



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

# ESRP 2020

## Employment and Social Reform Programme

# FIRST ANNUAL REPORT 2017



# ESRP MONITORING

Skopje, June 2018





**GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**  
MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL POLICY

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**FISRT ANNUAL REPORT**

ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
**EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL REFORM**  
**PROGRAMME – ESRP 2020**

FOR THE YEAR 2017

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Skopje, June 2018



### Preparation of the "Employment and social reform programme 2020 (ESRP)"

The Republic of Macedonia, as a candidate country for EU membership, in close cooperation and coordination with the European Commission, in 2015 has launched the new strategic mechanism of the social and economic dialogue on the priorities and reforms in the field of labor market, employment, education and social policy.

Within the framework of this joint initiative between the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and the European Commission, the development of an important strategic document was initiated, the so-called **Employment and Social Reform Programme 2020 – ESRP (Employment and Social Reform Programme 2020)**. The preparation of the document, was envisaged by the European Commission as an inclusive and participatory strategic process that will follow and accompany the process of European integration of the candidate countries and which will further represent an important mechanism for mutual dialogue through setting and regular monitoring of priorities in the areas covered, and which will be structured following the model of the European Union Strategy "Europe 2020".

The process of preparation of the ESRP in the Republic of Macedonia has started in the beginning of 2015. Taking into account the necessity of a multi-sectoral approach and effective coordination and cooperation between the various entities, in February 2015, a special Inter-sectoral Working Group has been established for the preparation of the Employment and Social Reform Programme, composed of representatives from all relevant institutions participating in the creation, implementation and monitoring of the policies covered by the Program. The work of the Inter-sectoral Working Group and the overall process of preparation of the Program was coordinated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

The process of development of the ESRP was open, transparent and participatory, followed by a process of intensive consultations with a large number of relevant stakeholders who, in different ways and at different levels, participate in the creation, implementation and/or monitoring of policies in the areas covered by the Programme. During the preparation of the Program, consultations were held with the social partners, representatives of the civil society, representatives of relevant international organizations and development partners, professors and experts in the fields, which contributed to significantly increase the quality, relevance and representativeness of the document itself<sup>1</sup>. The development of the ESRP was also characterized by continuous consultations and cooperation with the representatives of the European Commission (DG EMPL) and the Delegation of the European Union in the Republic of Macedonia.

With the developing and adoption of the ESRP program, the Republic of Macedonia has joined the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro, who as candidate countries for accession to the European Union, in cooperation with the European Commission and within the ongoing process of membership negotiations, have also prepared this strategic document.

**„The Employment and Social Reform Programme 2020“ was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia in August 2017 (at the 19<sup>th</sup> GRM Session, held on August 3, 2017).**

### Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the ESRP Program and achieved progress

The framework, i.e. the mechanism for monitoring the progress in the implementation of the ESRP Program is determined and specified within the strategic document itself, consisting of previously established **Sectoral working group for the Sector "Education, employment and social policy"**. This working group was established by decision of the Government in July 2015, within the sectoral approach for policy coordination and implementation and in accordance with the IPA Regulation for the financial perspective 2014-2020.

Regarding the criteria for the sectoral approach and the necessity of the existence of relevant and credible sectoral policies, in cooperation with the European Commission and the CEU, it was decided that the "Employment and Social Reform Programme 2020" will represent the only coherent strategic framework for this Sector, because it unites the employment, education and social policies and it has clear priorities and longer-term goals for reforms in these areas.

By adopting the Program, the Government of Republic of Macedonia has also determined the obligation for continuous monitoring of the implementation of the ESRP Program and regular (annual) reporting on the implemented activities and the progress achieved. The process of monitoring and reporting is coordinated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

Immediately after the official adoption, the preparations have been initiated for the establishing the system and the process of monitoring the implementation of the ESRP Program.

For this purpose, according the decision of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, in August 2017, the necessary changes/amendments were made within the Rules of Procedure of the Working Group for the Sector "Education, employment and social policy", in order to adequately cover these (new) anticipated competencies of the Group related to the progress monitoring and evaluation and preparation and review of the ESRP 2020 implementation reports.

Within the strategic document **two main tools** are set out and defined, that will be used for monitoring the implementation of the planned measures and activities and assess the progress and results of the ESRP implementation. Those are:

- **The Matrix of indicators and targets** - used as the main framework for monitoring and reporting on the progress in the implementation of the Program and the achievement of set goals and targets;
- **The Matrix of objectives and measures** - which consists a detailed description of the planned reforms, goals and measures within the three priority areas covered by the ESRP Program. This matrix further provides a more detailed information on the scope of all planned measures, the type of specific activities that are planned to be implemented, the institutions and other entities responsible and/or involved in the implementation of the measures, planned deadlines for their implementation, planned budget and sources of funding.

As a result of this process and established mechanisms, this **First Annual Report on the implementation of the "Employment and Social Reform Programme – ESRP 2020" for 2017** has been prepared.

The Report is prepared on the basis of the information and contributions received from various institutions and entities, participating in the work of the Sector Working Group and that are responsible or are participating in the implementation of various planned measures and activities, as covered by the ESRP Program.

Although the ESRP Program was adopted in the middle of 2017 year, a period when the Republic of Macedonia was facing a quite serious political crisis and period in which the main priorities were directed primarily towards gradually overcoming the consequences of this crisis, however, as can also be seen and concluded from this Report for the year of 2017, even in this period and in these conditions, a significant progress has been achieved in respect to the commencement of the planned reforms and implementation of a number of measures and activities within the areas covered by the "Employment and Social Reform Program – ESRP 2020":

1. Labor market and employment
2. Human capital and skills and
3. Social Inclusion and Social Protection.

In addition, what follows within this Report, is the presentation of the

- *ESRP Matrix with indicators and targets, with updated values of the indicators;*
- *ESRP Matrix of objectives and measures, providing and presenting the relevant information and data for the implemented activities and achieved results, for each planned measure.*

**This First Annual Report on the Implementation of the "Employment and Social Reform Programme 2020" for the year of 2017 was reviewed and adopted by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia in July 2018 (at the 81<sup>st</sup> GRM Session, held on July 24, 2018).**





**ESRP Table of indicators and targets**

Indicator	Baseline		Report 2017		2018	...	Target 2020
	2014	2015	2016	2017			
<b>LABOR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT</b>							
Improvement of economic development and job creation							
<b>Number of active enterprises in the Republic of Macedonia<sup>1</sup></b>	70,659	70,139	71,519	71,419			80,000
<b>Business Environment – Index and ranking of R. Macedonia<sup>2</sup></b>		3.9 # 35	3.7 # 49	:			4.3 In the first 20
<b>Productivity - Index and ranking of R. Macedonia<sup>3</sup></b>		3.9 # 65	3.9 # 61	:			4.2 # 50
<b>Inflows of FDI (Foreign Direct Investments) in relation to the GDP (% of GDP)</b>	2.4	2.4	3.5	2.3			4.5
Improvement of the unemployment situation ... (young, long-term unemployed etc.)							
<b>Employment Rate (15+) (%)</b>	41.2	42.1	43.1	44.1			46.9
<b>Employment Rate (15+) - MEN (%)</b>	50.1	50.5	52.3	53.6			:
<b>Employment Rate (15+) - WOMEN (%)</b>	32.4	33.7	33.8	34.6			:
<b>Employment Rate (20 - 64) (%)</b>	51.3	51.9	53.3	54.8			:
<b>Employment Rate (20 - 64) - MEN (%)</b>	61.6	61.5	63.7	65.6			:
<b>Employment Rate (20 - 64) -WOMEN (%)</b>	40.8	42.1	42.5	43.7			:
<b>Unemployment rate (15+) (%)</b>	28.0	26.1	23.7	22.4			21.5
<b>Youth Employment Rate (15-29) (%)</b>	27.1	28.3	28.6	30.2			30.7
<b>Youth Unemployment Rate (15-29) (%)</b>	45.1	42.5	40.6	39.2			38.0
<b>Long-term Unemployment Rate (%)</b>	23.4	21.3	19.2	17.4			18.0
<b>Total number of persons involved in various labor market services and active employment programs and measures</b>			37,500	141,870 <sup>4</sup>			min. 40,000 annually
<b>Coverage of young persons (15-29) with programs, employment measures and services, within the annual Operational plans</b>				51,350 <sup>5</sup> (36.2%)			min. 30%
<b>All young persons registered for the first time in ESARM are being early profiled, i.e. during the first 6 months of their unemployment period</b>				✓ <sup>6</sup>			✓
<b>Percentage of registered employments of persons with disabilities in the open economy, as compared with the employments in the sheltered companies</b>		60%		65%			maintaining or improving the trend
Tackling informal employment							
<b>Participation/share of the informally employed in the total number of employed persons (%)</b>	22.6	19.9	18.5	18.1			18.0
<b>Developed and adopted tripartite National Strategy for Formalization of the Informal Economy</b>							✓ (2017)
Improving quality of work and services to the public employment service (PES)							
<b>Number of renovated/reconstructed regional employment centers with significantly improved work conditions</b>		12		12			30
<b>Opening of new dispersed offices of the regional employment services, ensuring easier access and use of the ESA services</b>		26		29			40
<b>Number of employees in the ESARM and number of staff included in the activities for strengthening their capacities (trainings, workshops, seminars, etc.). (number of employees)</b>		502		472 <sup>7</sup>			min. 550 each employee, at least once per year, is included in a training/seminar
<b>Number of unemployed individuals for whom Individual Employment Plan 2 (IEP-2) is made</b>				4,069			40,000 persons – IEP 2 at least 60% of these individuals to be included in some of the active empl. measures and services within the 12 months period
<b>Number of employment mediation requests to the ESA by the employers</b>		4,655 requests 3,348 (72%) positive resolved		4,174 2,685 (64%)			increase of 15% (6,000 annually) of the number of mediation requests (with the majority to be successfully resolved)
Strengthening social dialogue at tripartite and bipartite level ...							
<b>Trade Union Density Rate (%)</b>		22 <sup>8</sup>		21.16 <sup>9</sup>			>26
<b>Collective Bargaining Coverage Rate on branch, i.e. section level (%)</b>		32.48 <sup>10</sup>		32.68 <sup>11</sup>			36
<b>Number of collective agreements at the level of employer</b>		65	77	85			80-85
<b>Prepared National Decent Work Programme, for the period following 2018</b>		/		/			✓ (2018)
<b>Rate of successfully resolved collective labor disputes through the mechanism of peaceful settlement of labor disputes</b>		60%	60%	60% <sup>12</sup>			maintaining a minimal rate of 70-75%
<b>Established and functional mechanism for monitoring the recommendations of ESC / regular monitoring of the number of opinions/recommendations submitted to the Government of RM</b>		10 opinions / recommend.	3	7			✓

HUMAN CAPITAL AND SKILLS						
Rate of early school leavers <sup>13</sup> (%)	12.5	11.4	9.9	8.5		10.5
Share of persons at the age of 30-34 which have completed tertiary education <sup>14</sup> (%)		28.6	29.1	30.6		32.0
Participation of students in the secondary schools in the VET system (%)		58.78	59.29	:		> 60
Participation in life-long learning <sup>15</sup> (%)	3.1	2.5	2.8	2.2		> 5.5
Employment rate of recent graduates (age 20-34) <sup>16</sup> (%)		48.0	46.9	50.0		60
Rate of pupils with special needs included in the regular (mainstreamed) primary education <sup>17</sup> (%)		62	56.8	62.2		70
Number of established Sectoral Commissions for Qualifications (for development and quality assurance of qualifications in certain sectors)				5 <sup>18</sup>		8 Sectoral Commissions for Qualifications
Established and functional Skills Observatory (for forecasting skills needs at the labor market)				:		✓ (2020)
Functional Qualifications Register (for overview and transparency of the qualifications)				✓		✓ (2020)
SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION						
Poverty rate <sup>19</sup> (%)	22.1	21.5	21.9	:		19.0
Number of established Social services centers and Local social protection councils		3		8		10 (established CSS and local SCP in 10 municipalities)
Revised and updated National Strategy for Deinstitutionalization in the Social Protection System				/		✓ (2018)
Number of persons accommodated in the established services/housing units for independent living with support and small group homes, within the framework of the deinstitutionalization process		93 <sup>20</sup> beneficiaries		95 <sup>21</sup>		around 150 accommodated beneficiaries <sup>22</sup>
Development of the Social Entrepreneurship: - adopted Law on Social Entrepreneurship - number of registered social enterprises - number of people belonging to vulnerable categories engaged in the social enterprises		/		/ <sup>23</sup>		- year 2017 - 30 (2020) - 200 (2020)
Increased coverage and access of beneficiaries from various vulnerable categories to non-institutional (alternative) forms and services of community care (day care centers, foster families, shelter centers, centers for providing services, intervention centers, etc.)		approx. 1,750 <sup>24</sup> beneficiaries		1,952		around 2,270 beneficiary./coverage (increase of 30%)
Increased capacity in institutions for elderly people - number of homes for elderly [public / private] - bed capacity [in public / private]		22 [5/17] 1,167[624/543]		30 [5/25] 1,471[624/847]		35 1,500 (30% increase)
Improving the social inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Macedonia						
Participation of Roma in the labor market services and active employment programs and measures	100 annually			735 <sup>25</sup> (in active empl. programs and measures) 4,955 (in services)		min 350 annually (at least 1,400 until 2020 of which 30% women and young)
Participation of Roma in the total number of registered unemployed persons in the ESARM (%)		5.5 <sup>26</sup>		6.0		4.5
Participation of Roma children (0-6) in the preschool education <sup>27</sup>		840 <sup>28</sup>	886	:		1,000 – 1,200 in school year
Percentage of Roma pupils successfully completing primary education (%)	75		78			increase of min. 10%
Number of enrolled Roma-students in tertiary education	188 <sup>29</sup>		247	:		increase of min. 10%
Transition rate of Roma pupils from primary to secondary education (%)		83.0	87			90.0
Transition rate of Roma pupils from secondary to tertiary education (%)		40.0	36			45.0
Number of Roma families with access to social housing		102 (15%) of 678 social apartments	118 (17.4%) of 678 soc. apartments	:		increase of min. 10% of the participation of Roma families (in the planned new 1,063 social apartments)
Number of completed public utility infrastructure projects in areas/settlements with prevalent Roma population	8 <sup>30</sup>	6 <sup>31</sup>	4 <sup>32</sup>	:		23 <sup>33</sup>
Infant mortality rate within the Roma population (per 1,000 live births)	14.2 ‰		11.2	:		< 10 ‰ (decrease of 30%)
Increase of the vaccination coverage among Roma children				:		95% vaccination coverage amongst Roma children
Health systems and health care to the population						
Infant mortality rate in the country <sup>34</sup>	9.9 ‰		11.9 ‰	:		6.9 – 7.0 ‰
Number of newly constructed and reconstructed public health-care buildings			/	/		2 newly-constructed 4 reconstructed buildings
Number of newly opened centers for treatment of specific diseases/conditions			/	/		18 <sup>35</sup>
Number of health-care workers in public health-care institutions of secondary and tertiary level, who successfully completed training for application of new diagnostic methods and disease treatment				133 <sup>36</sup>		1,000 at annual level
Completed upgrade with new modules of the integrated health-care information system "My term"		19 modules	:	27 (8 new)		33 functional modules

- <sup>1</sup> **Source:** State Statistical Office, Statistical release: "Number of active business entities"; [http://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziSooptenie\\_en.aspx?rbtxt=79](http://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziSooptenie_en.aspx?rbtxt=79)
- <sup>2</sup> **Source:** *World Economic Forum – "Global Competitiveness Report" – Pillar 1: Institutions, Sector 1.09 "Burden on the government regulations".....* <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-competitiveness-report-2015> ;
- <sup>3</sup> **Source:** *World Economic Forum – "Global Competitiveness Report" – Pillar 11: Business sophistication, Section 11.07 „Sophistication of the manufacture process".....* <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-competitiveness-report-2015> ;
- <sup>4</sup> According to the data of the Employment Service Agency, the Operational Plan for active programs and measures for employment and labor market services for 2017, covered a total of about **141,870** persons/beneficiaries; of which **6,870** persons were included in the active employment programs and measures (programs and measures for development of entrepreneurship and self-employment, for subsidized employments, programs for different types of trainings for the unemployed, the program for municipal-beneficial work – i.e. the program for providing community-based social services, specific measures to support the employment of persons with disabilities, etc.), and the coverage with the various types of ESA services was **135,000** persons (services to assist in job search, providing information on the labor market and the preparation of individual employment plans, trainings for preparation for employment and job-search skills, motivational trainings, job placement services – employment mediation, vocational guidance and career counseling services, services for activation of young unemployed people and people at risk of social exclusion, services for employers, job fairs, etc.) --- thus, taking into account the possibility that the same person or employer could be covered with several types of different services;
- <sup>5</sup> According to the ESA data, in 2017 active employment programs and measures and various LM services covered a total of about **51,350 young persons** aged up to 29 years (of which the active programs and measures covered **4,456** young persons, and labor market services – **46,892** young persons). The data demonstrate that this year the share of young people (aged up to 29) in active employment programs and measures is at the quite **high level of 65%** (taking into account the total number of unemployed persons included in these programs and measures – 6,870);
- <sup>6</sup> In 2017, approximately 8,000 young persons have registered for the first time in the ESA as unemployed;
- <sup>7</sup> Managerial workers - 36 (8%), employees on (dealing with) the active policies - 287 (61%), employees on passive policies - 123 (26%) and assisting workers - 26 (5%);
- <sup>8</sup> The current Trade union density rate is calculated on the basis of data from the decisions for representativeness of trade unions and data from SSO (LFS – data on employed according to the economic status, sectors and departments of business activity). Due to these reasons, this rate does not represent a fully representative data, i.e. it does not fully corresponds with the real situation of trade union organization. **Calculation:** data from the representativeness decisions with a total of 117,856 employed persons. Total no. of employed people 534,359 – SSO Statistical Report for the fourth quarter of 2015 - 2.1.16.04);
- <sup>9</sup> The current Trade union density rate is calculated on the basis of data from the decisions for representativeness of trade unions, the database on the membership of social partners and data from SSO (LFS – data on employed according to the economic status, sectors and departments of business activity). Due to these reasons, this rate is not a fully representative data, i.e. it does not fully corresponds with the real situation of trade union organization. **Calculation:** data from the representativeness decisions, requests for determining representativeness and the social partners membership database - with a total of 121,408 employed persons. Total no. of employed people 573,765 – State Statistical Office Release No. 2.1.17.35 dated 07.12.2017 "*T-07: Employed by economic status and sectors of activities, III quarter 2017*");
- <sup>10</sup> The current Collective bargaining coverage rate is calculated on the basis of data deriving from the decisions of representativeness of trade unions and employer's associations – signatories of the collective agreements at the branch level, combined with the data from the SSO (LFS – data on employed according to the economic status, sectors and departments of business activity). As such, this rate is not a fully representative data, i.e. it is possible that it is not precise and it deviates from the real/actual rate of coverage with collective agreements at branch/department level. **Calculation:** data from the decisions on representativeness, covering a total of 77,826 employed persons, as compared with the total number of employed 239,605 in the specific sectors, i.e. departments for which the collective agreements were signed – SSO Statistical Report for the fourth quarter of 2015 - 2.1.16.04);
- <sup>11</sup> The current Collective bargaining coverage rate is calculated on the basis of data deriving from the decisions of representativeness of trade unions and employer's associations – signatories of the collective agreements at the branch level, combined with the data from the State Statistical Office (LFS – data on employed according to the economic status, sectors and departments of business activity). As such, this rate could not be considered to be a fully representative data, i.e. it is possible that it is not precise and it deviates from the real/actual rate of coverage with collective agreements at branch/department level. **Calculation:** data from the decisions on representativeness and the database for social partners membership, with the total of 92,482 employed persons, as compared with the total number of employed 282,924 in the specific sectors, i.e. departments for which the collective agreements were signed – SSO MAKStat Database: "*Activity of the Population / Employed by economic status, sectors and divisions of activities, III quarter 2017*");
- <sup>12</sup> In 2016, 2017 and 2018 no new procedures for peaceful resolution of collective labor disputes have been implemented. For these reasons the rate (cumulative) remains unchanged;
- <sup>13</sup> Participation of persons aged 18 to 24 that do not have any or have at least primary (lower secondary) education (and are not in further education or training), in relation to the total population of that age group. The selection of this indicator is in accordance with the indicator of the EU Strategy "Europe 2020" in the education sector (*rate of early school leaving*);
- <sup>14</sup> The selection of the indicator is in accordance with the indicator of the EU Strategy "Europe 2020" in the education sector (*share of 30-34 year-olds completing third level education*);
- <sup>15</sup> Adults (between 25 and 64 years old) participating in learning (formal or non-formal), as a percentage of the total population at that age;
- <sup>16</sup> Employment rate of persons aged 20 to 34 who graduated from upper secondary to tertiary education (ISCED 3 to ISCED 8), having left education 1-3 years ago, and who are no longer in education or training;
- <sup>17</sup> Percentage of students with special needs involved in mainstream primary education, in relation to the total number of registered students with special needs (for the year of 2015, of the total number of 1,138 registered students with disabilities, 707 (62%) were in regular (mainstream) education and 431 in special schools);
- <sup>18</sup> In February 2018 5 Sectoral Commissions for Qualifications have been established (Sectoral commission for qualifications for hospitality and tourism, Sectoral commission for qualifications for electrical engineering, Sectoral commission for qualifications for personal services, Sectoral commission for qualifications of civil engineering and geodesy and the Sectoral commission for qualifications in chemistry and technology);
- <sup>19</sup> **Source:** State Statistical Office, SILC – Survey on Income and Living Conditions;
- <sup>20</sup> This refers to the 76 beneficiaries accommodated in the existing 16 housing units for independent living with support and the 17 beneficiaries accommodated in the two existing small group homes (in Berovo and Kavadarci);
- <sup>21</sup> 81 beneficiary in the services for organized living with support and 14 beneficiaries within the small group homes for children in Berovo and Kavadarci;
- <sup>22</sup> This number refers to individuals deinstitutionalized from the social protection institutions (SI "Demir Kapija", Institute for Rehabilitation "Banja BANSKO"), individuals accommodated in small group homes, as well as individuals accommodated in these alternative forms of supported living for the purpose of prevention of their institutionalization;

- <sup>23</sup> Initially it was planned by the end of 2017 to adopt a specific Law on Social Entrepreneurship, whose preparation was already initiated. But later, following the wide consultations with all relevant stakeholders (including experts in the field and civil sector), a decision was made to prolong (delay) the adoption of this Law. It is planned to develop a strategic document for this area first, which will also determine the dynamics of developing and adopting the appropriate legal framework to regulate this area;
- <sup>24</sup> The coverage is determined on the basis of the average number of persons/beneficiaries belonging to different vulnerable categories, who are currently visiting and/or using the services in the existing alternative forms of care-provision and social services, established throughout the territory of the country;
- <sup>25</sup> According to the data and information from the ESA and the MLSP, the coverage of Roma persons with various active employment programs and measures for 2017 is approximately 735 (175 were covered by the programs and measures implemented by the ESA - in accordance with the Operational Plan for 2017. And additional 560 Roma were involved in active programs and measures which were implemented within the framework of the 38 grant projects from both IPA (Component 4) grant schemes (vocational trainings, internship programs, measures to support entrepreneurship and self-employment, etc.);
- <sup>26</sup> **Source:** ESARM – out of the total of 123,892 registered unemployed persons in the RM actively searching employment - 6,761 (5.46%) are Roma. (data from: May 2015);
- <sup>27</sup> Number of Roma children included in the preschool education institutions (kindergartens/Early Child Development Centres). **Source:** SSO;
- <sup>28</sup> **Source:** SSO (*Statistical Review no.2.4.16.01/842*) – of the total number of children (age 0-6) in the kindergartens and Early Child Development Centres in 2015 (32,660), 840 were Roma-children (2.57%);
- <sup>29</sup> **Source:** SSO (*Statistical Review No.2.4.15.18/832*) – total no. of Roma students (188) enrolled at state and private universities in the academic 2014/15 year;
- <sup>30</sup> Completed 8 public utility infrastructure projects in 8 municipalities (Berovo, Bitola, Vinica, Gazi Baba, Kochani, Prilep, Probishtip, Shtip);
- <sup>31</sup> In 2016, 6 public-utility infrastructure projects were completed in settlements with predominant Roma population in 6 municipalities (Kocani, Prilep, Veles, Vinica, Delchevo and Pehcevo);
- <sup>32</sup> In 2017 funds were allocated for implementation of 4 additional projects of communal infrastructure in 3 municipalities (Kochani, Bitola, Prilep);
- <sup>33</sup> 23 projects are either commenced/initiated or planned for realization in several municipalities: Bitola, Veles, Vinica, Delchevo, Gjorche Petrov, Kochani, Prilep, Shtip (2015/2016) and Berovo, Bitola, Veles, Kumanovo, Vinica, Gazi Baba, Delchevo, Gjorche Petrov, Kochani, Probishtip, Prilep, Chair, Shuto Orizari, Kichevo, Shtip (2017-2020);
- <sup>34</sup> per 1,000 live births;
- <sup>35</sup> It is planned to open 18 centres for treatment of specific diseases/conditions (5 nephrologic, 3 stroke centers, 1 wound treatment center, 1 autism center, 1 center for people with Alzheimer, 7 palliative care centers);
- <sup>36</sup> The Law Amending the Law on medical studies and continuous professional development of physicians ("Official Gazette" 132/2017) repealed the obligation of the Ministry of Health for providing funds for the education of 1,000 health-care professionals on an annual basis. Education and vocational training of health-care workers in health facilities abroad remains the responsibility of the healthcare institution, in accordance with their capabilities and available budget. For these reasons, this particular measure will not continue to be implemented furthermore as it was initially planned, and in this respect, the possibility and necessity of monitoring and reporting on this particular indicator for its implementation will also be adequately assessed.

# **ESRP MATRIX OF OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES**

*- Status of implementation and achieved results -*

# 1. LABOR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

## 3.1.1. Improvement of Economic Development and Job Creation

<p><b>3.1.1.1. Objective: Improvement of the business environment</b>  <b>Measure: a/ Further improvement and strengthening of the one-stop-shop system for issuing permits, approvals and licenses, necessary for starting up and conducting business</b></p>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2020</p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> 3,000,000 €</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> In recent years the Government has established a wide e-government system, which provides a series of advanced e-services to the local business community. Submitting and paying of taxes via internet, other e-services as licenses, approvals, permits, e-public procurements, e-forms for statistical and other enterprise data, e-cadastre, etc. There are two main governmental e-portals which provide overview of the entire e-services available to the SMEs (the portal of the MISA and the portal of the GRM, which provides information for the e-government policy). The system exists, however there are areas where it has to be broaden or strengthen, such as civil engineering permits and licenses and other, conducting of the system that will enable safe exchange of e-documents between relevant public institutions in accordance with their competences, and with the purpose of electronic issue of business licenses, approvals and permits all on one place. An Internet database shall be developed, where one can search and discover what kind of licenses, permits and approvals are needed for starting up business, as well as enable downloading and submitting the necessary forms, etc.</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b>                  Within IPA program for public administration reform, it is envisaged to implement a project for establishing e-services for citizens and companies. The project for one-stop-shop system for permits and licenses will be implemented within the portal and initiatives MISA for establishing e-services, in accordance with the Services Directive. It is planned the implementation of the Project to begin by the end of 2018.</p>		
<p><b>Changes/adjustments/possible delays and postponements/change of priorities:</b>                  In accordance with the approved funds from IPA programming for 2017, 2,500,000 € are allocated for the implementation of planned activities.</p>		
<p><b>3.1.1.2. Objective: Support and improvement of the competitiveness and entrepreneurship in the Sector of Small and Medium-size Enterprises (SME)</b>  <b>Measure: a/ Preparation of the Strategy for Development of Small and Medium-size Enterprises with an Action Plan</b></p>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2017</p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> 90,000 €</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> It is planned for the Strategy and the Action Plan to be prepared with support of the ILO, in accordance with the Decent Work Programme</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b>                  The National Strategy for SME 2018-2023 ("Competitive small and medium enterprises as movers of the inclusive economic growth") was finalized in December 2017. It was prepared with the support of the International Labor Organization (ILO).                  The National strategy together with an Action plan for its implementation for the period 2018-2020 years is considered and adopted by the Government at the 62nd session, held on 3 April 2018.</p> <p>SME strategy establishes a framework for cooperation between relevant stakeholders from the public and private sector and civil society, in order to support the development of SMEs and innovation to increase their competitiveness.                  Key strategic objectives are: 1. to create a <u>favorable business environment</u> which is to incite entrepreneurship and investment, 2. Increasing and enhancing the opportunity for <u>growth of SMEs</u>, i.e. to help SMEs to become highly productive and competitive participants in the European and other international markets, and 3. to establish a dynamic ecosystem of <u>entrepreneurship and innovation</u>, i.e. to enforce economic competitiveness of Macedonia by increasing the entrepreneurial and innovation capacity of SMEs.</p>		

<p><b>3.1.1.2. Objective: Support and improvement of the competitiveness and entrepreneurship in the Sector of Small and Medium-size Enterprises (SME)</b></p> <p><b>Measure: b/ Support in providing an improved and more effective regulatory and institutional framework for SME</b></p> <p><b>Description:</b> It is planned to provide support for the analysis of the implementation of the existing regulations and its influence on the SMEs, as well as revision and improvement of the existing and development of the new regulation (laws and by-laws) related to the SMEs, which includes definitions for SME, costs, and benefits for conducting businesses etc. The activities shall be in compliance with the EU standards and practices and the Act of Small Enterprises, in order to create more efficient and effective regulations in the SME sector. This will contribute to the creation of more stable business environment for the SMEs and increased effect on the employment</p> <p><b>Implementation:</b> ////</p>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2018</p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> 1,500,000 €</p>
<p><b>3.1.1.2. Objective: Support and improvement of the competitiveness and entrepreneurship in the Sector of Small and Medium-size Enterprises (SME)</b></p> <p><b>Measure: c/ Support and development of the entrepreneurship culture, start-up companies, support for growth</b></p> <p><b>Description:</b> Initiating the programme and activities for promotion of start-up companies and support to early-growth companies. On the basis of Call for submitting project proposals, it is planned to establish network for support to the companies throughout the country for potential start-up companies and support of early-growth companies. It will provide general information, guidelines, training, and support in business planning and in access to capital, and the financial support will also be provided for stimulating start-up companies. A Programme for support of marginalized groups (women, youth, elderly, ethnic minorities) for potential and existing entrepreneurs is planned. System for direct financial support to the SMEs is planned to be established as well (in the amount of 1.5 million euro – in voucher schemes format or with direct co-financing), vouchers (co-financing) for use of certain consulting services, accounting services, product branding training, marketing, market research and similar)</p> <p><b>Implementation:</b> ////</p>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2020</p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> 4,000,000 €</p>
<p><b>3.1.1.2. Objective: Support and improvement of the competitiveness and entrepreneurship in the Sector of Small and Medium-size Enterprises (SME)</b></p> <p><b>Measure: d/ Implementation of Programme for Export Support for SMEs</b></p> <p><b>Description:</b> The programme includes a selection of 250 targeted SMEs with export potential (according to their experience, level of productivity, technological innovations, research and development activities, skill intensity, ICT capacities and other) and providing adequate support for these SMEs in regards to their “investment readiness”, including technical support for building capacities and financial assistance for issues related with export preparedness (standards, health and safety at work, branding, labeling, packaging, product testing, certification, signing of agreements, customs procedures, logistics, marketing, information and analysis and other) Support through the Swiss Import Promotion Programme (SIPPO)</p> <p><b>Implementation:</b> ////</p>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2020</p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> 6,000,000 €</p>
<p><b>3.1.1.2. Objective: Support and improvement of the competitiveness and entrepreneurship in the Sector of Small and Medium-size Enterprises (SME)</b></p> <p><b>Measure: e/ Implementation of the project “International Experts for Local SMEs”</b></p> <p><b>Description:</b> Through this initiative, it is planned to provide assistance and support to 300 SMEs, in the form of expertise from experienced experts from the most developed EU countries, in order to raise the competitiveness, to improve quality of the products and processes, to create new and keep existing jobs, as well as to increase the profit and income of the companies and their employees. Experts shall visit the companies and offer assistance/counseling for a specific problem. The local companies would also participate in the overall mission expenditures/costs (for ex. in providing accommodation, food, local transport, etc.) Thus far, for the realization of this Project the financial support was provided from the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia, and partly from foreign expert organizations and embassies in the country. Such SME support is planned to continue and the attempts are made for providing appropriate sources of finance.</p> <p><b>Implementation:</b> The goal of engaging foreign experts to contribute to the improvement of organizational, operational, analytical and marketing processes of Macedonian companies. The "Foreign experts for domestic companies" project is part of the Program of the Government of Republic of Macedonia for 2017 and the fundings for its implementation are provided in the State Budget.</p>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2020</p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> 1,000,000 €</p>

Initial achieved results of the third public call, published in May 2017:

- according to the decision of the Government of 25.04.2017, the public call was published on 15 May 2017 in three daily newspapers, and the deadline for applications to the call was 45 days (up to 06.29.2017). To 28.06.2017 yr. On the public call were applied only four companies, so there was a need for extending the deadline for applying for an additional 30 days (until 29.07.2017) and further promotion of the call at that time.
- in that extra period, the Government members and members of the working group of the Office of the Prime Minister undertook activities to promote the project among domestic small and medium enterprises, so it could increase the number of submitted applications. On 11.07.2017 the Government held a promotional event, which was attended and support for the project gave the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs and coordination of economic departments and ministers from the Republic of Macedonia Government. The event was attended by representatives of foreign expert organizations, the Ambassador of Switzerland, representatives of chambers of commerce and over 50 representatives of SMEs, who discussed the benefits that this project has on their companies, thus conveyed a common message to all small and medium companies to apply the public call in order to provide foreign expert who would help in solving their problems and needs, and in order to ensure growth and development, increase of the competition and creating new jobs.
- at this public announcement, in total applied 35 domestic companies (two of which did not meet the conditions, which had to have at least 10 employees). The submitted applications were considered by the Working Group, and in agreement with the companies were organized and visits, in order to adequately convey all the details about the project, the rights and obligations of the company and accurately determine the need / problem that the domestic company applies for, as would be found and engaged relevant experts.
- after the official visit of domestic companies applications were submitted to the foreign expert organizations in order to find the appropriate expert
- what follows is the procedure of evaluation of proposed CVs received from foreign consultants by companies, and if the consultant meets their needs, sends a request/consent according to which foreign expert organization continues the procedure for sending a consultant in our company.

<b>3.1.1.2. Objective: Support and improvement of the competitiveness and entrepreneurship in the Sector of Small and Medium-size Enterprises (SME):</b>	Deadline:	Budget:
<b>Measure: f/ Financing and support for competitiveness and innovation of the SMEs</b>	2020	6,000,000 €
<b>Description:</b> On the basis of the previous initiatives, establishing a fund of 30 million EUR - loan from the EBRD/commercial banks is proposed, in order to increase the competitiveness of the SMEs on international markets and to increase their investments in innovation. Allocation of 6 million EUR will be in form of an investment stimulation, as grants (4.5M EUR), as well as technical assistance (1.5M EUR). This measure will be focused on SMEs that do not fulfill banks conditions, as well as engaging banks of second order, i.e. those which have not been working until now with EBRD on similar schemes.		

**Implementation:**  
 Agreements were concluded that were necessary for the implementation of this measure between the EBRD and the EU.

<b>3.1.1.3. Objective: More attractive environment for foreign investors for an increased level of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI)</b>	Deadline:	Budget:
<b>Measure: a/ Assessment of the obstacles for the FDI, identification and initiation of system reforms, through an effective public-private dialogue</b>	2018	1,500,000 €
<b>Description:</b> The measure foresees transition from the existing "ad-hoc" to a more strategic approach in decreasing the barriers for the FDI, through establishing close cooperation between the Government of RM with the Foreign Investors Council and the National Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness Council. It is planned for steps to be taken towards a strategic approach for removing obstacles for the FDI, through detailed analysis of the current obstacles for investments (work permits, construction permits, waste management permits, export permits, customs delays, legal system delays etc.) and determining the necessary reforms based on the best international practices, ensuring that this process is a subject of an effective public-private dialogue..		

**Implementation:**  
 In the past period a comprehensive analysis was done of the system for attracting and supporting foreign investment in the Republic of Macedonia. This resulted in making redefined measures to support investment in Macedonia, covered in so called "Plan for economic growth" adopted by the Government of Republic of Macedonia and launched in December 2017. The plan represents set of measures that in a transparent manner, under the same conditions and with clearly defined criteria provides financial support by the Government to stimulate new investments, creating new jobs, higher wages for workers, increasing competitiveness, supporting innovation and technological development of the companies. Through the implementation of the measures contained in the Plan for economic growth it provides significant support to the companies for new investments, encouraging of the economic activity in the country, attracting new investments and supporting existing companies to develop, in order to improve the competitiveness of the economy and would be created new jobs. The plan allows raising of the cooperation between domestic and foreign investors. The plan for economic growth comprises measures divided into three pillars: measures for general economic development,



measures to support competitiveness and measures to support small and medium enterprises. The creation and implementation of measures contained in the Plan for economic growth is in close cooperation with the business community in the country, including the Foreign Investors Council.

In order to implement the measures contained in the Plan for economic growth, it is ongoing preparation of the Law on the financial support of investments that would contribute to incite economic growth and development in Republic of Macedonia by supporting investments to increase the competitiveness of the Macedonian economy and employment. With this law it would be created a legal framework in which the criteria will be established, the procedure for granting and payment of financial support to companies that will meet the specified conditions

<p><b>3.1.1.3. Objective: More attractive environment for foreign investors for an increased level of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI)</b></p>	<p>Deadline</p>	<p>Budget:</p>
<p><b>Measure: b/ Improvement and strengthening of the relations between foreign direct investments and local/domestic companies</b></p>	<p>2020</p>	<p>5,000,000 €</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> It is planned to undertake activities for further stimulation and strengthening of the relations and partnerships between the foreign companies working in Macedonia (mainly in TIDZ), local SMEs and the financial institutions. Providing support in dissemination of information to the suppliers, capacity building and trainings, upgrading of the suppliers and improving technology, facilitating access to finance. In the last two years, this was being implemented as a pilot programme, with the support from the World Bank. The expert team of the WB submitted a final report of the implemented activities aimed to ink the local companies as suppliers with the foreign investors in the country. In the forthcoming period, the activities shall be directed towards discussions for providing funds for the financing of the programme of a larger scale that would support in improving the links between the FDI/TIDZ and the local/domestic companies.</p>		

**Implementation:**  
 This activity is included as a measure in the frames of the "Plan for economic growth", promoted by the Government of Republic of Macedonia in December 2017, i.e. the Law on financial support for investments that will ensure its operationalization. The preparation of the Law on financial support for investments is ongoing, and the Law foresees assistance and support to be provided exactly for establishing and strengthening business ties and cooperation between foreign investment in TIRZ (Technological Industrial Development Zones) and domestic companies suppliers (financial support for the establishment and promotion of cooperation with suppliers registered RM, for business entities that perform activity in the technological industrial development areas and who will purchase and incorporate products from domestic suppliers in the final product intended for export).

The Law will be adopted during 2018, and the budget for the measure will depends on the number of accepted/approved applications/requests.

### 3.1.2. Improvement of the unemployment situation, especially with the most vulnerable categories (youth, long-term unemployed and others)

<p><b>3.1.2.1. Objective: Improvement of youth employment and promotion of more and better jobs for young people</b>  <b>Measure: a/ Further strengthening of the coverage and participation of unemployed young people in design and implementation of services and active employment measures</b></p>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2020</p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> The Budget included in OP</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> In the annual Operational Plans (ALMM), in all LM services and employment programmes, the intention will be to ensure rate of participation of young persons of at least a 30%. For 2016, around 13,900 young people were covered with the OP for active employment programmes and measures and labour market services (4,650 with ALMM and 9,250 with LM services). The number of young people included in the future OPs at annual level is expected to be around 15,000. All services and active employment programmes from the OP involving young persons are included here, and which are financed from different sources (including the State Budget, IPA, UNDP, ILO support and other sources). (Services for employment mediation, carrier counseling, orientation and motivation trainings, various programmes for trainings in general and specialized skills, in entrepreneurship and self-employment, trainings for demanded skills and occupations, internship programmes, subsidized employments etc.)</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b>                  With the prepared Operational plans for active programs and measures for employment and labor market services for 2017 and 2018, it was planned at least 30% of participants in active employment programs and measures and labor market services to be young people – up to the age of 29. In 2017, with active employment programs, measures and services, were covered a total of 51,348 young persons under 29 years of age, representing more than 36% of the participants. According to the ESA data in 2017 with active programs and employment measures were covered a total of 4,456 young people, and with services on the labor market 46,892 young people. Data shows that this year, the participation of young people aged up to 29 years in active programs and measures for employment is on the level of high 65% (taking into account the total number of unemployed persons involved in these programs and measures – 6,870)</p> <p>( see also 3.1.2.2. – Measure c/ )</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p>		
<p>In September 2017 with the support provided by the International Labor Organization to prepare a detailed mid-term monitoring report of the progress in implementing the Action Plan on Youth Employment 2020, where it were presented the analysis and information on the progress in achieving the intended results and goals by AP. This monitoring report then was also the main starting point for the preparation of the planned periodical review the Action Plan on Youth Employment 2020, which were defined activities and objectives envisaged for implementation by 2020 and who in February 2018 was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. After the revision, the Plan was supplemented with a special section "<u>Youth Guarantee</u>". The concept of the Youth Guarantee represents a systematic approach in the medium term, for handling one of the key challenges in the labor market in Macedonia - unemployment among young people. The Youth guarantee which will be introduced from 2018, aims to provide to the young people (15-29) offer of employment, continued education and training or internships for a period of four months after becoming unemployed or leaving education. A First master plan for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in the Republic of Macedonia was also developed, in which were defined the institutions involved in implementing and their commitments, and it was established a Coordinating body responsible for the implementation and monitoring of Youth guarantee. The Plan shall be implemented in two phases, where the first one (preparation phase) will be conducted in the time period of 2018/2019 yr. In the first phase the Youth Guarantee will be piloted in three municipalities – Strumica, Gostivar and Skopje, where in its implementation it will be regularly monitored and analyzed her implementation successfulness and will be taken appropriate preparatory actions for implementation of the Youth Guarantee throughout the country in the second phase.</p>		

<p><b>3.1.2.1. Objective: Improvement of youth employment and promotion of more and better jobs for young people</b>  <b>Measure: b/ Strengthening of the Profiling system of young unemployed, when registering in the ESARM, with the purpose of assessment and identification of employment possibilities and intervention prioritization</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2020</p>	<p>Budget: XXX</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> The Profiling system based on a "Control list of employment possibilities" was introduced in 2016. Within the framework of these activities, it is expected that <u>all</u> young persons registering for the first time in the Employment Service Agency, will be profiled at an early stage (early profiling), i.e. within the first 6 months of their unemployment.</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b>                  All individuals who will be first time registered as unemployed are profiled in the first 6 months after signing up in order to determine their degree of employability. Namely, by using a <u>Control questionnaire on employability</u> unemployed are categorized into 3 categories and according to this, relevant Individual employment plans are prepared for them. The plans represent a tool for determining the current situation of the unemployed person and over time, a method for measuring progress in the problematic areas.</p>		
<p><b>3.1.2.1. Objective: Improvement of youth employment and promotion of more and better jobs for young people</b>  <b>Measure: c/ Development and implementation of a tailored package of services for young, by the ESARM</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2020</p>	<p>Budget: 1,150,000 €</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> For example, services for supporting individuals who have dropped out of school, "youth day" at the employment centres, youth employment/job fairs, youth info-clubs operating at university campuses, youth info-points at the popular music and/or sport events, access to the Program "Youth Start", developed mobile application linked to the ESA database providing insight into the current available jobs and internship possibilities etc.</p>		
<p>Among other activities is the "Youth Start Program" intended for young people who are entering the labour market for the first time that includes employment preparation trainings, subsidized training programs at the work post, internships. The program is intended to become a part of the portfolio of active LM programs available to young unemployed persons.</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b>                  From 2018 the Republic of Macedonia will introduce "Youth guarantee" program which will target young people (15-29 years.) who within the period of four months will be provided with an offer of employment, continuous education and training or internship. The plan for the implementation of the Youth guarantee will be piloted in 2018 (1 phase) in three employment centers (Gostivar, Strumica and Skopje) with the involvement of young people who are unemployed neither involved in education and training (NEET) and that in 2018 for the first time will be registered in the employment Agency as unemployed. The Guarantee will be implemented as a coordinated joint action of several government institutions, social partners and civil society (youth) organizations. Within the Youth guarantee, the young people will be provided with services that will enable their activation and motivation, as well as involvement in relevant programs, measures and employment services, in accordance with the Annual Operational Plan, or their re-inclusion in the educational process. Implementing the activities of Youth guarantee in the first (pilot) phase will be regularly monitored and the performance will be analyzed and take appropriate preparatory actions for implementation of the youth guarantee throughout the country will be overtaken- in the second phase.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p>		
<p>Under the motto "From information to career", four info clubs located state the universities in Skopje, Tetovo, Bitola and Stip, in the period from January to December 2017, represent one of the main info-points for informing and motivating the unemployed youth people. Over 300 students have directly addressed to the clubs for information, assistance for employment opportunities, internships, training; more than 4,000 young people had directly informed about work of the clubs in other locations; over 2,000 followers on social networks daily are being informed about the idea, work and events that are associated with the clubs; over 700 people daily directly are on-line contacted about the events, initiatives and all other points of entrepreneurial subjects; are being held 20 promotional events on various topics related to entrepreneurship</p>		
<p>As part of the plans and promotional opportunities for employment and employability, the clubs have organized the so-called "live libraries" by promoting open positions from the local business community. The events were attended by a total of 1,000 students in their final years, but also from the other young unemployed people.</p>		

<p><b>3.1.2.1. Objective: Improvement of youth employment and promotion of more and better jobs for young people</b>  <b>Measure: d/ Upgrading and improving the existing models, survey researches and databases and establishing a coordinated and comprehensive system for forecasting the demand for skills and occupations on the labour market</b></p>	<p><b>Deadline</b> 2020</p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> 2,500,000 €</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Measures for improvement of the system which will enable the acquiring of information, analyses and studies, necessary for the creation of policies on education and labour market, as well as for the appropriateness of the choices that young people make.</p> <p>A set of measures and activities which will ensure upgrade of the existing models and databases, at the MLSP for labour market forecasting, at the ESA for vacancies and skills need analysis, development of a <i>Skills Observatory</i> within the MES. This will enable regular gathering of information on the labour market, on the industrial branches, the occupations and skills that are most in demand in the LM, it will also enable preparation of reports on the prospective (“promising”) occupations, and it will also ensure regular dissemination of the acquired information among the final beneficiaries (young people and their families, educational institutions, institutions in the labour market and the general public).</p> <p>In addition, it is also planned to develop a tool (model) for promising/demanding occupations (<i>Occupational Outlook</i>), which will represent a developed model (software tool and work methodology) for forecasting the demanded and promising occupations on the labor market in the Republic of Macedonia. The tool will give basis and will provide the necessary projections, information and data for reducing the mismatch between the labour market supply and demand of skills. The data on promising occupations that the Occupational Outlook will provide, will refer to the job description with specific tasks and responsibilities, the specific requirements for the particular occupation in terms of education, training, work experience, skills etc., the conditions of work, such as the average salary, working time etc., the employment prospects and potential demand for the occupation etc.</p> <p><i>Support in implementation of these activities and the development of the planned model, i.e. the Macedonian Occupational Outlook, will be provided by International Labour Organization (ILO).</i></p> <p>It is planned also to include the network of youth non-governmental organizations in the activities, which are intended to use the reports and information on the skills forecasting and on the demanded occupations. They should also make these data and information available to the young people (by preparing informational materials, organizing informative sessions, etc.) and to generally inform young people on the education choices, on the labour force demand and on the public services available to facilitate their transition to work and employment.</p>		

**Implementation:**

A so called Occupation Outlook is developed and in its initial stage 11 occupations were developed.

The Occupation Outlook is based on the Labor Force Survey, Survey of demanded occupations by ESA, surveys of employers and job vacancies, data on education, employment projections and sectoral studies. The outlook is designed and tested by the Department of Labor Market of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, and the goal is to provide reliable and easily understandable information about the occupations in which young people are more likely to find employment.

For the realization of this activity, MLSP provided technical assistance from the International Labor Organization, through the project "Solutions for youth employment through local social dialogue", which was implemented in Republic of Macedonia until March 2018. The prepared Review is in the responsibility of the MLSP and the inter-institutional working group, which determines the occupations to be included as a priority in the forecoming period, as well as the type of information that needed to be collected and the sources of those information, the methods of dissemination, and will prepare regular annual reports on demanded occupations. For greater dissemination and availability, as well as easier access to information from the Outlook, at the beginning of 2018 an Internet platform [www.zanimanja.mk](http://www.zanimanja.mk) was prepared and put into use. By mid-April the website had nearly 17,000 visits.

For every occupation the Outlook provides information about the working environment and conditions, the necessary education, the dangers and the risks of workplace injuries, the activities of the occupation, the average monthly net salary, the chances of finding work and other relevant data for the particular occupation.

Maintaining and updating the website is performed continuously by trained persons from the Department of Labor of MLSP.

In order to have further improvement the Occupation Outlook, the Government of Republic of Macedonia in April 2018 adopted a Work plan for the period 2018-2021, pursuant to which about 15 occupations on an annual basis will have to be developed, leading to the Outlook to provide information on 72 occupations until the end of 2021.

In addition, the Model for long-term forecasting of the labor market (HERMAK) established in the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy is continually updated and its use represents support for the preparation of strategic and other documents in the area of labor market and employment. By using this model and the latest available statistics, in December 2017 an "Information on long-term forecasts of the labor market" was prepared and the same (in March 2018) was reviewed and discussed at the session of the Economic and Social Council.

<b>3.1.2.1. Objective: Improvement of youth employment and promotion of more and better jobs for young people</b> <b>Measure e/ Introduction of quality services within the education process for career guidance, that will be provided to students from all levels of the education system, mainly during the secondary and tertiary education as part of the curriculum</b>	<b>Deadline:</b> <b>2020</b>	<b>Budget:</b> <b>500,000 €</b>
<p><b>Description:</b> Activities for the introduction of quality services (classes/teaching) within the educational process for carrier guidance (that will be based on information and data obtained from the system/model for skills forecasting), including, also modules for employee rights. These types of classes will be provided for pupils and students of various levels of the educational system (at the end of the elementary education, during high school and graduate studies) as a part of the curriculum at the national level.</p> <p>In 2014, 50 general-education high schools offered elective/optional courses for carrier guidance (with approximately 4,000 pupils attending the classes), while, 36,000 pupils attending schools for secondary vocational education had access to the services offered by the Centres for carrier development. The carrier guidance classes in high schools are still offered on the project basis and are not integrated in the curriculum.</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Program for carrier counseling was prepared;</li> <li>- 53 centres for careers in the vocational schools were established;</li> <li>- in total 171 teachers are trained in career counseling;</li> <li>- It was realized programs for career counseling for students in 66 secondary schools by 235 trained teachers and professionals (psychologists/pedagogues) in schools</li> <li>- It were prepared adjusted programs "Preparation for Employment and Work" and "Learning by doing" intended for students in the final years for all occupations and profiles that were realized during the free classes at the career centers in schools for students with special educational needs.</li> </ul> <p>( see also 3.2.3.1. – Measure c/ )</p>		
<b>3.1.2.1. Objective: Improvement of youth employment and promotion of more and better jobs for young people</b> <b>Measure: f/ Measures at local level for better informing young people of their working relations' rights and obligations</b>	<b>Deadline:</b> <b>2017</b>	<b>Budget:</b> <b>36,000 €</b>
<p><b>Description:</b> With the support of the International Labour Organization and the use of the developed tools, such as "<i>rights@work for youth</i>", a number of training programs for trainers are planned to be organized, as well as workshops, trainings, educational events, preparation of promotional materials for the strengthening the capacities of the Local economic and social councils (LESC), schools and non-governmental organizations, for issues related to the promotion of decent work and for raising awareness among young for the quality of employment</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b></p> <p>With financial and technical support from the International Labor Organization (ILO) until March 2018 it was implementing the project "Solutions for youth employment through local social dialogue", where was provided significant technical assistance in the part of the tool developed by ILO "<i>Youth Rights@Work</i>" and its customization / adaptation to the Macedonian context and Macedonian situations and conditions. Within the project activities it was implemented and workshop for training of trainers (in September 2017 yr.), which passed 16 participants (8 women and 8 men) where to the participants are provided additional information about their rights and manners of work in developing strategies for achieving these rights at the workplace, while execute and validate the technical content and group activities prepared for the Macedonian version of the guide and tool of ILO "<i>Youth Rights@Work</i>". At the end of 2017 and beginning of 2018 in Bitola and Strumica, the trained Macedonian trainers held two training activities (workshops), and were attended by 35 participants (24 women and 11 men) and were trained young trade union activists and members of youth organizations for using the ILO tool for labor rights of the young people.</p> <p>During the Project a campaign for awareness raising „365 Rights@Work“ was designed, organized and realized in partnership with the Coalition of youth organizations (SEGA (NOW)), the Confederation of Free Trade Unions and youth/student web-portal <a href="http://www.fakulteti.mk">www.fakulteti.mk</a>. The campaign was supported and promoted also by Agency for Youth and Sports and it was consisted in publication of a labor rights for every day of the year (“365 labor rights for youth”- <a href="http://www.fakulteti.mk/job/vrabetuvanje">http://www.fakulteti.mk/job/vrabetuvanje</a>); it was organized a widely advertised public debate, and it were organized training workshops and information days across the country using educational materials and information materials contained in the ILO adjusted tools for youth labor rights.</p>		

**3.1.2.1. Objective: Improvement of youth employment and promotion of more and better jobs for young people**

**Measure: g/ Strengthening the local approach in tackling youth employment**

<b>Deadline:</b> <b>2018,</b> <b>2020</b>	<b>Budget:</b> <b>236,000 €</b>
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**Description:** It is planned to implement a number of activities that will contribute to further and continuous capacity building of all relevant stakeholders at local level for more successful design and implementation of employment programs, measures and initiatives which will be tailored to the actual local challenges and needs of young persons. Within these activities, particular attention will be given to promotion of the engagement and participation of established Local Economic and Social Councils (LESCs) and of the other local entities (local government institutions, local employment centers, employers, training providers, civil society etc.).

The piloting of specific targeted measures and programs for youth employment, adapted to the local needs and conditions, will also be supported.

The capacities of local stakeholders will be strengthened for effective analysis and understanding of the specific challenges, obstacles and needs and for obtaining relevant and accurate information on the situation and trends in the local labor market, which could then be used in the design of local youth employment programs and will be needed by the young people, in the part of guidance for education and training, job profiles, the promising occupations, opportunities on the labor market and so on.

Support will also be provided for improving the process of dissemination of data and information to young people, their families and the general public, with the purpose to help in the selection of options and guidance for education and youth employment.

In respect to the design and piloting (testing) programs for youth employment adjusted to the local needs, the focus will be given to work experience programs and schemes, subsidized employment of young persons, vocational training (off and on-the-job) for occupations demanded at local level, apprenticeship training programs, etc.

*In the implementation of these activities the support will be provided by the ILO*

**Implementation:**

With financial support from the International Labor Organization and ESA participation it was implemented *the Project "Solutions for youth employment through local social dialogue"* to pilot specific, targeted measures and programs for youth employment which will be tailored to local needs and conditions. The project, which was implemented in the period 2016-2018, aimed to contribute to strengthening the capacities of government partners and local social partners, together - in partnership to respond to new and immediate needs of the labor market for youth employment, and to enable them to play an essential role in designing programs in areas of importance to create more and better jobs for young people. A joint mission of the ILO and ESA was organized in December 2016 for establishing the condition, aimed to choose three regions where it can be piloted programs for youth employment. It were identified three municipalities (Kichevo, Strumica and Resen) that exist functional in local economic and social councils, as well as Local employment centers that can offer personalized services and employment programs.

During 2017, in the three selected municipalities were implemented three pilot programs for employment of young people, and internship program, for job training and subsidizing salaries. For the Project was provided a budget of around 72,000 €, and practical implementation of the measures is since August 2017, with the total number of 57 signed contracts, of which for internship - 46 contracts, for job training - 8 contracts and wage subsidies program - 3 contracts.

The first component of the Project was focused on building the capacity of Local economic and social councils and local employment centers for designing, implementing and monitoring of targeted interventions and initiatives to support youth employment, which will be adjusted to the situations and local needs while it will be worked on raising awareness among young people about their labor rights. During 2017 yr. were conducted workshops and trainings for representatives of local ESS and employment centers in Kicevo, Strumica and Resen for the type of programs and measures for youth employment that will be piloted at the local level, the key features of the design of the measures (mechanisms for targeting, duration, level of compensation), and the mode / mechanism of implementation.

Piloting of the locally-designed programs for youth employment provided also opportunity for continuous monitoring of the implementation and analysis of the effectiveness of interventions in helping young people to enter into the labor market. Despite the limited scope of the pilot measures (participation of 57 young unemployed people), however implementation provided a larger number of important and useful information. One identified feature that arose from the implementation of the pilot program was the number of young people that have not responded to calls from the local employment centers or were not interested in the proposed measures.

This finding clearly indicates of the need to strengthen the strategies and programs of activation and introducing an approach that will be based on mutual obligation, whereby registered persons that several times have not responded to calls of the employment services or refusing offers of reintegration, are deleted from the register and lose rights for compensations / benefits.

The measure which was most popular among young people and enterprises, was the internships. It should be emphasized and the fact that emerged from the activities, and refers to the necessity of strengthening the capacity of professionals (employed in the departments/services) as they could effectively reach out to people who face multiple obstacles / difficulties to enter the labor market. The lack of interest shown by many young people in the offers of local employment centers points out to the existence of discouragement and distrust in the ability of services to help them. This situation could be overcome by stimulating partnership approaches and initiatives of specialized services (social, educational and health services) and by organizing activities for engaging with a low threshold (youth workshops, working paths, support from colleagues) with the involvement of youth organizations.

**3.1.2.2. Objective: Reducing unemployment among long-term unemployed and persons belonging to other vulnerable groups**

**Measure: a/ Preparation and implementation of the annual Operational plans for labour market services and active employment programmes and measures, focusing on design of set of various services and measured tailored to the needs of the different specific vulnerable groups of unemployed persons**

<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> 50,000,000 € (for OP)
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**Description:** Based on the needs of the labour market, the experiences and results from the implementation of the ALMM and services, consultations with all relevant stakeholders, the annual Operational Plans for LM services and active employment programmes and measures will be prepared and implemented every year.

**Implementation:**

The annual Operational plans for active programs and measures for employment and labour market services are being continuously developed and implemented. In this process, strong attention is being put on the necessity to tailor and adapt the employment programs, measures and services to the real needs of the labor market, but also it is important to properly adjusted them in order to allow inclusion of various vulnerable groups of unemployed persons

During 2017 the active employment measures and programs of the Operational Plan for 2017 were implemented, covering around 6,870 persons (programs and measures for the development of entrepreneurship and self-employment, for jobs subsidies, programs for different types of trainings for the unemployed persons, the program for municipal-beneficial work, measures to support the employment of persons with disabilities, etc.).

Continuous efforts are made for improving the coverage and quality of different types of labor market services for the unemployed people and for the employers, which during 2017 covered a total of 135,000 people (services to job search assistance, providing labor market information and the preparation of individual plans for employment, trainings for preparation for employment and acquiring job search skills, motivation trainings, employment mediation, vocational guidance and career counseling, services for activation of young unemployed people and people at risk of social exclusion, services for employers, job fairs, etc.). In this respect, it is important to notice that the same person or employer could be covered by several different types of services.

Operational Plan budget for 2017 (with the revision) amounted to approximately 992,600,000 denars (approximately € 16,000,000).

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In the beginning of 2018, the Government of Republic of Macedonia adopted the Operational Plan for active programs and measures for employment and labor market services for 2018 ("*Chance for all ...*"). This OP aims to cover the largest possible number of different target groups and vulnerable categories of unemployed people, and special emphasis is placed on young unemployed people aged up to 29 years and persons with reduced opportunities in the labor market. The financial framework of this OP amounts to approximately 1,046,000,000 denars (about 17M €).

<p><b>3.1.2.2. Objective: Reducing unemployment among long-term unemployed and persons belonging to other vulnerable groups</b>  <b>Measure: b/ Development and implementation of employment incentive measures for the long-term unemployed persons, especially for those that have been unemployed for more than 2 years</b></p>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2020</p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> ... in OP</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Implementation of measures for long-term unemployed persons (measures for subsidized employment, training programs at the workplace, various types of trainings for acquiring general and specific skills and knowledge, motivation trainings, special activation services and mentor support for animation, motivation, promotion of employment possibilities, additional trainings for employment, self-employment, support in the period after employment etc.).  <i>(Such measures will be part of the annual Operational plans)</i></p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b>  Vulnerable categories of unemployed people, including and long-term unemployed people have the opportunity to engage in all active programs and employment measures set out in the annual Operational plans. These individuals previously are involved in some of the services provided by ESA for the unemployed people, such as employment counseling, employment preparation and work, motivational training and similar. These activities have tendency to strengthen their opportunities in the labor market.  The creation of active programs, measures and employment services take into consideration and the features and possibilities of vulnerable categories of unemployed people, i.e. they adapt to their needs. Given that these people are with significant barriers to inclusion in the labor market, they are prepared more IPE (Individual plans for employment), within which experts from ESA cite and specify the activities that these people should be included.    <i>( see also 3.1.2.2. – Measure c/ )</i></p>		
<p><b>3.1.2.2. Objective: Reducing unemployment among long-term unemployed and persons belonging to other vulnerable groups</b>  <b>Measure: c/ Development and implementation of specific activation and employment support measures for the persons at social risk (social assistance beneficiaries, Roma, other), aimed at stimulating their active presence in the labour market, job seeking and employment</b></p>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2020</p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> ... in OP</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Measures that will stimulate employment and active presence in the LM, as well as active job search by persons that are in the state of social risk (poor people, social assistance beneficiaries, Roma etc.). The measures are also aimed to reducing the informal work among this category of persons.  Creation of specific active measures for this target group, public works programs, measures for linking the financial social assistance with the employment subsidies, measures for strengthening the interinstitutional cooperation in providing support to these persons, engagement of trainers and mentors in the local communities who would motivate and regularly inform, mainly Roma people, on the possibilities and opportunities for employment or improvement of professional capacities etc.  <i>(Such measures will be part of the annual Operational plans)</i></p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b>  In 2017, as part of the Operational Plan for 2017, among others, a <u>Services for activation of individuals exposed to risk of social exclusion</u> and <u>Services to activate young unemployed people</u> were implemented. Services were provided by the mentors, engaged with the support of UNDP, and they conducted activities with different target groups of unemployed persons: identification of unemployed people who show interest in participating in activities involving the labor market, their motivation, promotion opportunities employment through the use of active programs and measures for employment, self-employment, support for persons in employment or registering own business and monitoring the performance of the candidates.  Services activation of individuals that are at risk of social exclusion (Roma and others exposed at risk of social exclusion, such as long-term unemployed, welfare recipients, etc.) were conducted in 18 municipalities in Republic of Macedonia, and Services activation of the young unemployed have been implemented in 40 municipalities. The mentors contacted and informed unemployed people about the opportunities offered through active programs and employment measures. For some of the people it was made an individual assessment of their capacities, with applying of the "Questionnaire for profiling and evaluation of the professional capacities of the unemployed person for engagement in active measures" and were directed to participate in appropriate active programs and measures for employment or service placement.    In 2017, the Program of conditional cash compensation for subsidized employment of individuals at social risk continue with its implementation, which was intended to encourage employers to recruit individuals in social risk. During the year the activities that were initiated in 2016 continued with their implementation, with the extension of the public announcement, after which in total 15 contracts were concluded with employers who employed 19 people (7 of them - women, 13 - young people aged up to 29 years ).</p>		



\* \* \*

In addition, during 2016 and 2017, within the IPA component 4, 38 grant projects were funded aimed at integration in the labor market of the most vulnerable groups (16 out of 38 projects were targeting the Roma community). 90 mostly civil society organizations, public institutions and local governments implemented models (e.g. Social entrepreneurship), measures and services to enable activation of persons who for various reasons are distant from the labor market.

Significant achieved results:

- total of 2,299 people participate in the trainings for soft skills, 715 were ethnic minorities members, mainly Roma, respectively women; 350 people with disabilities; 290 young people in social risk, with low qualifications; further, long-term unemployed people, victims of domestic violence, single parents - mostly mothers; persons serving a prison sentence; rural population; etc.
- more than 2,225 people were trained in various vocational skills, acquiring knowledge, experience and qualifications that will facilitate their entry to the labor market. Of these 683 were Roma women and members of other ethnic communities, 647 were people with disabilities and 464 - unemployed youths who are at risk of poverty and exclusion.
- In addition to acquiring soft and professional skills, 687 persons were provided also with mentoring, internships and job training. Of these 185 were Roma women and members of other ethnic minorities, people with disabilities 153 and 157 young unemployed people at risk of poverty and exclusion.
- 480 business plans for starting own business were developed
- 128 people are employed, but the number is expected to increase, having in consideration that the projects finished with their implementation id December 2017
- 200 courses/trainings were organized and 45 training modules were developed providing a good basis for training and retraining of vulnerable groups that face many obstacles hampering their efforts to join the labor market.

In relation to measures to support the inclusion in the labor market and employment of members of the Roma community in Macedonia, see also 3.3.4.1. – Measure a/

**3.1.2.2. Objective: Reducing unemployment among long-term unemployed and persons belonging to other vulnerable groups**

**Measure: d/ Measures for supporting female participation and employment and for tackling (reducing) the gender gap in the labour market in Macedonia**

Deadline: <b>2020</b>	Budget: <b>160,000 € + OP</b>
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**Description:** Various specific measures and actions will continue to be implemented in the future, aiming at improving the situation regarding the employment of women and their participation in the labor market and in further reducing the gender differences. Among other things, equal participation of women in active employment measures and labor market services will be encouraged and taken into account, support will be provided for design and implementation of measures for women belonging to specific vulnerable groups, such as rural women, women from specific ethnic communities, women without or with low levels of education. Implementation of measures to further enhancement of the legal and institutional framework for improving gender equality and fighting gender based discrimination, protection of maternity, strengthening the inspection activities in this area and improving the capacities of several relevant institutions and social partners in the area. It is planned to implement specific actions for tackling the pay inequalities between women and men and enforcement of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

Specific part of these activities will be the promotion of issues related to reconciliation of work and family responsibilities, raising awareness for better balance between work and personal life, assessing the possibilities for promotion and introduction of more flexible working arrangements, work with the employers for their greater awareness and sensibilization, specific measures to facilitate family responsibilities of women, such as the care for children and other family members, development of alternative of childcare forms and services etc. There are also measures planned within this part, aimed at reducing the incidence of undeclared work among women and supporting formalization in certain specific areas, such as the hiring of nannies, housemaids etc.

Activities will also be implemented for supporting women's entrepreneurship and for financial support (grants) to enterprises owned by women and/or managed by women. In 2017 it is planned to prepare and adopt a special **Strategy for Women's Entrepreneurship 2017-2020** (first of its kind in the Republic of Macedonia).

The specific measures and activities that are planned and presented in this area, among others, will be carried out within the implementation of the active employment programs and measures, also within the activities supported by IPA (TA service projects, grant schemes), the programmes for competitiveness, innovations and entrepreneurship managed by the ME, projects and initiatives supported by international organizations and development partners, etc. It is also planned to conduct analyses of the expected impact of a specific employment measures on men and women covered by them, i.e. gender impact analysis

**Implementation:**

The Strategy for Women's Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Macedonia is in the final stage of preparation – process coordinated by the Ministry of Economy, with financial and technical support from GTF (Gender Task Force) - Initiative for sustainable growth and cooperation with the Association of Business Women in Macedonia. The strategy is expected to be finalized and adopted during 2018.

Pursuant to the draft text, the Strategy for Development of Women's Entrepreneurship aims to contribute to the economic empowerment of women through the creation of a favorable business climate and providing support for the development of their entrepreneurial potential, which will contribute to the development of existing and opening new businesses, creating new jobs, thereby strengthening the overall economy. In the long term it is expected to encourage and build entrepreneurial eco-system for the continuous development of female entrepreneurship in the country.

Expected results are to create an improved climate, opportunities and conditions for the development of female entrepreneurship through the active involvement of all stakeholders in the practical implementation of the Strategy, to increase the number of women starting a business venture, to increase the number of employees in companies established as a result of female entrepreneurship, and of course, to directly affect the increase of women employment.

Simultaneously to be realized and implemented many different initiatives and projects aimed precisely at raising awareness, encouraging and popularizing women's entrepreneurship and more active involvement of women in the labor market (e.g. Organizing various training activities for capacity building, organizing the event for "Selection of the most successful woman entrepreneur for eastern and southeastern region" for 2017, activities of the "Association of Business Women of the Republic Macedonia", implementation of the Project "*WE MAKE: Female Entrepreneurship*"; and "*Strengthening the contribution and effectiveness of civil society organizations in women's entrepreneurship to EU integration reforms in the field of economic policy - WE-Contribute*", "*Creating a favorable business environment and providing better system support to businesses owned by women*" financially supported by the European Union, forming of the first National Council for women's entrepreneurship in the Republic of Macedonia (2018), etc.).

In the past period it were realized and many other initiatives, measures and activities aimed to encourage the participation of women in the labor market and contribute to improving women's employment. Realized initiatives and measures aimed at addressing the harmonization of work and family responsibilities of women, such as activities within the IPA - Component IV Project alternative for childcare services, initiatives to increase the enrollment of Roma children and / or rural children in facilities for pre-school care and education, it is started to be realized initiatives for the development of services (e.g. the service of personal assistance) that could contribute to facilitating family responsibilities to women, such as caring for family members and thus indirectly contribute to creating conditions for improved and facilitated access of women to the labor market, etc.

\* \* \*

In addition, during the 2016/2017 several smaller grant projects were implemented under the two grant schemes financed by the European Union (IPA Component 4) "*Fostering social inclusion*" and "*Promoting social inclusion at local level*" (38 projects in total), which implemented various measures and specific actions aimed at supporting social inclusion and employment of various categories of vulnerable people in local communities. Among others, specific projects were implemented aimed precisely to contribute to the inclusion of women from vulnerable groups in the labor market, to promote female entrepreneurship, to increase the employability of women, etc. Many of these projects were targeting the Roma women and women from other ethnic communities, there were projects that targeted single mothers, women-victims of domestic violence etc.

As an examples in this respect, we could specifically mention the Project "*Program for (self) employment for single mothers*" - activities for single mothers (especially former victims of domestic violence) to provide them with skills, confidence and access to opportunities for sustainable employment and self-employment then the project "*Creating new employment opportunities for women*" where the target group were long-term unemployed women, the Project "*Participation of Roma women in the labor market*", "*Platform for entrepreneurship for economic and social inclusion of women from minority groups*," the Project "*Equal opportunities for Roma to participate in the labor market*", the Project "*Support for inclusion Roma women and women from ethnic minorities in the labor market* ", the Project titled "*Rural women: Key to economic growth*" - in which specific activities and tailored programs for capacity building in accordance with individual needs and requirements (Preparation of individual action plans for employment, different kinds of training, etc.) were covered around 180 women from Polog region aged 20 to 45 years, the Project "*Train yourself, get support, employ yourself*" - actions to integrate women belonging to ethnic groups (the Eastern plan region) in the labor market, the Project "*Empowering Roma-women by creating social enterprises*" and many other projects.

In 14 out of the mentioned 38 grant projects, in various trainings for development of soft and vocational skills and trainings in the workplace around 1,900 women were included, from which most Roma-women (about 70%), Albanian women (15%), Macedonian and women from other ethnic groups, generally unemployed and long-term unemployed women, unemployed single mothers (30), over 150 women from rural areas etc. Through these projects it is allowed encouraging and improving the capacity of women, change of status from passive to active job seekers, information and reporting for active employment measures and etc.

Also it were promoted equal employment opportunities for women and men Roma from IPA grants during 2017 was provided support to 305 Roma adults, of whom 280 women with no or incomplete primary education and elementary education and enable these people to acquire diplomas for finished high school (around 140 women) and a certificate of secondary education (40 women). Also in addition to the so-called second chance, in order to provide better access to the labor market, these people were involved in training in soft skills and active job search with the help of mediation, networking and active involvement of local stakeholders (Centers for employment and potential employers).

( see also 3.1.2.2. – Measure c/ )

**3.1.2.2. Objective: Reducing unemployment among long-term unemployed and persons belonging to other vulnerable groups**

<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> ... in OP
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**Measure: e/ Implementation of measures for employment support of persons with disabilities**

**Description:** Implementation of existing and design of new measures for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market, such as employment subsidies and other benefits for employment of persons belonging to this vulnerable group. For instance, the measure/program for self-employment of persons with disabilities is included here, that has been active since 2015 and is aimed at familiarizing these persons with entrepreneurship, at developing efficient cooperation between relevant institutions, organizations and associations working with PwDs and at motivating these persons through individual approach, to register their own businesses, after which business experts will provide support in the form of regular monitoring and counseling, in order to ensure better sustainability of the established businesses.

*(Such measures will be part of the annual Operational plans*

**Implementation:**

The Program for Self-employment of disabled persons began with its realization in 2015 and it continued throughout 2016 and 2017. During 2017 the public announcement was published and in total of 74 persons applied. 52 people attended to the trainings that were successfully completed by 51 people. 50 business plans were developed and selected (18 were from women and 15 from young people). Company registered 48 people (16 were women, young people were 11) and an agreement to use the grant was signed by 47 people. Additionally they employed 5 people (all women), of which 2 persons are young

Currently it is implemented the Law on Employment of Disabled Persons, and in 2017 were supported 223 employments of disabled persons among 138 employers. They were also approved 6 applications for adapting the workplace and 36 requests for equipment.

At the same time, many other projects, initiatives and activities were realized aimed to encourage the participation of persons with disabilities in the labor market and contribute towards improving opportunities for their involvement in the open economy. Among other, until July 2017 the Project "Promoting Social Inclusion Services" (financed by IPA Component IV) was implemented, and within its framework numerous activities were realized that laid the foundations for establishing and developing the services of vocational rehabilitation and personal assistance, which in addition to other vulnerable groups, are directed also specifically towards persons with disabilities and aim to contribute to their easier integration in the labor market. Laws and bylaws for vocational rehabilitation were developed, 10 standards were also developed and tested, as well as the methodology and 5 programs for conducting professional rehabilitation, and 170 professionals that work with people with disabilities were trained.

There were also developed standards for personal assistance, and the proposed model of personal assistance is piloted for 67 users with medium or high level of physical handicap in 8 locations: Ohrid, Bitola, Veles, Kumanovo, Tetovo, Kocani and Skopje.

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Furthermore, in the past period (2016/2017) several smaller grant projects were also implemented under the two grant schemes financed by the European Union (IPA Component 4) - "Fostering social inclusion" and "Promoting social inclusion at local level" (38 projects in total), which implemented various measures and specific initiatives and activities aimed at supporting social inclusion and employment of various categories of vulnerable people in the local communities. Among others, projects specifically targeting persons with disabilities were implemented and aimed precisely to contribute to the inclusion of this vulnerable group of persons in the labor market, to increase their employability, facilitating access to the labor market etc.

As an example of such projects we could point-out to the Project "Planning a model for sustainable employment of persons with disabilities" - promoting and piloting a model of sustainable employment for persons with disabilities based on their capabilities, covering persons from the Skopje region (over 150 people with disabilities were involved in various training and other activities), then the Project "Promoting active involvement of disadvantaged people excluded from the labor market" - in whose activities persons with disabilities were also included, Project named as "Center for employment of people with disabilities", the Project "Kitchen on wheels" - for creating of employment opportunities for people with disabilities, the Project "Pilot actions for access to employment rights of people with disabilities" and others.

( see also 3.1.2.2. – Measure c/ )

**3.1.2.2. Objective: Reducing unemployment among long-term unemployed and persons belonging to other vulnerable groups**

<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> XXX
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**Measure f/ Development of social entrepreneurship, aiming at creating work places and supporting integration of the most disadvantaged categories into the labour market**

**Description:** Implementation of numerous activities is planned for development, promotion and support of social entrepreneurship in the Republic of Macedonia, through establishment and completion of the necessary regulatory framework, identifying and developing adequate mechanisms and instruments for financial and other type of support to the social enterprises, raising public awareness on these issues etc. The activities for supporting social entrepreneurship will contribute to direct creation of job places for socially disadvantaged categories of citizens within the social enterprises, but also to increased opportunities for inclusion in the labor market through their participation in the programs of the established social-entrepreneurial centers/services for social and professional (re)integration.

In this way, the labour market participation will additionally be supported and improved for the disadvantaged/vulnerable categories of citizens (long-term unemployed, homeless, persons with disabilities, Roma, socially at-risk families, low-educated persons, vulnerable categories of young persons, victims of human trafficking or domestic violence, single parents, former drug and alcohol addicts, ex-prisoners and others).

The planned activities related to the social entrepreneurship development are presented in more details under the section 3.3.3.1. *Development and improvement of the social services and the opportunities for inclusion of various stakeholders in the high-quality and efficient provision of community-based social services*; measure b/ *Promotion and development of social entrepreneurship*.

**Implementation:**

In order to improve and enhance the inclusiveness of the labor market in the country and motivate the creation of new employment opportunities by stimulating the social economy, in the period May 2016 - November 2017 the Project "Fostering social entrepreneurship" (IPA Component 4) was realized. As part of the project a number of activities were conducted aimed at building an enabling environment for social entrepreneurship, and an expert support was provided to the working group that worked on preparation of draft legislation, in consultation with relevant stakeholders (civil society and other relevant state institutions/ministries). A pilot measures and financial instrument for future support of the social enterprises were also developed, together with the tools for monitoring the social entrepreneurship measures and a mechanism for systematically collecting information about social enterprises.

12 NGOs that operate under the principles of social entrepreneurship, were provided with a technical assistance and workshops to promote their work, in order to start or develop social businesses. In the process of financial and management strengthening, the 12 NGOs through workshops were informed of the potential financial instruments and ways to sell their goods and services, developed as social businesses. Social entrepreneurship was promoted among young people within the Open Days organized at the three state universities in Skopje and Bitola and several high schools in Skopje. A group of students and high school students (about 40) were involved in practical training / internship in the 12 social enterprises. Also, within the project activities, some micro-finance organizations have been approached and work with, in order to facilitate understanding of social entrepreneurship and their involvement in the financing and development of social entrepreneurship. Also, a cooperation was established with certain donors (embassies of Switzerland, Poland, Japan and Denmark) to initiate allocation of funds as initial capital for the 12 civil society organizations in the implementation of socio-economic activities/social businesses, according to the principles of social entrepreneurship.

( see also 3.3.3.1. - Measure b/ )

<p><b>3.1.2.2. Objective: Reducing unemployment among long-term unemployed and persons belonging to other vulnerable groups</b>  <b>Measure: g/ Regular and continuous monitoring and evaluation of the success of active employment measures and labour market services, setting targets and follow-up of their achievement</b></p>	<p><b>Deadline</b>  <b>2020</b></p>	<p><b>Budget:</b>  <b>95,000 €</b></p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Implementation of measures that will further improve and strengthen the processes, the procedures and mechanisms for regular monitoring of the implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of LM measures and services. The main objective is through this to contribute to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the measures that are designed and implemented, to improve the use of available financial and other resources for this purpose, to improve targeting and coverage of beneficiaries, to provide the necessary information for the possible need to modify and improve the measures and programmes and so on. It is very important that in these activities of regular monitoring and evaluation of employment policies, in addition to the state institutions, the social partners to be actively involved as much as possible. That will contribute, to a great extent, to a more efficient and effective creation/design of new policies and measures in the labour market and modification of the existing ones (wherever necessary).</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b>                  The implementation of the active employment programs and measures is regularly monitored, which results in appropriately, based on the results and identified weaknesses and challenges, redesign and adaptation of the design and coverage of beneficiaries of the programs and measures. This is being done during developing and preparation of the new Operational plans for active programs and measures for employment and labour market services, and if necessary, amendments (review) of the current Operational plans are also prepared.</p> <p>In addition, during 2017 with support provided by the International Labor Organization, a detailed monitoring report on the progress in current implementation of the Action Plan for Youth Employment 2020 was prepared. The preparation of this report was part of the projected medium-term monitoring and assessment of the progress in achieving planned results and objectives of the Action Plan for youth employment. This analysis (monitoring report) which was prepared in September 2017, and then it was used as the main starting point and basis for the preparation of the planned periodical review the Action Plan on Youth Employment 2020, which included defined activities and objectives envisaged for implementation by 2020. The Plan was also supplemented with a special section "Youth Guarantee". The revised Action Plan on Youth Employment was adopted at the beginning of February 2018.</p>		

### 3.1.3. Tackling informal employment

<p><b>3.1.3.1. Objective: Reducing the occurrence and existence of the informal employment in Macedonia</b>  <b>Measure: a/ Strengthening the capacities and effectiveness of inspection services in tackling undeclared work, including also improving the harmonization with the European Union standards and the enforcement of the legislation in the field of occupational health and safety</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2018/2020</p>	<p>Budget: 1,000,000 €</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Carrying out trainings for issues regarding various situations involving existence of undeclared work and informality in working relations, transfer and familiarization with the international experiences in this area, development and implementation of new methods and tools for addressing informal economy, measures for increasing the number, the frequency and the efficiency of the inspection supervisions conducted by the inspectors from the SLI in the areas/activities where there is an increased existence of unregistered employment, such as the construction sector, agriculture, tourism, small enterprises etc. Within this area, there are planned activities aimed at further improvement of the regulation, strengthening the capacities and functioning of all relevant institutions and stakeholders in the field of safety and health at work. In this area, which is facing important challenges, both in terms of legislation and in terms of its consistent practical application and enforcement, there are planned activities for assessment of the regulation harmonization, further strengthening of human capacities (including the inspection services), strengthening the capacities and the work of the Council for OSH, awareness-raising on issues in the area of OSH, development and improvement of a national system for collecting and recording information and data on accidents at work and occupational diseases etc. ILO participates in providing support in carrying out part of these activities and in addition to that, the support through IPA II is planned, as well</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b>  Numerous activities in this area have been realized in the previous period with the support from the European Union, within the project "<i>Support to the fight against undeclared work</i>", implemented through IPA-Component 4. Through the project activities a work has been done on capacity building and strengthening the efforts of all relevant national stakeholders in ensuring a systematic and coordinated approach to the institutions and the social partners in the fight against the phenomenon of undeclared work and informal employment. Much of the project activities were related to capacity building, work processes and procedures, improving the material resources of the State Labor Inspectorate and the labor inspectors. It were organized several workshops, trainings and seminars on various topics for the labor inspectors and representatives of other stakeholders, it was worked on how to strengthen the mechanisms and forms of cooperation and a coordinated approach between the Inspectorate, representatives of employers and workers, other relevant institutions. Among other topics, trainings were conducted on topics such as, what are the fundamentals of undeclared work, best practices in inspection, designing and implementation of public educational campaigns for undeclared work, basics of labor relations, improving the efficiency of inspectors of SLI (State Labour Inspectorate), awareness raising and connectivity/networking, effective public relations and communication with the media and others. Activities were also implemented for public opinion research and awareness of the citizens on their direct or indirect participation and influence in undeclared work.</p> <p>For improving the work and cooperation in this area were also signed several memoranda of cooperation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Memorandum for cooperation and data exchange between the State Labor Inspectorate, the State Technical Inspectorate, the State Market Inspectorate, the State Sanitary and Health Inspectorate;</li> <li>- Memorandum of Cooperation between SLI and ESA,</li> <li>- Memorandum of Cooperation to obtain data on misdemeanor procedure between SLI and the Central Registry of Macedonia (CRM);</li> <li>- Agreement for use of Internet distribution system, SLI and CRM</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the capacity of the State Labor Inspectorate was further strengthened, through the purchase of vehicles for the SLI (20), purchase of computer equipment (65 laptops), air conditioners, office furniture.</p>		
<p><b>3.1.3.1. Objective: Reducing the occurrence and existence of the informal employment in Macedonia</b>  <b>Measure: b/ Strengthening the tripartite approach and cooperation in tackling informal employment and preparation of the tripartite National Strategy for formalization of the informal economy</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2017</p>	<p>Budget: 90,000 €</p>

**Description:**  
 The strategy is going to be prepared and harmonized through the process of tri-partite consultations and through the Economic and Social Council. Efforts will be put towards further strengthening of the mutual cooperation and joint development of tri-partite initiatives, programs and measures for formalization of informal economy, for improving the cooperation in this area within the Economic and Social Council and the established local economic and social councils, establishment and functioning of a special working group for addressing issues in this area within the ESC etc. The ILO will participate in providing support in implementation these activities.

**Implementation:**  
 In March 2018 the Government of the Republic of Macedonia has adopted the **Strategy for the formalization of the informal economy in the Republic of Macedonia 2018-2022** (57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Government, March 6, 2018).  
 The development of this strategy was supported also by ILO and it is prepared with the active participation of many relevant institutions and social partners, and in the process of preparation NGO sector was also consulted. The Strategy presented peculiarities of the informal economy in the Republic of Macedonia, the reasons for its existence, current measures and activities taken to tackle this phenomenon, the most significant upcoming challenges in this area, and of course, the basics strategic objectives were defined, together with the specific objectives and the guidelines for further action. The general objective of the Strategy for the formalization of the informal economy in the Republic of Macedonia for the period 2018-2022 has been the creation of a comprehensive and consistent system for effectively reducing the informal employees, unregistered businesses and informal activities within the formal economy.  
 The government adopted also a conclusion for the corresponding coordinating body to be established, responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Strategy, composed of representatives nominated by a number of relevant institutions.  
 With the purpose to operationalize the strategic objectives, currently a preparation of a corresponding Action Plan is ongoing, and it is expected to be adopted by the Government in July 2018.

<b>3.1.3.1. Objective: Reducing the occurrence and existence of the informal employment in Macedonia</b> <b>c/ Implementation of a national campaign(s) and other promotional activities for informing and raising public awareness about the need and the benefits of formalization of the informal employment and the risks and harmful effects of the unregistered work, both for the employees, as well as for the economic and social situation in the country</b>	<b>Deadline:</b> 2018/2020	<b>Budget:</b> 45,000 € + IPA
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**Implementation:**  
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<b>3.1.3.1. Objective: Reducing the occurrence and existence of the informal employment in Macedonia</b> <b>Measure: d/ Design and Implementation of additional targeted measures for tackling informal employment and transition from informal to formal employment</b>	<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> 400,000 €
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**Description:** development and implementation of specific measures, for ex. measures for registration and formalization of persons hired to care for children (nannies) and/or housekeepers and cleaners (introduction of a voucher system), this type and/or similar measures in the agriculture, tourism and hospitality sector, measures for stimulation of activation of social assistance beneficiaries and reducing informal work among them, measures for improving information and knowledge of students/youth on the negative effects of grey economy etc.

**Implementation:**  
 In this area it is worth to mention the IPA project "Promoting alternative childcare services" that was implemented until September 2017 and within which, among other things, several surveys were conducted to better understand the needs (demand) and opportunities for further development of childcare services. A field survey was conducted in the period November 2016 - February 2017, covering over 2,000 parents, in order to identify the demand and supply of services for childcare. A research was also conducted on 200 companies that have over 50 employees, on the topics of harmonization of policies on work and family life and on how different options affect the ability of families to reconcile work and family life in the companies, in what way these options could be prepared for the introduction and implementation as part of their human resources policy.  
 A minimum standards for quality services for childcare and competence of providers of services for childcare were also prepared, as well as the minimum standards for children with special needs, a study on the costs for establishment of offered childcare services. A review was also prepared on the current/existing programs available for self-employment and active employment measures

were drafted for the establishment and provision of services for home childcare. Additionally, an overview of European practices in the area of childcare services, was provided, especially on the proposed models (childcare in the home environment and childcare within the company).

Related to the improved and flexible, affordable and higher-quality alternative childcare services, a training program was designed and tested for future providers of these services in home environment, as a pilot activity, a textbook was also developed and used to conduct 115-hour training program, in which through theoretical and practical part, 22 potential service providers in domestic services were trained, with a goal to allow formalization of this type of services. Of these 18 people were involved in the licensing process for care-givers that was implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. This training program, also represents a platform for future development and proposals for trainings for deficit occupations.

**3.1.3.1. Objective: Reducing the occurrence and existence of the informal employment in Macedonia**

**Measure: e/ Improvement and further strengthening of the electronic exchange of data and information among various competent institutions, comparison and cross check of data in the databases**

Deadline: <b>2020</b>	Budget: <b>XXX</b>
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**Description:** Improving the mechanisms and processes related to data exchange among the ESARM, the Agencies for temporary employments and Agencies for employment mediation, MLSP, SLI, Social work centres, Public revenue office, Central register, PDIF and others.

**Implementation:**

With support provided within the project activities of the IPA Project “*Support to the fight against undeclared work*”, for the purpose of further promoting and improving the work and collaboration in this area, several memorandums for collaboration were signed:

- Memorandum for cooperation and data exchange between the State Labor Inspectorate, the State Technical Inspectorate, the State Market Inspectorate, the State Sanitary and Health Inspectorate;
- Memorandum of Cooperation between SLI and ESA;
- Memorandum of Cooperation to obtain data on misdemeanor procedure between SLI and the Central Registry of Macedonia;
- Agreement for use of Internet distribution system, between SLI and CRM

( see also 3.1.3.1. – Measure a/ )



### 3.1.4. Improving quality of work and services of the public employment service (PES)

<b>3.1.4.1. Objective: Further improvement of the ESARM capacities</b>	Deadline: 2020	Budget: 1,500,000 €
<b>Measure: a/ Improvement of the physical capacities and work conditions in the Employment service agency</b>		
<b>Description:</b> The office renovations/reconstructions have been started, and during this period 12 regional employment centres have been renovated/modernized (Kavadarci, Sveti Nikole, Delchevo, Kriva Palanka, Shtip, Radovish, Resen, Kochani, Negotino, Probishtip, Bitola, Vinica), with financial support provided through the IPA component 4. By 2020, it is planned all 30-regional employment centres to be renovated/refurbished, which will lead to a substantial upgrade and improve of the working conditions and the quality of services delivered to the unemployed persons and employers. In the reconstruction and carrying out the construction works, in accordance with the existing legislation, the specific needs for access to these buildings/facilities for persons with disabilities, will be respected.		
<b>Implementation:</b> Up to this point, renovated and reconstructed are 12 Employment Centers.		
<b>3.1.4.1. Objective: Further improvement of the ESARM capacities</b>	Deadline: 2020	Budget: 270,000 €
<b>Measure: b/ Opening of new dispersed offices of the regional Employment centres</b>		
<b>Description:</b> For the purpose of improving the access and facilitating the use of ESARM services, 26 dispersed offices of the Employment centres have been opened so far, which have usually one employee from the regional Employment centre and who provides clients with the necessary services, such as registering unemployed persons and their regular check-in, registration and deregistration from employment, employment mediation upon request from the unemployed persons or employers, employment preparation services for the unemployed persons, registration for participation in the active employment programs and measures, receiving applications for exercising the right to unemployment benefit etc. By 2020, it is planned for additional 14 new dispersed offices of the regional employment centres to be opened		
<b>Implementation:</b> In the past period, 29 dispersed offices of the regional employment services were opened.		
<b>Changes/adjustments/possible delays and postponements/change of priorities:</b> After receiving and analyzing information about the functionality and appropriateness of the dispersed offices of the regional employment services, 4 offices have been closed, so that the current number of dispersed offices is 25.		
<b>3.1.4.1. Objective: Further improvement of the ESARM capacities</b>	Deadline: 2020	Budget: From the ESI budget
<b>Measure: c/ Developing human resources in the public employment service, through increasing the number of employees and ensuring their continuous development</b>		
<b>Description:</b> The great attention will continue to be paid in the future to the continuous development of the human resources in the ESARM, further development and increase of their knowledge, skills and competencies for delivering high quality services to their clients. By 2020 it is planned to increase the number of employees (staff) in the public employment service by at least 10%, and each ESA employee (excluding the auxiliary and technical staff), at least once a year, will participate in certain training program, workshop or seminar, which will be of significance for its particular work place and for improvement of the quality of services that he/she provides.		
<b>Implementation:</b> Employment Service Agency of the Republic of Macedonia continuously pays attention and cares for the development, strengthening and upgrading its human capacities, i.e. human resources. In this regard, during 2017, as well as before, all ESA employees attended various seminars, workshops and lectures, aimed at further upgrading their knowledge and skills.		

<p><b>3.1.4.2. Objective: Further improvement of services and work of the ESARM with its clients (unemployed and employers)</b>  <b>Measure a/ Improving the profiling process, preparation and the quality of the individual employment plans, thus achieving an increase in the employment of the unemployed persons</b></p>	<p>Deadline 2020</p>	<p>Budget: 220,000 €</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Based on the performed profiling and categorizing of unemployed persons, for persons classified as directly employable or with moderate obstacles in finding employment, a counseling session will continue with developing of IEP in accordance with the existing practice in the employment centres, i.e. preparation of the IEP - version 1. In the cases when it is determined that the unemployed person is facing significant obstacles in finding employment, an individual employment strategy, i.e. IEP - version 2 will be prepared for that person.                  This reform measure of the ESARM in the process of profiling and preparing IEPs, started with its practical implementation in January 2016, and since then, we have noticed the need for its significant strengthening, among other, through additional training programs for the staff in the Employment centres and also, through significant increase in the number of unemployed persons that will be subjected to profiling. And this is something to which greater attention will be paid in the period to come.                  It is planned that by 2020, the Individual employment plans – Version 2 will be prepared for approximately 40,000 unemployed persons, and at least 60% of those persons are to be included in some of the ALMMs and services within the period of next 12 months.</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b>                  The Employment Service Agency of the Republic of Macedonia continuously conducts the process of profiling of unemployed persons, which determines the level of their opportunity/possibility for easier employment. For this purpose and <b>Individual Employment Plans</b> are being prepared, and they can be either <b>IEP 1</b> - for people with minor and moderate difficulties/obstacles in employment or <b>IEP 2</b> - for people with major difficulties for their inclusion in the labor market. In the past period (2016 and 2017 – since when this activity was initiated) a total of 10,660 IEP 2 were prepared and in the same period, approximately 228,000 IEP 1 plans were made (for more easily employable persons).</p>		
<p><b>3.1.4.2. Objective: Further improvement of services and work of the ESARM with its clients (unemployed and employers)</b>  <b>Measure b/ Strengthening the cooperation with the employers</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2020</p>	<p>Budget: 120,000 €</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Strengthening of links and cooperation with the employers is planned in this area, through appointing certain ESA employees within the regional ESA offices that will function as a contact persons for cooperation with the employers and who will have knowledge of the characteristics of the available labour force, in order to being able to timely meet (respond to the employer's requests. It is expected that such measures will contribute to increase the number of submitted employment mediation requests by the employers and majority of these to be successfully realized.                  The current situation is such that approx. 4,600 requests for mediation are received annually and 72% are successfully realized.</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b>                  Providing information, as well as facilitating the access to services to employers during 2017 was implemented through systematic planning and implementation of effective services for employers, as well as monitoring their performance and effects, by meeting the common needs and interests.                  Employment Centers had continuously cooperated with employers and had direct meetings, both in Employment centers, and through visiting the employers. The cooperation with employers has been realized through several types of activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mediation in employment,</li> <li>- cooperation with employers through their active involvement in specific active employment programs, measures and services;</li> <li>- continuous informing employers about current activities, measures and services provided by ESA and those that they can use;</li> <li>- providing legal advice, opinions and clarifying the legal framework;</li> <li>- organizing joint meetings and visits (for mutual information, exchange of information, providing guidance and suggestions) etc.</li> </ul> <p>During 2017, a total of 4,174 requests for placement (employment mediation) have been received. Of these, 2,685 applications (64.3%) were positively resolved (3,405 employed people). In other cases, the employers cancel (give up) the request for mediation or have not been satisfied with the offered labor force.</p>		

<p><b>3.1.4.2. Objective: Further improvement of services and work of the ESARM with its clients (unemployed and employers)</b>  <b>Measure: c/ Improvement of the cooperation between the Employment Centres and the Social Work Centres, especially in the field of activation of the beneficiaries of social assistance and other types of benefits, persons under the risk of social exclusion, such as Roma, persons with disabilities</b></p>	<p>Deadline: <b>2020</b></p>	<p>Budget: <b>XXX</b></p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Activities and measures for joint meetings, information and data exchange, strengthening and deepening mutual collaboration, joint work and involvement in design and implementation of specific activities, especially targeted to beneficiaries of certain financial benefits, socially at risk persons, persons not sufficiently active, for the purpose of their activation and inclusion in the labour market, motivation and other specific activities etc.</p>		
<p><b>Implementation</b>                  In performing its activities, the Employment Service Agency of the Republic of Macedonia (i.e. the Employment Centers) and the Social Work Centers mutually exchange information on persons who are social assistance beneficiaries. In this respect, the implementation of employment programs, measures and services that include social assistance recipients, at the request of the ESA, the SW Center provides the data proving whether the persons who have applied for participation in the employment measures are social assistance recipients. On the other hand, when determining entitlements to social protection, SWCs have the opportunity through web-services to check whether the person is registered as unemployed in the ESA, and whether he/she is a beneficiary of financial compensation due to unemployment (unemployment benefit) – data needed in the process of determining the amount of person’s financial social assistance.                   The mutual collaboration, coordination and data and information exchange will continue and will be further developed and improved.</p>		

**3.1.5. Strengthening social dialogue in RM at tripartite and bipartite level, at national and local level, improvement of the collective bargaining**

<p><b>3.1.5.1. Objective: Strengthening the capacities of social partners and social dialogue mechanisms</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2020</p>	<p>Budget: 1,600,000 €</p>
<p><b>Measure: a/ Implementation of specific measures for strengthening the capacities of social partners (trade unions and employers' organizations) to improve the existing and develop new services for their members; promotion of services in order to retain existing and attract new membership</b></p>		
<p><b>Description:</b> It is planned to organize and implement different types of trainings, support in the improvement of the existing ones and development of new services for the members of the organizations of workers and employers (legal aid, organization and delivery of trainings, support in the field of occupational safety and health etc.), further development and improvement of the functioning mechanisms, consultations, and advocacy of the member's interests, mechanisms and instruments for organization and attracting new membership etc. Support will be provided to the existing and, where appropriate, new local and regional offices of employers' organizations and trade unions will be established and equipped. A needs assessment will be conducted, and based on the results, a new services for members will be developed and promoted, on specific topics in accordance with the expressed needs, such as the effective organizing and international labor standards, analysis of policies (eg. economic, legal, social, environmental), understanding economic concepts, networking and advocacy skills, communication skills and public relations, legal counseling, web design, human resources management, financial and accounting skills for SMEs, soft skills etc.</p>		
<p>Support in the implementation of planned measures shall be provided by the ILO, and significant support for these activities is planned to be provided through IPA II, as well</p>		
<p><b>Implementation</b></p>		
<p>Within the Project "<i>Promoting social dialogue</i>", co-financed by IPA Component 4 and implemented until March 2017 as a direct grant to the ILO, among others, many activities have been implemented aimed at strengthening the bipartite and tripartite dialogue, together with the numerous activities to improve the physical and human capacities of the Economic and Social Council and the Local Economic and Social Councils, but also of the social partners as well. Many trainings and workshops were organized on topics and issues related to the functioning of the social dialogue at various levels and improving the collective bargaining at sectoral level - for trade unions and employers from the sectors of transport and communications, construction, trade, tourism and catering, textiles, agriculture.</p>		
<p>The provided technical and expert assistance in the framework of the Project, contributed to the development of strategic plans and management statutes of employers' organizations. Five analyzes/documents were developed on the improving the business climate, development and implementation of communications and marketing strategies that will improve the visibility and image of the social partners, and on further promotion and improvement of the rights of workers through the creation and implementation of specific targeted web-page and campaign.</p>		
<p>The project has assisted in developing a specific strategy for marketing and communication for organizations of employers and the communication strategy for the trade unions. The preparation of the strategies followed the prepared analyzes of the current situation of the social partners, their image, perception among the general public and relevant institutions, as well as their competition. Based on this, specific measures and tools were established and developed, to enable organizations to become more visible and attractive to the existing and potential new members. A number of activities, included in the mentioned strategies, were implemented, starting from organizing promotional events, media appearances, designing new web-sites, development and dissemination of promotional materials and PR campaign.</p>		
<p>The Organization of Employers of Macedonia (ORM) and the Business Confederation of Macedonia (BCM) reported an increase in their memberships, as a result of project activities, by 12.84% and 10%, respectively. Confederation of Free Trade Unions (CFTU) also reported about unofficial increase of their membership by about 20% and a slight increase in membership, as a result of the action plan for advocacy and promotion, was also reported by the regional officers of the Federation of Trade Unions of Macedonia (SSM).</p>		
<p>The implementation of such activities aimed at strengthen the social dialogue and capacities of the social partners will continue to be intensively implemented from the IV<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2018 onwards, within the framework of the planned project for strengthening (supporting) social dialogue (second phase), that will also be co-financed by EU (IPA II), and implemented in the form of direct grant to the International Labour Organization (ILO).</p>		

<p><b>3.1.5.1. Objective: Strengthening the capacities of social partners and social dialogue mechanisms</b>  <b>Measure: b/ Improving the capacities of the employers' and employees' organizations for engaging in collective bargaining, improvement of the negotiation skills</b>  <b>Description:</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2020</p>	<p>Budget: ... IPA</p>
<p><b>Implementation:</b>                  Within the project "Promoting social dialogue" co-financed by the EU (IPA I), the trainings in six sectors (transport, trade, tourism, agriculture, construction and textiles) were conducted, aimed at strengthening the negotiating capacities of the social partners, covering 155 trained persons from employers' associations and trade unions.</p> <p>A Tripartite Action Plan for Promotion of Collective Bargaining was prepared, based on the analysis of the regulatory framework for collective bargaining and received contributions/inputs from social partners. The plan contains seven measures, one of which is related to gender and refers to the analysis of equal pay for work of equal value. With the support of the ILO, the planned measures have been implemented (in accordance with the tripartite AP) for capacity building of the negotiating teams of employers' organizations and trade unions, through numerous trainings on collective bargaining, providing relevant materials, manuals, training programs, exchange and transfer of international experience in sectoral collective bargaining, training of mediators for assisted collective bargaining.</p> <p>The Organization of Employers of Macedonia (ORM) and the Association of Trade Unions of Macedonia (SSM) in the reporting period, have signed the collective agreements in the sectors of agriculture, tobacco, textiles and leather.</p> <p>The training programs were developed for trainings in collective negotiation skills for organizations of workers and employers in six sectors (transport, trade, tourism, agriculture, construction and textiles), taking into account the identified needs, and guidelines for collective bargaining were also developed, which represent a basis for many other activities.</p> <p>In addition to the trainings for collective negotiation skills, employers' organizations and trade unions, also had the opportunity to get acquainted with the practical experience from the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany and were informed about the services that are offered and strategies that are used in the process of collective negotiations. All trade unions and employers' organizations participating in the implementation of project activities have their teams of negotiators who have been trained in all six selected sectors. 31 representative from the two employers' organizations have undergone and passed the trainings and 124 representatives from the three trade unions. Trained members from the negotiating teams of the ORM and SSM have used their newly acquired skills and conducted training to the other members of the organization, as a new kind of service.</p> <p>Additional activities related to this specific measure will begin to be implemented starting from the IV quarter of 2018, within the framework of the new planned project for supporting social dialogue (phase II), funded by the EU (IPA II), as a direct grant to the ILO.</p>		
<p><b>3.1.5.1. Objective: Strengthening the capacities of social partners and social dialogue mechanisms</b>  <b>Measure: c/ Implementation of promotional activities for awareness raising among workers about the role, the necessity and the benefits from organizing within the trade unions</b>  <b>Description:</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2020</p>	<p>Budget: ... IPA</p>
<p><b>Implementation:</b>                  Intensive activities related to the measure will begin to be implemented starting from the IV<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2018, within the upcoming new project to for supporting social dialogue (second phase), financed by the EU with a direct grant to the International Labour Organization.</p>		

<p><b>3.1.5.1. Objective: Strengthening the capacities of social partners and social dialogue mechanisms</b>  <b>Measure: d/ Preparation of new tripartite National Decent Work Programme for the period following 2018</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2018</p>	<p>Budget: XXX</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> After the expiry date of the current Programme, within the framework of one process of intense cooperation and tripartite consultation between the Government, the social partners and the International Labour Organization, a new National Decent Work Programme shall be prepared. The programme will represent a mid-term document for the period from 2019 onwards, which will define the tripartite priorities and objectives that will be realized in the following period in relation to the further promotion of a decent and productive work respecting the principles of liberty, equality, security and human dignity, and which will contribute to improvement of rights at the work place, support the possibilities for decent employment, improvement of social protection and strengthening of the social dialogue in the country. The Programme also determines the guidelines for the work ad functioning of the International Labour Organization in the country, in accordance with the priorities and objectives agreed jointly with the Government and the social partners.</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b>          According to the plan, the program is expected to be drafted and adopted by the end of III quarter of 2018</p>		
<p><b>3.1.5.1. Objective: Strengthening the capacities of social partners and social dialogue mechanisms</b>  <b>Measure: e/ Implementation of measures aimed at strengthening the tripartite Economic and social councils at national and local level and continuous strengthening of their consultative role in the process of creation policies relevant for the economic and social issues</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2020</p>	<p>Budget: ... IPA</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Number of activities will be implemented in the future, as before, aimed at further supporting the work of the national and local ESCs. Activities for analysis and identification/development of appropriate model for self-financing of the Economic and Social Council. It is planned to review and update the tripartite agreement on functioning of the ESC, which is currently regulating the legal basis/framework for its operation. Support will be provided for intensified and more effective participation of the ESC in the dialogue on economic and social reforms at national level, the debates on issues related to the creation of decent jobs, favorable environment for sustainable enterprises, the future of work, etc. The technical capacities for functioning of the newly established ESC committees on working relations and wages, employment policy and labor market, social security and occupational safety. The process of harmonization of legal and institutional framework with international labor standards and EU law will continue; expert assistance will be provided for overcoming identified weaknesses in exercising fundamental rights, including freedom of association, right to strike, right to collective bargaining, as laid down within the ILO Conventions and the EU law. It is planned to conduct an evaluation/assessment of the functioning of the 15 Local Economic and Social Councils, mutual exchange of positive experiences and innovative solutions in addressing unemployment and labour market skills mismatches at the local level; support to the LESC in negotiating and signing local employment pacts, with particular emphasis on youth unemployment, preparation of programs for professional education and development, support dialogue on OSH at local level. A network of LESC will be established and supported, that will allow exchange of information and experiences.</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b>          Significant support in this field in the past period was provided by the International Labor Organization, within the framework of the project for promoting social dialogue, financed by IPA Component 4, primarily as regards the functioning and strengthening the capacities of the National Economic and Social Council (ESC). The Annual operational work programs of ESC were being prepared, the Rules of procedure have been developed, with the provisions to establish a tripartite Secretariat of the Council, to support the activities of the ESC. The establishment of five permanent commissions in the areas of work of the Council was initiated and realized (labor and salary, employment and labor market policy, social security, health and safety at work, issuance and revocation of licenses for mediators and arbitrators). Trainings for the members of these existing committees were organized on the key topics of their work. In addition, a special system/mechanism was developed with the purpose to monitor the implementation of recommendations of the Council, supported by specific software application. Additional measures were taken to improve the visibility of the Economic and Social Council, and with support within the project, six new Local Economic and Social Councils (LESC) were established, and for them, rules of procedure, action plans were prepared and trainings were provided for key topics of interest. The implementation of activities under this specific measure will continue in the future, especially starting from the IV quarter of 2018, within the planned new project for supporting social dialogue (second phase), which will be co-financed by the EU (IPA II) and implemented in form of a direct grant to the ILO.</p>		

<b>3.1.5.1. Objective: Strengthening the capacities of social partners and social dialogue mechanisms</b>	<b>Deadline:</b>	<b>Budget:</b>
<b>Measure: f/ Support, efficient functioning and further improvement of the established mechanism for peaceful settlement of labour disputes</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>... IPA</b>
<b>Description:</b> In respect to the newly established mechanism for peaceful settlement of labor disputes, the support will be provided for the MLSP and the ESC's Committee for peaceful settlement of labor disputes, to fully assume the management of the mechanism. The widening the scope of the mechanism is planned to also cover resolution/settlement of individual labor disputes, as well as further defining the role of mediators and arbiters.		
Trainings for arbiters and mediators will be organized, proper functioning of the process of licensing and keeping the register of licensed arbiters/mediators, established and fully functional system for handling/management of cases of peaceful labour disputes settlements, informative activities and activities for raising awareness on the benefits and advantages of peaceful/amicable labour disputes settlement etc.		
<b>Implementation:</b>		
Within the Project for promoting social dialogue which was implemented in the past, a number of activities have been realized, aimed at establishing a fully functional system for peaceful settlement of labor disputes. This was achieved through the development of appropriate curricula for training, conducting trainings for trainers – who later fully undertook the further implementation of practical trainings for the candidates and creating a pool of well prepared and trained mediators and arbiters. Expert support (ILO) was provided also in the establishment and training of the Licensing Commission, through the involvement of members of the Commission in training workshops and providing the necessary knowledge and information. From organizational and practical aspect, a system for case management was established and developed, including a register of licensed mediators and arbiters, in order to promote the existence, as well as the benefits of the established mechanism for peaceful settlement of labor disputes. A specific awareness raising campaign, was designed and implemented.		
Various activities under this specific measure will continue to be implemented starting from the IV quarter of 2018 year, within the planned project for supporting social dialogue (second phase), co-financed by the EU (IPA II) and implemented by ILO (direct grant).		

## 2. HUMAN CAPITAL AND SKILLS

### 3.2.1. Ensuring fully inclusive education and equal access to education for all

<b>3.2.1.1. Objective: Reducing the drop-outs of pupils and the number of early school-leavers, by improving coverage, learning conditions, continuity and completion of the education</b>	<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> 640,000 €
<b>Measure: a/ Implementing measures for stimulating inclusion of children from marginalized groups, mainly within the primary and the secondary education</b>		
<b>Description:</b> Establishment of the working groups with representatives from the relevant institutions, preparation/development of procedure(s) for identification of children excluded from the education system, preparation of adequate legislative acts regulating inclusion of children from the marginalized groups, developing of a system and mechanism for enrolling and/or returning to schools for children that are not in the education. Awarding scholarships to pupils from socially vulnerable families who have regular attendance in secondary schools, to single parent's children, children without parents and parental care etc.		
<b>Implementation:</b> In cooperation with the Macedonian Center for Civic Education and more various relevant institutions (schools, local government, DDPELMC <sup>1</sup> ), a <u>Report on inclusion of children out of school in the educational system</u> was prepared, containing series of recommendations and planned activities. Scholarships for students from socially disadvantaged families and children of single parents, children without parental care is continuously implemented, on the basis of a public announcement (call). For the school year 2016/2017 a total of 400 scholarships were awarded to students from socially disadvantaged families and children of single parents, and for children without parental care from a total of 80 available scholarships, 20 were awarded – corresponding to the number of students that applied.		
<b>3.2.1.1. Objective: Reducing the drop-outs of pupils and the number of early school-leavers, by improving coverage, learning conditions, continuity and completion of the education</b>	<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> 50,000,000 €
<b>Measure: b/ Continuation in provision of free-of-charge text books to the primary and secondary school pupils</b>		
<b>Description:</b> Activities will continue to provide free-of-charge textbooks (schoolbooks) for primary and secondary education, in order to ensure improvement and modernization of the quality of teaching in primary and secondary schools. Procurement of the textbooks, purchasing of copyrights, editing, approval, printing, distribution to schools. The textbooks from grade 1 to 3 are treated as working material (for single use) and are supplied in full circulation (according to number of pupils) every year. The same is with the textbooks from grade 4 to 6 based on Cambridge program. Other textbooks for the primary and secondary schools are continuously renewed (reprinted) every year, and the number (circulation) depends on the needs of the schools. From the school year 2017/18, it is planned to proceed with the introduction of teaching in line with the Cambridge education system within the secondary general education (1 <sup>st</sup> to 4 <sup>th</sup> year), as well as for the pupils in the three-year vocational education. This will require considerable financial resources for full purchase of these textbooks.		
<b>Implementation</b> The activities for providing free-of-charge textbooks for primary and secondary education continue. Textbooks are being distributed at the beginning of each academic year, on the basis of the data collected for the current number of students in a given school year.		
<b>Changes/adjustments/possible delays and postponements/change of priorities:</b> The introduction of the teaching (curricula) based on the <i>Cambridge</i> education system in the secondary high school education is postponed.		

<sup>1</sup> Directorate for Development and Promotion of Education in Languages of the Members of the Communities



<p><b>3.2.1.1. Objective: Reducing the drop-outs of pupils and the number of early school-leavers, by improving coverage, learning conditions, continuity and completion of the education</b>  <b>Measure: c/ Providing free-of-charge accommodation in the dormitories for pupils coming from the cities where there are no secondary schools (gymnasiums and vocational schools)</b>  <b>Description:</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2020</p>	<p>Budget: 13,000,000 €</p>
<p><b>Implementation:</b>                  This measure is continuously implemented for students of secondary schools. In the academic year 2016/2017 accommodation was provided for 2,363 students</p>		
<p><b>3.2.1.1. Objective: Reducing the drop-outs of pupils and the number of early school-leavers, by improving coverage, learning conditions, continuity and completion of the education</b>  <b>Measure: d/ Intensified monitoring and registration of the pupils which have not regularly attended classes in the school and undertaking timely appropriate (preventive) measures</b>  <b>Description:</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2020</p>	<p>Budget: XXX</p>
<p><b>Implementation:</b>                  Students are continuously monitored by grade and subject teachers. A <u>Program for students counseling</u> is developed, which is used to work with students at risk during the school year. The process of strengthening the professional service that works with this kind of students has also been initiated.                  The Annual reports from schools for students who occasionally attend classes, are being regularly submitted to the pedagogical service at Ministry of education and science, and used to undertake additional analysis and assessments.                   The Ministry of Education and Science through the Directorate for Development and Promotion of Education in Languages of the Members of the Communities, has published a vacancy announcement for the temporary hiring of 20 <u>Roma educational mediators</u> in 16 municipalities in Macedonia. The purpose of this measure is to intervene in the improvement of primary education among Roma, including by monitoring and recording of irregular students, poor students, supporting the reintegration of Roma children returnees in the educational system and improve collaboration between families and schools.                   Selection of mediators by the Commission for the engagement of Roma educational mediators is made, and it is ongoing the signing contracts with selected mediators.</p>		
<p><b>3.2.1.1. Objective: Reducing the drop-outs of pupils and the number of early school-leavers, by improving coverage, learning conditions, continuity and completion of the education</b>  <b>Measure: e/ Intensified and improved work with the pupils' parents</b>  <b>Description:</b> Involving the parents in the organized pedagogical counseling together with their children/pupils, joint participation of the pupils and their parents in various school activities</p>	<p>Deadline: 2020</p>	<p>Budget: XXX</p>
<p><b>Implementation:</b>                  During the school year, parents of registered pupils at risk are involved in organized pedagogical counseling together with their children / students under the <u>Program for counseling of parents</u>. Also, through an open day at schools, parents are involved in various activities.                   In addition, the Ministry of Education and Science, through its Directorate for Development and Promotion of Education in Languages of the Members of the Communities has announced an advertisement for the temporary hiring of 20 Roma educational mediators in 16 municipalities in Macedonia. This measure will have direct impact on the improvement of basic education for Roma by monitoring and recording of irregular students, low-performing students, support in the re-integration into the education system of Roma - children of the returnees, and enhance cooperation between families and schools.                  Selection of mediators by the Commission for the engagement of Roma educational mediators is finalized, and it is ongoing a signing of contracts with selected mediators.</p>		

<p><b>3.2.1.1. Objective: Reducing the drop-outs of pupils and the number of early school-leavers, by improving coverage, learning conditions, continuity and completion of the education</b></p> <p><b>Measure: f/ Improving the integration and interaction among students attending classes in different language</b></p>	<p>Deadline: <b>2020</b></p>	<p>Budget: <b>XXX</b></p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Design of mechanisms for financial support to schools – primary and secondary, where the classes are in one or more languages, with the purpose of implementing multi-ethnic integration activities, forms and mechanisms for signing partnerships between schools where the classes are being held in different languages, piloting of the mechanism’s implementation</p> <p><b>Implementation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- all elementary and secondary schools have formed teams for interethnic integration in education, which are required to anticipate the activities for interethnic integration in schools, as part of the Annual program of the school and to realize them.</li> <li>- amendments to the Indicators of quality work of schools are made, in which state education inspectors perform integral evaluation of the schools for which are entered criteria for monitoring of planned and implemented activities for interethnic integration in education.</li> <li>- Through the Project for interethnic integration in education in some schools have implemented joint regular English lessons and art education.</li> <li>- In the Ministry of Education and Science a working group is established to monitor the activities for interethnic integration through the Plan for measuring achievements.</li> <li>- all elementary and secondary schools are obliged to organize a debate on “Education - door to success” and the quiz "Together we learn".</li> <li>- Center for Vocational Education and Training adopted the Guide for preparing programs for the free hours in the school in the integrated vocational education, which has approved more than 20 programs of free hours (in the choice these lessons become compulsory) in the secondary vocational education in the principles of interethnic integration in education.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the Directorate for Development and Promotion of Education in the languages of the communities in continuity, already the ninth consecutive year, in cooperation with the Roma Education Fund in Budapest, awards scholarships to high school students of Roma and provides mentoring/tutoring support. For the academic year 2017/18 are awarded 736 scholarships (in five categories) for high school-Roma who attend public and private schools in Macedonia. For support of the education of Roma students are engaged a total of 116 mentors/tutors.</p>		
<p><b>3.2.1.1. Objective: Reducing the drop-outs of pupils and the number of early school-leavers, by improving coverage, learning conditions, continuity and completion of the education</b></p> <p><b>Measure: g/ Implementation of specific measures for stimulating and supporting education of Roma-pupils</b></p>	<p>Deadline: <b>2020</b></p>	<p>Budget: <b>XXX</b></p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Awarding scholarships, providing mentors and tutors for Roma pupils, measures for involvement of Roma children from the streets (street children) in the education system, etc.</p> <p><b>Implementation:</b></p> <p>Among other things, in the academic year 2016/2017 were awarded 582 scholarships in 5 categories and are selected 91 mentors. The Directorate for Development and Promotion of Education of the languages of the communities, during the 2016/17 academic year, in cooperation with the Pestalozzi Foundation and the Macedonian Center for Civic Education, implemented a project to do research for Roma children from the street, which were detected more than 1,600 children. Next step is, by the Bureau for Development of Education (BDE) to be designed a Program to include these children in educational education system according to their age.</p> <p>Administration at the Ministry for Education and Science for the third year provides scholarships for students - Roma from the public and private higher education institutions and universities in the Republic of Macedonia. So far were awarded 195 scholarships to students - Roma, fully covered by the state. For the 2017/18 academic year were awarded 90 scholarships to students - Roma.</p> <p>( see also 3.3.4.1. – Measure b/ )</p>		

<b>3.2.1.2. Objective: Improving the coverage and conditions for access to all levels of education for persons (children/pupils/students) with disability</b>	Deadline:	Budget:
<b>Measure: a/ Introduction of conditions for greater inclusion of children with special needs in the preschool education</b>	2018/2020	6,200,000 €
<p><b>Description:</b> Analysis and development of mechanism and procedure for making decisions for involvement/non-involvement of children with special needs in regular preschool education and procedures for its introduction, construction and architectural adaptations of buildings of the preschool institutions for inclusion of children with physical disabilities (at least 20 kindergartens will be selected for adaptation), hiring and formation/ completion of adequate expert teams (pedagogue, psychologist, defectologist, speech therapist, and social worker) in kindergartens, revision of the existing and developing new didactical materials for children with special educational needs, printing of materials and its delivery to the kindergartens. Implementation of campaigns for raising awareness of the employees in the preschool institutions, as well as for the parents, on the necessity for acceptance of children with special needs</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b></p> <p>In order to establish better conditions and providing access to preschool education for all children, including children with disabilities, among other things, it is ongoing the preparation of a project for improvement of social services in Republic of Macedonia, which will be implemented with a loan from the World Bank. The project is expected to result in the first quarter of 2019 and will be for a period of 5 years (2019-2024), and will aim to contribute in improving to the access, quality and effectiveness of education and concern. Within this project it is anticipated and construction of new facilities and reconstruction of existing capacity, according to the world trends, performing new architectural solutions by adapting or building new kindergartens. Of course, during all architectural and construction work, a special attention will be paid to respect and meet all standards for providing and ensuring access for children with disabilities.</p> <p>In terms of completing the respective professional teams (educator, psychologist, special education teacher, a speech therapist and a social worker), the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy has started the procedures for employment of staff in the kindergartens. At the same time, this process also contributes in completing the professional teams, according to previously submitted applications by the kindergartens. This process will continue in the future in order to completely fill the systematized jobs in public institutions for children.</p>		
<b>3.2.1.2. Objective: Improving the coverage and conditions for access to all levels of education for persons (children/pupils/students) with disability</b>	Deadline:	Budget:
<b>Measure: b/ Improving the participation of pupils with disabilities in the regular (mainstream) primary education</b>	2020	2,070,000 €
<p><b>Description:</b> Implementation of a number of concrete measures and reforms which include analysis, preparation, adoption and setting up of national procedures and mechanisms for inclusion of children with disabilities in the primary education, development of specific instruments for monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs, setting up a system for identification of pupils with special educational needs, rulebook(by-law) for assessment of the needs and abilities of the pupils and other necessary secondary legislation.</p> <p>Establishment of regional bodies (8) for functional assessment of the needs and abilities of pupils, setting up a special teams for inclusion within the schools, organization of trainings for the teachers for early detection and work with pupils with special educational needs. Realization of architectural construction works (at least in 10 primary schools) for their full adaptation for inclusion of pupils with physical disabilities etc.</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b></p> <p>A systemic changes in this area have been initiated.</p> <p>With the amendments to the Law on Primary Education in February 2016 ("Official Gazette" of Republic of Macedonia No.30/2016) for the students with special educational needs enrolled in mainstream primary schools, the school establishes an inclusive team of counselor or psychologist in the school, teacher of the student, parent (or guardian of the student), special education teacher - if the school has and if it is necessary to include a doctor of the student.</p> <p>In order to strengthen the inclusive teams in schools were employed <u>74 special education teachers in primary schools</u> in the Republic of Macedonia.</p> <p>A Handbook for students with special educational needs has been developed. It was adopted a Rulebook for basic professional competencies of teachers in primary and secondary schools in areas where the fourth and fifth area are with the range of Social and educational inclusion and Communication and collaboration with family and community. This regulation began to be implemented from the academic year 2015/2016.</p> <p>During the school year 2015/2016 in mainstream municipal primary schools there were 707 students with special educational needs out of a total of 186,912 students, and in special primary schools and institutes there were 537 pupils.</p> <p>In the 2016/2017 academic year in regular municipal primary schools there were 751 students with special educational needs from a total of 190,714 students, whereas in special schools and institutes – a total of 457 students.</p>		

<b>3.2.1.2. Objective: Improving the coverage and conditions for access to all levels of education for persons (children/pupils/students) with disability</b>	<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> 1,115,000 €
<b>Measure: c/ Increasing the coverage and participation of pupils with disabilities in the secondary education</b>		
<b>Description:</b> Implementation of analysis and full mapping of the secondary schools for determining the existing possibilities and/or needs for inclusion for students with physical disabilities, setting up a mechanism/procedure for making decisions for inclusion/non-inclusion of children with special needs in regular(mainstream) secondary schools (legislation). It is planned to implement measures for improvement of the physical accessibility for inclusion of pupils with physical disabilities through construction works on adaptation of (at least 5) secondary schools. Awarding scholarships to pupils with disabilities		
<b>Implementation:</b>		
<p>The systematic changes in this area have already been initiated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Manual for work with students with special educational needs was prepared.</li> <li>- training of teachers from vocational schools to work with students with special educational needs within mainstream schools, has begun. 24 teachers from vocational schools were trained to implement customized modules for working with students with disabilities in inclusive groups for the program "Readiness for employment and work" and 17 teachers for the implementation of the custom program "Learning by doing" the special state schools to work with students with disabilities.</li> <li>- Rulebook on the basic professional competencies of teachers in primary and secondary schools in areas, where the fourth and fifth area are with the range of social and educational inclusion and Communication and collaboration with the family and community. This Rulebook began to be implemented from the academic year 2015/2016.</li> <li>- in November use of the Unified enrollment form was piloted, following the progress of students and cancellation of the elementary and secondary schools in 3 secondary schools for children with disabilities.</li> <li>- introduced are new profiles at the request of schools for children with special needs, for profiles needed in the labor market (machine technician, a textile technician and physiotherapist)</li> </ul>		
<p>For the academic year 2016/2017 51 scholarships for students with disabilities were awarded.</p>		
<p>In the academic year 2015/2016, are employed 57 special education teachers (defectologists) for <u>secondary schools</u> in order to strengthen the professional services in schools and increase of the coverage and inclusion of students with disabilities in high school.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p>		
<p>In this section it can be mentioned the participation of the Ministry of Education and Science, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which together with local communities and civil society organizations are participating in the Program for Municipal-useful work. This program, among other things, refers to providing additional assistance to students with disabilities in the educational process in primary and secondary schools through engaging educational assistants and personal assistants who help students with disabilities. Therefore, in the academic year 2017/2018 were engaged 106 educational assistants and 34 personal assistants in 60 schools.</p>		
<p>As of 2018, according the Regulation on the methodology for determining the criteria for allocation of block grants for secondary education by municipalities, it is used a special coefficient for students with special needs, which means that a student in the calculation is counted as two.</p>		
<b>3.2.1.2. Objective: Improving the coverage and conditions for access to all levels of education for persons (children/pupils/students) with disability</b>	<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> 500,000 €
<b>Measure: d/ Improving the accessibility in the tertiary education for students with disabilities</b>		
<b>Description:</b> Determining the needs and realization of construction and architectural interventions for physical adaptation of the buildings of the public universities (faculties) for inclusion of students with physical disabilities. Analysis and preparation of legislation and documents for exemption of payment the enrollment university fee for these students		
<b>Implementation:</b>		
<p>Exemption from the registration fee for university students with disabilities is a systematically regulated by the Law on High (university) Education.</p>		

<b>3.2.1.2. Objective: Improving the coverage and conditions for access to all levels of education for persons (children/pupils/students) with disability</b> <b>Measure: e/ Improvement of the possibilities and widening the scope of learning programmes for adults with disabilities</b>	Deadline: <b>2020</b>	Budget: <b>300,000 €</b>
<b>Description:</b> Analysis, development and certification/verification of the teaching programmes (curricula) for AE for persons with disabilities (minimum 5 programmes), implementation of certified trainings/courses for adult education with participation of minimum 25 adults with disabilities in each of the developed programmes/trainings.		
<b>Implementation:</b> Three programs have been realized, i.e. the program for "Masseur" for people with visual impairments, "plumber" and "argon-welder" - for people with impaired hearing.		
<b>3.2.1.3. Objective: Improving the learning conditions, schools capacities, content and quality in education and strengthening the capacities of the human resources (teaching staff)</b> <b>Measure: a/ Measures for improving the learning environment, content, learning methods and techniques and the possibilities for paying greater attention to each pupil/ student</b>	Deadline: <b>2018/2020</b>	Budget: <b>2,580,000 €</b>
<b>Description:</b> Preparation of National Standard for primary education, in accordance with the learning needs and development priorities, revision of teaching plans (curricula) in the primary education in accordance with the prepared National Standard, analysis and revision of the textbooks (schoolbooks) for improving their quality and promoting gender equality, multiculturalism, respect of differences and democratic values. Preparation of the National Standard for secondary (gymnasium) education and appropriate revision of the teaching plans and programmes (curricula), revising the textbooks and preparation of additional teaching aids, digital content, in accordance with the revised teaching programmes. Analysis of the situation, preparation and adoption of the necessary legislative amendments on the maximum number of pupils per class in the primary and secondary schools, analysis and preparation of a proposed-mechanism for increased participation of high-school pupils and the functioning of the pupils' bodies in the schools, piloting of the developed mechanisms (at least, in 5 selected secondary schools). Analysis, development of methodology and preparation of system of qualifications standards based on the learning outcomes in the university education, strengthening the networking of domestic and foreign (European) universities or in the Programme Erasmus+ and realization of students' exchange programmes, activities for optimizing the study programmes for the tertiary education, that would correspond to the needs of the labour market.		
<b>Implementation:</b> In January 2018, the Government of Republic of Macedonia has adopted the <u>Comprehensive education strategy 2018-2025</u> , together with an Action plan for its implementation. The preparation of this Strategy was coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science and is the result of long intensive work and a transparent and inclusive process that was carried out with technical support from the EU, provided through IPA Component 4 and involving all stakeholders - national authorities public institutions, social partners, educational institutions, development partners, experts and other stakeholders in education. A number of meetings, discussions, debates and conferences were organized in all stages of development of the Strategy and Action Plan, that is, the determination of the challenges and priorities to the formulation of the final text. There were organized seven regional consultative meetings across the country.  This Comprehensive education strategy 2018-2025 should initiate and bring-forward substantial changes in all levels of education and it is the basis for the activities of the Government and other entities in the field of education in the future. The document covers six main pillars of the education system: pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, vocational education and training, higher education and research and learning and adult education. In the next period starts the implementation of activities for the realization of anticipated goals and reforms.  In accordance with the Strategy, a new Law on High (university) Education is adopted, and in procedure are new laws on primary and secondary education. Drafted and adopted are three new standards of qualifications of V <sup>th</sup> level of the NQF and initiated activities with a special focus on post-secondary education.		
<b>3.2.1.3. Objective: Improving the learning conditions, schools capacities, content and quality in education and strengthening the capacities of the human resources (teaching staff)</b> <b>Measure b/ Improvement of work/learning conditions in the education</b>	Deadline: <b>2020</b>	Budget: <b>3,025,000 €</b>
<b>Description:</b> Analysis and mapping of the needs and continuation of the activities for schools reconstruction with the purpose to improve and modernize the facilities for learning, auxiliary buildings (kitchens), gyms (sport halls) and sport fields (sports playgrounds), renewal of sports equipment, equipping schools with the necessary technologies, devices, teaching aids etc..		

**Implementation:**

The measure is continuously implemented based on analysis and mapping the needs and requirements of the mayors of local government.

In 2016 the construction of two primary schools, building/extension of one additional school object and the reconstruction and repair of 26 school buildings in different municipalities were completed. Completed is the construction of 5 gyms in primary schools and rehabilitation of 1 sports hall.

A repairs (rehabilitation) has been made in 4 secondary schools, and completed the construction of two sports facilities in secondary schools.

It completed the renovation of one block of the dormitory "Goce Delchev".

Completed in 2017 is the extension of one school building at primary school and reconstructed and repaired 10 school buildings in different municipalities. Completed is also the construction of two sports halls in elementary schools.

A repairs (rehabilitation) has been made in 4 secondary schools and is completed the building of one school building in high school.

**3.2.1.3. Objective: Improving the learning conditions, schools capacities, content and quality in education and strengthening the capacities of the human resources (teaching staff)**

**Deadline:**  
2019/2020

**Budget:**  
2,740,000 €

**Measure: c/ Strengthening the human resources capacities in education**

**Description:** In the following period, implementing numerous activities is planned, that will contribute to improving quality, competences, knowledge and skills of the teachers/professors, monitoring the quality of their work, etc. It is planned to revise the criteria for enrollment of students at the pedagogical faculties for future teachers, provision of scholarships for studying at the pedagogical faculties for students with excellent GPA, to introduce an improved and revised mechanism for support, monitoring and mentoring the novice-teachers, developing of studying modules for training of teachers in accordance with professional standards. Organization of trainings, additional professional education/upgrade for teachers, as well as for the management (principals) of the schools, i.e. School Directors. Measures for intensifying the use and application of the ICT in the education, organizing Internet trainings/courses and distance learning for teachers, teacher trainings for use of new technologies and ICT tools in education. Introduction of a system for professional development and career advancement for the teachers, implementation of measures for improving the mechanism for accreditation of universities and the system for external evaluation, establishing centres for quality control and improvement of the systems for internal quality control in the tertiary education, in accordance with the standards and guidelines of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), activities for organizing and implementing a system for professional development of the teaching staff at the universities.

**Implementation:**

Pursuant to the Law, it is implemented a support, monitoring and mentoring apprentices - mentors as a condition for taking the exam.

Continuous training is been made for the directors by the State Examination Center, according to a published announcement.

During 2017 teachers of primary and secondary education conducted training by accredited institutions, in cooperation with the Bureau for Development of Education - Training of 5,500 high school teachers (professional and gymnasium schools) for the implementation of new models of teaching and learning in SOO.

During the year, in vocational education and training are carried out trainings and are trained 840 teachers, principals, employers, staff in career centers and career counselors counseling modular approach to learning and learning outcomes, 124 teachers for making standards qualifications and curricula and 28 trainers for the process of modernization of technical education and modular designed programs, 161 teacher of practical education were trained in companies, 20 teachers who teach the subject Entrepreneurship and innovation, 40 teams of teachers and students on "How to present your business plan to the investors" as preparation for participation in the contest "Business Plan" and 40 teachers on the topic of "Creativity."

### 3.2.2. Implementation of the National Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning – basis for ensuring quality in the system of education and training

<b>3.2.2.1. Objective: Establishing a sustainable NQF system and strengthening human resources for its implementation</b>	Deadline:	Budget:
<b>Measure: a/ Adoption and implementation of the Roadmap for the Macedonian Qualifications Framework</b>	2020	XXX + IPA
<p><b>Description:</b> The measure envisages preparation, harmonization and adoption of a detailed <i>Roadmap for the further development and implementation of MQF</i>, as well as its proper implementation, in accordance with the established timetable and dynamics.</p> <p>The development and practical implementation of the National (Macedonian) Qualifications Frameworks is part of a broader context of change, related to implementing the <i>Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) - 32008H0506(01)</i>.</p> <p>The Roadmap contains specific actions that will need to be implemented in the coming period to ensure further development in the introduction and application of the NQF and ensuring its sustainability. The activities are foreseen in relation to the analyses of the labor market needs and design of qualifications that will match the LM requirements, development of occupational standards and standards of qualifications, strengthening the role of employers and social partners, building the system for recognition and validation of prior learning (non-formal and informal learning), implementation of the learning outcomes system, redesigning the curriculum in vocational education and training and the study programs in higher education, preparation of documents in accordance with the qualification system, developing a system of quality assurance etc.</p> <p><b>Implementation:</b> In collaboration with many different stakeholders and actors a <i>Roadmap for the further development and implementation of the Macedonian Qualifications Framework (RCM)</i> has been prepared and have started its implementation. web-page: <a href="http://mrk.mk/?lang=en">http://mrk.mk/?lang=en</a></p>		
<b>3.2.2.1. Objective: Establishing a sustainable NQF system and strengthening human resources for its implementation</b>	Deadline:	Budget:
<b>Measure b/ Strengthening the role of the National Board of the Macedonian Qualifications Framework</b>	2020	6,000 €
<p><b>Description:</b> Preparation of by-laws for regulating the work of the Board, implementation for trainings for strengthening the capacities, provision of financial means for its functioning</p> <p><b>Implementation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- it is made the Rules of procedures of the Board</li> <li>- 8 workshops for members of the Board, 14 seminars involving the Board have been conducted – on the vision of the NQF and implementation of the Roadmap, 2 public debates and two conferences were organized by the Committee for promotion of NQF and benefits of implementation of the NQF.</li> <li>- the preparation of the by-law on the work of the Board is currently ongoing.</li> </ul>		
<b>3.2.2.1. Objective: Establishing a sustainable NQF system and strengthening human resources for its implementation</b>	Deadline:	Budget:
<b>Measure: c/ Establishing Sectoral Committees for Qualifications</b>	2020	5,000,000 €
<p><b>Description:</b> It is planned to establishing at least 8 Sectoral Committees for qualifications, with the task and responsibilities to promote and develop the sector and to participate in identifying of and counseling (advising) on the demand of new and revision of the existing qualifications. Developing rules and guidelines for functioning of the committees, organization of trainings for the members of these committees and operationalization of their work.</p> <p><b>Implementation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (in February 2018) <u>5 Sectoral qualifications committees (councils)</u> have been established (Sectoral qualifications committee for hospitality and tourism; Sectoral qualifications committee for electrical engineering; Sectoral qualifications committee for personal services; Sectoral qualifications committee for civil engineering and geodesy; and the Sectoral qualifications committee for chemistry and technology). The selection was made on the basis of adopted (general and professional) criteria for selecting members of Sectoral committee. The task of the sectoral committees will be in general to analyze the current state and trends of the sectoral labour market, to analyze the qualifications, to discuss proposals for the introduction of new qualifications, but also to propose themselves the new qualifications and to give opinion on the compliance of standards of occupations/standards of qualifications with exam programs. As a particularly important task in the process of quality assurance will be participation in committees for assessment and validation of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) in the non-formal education and training.</li> <li>- the Rules of procedures for the Committees have been prepared and adopted;</li> <li>- 2 trainings for the Sectoral committees' members have been organized.</li> </ul>		

<p><b>3.2.2.1. Objective: Establishing a sustainable NQF system and strengthening human resources for its implementation</b></p> <p><b>Measure : d/ Adoption and implementation of Guidelines and procedures for quality assurance (QA) in accordance with the recommendations of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)</b></p>	<p>Deadline: <b>2018</b></p>	<p>Budget: <b>2,000 €</b></p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Activities are envisaged aimed at further development and improvement of the systems and standards for <i>Quality Assurance (QA)</i> concerning qualifications in the Republic of Macedonia and their aligning with the European requirements and standards (<i>EQUAVET - European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training, ESG for HE - European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area</i>). It is planned to prepare analyzes of existing systems with the plans and proposals for their improvement and upgrading; development of specific Guidelines and procedures for QA, which will make the qualification system in Macedonia to be clear and transparent, and will contribute to the quality of acquired/awarded qualifications.</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b> In the past period (mostly during 2017) an intensive work has been done on preparation of a series of documents related to the processes in the system of qualifications (protocols, methodologies, guidelines, manuals and instructions, etc.) <a href="http://mrk.mk/?page_id=55&amp;lang=mk">http://mrk.mk/?page_id=55&amp;lang=mk</a> :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guidelines for quality assurance during development of new qualifications in the Macedonian qualifications system(MQS);</li> <li>- Protocol on cooperation between sectoral qualifications committees;</li> <li>- Protocol on cooperation between the Bureau for Development of Education, Center for Vocational Education and Training and the Center for Adult Education in development of occupational standards and qualifications standards;</li> <li>- Protocol on cooperation between the National Board of the Macedonian Qualifications Framework and the Board for Accreditation and Evaluation in Higher Education;</li> <li>- Protocol on cooperation between all stakeholders involved in the process of NQF;</li> <li>- Manual for adjusting the existing qualifications to the requirements of the NQF and the EQF;</li> <li>- Manual for development of new qualifications for the NQF;</li> <li>- Methodology for development of new qualifications for the NQF, based on the labor market needs;</li> <li>- Guide for determining the level of existing qualifications.</li> </ul> <p>The Ministry of Education and Science (2016) prepared a detailed Report on linking (compatibility) of the Macedonian Qualifications Framework (MQF) with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and self-validation with the framework of qualifications of the European space for higher education.</p>		
<p><b>3.2.2.1. Objective: Establishing a sustainable NQF system and strengthening human resources for its implementation</b></p> <p><b>Measure: e/ Introducing a NQF information management system</b></p>	<p>Deadline: <b>2018</b></p>	<p>Budget: <b>200,000 €</b></p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Development of the software application, integrated Register and sub-registers for qualifications, procurement of the necessary equipment, preparation of rules and regulations for its functioning, putting it into use, trainings for the human resources for work with the system.</p> <p><b>Implementation:</b> A software solution has been developed and the integrated <u>Registry of qualifications standards</u>, has been implemented</p> <p>On the meeting of the National Board of the MQF, held in December 2017, the Standard of qualification "<i>Trainer of Trainers for the Macedonian qualifications system</i>" (granted V-B level in NQF), which is the first Standard qualification entered into the Register of the NQF. The standard of qualification "<i>Trainer of Trainers for the Macedonian qualifications system</i>" is developed based on the Standards of occupation "<i>Trainer</i>" and has passed the entire process of quality assurance before being entered into the Register.</p>		



<p><b>3.2.2.1. Objective: Establishing a sustainable NQF system and strengthening human resources for its implementation</b></p> <p><b>Measure: f/ Development of qualification standards based on learning outcomes, according to NQF</b></p> <p><b>Description:</b> Development of qualification standards, training of minimum 50 experts for development of qualification standards, selection of the qualifications for which the standards will be developed, establishment of the working groups composed of trained experts and employer's representatives, preparation and approval of at least 70 qualifications standards based on learning outcomes according to the NQF, preparation of the rules and procedures for development of qualification standards and their inclusion in the NQF</p>	<p>Deadline: <b>2018</b></p>	<p>Budget: <b>WB + IPA</b></p>
<p><b>Implementation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 23 standards of qualification for level II have been prepared</li> <li>- 46 standards of qualification for level III have been prepared</li> <li>- 3 standards for qualification for level IV have been prepared</li> <li>- at the request of employers, 4 standards for qualification for level V have been prepared and adopted.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>3.2.2.1. Objective: Establishing a sustainable NQF system and strengthening human resources for its implementation</b></p> <p><b>Measure: g/ Raising awareness of the stakeholders and users on the role and the significance of the NQF, through public events and campaigns</b></p> <p><b>Description:</b> Organization of meetings with specific various target groups, public debates, printing and distribution of publications etc. .</p>	<p>Deadline: <b>2018</b></p>	<p>Budget: <b>10,000 €</b></p>
<p><b>Implementation</b></p> <p>In relation to this area, 14 seminars have been organized on the vision and the importance of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), 4 public debates about the role of NQF and the advantages for the users, as well as 2 conferences on the benefits of the NQF.</p>		
<p><b>3.2.2.1. Objective: Establishing a sustainable NQF system and strengthening human resources for its implementation</b></p> <p><b>Measure: h/ Improvement of transparency of the learning outcomes achieved by VET graduates, through introduction of the certificate/diploma supplement, in line with the NQF and EU practice</b></p> <p><b>Description:</b> Development and official approval of regulation and template/form for preparation and issuing of Diploma/Certificate supplement to all VET graduates</p>	<p>Deadline: <b>2018</b></p>	<p>Budget: <b>50,000 €</b></p>
<p><b>Implementation :</b></p> <p>During 2017 there are no changes related to the realization of this specific planned measure.</p> <p>In 2018 a work on the preparation of legislative amendments has been initiated, and it is expected to also cover these activities/measures, which are assumed to be of a great importance for the employers, as well as for the transition of students.</p>		

### 3.2.3. Strengthening the employability of the work force and building learning pathways in the context of lifelong learning

<b>3.2.3.1. Objective: Development, modernization and increasing attractiveness of VET</b>	<b>Deadline:</b> 2018/2020	<b>Budget:</b> 1,570,000 €
<b>Measure: a/ Ensuring greater harmonization of the VET with the needs of the labour market</b>		
<b>Description:</b> Preparation and approval of the procedures for developing the occupation standards with participation and consultation of all major stakeholders – among them, the business community and the social partners. Implementation of training for the experts for the process of development of occupational standards, development and adoption/validation of standards for (at least 100) occupations, activities for development of modular curriculum in accordance with the new standards, that would lead to the more flexible and effective way of organizing learning/teaching within the VET system, development, official approval and introduction of (at least 70) modular curricula, together with the necessary materials for teaching, learning and grading, organization of teacher’s trainings for realization of the modular curricula. Development and official approval of the Concept of Social Partnership in VET, together with the mechanism for its practical implementation, for the purpose of establishing a functional and efficient social partnership at central and institutional level, establishment of a single tri-partite consultative body (National Council) for VET and adult education, based on the principles of social partnership. Establishment of the <u>Skills Observatory</u> <sup>2</sup> and providing adequate staff and its functionality, preparation and introduction of a tracing mechanism for VET graduates		
<b>Implementation:</b>		
Implemented activities in 2016/2017: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- developed Methodology for preparation of standards for occupations (SO);</li> <li>- prepared Guide for coding the of standards for occupations;</li> <li>- Methodology for development of curricula;</li> <li>- 211 new occupational standards for occupations are prepared and adopted;</li> <li>- 23 curricula for 2-year education, 46 curricula for 3-year education and 3 curricula for 4-year education (with learning outcomes) have been designed.</li> </ul>		
<b>3.2.3.1. Objective: Development, modernization and increasing attractiveness of VET</b>	<b>Deadline</b> 2017/2020	<b>Budget:</b> 4,000,000 €
<b>Measure: b/ Establishing modern and effective system for post-secondary education</b>		
<b>Description:</b> A number of activities are planned to be implemented, including analysis of the situation and challenges in the post-secondary education, supported with the review of the best European practices compatible with the local context, revision of the Concept for post-secondary education in accordance with the European standards, revision of the legislative framework for the post-secondary education, development of procedures for harmonization of the post-secondary education with the NQF, development of curricula (at least 12) for post-secondary ed., including all necessary teaching, learning and assessment materials, organizing various activities for promotion and raising awareness about the post-secondary education		
<b>Implementation:</b>		
Realized activities in this field: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An analysis of the concept of post-secondary education has been prepared and recommendations for changes are provided;</li> <li>- 15 Standards of qualifications are prepared;</li> <li>- 3 Standards of qualifications - adopted;</li> <li>- Ongoing is the preparation of the Rulebook on organization, content, conditions, establishment of examination boards and committees, recognition of the special parts of the Master exam and its realization, and it was designed the Rulebook on the registry of passed masters of crafts.</li> </ul>		

<sup>2</sup> The activity is closely linked, also with the part of the activities planned within the section 3.1.2.1. relating to the improvement of youth employment, specifically the measures for “Upgrading and improving the existing models and databases and establishing a coordinated and comprehensive system for forecasting the demand for skills on the labour market”

<p><b>3.2.3.1. Objective: Development, modernization and increasing attractiveness of VET</b>  <b>Measure c/ Measure for improving the attractiveness, learning conditions and quality of VET</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2017/2018/2020</p>	<p>Budget 1,435,000 €</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Analysis and mapping of the situation in VET schools, accompanied with the identification of the main characteristics of the local and regional labour markets and relevance analysis. Development of an Action Plan for optimization of the network of VET schools, implementation of activities for optimization as defined in the AP, developing new norms for the educational facilities and the equipment for VET institutions, procurement of the needed equipment for (at least 20) VET schools in accordance with the revised norms and standards.                  Development of methodology, standards and guidelines for quality assurance in VET, preparation and adoption of Concept of enrollment in secondary vocational education and the necessary legislative amendments for improving the enrollment system and the number of pupils in VET. Introduction of new mechanism for practical training, <u>Concept of work-based learning</u>, inclusion of VET students in work-based learning in corresponding organizations, companies, enterprises, etc.                  Introduction of the career guidance services in VET, development and approval of the Concept on <u>VET Centres of Excellence</u>, selection of institutions that will be officially recognized as VET Centres of Excellence, renovation/refurbishment (construction works), procurement of equipment and modern didactic resources for (at least 5) selected VET institutions, staff trainings and piloting of the VET centres of excellence</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b>                  Implemented activities 2016/2017 :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- developed Program for career counseling;</li> <li>- 53 career centers in the secondary vocational schools are established;</li> <li>- a total of 171 teachers have been trained for career counseling.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>3.2.3.1. Objective: Development, modernization and increasing attractiveness of VET</b>  <b>Measure d/ Development and implementation of the Concept of work-based learning</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2018</p>	<p>Budget: XXX</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> It is planned to work on the development and introduction of a new Concept of work-based learning (learning in a working environment). Through such learning, the students will develop practical skills and competencies directly within the firms and companies and they will be trained to perform tasks and duties at the workplace. For this purpose, a special working group will be established to work on the development of the Concept and the necessary legislative changes. International experiences in this field will be analyzed and taken into consideration.                  For successful implementation of the prepared and approved Concept, the necessary training for work based learning will be organized for the staff (teachers) in the VET schools and from organizations where this learning will be implemented. The involvement of the VET students in work-based learning will be provided in accordance with the developed Concept</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b>                  Numerous activities has been implemented in this field, in the past period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- established special National body for systematic implementation of the work-based learning;</li> <li>- organized practical teaching – learning through work (work-based) in 229 companies with certifies mentors;</li> <li>- organized trainings: 421 mentors trained in companies where students realize practical teaching, of which 400 are certified mentors; training of 161 teachers in practical teaching – trained in companies and prepared curricula for professional – didactical training of trainers from the employers where the practical teaching is realized;</li> <li>- developed tools and criteria for: Recording and assessing the readiness of students for the realization of work-based learning (WBL); Monitoring, evaluating and recording the implementation of the WBL; Monitoring, evaluating and recording the WBL process; developed instruments and criteria for verification of practical qualifications of candidates in informal learning;</li> <li>- introduced are the <u>Registry for verification of employers for conducting practical training</u>, run by the Economic Chamber of Macedonia who submits to the Ministry an annual report on the verified employers (in accordance with the Rulebook on the form, content and manner of keeping the Register for verification of employers for practical training of students “Official. Gazette” No. 31/2008) and the <u>Register of concluded contracts between the institutions for vocational education and training and employers for practical training of the students</u> (in accordance with the Rule book on the form, content and manner of keeping the Register of students who concluded contract for practical training with the institution for vocational education and training and the employer "Official Gazette" No. 41/2014);</li> <li>- Inclusion of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Alliance for Apprenticeship (EAfA) for candidate countries (2017).</li> </ul>		

**3.2.3.2. Objective: Development and Improvement of informal education and adult education**

**Measure : a/ Raising awareness about the significance, opportunities and participation in the informal education (IE) and adult education (AE) and increase knowledge, skills and competencies of adults**

<b>Deadline:</b> 2018/2019/2020	<b>Budget:</b> 2,045,000 €
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**Description:** Activities for establishing a system for validation of competencies acquired through non-formal and informal learning, establishing a Steering Committee for VNFIL which will be linked to the NQF Board, development of rules and procedures for the VNFIL, the necessary legislative amendments, by-laws for ensuring legal and financial basis for implementation of the VNFIL, developing methodological documents and tools for implementing VNFIL, piloting the VNFIL procedures for certain occupations/qualifications (in at least 3 sectors and with participation of minimum 30 candidates). Organization of trainings and strengthening the capacities of the institutions for VNFIL implementation, implementation of campaigns/raising awareness events on the opportunities and benefits of VNFIL.

Revision of the mechanism for primary education of adults, development and piloting of study programmes/curriculum (for at least 8 key competences) within the primary education for adults. Providing support for completing secondary education for adults (participation of 10 municipalities and coverage of approx. 1,000 individuals).

Measures for expanding the network of institutions for NFE and AE at regional and local level, development of tools and analysis for identifying the regional and local needs for NFE & AE. Development of models/concepts for establishment and financing, training of staff in the public adult education, organization of campaigns for public awareness raising about the significance and opportunities of NFE & AE at all levels

**Implementation:**

Prepared documents:

1. Concept of non-formal education and informal learning in the Republic of Macedonia;
2. Roadmap for implementing the system for validation of non-formal and informal learning in the Republic of Macedonia;
3. Guide to procedures of VNFIL<sup>3</sup>;
4. Specification of the package of information and methodology;
5. Comparative analysis of the institutional framework, VNFIL procedures and instruments in Europe and recommendations for Macedonia.

Training for 25 counselors who will lead the candidates in the stages of identification and documentation (first and second stage of the process) was organized.

\* \* \*

Something that should also be noted within this section is the implementation of the Pilot project for elementary education in prisons, implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science, UNDP and the Department for Execution of Sanctions (DES). The Pilot implementation of the programs for Macedonian language and mathematics, which were developed within the joint action to operationalize the Concept of elementary adult education began in October 2017 (and were completed in April 2018), by the teaching staff of the Primary school "Hristo Uzunov" from Ohrid.

Prior to teaching minors at the penitentiary in Ohrid, there was a process of assessment of the previously acquired knowledge of 24 minors and in accordance with the findings of the assessment the realization of the teaching classes was organized, and the juveniles have successfully passed and learnt the planned content. Next step is to check (assess) the knowledge acquired during the teaching period, for which purpose the teaching staff involved in the implementation of this pilot activity has prepared an appropriate tests in the subjects of Macedonian language and mathematics. The tests have been sent for review and opinion to the national consultant and the Department of Primary Education at the Ministry, and after their approval, the realization of the process of evaluation of knowledge could start, in the presence of teachers and committee consisting of representatives from MES, DES and UNDP.

After completing this stage, what will follow will be the award of a certificate/document, according to which the efforts and knowledge of the minors will be recognized (validated) and it would allow them, upon leaving the prison, an entrance and transition into the primary schools. In the upcoming period activities will follow for unifying the template and the content of the certificate/document and it is expected for the whole process to be completed by the end of July 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL)

<p><b>3.2.3.2. Objective: Development and Improvement of informal education and adult education</b></p>	<p>Deadline:</p>	<p>Budget:</p>
<p><b>Measure: b/ Improving the efficiency, content and quality of the non-formal education and adult education and increase of the number of IE &amp; AE providers</b></p>	<p><b>2018/2020</b></p>	<p><b>110,000 €</b></p>
<p><b>Description</b> Preparation of the methodology for identifying the needs of adult education and development of adequate study programmes (curricula) in accordance with the labour market needs. Revision of the procedures for verification of the programmes and providers of non-formal and adult education, revision of the system of quality monitoring in NFE&amp;AE and establishment of the clearly defined procedures and tools, in consultation and with participation of all relevant stakeholders.                  Realizations of trainings for the State Educational Inspectorate on provision of monitoring, developing Professional standards and Job profiles of adult educators and development of training programmes for adult educators/teachers.                  Implementing an analysis for identifying the possibilities and introduction of mechanisms for motivating employers to invest in adult education and training</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b>                  49 specific programmes have been validated.</p>		

### 3. SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

#### 3.3.1. Improving decentralization of social protection services and tackling poverty and social exclusion at local level

<p><b>3.3.1.1. Objective: Promoting design and implementation of measures for reducing poverty and social exclusion at local level</b></p> <p><b>Measure a/ Measures for improvements in the type and adequacy of the financial social protection benefits, provided for addressing poverty and as an assistance and support to the most vulnerable categories of the population</b></p>	<p>Deadline: <b>2020</b></p>	<p>Budget: <b>17.600.000 €</b></p>
<p><b>Description</b> In accordance with the budgetary possibilities and analyses, we will continue with a steady increase of different types of cash benefits, improvements of their adequacy, improving the existing and introducing new benefits, programmes, projects and other forms of support and benefits/subsidies targeted to the most vulnerable categories of citizens – certain social benefits, conditional cash transfers, assistance for reducing energy poverty, additional financial allowances and benefits for people with certain types of disabilities, other types of additional benefits for the members of the socially endangered households, free-of-charge vacation and recreation for children, provision of free-of-charge trainings for computer skills and foreign languages and similar measures</p> <p>In the following period it is planned to conduct an analysis of the current situation, the efficiency and effectiveness of the social financial assistance scheme, in order to obtain relevant and evidence-based proposals and recommendations for implementation of reforms, system and regulatory changes and for providing opportunities for further improvement in this field.</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b></p> <p>Despite the current results and the positive trends related to reducing rates of poverty and social exclusion in the country, intensive preparations and activities have been initiated past period, for designing and implementing important and <u>comprehensive reform of the social protection system</u> in the country, with the purpose of creating opportunities for effective response and tackling/addressing the identified challenges in the area of social protection, poverty and social inclusion.</p> <p>The planned reforms will address the implementation of measures for improving the social policy, redefining the institutional framework of the social protection system, reform of the legal framework, redesign of the types and adequacy of social protection financial rights (benefits), strengthening of the existing ones and introduction of new social services. For preparation of the necessary analysis and design of welfare reform, an expert group was established (supported by international and domestic experts), coordinated by the MLSP. The group prepared a Proposal for reform of the social protection system. This document is based on a comparative analysis of the social protection systems in different countries, analysis of the current social protection system in Macedonia and its identified strengths and weaknesses, as well as financial analysis and estimation of costs for introduction of the planned reform.</p> <p>The reform will focus on the redesign of the system of social protection by separating the material (monetary) rights from the providing of social services, and that will also enable the establishment of the <u>case management model</u> and more efficient linking of the social work with the measures for employment support and access to education for people at social risk.</p> <p>The reform of the system of financial assistance for social protection will ensure proper and effective targeting and directing of the social benefits towards the individuals and families at risk of poverty and social exclusion.</p> <p>The adequacy and effectiveness of monetary compensation for materially most vulnerable families is planned to be provided and ensured through introduction of a <u>program for minimum adequate assistance</u>, which will allow families in social risk to receive cash compensation, in addition to their income up to the poverty line. Part of these transfers will be conditional with an entry to the labor market for beneficiaries who are able to work and with strengthening their work capacities. It is planned to introduce family packages and grouping of the financial rights (benefits) of both, social and child protection. These planned measures are expected to have a direct impact on reducing poverty and social exclusion of vulnerable categories of citizens.</p> <p>In parallel with the activities to reform the system of cash benefits in the social protection, important work is being done also on the substantial improvement in the area of social services, their type, scope, way of providing, introducing and involving other providers in ensuring these services etc.</p>		

The reform of the social security system will be regulated by a new Law on Social Protection, and the first draft of this law is scheduled to be prepared by September 2018, after which, a wider consultative process with all stakeholders will be initiated. Simultaneously, the authorities will work on preparation on the bylaws necessary for its practical application.

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During 2017 for the various types of benefits targeted at different categories of disadvantaged individuals, i.e. persons at social risks (excluding the payment of financial rights/benefits of social protection), the paid-out funds, provided by the budget of the Republic of Macedonia, are in a total amount of approximately 322.82 million denars (around 5.22M€):

- program of conditional cash transfers:	43,297,000	MKD
- subsidizing energy consumption	108,702,300	MKD
- support to NGOs, Red Cross, organizations for disabled - for implement. social services:	67,400,000	MKD
- assistance to children without parents attending school/studies:	51,000,000	MKD
- financing free holiday for children from socially vulnerable categories:	13,000,000	MKD
- placement in foster families:	39,421,000	MKD

For cash rights (benefits) of social protection (*financial social assistance, continuous financial assistance, assistance for care by another person, etc...*), the total amount paid in 2017 was 4,380,483,000 denars (about 71M€).

<p><b>3.3.1.1. Objective: Promoting design and implementation of measures for reducing poverty and social exclusion at local level</b>  <b>Measure b/ Development of specific forms/mechanisms and stimulating participation and cooperation at local level in addressing social risks of the vulnerable categories</b></p>	<p>Deadline: <b>2020</b></p>	<p>Budget: <b>IPA</b></p>
<p><b>Description:</b> In order to improve the delivery of social services to the citizens in the local community, it is planned to establish Social Services Centres (SSC) and Local Social Protection Councils (LSPC) which will provide increased activity, participation, cooperation and communication among institutions, NGOs, humanitarian organizations, religious institutions, private sector in the municipalities etc. in exercising social activities in the local community, in obtaining more realistic consideration and identification of the citizens' needs, design, adoption and implementation of local programmes in the field of social protection, ensuring better information of the citizens about their social protection rights and their exercise, development of knowledge and skills of certain groups of populations for dealing with specific social risks etc. Such SSC and Local social protection councils are already established in three pilot municipalities – Debar, Kochani and Probishtip and positive results from their functioning have been noted. It is also planned to implement measures/projects for strengthening the inter-municipal cooperation in provision of social services, by establishing joint inter-municipal institutions and services, i.e. establishing services that would be financed by more (partner) neighboring local self-governments for providing services to the citizens of those municipalities, through joining financial funds and resources and providing longer-term sustainability of the services</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b>                  The Social Services Centers (SSC) and Local Social Protection Councils (in Shtip – Social Protection Coordinating Body), by the end of 2017, have been established in eight (8) municipalities: Debar, Kocani, Probishtip, Kumanovo, Negotino, Tetovo, Staro Nagorichani and Shtip.</p>		

<p><b>3.3.1.1. Objective: Promoting design and implementation of measures for reducing poverty and social exclusion at local level</b>  <b>Measure c/ Improving the cooperation between institutions responsible for implementation of labour market activation measures and social protection institutions</b></p>	<p>Deadline: <b>2020</b></p>	<p>Budget: <b>XXX + IPA</b></p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Trainings for the staff for creation and implementation of measures adjusted to the needs of end users, training for recognizing the capacities of the people with functional disability, strengthened and regular exchange of information between the Social Work Centres and the Employment Centres, active involvement of the non-governmental sector and other experts (external associates) in implementation of activities for recognizing the capacities of the persons at risk from social exclusion, involvement of the business community in implementing the activation measures for vulnerable groups and in overcoming discriminatory practices related to their inclusion into the labour market etc.</p>		

**Implementation:**

In this section we could mention some of the projects (smaller grants) that were implemented in the past (2016/2017), as part of the two grant schemes financed by the European Union (IPA Component 4) "Fostering social inclusion" and "Promoting social inclusion at local level" (38 projects in total), which implemented various measures, initiatives and concrete actions aimed at supporting social inclusion and employment of various categories of vulnerable people in the local communities.

Many of these projects were implemented with direct involvement and active cooperation of various stakeholders at local level, mainly civil society organizations (CSOs), in cooperation with employment centers and/or social work centres, local self-government, in some cases, also with the participating the business community etc.

Among many others, 5 specific grant-projects were implemented which were specifically directed towards strengthening the capacities and cooperation of relevant actors in the field of social inclusion. Such examples were the project "Local Partnerships for Social Inclusion" aimed to contribute in facilitating the partnerships between local authorities, civil society and the private sector (in several municipalities in the state) to address the local socio-economic problems, awareness raising and capacity building of these local actors for successfully identifying and tackling social needs in the locals communities. Within the project activities, supported and successfully implemented was the establishment of five regional partnerships and development of five local action plans for social inclusion, numerous trainings were conducted, workshops, expert support, promotional materials were prepared and disseminated, etc. Similar to this one was also the project "Macedonian active platform for social inclusion - MAPSI" - implemented in 18 municipalities and contributed for strengthening the role and participation of relevant stakeholders (local self-government institutions, NGOs and other stakeholders) in the development, implementation and monitoring of the programs for social inclusion (with a special focus on the establishment of partnerships, networking and cooperation). The Project "Safe and Equal: Non-discrimination and diversity management in employment" – also, worked on strengthening the capacities and role of relevant actors (NGOs, social partners etc.) in three municipalities in the implementation and monitoring of programs for social inclusion, in identifying and monitoring local conditions and social needs and strengthening their capacity and role in promoting an inclusive labor market and fight against discrimination at the workplace. With the specific project "SEAP - Social and economic assistance platform" implemented in the municipality of Chair (Skopje) the establishment of cross-sectoral model of social and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups was promoted and supported, together with the strengthening the capacities of the local actors involved in the identification of vulnerable groups at-risk; adoption and establishment of a strategic approach in dealing with issues of social inclusion; development and testing of a model for social and economic assistance to vulnerable groups in the municipality. Actively involved in implementation of project activities were the representatives (experts) from the local self-government, the Social Work Center and the Employment Center, local NGOs and representatives of vulnerable groups themselves, living in the municipality.

One of the projects worth mentioning in this field was also the Project „Piloting a model for sustainable employment of persons with disabilities“ in which, in several municipalities in Skopje region, activities were aimed also to the strengthening the capacities of the business sector (companies) in ensuring an employment offer without any obstacles for people with disabilities. Trainings/workshops were organized for around 70 human resource (HR) professionals from the companies, on the topics related to employment without any obstacles, non-discrimination and management of people with disabilities. Prepared and distributed were practical guide “Employing and managing PwDs” and other promotional materials for the companies.

There were also many other projects and initiatives aimed at encouraging and supporting such partnerships, mutual collaborations and joint coordinated actions in tackling actual local challenges and problems in the area of social inclusion, labor market, employment, combating poverty, antidiscrimination etc.

**3.3.1.1. Objective: Promoting design and implementation of measures for reducing poverty and social exclusion at local level**

<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> 4,670,000 €
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**Measure: d/ Increasing employability and activation of vulnerable categories at local level**

**Description:** Implementation of measures and projects at local level aimed at increasing the employability and the social inclusion of people from different vulnerable groups.

Among other things, it is planned to expand in other (new) municipalities the programme of socially-beneficial work (the program for providing community-based social services) which provides work engagement of citizens from vulnerable categories (e.g. long-term unemployed), and at the same time the new innovative social services are being provided within the local communities, where the benefit is again to the citizens belonging to the vulnerable categories as end users of these services (such as the elderly, PwDs, pre-school aged children and their parents). These types of activities are so far supported in 42 municipalities. Unemployed individuals engaged to provide services to elderly persons under this programme have the opportunity to get a certified three-month training for providing home-based services (60 persons in 2015), and with this the engaged persons, besides the valuable work experience, also learn specific skills which will increase their working abilities and employability. In order to ensure greater sustainability of the developed services, it is planned to provide an additional support through grants for starting one’s own business which would continue with providing certain service(s) to vulnerable categories.



There are also planned activities to support integration of the migrants-repatriates (migrant-returnees) in their local communities, activities for stimulating the use of remittances from abroad received by our citizens (in many cases even the social assistance beneficiaries) through various forms, such as active employment measures, motivation to use these funds for starting own businesses, support in establishing family businesses and similar, which would activate the citizens and would gain them financial independence. Such activities would be implemented in cooperation and with support of the local community.

**Implementation:**

One of the specific measures included within the Operational Plan for active employment programmes and measures for 2017, was the realization of the program for municipal-beneficial work (i.e. provision of community-based social services), aimed at employment of persons belonging to vulnerable groups for developing and delivering social services within the community, in accordance with the programs submitted by municipalities.

The measure in 2017 was implemented in the duration of 6 months and it included 466 persons in service delivery. Of these, 140 were educational and personal assistants for inclusion of children with disabilities in education and 326 persons - in developing community services.

Furthermore, with the revised Operational Plan for employment 2017, two new measures were implemented "Financial and counseling support for growth of social enterprises" (non-refundable grant in amount of 10K€ for co-financing new business investments, with the obligation for employment) and the measure "Support for creation of new jobs in the civil society organizations" (grants in the amount of 1,500€ for hiring one person, and with a maximum of 5 employments).

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In addition, in the period 2016/2017 a number of smaller grant-projects were implemented within the two grant schemes financed by IPA Component 4, implementing various measures and specific actions aimed precisely at encouraging social inclusion and employment support for various categories of vulnerable people in local communities, by creating and fostering local partnerships, involvement of various stakeholders at local level, taking into account specific local conditions and needs, etc.

Within the two grant schemes "*Fostering social inclusion*" and "*Promoting social inclusion at local level*" 38 grant-projects were funded, implemented by 90 different entities, mostly civil society organizations, public institutions, units of local self-government and others, which implemented models (e.g. social entrepreneurship), measures and services to enable and to contribute to activation of persons who, for various reasons, are distant from the labor market and their social inclusion.

Some of the more important achieved results:

- a total of 2,299 people participated in trainings on soft skills, 715 were members of ethnic minorities - mainly Roma, and majority of them - women; 350 persons with disabilities; 290 young persons at social risk and with low qualifications; Furthermore, other involved were the long-term unemployed; victims of domestic violence; single parents - mostly mothers; persons serving a prison sentence; rural population; etc.;
- more than 2,225 people were trained in various vocational skills, acquiring knowledge, experience and qualifications that will facilitate their entry into the labor market. 683 were Roma-women and members of other ethnic communities, 647 were persons with disabilities and 464 - unemployed youths, at risk of poverty and exclusion;
- In addition to acquiring soft and other vocational skills, 687 persons were also covered with mentoring, internships and/or on-the-job training. Of these, 185 were Roma-women and members of other ethnic communities, persons with disabilities 153, and 157 young unemployed persons at risk of poverty and exclusion;
- 480 business plans for starting own business were develop;
- are 128 people were employed, but the number is expected to be higher, given that some of the projects completed their implementation in December 2017;
- 200 various courses/trainings were organized, and 45 training modules were developed, providing a good basis for training and retraining of vulnerable groups facing various multiple obstacles impeding their efforts to enter the labor market.

Within the framework of these grant projects, for example, as part of activities to encourage social inclusion of disadvantaged persons into the labor market, 98 young persons – social assistance recipients and 28 young people – placed in the social protection institutions, were trained for early career guidance and counseling. This was realized on the basis of the previously developed Methodology for career counseling and career guidance earlier, development of 60 social cards for young people without parental care and educational and social problems, as well as preparation of a needs analysis study.

Within the framework of another project, an efforts were made to contribute in creating favorable environment for re-integration of offenders into society, through trainings for acquisition of general skills and skills on occupations in deficit on the labor market. These trainings were realized based on the specialized educational programs tailored to the needs of 120 persons serving prison sentence (program for acquiring basic literacy, program for English language, program in basic computer skills, specialized program for vocational training as a baker/chef and program for hairdresser/barber).

Also, activities were implemented for developing and testing a model for comprehensive support of 77 single-mothers through a long-term training program for basic vocational and entrepreneurial skills, the self-assistance groups for single mothers were established, and also an appropriate tools and resources were provided for the Social work centers and the local civil society organizations for further support and facilitating the integration of single mothers (including victims of family violence) in the labor market.

<b>3.3.1.1. Objective: Promoting design and implementation of measures for reducing poverty and social exclusion at local level</b> <b>Measure: e/ Strengthening the capacities of the representatives of different stakeholders at local level for development, creation, implementation of social protection services</b>	<b>Deadline:</b> <b>2020</b>	<b>Budget:</b> <b>440,000 €</b>
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**Description:** The organization and implementation of various trainings, seminars, workshops for the representatives of the local self-government, institutions at local level, non-governmental organizations, social partners etc. will continue in the forthcoming period. With the purpose of improving their capacities for active participation in the development and implementation of policies, projects, measures, services which would be adjusted and adjusted to the needs of the citizens belonging to the vulnerable categories at local level. For improvement of the situation and capacities in this area, activities are planned for analysis and improvement of the data and information availability and the data bases for specific groups at risk, in order to gradually fill-in the gaps of chronic lack of relevant quality and reliable data for specific vulnerable and socially endangered categories of citizens. It is important to improve collection and availability of data disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, disability. Improvements in this area are necessary, through linking the already existing data and also through field check-ups, for identification of those that have not yet entered into the social and health care protection systems, have not been registered into the employment agency databases etc.

**Implementation:**  
 With the expert support provided within the Project *"Technical assistance in project management and monitoring of the grant scheme – 'Fostering social inclusion'"* (IPA Component 4), implemented during 2016 and 2017, a substantial assistance was provided to strengthen the capacities, mainly to the civil society sector for efficient and effective design and implementation of projects in the field of social inclusion. This technical assistance was implemented in parallel (simultaneously) with the implementation of the 26 grant-projects under the grant scheme funded by the EU (IPA Component 4) for "Fostering social inclusion".  
 The experts working on this Project provided strengthening of the capacities and skills and increase of the knowledge of 66 different organizations (CSOs, local self-government units, social work centers, secondary schools) that were implementing projects at the local level in the field of social inclusion.  
 Seminars were organized for the project managers and trainings for grant-projects management, attended by 142 persons; web-site (<http://taeugrants.net/>) was developed where all of the training materials are available and accessible; 53 field-visits were organized for to 26 grant projects, during which a practical training was also provided for the grants beneficiaries for more successful implementation of the projects.

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In addition to that, in order to ensure successful implementation of the planned reform of the social protection system, a research has been made to assess the capacities of the Social work centers to implement planned reforms, together with the assessment of the needs for further strengthening their capacities.  
 The reform, in the course of 2018 will also include changes and upgrade of the existing software solution for administering financial rights, the business analysts will be engaged, with the support provided by a World Bank project, who will begin with their work and the drafting of new tender documentation, i.e. description of the functionalities that the new system will need to support (in accordance with the new legislation) and in which, in addition to the financial rights (benefits), the social services will also be covered.

<p><b>3.3.1.1. Objective: Promoting design and implementation of measures for reducing poverty and social exclusion at local level</b></p> <p><b>Measure: f/ Defining and generating proxy-indicators and data that will enable better insight into the numbers and percentages of persons with specific disability in the local communities (municipalities)</b></p>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> <b>2017</b></p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> <b>UNDP</b></p>
<p><b>Description:</b> The activities will be implemented in close cooperation with the associations working with people with disabilities and their existing databases will be used. In addition to this, the work will also be done in the direction of detection of obstacles that the PwDs are facing, prioritization of their needs, as well as the opportunities and possibilities for overcoming those obstacles, including here also the obstacles for their inclusion into the labour market, and this would be afterwards used as the ground for creating relevant policies and measures for these target groups. Support for these activities shall be provided by the UNDP.</p>		
<p><b>Implementation</b></p> <p>In 2017, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, with the support provided by UNDP office, has implemented a project related to the generation of data on persons with disabilities, which should help in the estimates of the number and locations where these people live, and to help in identification of barriers to their social and economic inclusion within the community.</p> <p>Two field studies were conducted in three regions within the country - Pelagonia, Skopje and Southeast Region. Two sets of information have been prepared, that will need to be obtained, and 600 persons with different types of disabilities, as well as 83 foster families were covered by this research (study). Questionnaires refer to the availability and accessibility of services in the field of social and health protection, as well as the employment services. The second questionnaire was designed for the purpose of assessing the situation with respect to the foster families who take care of children/persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities were engaged as interviewers for this research. Two publications have been released with the results of this survey. In addition, the databases of the members of national disability organizations have also been obtained, allowing to assess the number of persons with disabilities by different municipalities.</p>		

### 3.3.2. Support and improvement of deinstitutionalization, focusing on persons with disabilities

<p><b>3.3.2.1. Objective: Strengthening the process of deinstitutionalization and improving the non-institutional forms of protection for persons with disabilities</b>  <b>Measure: a/ Revision and update of the National Strategy for Deinstitutionalization 2008-2018</b></p>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2018</p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> 200,000 €</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> For the purpose of improving and intensifying the process of deinstitutionalization, it is planned to initiate several activities in 2017. A detailed and comprehensive analysis and assessment of the current situation, achieved results and challenges in the implementation of the existing Strategy for deinstitutionalization will be undertaken. On the basis of the analysis findings and results, the process of revision and update of the Strategy will start, with extension of the timeline (beyond 2018), preparation of a specific action plan with timetable, budgetary framework, indicators and targets expected to be achieved. An effective mechanism for coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy will also be established.</p> <p>Special attention will be paid to the analysis and assessment of the situation at the Special Institute "Demir Kapija" and the established housing units for independent living with support; identification of the key challenges in this field; the required reforms and activities, in accordance with the best practices and EU standards.</p> <p>Thematic discussions and public debates, exchange of opinions, presentation and transfer of relevant European experience, will be organized within this process, with the involvement and active participation of all stakeholders in the field.</p>		
<p><b>Implementation</b></p> <p>During 2017, intensive preparatory and other activities have been implemented aimed at supporting the process of revising the existing Strategy of deinstitutionalization. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, in cooperation with the Delegation of the European Union, in April 2017 launched the project "<i>Technical assistance to support the process of deinstitutionalization in the social sector</i>". With the broad participation of stakeholders a Situation Analysis was developed, which included analysis of the context, needs assessment, assessment of previous policies and available services, as well as institutional assessment.</p> <p>Based on the findings and conclusions of this analysis, the first draft of the <u>National Strategy for Deinstitutionalization 2018-2027</u> was prepared, which also foresees a detailed action plan to also be prepared for the first three years of implementation, indicative budget framework, performance indicators and appropriate mechanism for coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy implementation.</p> <p>The National Strategy for deinstitutionalization 2018-2027 will be finally adopted in the first half of 2018, once the wide process of public debate and consultation with all stakeholders in the area is implemented and concluded.</p>		
<p><b>3.3.2.1. Objective: Strengthening the process of deinstitutionalization and improving the non-institutional forms of protection for persons with disabilities</b>  <b>Measure: b/ Continuation of the process of deinstitutionalization of persons with mental disabilities from the PI Special Institute "Demir Kapija"</b></p>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2020</p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> 3,500,000 €</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> It is planned to implement the analysis of the current situation in the Institute in order to obtain detailed information on the beneficiaries' conditions and types of diagnosis, development of individual plans for psycho-social preparation, determining the current price of cost for the care for one beneficiary, determining the costs and the dynamics of the continuation with the process for gradual deinstitutionalization of beneficiaries accommodated in the Special Institute. The process of opening new services (housing units) for organized independent living with support for people with mental disabilities, in order to increase the capacities and the number of people accommodated in these non-institutional forms. These forms of protection will have a significant role also in providing support for prevention from institutionalization of people with disabilities</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b></p> <p>During 2017, the focus was placed on the participatory and thorough process of preparation of a new Strategy for deinstitutionalization for the next ten years period, with the purpose to continuously and systematically expand the availability of different types of non-institutional social services, in accordance with the established long-term goals and priorities.</p> <p>In respect to the process of transformation of the Special Institute "Demir Kapija", an analysis of the situation in the Institute was prepared, including also the review of the structure of beneficiaries (by age, gender, type and degree of disability, place of origin, etc.), as well as the structure of employees/staff (profile, education, work experience, etc.).</p> <p>The training was also provided for the staff in the Institute for preparation of individual plans for the beneficiaries.</p>		
<p>Towards the end of 2017, the work has began for the preparations for determining the costs of social services (methodology), including also the organized supported living in the community. The preparation of the methodology is expected to be completed in the first half of 2018.</p>		

As part of the efforts to improve the conditions and the functioning in the Special Institute "Demir Kapija", a series of workshops were held to introduce the methodology of personal planning, involving professionals from several social welfare institutions, social work centers, civil organizations and students. The Institute in October 2017 held a student camp with the participation of students from universities in Skopje and Ljubljana, the staff of the institution and representatives of civil society organizations, during which a necessary steps were considered and discussed for moving (transferring) users from the Institute into the services of organized supported living in the community.

To facilitate this transition, in parallel, the Special Institute with the support from UNICEF has implemented the project "Providing specialized support for children with disabilities", engaging the expert for intensive interactive therapy, to assist a team of experts to prepare children up to 26 years old, for the life they deserve, outside the institute - in an environment similar to the family one.

<b>3.3.2.1. Objective: Strengthening the process of deinstitutionalization and improving the non-institutional forms of protection for persons with disabilities</b> <b>Measure: c/ Commencement and gradual realization of the process of deinstitutionalization of the institution for accommodating children and youths with physical disabilities PI Institute for rehabilitation "Banja BANSKO" -Strumica</b>	<b>Deadline:</b> <b>2020</b>	<b>Budget:</b> <b>110,000 €</b>
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**Description:** Currently the institution accommodates 62 beneficiaries (children and youths) of which the highest number - around 80% are above 26 years of age. It is planned to commence with the realization of activities for assessment of capabilities and the remaining functionality of persons with physical disabilities, an adequate individualized programme will be prepared for their rehabilitation and occupational qualification, support will be provided and inclusion in the professional rehabilitation and (self)employment programmes for PwDs. Training for experts for work oriented rehabilitation is also planned, that will be further piloted in the institution covering at least 20 people with physical disabilities with remaining functionality in order to be included in the labour market, and with that, to be able to gradually leave the institution and continue with self-reliant living. It is planned to open new housing units for independent and organized living with support for these persons, in order to provide adequate housing with support, in individual housing buildings until the moment when they would be able to continue to live on their own.

Furthermore, the activation measures will have to be implemented for persons with disabilities on the labour market and measures for acceptance of the disabled people by the employers in the private sector. This measure is planned to be a pilot measure with the persons from the Institute "Banja BANSKO" who would successfully enter the labour market through some of the active employment measures.

**Implementation:**  
 The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, together with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Municipality of Strumica and other national partners, implemented a project for professional rehabilitation, directly aimed at people with disabilities placed in the Public Institution - Institute for Protection and Rehabilitation "Banja BANSKO" - Strumica. The entire project was implemented with the support of renowned Austrian company for rehabilitation BBRZ, and the aim of the project was to encourage job (work-related) training and inclusion in the labor market of the residents.

Three trainings were conducted within this project for 16 professionals in the theoretical aspects of the work-oriented rehabilitation, and after the trainings it 25 days of piloting were implemented, i.e. direct work with the beneficiaries placed in the Institute "Banja BANSKO". During this process of piloting, for 23 users of the institution social histories were prepared, assessments, REHA planning, individual plans aimed to trace their personal aspirations, desires, abilities, and to increase their working capacity through practical exercises, visits to the local businesses and familiarization with the workplaces. Furthermore, for these persons a medical assessments were also prepared, by experts in the field of occupational medicine.

During 2018, activities for vocational training and inclusion of the residents from "Banja BANSKO" in the services of independent living with support, will continue in the framework of activities of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in the field of de-institutionalization of the of social protection institutions.

The focus during 2017 was on the participatory and thorough process to prepare a new Strategy for deinstitutionalization for the next ten years, whereas the process and the dynamics (pace) of leaving the institution by the residents of the Institute "Banja BANSKO" will be determined and laid-out within the Strategy, and decided upon together, with the participation of the institution residents.

<b>3.3.2.1. Objective: Strengthening the process of deinstitutionalization and improving the non-institutional forms of protection for persons with disabilities</b> <b>Measure: d/ Establishing a Centre for rehabilitation and work qualification and service for organized living with support, within the Institute of rehabilitation of children and youth - Skopje</b>	<b>Deadline:</b> <b>2020</b>	<b>Budget:</b> <b>50,000 €</b>
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**Description:** The Institute for rehabilitation which is visited by children and youths with moderate and severe mental disturbance in their intellectual development (over 100 beneficiaries) it is planned to implement activities for adapting the workshops for their use within the Institute and procurement of necessary adequate equipment for work and work-oriented rehabilitation, adjusted to the abilities of the beneficiaries and opening of a work centre within the institute. Introduction of vocational education tailored to the beneficiaries' abilities, providing service for supported living for the beneficiaries and providing adequate trainings for the employees in the institution who will work on the programmes for rehabilitation and work-oriented qualification of the persons with mental disabilities.

**Implementation:**

During 2017 the implementation of the EU (IPA) project on "Promoting social inclusion services" was completed, within which a draft standards for vocational rehabilitation and proposals for its introduction.

Used as a basis for the development of vocational rehabilitation are the experiences, lessons learned and recommendations from the implemented pilot-programs for vocational rehabilitation and work-related training of people with disabilities, piloted by 9 service providers (CSOs, day-care centers for people with special needs, private companies, social welfare institutions, specialized schools). A Draft Rulebook and nine standards for vocational rehabilitation have been developed, five programs for professional rehabilitation are designed focused on people with disabilities who are employed and those who are in the process of job search. A Draft Program for training from theory to practice with 21 modules was prepared, as well as training materials for training related to the work with 5 categories of persons with disability (people with hearing impairments, people with intellectual disabilities, people with mental disorders, visually impaired and blind persons and people with physical disabilities).

A specific field research was conducted and a special IT module for professional rehabilitation was developed, as part of the software for record keeping about the users of social services (LIRIKUS).

Based on these documents, a discussions have been initiated to open a rehabilitation center at the Institute for Rehabilitation of Children and Youth - Skopje, and according to the plans, this should begin to be realized in the second half of 2018. In this respect, project-proposal has been prepared for the purchase of equipment for rehabilitation for the mentioned institution and it was submitted for approval by the donor.

**3.3.2.1. Objective: Strengthening the process of deinstitutionalization and improving the non-institutional forms of protection for persons with disabilities**

Deadline:  
2020

Budget:  
IPA

**Measure: e/ Development of social services in the local community for persons with disturbed mental health**

**Description** There are a number of beneficiaries in the psychiatric hospital - Skopje and the mental hospital - Demir Hisar who are residing in these institutions for a longer period of time, among other reasons, also due to the lack of adequate programmes for their rehabilitation and centres in the local communities that will be able to provide support in their everyday activities. At present, on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, there are seven Centres for mental health (three in Skopje, and in Tetovo, Strumica, Gevgelija and Prilep). It is planned to start the activities for assessment of their programmes, capacities, and the possibilities for providing support service to people with disturbed mental health, within the communities where they live, on the basis of which an adequate support programmes would be developed, using the European experiences. Training programmes for strengthening the capacities of the non-medical staff in these centres (social workers, psychologists) would also be organized, for providing psychological counseling services, support in conducting everyday activities, support in strengthening the capacities for easier access to the labour market etc. It is also planned to commence with development of programmes for work-oriented rehabilitation of people that have stayed in these institutions for a longer period of time.

**Implementation:**

The development and improvement of social services for people with mental disorders is a process that requires an extremely high level of inter-ministerial (together with the Ministry of Health and other health institutions) and interdisciplinary cooperation (between medical staff and experts in the social protection system).

The key objectives and ways of cooperation in this respect, are expected to be established and determined within the National Strategy for deinstitutionalization 2018-2027. Therefore, a specific activities related to this particular measure will begin to be realized in the period after the adoption of the Strategy, by providing a systematic, coordinated and effective approach.

**3.3.2.1. Objective: Strengthening the process of deinstitutionalization and improving the non-institutional forms of protection for persons with disabilities**

Deadline:  
2020

Budget:  
XXX

**Measure: f/ Analysis and improvement of the existing minimum standards for providing services for community-based assisted living**

**Description:** For providing unified and improved quality of services and equal treatment throughout the territory of the country, it is planned to implement activities for analysis and eventual improvement of the minimum standards for providing community-based services for supported living, as a support and promotion/improvement of the deinstitutionalization process, as well as prevention from institutionalization of PwDs

**Implementation:**

Preparatory activities for implementation of the planned measures have been initiated in 2018 (in the part of preparation of bylaw for independent living with support and development of methodology for determining the cost of social services) ... Corresponding changes and improvements in the area of standards, regulations, etc. will follow also after the planned adoption of the new Law on Social Protection (within the framework of the planned reforms of the social protection system).

### 3.3.3. Further development of social services and pluralization

<p><b>3.3.3.1. Objective: Development and improvement of the social services and the opportunities for inclusion of various stakeholders in the high-quality and efficient provision of community-based social services</b></p> <p><b>Measure: a/ Implementing measures for improving the conditions for delivery of social services by other providers</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2020</p>	<p>Budget: 75,000 €</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Due to the lack of clearly established standards for social services, and according to that also the cost price, it is planned to undertake activities for development of standards for delivery of social services and its proper legal regulation. This would stimulate the private initiative and the civil sector for active involvement in the provision and delivery of social services. Although, in the Law on Social Protection, there are possibilities for signings agreements for providing social services by other providers, still, the activities have to be taken in order to define a more comprehensive model of social agreements which would cover a wider spectrum of social services, thus enabling and stimulating greater pluralization in this field and opening the possibilities to delegate social services to external providers (non-governmental organizations, private companies, individuals etc.)</p>		
<p><b>Implementation</b></p> <p>The planned reform of the social protection system is directed also towards activities for redesigning the system of <u>services</u> in the social protection, and towards developing a more comprehensive model of licensing and provision of social services through social contracts with external providers (NGOs, private companies, individuals etc.). This will lead to increase in the access and coverage of beneficiaries (users) with the social protection services.</p> <p>In accordance with this strategic document (ESRP), and as a result of the implementation of the planned measures and activities, it is expected that by 2020 the coverage of beneficiaries with social protection services will increase by 30%.</p> <p>(see also 3.3.1.1. - Measure a/ )</p> <p>In 2018, activities have been initiated for developing the methodology of cost of the service, which will allow determination of the costs (prices) of social services, and thus, also the development of the social contracting and providing services by external providers - civil society organizations and private sector.</p>		
<p><b>3.3.3.1. Objective: Development and improvement of the social services and the opportunities for inclusion of various stakeholders in the high-quality and efficient provision of community-based social services</b></p> <p><b>Measure: b/ Promotion and development of social entrepreneurship</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2020</p>	<p>Budget: 2,500,000 €</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> In Macedonia, the concept of social entrepreneurship is still not properly regulated, although the significance of the concept and its benefits are already known and well recognized. The activities have already been initiated for creating stimulating and supporting environment for development of social enterprises and social entrepreneurship, as an important tool in tackling social exclusion, creation of new jobs and delivering services for the most vulnerable categories of population. Supporting development of social enterprises is planned, encouraging/promoting socially responsible enterprises, supporting involvement of civil society organizations in this sphere, establishment and development of centers/services for social and professional (re)integration, support for direct work places creation for disadvantaged persons. The work will be done in the upcoming period for establishing the necessary regulatory framework for social entrepreneurship, including the preparation of a specific law, and further regulation/improvement of the existing legislation if found necessary (such as for example, the amendments to the legal provisions relating to the work of civil society associations, to the regulation related to employment of persons with disabilities, etc.). The process of drafting the <b>Law on Social Entrepreneurship</b> is currently underway. Activities for raising awareness on social entrepreneurship, establishing the adequate means and instruments (financial and other) for supporting social enterprises, will also be implemented.</p> <p>Development of set of measures for promoting and supporting social businesses that will be linked with the existing financial instruments - micro credits for self-employment, possibilities for support through the ALMM, facilitated access to small-scale public procurements, measures for improving access to information, trainings and expert counseling for starting and conducting social businesses. It is planned to establish a social enterprise support centres that will offer education, trainings and other types of support and services necessary for establishing and functioning of social enterprises. Implementation of measures for direct support to the social enterprises by providing adequate expertise and work analysis, business start-up guidance and counseling, development of business strategy/plan, access to financing/grants, providing/sharing office space and equipment to be used by the social entrepreneurs etc.</p> <p>Trainings will also be provided for experts and professionals in the relevant institutions (MLSP, ME, ESARM, MF and others) in implementing social entrepreneurship policies, taking into consideration the regional and EU experience in this field.</p> <p>Significant support in implementation of planned activities for development and promotion of soc.entrepreneurship in Macedonia will also be provided through IPA II.</p>		

**Implementation**

In the period between May 2016 and November 2017 the Project on "Promoting social entrepreneurship" was implemented, financed by the EU (IPA Component 4), and aimed at building an eco-system for the development of social entrepreneurship in the country, as well as to provide support to the already existing social enterprises for their growth. Within the project, the cooperation between institutions and cooperation between civil society organizations has been strengthened through the establishment of a mixed working group, responsible to review, discuss and recommend policies for the development of this sector.

The capacities of the financial institutions have been strengthened in respect to the specifics of social enterprises, as well as on the financial mechanisms that exist for their support, and as a result of this, in August 2017 these measures were included in the revised Operational Plan for active employment programs and measures for 2017, as two specific measures: the Measure for support of the social enterprises and Measures to encourage employment in the civil society organizations. A network of organizations working in the field of social entrepreneurship was established and the operational capacity of 12 civil society organizations were strengthened for management of social enterprises and they also received grants to support their businesses.

The project resulted in raised awareness about the social entrepreneurship among public authorities, private companies, universities, civil society organizations and the general public. The capacities of young students in respect to the social entrepreneurship have also been strengthened, by organizing a week of social entrepreneurs of the three universities in the country and through implementation of mentoring in the workplace for young people.

**Changes/adjustments/possible delays and postponements/change of priorities:**

Initially, it was planned that by the end of 2017 a specific Law on social entrepreneurship, whose preparation was already started, but later, within the wide consultations with all stakeholders (including experts and civil society) a decision was made to prolong (postpone) the adoption of this law. Meanwhile, there is an intensive work ongoing to establish favorable conditions and eco-system for the development of social entrepreneurship and to identify and implement the most appropriate forms and mechanisms of support (financial and other) to the social enterprises. The experiences from the implementation of these measures and mechanisms and the functioning of the existing and newly established organizations in this field, will be the basis for future policies and measures for further promotion and development of social entrepreneurship in the country. It is planned to also prepare a strategic document for the area, which will determine also the dynamics of adopting the appropriate legal framework to properly regulate this area.

<p><b>3.3.3.1. Objective: Development and improvement of the social services and the opportunities for inclusion of various stakeholders in the high-quality and efficient provision of community-based social services</b></p>	<p>Deadline: <b>2020</b></p>	<p>Budget: <b>300,000 €</b></p>
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**Measure: c/ Development of the service for providing personal assistance for people with disabilities**

**Description:** The service for personal assistance for people with disabilities is still not available and sufficiently and adequately developed. Because of this, in the following period, activities for development of a sustainable model of the personal assistance service shall be undertaken; the necessary amendments to the Law on Social Protection shall be made, providing conditions for adequate funding of this service and ensuring expected service quality. It is expected that the development of this new service for personal assistance will provide important support to individuals with disabilities and to facilitate their independent living and community-based living.

In the beginning, the personal assistance service shall be piloted in 10 municipalities in the country, covering around 70 beneficiaries, who will be provided with assistance and support in performing everyday living and work activities.

In the medium term, work will be done in direction of expanding the scope and coverage of personal assistance beneficiaries in their daily activities and in the workplace.

**Implementation:**

Numerous activities in this part have been implemented within the project "Promoting social inclusion services", financed by the European Union (IPA Component 4), implemented until July 2017. The project laid-down the foundation for the introduction of services for vocational rehabilitation and personal assistance for persons with disabilities in the Republic of Macedonia. Realized Preparatory activities to establish a sustainable model of personal assistance have been implemented, a field research on the needs for this service was conducted, work has also been done on properly defining the users of personal assistants and the types of personal assistance.

A training program for personal assistants was also prepared, and the plan and promotional material to raise awareness was also developed, as well as the assessment of the financial and budgetary implications for implementing personal assistants in the Republic of Macedonia.

The proposals for necessary changes/amendments in the legal framework for the implementation of this specific service were prepared, standards are developed. In addition to that, a piloting of the



proposed model of personal assistance was also realized. An upgrade of the existing software application for social services – LIRIKUS was done, by introducing appropriate new modules for vocational rehabilitation and personal assistance.

Included in trainings for personal assistance within the project, were about 230 persons - professionals from social work centers, employment centers, day-care centers, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, representatives from the civil society (relevant NGOs) and individuals involved in piloting the proposed model of personal assistance service. Piloting of personal assistance, from the middle of May until the end of June 2017 was carried out by two selected service providers (NGOs) with included 67 people with medium or high-level physical disabilities in 8 municipalities: Ohrid, Bitola, Veles, Kumanovo, Tetovo, Kocani and Skopje.

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In order to contribute to independent living, active and equal participation in the community and in society at large, i.e. to assist persons with disabilities in performing their daily personal and home activities, in participation in education and the labor market, in 2017 the Ministry of Labor and social Affairs has worked on the preparation of Program for personal assistance to people with disabilities for 2018, as a new type of social protection service - personal assistance, to be used by people with severe to most severe physical disability and the completely blind persons. During the 2018, the program will be piloted in 7 municipalities in the country (Skopje, Kumanovo, Bitola, Strumica, Struga, Gostivar and Negotino), and for its operationalization, the Institute for Social Activities (Zavod za socijalna dejnosti) has worked on developing standards for the service of personal assistance.

The Program for personal assistance will start with practical implementation in June 2018, and currently there are ongoing trainings to individuals who want to be assistants, as well as the process licensing of the providers of this service by civil society organizations.

<b>3.3.3.1. Objective: Development and improvement of the social services and the opportunities for inclusion of various stakeholders in the high-quality and efficient provision of community-based social services</b> <b>Measure d/ Development of the vocational rehabilitation services (including psycho-social rehabilitation/empowerment)</b>	<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> 2,700,000 €
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**Description:** At present, the vocational rehabilitation service for persons with disabilities is still not developed in Macedonia. It is planned to implement number of measures and activities to design vocational rehabilitation standards, to develop programmes for vocational and work-related rehabilitation of PwDs that will be (initially) tested in 10 selected day-care centres or organizations that will be interested to provide/deliver this service. Legislative amendments will also be prepared to enable financing and sustainability of the service, in order to stimulate the private initiatives and the civil sector in provision/delivery of this type of services. It is also planned to develop programmes for trainings and for certification/licensing for the professionals that will be involved in providing these services. In the following period, the support will also be provided in further expanding the coverage and diversity of the rehabilitation services for persons with various types of disabilities; support to the further development and implementation of bio-psychological, social and vocational rehabilitation services.

**Implementation:**

( see also 3.3.2.1. - Measure d/ and 3.3.2.1. – Measure c/ )

In 2017 the implementation of the EU (IPA) project "Promoting social inclusion services" has been finalized. Within the framework of this project a draft (proposals) standards for vocational rehabilitation, together with the recommendation for its introduction. Used and a basis for the development of vocational rehabilitation are the experiences and lessons learned and the recommendations from the implemented pilot-programs for professional rehabilitation and vocational training of persons with disabilities, piloted by 9 service providers (CSOs, day-care centers for people with special needs, private companies, social welfare institutions, specialized schools). A Draft Rulebook has been prepared and nine standards for vocational rehabilitation; five programs for vocational rehabilitation have been developed focused on the persons with disabilities who are employed and those who are in the process of job search. Also, a Draft Training Program from theory to practice was developed, with 21 module and training materials for trainings on the work with 5 categories of persons with disabilities (persons with hearing impairments, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with mental disorders, persons visually impaired and blind persons, and persons with physical disabilities). The field research was carried-out, and in addition, a specific IT module for professional rehabilitation was also developed, as part of the existing software (LIRIKUS) for record keeping on the users

of social services.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, in cooperation with UNDP, the Municipality of Strumica and other national partners, have worked on a pilot-project on professionally oriented rehabilitation, that was directly targeting the persons with disabilities placed in the Public Institution - Institute for Protection and Rehabilitation "Banja Bansko" - Strumica, for the purpose of their work-related training and inclusion in the labor market.

This project covered a total of 23 persons for whom, a well-known Austrian company for rehabilitation BBRZ has prepared individual plans, laying-down the personal affinities, desires, abilities of these individuals, but primarily aiming to increase their working capacities. In the activities, 16 professionals were also involved (from the Institute, the NGO sector and others.) who attended the training for "case management".

**3.3.3.1. Objective: Development and improvement of the social services and the opportunities for inclusion of various stakeholders in the high-quality and efficient provision of community-based social services**

<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> 11,000,000 €
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**Measure: e/ Further development and expanding the network of services and alternative forms of care and protection of specific vulnerable categories of citizens**

**Description:** Although in continuity the work is being done on developing various non-institutional forms of protection of vulnerable groups of citizens (elderly, children/persons with disabilities, children without parents and parental care, street children, children at risk, homeless persons, victims of violence etc.), the work shall continue in this direction.

In the forthcoming period the activities are planned to continue in further promoting placement in foster families, opening of more new day-care centres, small group homes, shelters (shelter centres) and similar alternative forms of providing care in many municipalities in Republic of Macedonia.

It is planned to open new day-care centres (DC) for children with disabilities, DCs for children with autism, DCs for children with Down syndrome, DCs for children with visual problems, day-care centres for early interventions (age between 0-3), establishing forms of service for support to children and young people at risk with asocial manifestation and facilitating their social integration, DCs for adults with severe and the most severe physical disability, DCs for elderly, DCs for homeless people, intervention centres for homeless people in several municipalities, shelter centres for victims of domestic violence etc.

**Implementation:**

- Within the Social Work Care of the City of Skopje a counseling center for psycho-social assistance and support for various groups of users, has been established, providing:
  - *counseling work for the victims of domestic violence;*
  - *psycho-social treatment for the perpetrators of domestic violence;*
  - *counseling work for children and youth with educational and social problems;*
  - *counseling work for disrupted partner, family and parents-children relationships;*
  - *counseling work with future parents;*
  - *counseling work with persons with disabilities and their parents.*

The counseling services, on a monthly basis, are used in an average by 105 users.
- In order to ensure adequate protection of homeless people, and as part of the activities and efforts to increase the coverage with the non-institutional forms of protection and care, in November 2017, in cooperation with the Red Cross of Macedonia, in addition to already established shelter for emergency accommodation for homeless persons in Skopje (whose capacity was expanded and is now 32 beds), three new Regional emergency shelters for homeless have been opened, in Bitola, Strumica and Struga with 10 beds each. The services in the emergency accommodation shelters are being regularly used by about 70 users.
- With the consent given by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, in 2017 a shelter-care center for victims of domestic violence belonging to the LGBT population has been set-up, managed by a non-governmental organization, and whose services during 2017 have been used by 7 persons.

- With the view of further expanding the network of existing services and alternative forms of care and protection of specific vulnerable categories of citizens, several projects in the field of social protection have been successfully implemented, financially supported by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and implemented by 7 selected civil society organizations, in the field of:
  - *providing specialized services for protection of victims of domestic violence (providing access to safe accommodation and temporary stay of 24 to 48 hours for women-victims of violence and their children, providing access to safe accommodation up to 1 year in specialized women's shelters for women-victims of violence and their children, as well as providing access to a free-of-charge national telephone (SOS) helpline that provides support and, so-called crisis counseling, and referrals to other direct services – counseling centers, police intervention, in accordance with the determined standards for specialized services for victims of domestic violence).*
  - *reintegration of homeless persons;*
  - *strengthening the life skills of children at social risk, with special emphasis on children who use psychoactive substances and the children of parents who abuse psychoactive substances;*
  - *support to the Day-care Center for children with autism in Shtip,*
  - *support to the Day-care centers for street children in Skopje.*

<p><b>3.3.3.1. Objective: Development and improvement of the social services and the opportunities for inclusion of various stakeholders in the high-quality and efficient provision of community-based social services</b></p> <p><b>Measure: f/ Development of services for home-based assistance and support for elderly and persons with disabilities</b></p> <p><b>Description:</b> In the following period it is planned to pay attention to the development of the assistance and support services for elderly people and persons with disabilities at home (home-based), particularly at local level, by engaging the non-governmental sector and private providers in giving such services to vulnerable categories of persons, by previously fulfilling certain conditions. Support in the development of these services is expected to be provided through the IPA instrument and part of the necessary funds to be covered by the national and/or local government, with the certain financial participation of the service users themselves. There is a possibility for training and work engagement of the social assistance beneficiaries and other non (or hardly) employable categories of citizens, in order to introduce and develop more forms of protection and services for elderly and PwDs in accordance with their needs, such as home-care, home adaptation and/or maintenance, setting up alarm systems 24/7, temporary replacement for family care etc.</p> <p><b>Implementation:</b>                  With the financial support through IPA (Grant Scheme) additional services for home-based assistance have been established, functioning within the civil society organizations, in the form of social enterprises, which for delivery of services engage trained persons from vulnerable groups (e.g. hiring the long-term unemployed women, aged over 40 years, in providing home-based services of care for elderly persons; or engaging unemployed Roma-women for providing services of professional palliative care).                  In addition, with the consent/approval of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the capacity of the established services for home-based assistance has been expanded, covering the whole territory of the City of Skopje.                  In line with the implementation of these specific measures, are also the activities related to the establishment and development of personal assistance services ....                  ( see also 3.3.3.1. – Measure c/ )</p>	<p>Deadline: <b>2020</b></p>	<p>Budget: <b>IPA</b></p>
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<p><b>3.3.3.1. Objective: Development and improvement of the social services and the opportunities for inclusion of various stakeholders in the high-quality and efficient provision of community-based social services</b></p> <p><b>Measure g/ Measures for increasing the capacities of the institutions for social protection of elderly, especially through stimulating the private initiative</b></p> <p><b>Description:</b> Taking into consideration that Republic of Macedonia has a significantly lower percentage of accommodation capacity for elderly persons in comparison with the EU member-states, there were a number of stimulating measures (package) implemented in the past for further development in this field, particularly in respect to the stimulation of the private initiative (sale of the state-owned building land with a starting price of 1 euro per m<sup>2</sup>, reduced communal construction taxes of 95%, offer of free locations and building by the LSGUs for building homes for elderly, linkage with the benefits offered through the ESARM when employing unemployed individuals in these facilities etc.). As a result of these measures, by the end of 2015, 17 private institutions for old people have been opened and the implementation of these measures and their broadening shall continue in the following period, as well. As a result, it is expected additional number of new homes for elderly persons to be opened throughout the country, leading to the significant increase in the accommodation capacities for these individuals</p> <p><b>Implementation:</b>                  As a result of the measures for stimulating the private initiative in accommodation and care for elderly persons, by the end of 2017, the total number of opened private institutions for the elderly is 25, with a total accommodation capacity of 847 beds.</p>	<p>Deadline: <b>2020</b></p>	<p>Budget: <b>XXX</b></p>
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### 3.3.4. Improving social inclusion of Roma

<b>3.3.4.1. Objective: Further improvement of the living conditions and the quality of life, access to services and social inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Macedonia</b>	<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> 1,670,000 €
<b>Measure: a/ Implementation of measures for improving the employment opportunities and reducing unemployment within the Roma community and increasing participation of Roma in different active employment programmes and measures</b>		
<p><b>Description:</b> Measures for increased participation of Roma in various employment programmes, measures and services implemented through the ESARM, financed through the Budget of the RM, European funds (IPA), support from other international institutions and donors etc.</p> <p>Providing free-of-charge information for the members of Roma community on the available employment services, measures and opportunities, developing professional counseling programmes and mentorship programmes for Roma, implementation of programmes for professional training of Roma for qualifications and occupations demanded on the labour market, other types of trainings, internship programmes for Roma, participation of Roma in self-employment programmes, measures for supporting employment of Roma in the central and local public administration. Measures are planned for organization of informative meetings at local level with the unemployed Roma, information sharing on the social networks and web-portals for promoting employment opportunities, organization of information meetings with potential employers for their stimulation in employing Roma by using subsidized employment and other available measures. Implementation of public awareness campaigns, information meetings, exchange of information and similar activities, for overcoming the challenges, stereotypes and the existing discrimination that the Roma are facing in access to the labour market etc.</p> <p>Particular attention will also be given to the design and implementation of specific programs and measures targeted at Roma women, as a specific category of persons who are particularly disadvantaged and are facing numerous challenges. Various training programs will be organized and conducted, vocational trainings, literacy and/or completion of education, awareness raising, grant schemes, various other active programs and measures for employment and inclusion of Roma women in the labor market, supporting equal opportunities and anti-discrimination, supporting inclusion in the LM through developing entrepreneurial skills, self-employment, social entrepreneurship etc.</p>		
<b>Implementation:</b>		
<p>Roma, as very important vulnerable target group, were involved in the implementation of various active employment programs and measures and labor market services, in accordance with the Operational Plan for 2017.</p>		
<p>According to reports on the implemented activities in 2017, the Roma persons, within the active employment programs and measures, showed the greatest interest for the Program for self-employment, in which 78 people have applied for participation within the program and 16 persons founded their own business. Within the Program for Supporting the growth of micro, small and medium-size enterprises for creating new jobs for young persons up to 29 years old - 10 young Roma-persons were employed. Great interest was also manifested by the unemployed Roma to participate in the work-engagement programs, such as the organization of Public works, which included 76 persons of Roma nationality or the Program for municipal-beneficial work, where 8 persons were engaged. In relations to the trainings, 11 Roma persons were involved in training in foreign languages, 14 have been involved in trainings for occupations demanded on the labour market, 8 were included in the internship programs and 8 in the Training and counseling for entrepreneurship for young aged up to 29.</p>		
<p>In respect to the services provided by the Employment Service Agency, the unemployed Roma had the opportunity to be involved in more services. The most of them were included in the Assistance in job search service (6,861 persons), under which within the Employment centers, the unemployed persons received information and counseling on job vacancies, employment possibilities, assistance in searching the job-advertisements, and they also participated in the organized Info-meetings for young people. Based on the profiling of their employability, the Individual employment plans (IEPs) were prepared, where they were assisted in planning the activities in the process of active job search.</p>		
<p>Unemployed Roma were also involved in various types of trainings aimed at strengthening the job-searching skills and successful self-presentation on the labor market (11 people in total), and 105 Roma were involved in motivational trainings, aimed to strengthen the awareness and motivation of people to actively seek for a job, through the use of active employment programs and measures and the services provided by ESA.</p>		
<p>57 persons were covered by the service Professional orientation and career counseling, in which, through a group and individual counseling they received assistance in planning the job search activities, employment and planning of their career development, and part of the unemployed has also received education on the use of ESA on-line services (41 person).</p>		
<p>The unemployed people were also involved in the employment mediation services, on the bases of the requests submitted by employers to be provided with the adequate workforce.</p>		

419 unemployed Roma were involved in the Activation services for individuals exposed at risk and 36 people in the Activation services for young unemployed people. Within these two services, the unemployed were informed by mentors and based on the assessment of their capacities, were directed to participate in the adequate active employment programs and measures.

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A significant number of Roma were also involved in the implementation of a number of smaller grant-projects, funded by the European Union (IPA Component 4) and implemented in the past period (2016/2017) under the two grant schemes "Fostering social inclusion" and "Promoting social inclusion at local level" (38 projects in total).

As an example, in this respect we will point out the Project on "Enhance Roma woman's participation in the labor market", targeted to the unemployed Roma-women and the Roma-women entrepreneurs, then the project "Improving Roma employment through education and training", the "EPESI - Entrepreneurship platform for economic and social inclusion of women from minority groups", the Project "Equal opportunities of Roma-women to participate in the labor market", the Project "Facilitating integration of ethnic minorities into the labor market" (promotional events, career counseling, trainings and courses for young persons on employability, entrepreneurship, creative workshops, etc.), then the project titled "Get trained, get support, get a job!", the Project "Fit for the future" – targeting young Roma who are not employed, neither in education or training (NEETs), the project "Roma access to (self)employment", the project "Developing sustainable model for the Roma employability" and many others.

With the various measures, activities, services and interventions implemented within the 38 grant-projects, a total of about 2,200 persons from the Roma community were covered. Of these, 1,700 Roma were involved in the 12 specific grant-projects that were specifically designed to provide support for the integration of Roma as a specific vulnerable target group (Roma women, young, unemployed Roma etc.).

In specific active employment programs and measures, within these projects around 560 Roma were involved (in vocational trainings - 238, in internship programs – 218, in measures to support entrepreneurship and self-employment - 105).

**3.3.4.1. Objective: Further improvement of the living conditions and the quality of life, access to services and social inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Macedonia**

<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> 9,900,000 €
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**Measure: b/ Implementing measures for raising the education level of Roma population and their participation/inclusion at all levels of education**

**Description:** Implementation of a number of measures to enable better access, participation and successful completion of studies at all level of education – preschool, primary, secondary, tertiary education, as well as adult education for Roma, especially Roma girls and Roma women. Further implementation of the successful programmes for free-of-charge participation of Roma children, aged 3 to 5, in the preschool education, increasing the capacities for Roma-children enrollment in the pre-school education/kindergarten in Shuto Orizari (municipality with prevalent Roma population), activities for trainings and strengthening capacities of the staff in the kindergartens to implement the programmes for intercultural learning and raising awareness among the Roma-parents about the importance of preschool and other levels of educations for their children, through organizing meetings with parents and their involvement in the managing bodies of the kindergartens/schools.

It is planned to introduce educational mediators in the schools (primary and secondary) for Roma pupils and organization of tutorial classes for Roma pupils that have lower grades in certain school subjects. Other measures (legislative and other programmes) for inclusion of Roma-children on the streets (street children) in the educational system, implementation of programmes for conditional cash transfers, as an incentives for regular school attendance of the Roma-pupils in the primary and secondary education.

It is planned also to continue with awarding scholarships to Roma pupils and other forms of additional support through mentorship and tutorship, expanding the existing enrollment quotes for the Roma in the state universities, providing scholarships and other forms of academic and additional support to Roma students. Activities for protection against segregation and discrimination of Roma pupils/students in education. It is also planned to implement activities for improving the quality of data and information about Roma adults that have not completed primary and/or secondary education and development of an adequate programmes for completion of the primary education etc.

**Implementation:**

In respect to the activities to improve the coverage of Roma children in preschool education, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, in cooperation with the Roma Education Fund (REF), for the period of eleven years in a row already, is implementing the Project on "Inclusion of Roma children in the kindergartens". The total number of children enrolled in all kindergartens in the Republic of Macedonia in the school year 2017/2018 was 34,521 of which 718 or 2.07% are Roma-children. Outside this project, 204 children are enrolled in the kindergartens in the country, i.e. it is the parents who pay for their children's kindergarten stay/enrolment.

During the school year 2017/2018, within the Project a total of 510 children are included in the 19 kindergartens/municipalities. 260 of them are girls. In average, the attendance of children in kindergarten is about 65%, and according to project statistics, the drop-out rate of children from kindergarten is in average 3.45%, with the more noticeable drop-outs among male children of 3.32%, while in girls it is at the level of 2.69%. All children who attend kindergarten have also regularly received all vaccines.

Within this project, in addition to the responsibilities (administrative and financial) undertaken by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, all participating kindergartens and the 19 municipalities are also supporting the stay for a certain number of Roma children in the kindergartens, and for this they sign an agreement with the MLSP. In this way, apart from the Government, the local government has also firmly demonstrated its willingness and readiness to actively contribute to the development of Roma community in the Republic of Macedonia.

For the purpose to improve the conditions for preschool care and education of Roma-children in Shuto Orizari (municipality in Skopje with a predominant Roma population), the construction of a new building for the kindergarten is initiated, with the support provided by the Government of Norway and the UNDP. The new building will replace the previous one that was destroyed in fire, and it will provide access to early childhood care and education to about 200 children from this municipality. Construction is scheduled to be implemented by the end of 2018.

The Ministry of Education and Science, through its Directorate for Development and Promotion of Education in Languages of the Members of the Communities, has announced the advertisement (call) for temporary hiring of 20 Roma educational mediators in 16 municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia. This measure is aimed at improving the primary education among Roma, by monitoring and recording of irregular pupils, low-performing pupils, provision of support for re-integration into the education system of Roma-children of the returnees, improving the collaboration between families and schools and so on.

For the 2017/18 school year, 736 scholarships for Roma students who attend public and private high school schools in Macedonia were awarded. For support of the education of Roma-students in high schools, a total of 116 mentors/tutors were engaged.

<p><b>3.3.4.1. Objective: Further improvement of the living conditions and the quality of life, access to services and social inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Macedonia</b></p> <p><b>Measure: c/ Implementation of measures for improving the quality of housing of the Roma community and improving of the infrastructure in communities with prevalent Roma population</b></p>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2020</p>	<p><b>Budget:</b> 8,000,000 €</p>
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**Description:** It is planned to continue with the implementation of measures for providing improved living conditions of Roma families, through investing in public utility infrastructure projects in municipalities and settlements with prevalent Roma population – construction of sewage, construction and reconstruction of streets/sections of streets in several municipalities (Bitola, Veles, Vinica, Delchevo, Kochani, Prilep, Shtip, Skopje) and social infrastructure. Activities for strengthening capacities of the representatives of the local self government units of the relevant/concerned municipalities on housing and urban development issues and preparation of project and technical documentation in the area of public utility infrastructure.

Legalization of Roma settlements and housing, preparation and implementation of plans for protection against forced eviction.

Provision of the social housing for Roma families from the socially vulnerable categories, by building apartment buildings and housing units where Roma families will be accommodated (until 2015, 14 apartment buildings in many cities throughout the country were constructed, with a total of 678 housing units, of which 102 (15%) are allocated to Roma, and by 2020 it is planned to build additional 19 apartment buildings with 1,063 apartments). Activities for renovation and reconstruction of homes in which Roma live (in cooperation with Habitat Macedonia and Horizons), activities for organized and systematic registration in the Cadastre of the properties owned by Roma, legalization of illegally built objects/buildings and providing property lists (deeds) etc.)

**Implementation:**

In 2016, 6 projects of communal infrastructure were realized in settlements with predominantly Roma population in 6 municipalities: Kocani, Prilep, Veles, Vinica, Delcevo and Pehcevo, with the budget in amount of 6,198,022 denars from the Budget of the Ministry of Transport and Communications for 2016 year, as capital grants to local self-government units to support the implementation of projects of communal (public-utility) infrastructure.

In 2017 an allocation of budgetary funds has been made, in the amount of 8,000,000 denars from the budget of the Ministry of Transport and Communications for 2017, for the support of

implementation of communal infrastructure projects:

- 3,000,000 MKD for the Municipality of Kochani, for the paving of the str.Stamen Manov and construction of two retaining walls at the street;
- 2,500,000 MKD to Municipality of Bitola, for public-utility projects in the settlements Bair 4 and Badembalari 3, and
- 2,500,000 MKD for the Municipality of Prilep, for communal infrastructure projects in the settlement Tri Bagremi.

In the 14 residential buildings with a total of 678 social apartments (build in 2015), 16 additional social apartments were allocated in 2016, to Roma. With this, there are 118 social apartments in total (17.4%), awarded to Roma.

In 2017 the construction of 2 residential buildings with a total of 53 social apartments was finalized. It is expected that the announcement (call) for the distribution of these social apartments will be published in 2018.

**3.3.4.1. Objective: Further improvement of the living conditions and the quality of life, access to services and social inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Macedonia**

<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> 750,000 €
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**Measure: d/ Implementation of measures for continuous improvement of the health status and access to health care for Roma**

**Description** In the following period it is planned to implement various programmes and measures for ensuring improved access of the Roma population to integrated and high-quality health services and for increasing the type and scope of health services in the Roma communities. Activities for improving the information and awareness of Roma population on exercising the right to health insurance and health protection, measures for bringing closer the primary health care protection to the Roma population.

Awarding financial incentives to medical doctors in gynecology and obstetrics for performing primary health care protection in the Roma communities and particularly, in the municipality of Shuto Orizari, implementation of field activities for preventive medical check-ups in the Roma settlements, developing measures for improving the access to health care for the Roma persons with unregulated status and without personal identification documents. The implementation of the project for "Roma health-care mediators" will continue with further widening of the network of Roma health care mediators, as well further strengthening of their capacities.

As a result of the identified weaknesses, measures shall be taken to further improve the system for collection of relevant statistical data and information based on the work and functioning of the Roma health care mediators. It is also planned to implement activities related to raising awareness of the necessity for immunization of the Roma children, implementing educational workshops for Roma parents about vaccination, transmitted and non-transmitted diseases with children, implementing field activities for the identification of non-regularly vaccinated and non-vaccinated Roma-children and their vaccination. Implementing measures for ensuring better access to information for Roma men and women on improving the sexual and reproductive health, informative and educational activities on family planning within the Roma communities etc. Informational and other types of activities for reducing the existence of discrimination in relation to the use of and access to health care services for Roma etc.

**Implementation:**

In 2017 within the project for "Roma health mediators" ten Roma health mediators were engaged in nine municipalities: Suto Orizari, Gorce Petrov, Karpos, Gazi Baba, Tetovo, Gostivar, Stip, Kocani and Delcevo. During the year, the mediators assisted in exercising their right to health insurance to 1,445 persons, as well as the right to choose a primary care physician/gynecologist/dentist to 1,676 persons. In addition they have realized educational counseling on healthy lifestyles to 3,527 persons, and furthermore, with their field activities, the Roma health mediators found 1,447 unvaccinated or irregularly vaccinated children and directed them into appropriate services.

For the purpose of further strengthening the capacities of the mediators, in 2017 a training was held on the subjects of recognizing and acting upon (responding to) the cases of discrimination.

In order to ensure continuous gynecological health protection and care for women from the Municipality of Suto Orizari (a municipality with predominant Roma population), in 2017 a primary health care gynecological practice was opened/established. With this, a permanent solution was ensured to the longstanding problem of shortage of gynecologists in this municipality.

### 3.3.5. Tackling the key challenges in the area of the pension system sustainability

<p><b>3.3.5.1. Objective: Strengthening the financial sustainability of the pension system and improving the efficiency in exercising the pension and disability insurance rights</b></p> <p><b>Measure: a/ Conducting an analysis of the pay-as-you-go and the fully funded pension insurance systems (I and II pillar) and detailed analysis of the structure of the members in the fully funded pension insurance, in relation to actual benefit from the membership in the second pension pillar, based on members' age and years of work-service</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2018</p>	<p>Budget: XXX</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> The implementation of the fully funded pension insurance started since 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2006, and one part of the contribution for pension and disability insurance started to go into private pension funds, and the mandatory members in the second pension pillar were the insurers employed for the first time after 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2003. Ten years since the beginning of the implementation of the fully funded pension insurance, there is a necessity to conduct and to prepare more detailed analyses of the current functioning of the pension system and the justification of the membership into the second pillar for older members (insurers). This would provide an insight into the situation and adequate draft-proposals for the possible improving and upgrading the system, for further amendments to the existing legislative framework and a just (fair) distribution of members (pension insurers).</p>		
<p><b>Implementation:</b> The analysis was prepared in March 2018 by a consultant hired with the technical assistance from the World Bank. The analysis provides a recommendations and options for overcoming the problems of differences in the level of pensions from the first pillar (pay-as-you-go system), compared with the ones from the two-pillar mandatory pension system. At the same time, the analysis also offers solutions for other issues that will lead to improved financial stability of the Pension and Disability Insurance Fund.</p> <p>Based on this analysis, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy will prepare legislative proposals which, according to the Work Program of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia for 2018, will have to be submitted to the Government for consideration and adoption by the end of June 2018.</p>		
<p><b>3.3.5.1. Objective: Strengthening the financial sustainability of the pension system and improving the efficiency in exercising the pension and disability insurance rights</b></p> <p><b>Measure: b/ Further improvement of the efficiency of the Pension and Disability Insurance Fund of Macedonia</b></p>	<p>Deadline: 2018</p>	<p>Budget: XXX</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> By upgrading the electronic services since 2015, the Pension and Disability Insurance Fund of Macedonia began implementing the function of electronic access in the evidence of qualifying years for insurance and salaries for each insurance member, with previously received code and password for access to the system. For the purpose of further upgrading of the access and services, a possibility for electronic application for exercising the pension and disability insurance rights will be provided, by using digital certificate. In addition to that, there will be continuation of the activities for raising public awareness on the pension and disability insurance system, with special focus on the private pension savings schemes, through more general public education on the rights deriving from the pension and disability insurance, at the level of specific target groups and including all stakeholders - institutions, trade unions, employers and non-governmental sector.</p> <p><b>Implementation:</b> The measure to introduce the possibility for electronic application for insight into the insurance period and salaries for each insured person, and for exercising the rights from pension and disability insurance by using a digital certificate, is currently in the process of analyses of the technical preparedness of PDIF for its implementation.</p> <p><b>Changes/adjustments/possible delays and postponements/change of priorities:</b> This particular measure (for introduction the possibility for electronic application for insight into the insurance period and the salaries for each insured person, and for exercising the rights from pension and disability insurance by use of digital certificate) planned to be realized by the end of 2018, will be postponed to 2019 because of conditions related to the technical readiness of the Pension and disability insurance Fund. Wider public education will be implemented after the adoption of the amendments related to the financial stability of the PDIF and the two-pillar pension system.</p>		



<p><b>3.3.5.2. Objective: Introducing new possibilities of investment of the funds from the second and the third pension pillar, in accordance with the capital market and the age structure of the members</b>  <b>Measure: a/ Conducting an Analysis of the existing system of investing assets from the second and the third pension pillars and Analysis of the existing Law on payment of pensions and pension benefits from the fully funded pension insurance</b></p>	<p>Deadline: <b>2019</b></p>	<p>Budget: <b>XXX</b></p>
<p><b>Description:</b> It is expected that the analyses will provide information on the possible introduction of new possibilities for investing the second and third pillar's assets, together with providing draft-proposals for setting up investment portfolios compliant with the investment risk, as well as to provide an overview of the existing system of payment of pensions and pension benefits from the fully funded pension insurance, with proposed actions for possible amendment to the existing legislation and operationalization of the quote (listing) and annuity as type of payment</p> <p><b>Implementation:</b>                  The preparation of an analysis for introduction of investment portfolios harmonized according to the investment risk of the funds from contributions for the fully-funded pension insurance, is planned for 2019.</p>		
<p><b>3.3.5.3. Objective: Maintaining the adequacy of the pension and protection of the standard of pension beneficiaries</b>  <b>Measure: a/ Analysis of the existing system of the right to the minimal pension and implementation of measures for ensuring social security to pensioners through alternative measures of protection and improvement of the social standard of this category of citizens</b></p>	<p>Deadline: <b>2018/2020</b></p>	<p>Budget: <b>3,000,000 €</b></p>
<p><b>Description:</b> The planned analysis will be prepared by the MLSP with an expert assistance. In addition, it is planned to continue with implementation of the already established, but also on finding new alternative measures and projects for improving the social standard, the quality of living and improved social inclusion of pension beneficiaries (e.g. projects for free-of-charge bus and train transportation, free spa recreation, free tourist weekend etc.)</p> <p><b>Implementation:</b>                  In 2017 a free-of-charge spa recreation was used by a total of 5,147 pensioners, with the budget of 30,564,270 denars (about € 495,000).                  In 2018 the project for free-of-charge spa recreation will continue. The criteria for using the free spa recreation for this year, is its availability to all pensioners who have never before used and/or were not entitled to use this service/benefit, and the priority is given to pensioners with low pensions. This year the project is planned to cover 5,500 pensioners and projected budget is 35,000,000 dinars (about € 567,000).</p>		
<p><b>3.3.5.3. Objective: Maintaining the adequacy of the pension and protection of the standard of pension beneficiaries</b>  <b>Measure: b/ Analysis of the existing system for calculating the amount of the pension</b></p>	<p>Deadline: <b>2018</b></p>	<p>Budget: <b>XXX</b></p>
<p><b>Description:</b> Two factors define the amount of the pension, i.e. the completion of the qualifying years of insurance and acquired (received) salaries, where the salaries of the previous years are valorized with coefficients, according to the salary growth in the year prior to obtaining the right to pension. The period of qualifying years of insurance is expressed in percentage which corresponds to the contribution rate of the pension and disability insurance. These parameters should be a subject of an analysis for the determining an adequate pension amount/level, and it is planned to be done by the MLSP during 2018, with the assistance of the additional expertise</p> <p><b>Implementation:</b>                  The analysis was prepared in March 2018 and it proposes possible options for pension harmonization/adjustment and for linking the level/replacement rates for determining the pension with the paid contribution for pension and disability insurance.</p>		

### 3.3.6. Tackling the key challenges in the area of health system and health protection of the population

<b>3.3.6.1. Objective: Improving access to health protection for all citizens, conditions in the health system and the quality of the health care services</b>	<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> 176,000,000 €
<b>Measure: a/ Continuation with the measures for construction, upgrading and reconstruction of the public health facilities</b>		
<p><b>Description:</b> The projects will continue for construction and reconstruction of the public health care institutions, in order to improve the conditions within the health care system and to provide the population with a better and higher quality health care protection. Certainly, in accordance with the existing national legislation, in implementing the construction works a particular attention will be paid to the specific needs of persons with disabilities for accessibility of these buildings/facilities. Within the framework of these activities, it is planned to build a new clinic block in the “Mother Tereza” Clinic Centre in Skopje, as well as new Clinic Hospital in Shtip which will offer modern and high-quality health care services to approximately 200,000 citizens from the Eastern and Southeastern region of the country. It is also planned to undertake activities for reconstruction of the Special Hospital for Orthopedics and Traumatology “Sv. Erzamo” in Ohrid, the City General Hospital “8<sup>th</sup> of September” in Skopje, the General Hospital - Strumica, University Hospital for Surgical Illnesses “St. Naum Ohridski” in Skopje. All of this will contribute to the substantial improvements in the coverage and further advancement of the conditions for providing health care protection in these health institutions.</p>		
<b>Implementation:</b>		
During the year the activities in the field of reconstruction and upgrading of facilities/buildings of the public health institutions (PHI) in the Republic of Macedonia have continued, as part of the initiated reforms in the health sector, as well as the activities aimed at increasing the efficiency of the existing infrastructure, equipment and the quality of services in the health care institutions.		
Achieved results in 2017 :		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the reconstruction of the Special Hospital for Orthopedics and Traumatology "St. Erzamo" in Ohrid is in the advanced phase. Expenditures for this purpose in 2017 were in the amount of 76,706,901 denars (approximately 1,245,000 €);</li> <li>- reconstruction of PHI<sup>4</sup> General Hospital-Strumica is advancing, with realized budget in 2017 totaling to 39,214,812 denars (636,000€);</li> <li>- ongoing is the reconstruction of PHI General City Hospital "St. Naum Ohridski" - Skopje. Realized funds in 2017 are in total amount of 16,245,733 denars (263,000€);</li> <li>- advanced stage in the construction of the Bunker for linear accelerator in the City General Hospital "8 September" in Skopje, with realized funds in 2017 amounting to 21,337,255 denars (346,000€);</li> <li>- construction of a new Clinical Center in Stip, with realized assets in 2017 amounted to 219,069,132 denars (3,550,000 €).</li> </ul>		
<b>Changes/adjustments/possible delays and postponements/change of priorities:</b>		
The Government of Republic of Macedonia is expected to a new decision in respect to the project "Construction of a new Clinical Center in Skopje".		
<b>3.3.6.1. Objective: Improving access to health protection for all citizens, conditions in the health system and the quality of the health care services</b>	<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> 3,000,000 €
<b>Measure: b/ Opening and developing Centres for treatment of specific illnesses or conditions</b>		
<p><b>Description:</b> This measure is complementary with the preceding one and it is in line with the efforts to improve the health care protection of patients with specific illnesses or conditions and the people with special needs. It is planned for a Regional Nephrology Centres to be opened in order to provide better accessibility of these services, early detection of the illness, to improve health and eliminate the need for patients to travel to Skopje. Opening of Regional Stroke Centers in the clinics in Bitola, Tetovo and Shtip to ensure greater accessibility of this kind of services for the population; opening of a Wound Care Center in the Gerontological Institute “13 Noemvri” in order to decrease the burden to the surgical and internist department and to improve the treatment of these patients; development of a transplantation centre, transplantation laboratory, activities for creation of network of donor coordinators, education of the personnel, creating of electronic waiting lists for transplantation and an electronic system for organ allocation, conducting a campaign for organ donation.</p>		
It is also planned to open the Centre for Autism that will provide the patients from this vulnerable category with the early diagnostics and treatment by specially trained psychologists and social workers, and the persons with autism will also be provided with a treatment through multidisciplinary approach, with previous adequate training of the multidisciplinary teams.		

<sup>4</sup> Public Health-care Institution

**Implementation**

The Ministry of Health has initiated activities for granting licenses to health-care facilities for transplantation of blood-forming stem cells, heart, pancreas, ocular tissue, liver and lungs.

A Professional Committee in the field of transplantation has been established, as an advisory body to the Minister of Health, which brings together representatives of medicine specialties/fields in which the transplantation will be further developed.

Two specialists in anesthesia departments that are working in intensive care, have completed training for transplantation related to the determination of brain death, thus enhancing the professional capacities for developing cadaveric transplantation, more specifically to increase the number of organs and tissues donors.

A special software to monitor the transplantation process was developed and will soon be put into operation, and it will also include the National waiting list, leading to the increased integrity of the list.

A Protocol of cooperation in the field of transplantation medicine between Ministry of Health of the Republic of Croatia and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Macedonia was signed.

**3.3.6.1. Objective: Improving access to health protection for all citizens, conditions in the health system and the quality of the health care services**

<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> 1,600,000 €
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**Measure: c/ Implementation of measures to improve accessibility to the health care protection for specific vulnerable groups – pregnant women and infants, elderly over 62 years of age, Roma<sup>5</sup> and other**

**Description:** For the purpose of reduction of the perinatal and infant mortality, the implementation of the Action Plan for strengthening neonatal services will continue, by organizing these services as a regional model with at least three level of care, activities to improve the health of pregnant women will continue by providing free-of-charge check-ups and delivery of all pregnant women, regardless of their health insurance status, there will be continuous work on the introduction of methods for early diagnostics of certain congenital anomalies.

In order to improve the accessibility of the health services to people over 62/64 years of age, it is planned to open Centre for persons with Alzheimer in Shtip, where the patients shall be given medical care and rehabilitation support. It is also planned for the new regional centres for palliative care to be developed and opened etc. The activities will also continue for improving the health and access to health care protection for the Roma people, as specific vulnerable population category.

**Implementation:**

In 2017 the activities to promote the health of pregnant women have continued, by providing free check-ups and delivery for uninsured pregnant women, through the Program for active health protection of mothers and children, of the Ministry of Health, or through the Program for participation in use of health protection in certain diseases of the citizens and health protection for mothers and infants in the Republic of Macedonia for 2017, provided for pregnant women and children under one years of age.

For these activities, within the framework of both programs, a total of 45.38 million dinars (around 735,500 €) were allocated.

( see also 3.3.4.1. – Measure d/ )

**3.3.6.1. Objective: Improving access to health protection for all citizens, conditions in the health system and the quality of the health care services**

<b>Deadline:</b> 2020	<b>Budget:</b> 1,500,000 €
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**Measure: d/ Improving and upgrading the established integrated health care information system “My term”**

**Description:** Measures for further improvement, optimization and upgrading with introducing new modules and functionalities are planned, such as module for cervical cancer screening as an extension of the successfully implemented module for screening of breast cancer, module for managing the electronic health care chart and electronic maternity card, module for electronic individual registrations in the health care system and development of registers in electronic form, managing an electronic immunization card, system for monitoring and managing the emergency care (ambulance) vehicles, system for material and financial affairs, system for working time registration in the public health care institutions and other

<sup>5</sup> More detailed information on the planned policies and measures that will contribute to increased access to health care protection and improved health status of the Roma community, are presented above in this table, within the section “Improving social inclusion of Roma”

**Implementation:**  
 In 2017, the following new modules of the Integrated health-care information system "My term" have been developed:

- module for electronic health-care record;
- electronic maternity card;
- module for electronic reporting of individual records in the health system, within which 18 individual applications/forms were made and 4 registers established (diabetes, chronic renal disease, health workers and health facilities);
- module for electronic monitoring of immunization. Its implementation in practice is planned for 2018;
- the system for registration and records of working time in the public health-care institutions is developed, as a separate software solution, and is currently undergoing implementation in the field.

<b>3.3.6.1. Objective: Improving access to health protection for all citizens, conditions in the health system and the quality of the health care services</b>	<b>Deadline:</b>	<b>Budget:</b>
<b>Measure: e/ Improving the system for prevention and control of infectious diseases.</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2,500,000 €</b>
<b>Description:</b> Improving the system for prevention and control of infectious diseases will ensure improved capacities of the health care facilities to implement measures and activities for prevention and control of infectious diseases, through improving the system of registration, data collection and data analysis, improving the biosafety in the public health microbiology laboratories and improving the national reference system of microbiological laboratories, maintaining high-level coverage of population with compulsory vaccination, improving the knowledge and skills of employees in public health institutions for intra-hospital infections and antimicrobial resistance (AMR)		

**Implementation:**  
 In October 2016, a team of experts from the European Center for Disease Control and the European Commission has conducted an assessment was carried out of the system for infectious diseases in the Republic of Macedonia.  
 After conducted assessment, a Technical Assessment Report was submitted, containing recommendations for each of the areas that were under review. The Ministry of Health has set-up a working group that is preparing an Action Plan on the recommendations of this Technical Report.

<b>3.3.6.2. Objective: Improving the expertise and competence of the health-care workers</b>	<b>Deadline:</b>	<b>Budget:</b>
<b>Measure: a/ Implementation of various forms of education to the health care workers from Macedonia in distinguished/renowned health institutions abroad and introduction of new methods/interventions</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>1,300,000 €</b>
<b>Description:</b> Through the programme for education of health workers, funds will be allocated for education and professional trainings for health care specialists employed in public health institutions of secondary and tertiary level, for application of new diagnostic methods and treatment of illnesses, for acquiring the most recent knowledge and expert education and professional training in implementation of more complex interventions in the area of cardio surgery, thoracic surgery, digestive surgery, vascular surgery, neurosurgery, anesthesiology, gynecology, gastroenterohepatology, ophthalmology, otorhinolaryngology, orthopedics, traumatology, neurology, radiology, urology, pediatrics, neonatology. The trainings of the medical staff will enable introduction of new medical diagnostic and therapeutic methods and interventions which have not been available in the public health institutions. This will widen the scope and the availability of health care services, their improvement, as well as complete and efficient use of the procured equipment and providing additional and higher-quality services.		

**Implementation:**  
 Within the Program for education of health-care workers for 2017, 133 health-care workers from public health-care institutions from the secondary and tertiary level, have been sent to education in prominent medical centers abroad.

**Changes/adjustments/possible delays and postponements/change of priorities:**  
 The Law amending the Law on medical studies and continuing professional development of physicians ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" 132/2017), repealed the obligation of the Ministry of Health for providing funds for the education of 1,000 health-care professionals annually. The responsibility for education its health-care workers in health centres abroad is with the health-care institutions themselves, in accordance with their possibilities and budget. For these reasons, this particular measure will not continue to be implemented according to initial plans, and adequately, the possibility and necessity of monitoring and reporting in relation to the corresponding indicator will additionally be assessed.