## SECTORAL OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

## JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES

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|  | Programming years covered by the multiannual action | **2024-2027** |
| **CRITERIA FOR RELEVANCE ASSESSMENT** | IPA III Window and thematic priorit(y)/(ies) | **WINDOW 4: COMPETITIVENESS AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH*****Thematic Priority 1:* Education, employment, social protection and inclusion policies, and health** |
| Links with specific policy instruments of the enlargement process | The proposed SOP is designed to support the legal and policy reforms relevant to the EU accession process, especially concerning the negotiations around **Chapter 19 on Employment and Social Policies, Chapter 23 on Judiciary and Fundamental Rights and Chapter 26 Education and Culture**. As such, the interventions included in the SOP aim to address the recommendations outlined in the **EC Country Report 2022** in the chapters above.The Enlargement Package recommendations for Chapter 19: Social Policy and Employment include continuing labour market activation measures, improving the State Labour Inspectorate's capacity for occupational safety and health, establishing a monitoring and evaluation system for social services, and improving bipartite social dialogue and collective agreements enforcement in the private sector. Decentralisation of social assistance and the deinstitutionalisation process are also recommended. Regarding **Chapter 22: Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments,** the recommendations suggest strengthening preparations for participation in the European Social Fund (ESF). This includes enhancing capacities within state bodies to ensure they are ready to manage the Fund effectively. Moreover, the reforms of economic governance and structural systems and their implementation will remain the primary means through which the EU and the country jointly identify reform priorities.The SOP actions are linked to the social cooperation established under the **Stabilisation and Association Agreement** and to the recommendations of the **Subcommittee on Innovation, Information Society and Social Policy** held on 28th April 2022, related to supporting the efforts of North Macedonia to develop its economic cooperation and support the efforts to complete the transition into a functioning market economy. More specifically, the interventions will address the medium-term priority for implementing a comprehensive strategy for promoting employment and reducing unemployment due to labour market reforms by involving all relevant actors. It will also materialise the intentions to upgrade job-search and careers advice services, provide backup measures, and promote local development to assist industrial and labour market restructuring. The separate projects will materialise the intentions related to respecting democratic principles and human rights. It will address close cooperation on a wide range of policy areas to help the development and growth potential of the country.The **Economic Reform Programme (ERP) 2023-2025** has defined the key challenges that entail necessary reforms to ensure inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the medium-term pace regarding: *-* strengthening human capital for inclusive development, - fostering a green transition, and - improving the competitiveness of domestic enterprises, their integration into global values chains and formalization of the economy. Among ERP measures defined is foreseen further development of the qualifications system, increasing labour market flexibility, strengthening the system for social inclusion of vulnerable categories of persons, financial support to Roma entrepreneurs and introducing mechanisms for formalizing informal work in sectors most likely to have undeclared work.The SOP areas of support are clearly linked with the **European Investment Plan (EIP) Europe for Western Balkan (WB)** whereas the vision of Europe for Western Balkan is set as a geostrategic priority of good governance for its sustainable economic growth and development. The investment flagships regarding investing in human capital will ensure reform priorities identified in the Economic Reform Programme (ERP) process and joint policy guidance in the areas of employment, and social protection and inclusion to be intervened in the SOP actions. Emphasis will be put on improving labour market participation, especially of young people (as further reinforced support of Youth Guarantee) and women, disadvantaged groups and minorities, in particular persons with disabilities and Roma. These investments also need to be made in an inclusive manner addressing those that are experiencing high poverty rates and low employment opportunities. The interventions will enhance the opportunities of employment, further education, an apprenticeship and/ or a traineeship, thereby also offering solutions and perspectives at labour market. Attention will also be given to capacity building of social partners and the development of social dialogue and collective bargaining, as well amicable settlements of disputes and local employment partnership. Reforms of social protection and inclusion systems, including social care services, will be a priority considering the human development in the country. Development of active inclusion strategies will be supported, especially regarding social economy. Thus, the SOP actions will tackle priorities of Flagship 10 Youth Guarantee and Flag Ship 9 Investing in the Competitiveness of the Private Sector.The **European Green Deal** identifies an important role should be played in helping Europe’s workforce to acquire the skills they need to transfer from declining sectors to growing sectors and to adapt to new processes, whereas the Skills Agenda and the Youth Guarantee will be updated to enhance employability in the green economy, as well of the vulnerable groups for their activation at labour market.This SOP is also in line with **EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III**, applying the standards of conducting and using updated gender analysis to inform decision-making, in particularly in the field inclusion of gendered indicators and needs assessment of women and members of other vulnerable groups, where applicable, in targeted sector. Activities will contribute to applying gender-sensitive and sex-disaggregated indicators and statistics in all mentioned fields.  |
| Contribution to the IPA III Programming Framework objectives | The Operational Programme is **fully coherent with the IPA III objectives under the IPA III Programming Framework, Window 4, Thematic Priority 1**: Education, employment, social protection and inclusion policies, and health, that aim to strengthen access to and quality of inclusive education, including vocational education and training, participation in Early Childhood Education and Care and lifelong learning opportunities at all levels. More specifically Operational Programme aims the following: * Ensure equal opportunities, access to the labour market, fair working conditions, social protection and inclusion.
* Enhance employment opportunities for youth.
* Build strong links to the education sector and in developing a broad range of active labour market measures, for increasing labour market participation and employment in particular for youth.
* Support the quality, effectiveness and labour market relevance of education, including vocational education, and training systems in order to provide people with skills adjusted to digitalisation, technological change, innovation and economic change.
* Support implementation of the Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport.

The intervention also meets the requirement in the IPA III Programming Framework that investments should always be associated with those institutional regulatory reforms undertaken in the context of the alignment with the EU *acquis* and standards, and likely to ensure long-lasting and sustainable social and economic returns.  |
| Links with national, regional and global strategies | The proposed SOP is in line with the following global, regional, and national strategies:* The objectives of **United Nation’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, more specifically, the SOP contributes to the following:

**SDG 1.** *End poverty in all its forms everywhere*, in particular target 1.3: implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.**SDG 4.** *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all,* in particular targets 4.1: to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes; target 4.2: ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education; and 4.3: ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university. **SDG 5.** *Envisions social protection and economic stimulus packages to be created in order to serve women and girls, as well as to ensure people support and practise equal sharing of care work.***SDG 8.** *Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all* in particular targets 8.5: achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value by 2030 and target 8.6: substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training. **SDG 17.** envisions strengthening the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.Overall, the Action will contribute towards compliance with the international law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights; International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Convention of the Rights of a Child; Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and ILO Decent Work Agenda.* The **European Pillar of Social Rights** under several chapters and relevant principles for fair, inclusive and full of opportunities:
* Chapter I of a document addresses the principles of equal opportunities and access to the labor market, including active support for employment. It states that young people have the right to education, apprenticeship, traineeship, or a job offer within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education. The chapter also addresses the principles of education, training, and lifelong learning; gender equality; and equal opportunities for all, regardless of gender, race, religion, disability, age, or sexual orientation. These principles aim to ensure that individuals can participate fully in society and manage successful transitions in the labor market, while also fostering equality and equal treatment for all.
* Chapter II Fair working conditions, i.e., the principles 5. Secure and adaptable employment (entrepreneurship and self-employment, transition towards open-ended forms of employment and innovative forms of work shall be forced) and 8. Social dialogue and involvement of workers (Social partners shall be further strengthened on the design and implementation of economic, employment and social policies according to national practices through support for their capacity to promote social dialogue at all levels).
* Chapter III of a document addresses the principles of social protection and inclusion. It includes the right to affordable and quality early childhood education and care, as well as specific measures to enhance equal opportunities for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The chapter also addresses the right to adequate social protection, services that enable people with disabilities to participate in society and the labor market, affordable and quality long-term care services, and access to essential services of good quality such as water, sanitation, energy, transport, financial services, and digital communications. These principles aim to ensure that all individuals have access to essential services and social protection, regardless of their background or circumstances.
* The **European Pillar of Social Rights and Action Plan 2030** turns the principles into concrete actions to benefit citizens with the headline targets set for the EU to reach by 2030. The SOP action will also ensure a shared responsibility for the institutions, national, regional and local authorities, social partners and civil society, to apply the principles.
* The **Commission Recommendation to Effective Active Support to Employment (EASE)** following the Covid-19 crisis defines in view of the labour market challenges resulting from this pandemic, as well on-going transition from declining sectors to economic activities that have higher growth potential and strategic value in the context of green and digital transitions and demographic change, it shall be promoted a job-rich recovery by encouraging skills development and supporting people in their transition to new quality jobs.
* The **EU Reinforced Youth Guarantee** and its **Youth Employment Support** package defines strategic commitment to ensure that all **young people under the age of 30**receive a good quality offer of employment**, c**ontinued education, apprenticeship, and traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education.
* The **European Skills Agenda** as a five-year plan, defines guidelines on the 12 flagship actions to help individuals and businesses develop more and better skills and to put them to use, by strengthening sustainable competitiveness, ensuring social fairness, and building resilience to react on crises.
* The EU in its newly adopted **Social Economy Action Plan** puts forward concrete measures to help mobilize the full potential of the social economy in order further building of social business initiatives and start-up and scale-up initiatives. In this regard, improving the right framework conditions for the social economy, including improved access to finance and markets are key aspects.
* The EU considers that the [**role of social partners in** **the design and** **implementation of policies** **and reforms**](https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet%3FdocId%3D16464%26langId%3Den%26sa%3DU%26ved%3D2ahUKEwjK1uHBr_31AhWxy4sBHX9WD2YQFnoECAkQAg%26usg%3DAOvVaw38EzLTx8PeU3TfzJ6sI212)is a key component of the European social market economy. Socialdialogue should promote agreements and policy measures that strike a balance between the interests of workers and employers, creating win-win solutions, at national and local level.Therefore, the practical modalities of social dialogue are verydiverse which could be organized at the level of an establishment, a company,a given sector, and/ or across industries, as well in a specific region, at national and local level.
* The **Action is in line with EU Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care** and its several quality statements related to:
* Provision that encourages participation, strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity.
* Well-qualified staff with initial and continuing training that enables them to fulfil their professional role.
* Supportive working conditions including professional leadership which creates opportunities for observation, reflection, planning, teamwork and cooperation with parents.
* Monitoring and evaluating produces information at the relevant local, regional and/ or national level to support continuing improvements in the quality of policy and practice.
* Monitoring and evaluation which is in the best interest of the child.
* Stakeholders have a clear and shared understanding of their role and responsibilities and know that they are expected to collaborate with partner organisations.

The Action proposed will address the above-mentioned ECEC quality statements to more effectively deliver on EU commitments.* **EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation 2020-20230** addresses a need to renew and step up the commitment to Roma equality, inclusion, and participation at both European and national levels. A strengthened commitment is notified as necessary to improve inclusion of Roma people in education, employment, health, and housing, as well to tackle persistent discrimination (antigypsyism). At the same time, an acknowledgement should be given to the diversity and needs of specific groups within the Roma population.
* The SOP is also linked to the **European Convention of Human Rights** and **European Social Charter of the Council of Europe**.
* The **National Employment Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2027** and its **Employment Action Plan 2021-2027**, which sets three specific employment objectives: 1. Improve the quality of education and training outcomes for all, 2. Enhance the role of economic and enterprise development policies in generating decent jobs, and 3. Strengthen the inclusiveness of labour market policies. SOP will support policy interventions planned in regard to enhancing service and programme lines targeted to the needs of groups at risk in the labour market (youth, women, low-skilled individuals, long-term unemployed, persons with disabilities, national minorities, etc.) and strengthening social dialogue as a means to bridge the social policy gap. As well, SOP will support ESA in expanding the quantity and quality of employment services and programmes − including the recruitment of additional front-office and specialized staff, the upgrading of physical infrastructure and its IT system, and the allocation of additional financial resources for the implementation of labour market integration programmes.
* The New **Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP) 2023-2026** envisions implementation of Reinforces YG throughout the country aimed at all young people in the age group of 15 to 29 who are legally residing in North Macedonia and are NEET. It will allow for policy reforms to yield their effect, prepare the groundwork for more forward-looking policy interventions (on reconciliation of work and family life and outreach activities) and consolidate YG service delivery outcomes.
* The comprehensive **Education Strategy 2018-2025** envisages comprehensive reform of the education and training system at all levels, including vocational education and training (VET), non-formal/informal education and adult education. All its reforms are essential for improving the educational outcomes for young people. Five policy interventions have been slightly accelerated in the period 2020-2022 as a contribution for full implementation of the Youth Guarantee.
* The **National Strategy for Development of Social Enterprises in the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2027 and its Action Plan 2021-2023** envisions creation of appropriate legal, financial, and institutional framework for development and functioning of social economy entities. Among its several strategic priorities for favourable eco-system for social economy foresee providing access to and developing market opportunities for social enterprises and facilitating access to external finances.
* The **Strategy for Development of Women’s Entrepreneurship 2019-2023** focuses on economic empowerment of women and building entrepreneurial eco-system for continuous development of female entrepreneurship.
* The **National Programme for Development of Social Protection 2022-2032** prioritizes development of sustainable, adaptive, and efficient social protection system based on application of and lead by the needs of beneficiaries for their strengthening and capability of independent, productive and active life. Overall, its strategic priorities are linked to further implementation of social reform.
* **The National Strategy for Deinstitutionalisation “Timjanik” 2018-2027** focuses on the advanced implementation of the transition from institutional care towards a system of social care in the family and community supported by social services
* The **National Strategy for Roma Inclusion 2022-2030** identifies promotion and development of the socio-economic, legal position, cultural and linguistic rights of the Roma in the Republic of North Macedonia by ensuring adequate and equitable access to public goods and services, where the Roma community participates equally in building an inclusive society based on elimination against all forms of discrimination, anti-Roma sentiment and poverty. Some of its strategic objectives define:
	+ Increasing the employment rate of Roma by widening the scope of active employment measures and services, creating an enabling environment for formalization and stimulation of entrepreneurship in the Roma community and reducing the rate of young Roma in NEET.
	+ Providing permanent, dignified, and non-segregated housing for Roma; and
	+ Increasing the coverage of Roma children and improving their success in all spheres of education.
* The **Strategy for Gender Equality 2022-2027**, aiming at accomplishing gender equality in society in which women and men, girls and boys have equal rights, access to resources, opportunities, and protection in all spheres of life, as a condition for complete and sustainable economic, demographic, and social development and progress of the country, i.e., a society in which women and men will have same privileges and responsibilities accomplished in real joint partnership.
* The **National Plan for the Adoption of the Acquis 2021-2025** defines the major short, medium and long priorities and objectives with the incorporated reforms in regard to to policy criteria in each of six clusters and related NPAA chapters. Most of them will be addressed through specific activities designed in the areas of employment and social policies to ensure adjustment and approximation of national institutions towards the European administrative structures.
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| Coherence with the Sector Approach | The SOP falls under the Sector Working Group (SWG) on Education, Employment and Social Policy (EESP). North Macedonia has made good progress in introducing the **Sector Approach**. Key strategy documents, especially those developed after 2017, use a rich data collection and measure success with SMART indicators. They are developed through a participatory process and benefit from the participation of relevant stakeholders, including civil society organisations and international donors. Authorities, donors, and civil society can discuss general and specific strategic directions and thus increase the compliance of the strategies with international and EU standards. The SWG is supported technically by the line ministry (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) and guided methodologically by the Secretariat for European Affairs. The SWG work in two formats: technical, involving the experts from the participating organisations, and decision-making, involving the heads of the participating bodies. The SWG has the mandate to lead the sector policy dialogue, which includes the definition of sector priorities and the reporting on their implementation. As of 2020, the country put in place a **Performance Assessment Framework** (PAF), streamlining the policy objectives; based on a set of impact and outcome indicators, targets, and baseline data. The indicators formulated and agreed upon for this window provide a robust system for measuring compliance with the evidence-based approach to policy making. The PAF is available under <https://pafnorthmacedonia.mk/PAF/>.The SOP Actions contribute to meeting a list of several key impact indicators of the Performance Assessment Framework (PAF):* Employment Rate (15+): total, men, women.
* Employment rate (20-64): total, men, women.
* Youth Employment Rate (15-29): total, men, women.
* Employment rate of recent graduates (20-34) (male and female).
* Unemployment rate (15 – 74 years): total, men, women.
* Youth Unemployment Rate (15-29): total, men, women.
* Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and labour status (NEET rate 15-29, 15-24 and 25-29).
* Coverage of young persons with active labour market programmes and measures and employment services.
* Long-term Unemployment Rate: total, men, women.
* Activity rate: total, men, women.
* Public budget for Active Employment Policies.
* Roma people involved in labour market services and active employment programmes.
* Expenditures on all types of social protection expenditure as a share of GDP.
* At-the-risk poverty rate (after social transfers).
* At-the-risk poverty rate (after social transfers and before pensions) (% of population).
* At-the-risk poverty rate (after social transfers, except pensions).
* People aged 0-59 living in households with very low work intensity.
* Enrolment rate of children in pre-school education and care.
* Pre-school staff / children ratio.
* Share of Roma children in the total number of children enrolled in preschool and care.

The **institutional set-up** is supportive to on-going and planned sector reforms with clear responsibilities allocated to the relevant national authorities.The sector **policy budgeting** has experiment relevant improvements. North Macedonia benefit from a medium-term expenditure framework to anchor the costs for the major reforms and ensure their credibility. The country adopted the Organic Law in September 2021. It introduces a new set of fiscal rules to guide fiscal consolidation and improve the budget process. Key reforms include medium-term projection, spanning both medium-term budgeting and a five-year fiscal strategy, as well as establishing a Fiscal Council, and independent body assessing fiscal policy.The budget for policies in the areas of employment and labour market, equal opportunities and social protection, and Roma integration, has been increasing reflecting the state commitment to the established sector priorities and ongoing reforms. |
| Coherence with other IPA III programmes  | The activities envisioned in the IPA III SOP “EU for Jobs and Opportunities” will aim to raising the employment level through qualitative jobs and opportunities of all stakeholders at labour market. Specifically, the actions will ensure more comprehensive access to labour market for vulnerable groups through enhanced social inclusion activities. The actions designed will contribute to the achievement of the specific objectives of the interventions foreseen in the **IPA III 2021-2027 Strategic Response** for North Macedonia **under Window 4, Thematic Priority 1:** Education, employment, social protection and inclusion policies, and health.**Objective 1.1: To raise the employment level and the quality of jobs, and productivity**Areas of intervention:* Develop and broaden employment services to provide better job search assistance and targeted career guidance and counselling, to young people.
* Reinforce Youth Guarantee and enhance the implementation of all its building blocks ranging from early intervention to dedicated labour market integration measures and services, especially those that equip young people with digital skills, but also entrepreneurial and career management skills, to strengthening the capacity of the Employment Service Agency to reach out to greater numbers of young people, provide more individualised support and optimise service provision.
* Sophisticate the active labour measures and develop/implement targeted programmes and measures, including initiatives to address skills mismatches in the labour market, for bringing women, youth, persons with disabilities, long-term unemployed, low-skilled persons, persons from minority background and other individuals in vulnerable situation (e.g., those engaged in precarious employment) into economic activity and decent work.
* Provide access to finance and advice for self-employment, small- and medium enterprises and for social enterprises for job creation.
* Promote employability, productivity and adaptation of workers and enterprises to changes.
* Strengthen labour market institutions and governance with special attention to develop comprehensive monitoring and impact assessment of the active labour market policies, as well upgrade of the skills anticipation intelligence to address skills mismatches and adapt the education/training offers to the needs of the labour market.
* Enhance social dialogue, consultation of social partners and civil society organisations and strengthen their capacities to guarantee inclusive reforms for employment and social policies and social insurance.

**Objective 1.2: To reduce poverty and social exclusion**Areas of intervention:* Complete the reform of the social protection system and improve its child sensitivity.
* Invest in stronger person- and child-centred social services, in particular, community-based services.
* Investments in tangible improvements in housing and infrastructure in poor quarters.
* improve the legal, health and social services in the poor quarters and communities living in remote or less economically developed regions and peripheral rural areas.
* Stimulate social innovations, social entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial opportunities yielded by the social economy, such as activating vulnerable groups or helping local communities.
* Strengthen gender equality and anti-discrimination policies and practices.

**Objective 1.3: To ensure comprehensive, inclusive, integrated and digital modern education** Areas of intervention:* Invest in and improve the quality and inclusiveness of the different phases of education, from early childhood development, through to primary, secondary and tertiary education.
* Support access to the labour market and support the quality, effectiveness and labour market relevance of education, including vocational education, entrepreneurial learning, comprehensive Life-Long Learning (LLL) and training systems, in order to provide people with skills adjusted to digitalisation, technological change, innovation and economic change.

The **IPA III 2024-2027 SOP "EU for Jobs and Opportunities in North Macedonia"** complements the actions and projects financed under IPA II (for programming years 2017, 2019, and 2020) and IPA III (for programming years 2022 and 2023) in the sectors of education, employment, and social policy, as well as fundamental rights. It also complements the actions funded under the IPA II and IPA III Multi-Beneficiary Programmes, including WBIF.The actions supported by IPA II and IPA III have been critical in accelerating reforms in the related areas and providing essential support for implementing some national strategies.Building on the lessons learned from previous programmes and projects implemented in North Macedonia, the IPA III 2024-2027 SOP emphasises the importance of ensuring coherence with different complementary activities. It aims to build on the achievements of previous actions and ensure their continuation in accomplishing national and EU objectives and priorities. Overall, the steps will further improve and align IPA III development assistance with the EU Enlargement Strategy and the country's focus on EU accession.Furthermore, the SOP ensures complementarity and avoids double funding through donor coordination established within the SWG dialogue. To this end, the MLSP has initiated gathering relevant information on donor-funded projects by selecting the EESP online platform for employment and social policy, equal opportunities, and Roma integration. |
| Indicative budget (in EUR) |

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| **Programming Year** | **Indicative Budget in EUR**  |
| **Total Budget in EUR** | **EU/ IPA Contribution in EUR** | **National Co-financing or Third Party Contribution in EUR** |
| **2024** | 7 059 140 | 6 000 000 | 1 059 140 |
| **2025** | 11 412 081 | 9 700 000 | 1 712 081 |
| **2026** | 14 353 258 | 12 200 000 | 2 153 258 |
| **2027** | 14 235 521 | 12 100 000 | 2 135 521 |
| **TOTAL in EUR:** | **47 060 000** | **40 000 000** | **7 060 000** |

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| Indicative list of areas of support under the operational programme | **(1) Implementation of Reinforced Youth Guarantee**This area of support will be instrumental to the implementation of the new Youth Guarantee (YG) Implementation plan 2023-2026 and introducing quality improvements an all phases of YG.Non-exhaustive list of activities: * **Stronger outreach** through
* information campaigns and awareness raising measures to attract young people towards available services and raise their understanding on labour rights and benefits. Mainstreaming information through ESA job fairs, Youth Centres' activities.
* individualized services to identify, contact and engage inactive or disengaged young people and support services delivered in proximity (e.g., in local communities, schools, malls, public events, one-stop-shops, or mobile settings). This involves revisiting the outreach approach, steps and practicalities of the outreach and in particular implementation of dedicated service line for young people offering support for labour market inclusion (psychological assistance, intensive counselling and guidance, referral to quality offers, trainings for soft skills).
* Building the capacity of youth workers for further development and implementation of a common outreach methodology.

(b) **Preparation and implementation of services and quality offer to** expand the portfolio of good quality offer of employment, continued education, traineeship, or apprenticeship within a period of four months. This will involve * adjustment of the ESA structure and of the individualized service delivery system.
* Implementing active labour market measures.
* Establishing specialized services for employers, including through partnerships with private employment agencies (online platforms catering to the needs of large employers).
* Outsourcing short employability training courses (basic IT literacy, languages, and business development) and employment services in the YG preparatory phase, as needed.

(c) **Strengthening YG Monitoring System** * Setting up of a common monitoring framework and development of an online registration module for the referral of outreach beneficiaries to the ESA-managed YG service delivery system.
* Upgrading the service delivery model of the Agency, including its IT system with data-based profiling and individual employment planning to manage service and programme delivery according to individual needs.
* Strengthening the capacities of ESA by delivery of specialized trainings for ESA staff.
* Implementation of ESCO classification of European Skills, Competences and Occupations.

**(2) Boosting social and micro-enterprises development and (self)employment among vulnerable groups**This area of support will further enhance the social economy ecosystem as foreseen in the National Strategy 2021-2027 for development of social enterprises adopted in 2021 and the Law on Social enterprises (in preparation). Special attention will be paid to supporting the employment, rehabilitation and work integration of persons at social risk, including of persons with disabilities. Non-exhaustive list of activities: * Development and functioning of social enterprises particularly those focused on social inclusion and work integration of people in social risk and social exclusion employed in social enterprise.
* Co-financing implementation of the Annual National Programme for support and development of social enterprises.
* Further enhancing the capacities and financial instruments of the institutional and non-institution providers for easier access to external finance for social and micro-enterprise.
* Support and development of access to and development markets for social enterprises.
* Further enhancing the ecosystem for supporting the SE development as well supporting the Centre for support of social enterprises in provision of information and support services for social enterprises.
* Digitalization of the process and procedures for more efficient implementation of the legislation for social enterprises, as well process for data collection, monitoring, analysis, measuring, reporting and evaluation of social impact, transparency for better development and implementation of sectoral policies and programmes for support development of social entrepreneurship.
* Stimulating self-employment and job creation by micro-enterprises and social enterprises, by additionally contributing to reducing the undeclared work.
* Develop/ implement targeted services, programmes and measures, including initiatives to address skills mismatches in the labour market, for bringing women, persons with disabilities, long-term unemployed, low-skilled persons, persons from minority background and other individuals in vulnerable situation (e.g., those engaged in precarious employment) into economic activity and decent work.

**(3) Social Dialogue and Local Employment Partnerships**Social dialogue plays a crucial role in promoting competitiveness, advancing equality and enhancing economic prosperity. As such, social dialogue is an essential element of the European social model and the EU acquis under chapter 19. Indicative activities include support for:* Further empowerment of employers and employees for qualitative functioning of Economic and Social Council (ESC), through capacity building of their analytical knowledge and skills and digitalization of the ESC operation.
* Effective collective barging and implementation of collective agreements in certain sectors.
* Better unionisation among workers in trade unions and improved collaboration among employers in employers’ organisations, and above all, their improved collaboration and improved “voice” for important socio-economic issues in national context.
* Enhanced implementation of amicable labour disputes, with prior amending of relevant legislation.
* Establishment and functioning local employment partnerships throughout the country, with involvement of local employment centres, municipalities, local branches of trade unions, employers’ organisations, civil society organisations, etc.
* Promotion of human resources development in enterprises in order to increase adaptability of workers and strengthen competitiveness of the employers.

**(4) Support for high-quality, affordable and accessible care services**This area of support will invest in increasing the offer and mix of social care and in closing the territorial gaps in the access to quality care services. The interventions will further support the reforms in social protection, including deinstitutionalisation and early childhood education and care.Non-exhaustive list of activities: * Social care and deinstitutionalisation.
* Transformation of residential institutions for children and youth into modern community-based services.
* Transformation of Public Institute for Protection and Rehabilitation in Banja Bansko for provision of social services in the community.
* Developing new and enhancing the established social services at local level, across the country.
* Supporting the decentralization of social protection at regional and local level.
* Improving the quality standards for service providers.
* Promoting fair working conditions and attractiveness of the care sector.
* Early childhood and care.
* Further improvement of access to and quality of pre-school education and care services in urban as well as rural or disadvantaged areas.
* Reinforcing the capacities of relevant institutions for planning, implementation, and monitoring the quality of early childhood education and care.
* Promoting inclusive practices in early childhood education and care.
* Implementing early intervention in child development in pre-school education and care (kindergartens and daily centres).

 **(5) Enhancing Roma Integration**Promotion of national-wide and locally set actions for Roma integration in order to enhance their inclusiveness, adaptability and employability will be supported. Non-exhaustive list of activities to implement the [National Strategy for Roma Inclusion 2022-2030](https://mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/2022/Strategy%20for%20inclusion%20of%20Roma%202022-2030%20final%20version.pdf) with a special focus on:* Social mapping.
* Investments in social housing, communal infrastructure and (re)construction of their dwellings.

**(6) Technical Assistance*** Capacity building of structures, assistance for projects’ preparation, staffing issues, preparation of ESA to become Intermediary body.
* Visibility and communication activities to ensure the SOP is communicate effectively to all stakeholders and that the benefits of the programme are widely understood.

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| **Area of Support** | **Indicative Budget in EUR**  |
| **Total Budget in EUR** | **EU/ IPA Contribution in EUR** | **National Co-financing or Third-Party Contribution in EUR** |
| **Area of support 1**  | 22 000 000 | 18 700 000 | 3 300 000 |
| **Area of support 2**  | 6 000 000 | 5 100 000 | 900 000 |
| **Area of support 3**  | 2 500 000 | 2 125 000 | 375 000 |
| **Area of support 4**  | 8 000 000 | 6 800 000 | 1 200 000 |
| **Area of support 5**  | 5 500 000 | 4 675 000 | 825 000 |
| **Area of support 6** | 3 060 000 | 2 600 000 | 460 000 |
| **TOTAL in EUR:** | **47 060 000** | **40 000 000** | **7 060 000** |

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| Institutions involved in the management of the operational programme | The institutional framework for IMBC under IPA III SOP for sectors employment and social policy in North Macedonia pursuant to the FFPA is under discussion. It is anticipated that a thorough analysis of potential alternative institutional framework vis-à-vis areas of actions planned will be carried out, also considering the potential future institutional framework for Cohesion Policy.1. 1. NIPAC and its office,
2. 2. Management Structure (MS) (NAO Support Office and Accounting Body),
3. 3. Managing Authority (MA).

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) will be proposed to be entrusted the overall management of SOP as Managing Authority (MA).1. 4. Financial Management of the Programme (IBFM).

The Ministry of Finance (MF) / Central Financing and Contracting Department (CFCD) will be proposed to be entrusted to take full responsibilities for financial management of SOP as the Intermediary Body for Financial Management (IBFM).1. 5. IPA Audit Authority (IPA AA).
2. Once the institutional framework is agreed upon, the following indicative list of documents will be prepared as accreditation package before the NAO will ask for entrustment:
* Organigrammes of NIPAC Technical Secretariat, Management Structure, Managing Authority, IBFM and IPA AA.
* Decree on mutual relations between the structures for IPA III, including the IPA Audit Authority.
* Act of Systematizations/ Job descriptions of the NIPAC Technical Secretariat, the Management Structure, Managing Authority and IBFM.
* Operational Agreements and Bank Protocol.
* Elaboration of protocols to ensure IT security in all the structures involved in IMBC.
* Manuals of Procedures of NIPAC Technical Secretariat, Management Structure, Managing Authority, IBPM and IPA AA.
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