Government established and capacitated, with over 50 professionals, three new functional assessment bodies



UN developed the first multidimensional child poverty index to better assess the profile of children at risk of poverty. Credit: UNICEF

for children and youth with disability for Pelagonija, South-East and Polog regions, which along with the relevant legislation amendments will consolidate **the provision of functional assessments for children and youth** in line with the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). This will create a single support services entry-point for children enabling them to fully participate in social life and enjoy their human rights.

To better determine the profile of children who are most at risk of poverty and the COVID-19 effects, utilizing the Alkire-Foster method, UN developed the first **multidimensional child poverty index** in the country. This new evidence will enable the Government to prioritize policies and services that reduce inequality and focus on the most vulnerable, such as Roma children and children living in rural communities.

UN continued to support **enhancing the parenting services for children's socio-emotional development**. Mellow Parenting programme was introduced, offering flexible low-cost approach to early intervention and parent support targeting parents from the most at-risk families, such as Roma, and families of children with disabilities, and families that suffer multiple deprivation. Couple of hundreds of parents and caregivers were directly supported through the National Parenting helpline, receiving counselling on positive parenting techniques, also aimed at preventing and addressing the potential negative secondary impacts of COVID-19. **Over 430,000 people reached and engaged during Parenting Month social media.**

Addressing the varied needs of children deprived of parental care, and children experiencing adversity and exclusion, was in focus of the childcare system strengthening support, directed towards improving **quality of foster and kinship care**. Key milestone was the **opening of two Support centres for foster families**, to promote the foster family service, evaluate and educate future foster families, observe and provide support to the existing foster families.

Furthermore, children, youth, parents and caregivers in the child-care system, were provided with targeted mental health and psychosocial support during the pandemic. All children in small group homes benefited from creative and educational activities aimed at improving their mental health. **Individualized on-line support was provided to more than 200 children with disabilities and their families** through a specially developed on-line service provider platform. Capacity of 80 day-care centres and preschool staff was developed on how to use the platform for online service delivery, expanding the network of professionals providing services.

19,640 (93% male; 2% female/ 4%male children; 1% female children) **refugees, migrants and asylum seekers**

transiting the country or seeking international protection **were assisted** by UN through continued support and social protection. Support included living and reception conditions and assistance services, provision of psychosocial support and medical services, cultural mediation/interpretation, educational support for migrant children as well as assistance in voluntary return of migrants who are not in need of international protection.

With UN support, the Government has improved capacities to consolidate the formal system of local integration of refugees as part of the country's efforts in strengthening the migration management policies and mechanisms in general. With the assistance of social partners, the Government's efforts to mainstream provision of social protection services and integration support for refugees and persons under subsidiary protection were supported, resulting in improved access to rights and services, increased integration capacities of local municipalities, improved local integration environment and public opinion and improved psychosocial well-being of refugees.

OUTPUT 2.4

Improved multisectoral response to prevent and address all forms of violence based on victims/survivor-centred approach, including harmful practices and discriminatory gender norms and stereotypes

Agencies: UN WOMEN, UNFPA, ITU

Violence of all forms was on the rise during the pandemic, leading to increase in prevention and response activities and strengthened UN support. On policy

level, important steps forward have been made with the adoption of the new Law on Prevention and Protection of Violence Against Women (VAW) aligned with the Istanbul Convention regulatory commitments. **Support for the operationalization of the new Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence** aligned with the Istanbul Convention was initiated through by-laws development and partnership building for improved **multisectoral response to prevent and address all forms of violence against women**.

68 JOURNALISTS TRAINED FOR REPORTING ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN with UN support

Nine civil society organizations gained better knowledge on evidence-based monitoring of the Istanbul Convention implementation and preparing shadow reports for the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women (VAW) and Domestic Violence (DV) (GREVIO). One draft shadow report for GREVIO was produced. 120 students and 18 school mentors were empowered to work as advocates against harmful gender stereotyping, VAW and DV. 68 journalists and other media professionals working across North Macedonia have increased knowledge on gender-sensitive reporting of VAW. 477 Roma women, men, girls, and boys were empowered on VAW, DV, harmful gender stereotypes and early marriages. 18 representatives of general and specialist service providers from the municipalities of Strumica, Stip and Veles have increased capacities on the provision of counselling and psycho-social support in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Istanbul Convention. 15 women survivors of violence have begun to benefit from social mentoring for economic empowerment, including minority women. Four social mentors have increased capacities on providing economic reintegration services to women survivors of violence.

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

Fundamentals first: Economic Development and Competitiveness
Chapter 15: Energy,
Chapter 27 Environment

2021 UN expenditure

\$9,169,225

Development partners:

Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education; Ministry of Labor and Social Policy; Ministry of Economy; Cabinet of Deputy President of the Government in charge of Economic Affairs; Crisis Management Centre; Directorate for Protection and Rescue; Local self-governments; Farmers' associations; Chambers of Commerce; NGOs, private sector, Balkan Foundation for Sustainable Development, Bureau of Education, City of Skopje, Connecting Natural Values and People - Office, DEKONS EMA, E-health Directorate, Food and Veterinary Agency, Fund for Innovation and Technological Development, International Union for Conservation of Nature - Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Macedonian Ecological Society, Municipality of Resen, National Public Health Institute, UNESCO National Commission, National Federation of Farmers, State Institute of Agriculture

OUTPUT 3.1

The enabling policy, regulatory environment, capacities at central and local level and community actions strengthened for low-emission development and multi-sector resilience to climate change

Agencies: FAO, UNDP, UNECE, UNICEF, UNIDO

Significant results in **climate change policy** have been achieved in 2021 by the Government with UN support. A comprehensive set of policy documents and tools shaping the country's engagement on climate change was developed including the **enhanced Nationally Determined Contribution (eNDC)**, defining country's climate change policy up to 2030; Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) Platform, enabling comprehensive and efficient reporting to UNFCCC; the **eNDC Roadmap**, outlining activities to achieve the targeted greenhouse gas emission reductions; **eNDC Financing Strategy, Policy on financial de-risking** for all enhanced eNDC sectors; and legislation on controlled management/phase-down of **ozone depleting substances (HCFCs)** used in refrigerators, freezers, air-conditioners, heat pumps and other equipment in accordance with the Montreal Protocol.

On **climate financing and private sector engagement**, the UN supported the country in the development of a

Carbon Tax Roadmap

and **climate budget tagging methodology**.

Ministry of Finance has incorporated the climate tagging in relevant draft law. Also, the country was supported to submit the **first Green Climate Fund (GCF) Country Work Programme**. Further, detailed mapping and tools for greater engagement of private sector and guidelines for MSMEs in delivering energy efficient products and renewable energy equipment were developed.

Activities on **climate-resilient agriculture** also continued, with further work on developing **single Earth Map platform**, integrating national and global data on climate, soils, terrain, statistics and more, to aid evidence based agricultural policy; on **enhancing the country's seed system** by improving the domestic production of high-quality and climate-tolerant seeds of strategic crops; and on capacity building of the **national plant pest surveillance** and phytosanitary certification systems.

FIRST EVER CLIMATE TAX ROADMAP
developed

Youth awareness has been significantly strengthened with the UN-supported mainstreaming of environment and climate change topics in the **curricula for grades 1 and 4** and training of over 60 pre-primary and primary school teachers. **Youth engagement activities** on climate change were also supported, starting from the **Youth Climate Declaration** developed by young people, backed by the President of the country and presented at the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, then amplifying the voice of more than 300 young people through **U-Report** and support to youth-developed climate change and environment protection **social innovations** (10 teams of 46 high school students through UPSHIFT).



The eNDC Roadmap outlines the activities to achieve the targeted greenhouse gas emission reduction in achieving the raised target of 82% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. Credit: UNDP

OUTPUT 3.2

Solutions are identified and scaled-up at central and local levels for integrated, sustainable and inclusive management of natural resources (water, land, forests, biodiversity)

Agencies: FAO, UNDP, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO

Significant achievements were made in **increasing protected areas' network**. A new national park was **proclaimed - National Park Shar Mountain**, whereas the proclamation of the Ohrid Lake as a Monument of Nature is ongoing. Studies for valorisation of natural values and draft Management Plans of National Park Shar Mountains and Ohrid Lake were prepared with UN support, taking into consideration interests and needs of local communities and national priorities on sustainable management of natural resources. Furthermore, the **capacity of National Parks' rangers** throughout the country was strengthened through series of trainings.

Progress in **protection of forests and habitats of plants, birds and other animal species** was made through the UN-supported **identification of 188 high natural value forests (55,988 ha)** and prepared guidelines for future management; development of **forest vegetation maps** for three pilot sections (Maleshevo Mountains and Ograzden),



In cooperation with the City of Skopje, the Koco Racin green roof was opened to the public in 2021 as part of a wider set of activities designed to increase the city's resilience to climate change and rising urban temperatures. Credit: UNDP

proposed **guidelines for management of forests** in two pilot sites to support the protection of large carnivores (Bukovic and Pletvar/Belasica); and MOEPP order on restriction for collection of **Bearberry** for use and trade, as a result of a non-timber forest products research activities. Furthermore, the **first national Red Lists/Books of reptiles and amphibians** were prepared, providing information on extinction risks as part of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species™. In terms of **fishing community livelihoods, data methodology and guidelines** were established aiming to improve sustainable management of inland fisheries, coordination of shared water bodies, and reduce illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Guiding document on enabling local self-government units for implementation of environmental legislation and **Environmental Performance Review (EPR) recommendations** was also prepared.

The **national erosion and drought sensitivity map**, and identification of **high-risk zones and their impact to biodiversity** was prepared through field investigations and erosion modelling. Also, activities for assessing the **soil sealing rate and loss of soil organic matter** were piloted in three sites in Strumica, Prilep and Ohrid region.

Green development in the Skopje region, as the largest urban region in the country, was also strengthened through a set of measures. The **Green Roof on Dom na**

Kulturata Koco Racin was built, as a measure to decrease temperature in the urban blocks in the city centre. Also, the Green Cadastre for the City of Skopje was upgraded with additional **12,537 geo-referenced and inventoried trees and shrubs**. In addition, five automatic wireless stations (divers) on the piezometers of the new monitoring network in the well area Nerezi–Lepenec were installed to establish continuous, timely and precise **monitoring of groundwater**. Possible transmission paths of six-valent chrome in Zeden Mountain underground waters and their impact on Rashce spring were identified.

Two activities related to the **Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region** we implemented to assist protection and sustainable development of UNESCO World Heritage Lake Ohrid.

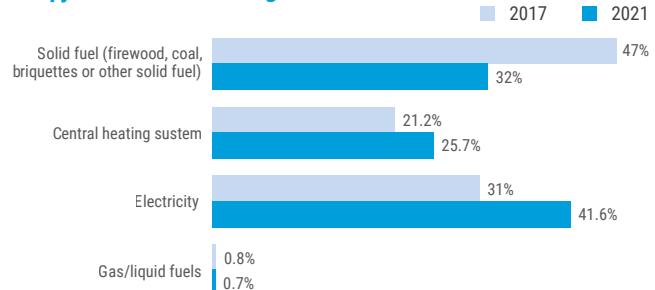
OUTPUT 3.3

Capacities at central and local levels are strengthened to prevent and respond to the air pollution threats and health consequences in most vulnerable communities

Agencies: IOM, UNDP, UNESCO

Awareness of journalists, CSOs and heating devices retailers on causes and effects of air pollution has been strengthened. **Investigative journalism** on air pollution was supported, 20 CSOs representatives were capacitated for advocacy on air pollution, and **15 retailers** of heating devices were trained on argumentative promotion of energy-efficient features. Ministry of Economy was supported in development of 15 correspondent tables for the **Rulebook on Labelling of Energy-Related Products** (EU-MK and MK-EU form).

Skopje household heating



Intensified efforts of all stakeholders and citizens of Skopje in changing polluting practices have resulted in modest but steady decrease of air pollution levels in Skopje. Source: UNDP Households heating studies, 2017 and 2021

128 houses in Lisice settlement (municipality of Aerodrom) were supported to replace inefficient wood stoves with new air conditioners, heating pumps, pellet stoves to reduce the indoor and outdoor pollution, and some households more complex interventions, such as installing a new facade, replacement of roofs, windows and doors to improve energy efficiency. The aim of these activities is to pilot a model for **reducing air pollution from households**, that can be replicated in other locations.

OUTPUT 3.4

Capacities at central and local levels are strengthened to identify multi-hazard risks and to plan, finance and implement effective disaster risk reduction and response, including human displacement, in line with the Sendai framework

Agencies: FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNDRR, WHO

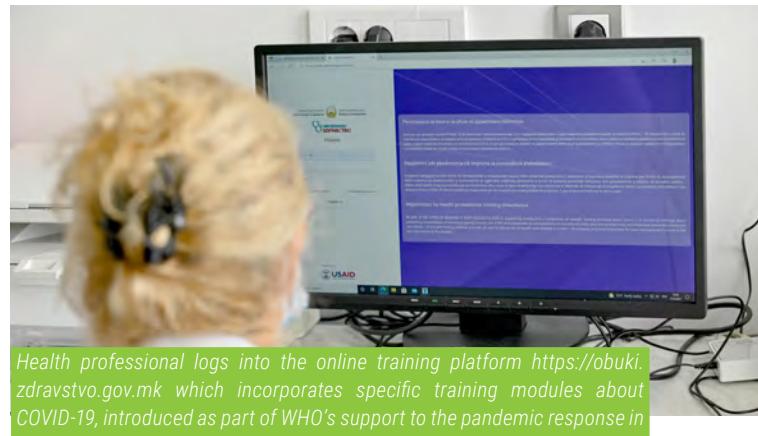
UN supported the strengthening of **evidence-based decision making for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)**, through the establishment of an INFORM sub-national model risk index, mapping vulnerability, exposure and coping capacity across sub-national entities in North Macedonia, in collaboration with the European Commission Joint Research Centre.

Resilience of the agriculture sector was strengthened through development of a first-time **National Drainage and Irrigation Strategy 2021-2031**, update of the **Analysis of the National DRR Systems for the Agriculture Sector**, and review of all national policies and plans related to climate change and agriculture in terms of harmonization with EU regulation. Furthermore, recommendations for improving the existing information system for **national Damage and Loss assessment** were provided. In terms of field activities, **innovative climate-smart agriculture (CSA) technologies** were introduced by local farming communities in three demonstration sites in Strumica, Gevgelija and Resen.

The **resilience to flood risk** of the **Polog region's communities** was improved through update of the Flood Risk Management Plan for Upper Vardar River Basin and identification of measures for increasing resilience of the two largest urban centres in Polog, cities of Tetovo and Gostivar. The main sediment sources (landslides and torrential streams) in the region were identified and technical documentation for **stabilization of Shipkovica torrent** and for **regulation of Bogovinjska riverbed** were finalized. Integrated climate-resilient **transboundary flood risk management of the Drini river basin** was also strengthened. With UN support, **17 hydrological and 9 meteorological stations** were newly added in the Macedonian part of Drini river basin. Moreover, greater accuracy of foreseen flood hazard and risk management planning was enabled through the collection of **historic hydrological and meteorological data** from 1960 onwards and development of a **high-resolution digital terrain model** using sophisticated technology (LiDAR surveying method, area of approximately 4,125 km²). Technical documentation for **restoration of Sateska river and diversion in its natural riverbed** was prepared. Assessment of the capacity for implementation and enforcement of **river basin management plans** was also conducted.

In terms of **urban resilience**, the **Hazards Assessment and Fire Protection and Rescue Plan of City of Skopje** were updated/developed. The technical documentation for **anti-erosive measures on Skopska Crna Gora** was prepared, to prevent severe flooding such as in 2016. UN supported the implementation of the **COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements** in the Western Balkans. UN provided capacity building and peer learning for the Southeast Europe countries on coordinating **land-use planning** and **industrial safety procedures**.

Health emergency preparedness was increased by **strengthening detection capacities** of National Public Health laboratories (provision of equipment, supplies and PPE, weekly training, strengthened IT infrastructure), development of the **National Genomic Sequencing Strategy**, establishment of a **COVID-19 Online Training Platform** providing accredited courses to health professionals, risk communication and community engagement on protective and preventive behaviours from Covid-19, procurement of **key equipment and medical supplies** for Covid-19 hospital wards, and establishment of **Epidemic Intelligence and Emergency Operating**



Health professional logs into the online training platform <https://obuki.zdravstvo.gov.mk> which incorporates specific training modules about COVID-19, introduced as part of WHO's support to the pandemic response in North Macedonia. Credit: WHO

Centre, increasing capacities to strategically manage and monitor health emergencies. UN provided a significant contribution to the digitalization and strengthening of electronic health system Moj Termin related to Covid-19 including: **digitalization and interoperability/data sharing** on Covid testing among all laboratories, family doctors and epidemiologists; digitalization of contact surveillance system; **e-epidemiological questionnaire; one COVID-19 complete patient record** with retroactive data import and analytics; development of a **telemedicine module** and module-data base on Health Human Resources and supply and equipment estimator.

OUTPUT 3.5

National and local capacities strengthened, and awareness increased for waste reduction and efficient waste management (chemical, water, municipal waste, hazardous waste, medical waste – including in rural areas)

Agencies: **ITU, UNEP, UNIDO, UNITAR, UNOPS**

On efficient waste management, the UN supported the development of guidance for the municipalities and the **regional waste management** centres and assessed the level of the implementation of regional waste management plans and capacity for collection and transport of the waste of the municipal communal enterprises.

The UN also supported activities for **clean-up/remediation of the hazardous waste**. Clean-up activities of the **lindane (HCH) in the small basin in OHIS complex** are ongoing, including construction works on the foundation to contain the area for excavation of the contaminated soil. Also, Institute of Public Health was provided with **laboratory equipment** to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of hazardous substances.



Ongoing activities for clean-up of the small basin in OHIS complex. 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



Fundamentals first: Economic Development and Competitiveness
Chapter 3.23 The Judiciary and Fundamental Rights
Chapter 3.24 Justice, Freedom and Security

2021 UN expenditure

\$9,084,881

Development partners:

President's Cabinet, Prime Minister's Cabinet, DPMs in charge of European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Economic Affairs, Political System, and Good Governance, Secretariat for European Affairs, Ministries of Interior, Local Self-Government, Labour and Social Policy, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Information Society and Administration, Justice, Culture, Education and Science, Defence, Environment and Physical Planning, Health, Parliament, National Bank, State Statistical Office, State Audit Office, Bureau for Regional Development, Centres for Development of the 8 planning regions, Supreme Court, Judiciary, Public Prosecutors Office for Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption, Academy of Judges and Prosecutors, Ombudsman, Anti-Discrimination Commission, Inter-ministerial WG for adoption of Migration Policy, National Council for Gender Equality, Customs Agency, Agency for Youth and Sports, WCO, INTERPOL, OSCE, National Commission for UNESCO, Bar Association, Faculty of Law Iustinianus Primus, Macedonian Academy of Science and Arts, Association of Finance Officers (AFO), Association of Units of Local Self Government, Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-east Europe (NALAS), the City of Skopje, Municipalities of Aerodrom, Bitola, Bogdanci, Bogovinje, Centar, Chashka, Delchevo, Gazi Baba, Gevgelija, Gjorce Petrov, Gostivar, Karposh, Kavadarci, Kisela Voda, Kochani, Kriva Palanka, Kumanovo, Makedonska Brod, Makedonska Kamenica, Mavrovo-Rostushe, Novaci, Ohrid, Shtip, Staro Nagoricane, Struga, Strumica, Sveti Nikole, Tetovo, Veles, Vinica, Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, Akcija Zdruzenska, organizations of persons with disabilities and other civil society organizations.

OUTPUT 4.1

Advanced rule of law, access to justice and protection and promotion of human rights for all, especially those left behind by inclusive and gender responsive legal, policy and institutional frameworks and capacity building

Agencies: **IOM, UNICEF, OHCHR, UNOPS, UNHCR, UNODC, UNESCO, UN Women, UNFPA**

In a challenging political and socio-economic context, UN collective support was central in accelerating reforms needed for the country's EU integration and sustainable, inclusive and green growth. The forward-looking, inclusive and transparent policy and decision making, backed up with evidence and facilitated with innovative digital solutions, contributed to advancing good governance, and the rule of law in the country.

UN contributed to developing and aligning of **21 policies and 98 laws and bylaws** with EU acquis and international standards, which promote fundamental rights, gender equality, access to justice and services for victim of gender-based violence, along with compensation for the harm suffered by other violent crimes. In the justice sector, the civil and criminal law, including justice for children were revised. UN engraved the principle 'No one left behind' in

policy development and implementation. Excluded and marginalized groups were empowered to claim their rights, and effectively participate and influence decisions that affect their lives. Engagement with international human rights mechanisms was promoted, and an independent monitoring framework for rights of PWDs was established.

UN supported the authorities in finding a systemic solution to statelessness by amending legislation, **#IBelong campaign**, and **provision of legal aid for 524 people with no nationality in the country**. 33 stateless persons were assisted with confirmation of nationality, while 512 persons were provided with legal counselling. A video raise awareness about statelessness and civil registration in North Macedonia, was produced and [broadcasted in national media](#).

Transposition of the EU gender acquis was initiated with the Secretariat for European Affairs. A new National Gender Equality Strategy (2021-2026) is in the legislative procedure, whereas two other sectoral strategies were adopted - National Strategy on Rural and Agricultural Development 2021-2027 and Strategy for Regional Development 2021-2031, setting for the first time, clear objectives for closing the gender gaps.

UN engagement with the Government in migration management and population dynamics, led to a comprehensive **Migration Policy 2021-2025 and its Action plan adopted by the Parliament in December 2021**, and development of a Migration Country Profile. In the area of criminal justice, 40 professionals increased their skills to handle trafficking in persons cases, while safeguarding victim rights.



OUTPUT 4.2

Capacities of central and local governments strengthened to: a) better plan, budget, monitor and track expenditure and leverage resources in a gender-responsive manner in support of accelerated sustainable development; b) improve design and efficient delivery of quality public services (targeting excluded groups, including refugee /migration management) with improved social accountability and participation in decision-making

Agencies: IOM, UNDP, UNOPS, UN Women, UNICEF

 13	MINISTRIES
31	MUNICIPALITIES
	HAVE GENDER -RESPONSIVE BUDGETS

Ombudsman, Anti-Discrimination Commission, SSO, other independent bodies, as well as civil society. The administration gained knowledge primarily in new aligned policies and legislation, 2030 Agenda and SDGs, and EU enlargement methodology, also acquiring EU accession negotiation skills. Overall capacities in areas of population dynamics, migration, asylum and international protection were improved.

An important footprint was the development of a compressive Methodology that will guide the country in setting its long-term development vision by formulating a National Development Strategy, emerging from a broad consensus across the society. Gender responsive budgeting continued to be implemented in 13 ministries and 31 municipalities, 10 municipalities more compared to last year, mainly in policies and budgets in healthcare, labour and socio-economic sectors. Gender perspective was also integrated into 15 strategic responses relevant to the EU accession. Increased capacities and leadership of MLSP Department for Equal Opportunities resulted in its stronger role as a **National Gender Machinery** initiating and coordinating reforms for advancing gender equality. In this direction, the first **Resource Center on Gender Responsive Policy Making and Budgeting** was established, which will serve as a knowledge hub, facilitating continued and sustainable capacity development of public administration.

UN substantively contributed to **more equitable primary and secondary education funding**. New methodologies for efficient allocation of resources enabled an increase of transfers to municipalities by \$8 million for primary education and \$1.5 million for secondary education in the 2022 national budget cycle. This will enable free meals for first through fifth grade students, free tablets for students from poorer families, adequate allocations for inclusion of children with disabilities, as well as for teaching in the languages of the smaller ethnic communities. Around **1,000 young people engaged in re-imagining consultation** processes, U-Report polls, social media channels, and partnered with the President to champion their calls to action.

Decentralization efforts were reinforced with the new Programme on Sustainable Local Development and Decentralization 2021-2026, and two new financial instruments (Equalization and Performance Funds) for municipal financing awaiting adoption in Parliament. **55 municipalities benefited from innovative digital solutions** that ensured efficient participation and service delivery, evidence-based policymaking, and inter-municipal cooperation that involved 26 municipalities. E-platforms



Young people participating at an event in Skopje City Park to launch UNICEF supported U Report platform developed to empower youth to share their opinion on matters they care about and become positive agents of change in their communities. Credit: UNICEF

for citizens' participation, provided 700 people with the opportunity to actively participate in the decision-making process in their communities.

OUTPUT 4.3

Increased utilization of foresight and quality and disaggregated data for improved forward looking, evidence-based, result-oriented and transparent policy making, responsive to the rights of women, men, girls and boys and vulnerabilities of groups left behind, at all levels and in all contexts, including humanitarian

1,000 YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED IN REIMAGINING
consultations in 2021

Agencies: UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, UNHCR, UNICEF

Transparent and participatory policy making processes at all branches and levels of governance gained a stronger focus on evidence and data, measurable targets and indicators aligned to SDGs. The **Municipal Development Index**, as the most reliable source of data on the socio-economic development of the municipalities in the country, was updated, made more gender sensitive and aligned with the Strategy for Regional Development 2021-2031 and the Program for Sustainable Local Development and Decentralization 2021-2026.

The **2021 Census communications strategy**, jointly led by UN and SSO, positively affected the process of collection of disaggregated quantitative and quality data during the census. SSO analytical and reporting capacities were stepped up in relation to SDGs indicators, especially SDG indicator 5.1.1 by including sex-disaggregated indicators and a portion of the Washington group of questions for self-assessment of disability in data gathering.

UN continued providing data and analytical research on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on children, women, victims of violence, and other vulnerable groups. A multi-media campaign targeted negative attitudes against children to access justice, working in partnership with CSOs and other national partners.

UN in partnership with key national stakeholders commenced a joint programme that aims to strengthen capacities and systems for innovative and anticipatory governance in the area of migration management. Additionally, the work on Big Data and remittances' flows through informal channels resulted with a survey methodology and survey instruments. In support, 4

campaign videos on social media have reached more than 740.000 views or 450.000 persons, which is almost 45 times more than the set target. This was followed by the presentation of the campaign on national TV stations.

UN supported the formulation of a **National Strategy on Justice for Children**, proposing a comprehensive and pragmatic program of activities to gradually achieve a positive change for children in contact or conflict with the law, and strengthen the capacities of the State Council for Prevention of Child Delinquency and other relevant stakeholder, ensuring active participation of young people in decision making process.

The [Analysis of Cases of Femicides in North Macedonia 2017-2020](#) revealed a high number of women victims, calling responsible authorities to take decisive action. More than 1,000 users have downloaded the BE SAFE mobile application. The application, along with social media and outreach campaigns in rural areas, improved awareness and access to GBV services.

OUTPUT 4.4

Social cohesion and trust improved through dialogue and meaningful participation by all, especially of the groups left behind.

Agencies: [UNDP](#), [UN Women](#), [UNHCR](#)

Throughout 2021, greater cohesion and positive public attitudes towards vulnerable and excluded groups were promoted through advocacy, communication strategies, concrete actions and efforts for inclusion and integration of people left furthest behind, including women, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, stateless people and certain ethnic minorities.

An important tool to help transform the narrative in the society is the **Communications Strategy for Social Change**, which was produced in 2021 by UNHCR with experts from the University of Kentucky. To promote and help the Strategy to move forward, an Advisory Body consisted of representatives from different sectors of the society, as well as a Communicators Hub, a group of communicators from across the board was established with the aim of mutual capacity building and joint action for social change.



The campaign "Be Loud and Clear!" showcases the work and initiatives of women at the local level, the importance of their participation in the decision-making processes, their engagement, organization and willingness to initiate change for the good of the community. Credit: UN Women

Special media grants enabled 140 TV forums to serve as mechanism for direct citizens participation in the decision making in municipalities. The Local Democracy Methodology was adopted by 4 new municipalities. 44 civil servants were selected to take part in the second phase of the ReLoaD project. Finally, the newly designed model of project-based funding from local government budgets boosted the agency of civil society, youth and women at local level.

UN amplified the advocacy for equal opportunities of marginalized women. The partnership with CSOs and municipalities resulted in 36 policy measures that provide gender-, age- and disability- sensitive services in health, social protection, public transport as well as [gender-based violence](#). With UN support, **over 3,300 women were directly involved in outreach and awareness-raising** carried out by CSOs and women's grassroots organizations, as well as the campaign *Be loud and clear*.

OUTPUT 4.5

Enhanced national and local capacities in asset recovery and countering corruption in public life through better enforcement of anti-corruption laws and preventive measures

Agencies: [UNODC](#), [UNDP](#)

By aligning national legislation with international standards, adopting arms control protocols and enhancing capacities of law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners, UN ensured a more effective response and cross-border and regional cooperation in arms control and countering trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants and other forms of organized crimes, while protecting and safeguarding victim rights. UN-supported key policy documents – **Assets Recovery Strategy and Anti-Corruption and Illicit Finance Roadmap** – benefited the entire Western Balkan region.



Event in Ohrid where on 25 June 2021, Ministers of Justice, Ministers of Interior, Deputy Ministers, State Secretaries and Heads of Anti-corruption agencies from the region have formally endorsed the Regional Anti-Corruption and Illicit Finance Roadmap for the Western Balkans. Credit: UNODC

SDG financing & partnership

[UN Annual Conference 2021](#) raised awareness and public debate on **SDG financing** in the country. The event focused on both, **sustainable public and private finance**, brought together key policy makers, financial sector representatives and international community, recognizing the efforts of early adopters. The UN-developed [SDG Financing Landscape Analysis in North Macedonia 2021](#) provided an overview of public, private, international and national financing flows and a set of recommendations how to further strengthen focus on financing of the 2030 Agenda.

UN team supported the Government on mainstreaming 2030 Agenda into the country's public finances through introducing **gender-responsive budgeting** at the central and local level (SDG 5) and introducing detailed methodology for **climate budget tagging** (SDG 13). UN also supported the country on various **taxation aspects** to increase the envelope of public funding available for achievement of sustainability objectives, including **tax policy on transfer pricing** and tax information exchange, and with the development of Roadmap for introduction of carbon tax (SDG 13). Support was provided with reducing **informal economy** (SDGs 8 and 10) and **illicit financial flows** (SDG 16), through development of indicators for monitoring of informal economy and a [public awareness campaign](#), as well as with the development of the [Western Balkans Anti-Corruption and Illicit Finance Road Map](#).

The UN also supported the government in development of **innovative financing instruments** to enable more effective allocation of funds to SDGs through:

- *green finance* – the development of the **Green Financing Facility**, increased access to the **Green Climate Fund** (SDGs 7 and 13)
- *municipal finance* – supporting the newly established **Performance Fund** and **Equalization Fund** for strengthened fiscal capacity and increased revenues for municipalities (SDG 16)
- *environment finance* – implementation of the country-level **Multi-Partner Environmental Fund**, enabling efficient pooling of financial contributions from various supporters to the clean-up of hazardous waste at the OHIS factory complex (SDGs 12)

For example, the [Green Financing Facility](#), a new financing instrument with the anticipated value of \$46 million, will help blend finance from the UN Joint SDG Fund, Government of North Macedonia, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and private banks in the country, in order to accelerate adoption of renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions by SMEs and households.

To promote **private sustainable finance**, UN initiated discussions and identified champions on incorporating environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) standards, corporate **sustainability** and **ESG reporting** and



2021 UN Annual Conference was devoted to SDG Financing in North Macedonia. Credit: UN RCO

the **responsible banking principles** among the banking and private sector.

UN North Macedonia continued to partner with a wide and varied set of partners, with direct contractual cooperation with over 130 partners. Partnership with international financial institutions increases through a new partnership with EBRD on GFF. Opportunities were explored to partner with select private sector entities on topics such as introducing **corporate sustainability reporting** and joint initiatives were implemented on **SDGs awareness raising** with Union of Chambers of Commerce and Swiss-Macedonian Business Club.



SDG Financing Landscape in North Macedonia
November 2021



2021 UN Annual Conference was devoted to SDG Financing in North Macedonia. Credit: UN RCO

UN coherence, effectiveness & efficiency

The first year of 2021-2025 SDCF implementation was characterized by the intensified collective and UN entities' individual efforts to translate the UN development system reform into practice in North Macedonia – through rigorous application of principles, guidance and tools that support better aligned and coherent UN delivery, focused on results and producing efficiencies.

Programmatic alignment and coherence

SDCF is operationalized annually through a joint workplan (JWP), which compiles all UN development activities within a given year, following the collective discussion and alignment through a consultative process within the UN and with national partners.

2021 JWP was the first such annual plan in North Macedonia, endorsed by the SDCF JSC in February 2021, after being **consulted among more than 70 UN and Government partners**. The 2021 JWP included detailed priority activities, benchmarks and targets, compiled in one place and serving as a tool that enhances accountability and is focused on results achieved through eliminating overlaps and maximizing complementarity within the four SDCF priority areas. The 2021 JWP also clearly outlined the **continuing shift of UN development system support from direct implementation towards a more targeted role as an enabler and provider of policy advice and expertise**.

The UN continued with dedicated efforts to develop joint programmes of multiple UN agencies, to enable the provision of a comprehensive set of UN knowledge and expertise to the country on complex, multi-faceted challenges. In 2021, the UN had **three joint programmes in implementation** – on migration policy and quality data for migration; COVID-19 response and recovery, focusing on e-immunisation, immunization hesitancy and access to health services in remote areas; and on advancing rights for persons with disability, focusing on policy, administrative data, financing aspects and greater participation of persons with disability in policy making.



Three new joint programmes were under development – on establishing innovative financing instruments (Green Financing Facility); strengthening dialogue and building constructive narratives among youth in the region; and on regional labour mobility.

Transparency and accountability

In addition to enhancing alignment and coherence of interventions, JWP 2021 added significantly to the transparency of UN work. Detailed information – including financial information – has been made available to the implementing and external partners during the planning and implementation phase, including through public channels such as UN-INFO. This not only **boosted the accountability for delivering results**, but also promoted **collaboration, partnerships, information exchange and avoiding overlaps in programming** – of UN agencies and Government partners.

The SDCF Funding Framework as an example – further boosts accountability and transparency by providing a single reference and overview of the SDCF funding situation as well as the financial resources required to achieve the results of the SDCF. The funding framework provides detailed information about the **amount, source, duration and sequence of financial resources that are required, available and projected to be available**, and that are **intended to be mobilized** by UNCT to deliver on SDCF results. It is embedded in the JWP and with that updated regularly, providing a current and detailed overview on the financial situation.

The use of **UN-INFO** – UNCT's central online planning, monitoring and reporting platform that digitizes the joint results frameworks, strategies and other operational coordination tools – **was fully rolled out** and promoted in North Macedonia in 2021 as a key tool to track, support and provide a one-stop-shop for all information on UN's contribution to Agenda 2030 and SDGs in the country.

Joint governance and coordination

The **SDCF governance structure was fully implemented** during 2021 to ensure strategic and day-to-day alignment between UN entities and with all other stakeholders.

The March UN-Government high-level Joint Steering Committee (JSC) provided strategic guidance and 2021 JWP endorsement, which was operationalized through regular bilateral and multilateral interaction and

coordination between UN entities and partner ministries and other institutions.

Early in 2021, four SDCF Outcome Results Groups (OGs) were constituted. OGs are the main coordination mechanism to ensure coherent UN system-wide approach of analysis, planning, implementation and monitoring at the SDCF outcome level. They met regularly throughout 2021 and, by the end of the year, became the key platform for joint planning that also engaged with the relevant Government counterparts at the outcome. This culminated in November and December joint prioritization for the 2022 JWP that has for the first time been designed in such a consultative manner.

UNCT remained the backbone for UN in-country alignment. UN internal coordination was also significantly boosted through the establishment and work of the Programme Management Team (PMT) that provided technical advice and support to UNCT and OGs on programmatic opportunities and challenges, with an overall aim of ensuring programmatic coherence.



2020 UN North Macedonia Annual Results Report was, for the first time, made available in three languages – English, Macedonian and Albanian.

The further intensified work through these and other joint internal coordination fora – Communications Group; Management, Evaluation and Learning Group; and various internal thematic groups – contributed immensely to the **enhanced coherence and alignment of UN work across outcomes and mandates** and the **country-level implementation of the UN development system reform**.

The set up and full functioning of the strengthened coordination structures was made possible by the enhanced leadership role of the UN RC and enabled her to better position and advocate for the overall work and impact of UN in the country. This was been possible due to support and resources invested globally by donors since 2019, including through the Resident Coordinator System Special Purpose Trust Fund (SPTF) that provides funding for the strengthened RCO.

Joint advocacy

Joint advocacy and public outreach activities to enhance UN visibility and bring its work closer to people were strengthened through enhanced storytelling on the corporate website – <https://northmacedonia.un.org> – and the **monthly Sustainable Development Bulletin**, dispatched regularly to more than 2,000 subscribers. To further strengthen data driven communications and advocacy, new collective tools and services were provided for UN communications teams (enhanced press clipping, social media listening services) were established during 2021.



16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign. Credit: UN-RCO

In addition to regular campaigns – 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence and SDGs campaign around UN Day – several new initiatives and campaigns were launched, or existing partnerships were strengthened during 2021, including with the EU Delegation on the environment and climate change.

2021 also marked the issuance of the first consolidated UN North Macedonia Annual Results Report that showcased the collective UN and Government's delivery and the indispensable support of international partners in 2020 that was marked by COVID-19 and the closure of the 2016-2020 UN programmatic cycle.

Efficiencies

UN North Macedonia started the implementation of the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) 2.0 in 2021 to realize the UN's global *Efficiency Agenda*. The five-year (2021–2025) joint plan for UN operations is expected to generate operational efficiencies, synergies and coherence, and estimated to save \$1.1 million through eliminating transaction costs, saving staff time and benefiting from economies of scale.

Steps were taken towards developing or implementing common services in the areas of facilities and premises management, information technology, human resources and finance, and procurement.

With COVID-19 continuing to impact working modalities in the country in 2021, the UN ensured business continuity and operations without interruption, with the safety and health of its staff being a top priority. Flexible and remote working arrangements remained in place, paired with gradual transition back-to-office when feasible.

Evaluation and lessons learned

PSD evaluation

The final independent evaluation of the strategy preceding SDCF, the 2016-2020 Partnership for Sustainable Development (PSD), was conducted at the end of 2019, with results informing SDCF development of the 2021-2025 SDCF.

The PSD evaluation report listed five recommendation areas in for UN to improve its results or coordination.

1. Strengthening of the inter-agency cooperation
2. Data management and programme design and monitoring
3. Sustainability of the undertaken interventions
4. Sustainability of financing; and
5. Strengthening UNCT role in coordination with development partners

UNCT is committed to fully consider the five sets of evaluation recommendations. Its observations gave the UN RC and UNCT North Macedonia a baseline overview and had further guided operations during 2021. A multi-year management response, prepared already in 2020, was reviewed in 2021.

By the end of 2021, UNCT fully achieved 12 out of the 38 actions, and 17 achieved in 2021 but continue to be applicable. Compared to the previous year (45% in 2020), implementation rate was 67%. 5 actions are in process and will be completed in 2022, while only 3 actions were either delayed or partially achieved in 2021. More than

half of these actions remain applicable and continue throughout the whole SDCF cycle.

Lessons learned

Close cooperation between UN entities usually emerges in those areas where there is a clear reform agenda, underpinned by a clearly identified problem and a strong commitment to change by the Government.

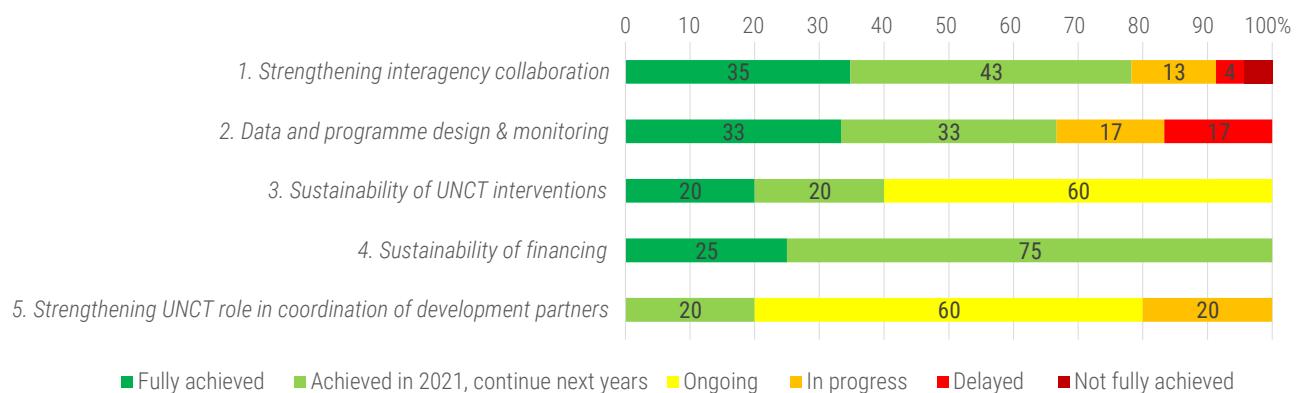
National ownership is thus an important factor that shapes the interaction of UN entities at the country level.

The UN System can become rapidly relevant and provide a major contribution in areas where it has had minimal engagement earlier. If there is a clear need in an area of UN expertise, capacity and experience, it is possible for UN entities to come together, coordinate effectively and efficiently deliver in close collaboration with each other.

Constantly changing environment, impacted by combination of local, regional and global challenges, significantly affects the pace and sustainability of the results. New and innovative approaches that may accelerate development results towards 2030 Agenda need to include (1) systematic and forward-looking strategic planning and decision-making within the operation; (2) strategic engagement with a broad range of selected stakeholders to mobilize support and engage with all actors of change; and (3) support the country in developing a collective vision and defining priorities for the future in order to advance common understanding and pursuing longer-term joint

UNCT management response to PSD Evaluation

Status of implementation as of 31 December 2021



Finance & resource mobilization

Financial overview

In 2021, \$44.9 million was made available to the UN, with \$35.6 million in expenditures, resulting in 79% delivery rate. Looking at SDCF outcomes, quality services for all (\$10.0 million), healthy environment (\$9.2 million) were the most resource-intense, followed by good governance (\$9.1 million) and inclusive prosperity (\$7.4 million). The delivery rate was slightly lower compared to the previous year due to the COVID-19 outbreak, local elections and government transition in the last quarter of the year, delayed procedures for the issuance of construction permits and delays with the implementation of several construction projects of larger value.

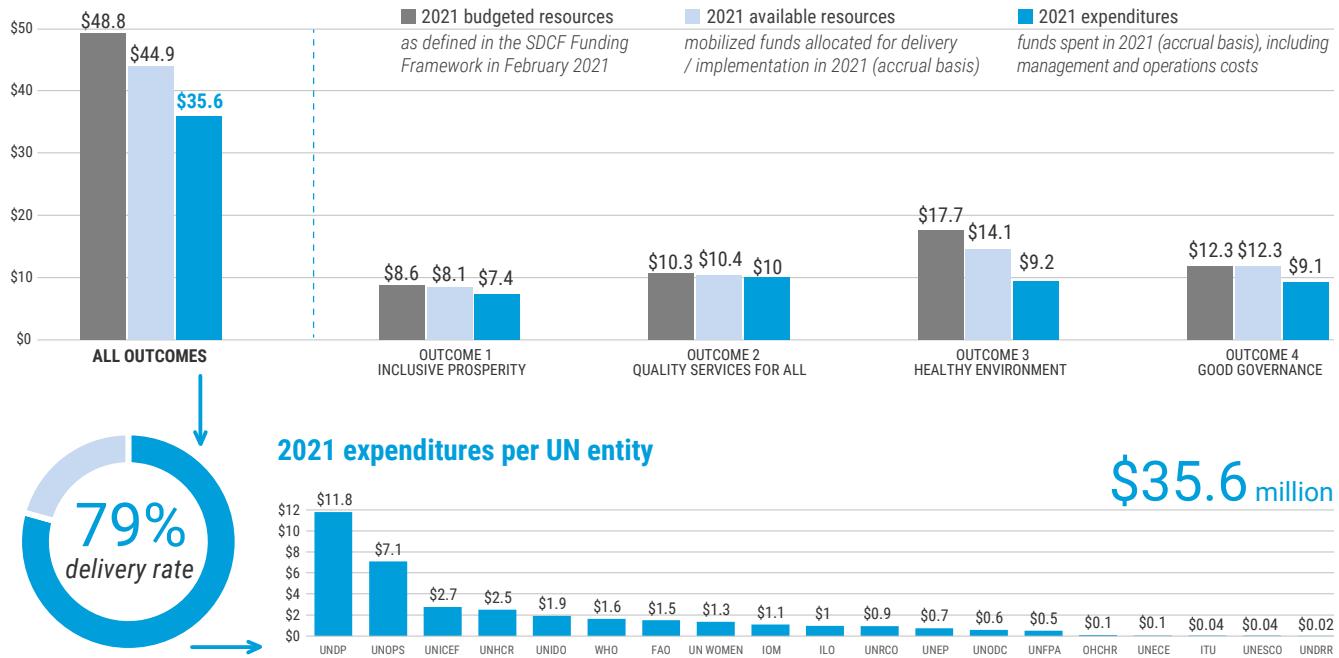
UN successfully mobilised 92% of the required resources for the year one of SDCF, enabling smooth implementation. 2021 UN North Macedonia activities were received from

34 sources of financing. Most of the available funding was received in the form of project- and programme-specific funding (42%), followed by government funding (21%), core funding (17%), global vertical funds (13%), pooled funds (5%), thematic funds (2.5%), and private sector funds (0.1%).

The top ten non-core funding sources based on expenditures in 2021 for UN in North Macedonia were North Macedonia, Switzerland, Sweden, Global Environment Facility, EU, Norway, United Kingdom, City of Skopje, UNICEF Thematic Funds and UNDP Funding Windows. The sizable contribution from North Macedonia to UN in 2021 reflects the emergency COVID-19 response-related procurements via UN entities, funded by the Government through the World Bank loan, and the Government co-financing for job creation, pre-school infrastructure and primary education financing activities.

2021 required and available resources and expenditures

Data as of 31 March 2022, for 1 January – 31 December 2021, in million US\$



Source: UN North Macedonia, 2022; available funding and expenditures are based on UN entities' financial systems or financial statements information as of 31 March 2022. UNHCR expenditures are estimates based on historic delivery rate as their expenditure reporting is consolidated only in April.

Resource mobilization

In late 2021, UN North Macedonia developed the [SDCF Resource Mobilisation and Partnership Strategy \(RMPS\)](#), which defines joint quantitative targets and qualitative approaches on resource mobilization and partnerships for the five-year SDCF period. The Strategy outlined resource mobilization and partnership objectives for the UN team and focus activities and approaches to ensure greater coherence and transparency. Reporting on progress in achieving SDCF RMPS targets at the end of year one is provided below.

In terms of **mobilising the needed finance to achieve the planned SDCF results (RMPS Objective 1)**, the UN North Macedonia is **on track**. At end 2021, **\$89.1 million** were available for activities in the five-year period. This represented 50% of \$178.2 million required to achieve the results foreseen under the five-year SDCF. Annually, 92% of the resources required for 2021, and 75% of the resources required for 2022, were mobilised before the end of 2021. \$89.1 million or 50% of the overall required funds remain to be mobilised by 2025.

In terms of **quality of funding/funding mix**, most of the funding received to date is in the form of non-core re-

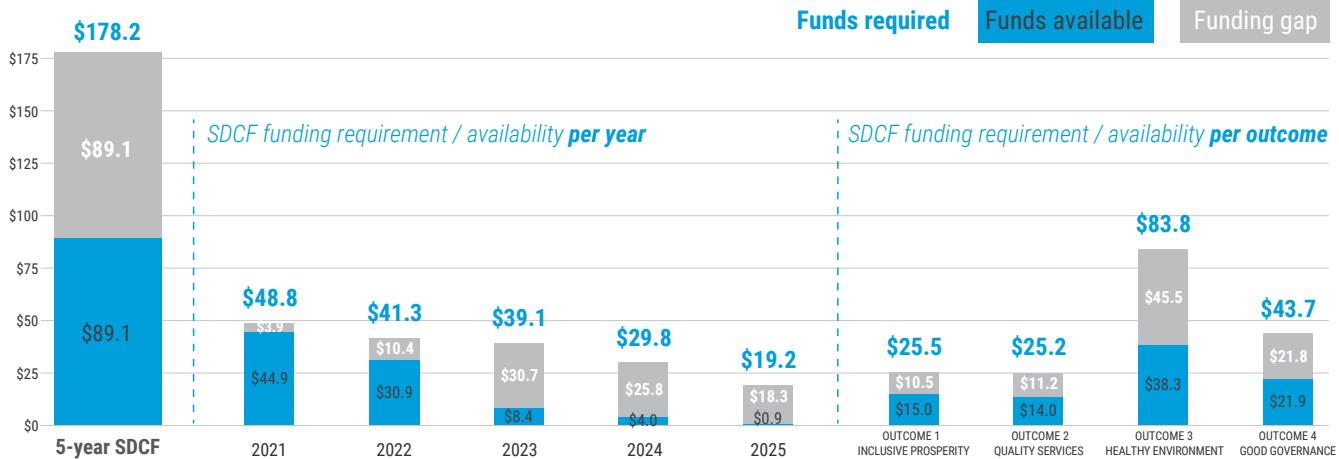
sources (\$79 million, 89%). Most contributions came from project and programme specific funding (48%), followed by government funding (15%), pooled funds (12%), core funds (11 %), global vertical funds (10%), thematic funds (3%), and private sector (less than 1%). The proportion of **government co-funding (RMPS Objective 4)** and **pooled and vertical funds funding** increased and reliance on earmarked project and programme funding was reduced, resulting in an **improved funding mix (RMPS Approach)**.

At the end of 2021, the **top ten non-core funding sources** for the period 2021-2025 were North Macedonia, Switzerland, European Union, Sweden, Joint SDG Fund, Global Environment Facility, United States, United Kingdom, Norway and City of Skopje.

UN North Macedonia continued its dedicated work on **increasing joint (multi-agency) programming** and is in line with the annual target defined under RMPS Objective 3. In 2021, four new joint programme ideas were developed: joint programmes on green finance, persons with disabilities' rights, regional labour migration and regional youth and dialogue; and one was successfully funded (rights for persons with disabilities). Some \$500,000 was mobilised in 2021 for joint programmes.

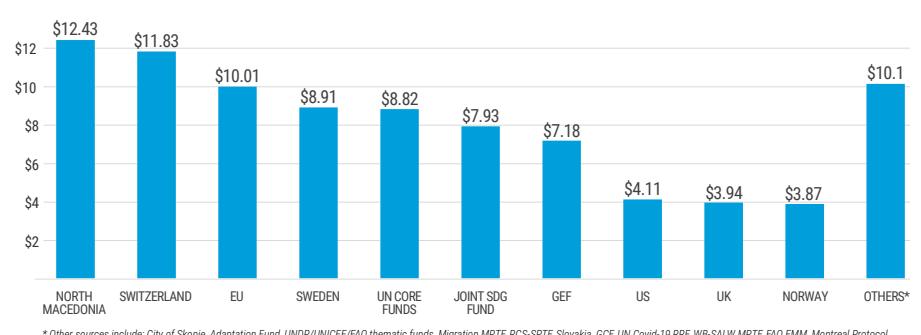
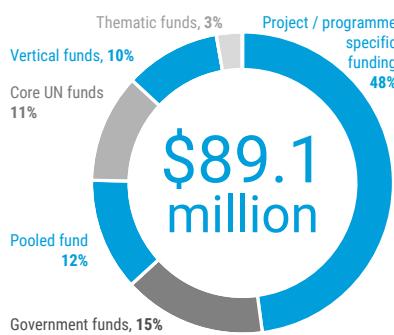
2021-2025 SDCF required and available resources

Data as of 31 March 2022, for 1 January 2021 – 31 December 2025, in million US\$



2021-2025 mobilized funds per funding modality and funding source

Data as of 31 March 2022, for 1 January – 31 December 2021, in million US\$



* Other sources include: City of Skopje, Adaptation Fund, UNDP/UNICEF/FAO thematic funds, Migration MPTF, RCS-SPTF, Slovakia, GCF, UN Covid-19 RRF, WB-SALW MPTF, FAO FMM, Montreal Protocol, Germany, Austria, UN-PRPD, Netherlands, Canada, France, Bulgaria, IOM-IDF, Makedonski Telekom.

UN in North Macedonia in 2022

In the second year of SDCF, UN North Macedonia will continue to provide policy advice and support to state institutions to accelerate 2030 Agenda implementation, as agreed in the 2022 Joint Workplan with the Government. UN entities will continue to ensure their activities are aligned with the key national workstreams and strategic priorities, including the National Development Strategy, EU accession process and the current Government programme.

In the area of **inclusive prosperity** (**SDCF Outcome 1**), the UN will continue to **create and support jobs and resilient SMEs**, fostering advanced technology and skills adjusted to future needs, promoting business opportunities and know-how in the culture and creativity sectors, and strengthening capacities for sustainable and competitive rural economy. **Employability of youth, women, hard to employ people and persons with disability** will be enhanced through active labour measures and life learning model training. **Regulations** will be further aligned with ILO and EU standards, facilitating job access for all including with digitalized services. Capacities in trade facilitation and resilient agriculture will be supported and efforts will be put to foster productive engagement of Diaspora. The **quality of employment** will benefit from ratifying the convention on Occupational Safety and Health policy, formalization in the HORECA sector and strengthening inspections capacities. Animal health management and agricultural land consolidation will continue at policy and practical level, further mainstreaming gender aspects in **rural development** policies and budgeting.

In the area of **social services** (**SDCF Outcome 2**), UN will continue supporting the implementation of the national **primary health care reform** through reorganization and strengthening of the quality of health services; capacity building and awareness raising activities at systemic level, but also with focus on specific segments of the system; improvements of the regulatory framework as well as capacity development of health workforce. Continued support will be provided 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, and development of a new concept for general secondary education (curricula and other activities). UN will support national partners with ensuring that persons in need are protected and provision of **social protection services to vulnerable categories is further improved**. **Violence prevention** and fight against domestic and gender-based violence will also remain top priority. **Support to childcare system** strengthening will continue to effectively address family separation, adversity and exclusion, by establishing mechanisms and services, and development of capacity of the social service workforce.

In the area of **healthy environment** (**SDCF Outcome 3**), the UN will continue the work on climate change, expanding support towards adaptation, management of natural resources, disaster risk reduction, air pollution and waste management. Some key foreseen activities include enhancing the climate change adaptive capacity through development of National Adaptation Strategy

and through implementation of practical adaptation measures in agriculture (improved irrigation infrastructure and efficient management of land and water resources); further, increased green financing (Green Financing Facility), support to improved nature protection, **greener agriculture and tourism, wastewater and solid waste management in Prespa**, new activities on land degradation neutrality and sustainable land and forest management, finalisation of the Source Apportionment Study for Skopje, potential replication of **air pollution reduction** activities through improved heating in select cities outside Skopje, continued activities on flood risk reduction in Polog and on Drini river, and completion of **clean-up of hazardous HCH (lindane) in small waste basin of OHIS complex**.

In the area of **good governance** (**SDCF Outcome 4**), UN will continue advancing the rule of law and good governance by strengthening more transparent, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, and forward-looking, anticipatory and evidence-driven policy making. UN will continue supporting NDS process that will set the country's long-term development vision for the next two decades based on the whole-of-society approach. UN support to the **EU acquis approximation process and alignment with international standards** will focus on fundamental rights and gender equality, judicial reforms, especially criminal justice and justice for children, migration management, anti-corruption and assets recovery, and countering organized crime and victim protection. UN will continue accelerating policy and institutional reforms aiming to ensure gender-responsive, age- and disability-sensitive planning and budgeting, and quality people-centred services. By promoting citizens' participation and agency of young people, women and people left behind in decision making, UN will contribute to enhanced democratic governance and a greater cohesion of the country's diverse society.

The LNOB principle, gender equality, human rights and the UN values and principles enshrined within the UN Charter and treaties will continue to guide UN North Macedonia work, planning and advocacy. UN will continue to promote and enhance coordinated approaches to partnerships, joint and coordinated SDCF funding opportunities and SDG financing and advocacy; and anticipate, prevent and manage risks related to internal and external shocks that could undermine the achievement of 2030 Agenda. Work will continue towards the set resource mobilisation objectives, including accelerated efforts to **increase internal coordination in approaching donors** (**RMPS Objective 2**), **improving transparency** (**RMPS Objective 5**) and **leveraging larger financing flows** (**RMPS Approach**).

In the area of business innovation, UN North Macedonia will further assess, adjust and boost internal processes to promote and generate greater operational efficiencies, synergies and coherence through the implementation of its Business Operations Strategy and other joint workstreams.

Link to the [2022 Joint Workplans](#)

Links to the SDCF document:

ENG MKD ALB



Annexes

[1] UN North Macedonia partners

Government and state agencies

Academy of Judges and Prosecutors
 Administrative Court
 Agency for Real State Cadastre
 Agency for Youth and Sports
 Anti-Discrimination Commission
 Bureau for Regional Development
 Bureau of Education
 Centre for Social Work
 Centres for Development of the planning regions
 City of Skopje
 Crisis Management Centre
 Customs Agency
 Directorate for Protection and Rescue
 Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Economic Affairs
 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 Good Governance
 E-health Directorate
 Employment Services 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
 Judiciary
 Local Self-government Units
 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
 Minister without Portfolio Responsible for Diaspora
 Municipal Centres for Social Welfare (MCSW)
 Municipalities
 National Bank
 National Committee for Countering Violent Extremism and Counterterrorism and Inter-Agency Working Group on Reintegration
 National Committee for CVE and CT
 National Coordination Body on Implementation of the CRPD
 National Extension Agency
 National Public Health Institute
 Parliament
 President's Cabinet
 Prime Minister's Cabinet
 Public Prosecutors Office for Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption
 Public Revenue Office
 Regional Employment Offices
 Secretariat for European Affairs
 State Audit Office
 State Labour Inspectorate
 State Statistical Office
 Supreme Court
 Office of the National Coordinator for CVE and CT
 Vocational Training Institutes

Civil society organizations

National Youth Delegate to the UN General Assembly
 Akcija Zdruzenka
 Association of Finance Officers (AFO)
 Association of Social Workers
 Association of Special Educators
 Association of Units of Local Self Government
 Association ZMAI
 Balkan Foundation for Sustainable Development
 Centre for Research and Policy Making
 Chambers of Commerce
 Connecting Natural Values and People - Office
 Council for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency - SPPMD
 Employers' organizations
 Farmers' associations
 Healthy Options Project Skopje
 Helsinki Committee for Human Rights
 International Union for Conservation of Nature - Eastern Europe and Central Asia
 IZBOR STRUMICA
 Macedonian Ecological Society
 Macedonian Red Cross
 Macedonian Young Lawyers Association
 National Federation of Farmers
 National Roma Centrum
 NGO SEGA PRILEP
 Ombudsman
 Open the Windows
 Organizations of persons with disabilities
 Producer organizations
 Professional Associations
 Trade Union of Health Workers
 Trade Unions
 Youth Educational Forum

Academia

Association for Research, Communications and Development
 Faculty of Agriculture and Food Science
 Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering
 Faculty of Law Iustinianus Primus
 Faculty of Veterinary Medicine - Skopje
 Health Education and Research Association
 Macedonian Academy of Science and Arts
 Medical Faculty Skopje
 South-East European University
 State Institute of Agriculture
 University Clinic of Psychiatry
 University Goce Delcev, Shtip
 University of Southampton

Multipartner councils

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

International partners

Austrian Embassy (ADA)
 British Embassy
 Central European Bank (CEB)
 Consular Office of the Slovak Republic

Delegation of the European Union in North Macedonia (EUD)
 Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South Eastern Europe (DPPI SEE)
 Embassy of France
 Embassy of Sweden (SIDA)
 Embassy of Switzerland (SDC, SECO)
 Embassy of the Republic of Turkey
 Embassy of the Russian Federation
 European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
 European Investment Bank
 European Training Foundation (ETF)
 General Consulate of Belgium
 Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)
 German Embassy
 German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
 German Federal Ministry of Health
 Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean
 Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ)
 International Centre for Migration
 INTERPOL
 Policy Development (ICMPD)
 International Union for Conservation of Nature, Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (IUCN - ECARO)
 Lions Club International Foundation
 Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI)
 Netherlands Embassy
 Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS)
 OSCE Mission to Skopje
 Royal Norwegian Embassy
 Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)
 Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP)
 United States Embassy (USAID)
 UNECE Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency

Private sector and others

Bar association
 Business Confederation of Macedonia
 Chamber of Mediators
 Diaspora
 Doctor's Chamber
 Media
 Primary Care Facilities
 Various companies

[2] UN joint programmes implemented in 2021

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 duration (1 October 2020 – 30 April 2023)

Safe and Innovative Health Services in times of Covid 19

Funded by the [Covid-19 Response and Recovery Fund](#), implemented by UNFPA, WHO and UNICEF; \$850,000, 14.5 months duration (1 January 2021 – 31 March 2022)

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

Funded by [UN PRPD](#) and implemented by UNDP, UNICEF, and UNFPA, \$400,000, 36 months duration (February 2021 – February 2024)

[3] SDCF outcome indicator trends

OUTCOME INDICATOR	CATEGORY	BASELINE	BASELINE YEAR	TARGET (2025)	LATEST VALUE	TREND
 Inclusive prosperity						
<i>Employment rate (20-64)</i>	Total (20-64 years)	59.2	2019	63.1	59.44	↗
	Female	48.4	2019	49.2	49.7	↗
	Male	69.8	2019	74.3	68.9	↘
	Youth (15-29) Total	34.4	2019	34.9	32.63	↘
	Female	28	2019	28.2	27.79	↘
	Male	40.4	2019	41.8	37.2	↘
<i>Proportion of informal employment in total economy</i>	Total	16.1	2019	14	12.93	↗
	Female	13	2019	not set	10.1	↗
	Male	18.1	2019	not set	14.89	↗
	Youth (15-24) total	24.01	2019	not set	16.53	↗
<i>Percentage of young people neither in employment nor in education and training</i>	15-29 years	24.5	2019	22	24.26	↗
	Female	28.3	2019	28.2	25.48	↗
	Male	20.9	2019	20	23.1	↘
	15-24 years	18.1	2019	15.8	17.82	↗
	Female	19.2	2019	19.1	16.83	↗
	Male	17.1	2019	16.9	18.75	↘
	25-29 years	34.9	2019	33.3	34.7	↗
	Female	43.1	2019	43	39.45	↗
	Male	27.1	2019	25.6	30.19	↘
<i>Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person</i>		-1.3	2019	2.7	1.54	↗
<i>Global Competitiveness Index 4.0</i>	Rank	82/141	2019	67	82	↔
	Points	57.3	2019	not set	57.3	↔
<i>Working Poverty rate</i>	Total	8.8	2019	7	10	↘
	Female	6	2019	not set	not available	↔
	Male	10.6	2019	not set	not available	↔
 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	36 (2020)	↘
	Girls	47.76	2019	60	not available	↔
	Boys	52.24	2019	60	not available	↔
<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	next survey in 2022	↔
	Numeracy	39	2018	49	next survey in 2022	↔
<i>Self-reported unmet need for medical examination and care, % of population aged 16 and over</i>	Total	2.3	2018	2	2.5 (2019)	↘
	Female	2.6	2018	2.2	2.4	↗
	Male	2	2018	1.8	2.6	↘
<i>Proportion of the target population covered by all vaccines included in their national programme</i>	All vaccines coverage	95	2018	>95	<90 (2020)	↘
	3 doses of DTP3	92.5	2018	95	83.9	↘
	Second dose of MCV2	74.8	2018	95	68.5	↘
<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 (2019)	↘
<i>Modern contraceptive prevalence rate</i>		14	2018	20	next survey in 2023	↔
<i>Neonatal mortality rate</i>		3.8	2019	3.5	4.2	↘
<i>Proportion of households covered by social protection cash transfers</i>		8	2019	14.5	no data available yet	↔
<i>Human Development Index</i>	Index points	0.759	2019	0.78	0.774	↗
	Rank	82/189	2019	not set	82	↔

OUTCOME INDICATOR	CATEGORY	BASELINE	BASELINE YEAR	TARGET (2025)	LATEST VALUE	TREND
Proportion of population living below the national poverty line	Total	21.9	2018	15.5	21.6	↗
	Female	22	2018	16.8	22	↘
	Male	21.8	2018	14.2	21.1	↗
	0-17 years old	29.3	2018	not set	27.8	↗
	Youth (15-24)	29.7	2018	not set	27.4	↗
	Adult (16+)	20.6	2018	not set	20.4	↗
	25+	19.2	2018	not set	19.3	↘



Healthy environment

Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Gg CO2-eq)	8,021	2016	6196	12,290* (2019)	↘
Proportion of a country designated total area that is protected	10.34	2019	15	13.47	↗
Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter PM10 (µg/m³)	51.32	2019	<40	41.90	↗
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	2.5
	Risk level	low	2020	very low	Low
System for integrated pest management in place	no system in place	2020	system in place & fully functional	no	↗
Average use of pesticide per area of cropland (kg/ha)	0.22	2017	EU average: 3.14	0.3	↗
Degree of integrated water resources management implementation (0-100)	Points	33	2020	60	40
	Level	medium-low	2020	medium-high	medium-low
Renewable energy share in the total gross final	Energy consumption	18.18	2018	29	19.22 (2020)
	Electricity consumption	24.84	2018	46	23.53 (2020)



Good governance

Rule of law index (overall, on a scale from 0 to 1)	0.53	2020	not set	0.53	↔
Gender equality index	62	2019	65	next survey in 2022	↔
Level of establishment of permanent national child rights coordinating mechanism	weak	2020	established	weak	↔
The country has a system in place to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment	no	2020	yes	no	↔
Worldwide Governance Indicators	Average	49.72	2018	>60	52.92
	Voice & accountability				50.24
	Political stability & absence of violence/terrorism				50.47
	Government effectiveness				57.69
	Regulatory quality				68.75
	Rule of law				52.4
	Control of corruption				37.98
Open Budget Index	Transparency	41	2019	>=45	41
Percentage of official statistics aligned with EU acquis	67	2019	95	67 (2019)	↔
Level of general satisfaction with public services at the local level (on a scale from 1 to 5)	Total	3.07	2020	3.5	2.97
	Female	3.12	2020	3.6	2.97
	Male	3.02	2020	3.4	2.97
	Urban	3.09	2020	3.5	2.83
	Rural	3.05	2020	3.5	3.08
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	↗
Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive	19.8	2020	25	19.3	↘

* This figure does not represent rapid increase of GHG emissions, but reflects the change of methodology (including inclusion of forestry sector and emissions from large number of forest fires) and availability of additional and more accurate data. With this update, it is expected that the national target is revised, and reflected in the next plans and reports.

Supplement:

2021 detailed results



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

Fundamentals first: Economic Development and Competitiveness
19. Social policy and employment;
20. Enterprise and industrial policy;
26. Education and culture

2021 UN expenditure

\$7,394,489

Development partners:

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy; Ministry of Education and Science, Secretariat for European Affairs, Employment Services Agency; Regional Employment Offices; Fund for Innovation and Technological Development; Trade Unions; Employers' associations; Economic and Social Council; Local Economic and Social Councils; Farmers Associations, Producer organizations, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine - Skopje, Ministry of Health, State Labour Inspectorate, Trade Unions, Agency for Real State Cadastre, Centre for Social Work, Faculty of Agriculture and Food Science, Food and Veterinary Agency, Fund for Innovation and Technological Development, IZBOR STRUMICA, Economic and Social Councils of North Macedonia, Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Interior, Municipality of Gostivar, Municipality of Prilep, Municipality of Shtip, Municipality of Bitola, Municipality of Cheshinovo-Obleshevo, Municipality of Dolneni, Municipality of Shuto Orizari, National Committee for CVE and CT, National Federation of Farmers, National Extension Agency, National Tripartite Social and Economic Council, NGO SEGA PRILEP, Ombudsman, South East European University, State Labour Inspectorate, State Statistical Office, The Office of the National Coordinator for CVE and CT

OUTPUT 1.1 SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISES CREATED

In 2021, UN put the focus on supporting business to cope with the prolonged COVID19 crisis and build resilience through advisory and digitalized services with content developed in cooperation with the private sector. Within these programmes, through **UNDP**, around **500 medium, small and micro enterprises (MSME)**, of which 30% managed by women were supported with business mentorship and counselling services predominantly in the field of on-line and digital marketing. **UNDP's and UNOPS' self-employment programmes** resulted with **72 start-ups that created around 80 new jobs** of which 28 for people with disability, 5 of them women. In total, with different interventions including predominantly within the **UNDP's Community Works Programme**, UN assisted in **creating over 1000 jobs**, of which 391 for youth.

ILO contributed to **youth employability** by supporting the implementation of the **Youth Guarantee plan** that created **6,787 jobs for young people** in 2021. Furthermore, **UNDP** worked on skills building including through the **Youth Resource Centre – iCan** a newly established training service provider and innovation hub that offers support to young people in Polog region in finding employment through job seeking, business creation, career, innovation and skills development, start-up incubation and others. The Centre was also officially recognized as implementor of the "Internship program" within the 2021 National Employment Operational Plan.

UNDP assisted with "**future**" **skills building** through the **platform** that brings together businesses, industry professionals, academia, the public sector, economic development networks to collaborate for introduction of new technologies and achieve transformative change. The **Future Skills Training Centre (FSC), SkillsNext**, was established and fully equipped in the SEEU campus of the SEEU, providing digital skills training, such as Building Information Modelling (BIM), 3D Design and Solar energy

for **over 306 people**, including 156 from the textiles, construction and renewables industry. In addition **6 new occupational standards** were developed along with 6 new VET training program. **ILO** also equipped **Virtual Reality Skills lab** with 3D environments, animation and VR interactions as simulated workplace for VET students in agriculture products, as well as by facilitating contract farming for 30 agricultural families who work in organic farming.

UNESCO promoted creative industries as economic opportunities through the international forum Creative



The UNDP-supported Youth Resource Center iCan marked its one-year anniversary at the end of 2021. The Gostivar-based youth center provides unique learning, innovation and employment services to the youth of the Polog region. Credit: UNDP

Cities Network: "Creative industries - bridge of the future between culture and creative economy" and provided support for implementation of related projects in the country that will continue in 2022.

OUTPUT 1.2 JOBS FOR WOMEN AND VULNERABLE/EXCLUDED PERSONS

Leave no one behind (LNOB) is the centrepiece of the UN work across the globe. In that context, **UNDP** worked to empower women, PWDs (PwD) and hard to employ people in North Macedonia with different interventions for their inclusion in the labour market. As result, out of the total number of over 1000 jobs created, at least **653 belong to women, 52 to Roma and 42 to PWDs**, including 28 within the 20 start-ups created by PwD. Majority of these job-placements were enabled by the UNDP's Community Works Programme, through which unemployed people provided over **120 different social services to over 8560 end-beneficiaries in 46 municipalities**.

The socio-economic impact studies demonstrated that the majority of jobs lost in the formal market during the COVID19 crisis belong to **women**, who, at the same time, are predominantly undertaking unrecognized care services for elderly, ill and people with disabilities. Hence, **UNDP** assisted the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) to develop, finance and implemented **two new employment measures in Care Economy worth \$1.3 million**, aimed to recognize and redistribute unpaid work in this sector. Both measures are expected to ensure a network of 150 skilled and qualified caregivers and professional individuals available for 600 persons in need in home care and assistance and respite care services. In addition, **UNDP supported Youth Resource Centre – iCan** focuses on assisting women entrepreneurs especially in the area of digital marketing. So far, more than 500 women participated in the events organized by the centre, while **more than 300 women and girls attended courses**, of which 70% were aged 29 and younger.

UNDP supported policy level interventions to facilitate the inclusion of **PwDs** in the labour market aimed at ensuring efficient delivery of sustainable and standardized services for PwD. Also, a new programme was initiated to build capacities of Organization of Pwd (OPD) to effectively represent the interest of Pwd. In agreement with the MLSP, enabling environment was further enhanced through three respite centres working with Pwd – one public one in Demir Kapija, one in Gostivar and the third led by an NGO Humanost. The training in care and assistance for long-term ill people developed and provided in partnership with Ministry of Education and Science, Adult Education Centre and VET Centre for 80 people at the end of 2020 enabled smooth initiation of the actual services in early 2021. In addition, **UNDP supported Reha Centres in Skopje and Strumica** provided services to PWDs, 150 in work-oriented rehabilitation, 14 full employments, 20 recommendations for self –employment, 25 enrolled on the job trainings and 60 persons under institutional care received psycho-social support.

UNDP also worked on labour market inclusion of **hard to employ people, enabling 900 to complete at least one skill** learning programme, over 70% of them women. A total of **474 people benefitted from labour activation and support services**, of which at least 206 Roma and 150 Pwd. Within the ACCEDER programme, over 2,000 **Roma** women were informed about employment opportunities. Roma were further empowered by the finalization of the only kindergarten in the Roma Suto Orizari, expanding

capacities to total of 306 children. UNDP also works on the first ever functional model of the community engagement centre for inclusion of 100 children at risk. Also, in 10 municipalities 43 recipients of guaranteed minimum assistance were engaged in services related to COVID-19. **Prison education system** was also supported by **UNDP**, resulting with **16 women and 12 juveniles out of total 67 inmates** completing the primary education to improve their prospects of reintegration in society. Completion of primary education was also made available to 52 Roma (out of above 206).

In cooperation with Macedonian Young Lawyers Association and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy **UNHCR** worked together with other relevant national entities to identify the challenges and opportunities in facilitating adequate recognition of vocational skills and of specialized knowledge of those who have no formal proof being certificate or diploma, such as **refugees**. The organized **roundtable with 15 institutional stakeholders** increased their understanding of positive practices and limitations of refugee capacities to engage in sustainable livelihoods, more work remains to be done in this area together with relevant partners. Furthermore, **UNHCR** and partners (City Red Cross) supported access to employment for refugees, with targeted soft skills, computer skills trainings, support facilitating access to national VT programs and employment measures, providing info and bridging support to formal employment. Despite the efforts, none of the refugees were formally employed in 2021.

To enable **local** partnerships of public and private sector, ILO supported a pilot **Local Employment Plan (LEP)** in the Bitola, where the established Startup Centre resulted in 35 jobs created (10 - through the startup programme, 10 through the IT training and 15 through the career fair). Furthermore, based on assessment of vulnerabilities of returnees, **UNDP** signed MoUs with 3 municipalities aimed at strengthening the local system for more effective socio-economic **reintegration of returnees**. For this purposes 1,5 mill USD were mobilized from EU Commission, DG Near as part of the bigger regional project implemented in the next 3 years. The support interventions so far, resulted with 518 unemployed people completing vocational training, over 77% of them women and 87% specifically on care services training.

OUTPUT 1.3 ENHANCED AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE POLICIES AND REGULATORY MEASURES

Throughout the year, UN assisted in the design of policy documents, including laws, measures and strategies in line with International Labour Standards (ILS) and the EU acquis. Focus was also put on creation and implementation of employment related services for companies and vulnerable groups, as well as on building capacities for functional social dialogue in the process of legal consultations.

The new **National Employment Strategy (NES) 2021-2027**, along with a new **Action Plan on Employment 2021- 2023** and **Working plan on Occupational Outlook 2022- 2026** were developed and adopted with **ILO** support. The NES includes three key policy objectives: 1.improving quality of education and training outcomes for all (including addressing skills mismatch); increasing PISA 2025 scores share of adult education); 2. enhancing the economic and enterprise development policies to generate decent jobs (e.g. improving the competitiveness index; increasing employment to 60% and decreasing

youth unemployment to 27/23%20), and 3. strengthening inclusiveness of labour market policies, including decline of gender employment gap to 15%; long-term unemployment by 10% and people at risk of poverty and social exclusion to 18%.

In addition, **UNDP** assisted the design of the first **National Strategy for Development of Social Enterprises (2021-2027)** with a **three-year Action Plan**, as a first step towards establishing a favourable ecosystem for the development of social enterprises, adopted in 2021.

With **UN Women and FAO** assistance to the Working Group on Gender Equality within Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (MAFWE), gender aspects were mainstreamed in the new **National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development 2021-2027**, adopted by the Government in early 2021.

The work on laws included **ILO** support to design the **Labour Relations Law**, that contains provisions addressing new realities in the labour market (e.g. telework), in particular regulations of non-standard forms of employment based on the UN performed national diagnosis of diverse forms of work arrangements in the country with policy recommendations to ensure effective labour and social protection.

UNDP also supported the design of the new **Law on employment and insurance** addressing the structural gaps between different regulations and legal aspects that are enabling or disabling labour market inclusion of PwD. Models developed through PPP will also include development of financial mechanisms that will support the work-oriented rehabilitation services and mechanism for social contracting.

Technical support was provided by **UNDP** for developing a new **Law on Adult Education**, based on the Concept paper for Adult Secondary Education and Concept for Regional VET Centres, regulating **inclusive education** in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the SDGs. In this area UN ensured 68 assistants to students with disability in secondary school as part of the Community Works Programme.

The new **Law on Sale of State-owned Agricultural Land**, in line with international standards and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests, was prepared with **FAO** assistance and extensive public consultation. This important step in putting state-owned agricultural land, including abandoned land, in function of agricultural development and food production will be completed with adoption in 2022.

With **ILO** support, the **Economic and Social Council (ESC)** positioned as an important actor in development of economic, labour and social policies. For example, the ESC successfully led the tripartite discussion on anti-crisis measures, extending the wage subsidies for a longer period in line with recommendations in ILO policy documents²¹; and influenced the Labour relations Law and the legal solution for Sunday a non-working day. ILO's analytical documents further covered topics in the area of sustainable enterprises and entrepreneurial culture, collective bargaining, labour and poverty indicators and labour activation strategies. In addition, **ILO supported 12 local economic and social councils (LESCs)** with local labour market diagnostics and recommendations to close the skills gap and overcome market mismatch and

developed two Local Employment Action Plans (Strumica and Kumanovo). LESC visibility and communication was upgraded through communication [platform](#).

Assistance was provided by ILO to ESC to expand the number of services offered to the members, which resulted with **increased membership**, including 5400 new members (up for 9%) in the Federation of Trade Unions (FTU) and 1 new branch trade union in the Confederation of Free Trade Unions (CFTU), 4 new members with 1800 workers in Employers Organisation (EO) and 20 new members with 600 workers in Business Confederation of Macedonia (BCM). The new services include **10 new and digitalized services** of FTU, including a virtual advisor Cindy on legal aid available at the webs-site and [mobile application](#) to report violation of workers rights; [E-learning platform](#) with trainings on Labour Legislation and Occupational Safety and Health available from EO, as well as comparative analyses and data on salaries within and between industries. KFTU provided [workers' rights guidelines](#) and offered an online members [registration platform](#). A Legal Corner and Resource Centre Platform for MSME is now available at [BCM](#) with ILO support, as well as trainings on occupational safety and health and protection of workers from harassment at work, including an SOS lines with total of 506 calls at the Branch Trade Union of Security and Defence (SOB).

The **Employment Support Agency (ESA) was supported by UNDP to provide digitalized advisory services** through the online Business Platform to counteract the physical contacts restrictions and enhance the efficiency of service delivery. In that context, online access for unemployed was supported with a Document Management System and interoperability with other databases, primarily with the Public Revenue Office. **ILO also assisted with online learning modules available for the ESA staff** in the area evaluation of services and programmes; ii) design and implementation of active labour market programmes and profiling, iii) Client segmentation and targeting. ESA capacity for monitoring and reporting is further developed with **UNDP** interventions focusing on trained business advisors and carrier counsellors.

Assisted by **UNDP**, the ESA delivered training in high demand to 150 unemployed, successfully completed by 139 of which 34 were employed. In addition, under the VET active labour market measures around 74 employers have applied through VET program designed based on their needs, and 182 unemployed were trained, guaranteeing at least 91 employments after training completion. System for training of 200 mentors for VET in companies was additionally supported.

New social services were also designed and implemented, with **UNDP** assistance, such as the two new care economy measures included in 2021 Operational plan for employment of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP).

In response to COVID-19 and other potential shocks FAO worked on strengthening capacity in **price and market information systems and policy monitoring for food commodity and value chain**. In that context, Macedonian representatives participated at international training for Food Price Monitoring and Analysis (FPMA), developed following the 2008 price hikes with data from almost 90 countries globally to provide an easy access to the data and trend comparisons at national level. Due to COVID19 preparations for FPMA in North Macedonia were somewhat delayed and the tool will be fully tested

and developed in 2022. The training also included Country Cereal Balance Sheet (CCBS), providing a comprehensive picture of a country's food supply and demand patterns in aggregate terms during a specified reference period, as well as Earth Observation for Crop Monitoring, as valuable insight on water availability and vegetation health during cropping seasons. Capacity building has been also provided through **UNECE** regional project aimed at enhancing capacity Western Balkans transition economies to implement **trade facilitation measures and the Single Window**.

OUTPUT 1.4 IMPROVED QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT

In 2021, UN continued to work with national institutions to address under-employment, informality and protection at work. In that context, **ILO** supported the implementation of the **Strategy for formalization of informal economy**, based on a tripartite consensus on the measures to tackle informality. In addition, HORECA sector platform was developed in partnership with Association of employers in hotel and catering (HOTAM) available at their [web-site](#) to assist in implementing the measure in 2022.

Based on the **ILO** Gap analysis on the **ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment and the Guide on Violence and Harassment Convention** published in Macedonian language and number of [awareness raising](#) products, the Economic and Social Council fully supported ratification of Convention. The work on ratification will continue in 2022.

Furthermore **ILO** assisted with number of related interventions, including two campaigns: [My Labour, My Rights!](#) (more than 20.000 users) and the campaign for formalization of undeclared work - [Take Care of Your Staff](#).

The virtual advisor Cindy on **legal aid** available at the FTU [web-site](#) and mobile application to report violation of workers rights, developed with **ILO** assistance, resulted with legal protection provided to 3000 workers based on 95 reports in cooperation with the State Labour Inspectorate. Through the Free Legal Aid Department, the KFTU solved 83 cases along with 450 legal phone/online consultations for legal.

More than 600 young person downloaded app developed by **ILO** and participated in the Youth Rights @ Work competition, as part of the My labour, My Rights campaign. In addition, ILO developed **Youth Rights@Work learning materials** were officially approved by the Bureau for development of education and **delivered to 500 secondary school students from 12 cities** while 500+ from 56 secondary schools participated on the quiz basic workers' rights.

OUTPUT 1.5 SUSTAINABLE AND COMPETITIVE RURAL ECONOMY

UN provided substantial assistance to the national authorities to strengthen competitiveness and sustainability of the rural economy, enhancing the opportunities for women and small farmers.

Within **FAO** project, the focus was put on agricultural **land consolidation** of around 3 000 hectares in eight active land consolidation areas, covering 2 455 landowners and small farmers (of which 608 or 24,7 % are women). In 2021, with active involvement of relevant stakeholders, including the Agency for Real Estate Cadastre, the National Extension Agency, local governments, farmers organizations and the private sector, the process was finalized in the Egri village,

with new consolidated land registered and supported with full infrastructure construction (drainage channels, irrigation and gravel roads) and almost finalized in Dabjani village. The total consolidated land in both villages counts to 1 078 hectares, benefitting 300 agricultural landowners, their households and communities. The number of land parcels in Egri was [almost fourfold reduced](#), from 874 parcels to 260, with an average parcel size of 1.30 ha, compared to only 0.38 ha before land consolidation. In [Dabjani](#) the number of land parcels was reduced from 602 to 127 parcels, with an average size of 5,84 ha, up from just 1,23 ha before land consolidation. The newly formed parcels are regularly-shaped and allow for more efficient farming practices. The interventions also enabled women's equal access to ownership and control over agricultural land, requiring spouses' consent for the property acquired during marriage in the land re-allotment phase and promoting the registration of the new consolidated land parcels in the name of both spouses.

In addition to mainstreaming gender aspects in the new National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development 2021-2027 assisted by **UN Women and FAO**, gender equality in the National Programme for Rural and Agricultural Development 2018-2022 was also enhanced with **UN Women** support. With the [Measure 114](#) of this programme, 250 women agricultural producers had the opportunity to apply for financial support to strengthen their businesses. Furthermore, **UN Women** signed a partnership agreement with the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food – Skopje to support MAFWE with relevant research, policy analysis and capacity strengthening on **women empowerment in the sector of agriculture**.

FAO assisted the MAFWE to **strengthen capacities for policy analysis and programming** with evidence-based guidance for aligning the national direct payment scheme with EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) regulations elaborated in the [policy paper](#) "Impact of decoupled direct payments on farmer income in North Macedonia"35. Calculating the cost of ten agricultural products with significant economic, social and strategic importance for the Macedonian food and agriculture sector in five different scenarios, the analysis indicates that, on average, the decoupling direct payments will have a positive effect on the farmers' income. In addition, **FAO** provided specialized training for 35 advisors in the National Extension Agency and five MAFWE officials on data collection and calculation of gross margin cost of production for ten agricultural goods.

FAO also strengthened [capacities on integrated local community development](#) in six villages, with small scale investments (e.g. facilities renovation, refurbishment, equipping) based on community baseline analysis aimed to enhance attractiveness and quality of rural life, in synergy with the ongoing support to agricultural land consolidation in the same areas.

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

Cluster 2, Chapter 28: Consumer and health protection
Cluster 3, Chapter 19: Social Policy and Employment; Chapter 25:
Science and Research, Chapter 26: Education and culture

2021 UN expenditure

\$9,967,640

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, State Statistical Office, Bureau for Development of Education, National Public Health Institute, Municipalities, Vocational Training Institutes; Trade Union of Health Workers; Civil Society; Academia; Private Sector; Association for Research, Communications and Development, National Roma Centrum, Centre for Research and Policy Making, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), E-health Directorate, Health Education and Research Association, Health Insurance Fund, Healthy Options Project Skopje, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, Medical Faculty Skopje, Municipal Centres for Social Welfare (MCSW), Professional Associations.

OUTPUT 2.1 UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HIGH QUALITY HEALTH SERVICES

- ◊ **Improved management of COVID-19 pandemic and better health care services for COVID-19 patients**

WHO provided comprehensive and substantive support in building national capacities in better management of the pandemic and care for the COVID-19 patients through:

- building **SARS CoV 2 detection capacities of National Public Health laboratories** by ensuring the testing readiness of the national virology laboratory. Thereafter, ensured quality non-interrupted testing performance through large-scale procurement of equipment, supplies and PPE for laboratories, based on robust capacity assessment as well as uninterrupted weekly training on testing, reporting, biosafety and biosecurity. Investments were also made in infrastructure and upgrading the servers for surveillance and laboratory performance and National Genomic Sequencing Strategy developed and adopted by the MOH.
- establishment of an **Epidemic Intelligence and Emergency Operating Centre** which increased the capacities to conduct strategic management and monitoring of emergencies, strengthened communications and coordination, as well as possibility for capacity building activities for contact tracing.
- establishment of a **COVID-19 Online Training Platform**

in local languages (Macedonian and Albanian) enabling timely and proper training and technical assistance for all health professionals for COVID-19 patients case management, IPC, rehabilitation, mental health etc. while ensuring sustainable access to accredited courses for and a high degree of uptake at different levels of care.

- continuous implementation of risk communication and community engagement activities for community trust building aimed at **increased uptake of protective and COVID-19 prevention behaviours** with groups identified through the Behavioural Insights studies conducted by WHO.
- development of **infodemic management capacities** of the national health authorities, fact-checking organizations, UN agencies and international partners.
- support of the **digitalization and improvement of the electronic health system Moj Termin**, including: digitalization of all laboratories that are performing COVID testing and unification of the data system for positive tests and connection with family doctors and epidemiologists; digitalization of contact surveillance system; development of telemedicine module for continuation of health services; development of a module database of all existing profiles of health human resources and supply and equipment estimator module; digitalization of e-epidemiological questionnaire for COVID19 as well as one COVID-19 complete patient record with retroactive data import and analytics.
- digitalization of the **national vaccination system** and its integration into the national e-health system "Moj Termin" to ensure efficient vaccination process, proper records and issuance of patient certificates as well as faster reach-out to the target population.

UNOPS supported the Government in **procurement and delivery of an agreed list of medical equipment** with the Ministry of Health to contribute to the prevention, detection and response to the threat posed by COVID-19 and to contribute to the strengthening of the national systems for public health preparedness. Two radio frequency cabins, two magnetic resonance systems and two computer tomography systems were provided to the Institute for radiology. One flow cytometer was provided to the University clinic for haematology. **UNICEF** also donated **PPE** (200.000 masks and 200.000 boot covers) to the Ministry of Health while **WHO** supplied **equipment and**



A man receives his first shot of COVID-19 vaccine in Skopje during European Immunization Week. Credit:WHO

medical supplies: biomedical equipment, PPE, diagnostics and non-medical equipment.

The revision of the **National deployment and vaccination plan for COVID-19 vaccination** ensured coherent and efficient national action, strengthened immunization capacities and introduction of new vaccination service delivery modalities for targeting vulnerable groups. With WHO support, the **national electronic immunization database** was connected with the national e-health records and reporting system enabling full oversight of vaccination situation of the whole population. The capacities of **60 health managers** in the health centres and public health institutes and **340 health workers** working into the vaccination points were strengthened ensuring better immunization quality and efficient cold-chain management of the new COVID-19 vaccines.

UNICEF joined efforts by supporting the Ministry of Health with a "**Vaccine Saves Lives**" Campaign, aimed to address misinformation that was fuelling hesitancy in the early uptake of COVID-19 vaccines and build trust in immunization in general. On television, the campaign reached **77% of the population over 18 years of age** at least once and 62% at least three times. While the campaign ran on all social media channels, on Facebook some 30 posts reached on average 75,000 people by post and engaged some 21,000 people by post. As result, according to WHO regularly conducted Behavioural Insights Surveys, the number of people who believe a vaccine can help control the spread of COVID-19 **increased from 56% in December 2020 to 69% in June 2021**.

UNICEF supported, **Behavioural insights survey on MMR1 vaccine**, completed in early 2021, identified the main barriers for vaccine uptake on both demand and supply side. Based on the findings and testing phase results, 5 prototypes were designed and will be distributed around the country. Survey on self-efficacy, attitudes and perceptions of health care workers on routine immunization was completed in September 2021. In partnership with USA Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs, training modules were selected and adapted for **improvement of interpersonal communication skills for front-line health workers**.

Last but not least, with mental health issues arising as a new challenge due to prolonged COVID-19 pandemic, with **UNICEF** support, **200 home visitors (50% of the workforce) and 350 family doctors (30% of the workforce)** were trained in basic psycho-social counselling and mental health support.

◊ Primary Health Care Reform implementation

Making Nurses effective and recognized members of the PHC care team in North Macedonia, was supported by design and implementation of the first **nursing competency training** for strengthening of the primary care nurses. The process was designed to provide the nursing working group members with skills and practice in acting as training facilitators and developing their teaching. About **430 primary care nurses and midwives** participated in the programme and acquired new knowledge and skills aimed to provide better-quality health care services. A feasibility study for creating a robust, accelerated (and accreditable) nursing diploma adapted to the health demands in the country has been completed, to address the longer terms legal, health system and education barriers for the nursing profession.

The implementation of the national primary care reform, adapted to the COVID-19 needs continued in partnership with the UN. Support was targeted to addressing barriers

through key interventions such as advocacy, technical support, evidence generation and improvement of the quality, continuity and overall performance of primary health services for all citizens.

In 2021, **WHO** supported an analysis of the **health financial expose of the population** aimed to understand if people can afford to pay for health care, based on the need to address gaps in all three dimensions of health coverage (population entitlement, benefits package and user charges) as well as other factors that contribute to financial hardship and unmet needs for health care.

"**Health inequity and COVID-19 in North Macedonia - Investing in health and well-being for a fairer and more equitable future for all**" report, commissioned by WHO provides recommendations for MoH prioritization of the investments in health, health systems and health determinants as the central aspect of socioeconomic recovery. The report also provides recommendations on how to integrate these into national recovery plans and socioeconomic recovery framework including actions to reduce and monitor gender inequalities, health inequities and discrimination.

New instruments to measure performance and quality of services through Assessment of the **health status and access to health services for the elderly population** have been introduced.

With **WHO** advocacy, local partners have initiated the preparations for introduction of health promoting school programme that will aim at awareness raising and new practices among school-age children for health prevention.

Recommendations for essential next steps for improvement of community based mental health services aimed at resocialization and reintegration into society of people with severe mental disorders based on the assessment and mapping of Community Based Mental Health Centres were undertaken by WHO in collaboration with the Clinic of Psychiatry. Identification and mapping psychosocial support needs for health workers and current availability of on-line resources in North Macedonia in order to inform further actions towards digitalization of psychosocial support programmes.

UNICEF also supported capacity development of **200 home visiting nurses** in basic psycho-social and mental health counselling, while also supporting the process of digitalization of the recording and reporting forms for home visitors (HV) integration in "Moj termin", allowing for real time data collection and disaggregation along many social determinants of health.

Functional analysis of home visiting (HV) system and paediatric care to inform the development of the Masterplan 2030 was also undertaken with **UNICEF** support. The analysis covers aspects related to institutional organization and development, human capital development, more specifically systematization of working positions, job descriptions and competences (general and professional), as well as performance management and appraisal. Ultimately, improved functioning of the HV service as part of the health sector will significantly indirectly contribute to the wellbeing of children in the country.

Capacity development of family doctors and home visiting nurses in GBV and inter-sectoral collaboration has further expanded the capacities of these primary healthcare professionals that are first contact with families and all issues that COVID-19 has raised.

In support to the country efforts for **establishment of**

trauma-informed primary healthcare, 10 family doctor practices were selected that will implement targeted inquiries for **adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)**. Following the training by an international expert, this experience will further develop their knowledge, confidence and skills in enquiring about ACEs, confidence and skill in responding to disclosures and understanding about what is required in a service context. Advocacy activities were ongoing to ensure support from MoH, MoES, MoLSP and Institute of Public Health selected as a national entity that will provide sustainability of the efforts. 1600+ mandatory content articles and videos in two local languages are now available to support parental efforts in tracking their child/ren milestones, developmental issues, vaccination, age-appropriate nutrition, health, learning and play.

UNFPA supported national counterparts in ensuring increased access to family planning commodities to vulnerable groups. Findings of the family planning survey conducted at regional level provide recommendations for future actions, while FP counselling has been also provided through the mobile gynaecological clinic operating in rural/underserved areas of the country.

In close cooperation with the Ministry of Health, the University Clinic for Gynaecology and Obstetrics, the Macedonian Medical Association, the Macedonian Association of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians, the Red Cross and the E-Health Directorate, **UNFPA** supported continued and **uninterrupted provision of essential service for prevention of women and girls sexual and reproductive health (SRH)** through the design and introduction of **mobile gynaecological clinics**. To ensure sustainability of the service provision, protocol for operation of the mobile clinics was designed, informative material for patients in 3 languages prepared and distributed, and outreach strategy to encourage utilization of the services developed. Necessary SRH commodities, equipment and PPE necessary for safe and quality provision of services have been supplied for the teams working in the field. **21 SRH teams** of health professionals (ob/gyn + midwife/nurse) have been trained to operate in this type of setting. Work started in December 2021, in the small town of Sveti Nikole (18,000 inhabitants, and only 1 gynaecologist in the town), serving **188 women and girls** in only a month. The services offered on site include Cervical Cancer screening, ultrasound examination, counselling on family planning and maternal health, counselling on STIs and other needed services. In addition, the SRH teams are sensitized to provide basic GBV referral. All records for the services provided in the mobile clinics are entered in the national E-Health System, thus there is no double nor paper-based reporting.

To support the implementation of the National Master Plan for Perinatal Care, **WHO** continued the **capacities building** activities for improved provision of **maternal and new-born health care**, in two pilot sites (Bitola and Tetovo), followed by three additional sites Strumica, Shtip and Kumanovo. While **UNFPA** supported the capacities building in other 5 hospitals in Gostivar, Prilep, Kichevo, Ohrid, Struga - altogether reaching out to over **70% of the total SRH professionals** in the hospital out of the capital.

In parallel, with **UNICEF** support, **32 neonatologists at level I and II (100% of the workforce)** were trained in contemporary procedures and practices in **neonatal care**.

UNHCR provided support to the General Hospital in Gevgelija and the local Centre for Social Work, to **continue provision of services to refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants**, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. UNHCR and partners worked on assisting the challenges

that the Traumatology Clinic in Skopje faces when working with foreign patients. Besides developing a communication line for on-nationals admitted to the clinic due to accidents while on the move, UNHCR supported the traumatological clinic with medical supplies. A challenge still remains, as the asylum-seekers were only very late Covid vaccinated, while stateless persons do not have ACCESS TO COVID VACCINATION.

OUTPUT 2.2 QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE EDUCATION

While the 2020/2021 school year ended with the majority of students participating in remote learning, through advocacy, robust monitoring tools, and comprehensive research, **UNICEF helped increase the share of schools where students physically attended classes**, and jointly with the Ministry of Education and Science led to the actual reopening of all schools in September. To further support safe school attendance, **15 schools in need of WASH support** (with close to **5,000 students**) were provided with **52 mobile handwashing stations**.

UNICEF provided technical and **expert support** to many **policy-level dialogues** in the following areas: distance learning and school reopening, the concept for primary education, the law on textbooks, digitalization of textbooks, inclusive education, school optimization, development of a new funding formula for primary education and providing input in the secondary education formula. To support the practical implementation of the new curricula, UNICEF supported the **training of over 3,000 teachers in contemporary pedagogical practices** and the availability of high-quality teaching and learning resources.

Responding to the reform momentum, UNICEF supported the development and printing of **textbooks for grade 1**, developing **digital interactive textbooks for Grade 4** and a **platform for their offline and online use** (E-Library) and kept building alliances and partnerships to upgrade the Eduino portal. The upgrades will allow crowdsourcing of additional teaching resources and uploading of the new interactive digital textbooks onto Eduino. In addition, Eduino was expanded with a dedicated early childhood development subpage and an affiliate platform for vocational secondary education. To expand the programme's reach beyond kindergarten playrooms, UNICEF is supporting the development of animated and TV content that is being broadcast nationwide and shared online, to reach children who are not attending pre-schools and help create public demand for social and emotional learning opportunities.

To support the **full inclusion of all children into mainstream education**, UNICEF supported the **transformation of special schools into resource centres**, through the capacity development of staff that **trained 500 teaching assistants**. In addition, UNICEF is localizing a set of modules on assistive technology and alternative communication, to support professionals with early identification and intervention for children with developmental delays.

Building pre-school teachers' competences to deliver quality and trauma-informed education and **foster social and emotional skills in children at an early age - in preschool**, the rollout of social and emotional learning (SEL) was completed and all pre-school teachers received four-month coaching and mentoring in mastering the SEL programme. The core group of **190 peer-support leaders** continues to support professional development in other areas of early childhood development supported by the World Bank.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and Science to overhaul the **transfers from the Government to municipalities that fund primary and secondary schools**.

New funding formulas based on the number of students and costs for attaining educational standards were developed and incorporated in the 2022 national budget, increasing efficiency, improving funding transparency and fairness and establishing mechanisms that would enhance quality of teaching. Adequate allocations are also made for inclusion of children with disabilities as well as for teaching in the languages of the smaller ethnic communities. The new formulas provide sufficient funding to schools for adequate maintenance, suitable investment in equipment and teaching aids, professional training and career development of the school staff, as well as increased number of professional associates.

For the first time the 2022 primary education funds transferred to the municipalities, prepared based on the funding formulas, include **free meals for students from first to fifth grade** thus further **expanding universal social protection programmes for children**, as well as **free tablets for access to digital educational resources for students from families at social risk**.

UNICEF has also supported the drafting of **municipal school optimization plans**, which aim to identify potential ways to improve the allocation of the limited resources to ensure all primary schools enable teaching in accordance with national standards, laws and educational concepts. **School optimization index** which measures the gaps for each primary school and municipality to fulfil the educational and infrastructural standards, as well as the gaps in actual costs per student and standardized costs, unveiling the level of financial efficiency was also developed. For each municipality where action is needed, a detailed plan is prepared for adjusting the infrastructural and educational capacity, while the financial efficiency will be improved with the use of the new school funding formula. The implementation of these plans will: **establish an equitable system for primary education; create equal conditions for teaching in all the schools; implement the new concept of primary education; ensure efficient allocation of resources.**

In consultations with the Ministry of Education and Science and the Bureau for Development of Education (BDE), **UNFPA** signed Memorandum of Understanding outlining the key areas for cooperation and support in the **introduction of comprehensive sexuality education**, from the piloting in 2021, to the full roll out by the end of 2025, including review of curricula with regards to gender roles and stereotypes, sensitivity about PwDs, GBV and other topics.

Within the programme for Climate change and Environmental education, **UNICEF** implemented one UPSHIFT cycle dedicated to the topic. **10 teams of 46 young people** from secondary schools in the country completed the **three-day design thinking workshop**, while **five teams** were awarded **seed funding** to advance their climate change and environment protection **social innovations**. This programme will further engage young people in a cooperation with the Youth Cultural Centre of the City of Skopje. Within this year's editions of the CineDays film festival, and the Zdravo Mladi music festival, young artists will participate in a number of workshops and challenges, offering them the opportunity to utilize their creative energy in advocating for sustainable development and climate change mitigation.

UNHCR in cooperation with Macedonian Young Lawyers Association and MLSP worked together with other relevant entities (schools, NGOs and international organizations) to identify the challenges, opportunities and existing good practices in ensuring **quality education to asylum**

seeking and refugee children. Complementary, UNHCR and partners provided Macedonian language classes, mentoring educational support and catch-up classes to **30 asylum seekers and 6 refugees**, thus supporting the reception and integration authorities in providing inclusive and a receptive environment for refugees.

New cooperation was established between UN, MLSP and Faculty of Philology "Blaze Koneski" in developing of an **Online Language Platform for learning Macedonian Language** for asylum seekers and refugees opting for local inclusion, while also opening it up for anyone else interested in learning basic Macedonian. Capacities on online teaching were provided to 13 teachers and educators from Primary School "Kliment Ohridski", Skopje that is hosting refugee children, Nova International School and Youth Educational Forum, ensuring basic awareness and understanding of the work with students of refugee and migrant background, as well as familiarizing them with resources that could be used in the classroom to cultivate harmony and belonging as part of larger efforts to welcome and fully integrate newcomers into the community.

OUTPUT 2.3 SOCIAL AND CHILD PROTECTION

UNHCR supported MLSP and relevant social protection institutions responsible for implementation of refugee related policies and legislative solutions resulting in establishment of a **national coordination structure on refugees integration**. It further strengthened government capacity on alternative care arrangements and local inclusion and livelihoods of refugees in south-south cooperation with authorities from the Netherland and Slovenia. In addition, capacity building on integration and livelihoods for the authorities and CSOs working on refugee inclusion was supported, as well as to nine Municipalities on refugee rights and local integration policies and standards. As a result, the Municipalities, of which two already host refugees, are better equipped with knowledge on the national legal framework as well on the roles of the local authorities in inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers.

Legal support to stateless persons in case of denial of access to social services was provided by UNHCR through its partner. The authorities were supported in implementation of the Law on undocumented persons awareness raising activities with the affected population.

UNICEF re-started the capacity development on **social work case management** that was disrupted due to the pandemic, through mentoring 40 case workers and 30 triage workers, development of methodology for defining the notion of "case" with indicators for active, inactive, and complex cases, as well as assistance to 30 centres for social work (CSW) in allocation of casework. Additionally, the analysis of social service users provided valuable, and gender/age differentiated data that will be used to devise policy recommendations for improved gender and child-sensitive work, better planning of casework, and improvement of the statistical system of the centres.

Recognizing that every growing child need nurturing care, good health, optimal nutrition and a stimulating and safe environment that offers plenty of support for early learning, **UNICEF** launched several initiatives to **support parenting and ensure the best start for the children**. To close the knowledge gaps on early childhood interventions (ECI) service needs, UNICEF commissioned **ECI Situation Analysis** to generate evidence on existing national strengths and capacities, salient needs, and opportunities to establish and support contemporary and sustainable ECI programmes for children aged 0-6 years, with an emphasis on children 0-3 years at risk of or have developmental

difficulties, including disabilities.

Understanding the importance of building family resilience and providing preventive services and early interventions, and seeing the potential in the preschools counseling services, UNICEF in collaboration with the MoLSP partnered with Mellow Parenting to deliver an evaluated **parenting programme**. 30 practitioners from preschools and parenting helpline were trained to deliver the programme based on the psychological theories of attachment, social learning and cognitive behavioral therapy. Practitioners have delivered the 8-week online parenting programme to 27 parents of pre-birth to pre-school age children. Parents in need of support during the stressful and challenging period caused by the pandemic, benefited from easy access to relevant and reliable advice through the **National Parenting Helpline**. Operators provided support to **245 parents and 22 children, including 28 parents of children with disabilities**, aimed at preventing and addressing the potential negative secondary impacts of COVID-19, psychosocial distress, neglect and lack of parental care, increased exposure to violence. 370,000 people were reached through social media with advice on positive parenting techniques.

UNICEF also continued supporting the introduction of **functional assessment based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)** as a single entry-point for children and youth to access various support services in the fields of health, education, and social protection. As a result of the progressive advocacy, the two bodies for functional assessments based on the ICF, covering the Skopje region, and the National expert body for functional assessment that were created with UNICEF support were taken over by the state healthcare system.

The Public Health Centre (PHC) Skopje opened **a new Service for functional assessment of children and youth up to 26 years of age**, and from January 2021 it started with provision of regular assessments of children and youth from the Skopje region. In the period May-October 2021, training and mentoring on ICF-based functional assessments was conducted in Pelagonija, Polog and South-West regions, involving almost fifty professionals. PHC Skopje has engaged twelve of the persons whose capacity has been developed to staff three new regional functional assessment bodies in Strumica, Bitola and Gostivar.

UNICEF also supported (through 15 workshops) the **introduction of the new model for functional assessment to the service providers** – including Centres for Social Work (CSW), schools and kindergartens – as well as parents in the three targeted regions.

In coordination with line ministries and other relevant institutions, the drafting of amendments to the Social Protection Law, Child Protection Law, Health Insurance Law, Healthcare Law and Primary Education Law in order to consolidate the provision of functional assessments for children and youth in line with the ICF was also undertaken. The amendments were approved by the Government and were put on the agenda of Parliament in December 2021.

This was undertaken along with the **revision of the draft Rulebook on ICF based disability assessments**, in order to align with the three line-ministries – Health, Education and Science, and Labour and Social Policy – as well as other relevant institutions.

While the establishment of functional assessment bodies which cover four of the eight regions of North Macedonia, children and youth outside the covered regions could not

complete such an assessment and were thus not eligible to obtain access to educational and personal assistants. This resulted in difficulties in exercising their right to education, as well as problems in carrying out their everyday activities. To address this, **UNICEF** supported the creation of a **special team** to conduct ICF-based disability assessment to **children from vulnerable communities in locations that are not covered by the regional assessment bodies**.

To address **emerging risks of child mental health** during COVID-19, University Clinic of Psychiatry provided support to **750 children, youth, parents, and caregivers** through the helpline, while 45 carers and 30 children in foster care received targeted and individual support. Videos with advice and information related to psychosocial support reached 77,967 people through social media. **60% of all children in small group homes** benefited from **creative and educational activities** aimed at improving their **mental health**, while **59 professionals** working with children and adolescents benefited from tailored training programme on effective, culturally sensitive and adaptable methods to minimize the risk of violence towards adolescents.

In addition, in response to the globally growing **gender-based violence**, up to **100 social service frontline workers** were gained knowledge on **mental health preventive support services**, gender specific impacts of the pandemic and gender-based violence. **200 children with disabilities and their families** benefited from **individualized on-line support**, through a specially developed on-line service provider platform. The interventions included free support for children with disabilities and their parents/caregivers, both for educational, psychosocial support, and rehabilitation purposes, countrywide. The online service provision was presented to **104 national and local officials**, aimed at alleviating the existing gap of lack of service provision in the country, especially in the smaller communities, and identifying avenues to ensure sustainability of the service. Additionally, **80 day-care centres, kindergartens, and centres for social work professionals**, gained knowledge on how to use the platform and incorporate it as an outreach element in their everyday work with children with disabilities.

Aimed at addressing the needs of **families experiencing hardship during the pandemic**, mapping and providing social protection services was ensured for 260 families, **928 people, 487 children at social risk from ten municipalities, by seven mobile teams** composed of lawyers and social workers, in close collaboration with the centres for social work, additionally resulting in **87 families applying for social welfare for the first time**. Seven local CSOs trained in providing support to families at risk.

UNICEF managed implementation of the inception phase of the joint UN **programme on the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs)**, which resulted in gaining a crucial knowledge and evidence on the realization of fundamental human rights of the PWDs, using the Convention on the right of PWDs lenses. Considering the previous developments and achievements, the **situational analysis** helped to identify the key bottlenecks and challenges, and provided recommendations, paving the way for future investments and programming. The programme also supported various stakeholders and rightsholders to gain better understanding on the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)** and disability inclusive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Advocacy efforts and technical support provided through the programme guaranteed that at the end of 2021, North Macedonia continues to **maintain zero children in large scale residential institutions**, despite challenges

of backward trends, including growing poverty. UNICEF's long-term support provided to the Government yielded results in **improving quality of service provided to children in foster and kinship care**.

In particular, the MLSP redirected sizeable human and financial resources from institutional to community and family-based care, including for **establishment of foster care support centres** for the first time in the system. **Two newly established support centres** for foster families started operating in **Skopje and Bitola**, covering all foster and kinship families countrywide as a key element in the system, being introduced for the first time based on the 2019 Social Protection Law. All **twelve newly engaged staff** of these centres gained knowledge needed to perform their role to promote the family foster care service, evaluate and educate potential and future foster families, and to observe and support the existing foster and kinship families.

Multi-dimensional child poverty study, commissioned by UNICEF put forward an index encompassing **12 dimensions of child poverty and 27 indicators**. Using data from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, it showed that **12% of children aged 5 to 17 and 9% of children under 5 are affected**. Deprivations in education, early child development, nutrition, safety, and love and care are among the top five contributors to child poverty, signalling areas where improvement in public finance allocations and service delivery are most needed. The study provides evidence for the needed focus on most vulnerable groups, including in terms of ethnicity and location. Roma children are significantly more vulnerable – at least one in three Roma children experience multidimensional poverty, compared to one in nine children in the overall population.

The East and the Southeast region have a notable prevalence of multidimensional poverty, with Polog and Skopje regions also showing high vulnerability. The multidimensional child poverty study marks a solid base for future engagements addressing the multiple layers of child poverty. As it introduces a new Multidimensional Child Poverty Index for the country, it provides an opportunity to enrich the official statistics with additional data on child poverty, which currently is limited to monetary/income poverty, and lacks important disaggregation, including geographic and by children's age.

The launch of the Multidimensional Child Poverty Study was conducted in cooperation with the President of North Macedonia – as it relates to competences of various line ministries – and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative. As a result of this partnership, North Macedonia is invited to join the global Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network. The Network was established to provide information on implementing multidimensional measures, and for an exchange of experiences as well as technical and institutional support. Participants in the network are ministers and senior officials from 60 national governments and 19 regional and international institutions including the World Bank, OECD, SIDA, UNDP and the WFP.

UNDP supported social services delivery through Care Economy interventions enabling women currently occupied with provision of care within their families to get **formal recognition** of their work. UNDP focus is complementary with other work in the area of employment and social services - working with ODPs and other parties to better understand the behavioural enablers and barriers that empower people with disabilities to become successful job seeker, entrepreneurs, part-time employed, etc. with a particular focus on gender dimensions. More details on these activities can be found under Outcome 1.

OUTPUT 2.4 Eliminate all forms of violence

Providers of general and specialist support services for victims of all forms of violence now have the capacity to implement the standards enshrined in CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention. Four capacity building trainings were delivered to general and specialist service providers from the municipalities of Strumica, Stip and Veles, to increase their capacities on the provision of counselling and psycho-social support in line with CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention, by **UN Women** partnering CSO Health Education and Research Association. Three **local multi-sectorial groups for survivors of violence were established** in Strumica, Stip and Veles to ensure regular collaboration and quality of services provided to the survivors of violence. In addition, capacities were built for social mentors to on work integration processes of vulnerable groups, including working with women survivors of VAW by CSO Association for Research, Development and Communications – PUBLIC.

With **UN Women** support , ten modules and five trainings were delivered to **six high schools** across different municipalities in North Macedonia to empower students and teachers on harmful gender stereotyping, violence against women (VAW) and domestic violence (DV), by the CSO Macedonian Young Lawyers Association. 68 journalists and other media professionals working across the country were trained on gender-sensitive reporting of VAW by CSO Healthy Options Project Skopje. Over 300 door-to-door visits, and five dialogue sessions aiming to empower the Roma community (women, men, boys and girls) on VAW, DV, harmful gender stereotypes and early marriages were carried out by UN Women CSO partner National Roma Centrum.

With **UN Women** support Civil Society Organizations capacities to advocate for the development and implementation of laws and policies in line with CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention were also built. 24 draft amendments and 38 comments were submitted for the amendment of the Criminal Code and 10 amendments were drafted on the Law on Health Protection and the Law on Patient Rights Protection in line with the Istanbul Convention, by CSOs supported by UN Women. Nine CSOs members of the Gender Equality Platform have now increased capacities on evidence-based monitoring of the Istanbul Convention implementation and preparing shadow reports for GREVIO. Two awareness raising and advocacy campaigns were organized on the amendment of the Criminal Code in line with the Istanbul Convention and the provisions of the new Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

With **UN Women** and **UNFPA** support, new **Law on Prevention and Protection of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence** and six (6) new bylaws were developed by a group of experts and consultants, through a participatory process with national different national counterparts and new partnerships were initiated.

Community figures/leaders were also mobilized to enhance gender equality and women empowerment through culturally acceptable approaches. One major event and one campaign were realized (the launching event and 16 days activism campaign). **UN joint campaign on 16 days of activism to end violence against women and girls** was successfully conducted with over 1.1 million reach only on Facebook .

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

Fundamentals first: Economic Development and Competitiveness
Chapter 15: Energy;
Chapter: 27 Environment

2021 UN expenditure

\$9,169,225

Development partners:

Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education; Ministry of Labor and Social Policy; Ministry of Economy; Cabinet of Deputy President of the Government in charge of Economic Affairs; Crisis Management Centre; Directorate for Protection and Rescue; Local self-governments; Farmers' associations; Chambers of Commerce; NGOs, private sector, Balkan Foundation for Sustainable Development, Bureau of Education, City of Skopje, Connecting Natural Values and People - Office, DEKONS EMA, E-health Directorate, Food and Veterinary Agency, Fund for Innovation and Technological Development, International Union for Conservation of Nature - Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Macedonian Ecological Society, Municipality of Resen, National Public Health Institute, UNESCO National Commission, National Federation of Farmers, State Institute of Agriculture

OUTPUT 3.1 LOW-EMISSIONS DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE

Forth National Communication to the UNFCCC (UNDP): The 3rd Biennial Update Report was adopted by the Government and submitted to UNFCCC in June 2021. The most ambitious so far mitigation target of the 3rdBUR of - 82% reduction of net emissions in 2030 compared to the 1990 levels has been translated in the most ambitious NDC (Nationally Determined Contribution) in the region. The development of the 4th National Communication on Climate Change is progressing well with slight delays of some of the analytical reports. The quality of the GHG inventory has been significantly improved in the areas of agriculture, livestock, forestry, and land use, by using innovative tools such as GIS remote sense-making and surveys. The analyses of historic extreme climate events for the country were prepared, and results from the meso-meteorological measurements in the Skopje valley for the period 2011-2020 were analysed. Climate change livelihood vulnerability index has been created which helps to identify the most vulnerable municipalities to climate change in the country.

The partnership established with the Crisis Management Centre in the area of climate change resulted in incorporation of new modules in their existing E-platforms for multi-risk and multi-hazard assessment countrywide. The new modules will support gathering and analyses of data relevant for reporting towards the UNFCCC, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the SDGs. The primary information portal for climate change, that is the

national climate change website (www.klimatskipromeni.mk) has been regularly updated. More than 170 news/blogs/policy briefs/reports/climate actions were published on the web site, and 14 newsletters, 14 newsletters have been shared with the growing network of followers.

Comprehensive and transparent climate change Monitoring, Reporting and Verification Platform (MRV) (UNDP): The MRV Platform which was designed with support from UNDP will support the country to meet the enhanced transparency requirements as defined in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement. The Platform enables efficient coordination and compilation of information necessary for regular reporting to the UNFCCC on the progress of the climate actions in the country. The MRV Platform shall also facilitate reporting both to the UNFCCC and the EU / Energy Community in the areas of energy and climate change. The harmonized digital collection of this essential data will facilitate the work of all stakeholders involved in the transparency process, and it will provide improved and more accurate data. The MRV platform is in testing phase. The MRV requirements are incorporated in the draft Law on Climate Action and a secondary legislation for the MRV platform was developed thus ensuring sustainability of data provision.

More than 50 trainings and webinars were carried out targeting broad range of stakeholders ranging from high-level decision-makers and civil servants responsible for climate policy and MRV reporting to gender focal points, youth, and civil society thus resulting in more than 3000 participants (61% women) that have become sensitized and have increased understanding and knowledge on climate change issues.

De-risking Roadmap and Financing Strategy for the enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions (UNDP): The Macedonian enhanced NDC, developed with UNDP's support, sets a national goal to achieve 51% reduction of GHG emissions by 2030 compared to 1990 emissions thus setting the stage for low carbon development of the country. The eNDC was accompanied by a Roadmap for Implementation and a Strategy for Financing of the Macedonian enhanced NDC. Both documents provide for addressing the biggest challenge and highest priority posed for the eNDC implementation - decoupling energy-related emissions from GDP growth. Also, the Policy and financial de-risking for all enhanced eNDC sectors and the roadmap for introduction of carbon tax in the country are further



Cleaning the Bogovinje river basin as part of a wider set of activities undertaken to improve the flood resilience of the Polog region.
Credit: UNDP

enhancing the enabling environment for implementation of the measures and actions definite in the enhanced NDC. The Climate Budget Tagging methodology commenced by UNDP shall help to integrate climate change into the national public financial management system. The Ministry of Finance has incorporated the climate tagging in relevant draft law.

Access to green finance for SMEs and target group of individuals/households (UNDP, IOM, UNECE, EBRD): The project proposal "Green Finance Facility to Improve Air Quality and Combat Climate Change in North Macedonia" jointly developed by UNDP, IOM, UNECE and EBRD was submitted to the SDG Fund. UN agencies in collaboration with the EBRD will support the country to develop and operationalize a Green Financing Facility (GFF), a new financial vehicle, that will significantly improve access to affordable green financing for SMEs and target groups of individuals/households for investments in renewable energy (RE) and energy efficiency (EE) solutions as well as foster innovation in RE and EE sector. The GFF enabled accelerated adoption of RE and EE solutions will contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution and strengthen the local ecosystem for RE & EE innovation and green finance.

Development of a Project Proposal for the National Adaptation Plan (UNDP): The proposal for the development of the National Adaptation Plan is in an advanced stage. Number of consultative meetings for the draft proposal were organized with relevant ministries, local government, CSOs, and comments and suggestions received were incorporated in the final draft that was shared with the Nationally Designated Authority (NDA). The proposal was not submitted to the Green Climate Funding as the NDA wanted to carry out additional consultative meetings. However, the local elections and the political crisis that followed, did not provide a favourable environment for organization of such consultations.

Accelerating innovations in Clean Technologies and Green Jobs using a Climate Smart Urban Development approach (UNDP): The finalization of the PIF for the project "Accelerating Innovations in Clean Technologies and Green Jobs Innovation using a Climate Smart Urban Development (CSUD) approach" has been delayed due to the issues related to the implementation modality of the GEF project. The full NEX modality is not preferred neither by the Ministry nor by the Country Office, so the issue of the project implementing partner is still unresolved.

Guidelines and Best Practices for MSMEs in North Macedonia in delivering energy efficient products and in providing renewable energy equipment (UNECE): Customization of the previously developed Guidelines and Best Practices for MSMEs in delivering energy efficient products and in providing renewable energy equipment for North Macedonia.

Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFC) phase-out management plan (UNIDO). This activity supports the country's commitment under the Montreal Protocol. Drafting and adoption of the legislation related to controlled substances management/phase-down:

- Order prohibiting HCFC-141b and compounds containing HCFC-141b trade
- Order limiting import (quota) of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs)
- Order prohibiting HCFCs trade
- Draft-rulebook on types of categories of licenses for management of refrigerants and/or products

containing refrigerants.

- Draft-ordinance for banning of import and export of used refrigerators, freezers, air-conditioners, heat pumps and other cooling and freezing equipment, electric and others.
- Draft-rulebook on the programme for the examination on the management of refrigerant and equipment containing refrigerant.
- Monitoring and permanent control of consumption of the HCFC and other substances controlled by the Montreal Protocol on the Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer (evaluation of 40 import licenses)
- Monitoring of the recovery and recycling scheme: 36,115.05 kg of controlled substances and their blends recovered and recycled in 2021.

National plant pest surveillance and phytosanitary certification systems (FAO): In 2021, FAO contributed to strengthening the technical knowledge of the National Plant Pest surveillance and phytosanitary certification authorities in the country, including the Phytosanitary Directorate under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy and the State Phytosanitary Laboratory, by developing and making available a technical guide on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) dedicated to strengthening the national capacities to protect from plant pests some of the most economically important crops in North Macedonia. The guide „Integrated pest management of major diseases and pests in grapevine, tomato and pepper production in the Republic of North Macedonia“ available in [English](#), [Macedonian](#) and [Albanian](#) language.

This was the last activity of an FAO project which contributed to strengthening the capacities of around 20 staff representatives of the National Plant Pest Organizations on national plant pest surveillance systems, pest diagnostics and on phytosanitary certification, based on international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs) adopted under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

Climate smart-agriculture and agroecology - sustainable productivity growth in agriculture through high quality data for decision-making (FAO): With FAO support in 2021, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy started integrating data from the different national environmental platforms and databases (national data sets and maps on climate, soils, terrain, statistics and more) with various existing global data into a single Earth Map platform (developed by FAO and Google) to serve timely and effective policy formulation, decision making and interventions for sustainable agriculture, as well as meeting international obligations such as reporting against the SDGs.

Strategy for Food Loss and Waste Reduction (FAO): FAO's Food Loss and Waste Reduction educational package for children – "Do Good: Save Food!" was adapted to Macedonian language in 2021. The teaching materials are targeted to children and young people of five to fourteen years old. to promote awareness of the economic, social and environmental consequences of wasting food, advantages of preventing food waste, actions that children can take to reduce food waste and good habits that they can develop and introduce to their friends, families and communities to reduce food waste. The education package contributes to achievement of the target 12.3 of the global Sustainable Development Goals - halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains by 2030 - as well as address other related targets such as malnutrition, climate change and natural resource preservation. The publications

are available here (Do Good, Save Food 1, Do Good, Save Food 2, Do Good, Save Food 3, Do Good, Save Food 4). A Macedonian version of the FAO guide to reducing food waste by consumers was also developed and published.

Green Climate Fund country work programme and strengthening capacities for climate change adaptation and mitigation (FAO): In 2021, FAO supported the Cabinet of the Deputy President of the Government in charge of Economic Affairs, to develop and submitted to the GCF the first GCF Country Work Programme. As part of the GCF Country Work Programme development, a Readiness and Capacity Development Needs Assessment was conducted. Based on the Capacity Needs Assessment, FAO developed a detailed training curriculum for trainings in the field of Climate Change and engagement with the Green Climate Fund in the Republic of North Macedonia, particularly in the specific areas of: 1) Private Sector Engagement in GCF financing; 2) Climate change impacts, measures and the role of the GCF in supporting climate action; 3) Gender and Climate Change; 4) Climate Finance; 5) Climate Technologies; 6) GCF/National Accreditation Process; 7) National Coordination Mechanism and "No-objection" procedure for GCF financing in North Macedonia and 8) GCF Project Formulation Process. The trainings are available to all interested GCF stakeholders at www.greendevelopment.mk.

A draft catalogue on climate technologies from all nine priority sectors was developed. Rapid Assessment process of potential National Direct Access Entities to the GCF was conducted proposing three different scenarios for national GCF accreditation to the NDA. FAO worked with the Government to map the private sector actors in North Macedonia and help them fully tap into GCF opportunities, including through development of private sector engagement methodology, on-line survey, Private Sector engagement handbook, and close cooperation with the Fund for Innovation and Technology Development.

Enhanced climate resilience in agriculture (resilient seed system) (FAO): In 2021 FAO supported the Government of North Macedonia to enhance the country's seed system by improving the domestic production of high-quality and climate-tolerant seeds of strategic crops and building the national capacities to ensure proper seed supply for farmers.

In cooperation with the UKIM Institute of Agriculture, field demonstration plots were established in the Municipalities of Kochani, Skopje and Lozovo for multiplication of climate-tolerant varieties of beans, pepper and wheat and for provision of on-farm trainings to strengthen capacities of farmers on quality seed production for increasing resilience and achieving optimal yields under a changing climate.

As part of the initiative, more than 35 farmers and agricultural producers, as well as representatives of seed farms, agricultural cooperatives and the National Extension Agency were trained on how to select, test and grow high-quality seeds for each crop, in order achieve optimal yields under a changing climate. In addition, FAO conducted an assessment of the national seed system in North Macedonia, including reviewing the national seed production, certification, distribution, quality assessment, ex situ conservation and plant breeding programs.

Evidence-based communication for development initiatives on youth led climate action (UNICEF): To further amplify the voice of young people UNICEF also established U-Report in the country and in this reporting period amassed 300 U Reporters and published 9 polls. These activities engaged multiple UNICEF Volunteers and will continue to do so in the scale-up of U-Report.

Environment and climate change education (UNICEF):

With funding from the Swedish International Development Agency, UNICEF put an increased focus on environment and climate change education. New partnerships were established with government and Civil society organizations, and environment and climate change content was streamlined in the new curricula for grades 1 and 4. To support teacher capacities, over 60 pre-primary and primary school teachers received a training programme on experiential learning and integration of environmental concepts in teaching and will be disseminating it through the professional learning communities.

Experiential learning on environmental practices (UNICEF): Backed by the government and partnerships with young people and the office of the President of North Macedonia the new climate change programme of the UNICEF CO was propelled forward in less than 10 months. By November a Youth Climate Declaration developed by young people, was backed by the President of the country and presented at the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow.

Modelling innovative environment and climate-friendly solutions - capacities and seed funding for youth (UNICEF): Within the programme for Climate change and Environmental education, UNICEF implemented one UPSHIFT cycle dedicated to the topic. 10 teams of 46 young people from secondary schools in the country completed the three-day design thinking workshop. Five teams were awarded seed funding to advance their climate change and environment protection social innovations.

OUTPUT 3.2. INTEGRATED, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Land-use planning and industrial safety for South-Eastern Europe (UNECE): The Sub-regional workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety for South-Eastern Europe provided a platform for countries of South-Eastern Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) to share their experiences and good practices in coordinating their land-use planning and industrial safety procedures and to support cooperation between the relevant experts for industrial accident prevention, including in a transboundary context. Sub-regional workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety for South-Eastern Europe was held in Belgrade, 27-29 October 2021.

Policy packages on environmental governance (UNECE): 1) Analysed and developed a proposal of appropriate policies and governance in sectors with potential for mitigation on GHG emissions, contributing towards achieving on SDG and mainstreaming climate change towards more ambitious national commitment, including fighting pandemics; 2) Provided technical support for establishing a monitoring and evaluation framework for the current and future policy papers on air quality management. Introducing a model for planning, monitoring and evaluation of the air quality policy papers; 3) Document enabling and contributing to capacity building (establishment of an effective framework) of local self-government units for implementation of environmental legislation and EPR recommendations, as well as improving coordination between central and local governments in the implementation of environmental legislation. The document should also provide challenges of the local self-government during the COVID-19 crisis; 4) Assess the current level of the implementation of the existing regional waste management plans. Assess the capacity of the public communal enterprises in the municipalities for collection and transport of the waste to the transfer stations or regional centre. Develop professional guidance for the municipalities and the regional waste management centres; 5) Assess the capacity for implementation and enforcement of RBMPs

in order to prepare a plan for strengthening the capacity for implementation and a plan for public consultation procedure for development and approval of the river basin management documents.

Sustainable Land and Forests Management (UNEP): To strengthen the national legal and institutional capacities for Sustainable Land Management and Sustainable forest management of the project partners, such as MOEPP and MAFWE, National Forests, PE for Pasture Management, NHMS, Local Self Government Units (Municipalities), Research Institutions and Universities, CSOs and other project stakeholders, UNEP started to plan and prepare the concept and the curriculum for the capacity building training, as well as the study visits.

Soil Protection Strategy and Guidelines for Establishing

Soil Quality Monitoring Programme (UNEP): To address the national gaps and weaknesses in the land use and land degradation policy and to accelerate the achievement of land degradation neutrality, UNEP started the procedure for preparation of the soil protection strategy and guidelines for monitoring.

Protected Area management training programme + guidelines to support revision of the National Spatial Plan (UNEP): The capacity building training for the rangers of protected areas that included four modules (Legislation on Nature conservation; Conservation and monitoring of Natural values; Inter-institutional cooperation with inspectorates; Improvement of communication and personal skills), contributed to improved skills and knowledge about the sustainable management of the natural resources, improved biodiversity conservation, and monitoring. Two manuals have been prepared: (1) for greater inclusion of biodiversity in spatial planning in the Republic of North Macedonia and (2) for sustainable forest management in the country.

Pilot corridors from the proposed National Ecological Network (MAK-NEN) (UNEP): To achieve biodiversity protection by creating and effectively managing protected areas and integrating biodiversity into land-use planning, UNEP assisted the relevant state bodies in the improvement of the connection of protected areas by preparing documentation for two bio corridors: 1. Ecological corridors: Bukovic (Sretkovo) and Bukovic (Kolari), as a continuation of the cross-border ecological corridor Mavrovo (MK) - Korab Koritnik (AL) - Mount Munela (AL) and 2. Ecological corridors: Selecka Mountain, Dren - Vitolishte and Kozjak (Pletvar), as part of the larger ecological corridor Nidze - Kozuf - Jakupica (MK). Two promotional videos available – [video 1](#) and [video 2](#).

Red Books on Reptiles and Amphibians (UNEP): The first national Red Lists of reptiles and amphibians have been prepared, providing key information on extinction risks. The creation of the first National Red Lists provides insight on extinction risks at the national level and helps to assess the impact of measures to preserve biodiversity. The Red Lists are expected to improve national policymaking, help setting conservation targets and measure progress towards achieving and implementing European Union Directives in the field of nature protection, as well as the prospective EU Green Deal. Data will also feed into reporting for multilateral agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity. The creation of the National Red Lists took place under the Achieving Biodiversity Conservation Through Creation and Effective Management of Protected Areas and Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Land Use Planning project, an initiative implemented by UNEP together with the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of North Macedonia, with finance from the Global Environment Facility. Based on the RLs findings and with some additional field work, Red

Books for reptiles and amphibians have also been produced.

High nature value forests identification on national scale (UNEP): UNEP finalized the process for the identification of 188 forests (55988 ha) with high natural values and prepared guidelines for future management. Forests are suitable habitats for many plants, birds, and other animal species because of their structural and functional complexity, and these species are often highly dependent on the quality of forests. High Nature Value forests (HNVFs) are 'all-natural forests and those semi-natural forests in Europe where the management (historical or present) supports a high diversity of native species and habitats, and/or those forests which support the presence of species of European, and/or national, and/or regional conservation concern' defined by Institute of European Environmental Policy.

Identified quotas for one species on national level (UNEP):

The importance of the Non-Timber Forest Products in the local economy and the biodiversity values have a different but important role. Defining the quotas of the NTFB can significantly influence the balance and sustainability of the species within the country. With the aim to establish sustainable management of NTFP, UNEP prepared an Assessment of bearberry status (identification of quotas on a national scale) and prepare the Report for use of NTFP in Macedonia with a socioeconomic overview and legal analysis, together with the Assessment of the Juniperus communis resources in Umlena forestry unit. To achieve the sustainability of the NTFP, capacity-building training was conducted for the NTFP collectors. Based on the findings and recommendations related to the Bearberry, MOEPP issued an [Order](#) to restrict the collection of these species, for use and trade and a [Bearberry promotional video](#).

Development of forest vegetation maps (UNEP): The three pilot areas covered by the preparation of a map of forest vegetation within this project are located in the eastern parts of North Macedonia and they include most of the Maleshevo Mountains and the mountain Ograzden. The total project area is 55,777.0 ha or 2.17% of the territory of the country. Most of the forests within the boundaries of the project area are state-owned and managed by PE National Forests, by its subsidiaries in Pehchevo, Berovo, and Strumica, but also private-owned forests were included.

Database development of soil sealing rate and loss of soil organic matter (UNEP): UNEP gathered necessary data for soil sealing rate and loss of soil organic matter by piloting three sites in Strumica, Prilep and Ohrid region. The evidence showed a decline of SOM in all three sites, especially on agricultural land, which is a result of the improper management practices applied in the pilot regions.

National erosion and drought sensitivity map (UNEP): Through a process of field investigations, erosion modelling, erosion intensity modelling, UNEP prepared the national erosion and drought sensitivity map and the identification of high-risk zones and their impact on biodiversity.

Protected areas management plans according to new methodologies (UNEP): UNEP, in cooperation with national and international experts through a participative process of consultations, prepared the draft Management plans for [National Park Shar Mountains](#) and Ohrid Lake, taking into consideration all the data and priorities from the Studies for valorisation.

Valorisation Study for Ohrid Lake (UNEP): UNEP with the expertise from the IUCN and through a participative process of consultations prepared the Study for valorisation of the natural values of the Ohrid Lake. The Study for valorisation was used as baseline information for the preparation of the draft Management plan and will also contribute to the re-

proclamation of the Ohrid Lake as a Monument of nature.

Capacitation of farmers in Strumica River Basin for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) (UNDP): The interventions for restoration of Strumica River Basin that have started in 2015 were completed. The remining activities such as connection of 25 individual households to the wastewater collection system, and full operationalization of the wastewater management plant in the village of Edrenikovo, as well as the third grantees cycle on introduction of new agro-ecological farming practices that included 60 farmers/grantees that received full expert knowledge and theoretical and practical skills for introduction of agro-ecological farming practices and full set of necessary agriculture equipment have been successfully finalized.

Urban Resilience in Skopje region (UNDP): The Hazards Assessment to the City of Skopje was updated, and a Fire Protection Plan and a Plan for improvement of the capacities of the Firefighting Brigade of the City of Skopje were developed in close collaboration with relevant departments of the City of Skopje. Also, the technical documentation for implementation of for anti-erosive measures on Skopska Crna Gora was prepared. The implementation of the proposed measures should prevent severe flooding event such the one that affected this in 2016.

Possible transmission paths of six-valent chrome in Zeden Mountain underground waters were identified and their impact on Rashce spring was assessed. Five automatic wireless stations (divers) on the piezometers of the new monitoring network in the well area Nerezi – Lepenec were installed to establish continuous, timely and precise monitoring of the underground waters.

80 employees of the City administration were trained to use human-centred design, tools and methods for public service improvement, and 5 services were redesigned and improved.

The Green Roof on "Dom na Kulturata Koco Racin" which was built contributes to the decrease of the temperature in the urban blocks in the city centre and provides a space for organization of public events. Also, the Green Cadastre for the City of Skopje was upgraded with additional 12,537 geo-referenced and inventorized trees and shrubs. The efforts to further improve transparency of the public administration was supported through the development of an Open Government Partnership (OGP) Datasets for City of Skopje, organization of training for the relevant departments and development of related guidelines.

Climate resilience of agricultural production in the South-east region (FAO): FAO in close cooperation with MAFWE and the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, prepared and submitted a project of North Macedonia for the Adaptation Fund, aimed at building climate resilience of the agricultural production in the Radovish region through improved irrigation, land and water management, with a budget of USD 9.9 million. The Project Concept Note was approved, with full project proposal under development. The Development of the Project proposal involved extensive stakeholder consultations at local and central level, including community consultations with men and women farmers and local self-government authorities in the target region, and technical consultations with State Water Economy Enterprises, the MAFWE and MOEPP (as National Designated Authority for the Adaptation Fund).

Sustainable management of inland fisheries resources (FAO): The project directly contributed to the fishing community livelihoods, aiming to improve the sustainability of the entire inland fisheries sector through better collection and management of data. Important data and methodologies

are now available, enabling countries with shared lake resources to develop joint management plans, reduce the illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing of inland waterways, and improve coordination among the various stakeholders of shared inland water bodies. "Good Practices Guidelines for data systems in support of sustainable inland and recreational fisheries in the Western Balkans region" ([English](#), [Macedonian](#), [Albanian](#) and [Montenegrin](#)) were produced and provided to the Government and for use by key national stakeholders.

National Codex structures (FAO): Considering the challenges imposed by the COVID 19 pandemic a number of the key project activities were postponed, including raising awareness conferences, preparatory meetings, on the job trainings, which require physical presence of experts, especially given the fact that North Macedonia is a country with limited Codex experience to follow the activities online.

Food Safety and Quality Standards in the Dairy Sector (FAO): FAO supported MAFWE and relevant stakeholders along the dairy value chain to develop and introduce food quality standards in the diary sector with a focus on quality-based milk payment schemes.

Based on assessment of the structural gaps and capacity development needs to implement Common Market Organization (CMO) principles in the dairy sector, the following policy support documents were developed in order to support the development and establishment of a quality based milk payment scheme in the country:

1. Concept for the milk payment scheme, outlining the necessary steps and mechanisms, policies, legislative and institutional set ups required to operationalize the system.
2. Guidelines for milk producers; for milk sampling and for milk processors on quality and quality standards, based on Good Hygiene Practices, as a prerequisite for hygienic dairy production.

UNESCO World Heritage Lake Ohrid - youth-led initiatives to assist its protection and sustainable development (UNESCO): This activity is funded by the UNESCO Participation Programme (PP), which provides a means of supporting national, subregional or regional activities of Member States that are in line with the Organization's programme priorities.

INNS management in the UNESCO World Heritage Lake Ohrid (UNESCO): This activity is funded by the UNESCO Participation Programme (PP), which provides a means of supporting national, subregional or regional activities of Member States that are in line with the Organization's programme priorities.

OUTPUT 3.3. AIR POLLUTION IN URBAN AREAS DECREASED

Public awareness on the air pollution causes and effects (UNDP): In collaboration with the Association of Journalists (ZNM), UNDP established an award for journalistic articles, video or research stories on air pollution. It contributed to put attention on a topic that is not very present in the media except during the winter period when the air pollution usually reaches the highest level. The story "Conspiracy against the Air" by the Investigative Reporting Laboratory (IRL) which was awarded the first prize approaches the issue of air pollution from different angle as it identifies direct linkages between the bad air quality and corruptive practices.

At least 20 CSOs representatives attended the training and increased their knowledge and understanding on relevant issues to sources of air pollution, air quality monitoring and

indexes, measures to address the air pollution, and hence enabling them to advocate for certain solutions/politics. Also, at least 15 retailers of heating devices strengthened their knowledge how to argumentatively promote the energy-efficient features of the new energy-efficient devices and thus to influence the decision of their clients for selection of these products.

Air pollution from households heating, proof of concept measures (UNDP): In total 128 houses in Lisice settlement, Aerodrom, have been supported to replace inefficient wood stoves with new air conditioners, heating pumps, pellet stoves to reduce the indoor and outdoor pollution, and energy efficiency measures in number of households such as installing a new facade, replacement of roofs, windows and doors. Better off beneficiaries are sharing the costs of these interventions and for the most vulnerable households, costs were completely covered. Particular attention for selection of the beneficiary households was put on socio-economic status of the families and on families with PWDs, children and female headed households.

Regulatory changes towards a lower emission household energy system (UNDP): In coordination with the Ministry of Economy and through a consultative process with the relevant institutions and interested key stakeholders, UNDP supported the development of 15 correspondent tables (EU-MK form and MK-EU form) for the Rulebook on Labelling of Energy-Related Products.

Comprehensive monitoring system for air pollution in the City of Skopje (UNDP): Set of data was collected from the fixed monitoring stations placed in Lisice and Karpoch settlements, and the mobile monitoring stations that were placed on different locations determined as critical within the boundaries of the City of Skopje. These data will be modelled and analysed as part of the Source Apportionment Study for Skopje Agglomeration that is developed by the University "Goce Delcev", Skopje. The data collected from the monitoring study are visually presented at the Air Pollution Platform: www.cistvozduh.mk. The web-based platform provides reliable presentation of the air pollution data, present activities on air pollution in the country and create and communicate relevant events. Moreover, five indoor monitoring devices were temporally installed at the selected households in Lisice in order to measure the current indoor air quality.

The discussions about the format of the coordination platform are still ongoing. The initial aim of such platform activity was to support the Intersectoral working group for air quality monitoring in strengthening the efficacy of the coordination activities at different stages, which, unfortunately is not functional for a longer period.

Application of functional nanoparticles and structures in facial health masks and filters for protection of Covid 19 (UNESCO): This activity is funded by the UNESCO Participation Programme (PP), which provides a means of supporting national, subregional or regional activities of Member States that are in line with the Organization's programme priorities.

OUTPUT 3.4 EFFECTIVE DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND RESPONSE

Risk informed policies through collection and analysis of data at sub-national level (UNDRR): UN supported the strengthening of evidence-based decision making for DRR, through the establishment of an INFORM sub-national model risk index, mapping vulnerability, exposure and coping capacity across sub-national entities in North Macedonia. The development of the INFORM sub-national model risk index was done in collaboration with the

European Commission Joint Research Centre, and results are available online [here](#).

Resilience of Polog region's communities to flood risk (UNDP): The Flood Risk Management Plan for the Upper Vardar River Basin was updated with data and information from the new studies carried out for the Polog region. Such approach was chosen as the Management Plan is the most important planning document for future flood risk mitigation interventions in the region and has to provide accurate and reliable data and information. Measures for increasing resilience of the two largest urban centres in Polog, cities of Tetovo and Gostivar were identified. Preparedness to floods and other related geo-hazards have been identified, and draft concept for establishment of an early warning system in the Polog region have been prepared. The main sediment sources (landslides and torrential streams) in the region along with approaches to their future management have been identified, and for the 8 most critical locations, technical documentation for their stabilization shall be prepared. Technical documentation for stabilization of Shipkovica torrent and for regulation of Bogovinjska riverbed were finalized.

Integrated climate-resilient transboundary flood risk management of the Drini River Basin (UNDP): With support from UNDP, the hydrological and meteorological monitoring network in the Macedonian part of Drin River Basin was expanded with new 17 hydrological and 9 meteorological stations that are running and are fully functional. Moreover, based on the signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Hydro-meteorological Institute, historical timeseries of hydrological and meteorological data from the existing hydrological and meteorological stations in the region covering the period from 1960 onwards were shared. This very important dataset is crucial for the calibration and accuracy of the foreseen hydraulic model to be developed for the Drini River Basin which is prerequisite for development of flood hazard and risk mapping tools aiming to perform vulnerability assessment, produce vulnerability maps which will include damages and loss of life estimates and to test flood management options. LiDAR surveying method (Light Detection and Ranging) for preparation of DTM (Digital Elevation Model) and DSM (Digital Surface Model) was conducted for the Macedonian part of the Drin River Basin in collaboration with the Agency for Real State Cadaster using a sophisticated technology (area of approximately 4,125 km²). The created High-resolution digital terrain model (DTM) will be utilized as baseline tool with improving the accuracy of the flood simulations and risk assessments and foreseen flood hazard and risk management planning. Technical documentation for restoration of Sateska river and diversion in its natural riverbed has been prepared and administrative permitting procedure initiated with the key affected stakeholders/beneficiaries (Municipalities). The realization of the structural measures shall directly contribute to the improvement of the quality of the water and the ecosystems of the Lake Ohrid which is a Monument of Nature and will also address one of the recommendations of the UNESCO reactive mission.

Disaster risk reduction in the agricultural sector (FAO): In 2021, FAO supported the update of a previous comprehensive analysis of the national DRR systems for the agriculture sector, identifying strengths and capacity gaps in the legislation, administrative structures and institutional set up related to DRR and management, to provide recommendations to strengthen the existing system. A country DRR study with focus to the Macedonian agriculture sector was finalized in December 2021 and submitted for validation to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy.

Resilience of agriculture sector through climate smart agriculture practices (FAO): In 2021, FAO supported the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy to draft its first "National Drainage and Irrigation Strategy 2021-2031", a new document in which the country will for the first time incorporate a targeted drainage and irrigation strategic policy plan/document, aimed at tackling the management of natural resources, specifically water in the face of the challenging climate change issues.

Under the same project FAO supported the introduction of new and innovative climate-smart agriculture (CSA) technologies by local farming communities, through the establishment of three pilot demonstration sites, in Strumica, in the village of Miravci (Gevgelija Municipality) and in Resen. Several new technologies were piloted for CSA and climate resilience in agricultural production, including: i) UV and hail protection for espalier table grapes on a surface area of 0.4 hectares in Miravci village; ii) closed/covered high tech commercial production of varied vegetables in a controlled environment (modern plastic high tunnel, with electric heating, drip irrigation, and humidity control) in Miravci; iii) hydroponics, and substrate culture of vegetables in closed and controlled environment in the Vocational High-School in Strumica "Dimitar Vlahov"; iv) sub-soil water conservation irrigation technology in Resen for climate smart production of hazelnuts. During the establishment of the pilot sites, two rounds of trainings were held for each site covering 55 local farmers who were trained on various topics such as: substrate culture production, controlled climate production, raspberry production, sub-soil irrigation and scheduling and protected structures for vineyards.

FAO supported a detailed assessment of the state-of-play of the existing national D&L information system and its relation to the FAO D&L methodology and review of the data quality in each stakeholder institution in relation to the data needs and provided recommendations for improving the existing information system for D&L assessment in the agriculture sector.

A thorough review of all national policies and plans related to climate change and agriculture, resulting with a report with recommendations for the priority interventions in the national policies and plans relevant to climate change adaptation and mitigation in the agriculture sector was also supported by FAO, in order to support the harmonization of selected national policies and plans relevant to climate change and agriculture to EU regulation.

Preparedness for health emergencies and risk assessment, including epidemics and pandemics (WHO): The Intra - Action Review, helped identify immediate, mid- and long-term actions to be taken to improve the current COVID-19 response and strengthen North Macedonia's preparedness and response to epidemics in general. Cross-cutting recommendations brought up by the participants included: i) investing in sustainability of human resources and the developed technical capacities during the pandemic, ii) continuous capacity building and training (with regular simulation exercises), iii) updating legislation related to emergencies and communicable diseases, iv) improving communication between healthcare providers at all levels and v) enhancing the ongoing digitalization of health information systems.

COVID - 19 response by strengthened health emergency preparedness (WHO): WHO continued supporting the activities for bolstering SARS CoV 2 detection Capacities of National Public Health laboratories by ensuring the testing readiness of the national virology laboratory before the virus introduction to the country and thereafter, quality non-interrupted testing performance through large-scale

procurement of equipment, supplies and PPE for the laboratories, based on robust capacity assessment as well as uninterrupted weekly training on testing, reporting, bio-safety and biosecurity. WHO invested in infrastructure and upgrading the servers for surveillance and laboratory performance. The National Genomic Sequencing Strategy was finalized and adopted by the MOH. WHO supported coordination of the laboratory network for sequencing, and implemented WHO guidelines for sequencing, as well as routine genetic sequencing training for PH Laboratory experts.

The Epidemic Intelligence and Emergency Operating Centre was established, increasing the capacities to conduct strategic management and monitoring of emergencies, strengthened communications and coordination, as well as possibility for capacity building activities for contact tracing. Also, Concept and Operational plan for resource mobilization and establishment of the Functional Network of Public Health Emergency Operation Centres (PHEOC) under MOH/IPH coordination was developed and the existing PHEOC and networking with Regional EOCs was operationalised. COVID-19 Online Training Platform was established for health professionals in Macedonian and Albanian, providing training and technical assistance for COVID-19 patients case management, IPC, rehabilitation, mental health etc. and ensuring sustainable access to accredited courses for and a high degree of uptake at different levels of care achieving intended results for building capacities of the HCW to better respond to COVID-19 challenges. WHO supported activities to build trust with communities and increase the uptake of protective and COVID-19 prevention behaviours among health workers, the elderly, youth and Roma population. Infodemic management capacities were developed though organization of training for representatives from national health authorities, fact-checking organizations, UN agencies and international partners. WHO also delivered equipment and medical supplies (biomedical equipment, PPE, diagnostics and non-medical equipment of app. 800.000 USD in 2021);

WHO provided a large contribution to digitalization and strengthening of electronic health system: Moj Termin, including: digitalization of all laboratories that are performing COVID testing and unification of the data system for positive tests and connection with Family doctors and Epidemiologists; Digitalization of contact surveillance system; Development of a Telemedicine module for continuation of health services; Development of a module-data base of all existing profiles of Health Human Resources and supply and equipment estimator module; E-epidemiological questionnaire for COVID19; and One COVID-19 complete patient record with retroactive data import and analytics.

OUTPUT 3.5 WASTE REDUCTION AND EFFICIENT WASTE MANAGEMENT

Mechanism for sustainable clean-up operation at the OHIS complex (HCH (lindane) contaminated site) (UNIDO): Laboratory equipment for the Institute of Public Health was delivered and installed. Training and testing are ongoing. The construction of the foundation, which will contain the area where the excavation of contaminated soil will take place, is nearly completed.

Remediation activities of the small basin of waste in OHIS complex (UNOPS): The contract for remediation of OHIS small basin was signed and activities have been started.

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

Fundamentals first: Economic Development and Competitiveness
Chapter 3.23 The Judiciary and Fundamental Rights
Chapter 3.24 Justice, Freedom and Security

2021 UN expenditure

\$9,084,881

Development partners:

President's Cabinet, Prime Minister's Cabinet, DPMs in charge of European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Economic Affairs, Political System, and Good Governance, Secretariat for European Affairs, Ministries of Interior, Local Self-Government, Labour and Social Policy, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Information Society and Administration, Justice, Culture, Education and Science, Defence, Environment and Physical Planning, Health, Parliament, National Bank, State Statistical Office, State Audit Office, Bureau for Regional Development, Centres for Development of the 8 planning regions, Supreme Court, Judiciary, Public Prosecutors Office for Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption, Academy of Judges and Prosecutors, Ombudsman, Anti-Discrimination Commission, Inter-ministerial WG for adoption of Migration Policy, National Council for Gender Equality, Customs Agency, Agency for Youth and Sports, WCO, INTERPOL, OSCE, National Commission for UNESCO, Bar Association, Faculty of Law Iustinianus Primus, Macedonian Academy of Science and Arts, Association of Finance Officers (AFO), Association of Units of Local Self Government, Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-east Europe (NALAS), the City of Skopje, Municipalities of Aerodrom, Bitola, Bogdanci, Bogovinje, Centar, Chashka, Delchevo, Gazi Baba, Gevgelija, Gjorce Petrov, Gostivar, Karposh, Kavadarci, Kisela Voda, Kochani, Kriva Palanka, Kumanovo, Makedonska Brod, Makedonska Kamenica, Mavrovo-Rostushe, Novaci, Ohrid, Shtip, Staro Nagoricane, Struga, Strumica, Sveti Nikole, Tetovo, Veles, Vinica, Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, Akcija Zdruzenska, organizations of persons with disabilities and other civil society organizations.

OUTPUT 4.1 RULE OF LAW, ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL

Throughout 2021, UN strengthened its partnership with state and non-state actors to accelerate policy, legal and institutional reforms **advancing the rule of law, fundamental rights, gender equality and access to justice and quality services responsive to those in need.**

It invested its collective expertise to support evidence-based, anticipatory and inclusive policy making and long-term strategic visioning, heavily based on evidence and systemic data collection and analysis. UN further assisted in building strong, effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, capable to promote and protect human rights for all, especially groups that have been left behind.

UN expert and technical support was central in devising and implementing national strategies and legislation in line with EU aquis and international standards in areas of respect, promotion and protection of human rights, gender equality, judicial reform, justice for children, civil and criminal law, compensation of victims, migration management, international protection, decentralization, anti-corruption, arms control and fight against organized crime. UN contributed to developing 21 policies and 98 laws and bylaws, which were aligned with the EU aquis and international human rights standards. Many of these novel legislative initiatives are in Parliament procedure. Large number of rulebooks, manuals, guidelines, and analysis prompting their implementation in practice were developed.

UNOPS supported the MoJ in the implementation of specific measures envisioned in the Judicial Reform Sector Strategy 2017-2022. In this direction, UNOPS provided legislative support in developing a new Civil Procedure Code and amendments to the Law on Civil Liability. Technical assistance was provided to the Public Prosecutor of the Republic of North Macedonia with regards to legal drafting and harmonization process of seven bylaws pertaining to the prosecution office operations. As a result of UNOPS support, over 200 civil servants, judges and prosecutors were capacitated



Participants at a networking workshop organized by NGO Akcija Zdruzenska, a partner organization of UN Women in the frames of the gender-responsive budgeting project. 14-16 July 2021, Struga. Credit: UN Women

through 15 training events on issues related to effective investigations and examination, civic control mechanism of the police work and the functioning of the National Preventive Mechanism under the Ombudsman, the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights (specifically landmark cases), HCCH Conventions, and on the Law on International Cooperation in Criminal Matters. The NPAA 2021-2025 was aligned with the Government's strategic priorities, sector strategies, priorities in the Economic Reform Programme, and the Agenda2030. Communication support to SEA resulted in increased SEA's digital and media presence.

Several UN agencies contributed to a **comprehensive assessment of the Gender Equality Draft Law** and engaged in the development of a new National Gender Equality Strategy. The assessment highlights areas where improvements are needed and provides concrete recommendations for the MLSP-led drafting group. Working closely with the Ministry of Justice and civil society, OHCHR also supported legislative initiatives aiming to improve access to justice and the rule of law, including a new law to facilitate access and recourse to compensation for survivors and victims of all forms of

violent crimes, including trafficking in persons and gender based violence, ensuring alignment with international norms and standards.

Following the adoption of the new antidiscrimination legislation, UN strengthened the capacities of the new complaint mechanism, Antidiscrimination Commission, to engage effectively in the promotion and protection against discrimination on all grounds recognized by international law. UN supported national human rights institutions and civil society to stepped up their understanding of ways to increase the demand and engage meaningfully in the State reporting and follow up processes, as well as engage with international human rights mechanisms. With a view to advance right based approach to disability, **OHCHR supported the establishment of a national monitoring framework in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, which was formally launched in April 2021, as a strategic partnership between the Ombudsman and 20 organizations of persons with diverse forms of disabilities and civil society organizations.

People left behind were empowered to claim their rights, and effectively participate and influence decision making. **UNHCR support bolstered the state free legal aid system to start functioning for asylum seekers, refugees and stateless people**, followed by an advocacy campaign and specific guidelines for improved implementation of the pertinent legislation. The joint efforts with MYLA, as a partner CSO, resulted in establishing a pool of 55 attorneys, of which 40 trained to provide legal aid.

In 2021, the refugee law course, run by Law Faculty in Skopje and UNHCR, recorded highest number of 33 students enrolling including three study cycles (undergraduates, masters, and PhD students). In addition, two basic training modules on International Refugee Protection were designed for the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors and the Bar Association of North Macedonia, to become part of the regular training curriculum of both entities, which will continue to be offered to judges, prosecutors, and attorneys, as well as other professionals in the justice sector. UNHCR supported MLSP in drafting Standard Operating Procedures on Local Integration of Refugees that also include elements of monitoring and evaluation and integration management (OSS concept). UNHCR procured and donated IT equipment for Border Police regional units that will enable timely data collection and registration of migrants travelling in mixed movements.

UNHCR dialog and coordination with relevant national and international actors working on prevention and reduction of statelessness intensified, aiming to be fully eradicated by 2024. Within the #IBelong campaign month, a video was broadcasted on national televisions to raise awareness about the importance of ending statelessness in the country. By end of 2021, some 33 stateless persons were assisted with acquisition or confirmation of nationality, while some 512 persons were provided with legal counselling. **UNHCR continued strengthening alliances towards a systemic solution to end statelessness**, partnering with various stakeholders in national and international fora. Among others, these initiatives included public discussions on the first draft of the Roma Integration Strategy 2022-2030, considering that majority of registered stateless persons are Roma, capacity building, awareness raising among children, like the project "Open day for civil education", specifically on the topic "I am a child too and I have rights – children without citizenship".

UNICEF contributed improving justice for children system though legal analysis, policy and legislative drafting. The legal gap analysis provided the Government with substantive recommendations to inform the revisions of the Justice for Children Law in terms of providing alternative solutions to detention, custody and the need for establishing restorative justice models. UNICEF advanced proposals for revision of the Criminal Code on all articles affecting children, particularly child victims of violence. These interventions are intended to significantly enhance the child protection system through better prevention, rehabilitation and resocialization of children, through intersectoral and trauma-informed response, in line with the children's best interest. To duly implement the revised legislation, a multisectoral training curriculum has been developed for all relevant professionals. 25 professionals have gained necessary skills to act as trainers and further disseminate the knowledge.

In parallel, **UNICEF worked on establishing monitoring system for children in conflict and in contact with the law enhanced**, and further improvements to the access to justice of children. To this end, a capacity building plan for the State Council for Prevention of Child Delinquency (SCPCD) was drafted based on their self-assessment process, along with initial consultations with the National Coordination Body for Protection of Children against Abuse and Neglect, the SCPCD and the SSO. To address the underlying societal barriers preventing children from accessing justice and enjoying their rights in the justice system, two surveys assessing the knowledge, attitudes and practices were completed, which will inform the design of a multi-media campaign to address the underlying societal barriers preventing children from accessing justice, planned to take place in 2022.

UNODC increased the capacities of criminal justice practitioners to counter trafficking in persons (TIP) and smuggling of migrants and engage in joint collaborative actions at regional and sub-regional, bilateral, and multilateral levels, especially in investigation and prosecution of these cases, while safeguarding victim rights in line with international standards. As a result, 40 representatives of national criminal justice actors and experts, including the judiciary, Public Prosecution Office, MoI, MLSP, labour inspectors, representatives of non-governmental and international organizations, trade unions, private companies, and academia advanced their knowledge through six multi-disciplinary workshops that covered the South-East Europe region. They focused on: 1) access to effective remedies to trafficked victims; 2) handling cases of trafficking in person for the purposes of labour exploitation; 3) addressing the demand side of TIP; 4) trafficking of children, in particular for the purpose



UNICEF launched "Reimagine the future" initiative jointly with the Office of the President of the country. Credit: UNICEF

2021 DETAILED RESULTS

of forced criminality; 5) addressing TIP in prostitution through international cooperation; and 6) effectively detecting, investigating and prosecuting TIP cases and aggravated migrant smuggling offenses from and through South-Eastern Europe, through a gender and human rights considerations. UNODC became an official member of the operational bodies of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Persons and Illegal Migration (its Secretariat and Subgroup for Combating Child Trafficking).

UNODC undertook a comprehensive overview of the existing systems and practices for data collection and analysis on seized and confiscated firearms, their parts and components, and ammunition across the criminal justice sector. The first two data collections rounds have revealed that different agencies, including law enforcement, customs, prosecution and judiciary, have different data collection methodologies in place, without the possibility of obtaining comparable statistical and other data overviews essential to effectively respond to all forms of crime and ensure protection of victims. Also, engagement and responses of the criminal justice institutions to the global UNODC Illicit Arms Flow Questionnaire was enabled.

OUTPUT 4.2. CENTRAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES STRENGTHENING

UN systematically upgraded the capacities of state and non-state actors, including government officials, central and local administration, judiciary, prosecution office, Ombudsman, Anti-Discrimination Commission, SSO, other independent bodies, as well as civil society. National capacities have been increased to align and implement policies, legislation, planning and budgeting in line with the EU and international standards, Agenda2030 and SDGs, and deliver people-centred and good qualitative services. Primary focus was on implementing international standards, acquiring EU accession negotiation skills, advancing knowledge on EU enlargement methodology and accession process, approximation with EU aquis in multiple areas, including population dynamics, migration management policy, asylum, international protection, and decentralization.

In this direction, **IOM expert and technical support** resulted in development of key policy documents related to migration management, such as **Migration Policy 2021–2025 and its Action Plan**, adopted with a Resolution of the Parliament in December 2021.³⁷ Another important milestone was the Country Migration Profile. In addition, IOM continued upscale the knowledge and skills of the Inter-institutional Group to integrate and institutionalize participatory, innovative, and forward-looking planning and policy development into migration management in the upcoming years.

Building on the good cooperation with the Parliament, **UN Women continued engaging in a constructive dialogue with Parliament bodies**, including its standing Committee on Equal Opportunities, Parliamentary Institute and Women MPs Club on legislative and policy-making processes as promoters and drivers for systematic application of GRB. 30 Members of the Parliament (MPs) strengthened their knowledge and understanding of gender assessment of policies and laws, and the oversight role of the Parliament in advancing the implementation of gender equality commitments.

UNOPS redoubled the capacity building support to SEA and MFA on EU accession process through training and stepping up existing competencies and knowledge

on the accession process. Also, technical capacities of the Parliamentary Committee for European Affairs and administrative staff for support of the overall accession negotiation process strengthened. In addition, the capacities of key government institutions were increased to commence the negotiation process and identify areas in need of further improvements under the overall Government reform process. This was primarily achieved through delivery of capacity building events (56 events, and over 670 trained civil servants) covering different aspects of the EU accession process (rule of law, energy, agriculture, environment, trade, education, financing services, different EU policies, etc.). UNOPS also supported the development of large number of EU related rulebooks, manuals, guidelines, and analysis enabling their practical implementation.

As a result of UN Women continued support, 2021 saw an increased number of local governments with gender-responsive budgeting and programming in line with the Government commitment to enable conditions for greater gender equality and services that will empower women. In 10 new municipalities³⁸ gender responsive policymaking and budgeting initiatives were piloted. Targeted capacity building, strategic planning, mentoring and exchange of experience with other 21 municipalities that already have engendered budgeting and programming, enabled municipal administration to increase understanding of the relevance of gender statistics and indicators and data collection for the design of local programmes. More than 300 local administration representatives from 31 municipalities improved knowledge and skills on application of GRB tools in local planning and budgeting processes, thus demonstrating increased responsiveness to the needs of women and those most vulnerable.

In the effort to strengthen the role of the **National Gender Machinery, UN Women capacitated the MLSP Department for Equal Opportunities to take strong leadership** in guiding and coordinating other government institutions on gender responsive policy making and budgeting. In this direction, a Resource Centre on Gender Responsive Policy Making and Budgeting was established to serve as knowledge hub. Dedicated administration staff in 15 ministries and 3 state agencies undergone training and mentoring programmes related to engendering sectoral programmes. Out of these, 13 line-ministries and state institutions have continued to apply GRB in their sectoral programming processes in line with the Government Methodology on GRB.

Capturing the positive reform momentum in the education and environment domains, **UNICEF launched “Reimagine the future” initiative** jointly with the Office of the President of the country. The initial exploratory phase reached out to large number of young people with a view to identify the key areas of their interest. Based on the opinion and views of over 700 young people, a series of deep-dive consultations with youth from across the country were held on three distinct topics: Education, Environment and Climate change and Mental health and wellbeing. The recommendations arising from the discussions were incorporated in a Youth for Action Strategy aimed to inform the policy makers. It has been co-signed and backed by the President of the country, pledging to champion these calls on their behalf. UN supported North Macedonia's participation at the second Generation Unlimited Global Challenge, and yet again produced one of the five global finalists. The eBionics team competed with their solution to expand access to prosthetic care with Venus Arm, an open-source 3D printed bionic arm for people with upper

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limb deficiency. Another notable success is one of the runners-up in the local competition. Working on the Walkiee application, the team "Something Atypical" received global recognition as one of the seven World Bank 2020 Ideas for Action Winners.

UNDP contributed to furthering decentralization by strengthening municipal councillors' capacities and inter-municipal cooperation. Over 1,300 municipal councillors benefited from e-knowledge platform populated with more than 200 new reference materials. Innovative modalities of provision of digitalized services were integrated into 7 pilot projects involving 26 municipalities in the frames of inter-municipal cooperation. Also, the municipal grants scheme enabled more than 700 citizens to actively participate in the decision-making process for selection of 12 community's priority projects.

Furthermore, **with UNDP support, fiscal decentralization has continued to improve** based on innovative and digital tools for collection and administration of local taxes and administration fees, followed by an analysis of the best practices and lessons learned. These efforts enabled 15 municipalities and two planning regions (involving 19 municipalities) to benefit from the SDG aligned Technical Documentation Fund. They were supported to develop, finance and implement 53 complex technical documentation for the highest priority infrastructure developed. Support in analysis, training and improvement of regulation on transfer pricing and exchange of information on tax purposes of the Ministry of Finance and Public Revenue Office was provided.

UNICEF supported the MoES to initiate reform of the transfers to municipalities that fund primary and secondary schools. New funding formulas based on the number of students and costs for attaining educational standards were developed and incorporated in the 2022 national budget, increasing efficiency, improving funding transparency and fairness and establishing mechanisms that would enhance quality of teaching. Adequate allocations were also made for the inclusion of children with disabilities as well as for teaching in the languages of the smaller ethnic communities. These formulas will provide sufficient funding to schools for adequate maintenance, suitable investment in equipment and teaching aids, professional training and career development of the school staff, as well as an increased number of professional associates. For the first time, the 2022 primary education funds transferred to the municipalities, prepared based on the funding formulas developed with UNICEF support, include free meals for students from first to fifth grade thus further expanding universal social protection programmes for children, as well as free tablets for access to digital educational resources for students from families at social risk.

OUTPUT 4.3. EVIDENCE-BASED, RESULT-ORIENTED AND TRANSPARENT POLICY MAKING

Transparent and participatory policy making processes at all branches and levels of governance gained a strong emphasis on evidence and data, measurable targets and indicators aligned to SDGs. **UNDP updated the Municipal Development Index**, as the most reliable source of data on the socio-economic development of the municipalities in the country. It was also aligned with the Strategy for Regional Development 2021-2031 and the Program for Sustainable Local Development and Decentralization 2021-2026, whereby it was made more gender sensitive by improving the gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data collection.

UNDP supported 34 municipalities to improve planning and implementation of development projects. Citizens from 55 local governments (out of 81 in the country) benefited from innovative digital solutions enabling inclusive and evidence-based policymaking and advanced service delivery. In parallel, 7 municipalities were supported to improve cooperation with CSO's and outsource delivery of services. Over 130 municipal administration representatives and councillors increased their knowledge on gender responsive budgeting, gender statistics and gender indicators through training sessions organized by the Association of the Units of Local Self-Government (ZELS).

UNFPA supported the implementation of the SSO Census communication strategy, which have positively influenced on the process of collection of disaggregated quantitative and quality data during the 2021 Census. Also, SSO analytical and reporting capacities were stepped up in relation to SDGs indicators, especially SDG indicator 5.1.1. by including sex-disaggregated indicators, as well as a portion of the Washington group of questions for self-assessment of disability in data gathering. UNFPA continued providing data and analytical research on the socio-economic impact of COVID19 on children, women, victims of violence, and other vulnerable groups.

UN Women supported the Government in transposing the EU Gender Equality acquis. Working closely with the SEA, a joint and structured approach and expertise led to improved gender mainstreaming in EU integration processes. Concrete gender expertise in the EU pre-accession dialogue was provided, by mainstreaming gender perspective throughout 15 strategic responses of the country. UN Women-supported analysis of the past 10 editions of the **statistical** publication "Women and Men in the Republic of Macedonia/North Macedonia", provides a clear overview of the progress achieved in measures undertaken to improve gender equality and women's empowerment in the period 2008-2020. It offers recommendations on how to make SSO publication better align with SDG indicator 5.1.1 and gender and sex-disaggregated indicators in multiple areas.

The **UNDP-sponsored "Analysis of Cases of Femicides in North Macedonia 2017-2020"** revealed a high number of women victims, calling responsible authorities to take decisive, multi-sectoral and comprehensive action. More than 1,000 users have downloaded the 'BE SAFE' mobile application. The application, along with social media and outreach campaigns in rural areas, improved awareness and access to GBV services. As digitalization provides wider outreach, efforts were made to extend the outreach to rural areas and all demographic groups of women via social media campaign.

UNICEF supported the process of formulation of a National Strategy on Justice for Children, proposing a comprehensive and pragmatic program of activities to gradually achieve a positive change for children in contact or conflict with the law. To further strengthen the capacities of the State Council for Prevention of Child Delinquency, an assessment was conducted, defining the areas for professional development. Strong emphasis was also put on child participation in the creation of solutions for access to justice. 60 children were selected to be part of the programme, thus becoming advocates for justice for children and youth. UNICEF supported 2021 Update of the study on social and economic effects of COVID-19 on children, where it is estimated that relative child poverty will increase from 27.8% before the pandemic to 32.4%,

putting additional 19,000 children at risk. Disruptions to social protection and education services and decreased demand for health services are putting children at further risk as the pandemic lingers.

IOM, UNHCR and UNFPA, in close partnership with key national stakeholders, commenced a new joint programme aiming to strengthen capacities and systems for innovative and anticipatory governance in the area of migration management. The mapping of key national stakeholders was completed, and 8 interview meetings were conducted with national institutions, UN agencies and NGOs represented in the Intergovernmental body for the development and implementation of the Migration policy 2021-2025, which was adopted in December 2021. Under another component of the joint programme, which aims at improved systemic data collection and analysis, a concept note was developed providing landscape analysis of remittances. This analysis provides insights and policy guidance on both migration measurement and remittance accounting. The specific focus on the flows, volumes, transfer mechanisms and use of remittances underlines many advantages in terms of policy design that can provide a more complete utilization of their economic and social potential. The work on remittances' flows through informal channels resulted with a survey methodology and survey instruments. In one month, 4 campaign videos on social media have reached more than 740.000 views or 450.000 persons which is almost 45 times more than the set target, and presentation the campaign in national media across the country.

OUTPUT 4.4. SOCIAL COHESION

Throughout 2021, greater societal cohesion and positive public attitudes towards vulnerable and excluded groups were promoted through advocacy, communication strategies, outreach and efforts for inclusion and integration of people left furthest behind, including women, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, stateless people and certain ethnic minorities.

One important tool to help transform the narrative in the society is the **Communications Strategy for Social Change, produced by UNHCR** with experts from the University of Kentucky. To help move the Strategy forward, UNHCR established an Advisory Body consisted of representatives from different sectors of the society, as well as a Communicators Hub, a group of communicators from across the board with the aim of mutual capacity building and joint action for social change.

The Communications Strategy for Social Change identifies key messages and tools aimed at changing behaviours and foster positive view on refugees and migrants as development actors. Implemented with different partners, notably the Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, it enabled training of 161 officials, civil society representatives, journalists (61% women). A campaign to foster positive sentiments towards refugees, migrants and stateless persons was organized under the slogan "Not hate – build an attitude". **The campaign, together with other initiatives such as the Skopje Jazz Festival, the Journalist award, the Media Festival Skopje, reached 555,173 persons throughout 2021.**

UN Women amplified the advocacy for empowerment, participation and equal opportunities of women, especially those most vulnerable. The partnership with 16 municipalities resulted in 36 policy measures that provide gender-, age- and disability- sensitive services in health, social protection, public transport as well as gender-

based violence. With UN support, over 3,300 women were directly involved in outreach and awareness raising carried out by CSOs and women's grassroot organizations and 128 women strengthened their local advocacy and leadership skills. These activities resulted in 216 policy measures proposed by women to 13 municipalities. (<https://bit.ly/3f3cVhx>) and visuals of women's priorities submitted to the municipalities (<https://bit.ly/3t9yhST>) within the campaign "Be Loud and Clear".

UNDP support resulted in digital innovative solutions that increased transparency and accountability of local government. These innovative solutions enabled a greater utilization of the inter-municipal cooperation as an effective alternative service delivery mechanism during COVID 19, which won the 3rd place at the Global Summit on Open Government Partnership (OGP) for impact on improving people's lives and quality of democracy. Special media grants enabled 140 TV forums to serve as mechanism for direct citizens participation in the decision making in municipalities. The Local Democracy Methodology was adopted by 4 new municipalities. 44 civil servants were selected to take part in the second phase of the ReLOaD project. 41 UNDP active engagement and newly designed model of project-based funding from local government budgets boosted the agency of civil society, youth and women at local level.

OUTPUT 4.5 ASSET RECOVERY AND COUNTERING CORRUPTION

In response to the Government top priority to fight corruption and ensure assets recovery, **UNODC** supported the development of key documents – **Assets Recovery Strategy and Anti-Corruption and Illicit Finance Roadmap**, covering the entire Western Balkan region.

UNDP continued to support a cross-border cooperation and integrated approach **in countering illegal small arms possession and trafficking between North Macedonia and Kosovo**. A special software and equipment enabled the Ministry of Interior to improve data sharing regarding incidents and events involving firearms, along with a specialized system support staff training. 60 police officers scaled up their skills on how to gather, analyse and streamline information and processes in both jurisdictions, which led to improved data exchange, effectiveness of joint investigation teams, and seizure of small arms and light weapons. A promotional video to raise awareness of the public was produced and aired.

[4] Acronyms & abbreviations

BOS	Business Operations Strategy	NEET	Youth Not in Education, Employment or Training
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy	NES	National Employment Strategy
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	OG	SDCF Outcome group
CSA	Climate-smart agriculture	OPDs	Organizations of persons with disabilities
DV	Domestic violence	PAs	Protected areas
eNDC	Enhanced nationally determined contribution	PMT	UN Programme Management Team
EPR	Environmental Performance Review	PSD	Partnership for Sustainable Development
ESA	Employment Support Agency	PWD	Person with disabilities
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
GHG	Greenhouse gas	SDCF	Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
GRB	Gender-responsive budgeting	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence	SEEU	South-East European University
HFCFs	Ozone depleting substances	SEL	Social and emotional learning
HDI	Human Development Index	SSO	State Statistical Office
HORECA	Hotels, restaurants, and cafes	UN	United Nations
HOTAM	Association of employers in hotel and catering	UNCT	United Nations Country Team
ICF	International classification of Functioning, Disability and Health	VET	Vocational education and training
ILS	International Labour Standards	WAV	Violence against women
JSC	Joint Government-UN SDCF Steering Committee		
MAFWE	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy		
MAP	Modified atmosphere packaging		
MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy		
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science		
MoEPP	Ministry of Environment and Physical Planing		
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification		
NDS	National Development Strategy		



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