

UNDP COUNTRY OFFICE PROFILE

NORTH MACEDONIA

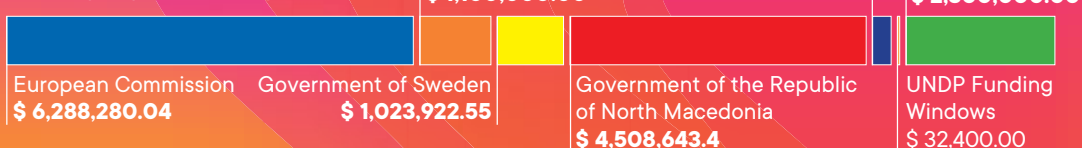


IN THE COUNTRY SINCE **1995**

NUMBER OF STAFF IN COUNTRY **77**

ONGOING PROJECTS **37**

FINANCING PARTNERS



Delivery (2023):
\$12,557,237.93

Delivery in the past 20 years (2004 – 2023):
\$208,167,775.15

Resources mobilized in 2024:
\$15,585,620.31

RESULTS IN NUMBERS



PEOPLE (end – beneficiaries) PROVIDED WITH ACCESS TO Social SERVICES:

80 615



Municipalities supported:

100%

Full-time jobs created:
2021 - 2023

14,788



Increase in active transparency index in partner municipalities:

from 3% to 32%



Municipal councilors with access to e-learning platforms:

1150 (85%)



Total of citizens who have access to local e-services:

462,968

UNDP in North Macedonia is working with institutions at all levels and society to drive transformative change, with the ultimate goal of improving people's lives. We address development challenges through a systems approaches, integrated tools and solutions which involve looking beyond sectoral issues. Our vision is focused on a revitalization of governance, empowering local and regional authorities to effectively address crises and emergencies while ensuring social justice and equity for North Macedonia to converge more rapidly with the quality of life and standards of European Union countries, ensuring that no one is left behind.

The CO leverages its technical expertise, strong operational presence, wide network of partnerships and trusted relationship with government to advance the achievement of the outcomes set out under the United Nations Sustainable Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) priorities and outcomes where UNDP has a comparative advantage in:

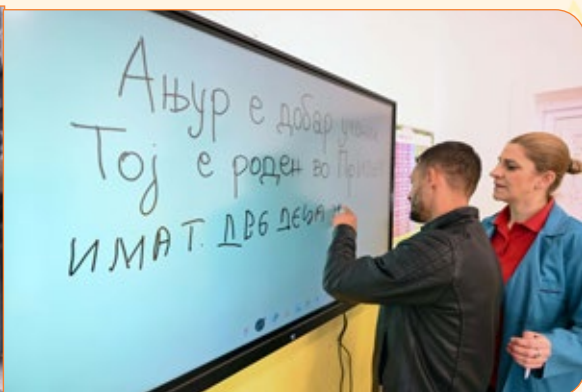
- a) effective, people-centred governance and rule of law - strengthening the effectiveness and accountability of institutions particularly at municipal levels,
- b) eradication of poverty and job creation
- c) green and inclusive economic development, facilitating citizen engagement in decision making and climate action.
- d) gender equality and women's empowerment

POVERTY AND ECONOMIC EXCLUSION

To reduce poverty and economic exclusion, the Country Office (CO) engages public and private stakeholders to invest in the business ecosystems with a focus on entrepreneurship. We support businesses to navigate the economy as it recovers from the pandemic, including digital transformation of SMEs and other vital economic aspects.

The CO demonstrated its effectiveness in these areas by supporting the creation of over 14700 formal sector jobs and over 14000 new small businesses. Within the "Global Engineer Girls - North Macedonia", UNDP CO worked to cultivate interest in STEM and help more than 60 girls and young women, especially in marginalized groups, to continue to grow and develop in these areas, preparing and position them to pursue higher education and careers in STEM.

To address the challenges of the returnees in their home countries, the CO focuses on the broader social inclusion agenda promoting the socio-economic well-being and tackling the root causes and negative drivers of migration of Roma and vulnerable populations.



CLIMATE CHANGE, RESILIENCE BUILDING AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

To help the country respond to the challenges of climate change, UNDP strengthens policy frameworks and local capacities for climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk management and efficient management of protected areas. The CO contributes to the country's enhanced institutional capacity to meet its commitments to UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) by supporting the development of national communications and transparency reports. Particular focus is put on preservation and improvement of the ecological system in the Prespa Lake, a Monument of Nature, and enhancement of the transboundary cooperation and improvement of connectivity and mobility around the Lake. In the area of disaster risk reduction, the CO is focusing on instigating transformational change in managing flood risk in the region, accelerating the shift from purely reactive responses to floods to integrated systems to manage hazards, vulnerabilities and exposure of communities and assets to prevent/mitigate losses and alleviate the impact of future floods. As a

contribution to the overall efforts to decrease of the annual levels of fine particulate matter (PM10), the office is providing a model for collection and modelling of air quality data and support for the development and implementation of municipal air quality plans.



EFFECTIVE, PEOPLE-CENTRED GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW

UNDP is dedicated to enhancing governance reforms through collective actions, a system transformation approach, and resilience building. We facilitate and coordinate policy-making processes across different policy domains, government levels (national and local), and stakeholders (public, private, civil organizations, and development partners). Through collaborative efforts, the CO is contributing to stronger governance structures and service delivery at the national and local levels while supporting the implementation and monitoring of the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2024-2044 and advancing the EU accession process.

UNDP CO is strongly involved in decentralization and local and regional development, digitalization, financing for sustainable development and public finance management, women and youth empowerment, dealing with tech-facilitated violence and gender-based violence, rule of law, justice and security for all. Additionally, initiatives targeting misinformation, corruption preventions, journalism support, trust-building and civic participation highlight our commitment to transparent governance and community engagement.

The changes in these areas contribute and reaffirm the Government's commitment to EU accession and the "fundamentals" to build trust and counteract polarization.



GENDER EQUALITY and WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

In line with the SDG 2030 Agenda, UNDP CO North Macedonia is placing gender equality and the empowerment of women in the center of its work. The CO's strategic priorities on Gender Equality align closely with UNDP's corporate objectives for 2022-2025, making a substantial contribution to North Macedonia's gender equality agenda. These priorities encompass interventions across all country priorities, with a specific focus on: reducing employment gender gap through increased women's economic participation in the labor market; improving gender responsive management of natural resources and DRR through effective participation of women in decision making. Parallely, we support national institutions on developing legal, policy and institutional reforms to support to remove structural barriers to gender equality.



Having received a **Silver Certification** in acknowledgment of its efforts in advancing gender equality in both programming and operations, the office works towards attaining a Gold Award in the upcoming Gender Seal certification.

ACCELERATING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The Accelerator Lab team embedded within UNDP country has been responding to the strategic needs of our office. The key processes within the Labs' portfolio include:

- Supporting the country office and national institutions in designing and deploying innovative processes, methods, and tools in core development processes, as well as ensuring citizens participation in the process.
- Creating and activating a portfolio of options aimed to showcase the transformational potential of circularity in urban communities.
- Generating new knowledge on the impact of the climate crisis on communities in our country.
- Working on exploring new tools and solutions including foresight, sensemaking, solutions mapping and experimenting.
- Acting as the research and development arm of the UNDP country office, we drive exploration, experimentation, and solutions mapping to uncover actionable insights for today's development challenges.



2024 KEY FOCUSES

FOCUS 1 | GOING GREEN

**FOCUS 2 | RESILIENCE, RISK,
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

FOCUS 3 | GENDER EQUALITY

**FOCUS 4 | TRANSFORMATIVE
GOVERNANCE**

FOCUS 1 GOING GREEN!

Green Portfolio

The Green Portfolio, the latest initiative of the UNDP CO, combines diverse program elements to facilitate holistic planning and integrated implementation. It focuses on innovative financing mechanisms to advance the green agenda, particularly in providing opportunities for SMEs and households in North Macedonia to access renewable energy and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, it supports national and local institutions in addressing development and environmental challenges, with a focus on improving air quality and environmental justice.

In 2024 Green Finance Facility (GFF) will contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution in the country which possesses notable renewable energy potential, especially solar, while struggling with significant GHG emissions and high levels of air pollution.

Advancing the Green Agenda

- a) Enhancing Prespa Lake's ecosystem, promoting sustainable agriculture and tourism, fostering cross-border cooperation, implementing digital tools, and upgrading rural wastewater networks
- b) Developing biodiversity finance through diagnostics, capacity building, and finance plans for the Global Biodiversity Framework.
- c) Building local government capacities to design gender-sensitive action plans for improving air quality and raising awareness about air pollution.
- d) Helping local governments advance their development planning processes by incorporating



the EU Green Deal principles into their Integrated and Inclusive Local Development plans.

- e) Institutionalization of the SDG-aligned Technical Documentation Fund, offering financing for municipal technical designs. In 2024, prioritizing projects for energy efficiency and better air quality.
- f) Driving green job creation in the private sector through eco-friendly innovations, resulting in 219 new jobs and green investments in 124 companies from 2022 to 2023.
- g) Strengthening resilience with early warning systems in Polog and Drini River Basins and establishing a DRR coordination platform for integrated action.
- h) Assisting in preparing and submitting North Macedonia's First Biennial Transparency Report on Climate Change, combined Second Biennial Transparency and Fifth National Communication Report under the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement, and developing the National Adaptation Plan.

Partnership in Green

Together with the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors, Association of Journalists, Ombuds-office, CSOs, grassroots organizations, and activists, we are aiming to increase public participation, access to information, justice, and legal empowerment in environmental matters, particularly for women and vulnerable groups.

At the UNDP-established Future Skills Centre in Tetovo, around 270 trainees gained expertise in specialized technologies like BIM (Building Information Modelling), 3D Design in fashion, and renewable energy installation.

With support of the City of Skopje, UNDP and UNICEF started a National Biohacking Initiative and opened the first Biohacking Laboratory in Skopje that aims to foster innovation, education, and engagement of communities in finding solutions to the environmental challenges.

FOCUS 2 DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

As a continuation of the coordination role that the CO had with Skopje 60 (In 2023, UNDP served as the umbrella organization coordinating all activities commemorating the 60th anniversary of the devastating Skopje earthquake), the office facilitates the establishment of a DRR Dialogue Platform as an instrument to foster collaboration, dialogue, prioritize support and knowledge sharing in the realm of disaster risk reduction. The Platform aims to improve the strategic planning and coordination of government entities, donor community, international community, non-governmental organizations, private sector, and academia and is expected to support mobilization resources.



FOCUS 3 GENDER EQUALITY and WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT



We aim to boost women's economic participation by strengthening the care economy, expanding STEM access, and promoting gender-responsive HR practices. Our focus is on empowering women and girls with disabilities, advocating for their rights, and supporting their independence within communities. Combatting **gender-based violence** with focus on **technology-facilitated gender based violence (TFGBV)** remains a top priority. Enhanced institutional responses entail analyzing TFGBV-related legislation, building

capacities of law enforcement and CSOs, sensitizing CSI staff, and improving tracking of domestic violence cases involving firearms in the Police Information Management System. UNDP also addresses gendered disinformation by conducting media analysis on media integrity, focusing on gendered disinformation and hate speech against women. As a result, in partnership with the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, we created a **unique web platform** (www.jasno.mk). As part of this platform, the UNDP Country Office is introducing the global 'i-verify' tool as a fact-checking mechanism to enhance the accuracy of available media content.



Efforts to mainstream gender in local planning and budgeting are focusing on capacity building for municipal councillors, integrating gender perspectives into the MDI model, and supporting gender-responsive development plans.

FOCUS 4 TRANSFORMATIVE GOVERNANCE

After successfully supporting the Government of North Macedonia in the creation and adoption of the National Development Strategy 2024-2044 (NDS www.nrs.mk), UNDP CO continuously supports the capacity development for implementation and monitoring of the strategy, focusing the joint efforts on the General Secretariat of the Government of North Macedonia, State Audit Office and the Ministry of Finance. UNDP also assisted in developing the new National Youth Strategy and will continue to support the implementation of key actions for youth empowerment.



Together with the Ministry of Local-Self Government, the Ministry of Finance, and municipalities we drive systematic decentralization and local self-government processes. This involves strengthening national decentralization policies, boosting municipal capacities, enhancing local councilors' skills, advancing digitalization, and promoting citizen inclusion through community forums. Building on our joint activities with the Ministry for Internal Affairs, UNDP CO is supporting the criminal justice response by building of the capacities and infrastructure needed for forensics and crime-scene-investigation, combating sexual and gender-based violence in the online space, and internal systems for registration of domestic violence.

UNDP CO aids in transparent public finance management for North Macedonia, supporting the Ministry of Finance, Public Revenue Office, and State Audit Office. We focus on SDG finance, taxation, auditing, and combating the informal economy. In 2024, North Macedonia joined the Global Tax Inspectors Without Borders Programme, addressing multinational tax evasion with OECD and UNDP.

Digital Transformation

North Macedonia is embracing **digital transformation** and the use of technology, new business models and new digital services. UNDP CO is mainstreaming digitalization to advance the digital agenda in the areas of digitalization of public services, digital transformation of the private sector and innovative digital tools for improved environmental management.





2024 Events HIGHLIGHTS

To foster knowledge exchange among practitioners and institutions for informed policy and decision-making processes, UNDP CO hosts various conferences, workshops, and events.

03
2024

In March 2024, UNDP CO and IRH co-hosted the Regional workshop “**Future-Ready Local Governance: Harnessing Integration and Innovation, Managing Complexities**” in Struga. Experts from Europe and Central Asia convened to discuss trends, share best practices, and generate ideas for sustainable development. Emphasizing local involvement, the workshop’s outcomes contribute to updating UNDP’s Regional Offer/Framework for Local Governance in the ECIS region.

05
2024

In May 2024, our CO, in collaboration with Istanbul Regional HUB (IRH), will host a two-day conference. It aims to deepen the understanding of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Gender Equality in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The conference will highlight women’s leadership in disaster risk management and advocate for inclusive policies and collaboration among stakeholders. Additionally, it will foster a sub-regional approach to the European Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR).

11
2024

In November 2024, the CO will organize a **Business Forum: Unleashing the Digital Potential of the Private Sector** that will explore digital transformation practices for enhancing business processes and unlocking new opportunities.

12
2024

The Annual Decentralization Conference planned for **December 2024**, facilitates the dialogue among national and local institutions on advancing decentralization, financing of local self-governments and local democracy. The conference will host mayors and presidents of municipal councils from North Macedonia and the region, representatives of the relevant national institutions, ZELS, Regional Development Centers, representatives of CSOs, the business sector, experts.

