

# **Final Report**

## **Mid – Term Evaluation**

of the project

**’Job opportunities for all - JO4A’’**

**supported by** Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

**(Main phase I)**

**North Macedonia**

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## Acronyms

ALMMs- Active Labour Market Measures

ESA – Employment State Agency

ET – Evaluation Team

EU – European Union

GMA – Guarantee Minimum Assistant

ILO – International Labour Organization

IOM – International Organization for Migration

IPA – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

MLSP – Ministry for Labour and Social Policy

CSW – Centre for social Welfare/Work

JO4A - Job Opportunities for All

MTE– Mid Term Evaluation

NEET –not in employment, education or training

NGOs – Non-governmental Organization(s)

OECD-DAC -The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee

PwD- -People with disabilities

SDC – Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

SCO – Swiss Cooperation Office

SME – Small and medium-sized enterprises

ToR – Terms of Reference

UNDP – United Nation Development Programme

## Summary

Today, North Macedonia faces a serious challenge of unemployment among vulnerable groups<sup>1</sup> and at the same time of creating decent and sustainable jobs for people entering the labour market each year. Unemployment of vulnerable groups is particularly prominent, which further increases the risk of poverty and contributes to their social exclusion. In view of these challenges, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) and the Government started the social reform processes in 2019<sup>2</sup>. This inspired the design of the Job Opportunities for All programme as a country system intervention, with the aim to facilitate employment for vulnerable groups in North Macedonia by introducing the appropriate active labour market measures, improving the capacities of responsible institutions to coordinate employment measures and engaging the private sector. This evaluation is intended to determine if the programme is making progress towards systematic impact change and to recommend strategic directions for possible adaptations of the project design, approach or implementation structure by assessing the extent to which JO4A has contributed to strengthening capacities of the country system. The focus of the evaluation was on how the piloted measures address the systemic issues that prevent vulnerable groups from entering the labour market, and if and to what degree the programme is the part of the country system approach.

## Key findings

### Relevance level

The JO4A project is highly relevant when considering the needs of the target groups and beneficiaries who do not take actively participate in the labour market. However, the groups of vulnerable groups and youth were defined without carefully set criteria, hence activities were not well targeted, and the intervention was not tailored to serve the needs of the specific groups. For example, Roma people very often are not visible on the Employment Service Agency (ESA) evidence as the jobseekers, due to restrictions of Guaranteed Minimum Assistance (GMA) status<sup>3</sup>. They stay in the grey economy zone or accept just those Active Labour Market Measures (ALMMs) that do not influence their GMA status. In addition, youth was also vaguely defined, it is not clear if it is defined as young people aged 18-23 or young people aged 24-29, and if from those groups, only the NEETs are considered? Ultimately, all this was necessary in order to see if different groups need different approach towards their labour market integration.

The strategic goals of the project were and are still relevant even in the time of pandemic. However, the Project design, intervention structure and approach remain questionable due to the issues elaborated above.

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<sup>1</sup>“Study on Impact of Social Benefits towards Labour Activation of Vulnerable Categories”

<sup>2</sup> The "Employment and Social Reform Programme 2020" was adopted by the Government of North Macedonia in August 2017 and it was revised version of in 2019<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Source, draft of the GMA analysis 'The challenges related to formal inclusion of the beneficiaries of the Guaranteed Minimum Assistance (GMA) in the labor market especially of Roma beneficiaries are high and persistent. Even though there is an evidence that Roma beneficiaries respond to the activation measures they are willingly active only to the extent that does not affect their GMA status. The long-term dependence on the social assistance of this target group along with the possibility to combine social assistance with informal work/income are major barriers to greater activation of the GMA beneficiaries.'

Project Board consists of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Employment Service Agency of the North Macedonia, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) present the decision-making body of the project. The relevance of these partners is unquestionable, yet it is not clear if Project Board had strategic steering role, discussing issues that affect the programme success. Furthermore, the key implementing partners (MLSP and ESA) are relevant for achieving the formulated objectives, as this is a country system intervention. Their role and performance is elaborated in the document below. National project partners remain relevant but local partners were not considered to have a role in the meetings of the Project Board. Also, some relevant stakeholders were not even considered as partners of this Project.

### Coherence level

The focus of the project activities has been predominantly on social inclusion and not on designing and piloting concrete ALMMs that would lead towards higher employability and ultimately employment of the vulnerable groups. Namely, these ALMMs were designed without prior comprehensive analysis of systematic barriers for each of the selected target groups/ beneficiaries<sup>4</sup>. In addition, private sector was included, but not sufficiently involved in the overall intervention strategy.

The intervention structure and the way it was designed, instead of resulting in a decrease of the number of GMA beneficiaries, led to a significant increase of those beneficiaries (the poverty has worsen). Unfortunately, considering the social-political-economic context, including the Covid-19 pandemic, the project could not have supported adequate ALMMs that would actually help the target group to come out of poverty.

### Effectiveness level

The log frame has too many outputs, yet these outputs did not come out of the country system. In addition, the outputs were delivered by the project, and the overall the analysis identified neither effect on outcome level nor potential for progress towards measurable impact of the project. Namely, the project developed various activities and different targets, which have been achieved. Unfortunately, the agreed monitoring matrix did not provide specific impact indicators that could measure the effectiveness of the interventions. During the field research, ET did not have a chance to assess the project activities nor to see the results on how many people make better use of the existing or new ALMMs or even how many of them got a job as the direct results of active measures. (Related to Outcome 1) The same situation is with analysing Outcome 2 - there were many targeted companies, few social enterprises and rehabilitation centres. As a result, large number of quantitative indicators at the level of outputs were achieved ( e.g. 44 companies were targeted through Ican, 161 companies were assisted in screening their workforce requirements, 12 companies completed application process for participation in the active measures, etc.). This shows the interest of the private sector but there is hardly evidence on their real and effective involvement.

In the case of ESA (although UNDP has prepared all relevant preconditions for developing ICT system with the aim to provide efficient, effective and quality linking of the job seekers and the employers) – their role

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<sup>4</sup>The percentage of Roma who use ALMMs is very low, except when they could use measure that have no influence on their GMA status:

as one of the key national implementer was missing. ESA staff did not demonstrate capacity or willingness to engage in the project implementation. Although many formulated activities indicate capacity building of the national and local authorities and improving coordination between these institutions - the analysis did not identify improvement, and the outcomes were not reached.

It would be very valuable to have an indication of the cost-effectiveness of activities and the value-for-money achieved by the project. It was very difficult for ET to conclude, based on the available narrative and financial reports, how many different resources (time, money, etc.) were spent on different activities. The current reporting does not provide sufficient data to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of individual activities. However, the perception of the ET is that some project activities were far more expensive than others, when comparing the achieved results (for ex: Izbor and ICan versus Acceder).

**The project team created a comprehensive Awareness raising campaign** focused on removing the PwD and Roma related non-formal barriers and stereotypes in the private sector and the public. Reaching the outcomes also needs to be supported with a well-defined communication for development campaign, which in this case was not very well aligned and did not deliver the needed results. It is to some extent because of the different and not well-defined target groups that should have informed which communication channels are necessary in order to reach each of the groups. It remains questionable what effect the campaign has achieved, given that none of the informants mentioned its effect on the beneficiaries. The operational plan (OP) for ALMMs remained invisible for the main target groups. It is not clear how the campaign contributed to information sharing and whether the OP has been communicated with relevant groups. The communication was directed towards all vulnerable groups in general without taking into account their differences.

### Efficiency level

The project team demonstrated good internal coordination. However, the efficiency and effective external communication is missing. Different representatives of institutions (national and local level) have highlighted uneven coordination or even lack of coordination from the Project team. However, representatives of MLSP did not have the same impression.

Project staff who represent the Department for social inclusion at UNDP has been predominantly focusing their project's work on designing and/or piloting various measures/services/activities according to UNDP social inclusion mission. The majority of staff is engaged in designing, supporting or consulting other local implementation partners and target groups through social inclusion aspect. Only one team member is in charge of working with the business sector. However, the role of team member who is engaged in the Roma unit within MLSP was appraised by several interviewees and having people embedded in the institutions was pointed out as good practice. Staff and resource allocation to reach targeted objectives was not appropriate or sufficient, hence not efficient.

## Impact level

Priority activities defined by the JO4A for reducing unemployment of beneficiaries are only partially relevant for achieving the overall goal and make progress towards impact of the overall intervention. Namely, to a high extent the targeted vulnerable groups are also GMA beneficiaries and their number increased by 45% over the last 2 years. This data is based on the conducted study on *Impact of social benefits towards labour activation of vulnerable groups*. Furthermore, the reason for this increase is not COVID-19 pandemic and supportive measures. As interviewers stressed, the extended definition of who is or who could become GMA beneficiary influenced this result i.e. people get more benefits compared to the previous social support.

The project clearly identified the groups who are underrepresented on the labour market, it was at the same time too ambitious, too complex and difficult to achieve the project objectives as defined at the beginning of the project phase.

## Sustainability level

In certain aspects, JO4A's effect was not achieved. The practice often was not in accordance with the objectives due to the fact that project itself has not found a systematic and comprehensive approach.

Stable partnerships were established during the inception and Phase 1 but the sustainability of the design is not realistic. Namely, fragility of ESA, CSW and their local branches also affects the inefficient implementation of social reform, stimulation and motivation of business sector involvement on the local level of different municipalities can undermine achievements related to the increased employability of beneficiaries and sensitivity for creating stronger legislative framework in order to secure preconditions for their better socio-economic perspectives. The sustainability of the local partners is questionable as a financially independent organization.

For example, Izbor was unable to cover its operating costs, their status is questionable as well as the project's concept of supporting social enterprises – ET did not consider it as sustainable practice.

The sustainability of JO4A Phase 1 achievements rises alarm that some of the fragmentary or modest achievements (number of new employed beneficiaries e.g. Roma representatives or PwD; interested local various actors in some municipalities for further cooperation) could be unstable in Phase 2 or in the long run. The main problem appears in insufficiently developed, stable and resourceful partnerships at the local level, which can undermine all future actions regarding the objectives. Although the new appointed Minister of LSP as the National Project Director of the Project Board expressed her commitment and willingness for the issue of employment of vulnerable groups and continued that this topic should be among the priorities of her competence, the ESA, as another national partner and coordinator, remained invisible for the period of the project's implementation.

The JO4A did not position itself as an employment generating project with a focus on labour market integration of more coherent vulnerable groups, not Roma people, PwD and youth.

Based on the latest GMA analysis, there is a certain risk that Roma people, even with enhanced skills, will not be motivated to find work due to the fear of losing the social support and the GMA status. They are very often in strong need for immediate work, and resort to the informal sector.

There is the lack of visible progress regarding outcomes (particularly, Outcome 1) of the project and continuation after the project lifespan.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The overall conclusion is that JO4A, in view of the social reform from 2019, was appropriately conceptualised and designed for the context of vulnerable groups. The project interventions are extremely valid in the current circumstances – many activities and results on the level of outputs were achieved, but not at outcome level and the progress towards impact<sup>5</sup> remains questionable. Almost all achieved results will be diminished in the long-run, considering various external factors that have escalated in the meantime, undermining the initial assumptions.

If there is a lack of providing focused activities for Phase 2 that will be based on cost-effectiveness analysis with a strong attention on sustainability, as well as precisely defined direct beneficiaries that would enable the design of user-friendly support measures, then it may be better to round-up the project earlier than it was originally conceived.

On the level of direct beneficiaries – it is important to emphasize that they are not a homogenous group, they are of very different social, economic, cultural background and their competencies and skills are quite different. Furthermore, during implementation, the project considered additional groups (juveniles, drug addicts, inmates, juvenile delinquents) that further scattered the focus the project and led to waste of resources.

The limited number of analysis of the business environment in selected regions, the lack of clear coordination of ESA local offices, especially at municipal level, additionally deepens the challenge of disparity between the demand and supply. The trainings on vocational skills are not based on the actual private sector demand.

Recommendations for future interventions through the phase 2:

1. GMA should be a candidate for deeper analysis and strategic discussion at Board level<sup>6</sup>. The increased number of GMA beneficiaries for the last 2 years is not only the consequence of the Covid-19; it would be important to determine how GMA and current ALMMs disincentive the process of activation of vulnerable groups;
2. Improving legislation, relevant bylaws, rulebooks and procedures in order to improve activation in the labour market (i.e. to reduce GMA beneficiaries);
3. The **coherence of partners' strategies**<sup>7</sup> needs to be secured.

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<sup>5</sup> \*Based on GMA analysis and conducted interviews - percentage of people who came out of poverty is low.

<sup>6</sup> "Study on Impact of Social Benefits towards Labour Activation of Vulnerable Categories"

<sup>7</sup> MLSP and ESA in cooperation with SDC and UNDP



4. Strengthen the strategic role of the Project Board, as the board was relevant yet ineffective for 3 years.
5. Redefining vulnerable groups as well as make to more effective scope of beneficiaries in the future activities<sup>8</sup>;
6. Engage strategy development consultant to define clear outcomes of the new long term strategy for project's implementation, with clearly defined output and impact indicators;
7. Conduct mapping and analysis of all relevant stakeholders and other organisations and private companies;
8. Strengthen institutional capacities of key stakeholders;
9. Using good practice from the region could be useful regarding developing local action plans for employment with their own specific aspects on the LSGs.

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<sup>8</sup> This statement is in line with a few interviewees that emphasized furthermore what was confirmed in analysis of labour law and related legislation that was conducted by expert for labour law from Slovenia.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and context

In the last three decades North Macedonia has gone through a very turbulent economic period – a) from positive economic growth, averaging 3.5 per cent annually in the 2000s and 2.5 per cent in the 2010s<sup>9</sup>, which resulted in increasing job opportunities. This contributed to the reduction of poverty from 27 per cent in 2010 to 21.5 % in 2015; b) since 2015 the share of population living in poverty has remained stable at 22%. Nowadays, North Macedonia faces a serious challenge of unemployment among vulnerable groups<sup>10</sup> and at the same time of creating decent and sustainable jobs for people entering the labour market each year. Such situation directly contributed to poverty which is an additional key element to the country's fragility. **Unemployment of vulnerable groups is particularly pronounced** ( such as Roma people, people with disabilities or youth, especially certain ages of those who are NEET -the age group of 25-29 was still above 40 % and 52% of them are women <sup>11</sup>) **which further increases the risk of poverty and contributes to their social exclusion.** Special vulnerable group is Roma community, especially women and the biggest factor concerning their unemployment is a very low level of education among them. On the other hand, the low number of registered PwD as unemployed is a consequence of the inefficiency of government policies which fail to support the integration of people with disabilities into the labour market. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) is the key national level institution in charge of policy development on employment and social inclusion. However, the ministry lacks capacities to develop and implement the requested set of reforms, and relies on donor support (EU, World Bank, Switzerland and other bilateral donors) and implementation capacity (UNDP) to achieve its goals. While MLSP is responsible for the policy planning on the national level, the implementation is done through the institutions at the local level. The "Employment and Social Reform Programme 2020" was adopted by the Government of North Macedonia in August 2017 – that was the foundation for the project designing such as JO4A and it was further followed by the revised version of "ESRP 2020" in 2019<sup>12</sup>. At municipal level several key stakeholders play a role in supporting the vulnerable groups with active labour market measures (ALMMs): Local Employment Service Agency (ESA) offices inform unemployed about existing ALMMs and facilitate their access. Centres for Social Welfare (CSW) support members of vulnerable groups, both through preventive (e.g. counselling) and protective measures (e.g. access to institutions that provide social protection). Municipalities are responsible for fostering local economic development and introducing additional measures that would help tackling unemployment. **Currently there is a lack of vertical and horizontal coordination among these institutions.** Policies are developed with a top-down approach and policy-making is most often not evidence-based due to the lack of statistical data. The private sector is neither consulted on employment of vulnerable groups nor incentivised to properly include these groups

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<sup>9</sup> "National Employment Strategy 2021-2021 with Employment Action Plan 2021-2023, Gov. of Republic of North Macedonia, Ministry for Labour and Social Policy, Skopje, 2021

<sup>10</sup> "Study on Impact of Social Benefits towards Labour Activation of Vulnerable Categories"

<sup>11</sup> Decent work country programme North Macedonia, 2019

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/dokumenti/2020/1.4\\_esrp.pdf](https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/dokumenti/2020/1.4_esrp.pdf)

in the labour market. Furthermore, vulnerable groups often find the existing ALMMs complex and have limited guidance to find the most appropriate measure for them.

**The Job Opportunities for All programme was designed as a country system intervention, with the aim to facilitate employment for vulnerable groups in North Macedonia by introducing the appropriate active labour market measures, improving the capacities of responsible institutions to coordinate employment measures and engaging the private sector.** By doing so, it aims to reduce the risk of members of these groups to fall into poverty and enhances their social inclusion. Youth, Roma and PwD are the main target groups as they are disproportionately affected by unemployment.

## 1.2 Purpose and scope of the review

The purpose of the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) was to provide an independent assessment of the project progress towards attaining its achieved results, sustainability, progress and relevance. Also, the evaluation should present assessment of the first 3 years of phase 1 and as a basis for the planning process of the project phase 2 that will commence in October 2022. Specifically, the evaluation was intended **to determine if the programme is making systematic impact change and to recommend strategic directions on possible adaptations of project's design, approaches or implementation structure by assessing the level to which JO4A has contributed to strengthening capacities of the country system.**

Namely, the main focus of **the evaluation should be on how the piloted measures address the systemic issues that prevent vulnerable groups from entering the labour market**, and if and to what degree the programme is the part of the country system approach.

The main evaluation question: “Did the intervention succeed to make a notable difference for members of vulnerable groups to get employment and improve living conditions, and have country systems been enabled to replicate successful practices at national scale in a sustainable manner?”

Therefore, the evaluation team is composed of one international evaluation consultant (lead evaluator) and one national evaluation consultant. The scope of work and expected deliverables of the review are defined in the evaluation ToR (Annex 1). The role of the national evaluator was to provide support to the international evaluator in collecting data and conducting interviews with key informants, as well as to provide inputs on specific topics and areas related to the evaluation criteria.

The ET is documenting the learning and the examples in the first phase of project realization and provides conclusions with recommendations to enable SCO (and other stakeholders) to draw on positive lessons and models in the next period of designing the second phase of the project and the period of implementation in the future interventions, as well. The ET is also highlighting areas where the project was performed less effectively than anticipated, the rationale behind that and the related recommendations to be considered in further work.

The MTE procedure is based on the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, in accordance to ToR and conclusion of evaluation process and presented first findings.

The official time span of the evaluation process is January 2022 (*SCO Approval on the Evaluation team was granted on the end of December, 2021*) to February 2022, but some most current figures and documents are also taken into consideration.

### 1.3 Methodology and organisation

The evaluation approach is based on the broader perception ***of the implementation process that includes the impact of formulated activities conducted through direct mechanisms (UNDP, ESA, MLSP or other stakeholders on the regional and/or local level) supported by SDC and the main donor, but also through assessing qualitative changes that were made by different stakeholders.***

The evaluation was conducted by applying triangulation of data which means that in most of the cases conclusions on the outputs have been drawn based on different sources (reports and other documents) and stakeholder's opinions/perceptions.

The evaluation process of the project was conducted in the period from 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2021 to 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2022. Due to COVID 19 pandemic and some infected and sick interviewees, evaluators conducted some online meetings with relevant informants in the standard way, additionally.

The evaluation was a consultative, inclusive and participatory process. The evaluation team combined generic and specific evaluation questions to ensure that all questions focus on providing useful information, such as information on the changes the intervention sought to achieve, examining particular intervention characteristics or factors, which have or have not worked.

Following main methods were applied for data collection:

- 1) **Desk review** of relevant documents: official reports from the implementation of activities, regular or special reports of stakeholders, relevant normative acts (amendments, bylaws, regulations, etc.), studies/ research reports, etc. So far, the list of documents identified and analysed or prepared for the analysis has included over 20 documents (the list of documents is presented in the annex 3).
- 2) **Quantitative data collection and analysis:** these are data collected from official statistics or other data bases used to quantitatively measure some outcomes, such as rates, shares, percentages, trend lines, etc.

**Individual interviews** with 35 stakeholders in order to reconstruct the implementation process, learn about background factors, inhibiting or stimulating factors, personal experiences and effects of certain measures, etc. (The list of stakeholders interviewed is presented in the annex 2).

Documentation related to the project was provided and all interviews were arranged by ET, supported by UNDP project team; and with the assistance of data collection tools and other relevant papers.

The suggested partners' selection was based on the criteria "involvement in the programme", "type and relevancy of activities" and logistical possibilities. These meetings were organized so that evaluators could discuss with various stakeholders, playing different roles in JO4A programme (related national and local institutions, partners, and the donor). In addition, the recommendation expressed by the UNDP Project Manager as well as SDC representative was taken into consideration.

The evaluation process consisted of three phases:

- 1      *Preparation and Inception phase* – initial communication meeting with donor, preliminary desk review of the main programme documents, preparation of the evaluation framework and questionnaire, reconstruction of the intervention logic, resulting in the Inception report,
- 2      *Research phase* – review of additional documents made available by the project team and in-depth interviews conducted in person with programme partners and key stakeholders resulting in the draft Final Report
- 3      *Reporting phase* – short power point presentation on the evidence-based findings, lessons learned and recommendations and the final integration of all inputs from the debriefing with donor' s representatives into the Final Report

### *Limitations*

The evaluation process faced several types of limitations in the period of receiving documents i.e. during desk review. However, these limitations were important findings because they revealed significant gaps in the processes and mechanisms of implementation. The ET designed different mitigation strategies to fill the gaps and provide more solid factual ground for evaluation; however, due to the nature of the gaps, this was not always possible.

- 1) ***Programme documents.*** The monitoring process was not fully adequate because its focus was on presenting outputs rather than on the project impact; furthermore, it is important to have in mind the complexity of the project and multilayer nature through piloting various measures/services/activities regarding such a wide range of vulnerable groups that limited the Project's purpose; Different target groups would require different interventions; GMA analysis which is crucially important for this evaluation has been created, detecting systemic barriers for activation of vulnerable groups caused by the social reform that started in 2019. There was a lack of some more systematic reports on the implementation of activities within MLSP related to the project as well as other stakeholders from all levels of managing project' activities. Therefore, the relevant pool of documents was given at the beginning of evaluation process; but some facts (such as: number of GMA beneficiaries who are involved through different project's activities remained inaccessible), just some scattered data from one to another stakeholder. Also there were some analysis but ET was not able to link project activities with those field analyses conducted ...- it would help ET to understand the piloting of certain services, etc. Furthermore, the scope of evaluation was strongly relying on research methods and responsiveness of stakeholders. Within such a context, research strategy was designed in a way that it collects information from all implementing agencies (ministries, institutions) identified in the project proposal and reports with support of UNDP Project Manager.
- 2) ***Responsiveness of stakeholders.*** The evaluation relies on the reports of individual stakeholder-UNDP, mainly. However, responsiveness of stakeholders varied highly and just some ESA representatives from the head office did not provide answers to our invitation to the meeting until the end of evaluation process. ET tried several times during the field research.

- 3) ***Some aspects Insufficient through reporting.*** In some cases, reports were mostly focused on a large number of indicators and direct results of certain activities (outputs) but in the absence of correlation with the main outcomes of the project.

***Lack of awareness and coordination.*** Stakeholders often do not recognize their mandate or assigned responsibilities by the project. Even though the national or local implementers have been in charge of certain activities, they are often not aware that these were linked to the project.

## 2 Overview of the programme

### 2.1 Main characteristics of the JO4A project

The JO4A project has been developed with the idea to support employment of vulnerable groups through creating and piloting adequate labour market measures, to improve all responsible stakeholders' capacities and to sensitize and to support business sector through job creation. Also, it was developed with the intention of reducing the risk of further expansion of vulnerable groups and contribution to enabling their social inclusion. Initially, through the inception phase of the project, the main target groups were Roma men and women and PwD as they are disproportionately affected by high unemployment in North Macedonia. The project presents a contribution to an ongoing UNDP programme on employment, financed by the Government of North Macedonia (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) and UNDP. In fact, Swiss focused on extending this project to vulnerable groups- Roma people, PwD and later youth. Being a part of ongoing programme and support, the JO4A project is aligned with the relevant national strategies for responding to the risk of poverty together with national priorities regarding employment of vulnerable groups. The project is designed so that all relevant assessments/analysis are made through the entry phase, which will enable measures to encourage employment of all beneficiaries (coaching and mentoring to identify appropriate measures, such as tailor-made skills development, internship, self-employment, etc.). For the second phase, it is planned to implement all previously identified successful measures (which were piloted and yielded results) during the first phase and to make follow-up policy changes and including capacities building of relevant institutions<sup>13</sup>. In particular, in order to ensure that policies and their implementation are recognized by vulnerable groups, it is necessary to keep strengthening relevant institutions firmly. The project's overall goals are defined as: unemployed women and men, especially members of vulnerable groups, obtaining employment and improving living conditions. The formulation of specific three outcomes:

Outcome1: More women and men from the Roma ethnic community and/or who have disabilities to make use of tailored active labour market measures.

Outcome 2: The private sector, including social enterprises, creates new jobs accessible to members of vulnerable groups, especially Roma and people with disabilities.

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<sup>13</sup>As initially planned in the EP

Outcome 3: Relevant institutions develop and implement policies and services that will ease access to the labour market for members of vulnerable groups, in particular Roma and people with disabilities (PwD).

## 2.2. Intervention logic

At the beginning of the evaluation process, the evaluators made a reconstruction of the intervention logic of JO4A project, since formulating explicit intervention logic would be useful for the evaluation to ensure a common understanding of what JO4A plans to achieve and how this is to be done. The intervention logic is a channel to understand how the various elements of the programme fit together in terms of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact, together with assumptions made about cause and effect. JO4A approach was set as very ambitious - to meet two important components for increasing the overall purpose of daily life, on the one hand, the covered target groups/beneficiaries- economic through the labour market, and social through improving their life. By creating and piloting various ALMMs (through different methods and soft skills for increasing chances for employment) on the one hand, and improving economic performance of SMEs as key business sectors, overcoming difference between demand and supply side which will enable better dynamic of labour force, and facilitate recruitment of appropriate labour force by employers. All these should be done with a strong and serious commitment of all relevant institutions and creating appropriate policies and interventions. Through this intervention, the project intends to tackle directly the main driving force (Outcome 2) of North Macedonia economy through technical, strategic and financial support. On the level of Outcome 3 - by the impact hypothesis through introducing new ALMMs to ease the access of youth, Roma and persons with disabilities to the labour market, building the capacities of the national and local level institutions to develop and implement policies that help these groups in a coordinated way, by creating better conditions for the private sector to employ these groups. By supporting these groups to make better use of the relevant policies, youth, Roma and people with disabilities will ultimately gain employment, which will contribute to better living conditions. Throughout the intervention, human rights and gender equality make the solid mainstream with prioritisation of vulnerable groups and respecting social inclusion.

## 3. Findings

**The Evaluation findings reflect the project's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.**

**The Evaluation findings are presented criteria for achieving objectives and the overall goal of the whole project that evaluators found as vital for the assessment.**

Based on the perception that project's implementation is multi-layered and very complex, evaluators have carefully chosen the evaluation approach that implies broader picture and focuses on assessing on qualitative changes of the implementation process in accordance with the time they had. Explicitly, this project includes a lot of documents and partners on different level of governing. Since the additional evaluation has its limits they tried to review realistically effects of the project, particularly changes on the outcome level, and if it is on right track to accomplish the desired impact in the long run.

### 3.1. Relevance in view of beneficiaries' needs

*Relevance analysis is expected to answer to the question: Is the intervention doing the right things?*

Since the unemployment rate among vulnerable groups is high in North Macedonia and that fact influences further impoverishment and social exclusion of these groups, continuous efforts on reducing unemployment by supporting the institutions and the promotion and implementation of ALMMs are of key importance. Particularly, taking into account the fact that Roma people very often are not visible on the ESA evidence as the jobseekers due to restrictions of GMA status<sup>14</sup> and they stayed on the black market or accept just those ALMMs that do not influence their GMA status. Furthermore, the design programme is focused on creating employment through key interventions areas such as: self-employment, support SMEs on growing and creating jobs, community works. Only these comprehensive approaches and taking into account key mechanism, relevant stakeholders and their commitment on creating adequate policies and other strategic documents concerning broader community in order to improve business environment, could provide conditions for the improvement the position of underrepresented groups in the labour market (Roma and People with disabilities). The Swiss value added was that they recognized the importance of involvement of these groups.

**The relevance of the JO4A project further confirms that the outline intervention is designed for achieving the impact of the project.** It is concluded that JO4A project is highly relevant to the identified needs of the target groups/beneficiaries, i.e. Roma people, PwD and youth, as well as local relevant institutions and various NGOs (with the ambition to involve social enterprises and other SMEs; incubators-start-ups, etc.) in different regions of North Macedonia.

However, the groups of vulnerable people and extra juveniles were defined without carefully set criteria ( for example, young people aged 18-23 or young people aged 24-29, whether they are only NEET young people - men and women, as well as the question if **they need a different approach because of all the above, it was necessary to give a very precise definition of the scope of the group as project's beneficiaries** ).

**Selection of specific outcomes was appropriate and relevant to the main goal, as well as activities through which these outcomes were planned to be achieved.** These processes were grounded on varied analysis conducted during the entry phase, and the lack of some data (such as: number of PwD; analysis on economic potentials or self-employment capability of vulnerable groups, etc.) that should have been gathered in different regions in order to define certain objectives in this area in the form of tools for monitoring.

It is evident that JO4A has been adapting during the time and responding to dynamic circumstances that influence the suitability of the programme.

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<sup>14</sup> Source, draft of the GMA analysis 'The challenges related to formal inclusion of the beneficiaries of the Guaranteed Minimum Assistance (GMA) in the labor market especially of Roma beneficiaries are high and persistent. Even though there is an evidence that Roma beneficiaries respond to the activation measures they are willingly active only to the extent that does not affect their GMA status. The long-term dependence on the social assistance of this target group along with the possibility to combine social assistance with informal work/income are major barriers to greater activation of the GMA beneficiaries.'



The UNDP, as the key national implementer with MLSP as well as ESA, acted as the responsible party for the implementation of the JO4A following the social reform objectives of the country. As this was the pilot project and it had to be the area of concern of MLSP, ESA and other relevant stakeholders from the state, NGOs and private sector, a network of partners/implementers was established at the national and local level for the purpose of cooperation on implementing project's activities. Thus established national and local partnerships represent an innovative method in the improvement of position of various actors within JO4A.

The outbreak of COVID-19 in the beginning of the main phase of project implementation is an issue that could not have been foreseen. Still, it didn't influence the relevance of the project. **The JO4A idea is appropriate for the new circumstances, too, and it has remained relevant even in the time of pandemic. Though, the Project's designed intervention structure/approach remained questionable.** There were some analyses but ET is of the opinion that it is not documented or adequate enough with the business sector in covered municipalities. Also, there is lack of more formal but essential communication with local/regional chambers of commerce. Furthermore, ET did not have the access to some of the surveys, mentioned through annual reports of the project.

ET was not able to notice any measurable results that private sector recognised as their real interest and benefit to invest into human resources, given that project anticipated additional support for growth and job creation. Especially, since the JO4A positioned itself as an employment generating project with a focus on labour market integration of these 3 vulnerable groups.

### 3.2. Relevance of the programme partners

**Project Board** consists of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Employment Service Agency of the North Macedonia, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) present decision-making body for the project. The relevance of these partners is unquestionable. Furthermore, the relevance of **the key implementing partners (MLSP and ESA)** is priority for achieving formulated objectives.

As it was stated in the project proposal, several donors have supported the MLSP in designing and implementing employment policies (UNDP<sup>15</sup>, ILO, IOM, EU through IPA funds) with the **aim to reduce unemployment through creating adequate ALMMs and interventions** related to support SMEs to grow and create jobs and new ecosystem appropriate to embrace new labour force. Thus, **Swiss contribution through regional interventions was SDC Programme on Roma inclusion which delivered certain learnt lessons which are extremely relevant for this project and for continuous support of these vulnerable groups.** And this corresponds to the evaluators' focus on project's impact, implementations strategy and key issues of the rationale (**to decrease the high unemployment rate among vulnerable groups**).

However, project local partners were not considered to have a role in the meetings of the Project Board. Also, some relevant stakeholders were not considered as partners (such as Red Cross or and/or accredited protected companies as the existing mechanism for involvement of PwD in the work process that are already recognized by institutions) of this Project.

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<sup>15</sup> EP and CP – "key intervention areas: self-employment, support SMEs, community works, mentoring and coaching for Roma, etc."

## 4. Findings coherence

Coherence analysis is expected to answer to the question: How well does the intervention fit within the **Government strategy on social inclusion and** complement/enhance/strengthen the portfolio of the Swiss Cooperation and its role as a relevant and effective development partner in North Macedonia?

According to all abovementioned context and good experience, cooperation with Government and their commitment to the programme and clear willingness for new approaches; based on **3 most relevant strategic documents<sup>16</sup>, with a focus on ensuring that hard-to-employ groups enjoy better access to the formal labour market'** this project execution is a step forward to improving economic and also living conditions of certain groups of people. Moreover, compatibility ALMMs with social policy measures is implied on the level of the project's achieving impact. According to all institutional efforts, this project has been developed and various measures are piloted - with an aim to make a concrete progress and suitable active labour measures for these vulnerable groups.

As the Project's intervention focuses on vulnerable groups – it should have been essential to establish compatibility between increasing employment as the issue of labour activation on the one hand, with social aspect i.e. social inclusion on the other hand and create all necessary precondition for harmonizing the main goals of all 3 strategies - according to the Ministry's mission because that is the idea of Social reform implementation for Macedonia as the country.

**It seems that focus has been predominantly on social inclusion part of strategies and not on designing and piloting concrete ALMMs that leads further towards higher employability and employment as well as initiating cooperation with business sector in creating jobs. Namely, these ALMMs were designed without prior comprehensive analysis of systematic barriers for each of the selected target groups/beneficiaries<sup>17</sup>.**

## 5. Findings effectiveness

**Effectiveness analysis is expected to answer to the question: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?**

**The effectiveness of the project is assessed by the extent to which it has been successful in reaching its outputs and outcomes in accordance with the plan<sup>18</sup>. Nevertheless, the designed indicator on the outputs level does not provide adequate information.**

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<sup>16</sup>**1)** Swiss Cooperation Strategy on the level of Employment and Economic insists on social inclusion and decent work, **2)** National Strategies for Employment and National Strategy for social protection and **3)** UNDP agenda "to infuse social inclusion and decent work standards into national employment strategies and continue to implement active labour market measures"

<sup>17</sup>The percentage of Roma who use ALMMs is very low, except when they could use measure that have no influence on their GMA status:

<sup>18</sup>ET was not able to analyse data (matrix indicator); the high number of indicators were developed on the level of outputs and very small number on the impact level

## 5.1. Actual outcomes

ET reviewed the Progress reports and related anticipated outcomes of the project, according to the ToR and relevant the Log Frame Matrix. Some of the results will be measured later or at the end of the project. The project results are formed in three project components<sup>19</sup>.

**Namely, the project developed various activities and different targets which have been achieved but it was not possible to estimate all these due to a very high number of activities, indicators and outputs. In terms of actual activities, the Project team had to look for alternative solutions in order to maintain effectiveness of the project and follow government's protective measure. Many companies were target and just some of them supported training and internship or on-the-job training with very modest number of employments.**

**During the field research ET did not have a chance to access the project's activities nor to see the results on how many people make better use of the existing or new ALMMs or even how many of them got a job as the direct results of active measures. (Related to Outcome 1)**

The same situation is when analysing Outcome 2- there are a lot of targeted companies, few social enterprise and rehabilitation centres. A large number of quantified indicators at the level of outputs achieved ( 44 companies were targeted through I can or 161 companies are assisted in screening their workforce requirements, or– 12 companies completed application process for participation in the active measures, etc.); general qualitative indicators prevail ( „the Project supported drafting of the National Strategy for Development of Social Enterprises...) which shows the interest of this sector but hardly their real and effective involvement...

According to Outcome 3 - The MLSP continued to outsource social services from non-state providers and NGOs. At the same time, the MLSP works on preparing a new draft Law on Employment and Insurance in Case of Unemployment. On the other hand, the Labour Law- drafting and public hearing process was established in 2021 and the Project supported drafting of the first National Strategy for Development of Social Enterprises. The status of these legislative changes as well as other initiatives in terms of amending or creating new regulations of the MLSP itself are still in the phase of preparing or drafting solutions. Likewise, improved legislation will ensure efficiency, for example, in the implementation of social contracting model and ensure delivery of sustainable services to different licensed providers, financed according to standardized pricing methodology. Certainly, the new law will enable the systematization of measures supported by the project (e.g. Acceder methodology and approach).

In the case of ESA (although the UNDP has prepared all relevant preconditions for developing ICT system with the aim to provide efficient, effective and quality linking of the job seekers and the employers) – their role as one of the key national implementer was missing in terms of their staff capacities and engagement within project's objectives. Although many formulated outputs were very precisely supported by activities

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<sup>19</sup>**Outcome 1: More women and men who are young, Roma, or have disabilities make better use of the existing or new active labour market measures: Outcome 2: The private sector, including social enterprises, employs diverse workforce and make jobs accessible to members of vulnerable groups: Outcome 3: Relevant institutions develop and implement policies and services that will ease access to the labour market for members of vulnerable groups**

that indicate Capacity building of the national and local authorities or improving coordination between these institutions -the analysis identified neither the changes on the level of outcomes nor the potential for progress towards a measurable impact of the project.

## 5.2. Influencing factors for performance

Since the project's official initiation date was 03 December, 2018 it has been influenced by multiple factors:

- Postponements in the beginning of the Project's implementation in 2018
- The COVID-19 pandemic and the closure and disorder it has created
- The finalization of the required analyses from entry phase and definition of target groups/beneficiaries (expended few times)
- **Unstable government and new changes in cabinet (three different ministers in 3 years) as well as new postponed policy interventions; new actors among donor and implementation UNDP level, also**

The JO4A project's main activities had started almost before COVID-19 pandemic, but later, since 2020 and through the government's protective measures across the country, project team had to maintain the health and safety of all staff, beneficiaries, and stakeholders and to look for alternative, and yet efficient methods to achieve its objectives. The team continued relying on the alternative online regime, to collect data in a safe, efficient, and transparent manner. For accomplishment of some activities, the team have adjusted some online events/workshops, etc.

## 5.4. Communication, Awareness and Visibility

**The project team has created a comprehensive Awareness raising campaign** focused on removing the PwD and Roma related non-formal barriers and stereotypes in the private sector and the general public conducted on annual basis- in line with project objectives and activities. The project is following the plan for all outreach and communication activities that focused on several target groups at once: private sector, unemployed people, youth and other vulnerable groups with the main goal:

- To initiate a process to inform and to educate people and entities, to influence their attitudes, behaviour and believes.

The team applied the most efficient way to reach the target group and increased an interest for the project activities, initiated media and public attention on unemployment of vulnerable groups and, promoted and increased the role of the involved partners and donors.

The main commercial activity included video success stories on Acceder program which were regionally recognized as great examples of Roma business engagement and story of NGO 'Izbor' and their work-oriented training with PwD in Strumica.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the Project produced numerous video materials with motivation messages and an idea to increase empathy and solidarity regarding negative impact on business sector with awareness campaign's slogan #supportsmallbussiness#bidiprijatel.

During the first part of 2021, all these activities were contributed to the Operational plan of ALMM, which was conducted under #SansaZaSite logo. Another 2bizz4all online campaign targets small business entities

with the aim to motivate them to apply for the free of charge mentorship support. As the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, strict measures for gathering influenced have limited promotional public events.

**It remains questionable what effect all these communication channels/social networks, tools have achieved, given that none of the informants mentioned the impact of the campaign.** The operational plan for ALMMs remained invisible, i.e. no one mentioned it as an event that raised awareness, visibility, etc. Especially, it is not clear whether it has been communicated with all stakeholders. It is not clear how the differentiation of beneficiaries and target groups was done as well as the special outreach campaign for certain subgroups (such as PwD, Roma women or youth under 24, etc.). Also, the communication was directed towards all vulnerable groups in general without taking into account their differences.

## 6. Findings Efficiency

*Efficiency analysis is expected to answer the question: How well are resources being used?*

Efficiency considers the relationship between the resources used by the programme and the changes generated, i.e. how well are resources being used and converted to results.

The analysis includes assessing the operational efficiency, i.e. how well the project was managed, since the implementation process and management issues are of great interest to all parties.

Efficiency of the JO4A project was assessed on three levels:

- Efficiency of the program in general (time resource)
- Relation between inputs and outputs (i.e. were the results achieved good value for money)
- Appropriateness of the program design and set up (i.e. delivery mechanism)

### 6.1. Realisation of planning

With regard to planning the time frame, the project is slightly behind the schedule due to the delay in realization of some of the activities of the project. COVID-19 pandemic caused additional difficulties and project team had to look for alternative ways of realisation and adapt the approach to restrictions imposed by national authorities. However, it seems that such scenario does not put at risk the realisation of the project as a whole. Also, the hindering factor was the political situation - there was no continuity of work of executive bodies relevant to the creation and preparation of legislative reform, bylaws and on the other hand, opportunities for more comprehensive and continuous work on creating preconditions for achieving project's goals, generals.

### 6.2. Cost-effectiveness

It will be very valuable to have an indication of cost awareness and value-for-money achieved on the project. The cost-effectiveness is understood as a goal attainment and costs involved *per unit of the*

*benefit.* It was very difficult for ET to conclude, based on the available narrative and financial reports, how many different resources (time, money, etc.) were spent on activities. Namely, it was necessary to adjust the project's financial reporting. The varied activities, the prices of different activation measures that have been piloted as well as the resources spent (e.g. production machines or ICT equipment) imply several different criteria for this type of analysis.

### 6.3. Operational efficiency

**The project's structure is very complex** and involves at least two levels of decision-making. Namely, on the top and with the highest responsibility is the Project Board which consists of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Employment Service Agency of the North Macedonia, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)<sup>20</sup>. Considering the high contribution by MLSP, two Project Agreements are signed by SDC – one with MLSP and one with UNDP.

Their roles and responsibilities are determined by contracts and the **Minister of LSP who present the project ownership to chair the group**; coordinating with relevant line ministries and other partners regarding the Employment Programme. ESA Director is responsible for coordinating activities, creating conditions and removing obstacles for undisturbed project's realization.

Within this project, UNDP is envisioned to have a close partnership with the key stakeholders – MLSP, ESA and with local CSW, branches of ESA, municipalities, various local CSOs and other business organizations and scientist institutions concerned.

The highly experienced team members of UNDP and their own structure, delegated duties and responsibilities. Reporting and communication lines are well defined and functional. The Project Manager centralises all activities and keeps regular operational communication with the donor and Board.

The project team has demonstrated a notable internal coordination. They have weekly staff meetings and frequent communication with target groups and stakeholders to update on ongoing activities and problems they encountered. However, the efficiency with effective external communication is missing. **Project documentation management is professional and documents are easily accessible.**

During the field interviews, different representatives of institutions (national and local level) have highlighted uneven coordination or even the lack of coordination from the Project team. However, institutional partners did not have the same impression (representatives of MLSP).

In fact, the Project staff that represents the Department for social inclusion has been predominantly focusing their project's work on designing and/or piloting various measures/services/activities according to their social inclusion mission, primarily. The majority of staff is engaged in designing, supporting or consulting other local implementation partners and target groups through social inclusion aspect. Only one staff representative is in charge of business sector. However, the role of staff representative who is

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<sup>20</sup>In the same horizontal hierarchy is representative of SDC who provides funding and technical expertise to the project and pay attention to technical feasibility of the project. On the other hand, UNDP representative performs the role of technical expertise to the project.

engaged for Roma unit within MLSP was appraised by several interviewees and this was pointed out as good practice.

## 7. Findings impact

The impact analysis is expected to answer to the following question- “what difference does the intervention make for the target groups”? Namely, - did the intervention effectively contribute to improving living conditions and to the employment of unemployed women and men, specifically members of vulnerable groups?”

**Priority activities defined by the JO4A for reducing unemployment of beneficiaries are only partially relevant for achieving the overall goal and making progress towards impact of the overall intervention. Particularly, when taken into account that groups are thus incoherent.**

The evident gap between piloting measures/training/ skills of workforce and those needed by local employers is addressed by the project in a way that it is not clear by what criteria various measures/trainings were developed to avoid mismatch between tangible needs of local business environment and beneficiaries’ realistic needs. **The anticipated progress on the level of created activities is set to enhance skills and competences of the workforce in order to improve their employability and position on the labour market and to enable employers to get the qualified workforce that match their requirements misses.**

On the other hand, the number of GMA beneficiaries has been increased (one of the milestones for measuring the progress of the project). Namely, a great number of these covered vulnerable groups presents GMA beneficiaries and their number is higher by 45% in two years in a row (2020,2021) compared to 2019. This data is based on the conducted study on *Impact of social benefits towards labour activation of vulnerable groups*. Furthermore, the reason for this new fact is not COVID-19 pandemic and supportive measures. As interviewers stressed, **the extended definition of who is or who could become GMA beneficiary influenced this result- people get more benefit in comparison with previous social support.**

Although the project unequivocally recognized the groups who are underrepresented in the labour market, **it was at the same time too ambitious, too complex and difficult to achieve the final impact / change that was formulated at the beginning of the project designing phase.**

## 8. Findings sustainability

*Sustainability analysis is expected to answer to the question: Will the benefits last?*

*The assessment of sustainability addresses the effects of the development process itself over the long run. Sustainability is in many ways a higher-level test of whether or not the programme intervention has been a success (Effectiveness criterion).*

It is difficult to provide a reliable assessment of sustainability while activities are still underway, or immediately afterwards. In case of JO4A project, the assessment is based on projections of potential future developments built on available elements of the Phase 1. Actually, following the project effects and the capacity of involved stakeholders and potential business sector, as well as the fact that beneficiaries have to deal with the context of very slow social reforms. In certain aspects JO4A’s influence is not

achieved. The practice often was not in accordance with the objectives due to the fact that project itself has not find systematic and a comprehensive answer.

The sustainability of JO4A Phase 1 achievements rises alarm that some of the fragmentary or modest achievements (number of new employed beneficiaries e.g. Roma representatives or PwD; interested local various actor in some municipalities for further cooperation) could be unstable in the Phase 2 or in the long run. The main problem appears in insufficiently developed, stable and resourceful partnerships/ at the local level, which can undermine all future actions regarding the objectives. Although new appointed Minister of LSP as the National Project Director of the Project Committee expressed her commitment and willingness for the issue of employment of vulnerable groups and continued that this topic should be among the priorities of her competence, the ESA, as another national partner and coordinator, remained invisible for the period of the project's implementation.

Namely, stable partnerships were established during the inception and Phase 1 but designing sustainability is not realistic. Namely, fragility of ESA, CSW and their local branches (centralized system of managing, lack of professional staff, motivation) also affects the inefficient implementation of social reform (among, other issues, this has resulted in more GMA recipients), stimulation and motivation of business sector involvement on the local level of different municipalities can undermine achievements related to the increased employability of beneficiaries and sensitivity for creating stronger legislative framework in order to secure preconditions for their better socio-economic perspectives.

Some of the few achievements that could be estimated as sustainable with high level of probability are:

- Improved social and education status of some vulnerable groups (Roma people and PwD – that should improve activation of these groups)
- Some important analysis must be conducted as they could be the relevant base for further measures for improving position of vulnerable groups in the labour market (assessment for all 3 target groups, GMA analysis, ESA capacities is needed;

#### *Sustainability of local partners*

The JO4A project is designed in a way to work through very complex structures. The project is focused on local ownership of project activities and achievements, recognising specific strengths and expertise of local entities and supporting their efforts towards long term sustainability and enhanced performance.

Within the JO4A project, donors are in dual position, as the operational implementation partners ESA and MLSP of Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 and, at the same time, the direct beneficiary of the Outcome 3 (institution(s) strategy developed and legal capacity enhanced).

Local partners, i.e. NGOs, as local implementers who communicate directly with the UNDP Project team present very different structures, resources, knowledge and skills. Namely, in relation to a certain vulnerable groups, for example: 1) **SEGA** is strengthened for a long term sustainable model using adjusted ACCEDER methodology and with aim to increase and secure further application for further labour activation of Roma people and youth (15-29 years) in cooperation with other Youth resource Centre in Bitola, Tetovo and Skopje, supported by other NGOs (they are not part of this project); together they cover



entire Polog region; 2) **Humanost** vocational rehabilitation centre of the PwD located in Skopje, licenced organization – service provider for social services dominant within care economy; 3) **I can** present the very first hub of that kind in the region – foundation status and established by City of Gostivar, ESA local office, MLSP and University, Regional Chamber of Commerce and Tetovo municipality. The ambition of this organization is to become a centre for young people, SMEs – to digitalize and empower digital society in the whole region. They have developed two start-ups which are led by PwD and give opportunities as a service provider. However, their sustainability is questionable as a financially independent organization. The LSGs support is important and it is expected to be an example of good practice for other regions; **I can** will further enhance its expertise and experience to continue with successful implementation of informal education trainings for IT and for employment, soft skills and HR.

As **Izbor** was unable to cover its operating costs, their status is questionable as well as the project's concept of supporting social enterprises – ET did not consider it as sustainable practice. Namely, some systematic solution should have been developed for financing and there was no chance for getting an insight.

### Sustainability of beneficiaries

Sustainability of the project effects among all vulnerable groups is grounded on the criteria that JO4A Project team applies the involvement of trained mentors and selecting NGOs, companies – those with capacity to utilise the project outputs and achieve sustainable effects and changes in their perceived livelihood socio-economic security.

The vision of JO4A by the end of the project is a better position of vulnerable groups on the labour market and that was central national intervention. Increased chances on the local labour market would be achieved through various activities with the focus on beneficiaries' needs on the one hand and on the other hand on established partnership and strengthening business sector through their engagement in the whole process of creating ecosystem for reducing unemployment rate among carefully selected vulnerable groups.

Sustainability of results among beneficiaries of the programme is questionable. By participating in the project, beneficiaries gain something highly sustainable – knowledge and skills that are applicable in any situation and cannot easily cease to exist but with the lack of carefully chosen certain vulnerable groups as well as the lack of assessing relevant training needs for all these properly selected vulnerable groups there is neither perspectives nor sustainability. **The JO4A should have positioned itself as an employment generating project with a focus on labour market integration of more coherent vulnerable groups, not Roma people, PwD and youth.**

Based on the latest GMA analysis, there is a certain risk that Roma people even with enhanced skills remained with the lack of motivation to find work due to the fear of losing social support or GMA status. They are very often in strong need for immediate work, even within the informal sector.

There is the lack of visible progress regarding outcomes (particularly, Outcome 1) of the project and continuation after the project lifespan.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

**The overall conclusion is that JO4A was appropriately conceptualised and designed for the context of vulnerable groups and their socio-economic status in general.** The underlying principle of JO4A project is complex and it takes a longer period of implementation to achieve visible and real effects in the society.

JO4A was implemented in the period of severe political and health hindering factor – from designing legislative framework to mitigating direct consequences of COVID-19. These obstacles additionally make important project's rationale in existing ecosystem when beneficiaries of JO4A are in a greater need.

Although, the project is extremely valid in the current circumstances – many activities and results on the level of outputs were achieved, **the impact<sup>21</sup> remained questionable.** This project strives for **a** systematic solution that has remained invisible through this intervention but it is the highly complex process and it requires more time... Also, **almost all achieved results will be diminished in the long-run considering various outsource factors that have escalated in the meantime.**

That is the reason why **cost-effectiveness analysis is crucial for detecting project's activities that are sustainable.** Therefore, **ET was not able to confirm the project's results for the phase 1, based on the current data** (financial and other relevant data).

If there is a lack of providing focused activities for Phase 2 based on cost-effectiveness and especially sustainability, as well as precisely defined direct beneficiaries that would enable the design of user-friendly support measures..., then it may be better to round-up the project earlier than it was originally conceived...

**On the level of direct beneficiaries – it is important to emphasize that they are not a homogenous group, they are of very different social, economic, cultural background** and also their competencies and skills made our work complex. Furthermore, we have been told that the project considered (period of implementation) extra groups (juveniles, drug addicts...) that will further defocus the project and inevitably waste resources.

**The limited number of analysis of the business environment in selected regions, the lack of clear coordination of ESA local offices, especially in municipalities, additionally deepens the challenge of disparity between the demand and supply of various trainings/vocational skills continue, and JO4A avoids the fact that appropriate approach is necessary to tackle. Changes in behaviour and the mind-set of direct project beneficiaries and potential job providers will generate a chain-effect in the wider society.**

*'Job Opportunities 4 All'* sounds as a very effective title/slogan of the project, sending a strong message but fails to reach some beneficiaries (example: online campaign for Roma people and PwD who most likely do not have the access to the Internet connection or even electricity – motivational video messages did not reach them). The **team is recommended to reformulate this title for the phase 2** and to create efficient beneficiaries' analysis (m/w are vulnerable groups but who are better defined and differentiated regarding demographic characteristics, by age, by gender).

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<sup>21</sup> \*Based on GMA analysis and conducted interviews - percentage of people who came out of poverty is low.

On the outcome of the capacity building component, project' partners should improve organisational capacity and efficiency as a response to livelihood **problems of better defined vulnerable groups, together with the investment in organisation's physical hardware (besides digitalization process).** Unquestionably, this will improve the implementation of partners' efficiency and the position in the field of donor funded economic development programmes.

**Development of partners' new strategic approach** should have a better focus on overall goal that will open new opportunities and widen implementer's portfolio of activities. It is essential for further improvement of efficient, necessary and suitable ALMMs developed according to the overall goal. Furthermore, the focusing on resolving existing challenges on a systematic level will contribute to effective resolutions for redefined target groups/beneficiaries as well as the role of ESA, primarily, and to providing further strategic guidelines and political support. The **coherence of partners' strategies** should be secured, as defined in their implementation/operational plan: increasing successful Communication strategy to public, externally, in order to increase visibility is of the high importance for the project's goal, as well.

Based on the findings and conclusions of the MTE, the evaluators proffer the following **recommendations** to inform possible decisions around mid-term adjustments in the implementation of the project and for **future interventions through the phase 2:**

- vulnerable groups defined as very heterogeneous groups-**recommendation is to redefine vulnerable groups as well as to make more effective scope of beneficiaries in the future activities<sup>22</sup>**; Additional rationale for the high relevance of the project is its orientation to acutely vulnerable groups – men and women from Roma community (with particularly high unemployment rate among Roma women-only 7%, as well as GMA beneficiaries; and 23% living in absolute poverty), added youth (with long period of transition from education to the labour market and thus, 31% of them are NEET) and PwD ( the lack of official data and around 32% of women of the working age). **It remains questionable why all these groups were involved within one project when their structure is very different.**
- Having in mind the complexity of the JO4A approach and the time required for its tangible impact, **it is recommended to think about redesigning some activities regarding unsuccessful piloting measures/services/measures (particularly, based on cost-effectiveness conclusions); the second phase** of the project should be an improved methodology based on the experience and lessons learnt during this period.
- **It is recommended that Project Board** induce improvement of the project team's role. It would be significant to think about allocation of the **Project team**; there is a lack of coordination, monitoring measures, communication among all partners (national and local level); the allocated team could make new connection of the Project staff within MLSP to create atmosphere through higher trust and commitment. On the one hand, it could have a constructive influence on political decision making processes because of their presence in the institutions; on the other hand, the employed within MLSP and responsible for the project's implementation will feel the sense of

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<sup>22</sup> This statement is in line with a few interviewees that emphasized furthermore what was confirmed in analysis of labour law and related legislation that was conducted by expert for labour law from Slovenia.

belonging to the project and they would be motivated to work together to improve state interventions;

- For the future vocational re/training programmes, implementation partners are recommended to apply slightly modified approach based on comprehensive analyses – **1. Business sector and environment needs/demands (their willingness for engaging vulnerable groups) and 2. the precise lists of the requested trainings/skills/measures by business sector and/or assessment of their potential for on-job training, internship programmes, outsourcing services and initiate co-financing by selected and interested companies, etc.** Furthermore, willingness of business sector to show its social responsibility and adaptability in its community through the involvement of vulnerable groups which directly and indirectly contributes to achieving the overall goal of the project; it is a confirmed long-term process and it could be developed through phase 2;
- **Individual Case Management and Mentorship** during practical phase of the programme is crucial (in case of PwD and Roma people, according to Acceder methodology- living + employment skills, could be crucial), and implementation **partners are recommended to introduce training programme for in-company mentors** in its portfolio which should be developed within phase 2.
- For phase 2, the project team is recommended to increase their capacities in the field of private sector support.
- A continuous gender mainstreaming of the PCM; special focus on the needs of a range of disadvantaged and discriminated groups of women (particularly from Roma community and PwD); in the future, interventions should focus on mitigating barriers for women.
- Mainstreaming PwD - Project team is recommended to direct efforts towards vulnerable groups in a socially inclusive and sustainable way, particularly toward PwD;
- **The team is recommended to engage strategy development consultant and define clear outcomes of the new long term strategy for project implementation, with the defined impact indicators.** This way, **the team should have a thorough upgrade analysis of all relevant stakeholders** and other organisations and companies (*mac.zaštitna društva*) active in the field of PwD support in order to identify implementer partners' specific attributes that distinguish it from other players and then to promote partners' unique approach on this particular subject. Partners' long term **communication strategy** will be a component of the general, 5-years or longer than that strategy which will be defined within the Outcome 2 and Outcome 3 of the project.

As the proven way in upgrading internal practice based on learning from others, Partners team is recommended to conduct **benchmarking** with similar organization implementing related projects.

### *Future activities phase 2*

- ▶ **It is recommended to Improve legislation, relevant bylaws, rulebooks** and procedure in order to improve activation in the labour market (i.e. to reduce GMA beneficiaries)
- ▶ It is recommended that **the state defines better the criteria for more equal development of social services in order to avoid the practice of being solidly developed in one region while another region suffers from deficiencies**, especially taking into account the latest demographic indicators, age structure, etc.;
- ▶ **Good practice from the region could be useful regarding developing local action plans** for employment with their own specific aspects (also, it could be a regional strategic document) on

the LSGs level /regional – it is conditioned by the size of the budget; in that case LSG/ region could contribute to ALMMs and its implementation by local ESA office Serbia example) and through current piloting project on engagement of season workers in Serbia. It is implementing not to take percentage of income – the project has been developed by NALED in partnership with the Ministry and Fund for social innovations – still no evaluation. All this involves decentralized management system on a local level; simultaneously, supporting regional councils for Social Protection establishment for designing social service, including budgeting on the municipal as well as regional level and the level of the Ministry of Local Self Government - **it is recommended to establish coordination and cooperation with their Project team and synchronizing activities in the field;**

- ▶ **Institutional capacities of key stakeholders** (ESA - digitalization and connecting all relevant institutions as well as to NGOs subcontracted to implement certain activities/services, etc.; using tools for improvement and increasing MLSP and ESA professional staff in order to develop and implement of ALMMs).
- ▶ **GMA– it should be a candidate for deeper analysis and discussion on the Board level** (based on conducted recent Study<sup>23</sup>) due to the fact that increased number of GMA beneficiaries for the last 2 year is not only the consequence of the Covid-19; moreover, ET had no insight in the final GMA analysis but as they informed through the interviewing part – **it would be crucially important to determine how ALMMs affect disincentives i.e. the process of activation of vulnerable groups;**
- ▶ For Izbor- it is necessary **to design a separate project that will be structured for providing services that could support business model which will be sustainable.**
- ▶ It is recommended to implement a comprehensive analysis in order to understand the current performance of protected companies and to develop measures for the improvement of their performance (for engaging this PwD);
- ▶ Future interventions on set of services and vocational re/training and employability of Roma through ACCEDER methodology should be continued and **Sega** could be grew into national service provider integrated in the national system as the national partner; **the Project considers the development of systematic measures that will provide adequate resources to SEGA in order to achieve this and guarantee sustainability of activities;**
- ▶ Multifunctional centre **I can** presents a potentially good model and the **recommendation** is merging with the existing NGOs which have similar trainings and missions; a potentially sustainable model; **and, it is recommended to replicate** in 2 other suggested regions ( the same structure and the same recipe : LSG, NGO; University & private sector, Štip and Bitola); Anticipated further support of legal entities for providing local social services and focus on women ( the most severely affected by the COVID-19) and this is confirmed by conducted studies on the socio-economic impact of the health crisis ( job losers in the formal market are women, locally and globally) and they were forced to take care of the elder, PwD or look after children- New model proposed by UNDP – **care economy** and social entrepreneurship could be successful if implementer partner targeted this very specific group of women (Outcome 1) with the aim to improve not only their economic but also social conditions- it could present measurable results toward the main goal, also; Service provider **Humanost** for PwD has very clear and credible results and it is recommended to support similar NGOs in Štip and Bitola for providing similar social services; **Red Cross** has not been involved with the project even though they have accredited courses and could potentially become a valuable Project resource. Moreover, they are nationally important and credible partner, with a great network and solid structure and they have been working with MLSP for a long time.

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<sup>23</sup>“Study on Impact of Social Benefits towards Labour Activation of Vulnerable Categories”



## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Evaluation of the JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL (main phase)

#### 1. BACKGROUND

##### Context

The moderate economic growth in North Macedonia in the last decade has been insufficient to address unemployment, which is one of the key contributors to poverty. Poverty causes socio-economic grievances, which are one of the key elements of fragility in North Macedonia. Unemployment also affects disproportionately vulnerable groups such as youth, Roma and people with disabilities, thus increasing further their risk to fall in poverty and contributing to their social exclusion. Roma are the most severely affected by unemployment, especially women. The main factor of high Roma unemployment is the very low education level. In turn, low education level also prevents Roma from accessing the existing employment measures, as completed primary education is a precondition to access these measures. Statistical data about people with disabilities are scarce. The low number of people with disabilities registered as unemployed is due to the ineffectiveness of government policies, which fail to support the integration of people with disabilities into the labour market.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP), is the key national level institution in charge of policy development on employment and social inclusion. However, the ministry lacks capacities to develop and implement the requested set of reforms, and relies on donor support (EU, World Bank, Switzerland and other bilateral donors) and implementation capacity (UNDP) to achieve its goals. While MLSP is responsible for policy planning at the national level, the implementation is done through the institutions at the local (municipal) level. At municipal level several key stakeholders play a role in supporting the vulnerable groups with active labour market measures (ALMMs): Local Employment Service Agency (ESA) offices inform unemployed about existing ALMMs and facilitate their access. Centres for Social Welfare (CSW) support members of vulnerable groups, both through preventive (e.g. counselling) and protective measures (e.g. access to institutions that provide social protection). Municipalities are responsible for fostering local economic development and introducing additional measures that would help tackling unemployment. Currently there is lack of coordination among these institutions at local and national levels. Policies are developed with a top-down approach and policy-making is most often not evidence-based due to the lack of statistical data. The private sector is neither consulted on employment of vulnerable groups, nor incentivised to properly include these groups on the labour market. Furthermore, vulnerable groups often find the existing ALMMs complex and have limited guidance to find the most appropriate measure for them.

The Job Opportunities for All programme was designed as a country system intervention, with the aim to facilitate employment for vulnerable groups in North Macedonia, by introducing appropriate active labour market measures, improving the capacities of responsible institutions to coordinate employment measures, and engaging the private sector. By doing so, it aims to reduce the risk of members of these groups to fall into poverty and enhances their social inclusion. Youth, Roma and people with disabilities are the main target groups as they are disproportionately affected by unemployment.

## **History of the programme**

Start of phase 1: 1.07.2017

End of phase 1: 31.10.2022

Planned duration according to EP: 12.2027

The project aims to address one of the key contributors to poverty and social exclusion in North Macedonia – the high unemployment rate among vulnerable groups. It is a contribution to an ongoing UNDP implemented programme (“Creating Job Opportunities for All”) financed by the Government (MLSP) and UNDP, aiming to reduce unemployment by supporting the institutions to introduce and implement ALMMs. The UNDP “Creating Job Opportunities for All” programme is focused on strengthening the country system by identifying and removing systemic barriers and bottlenecks hence creating employment for the overall unemployed population in North Macedonia. It has several key intervention areas, among which self-employment, support to SMEs to grow and create jobs, community works, etc.

The Entry phase was used to conduct analyses needed to develop the Project Document for Main phase, in consultation with the key stakeholders and donors active in employment and social policy. The key recommendations of the analyses were to include youth among the key target groups, to introduce a new model to support employment of Roma, and to take a more comprehensive approach towards employment of persons with disabilities, including policy changes to stimulate labour market activation and better integration of this group in the labour market. The analyses also led to recommendations to use CSOs to deliver services to vulnerable groups and to foster local territorial employment partnerships composed of representatives of the private sector, local authorities and civil society to support employment of vulnerable groups.

The overall goal of the project is for unemployed women and men, specifically members of vulnerable groups, to obtain employment and have improved living conditions. Specific programme objectives are:

1. More women and men from the Roma ethnic community and/or who have disabilities make use of tailored active labour market measures.
2. The private sector, including social enterprises, creates new jobs accessible to members of vulnerable groups, especially Roma and people with disabilities.
3. Relevant institutions develop and implement policies and services that will ease access to the labour market for members of vulnerable groups, in particular Roma and people with disabilities.

The impact hypothesis is that by introducing new ALMMs to ease the access of youth, Roma and persons with disabilities to the labour market, building the capacities of the national and local level institutions to develop and implement in a coordinated way policies that help these groups, by creating better conditions for the private sector to employ these groups, and by supporting these groups to make better use of the relevant policies, youth, Roma and people with disabilities will ultimately gain employment, which will contribute to better living conditions.

The programme goal and specific objectives are to be achieved by developing, piloting and mainstreaming measures for integration of Roma and PwD in the labour market and by contributing to identify and remove systemic barriers and bottlenecks. UNDP was tasked to actively include all national institutions for planning and implementation of these measures, and enhance institutional capacities for effective policy development. Phase 2 will need to focus on implementation of the measures piloted during Phase 1 by MLSP and ESA, hence directly contributing to the strengthening of the country system and ensure sustainability of the programme.

## **Implementation**

The programme is part of a larger employment programme of UNDP and the Government. SDC's contribution focuses on making employment opportunities more accessible to vulnerable groups, in particular youth, Roma and persons with disabilities through establishing new services to support employment of these groups, improving the capacities and collaboration by all stakeholders, and engaging the private sector. Services are to include (1) better outreach to inactive members of target vulnerable groups for their activation, (2) support for acquiring additional skills and competences when needed, and (3) matching with the private sector. In order to achieve its goals, and yield sustainable results, the implementer is expected to detect the underlying systemic issues that led to the creation of the problem, and work with MLSP for creating systemic solutions that would contribute to strengthening the country system.



## 2. OBJECTIVE OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation is initiated and commissioned by SDC and has the purpose of informing SDC, SCO Skopje and MLSP, as main partner, on the programme's achieved results, sustainability and progress and relevance. The evaluation is expected to serve as a reflection on the first 3 years of phase 1 and as a basis for the planning process of the project phase 2 that is to commence in October 2022. More specifically, the objective of this evaluation is to determine if the programme is yielding the necessary systemic impact/change and to recommend strategic directions on possible adaptations of project design, approaches or implementation structures by assessing the level to which JO4A has contributed to strengthen capacities of the country system.

While the evaluator needs to check the programme progress against the agreed upon outcome and output indicators (as per LogFrame), the main focus of the evaluation should be on how the piloted measures address the systemic issues that prevent vulnerable groups from entering the labour market, and if and to what degree the programme is part of the country system approach.

### **Main evaluation question:**

“Did the intervention succeed to make a notable difference for members of vulnerable groups to get employment and improve living conditions, and have country systems been enabled to replicate successful practices at national scale in a sustainable manner?”

### **Specific evaluation questions according to OECD/DAC evaluation criteria:**

#### Relevance

1. Is the intervention doing the right things and addressing the most pressing issues and biggest potential hurdles within the scope of the programme?

#### Coherence

2. How well does the intervention fit within the Government strategy on social inclusion and complement/enhance/strengthen the portfolio of the Swiss Cooperation and its role as a relevant and effective development partner in North Macedonia?

#### Efficiency

3. Was the approach to divide the implementation focus in three separate components by target audience (1. Roma, 2. Youth, 3. PWD) the most efficient way to achieve the defined goals and outcomes? Was the scope of the project reasonable?
4. How well are resources being used, including with a view to lasting results and benefits, and to the number of beneficiaries?
5. Did the operational and strategic coordination mechanisms of the programme enable effective steering and required policy dialogue between the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP), Employment Service Agency (ESA), SDC and UNDP?

#### Effectiveness

6. Is the intervention achieving its objectives in quantitative but also in qualitative terms at a relevant country scale? Namely according to the three project phase 1 outcomes:
  - Do more women and men who are young, Roma, or have disabilities make better use of the existing or new active labour market measures? Has the intervention been equally successful in achieving sustainable results at a relevant systemic scale with all three primary target groups?
  - Is the private sector, including social enterprises, employing diverse workforce and making jobs accessible to members of vulnerable groups? Office for employment



- Did relevant institutions develop and implement effective policies and services that ease access to the labour market for members of vulnerable groups?
- 7. To what extent do piloted measures address systemic issues preventing target groups entering the formal labor market? Zavod za socijalnu zaštitu ili sl.

#### Impact

- 8. What difference does the intervention make for the target groups? Namely, did the intervention effectively contribute to improve living conditions and to employment of unemployed women and men, specifically members of vulnerable groups?

#### Sustainability

- 9. Will the benefits last and have the institutions been strengthened and the systems been reformed to ensure an autonomous implementation of effective social inclusion programmes by national partners? Namely,
  - Have the capacities of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) and the Employment Service Agency (ESA) been “gradually strengthened to make policy changes and take over the implementation of the piloted measures” [EP] after phase 1?
  - Have the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) and the Employment Service Agency (ESA) been enabled to “take over the planning and implementation of the programme” [EP] as foreseen in the Project Entry Proposal for phase 2?

#### The main conclusions and recommendations sought are:

- **Based on the findings of phase 1 and with a view to vulnerable groups effectively getting employed and having improved living conditions, what should the implementation approach of phase 2 look like and what should be the primary focus of the intervention to ensure sustainability and systemic long-term impact at a relevant country scale?**
- **Based on the findings of phase 1 and in consideration of the financial and operational framework, should phase 2:**
  - 1) **Continue to equally cover all three main target groups individually?**
  - 2) **Cover the target groups more generally and jointly under the umbrella of vulnerable groups at a more systemic level?**
  - 3) **Focus and concentrate efforts on one or two target groups only?**
  - or
  - 4) **Use a different definition for the target groups?**
- **Based on the findings of phase 1, what implementation structure and contribution set-up is recommended for phase 2 to ensure strengthening of the country-systems and of the ownership for the planning and implementation of required services, measures and reforms by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) and the Employment Service Agency (ESA)?**

### 3. *Scope and method of work*

This evaluation is expected to be conducted by a team consisting of one international consultant, who is expected to have the lead, and one local consultant. The present ToR are valid for both. SCO Skopje is going to choose the international consultant, who can also propose the national consultant that will perform the work with him/her. When selecting the national consultant, it is

recommended to consider her/his language skills in English, Macedonian and preferably Albanian language as simultaneous translation during the interviews will be necessary.

The **main tasks of the assignment** are as follows:

- Review of main documents related to this project:
  - Cooperation Programme North Macedonia 2021-2024;
  - Entry Proposal and Credit Proposal of the JO4A
  - Project Documents of JO4A
  - Yearly plans of operation for 2018-2021
  - Semi-annual Reports (2018-2021)
  - ToR of Steering Committee
  - Minutes of SC meetings
- Initial briefing at the beginning of the mission and debriefing at the end of the mission with the management of SCO North Macedonia and the National Programme Officer in charge of the programme;
- Interviews with MLSP and ESA representatives;
- Interviews with the members of Steering Committee;
- Visits and interviews with beneficiaries: Reha centers in Skopje and Strumica, iCan resource center, Sega and Sonce NGOs implementing Acceder methodology;
- Interviews with representatives of the local authorities and citizens in selected regions;
- Interviews with other stakeholders operating in the field of social inclusion;

The consultant is invited to propose other methods and instruments for carrying out the evaluation as well.

#### **4. Deliverables / Reporting**

The international consultant is expected to provide following deliverables:

- At the beginning: A brief agenda/ programme of the field mission including an approximate timeframe per each activity.
- A final report of max. 15 pages (excluding annexes) focusing on:
  - Executive summary (1-2 pages)
  - Evidence-based findings and lessons learned based on ToR (8 pages)
  - Recommendations for Phase 2 (4 pages)
- Short power point presentation (6-8 slides) on the evidence-based findings, lessons learned and recommendations.
- The draft report is to be submitted to SCO 14 days after the end of the mission and discussed with SCO;
- Final evaluation report is to be submitted to SCO not later than 7 days after the discussion of the draft report.
- The consultant is responsible for the logistical and administrative organization of the mandate.

#### **5. Timeframe of the assignment**

The evaluation is to start on 1.01.2022. The timeline for completion is to be proposed by the international consultant as part of the methodological approach.

<b>Activities (consultants)</b>	<b>International consultant</b>	<b>National consultant</b>
Relevant desk research and preparation of review guidelines	3 days	3 days
Interviews with key partners / stakeholders from NMK	8 days	8 days
Analysis of mission results, report writing, preparation of Power Point presentation, finalisation of report based on feedback by SCO Skopje	3 days	3 days
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14 days</b>	<b>14 days</b>

## **6. *Evaluation team / Qualification***

The selected international consultant and local consultant should have extensive evaluation experience with development programmes. This includes but is not limited to:

- Extensive experience in reviewing/evaluating development projects;
- Extensive experience with evaluation of development projects aiming to achieve systemic impact and country system strengthening;
- Extensive experience as team leader of project evaluations;
- Extensive experience in assessing projects in the domain of social inclusion, with special focus on vulnerable groups;
- Experience in conducting reviews that focus on learning and steering;
- Excellent analytical expertise, ability to propose sound recommendations;
- Excellent report writing skills;
- Good knowledge of the Balkan context;
- Local consultant: excellent command of English, Macedonian and preferably Albanian.

## List of reviewed documents for desk analysis

Name of the consultants: Ljubomir Dimovski & Olgica Lola Milojević

List of documents to be used for desk analysis
1. SDC Report Jun –Nov. 2017
2. Report CJOA June 2017-December 2018
3. Adjusted Methodology- ver 2
4. Pricing List
5. Report Dec.2018-June 2019
6. Report Jan-July2019
7. Report 2019
8. Report Jan-June 2020
9. Report Jan-Dec.2020
10. Report Jan –June 2021
11. ACCEDER methodology Brief
12. AWP 2020
13. AWP 2021
14. AWP 2022
15. EP and CP
16. ProDoc Main phase
17. SDC Porgress Report Jan.Dec.2020 April 29thFinal
18. SDC Progress Report JanJun 2021- 23 September Final
19. SDC Progress Report 2019 V4

20. SDC Progress Report Jul Dec.2019 Final in May	
21. "National Employment Strategy 2021-2021 with Employment Action Plan 2021-2023, Gov.of Republic of N. Macedonia , Ministry for Labour and Social Policy, Skopje, 2021	
22. Decent work country programme Macedonia, 2019	
23.	
<b>REMARKS:</b>	<p><b>1)</b> Swiss Cooperation Strategy on the level of Employment and Economic insists on social inclusion and decent work, <b>2)</b> National Strategies for Employment and National Strategy for social protection and <b>3)</b> UNDP agenda <i>"to infuse social inclusion and decent work standards into national employment strategies and continue to implement active labour market measures"</i></p> <p><b>2)</b> Other relevant documents/paper and relevant links of MLSP, ESA and donors;</p>