



MACEDONIAN
CENTER FOR
INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION



Implementation of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with and Development of the Civil Society

Report on the Implementation of the Activities in 2023

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*Implementation of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with and Development of the Civil Society
2022-2024*

Report on the Implementation of the Activities in 2023

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Contents

Introduction.....	4
Implementation of the Action Plan of the Strategy	5
Priority area 1 – Normative, institutional and financial framework for civil society development	7
Strategic Goal 1. Improvement of the legal frame for civil society organisations	8
Strategic objective 2. Strengthening the institutional framework and practices of cooperation between the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, state administration bodies and civil society organisations	11
Strategic Goal 3. Establishing a tax framework that corresponds to the specifics of the work of the civil society organisations and enables their development	13
Strategic Goal 4. Improving the state funding system for civil society organisations	16
Priority area 2. Democratization, active participation of civil society organisations in social processes, in the policy creation and monitoring, with a special focus on the EU integration process.....	18
Strategic goal 5. Increasing the involvement of civil society organisations in the process of creation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies	19
Strategic goal 6. Strengthening the partnership in the processes related to the European integration	21
Strategic goal 7. Advancement of the legal framework for the right to peaceful assembly and direct participation of citizens in decision-making	26
Priority area 3. The civil society sector as a stakeholder in the social-economic development	27
Strategic Goal 8. Development of Social Entrepreneurship	28
Strategic Goal 9. Recognition of the specifics of CSOs as an employer	30
Strategic Goal 10. Promotion and development of volunteering	31
Strategic Goal 11. Encouraging citizens and the business sector to support and contribute to the civil society development.....	32
Strategic Goal 12. Increasing the CSOs’ participation in providing services to the community	34
Conclusions and Recommendations	37
Conclusions.....	37
Recommendations	38

Introduction

The Strategy of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia for cooperation with and development of civil society 2022-2024 aims to provide an enabling and sustainable environment in which civil society functions and develops, which enables dynamic, independent, active and sustainable civil society organisations (CSOs) that contribute to strengthening of democratic governance, reflect the interests and needs of the citizens and engage in structural dialogue for the society advancement.

In 2007, the Government adopted the first Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Society Sector with Action Plan 2007-2011, laying the foundations of its cooperation with CSOs. In 2012, the second Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the civil society sector with Action Plan 2012-2017 was adopted, aiming at promoting, supporting and advancing the partnership relations between the Government and civil society, through measures to strengthen cooperation. The third Government Strategy for cooperation with and development of the civil society sector 2018-2020 was supposed to enable further promotion of cooperation and enabling development of the civil society organisations, as a corrective to policies, a service to citizens and a channel for solidarity, a partner of the state and business and a driving force of the EU integration. The implementation of the fourth Strategy covering the period 2022-2024 is underway.

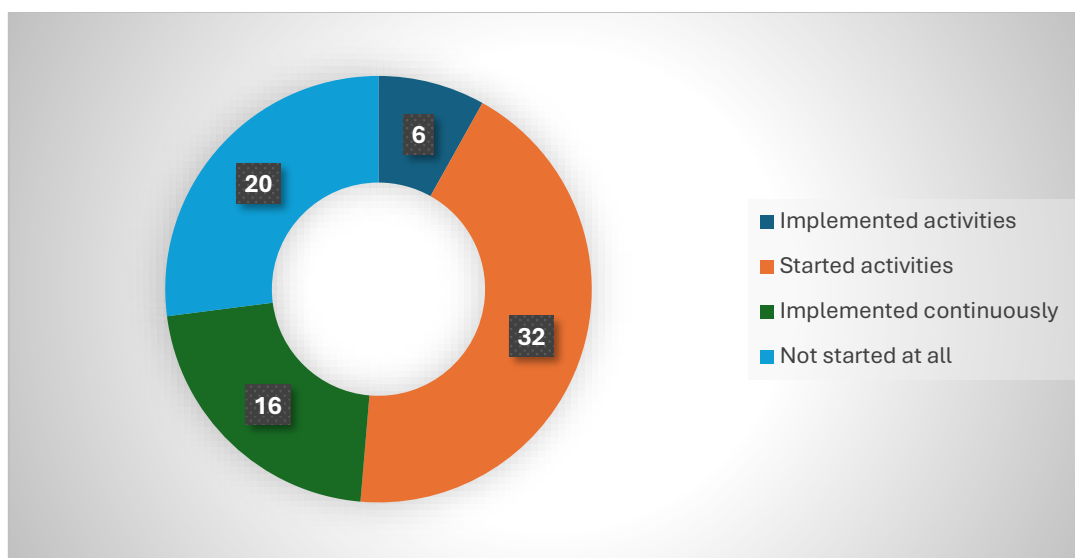
This report addresses and reviews the implementation of the Action Plan and the Strategy for cooperation between the Government and civil society in 2023. The report is based on desk research, a survey of 277 CSOs, interviews with CSOs and relevant state institutions. Furthermore, this report takes into account the Report on the Progress in the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia for Cooperation with and Development of Civil Society 2022-2024 in 2023 prepared by the General Secretariate – Organisational Unit for Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations and it makes a comparison with the level of the Strategy implementation shown in that report.

The purpose of this report is to determine the level of implementation of the Action Plan of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with and Development of Civil Society 2022-2024, the realization of the strategic and operational goals and the implemented activities in 2023. Further on, the report provides recommendations and guidelines for the preparation of the next Strategy, the preparation of which should begin in the middle of 2024, and it is necessary to ensure a full consultative process and CSOs' involvement.

Implementation of the Action Plan of the Strategy

The action plan for the implementation of the Strategy covers the following three priority areas: 1. Normative, institutional and financial framework for the civil society development; 2. Democratization, active participation of civil society organisations in the social processes, in the policy creation and monitoring, with a special focus on the EU integration process; 3. The civil society sector as a stakeholder in the socio-economic development. These priority areas are divided into 12 strategic goals, 26 operational objectives and 81 activities. According to the year for which the implementation of the activities is planned, the largest number of activities are planned for the first year, that is, for 2022 it is planned to implement 49 activities, 11 activities in 2023, 11 activities in 2024 and 10 activities are planned to be implemented continuously.

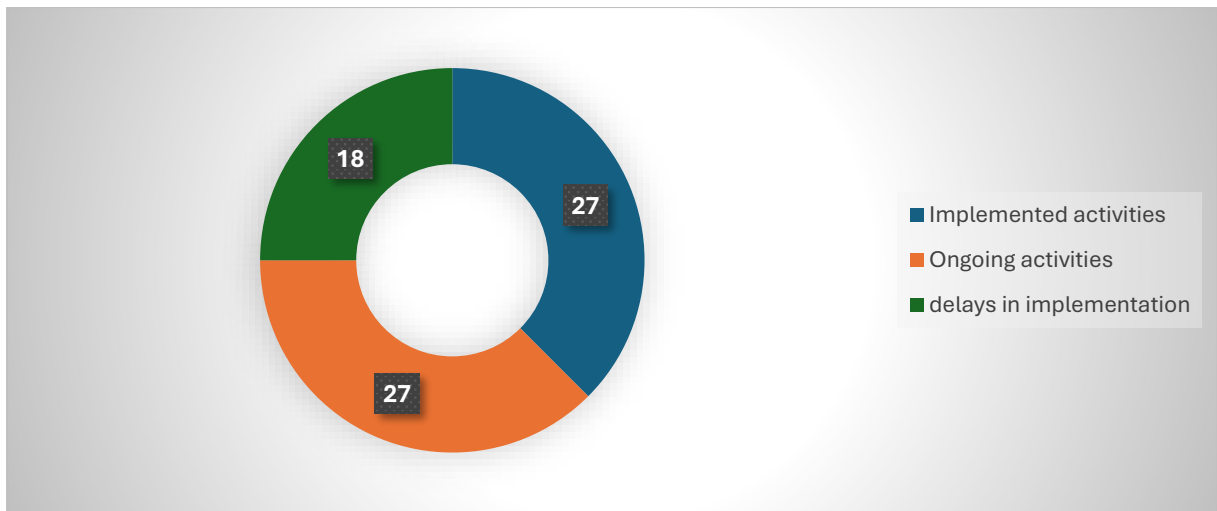
According to the findings of this analysis, six activities (7.4%) have been fully implemented. 16 activities (20%) are continuously implemented. The implementation of 32 activities (39.5%) has been started, but 30 of them have not been completed within the specified period, and the implementation of 20 activities that were planned for 2022 or 2023 has not been started at all. The implementation of four of the 11 activities planned for 2024 has started.



Graph 1: Level of implementation of the activities of the Action plan of the Strategy

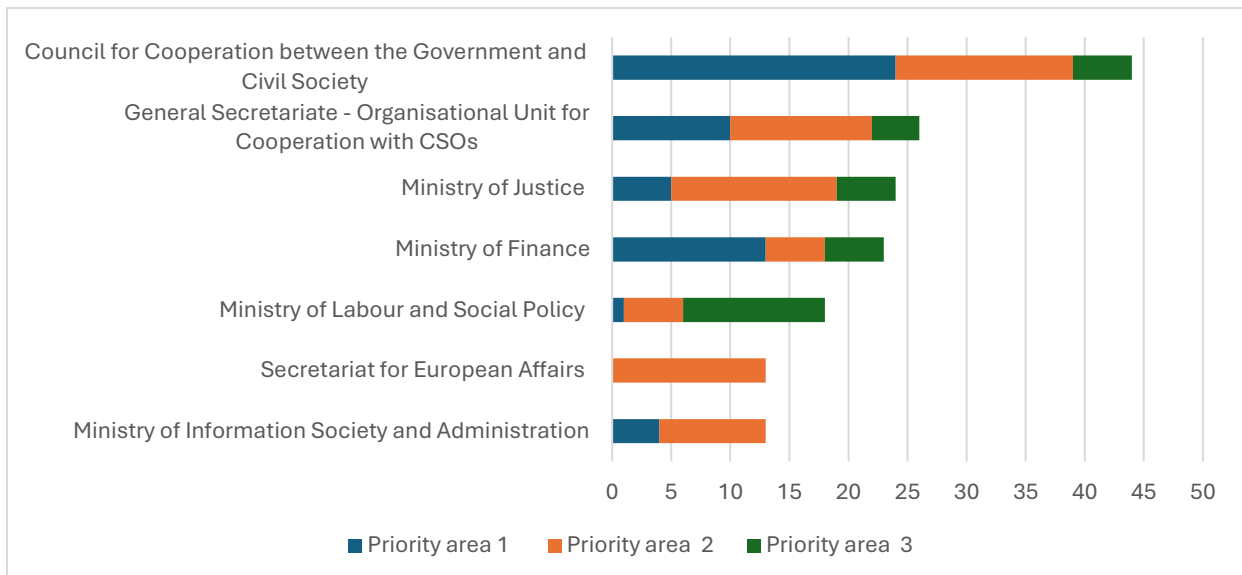
According to the Draft Report¹ prepared by the General Secretariat - Organisational Unit for Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations, 27 activities (37.5%) have been fully implemented, 27 activities (37.5%) are ongoing and there is a delay in the implementation of 18 activities (25%).

¹ Draft-Report on the Implementation of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with and Development of Civil Society 2022 – 2024, in 2023, available at: <https://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/990>



Graph 2: Level of implementation of the activities of the Action plan of the Strategy according to the Draft-Report prepared by the General Secretariat – Organisational Unit for Cooperation with CSOs.

The action plan also lists the institutions responsible for implementing each of the planned activities. The most frequently cited institutions responsible for implementing the activities are: the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society (one of the competent institutions for the implementation of 44 activities), the General Secretariat - organisational unit for cooperation with civil society organisations (one of the competent institutions for 26 activities), Ministry of Justice (one of the competent institutions for 24 activities), Ministry of Finance (one of the competent institutions for 23 activities), Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (one of the competent institutions for 18 activities), etc. The Council for Cooperation dominates as the competent institution for implementing activities from the first and second priority areas, while the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy is most often cited as one of the competent institutions for implementing activities from the third priority area.



Graph 3. Competent institutions for implementation of the Strategy by priority areas

Priority area 1 – Normative, institutional and financial framework for civil society development

The first priority area contains four strategic goals, eight operational goals with 27 activities aimed at improving the legal, institutional and financial framework for the functioning and development of civil society. **Out of the 27 activities, there is a delay² in the full implementation of 21 activities, two activities were fully implemented in 2022, and three are being continuously implemented.** Key goals in this priority area are: Amended Law on Associations and Foundations; An independent, representative, operational and effective Council for cooperation between the Government and civil society; Increased state funding for civil society organisations and an adopted model for state funding of CSOs that encourages the civil society development.

Although the activities for the implementation of these goals are ongoing, still there is no significant progress in their implementation in 2023. The preparation of the first draft of the Law on Changes and Amendments to the Law on Associations and Foundations can be highlighted as a **partial progress**, but the consultations with CSOs and the submission of the law to government procedure are yet to follow. On the other hand, the biggest setback is in the functioning of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, which was on boycott for whole 2023 without any Government efforts to restore its functionality. Three activities are being continuously implemented, namely the regular updating of open data from the Registry of registered CSOs by the Central Register, holding coordination meetings and strengthening the members of the Network of civil servants for cooperation with the civil society.

Responsible institutions for implementing the activities from this priority area of the Action Plan are: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society (one of the responsible institutions for implementing 24 activities), Ministry of Finance (one of the responsible institutions for 13 activities), General Secretariat - Organisational Unit for Cooperation with CSOs (one of the responsible institutions for 10 activities), Ministry of Justice (one of the responsible institutions for five activities), etc.

² There activities may have already been started and are in progress or have not been started at all, however, these activities have not been fully completed by the deadline stated in the Action Plan of the Strategy.

Strategic Goal 1. Improvement of the legal frame for civil society organisations

Operational objective 1. Advancement of the legal framework for associations and foundations that provides guarantees for the exercise of the right to freedom of association in accordance with international standards

Activity 1.1. Preparation of amendments to the Law on Associations and Foundations (concerning revision and adjustment of the nomenclature defined in the Law in order to recognise other forms of association, revision of the provisions for non-partisan action and influence on elections, analysis of the functional models for acquiring the status of public interest, integration of the data of the registered organisations in an open format database, protection of the non-profit character, general criteria for the method of financing the organisations by the users of public funds, etc.).

Indicator: A proposal to the Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Associations and Foundations has been prepared with the participation of CSOs' representatives in the working group.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Justice, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil society

Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter of 2022

The activity is ongoing

The working group for drafting the Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Associations and Foundations, established in March 2022, and coordinated by the Ministry of Justice, held 4 meetings in 2023. In the working group, in addition to the representatives of the relevant institutions, there are five CSOs' representatives who applied on an open call and then were elected by the members of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society. A working version of the Draft Law has been prepared, which until the end of 2023 remained within the Ministry of Justice, it has not been finalized and it has not been submitted to the Government.

Activity 1.2. Public consultations and debates with CSOs, institutions and other stakeholders on the amendments to the Law on Associations and Foundations.

Indicator: Conducted four public consultations/debates on the amendments to the Law on Associations and Foundations (one national and three local) involving more than 100 CSOs' representatives.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Justice, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 2nd quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

In October 2022, the Ministry of Justice on its website announced that it will publish the draft law on ENER and organise public consultations³. Public consultations (one national and three local) have not been organised for the draft law before it is submitted to the Government. The four consultative roundtables on specific topics, organised in December 2022 with about 30 CSOs' representatives, are designed to provide input for drafting the text of the draft law. The draft law has not been presented and discussed with CSOs and other stakeholders. The draft law has not been published on ENER for public consultations, and there is only information on ENER (from April 2022) about the start of the process for preparing the draft law⁴.

³ Source: <https://www.pravda.gov.mk/vest/6416>

⁴ Source: https://ener.gov.mk/Default.aspx?item=pub_regulation&subitem=view_ann_detail&itemid=W0H707LXXMp3BkwwwWT1xQ==

Activity 1.3. Submission of the amendments to the Law on Associations and Foundation (Government procedure).

Indicator: Proposal to Law on Chances and Amendments to the Law on Associations and Foundations has been submitted to the Government procedure.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Justice, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 2nd quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

A working version of the proposal to the law has been prepared, which remained in the Ministry of Justice until the end of 2023 and has not yet been submitted to the Government for further consideration and adoption.

Activity 1.4. Building the capacities of institutions and CSOs for consistent application of the Law on Associations and Foundations.

Indicator: Prepared comments on the amendments to the Law; Conducted at least four information events with the users of the law (CSOs, institutions, etc.).

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Justice, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 3th quarter 2022

The activity has not been started

Operational objective 2. Enabling free access to data on CSOs from the Registry of registered organisations in accordance with the Law on Associations and Foundations in the Central Register of the Republic of North Macedonia

Activity 2.1. Expansion of the open data that the Central Registry of the Republic of North Macedonia publishes for CSOs with the data available from the individual search, available as existing services.

Indicator: Published integral data on registered associations and foundations in an open format, which can be searched by key indicators (based on the information collected in accordance with the Law on Associations and Foundations).

Responsible Institution: Central Registry of the Republic of North Macedonia, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, General Secretariat - Organisational Unit for Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2022

The activity is implemented (2022)

Activity 2.2. Enabling access to dynamic reports with adjustable data for civil society organisations for budget users (central and local government).

Indicator: /

Responsible Institution: Central Registry of the Republic of North Macedonia, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, General Secretariat - Organisational Unit for Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 2nd quarter 2022

The activity is implemented (2022)

Activity 2.3. Regular updating of open data from the Registry of registered CSOs by the Central Register of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Indicator: Number of data updates in a single integrated Registry of registered CSOs.

Responsible Institution: Central Registry of the Republic of North Macedonia, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, General Secretariat - Organisational Unit for Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: continuous

The activity is being implemented continuously

The list is updated every two weeks.

Activity 2.4. Preparation of amendments to the Law on the Use of Public Sector Data and its alignment with the Directive on open data and re-use of information from the public sector (2019/1024).

Indicator: A Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on the Use of Public Sector Data has been prepared.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Information Society and Administration in cooperation with Metamorphosis - Foundation for Internet and Society

Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

Drafting of amendments and additions to the Law on the Use of Public Sector Data is underway.

Strategic objective 2. Strengthening the institutional framework and practices of cooperation between the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, state administration bodies and civil society organisations

Operational objective 3. Continuous operation of an independent, representative, operational and effective Council for cooperation between the Government and civil society

Activity 3.1. Development and implementation of efficient methods for consulting and informing CSOs about the work of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society (brochures, educational videos, public events, open days, etc.), so that the Council becomes an effective mechanism for shaping up the civil society policies.

Indicator: Percentage of CSOs informed about the operation of the Council; Percentage of CSOs consulted by Council members coming from CSOs; Number of information related to the operation of the Council sent by the Council to CSOs; Number of topics initiated by CSOs to the Council; A plan for the Council's communication with CSOs is prepared, adopted and implemented.

Responsible Institution: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, General Secretariat - Organisational Unit for Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations

Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing, there is a deterioration in 2023

According to the results of the survey with 277 CSOs, 63% stated that they are familiar with the existence of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society. Furthermore, **51% of the organisations that responded that they are familiar with the existence of the Council stated that they are informed about the Council's operations.** Thirty organisations, i.e. 17% of the organisations that answered that they are familiar with the existence of the Council, stated that the Council's decisions are based on the recommendations and contributions of the CSO, and somewhat more, i.e. 20% of the organisations disagree with this statement. The remaining 63% do not know whether the Council's decisions are based on the CSOs' recommendations and contributions.

In 2023, the Council did not hold a single session due to the boycott of the Council's work by the Council members coming from CSOs.

Although a draft of the Communication Strategy of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society has been prepared, it has not been adopted by the members of the Council (the Communication Strategy was prepared within the EU-project "Technical Assistance for Improving the Enabling Environment for Civil Society Organisations in the Republic of North Macedonia").

Recommendation: This activity should be carried out continuously

Activity 3.2. Development and implementation of efficient methods for communication with the public, including state institutions, especially the Network of civil servants for cooperation with CSOs and the public.

Indicator: Number of announcements related to the work of the Council at <https://nvosorabotka.gov.mk/> Prepared, adopted and implemented plan for Council's communication with the public.

Responsible Institution: Council for cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, General Secretariat - Organisational Unit for Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations

Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing, there is a deterioration in 2023

The Council has not adopted a plan for Council's communication with the public, although a Communication Plan for 2022 was prepared which was never adopted. In 2023 there are no announcements about the work of the Council on the website of the Unit for Cooperation with NGOs.

Recommendation: This activity should be carried out continuously

Activity 3.3. Strengthening the capacities of the members of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, establishing tools for continuous, independent and efficient operation of the Council and establishing internal communication mechanisms between the Council members.

Indicator: Percentage of absence of Council members from Council sessions and changes of Council members; Percentage of decisions or policy proposals made by the Council that have been adopted by the relevant state institutions; The Council's communication plan was drawn up, adopted and implemented.

Responsible Institution: Council for cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, General Secretariat - Organisational Unit for Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations

Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing, there is a deterioration in 2023

In 2023, the Council members did not hold any meetings due to the boycott of the Council's work by the members from CSOs, and thus no decisions or policy proposals were made, which should be subsequently adopted by the relevant state institutions.

Although a Council's communication plan for 2022 was prepared, it was never adopted and was not implemented.

In 2023, there were no activities carried out to strengthen the capacities of the Council members.

Recommendation: This activity should be carried out continuously

Operational objective 4. Improving the knowledge and capacities of the Network of civil servants for cooperation with civil society

Activity 4.1. Holding regular coordination meetings of the General Secretariat-organisational unit for cooperation with civil society organisations and the members of the Network of civil servants for cooperation with civil society.

Indicator: Four coordination meetings of the Network of civil servants for cooperation with civil society held per year.

Responsible Institution: General Secretariate – Organisational unit for cooperation with CSOs

Implementation Deadline: 2022 -continuous

The activity is being implemented continuously

In December 2023, the General Secretariat – Organisational Unit for Cooperation with CSOs organised individual meetings with the members of the Network from the ministries (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and Ministry of Local Self-Government) on the degree of the implementation of the Action Plan concerning the activities under the competence of these ministries.

Activity 4.2. The members of the Network of civil servants for cooperation with civil society participate in trainings on the meaning, operation and models for cooperation with civil society.
Indicator: Percentage of members of the Network participating in trainings related to civil society; Number of CSOs that communicate and cooperate with relevant institutions through the Network.
Responsible Institution: General Secretariat – Organisational Unit for Cooperation with CSOs
Implementation Deadline: 2022 – continuous

The activity is being implemented continuously

In January 2023 within the EU-funded project "Technical Assistance for Improving the Enabling Environment for Civil Society Organisations in the Republic of North Macedonia", a workshop was held with the members of the Network for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Government's Strategy for cooperation with and development of civil society 2022-2024.

There is no data available on how many CSOs communicated and cooperated with relevant institutions through the Network.

Strategic Goal 3. Establishing a tax framework that corresponds to the specifics of the work of the civil society organisations and enables their development

Operational objective 5. Improvement of the tax framework concerning the value added tax and in accordance with the identified development needs of the civil society organisations

Activity 5.1. Analysis of the possibilities for value added tax (VAT) exemption for the co-financed part of approved projects supported by donors (European Union, USA, EU member states and countries with which bilateral cooperation agreements have been signed).
Indicator: Number of local donors who are aware of tax incentives and support CSOs.
Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society
Implementation Deadline: 2nd quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

In November 2023, within the EU-funded project "Technical Assistance for Improving the Enabling Environment for Civil Society Organisations in the Republic of North Macedonia", an analysis was prepared – [Review of the best practices of tax treatment of CSOs in the European Union](#). This analysis addresses the issue, but no specific proposals are given for the possibilities for VAT exemption for the co-financed part of the approved projects supported by donors. The Ministry of Finance has not taken any follow-up actions on this matter. The Secretariat for European Affairs has informed that when registering projects in the Central Database, the total amount of the grant (with co-financing) is entered, which means that the full amount of the grant is VAT exempt.

Recommendation: If this activity remains in the next Action Plan, the indicator should be defined better.

Activity 5.2. Public consultations to present the findings/recommendations of the Analysis on the possibilities of VAT exemption for the co-financed part of the approved projects supported by donors.
Indicator: /
Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society
Implementation Deadline: 3rd quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

Within the EU-funded project " Technical Assistance for Improving the Enabling Environment for Civil Society Organisations in the Republic of North Macedonia", a consultative meeting on the tax treatment of CSOs was held on 28.2.2023. A comparative review of practices from the EU member states and the Republic of North Macedonia concerning the income tax, value added tax (VAT) and tax treatment of philanthropic giving was presented at this consultative meeting.

Recommendation: If this activity remains in the next Action Plan, indicator(s) should be defined.

Activity 5.3. Establishing a working group for amendments to the legal framework for the value added tax aiming at VAT exemptions for the co-financed part of the approved projects supported by donors.

Indicator: /

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 3 quarter 2022

The activity has not been started

The Ministry of Finance has not established a working group for amendments to the legal tax frame aiming at VAT exemption of the co-financed part of approved projects supported by donors.

Recommendation: If this activity remains in the next Action Plan, indicator(s) should be defined.

Operational objective 6. Improving the transparency of the financial activities of CSOs

Activity 6.1. Publication of financial data from CSOs' operations.

Indicator: /

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 2nd quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

An [Analysis and proposals related to the legal framework for accounting of civil society organisations](#) in Macedonia was prepared within the EU-funded project "Technical Assistance for Improving the Enabling Environment for Civil Society Organisations in the Republic of North Macedonia".

Recommendation: If this activity remains in the next Action Plan, indicator(s) should be defined.

Activity 6.2. Organising a thematic roundtable with representatives of non-profit organisations in order to discuss progress and recommend further improvement of the publicly available information on the financial activities of non-profit organisations.

Indicator: /

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 2nd quarter 2022

The activity has not been started

In 2023, a thematic round table with representatives of non-profit organisations was not conducted in order to discuss progress and recommend further improvement of the publicly available information on the financial activities of non-profit organisations.

Recommendation: If this activity remains in the next Action Plan, indicator(s) should be defined.

Operational objective 7. Preparation of an improved legal and by-law framework for the accounting of non-profit organisations

Activity 7.1. Consultations with CSOs and other non-profit organisations to identify the most appropriate accounting model, taking into account the specifics of the non-profit entities.

Indicator: Number of conducted consultations; Number of consulted CSOs.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 2nd quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

In November 2023, under the EU-funded project "Technical Assistance for Improving the Enabling Environment for Civil Society Organisations in the Republic of North Macedonia", online consultations were organised with around 20 CSOs on accounting standards for CSOs in EU Member States and the legal framework for accounting of CSOs in Macedonia.

Activity 7.2. Preparation of a legal framework for accounting of non-profit organisations, according to the recommendations and the conclusions from the conducted consultations.

Indicator: /

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 2nd quarter 2022

The activity has not been started

In 2023, no activities have been started in the Ministry of Finance to prepare changes in the legal framework for accounting of non-profit organisations in accordance with the recommendations and conclusions of the conducted consultations.

Activity 7.3. Preparation of by-laws for the accounting of non-profit organisations, including accounting accounts, in accordance with the recommendations and conclusions of the conducted consultations, in order to enable a more appropriate monitoring of the development and financial sustainability of CSOs.

Indicator: /

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2022

This activity has not been started

In 2023, no activities have been started in the Ministry of Finance to prepare changes in the legal framework for accounting of non-profit organisations in accordance with the recommendations and conclusions of the conducted consultations.

Recommendation: If this activity remains in the next Action Plan, indicator(s) should be defined.

Activity 7.4. Organising information sessions on the adopted changes in the legal framework for accounting of non-profit organisations.

Indicator: Conducted at least four information sessions with CSOs and institutions about the adopted amendments to the legal framework, with appropriate interpretation of the new provisions.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2022 and 1st quarter 2023

This activity has not been started

No information sessions were conducted in 2023, no changes were made in the legal framework for accounting of non-profit organisations.

Strategic Goal 4. Improving the state funding system for civil society organisations

Operational objective 8. Advancement of the model for financing civil society organisations from the state budget

Activity 8.1. Increasing the share of state funding from the central budget and from the budgets of local self-government units, in order to reach a share of 30% (about 2 billion denars) in the total income of CSOs by 2024.

Indicator: In the process of budget planning in the country, consultations are organised with CSOs on the budget planning; The Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia is adopted with a total increased percentage of planned funds for financing CSOs (20% of the total income of CSOs in 2022, 25% in 2023 and 30% in 2024) and financial funds are provided for establishment and functioning of the Fund for support and development of civil society and co-financing of European Union projects.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 2022 - 20% 2023 - 25% 2024 - 30%

The activity is ongoing

According to the [Report on the financing of program activities of associations and foundations by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, state administration bodies and local self-government units in 2022](#), prepared by the General Secretariate – Organisational Unit for Cooperation with CSOs, the financial support for CSOs in 2022 amounts to 994,454,416 denars, financial support for 2,550 projects/programs of associations and foundations, which represents 7.93% of the total income of CSOs in 2022. At the time of preparing this analysis, there is no report or data available for 2023.

In September 2023, the General Secretariat of the Government conducted an online consultation process with CSOs to submit proposals for the Government's Work Program for 2024⁵. However, in 2023 no consultations were conducted with CSOs in the budget planning process.

Recommendation: If this activity remains in the next Action Plan, the indicator(s) should be better defined.

Activity 8.2. Introducing mechanisms that will ensure that the planning of funds for financing civil society organisations will be exclusively from the budget line 463, and only in exceptional and specific cases will this be done through other accounts in the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Indicator: In the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia, all funds for financing CSOs are planned from budget line 463.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 3rd quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

During budget planning, efforts are made to ensure that the funds for CSOs are under budget line 463, however, no mechanisms have been introduced to ensure that the planning of funds for CSOs will be exclusively from budget line 463.

⁵ Source: <https://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/976>

Activity 8.3. Transformation of the Code of Good Practices of Financial Support to Citizens' Associations and Foundations into a horizontal and mandatory by-law for all state administration bodies. The amendments and additions to the Code will, first of all, have to focus on the provisions that have been shown to be weak: the planning of funds (obligatory consultations on priorities), decision-making (independent evaluation committees, regulation of conflicts of interest, involvement of experts and CSOs' representatives), the publication of results and the right to appeal, monitoring and evaluation, etc.

Indicator: The provisions in the Code of Good Practices of Financial Support to Citizens' Associations and Foundations have been amended, which refer to: the planning of funds (number of mandatory consultations held to determine the priorities for the calls), the decision-making on the allocation of funds for CSOs (number of established independent evaluation committees, number of acts that regulate the conflict of interests, number of involved experts and representatives of CSOs in the decision-making process for awarding funds), the publication of the results and the right to appeal, monitoring and evaluation, etc.

Responsible Institution: General Secretariat – Organisational unit for cooperation with CSOs, Council for Cooperation between the Government and civil society

Implementation Deadline: 3rd quarter 2023

This activity has not been started

In 2023, no activities were carried out to transform the Code of Good Practices for financial support to citizens' associations and foundations into a horizontal and mandatory by-law for all state administration bodies.

Recommendation: If this activity remains in the next Action Plan, an indicator should be added to measure the transformation of the Code of Good Practices for financial support to citizens' associations and foundations into a horizontal and mandatory by-law for all state administration bodies.

Recommendation: In the implementation period, it should be added that the implementation of the Code should be continuously monitored.

Activity 8.4. Amendments to the Law on Games of Chance and Entertainment Games (to intervene in Article 16 of the Law where: 1) development of CSOs registered under the Law on Associations and Foundations is added, as a basis for additional funding (expansion of the scope of the Law); 2) the amount of funds is determined at a maximum of 50% of the total income from games of chance and entertainment games determined in the previous calendar year, but not less than 120 million denars; and 3) the allocation of funding for the institutional support of organisations established in line with the Law on Associations and Foundations is carried out by a Fund established by a special law, which performs the function of support, promotion and development of civil society).

Indicator: Amendments to the Law on Games of Chance and Entertainment Games were adopted in a participatory and consultative process with CSOs where: 1) the development of CSOs registered under the Law on Associations and Foundations was added, as a basis for additional funding (expansion of the scope of the Law); 2) the amount of funds is determined at a maximum of 50% of the total income from games of chance and entertainment games determined in the previous calendar year, but not less than 120 million denars and not more than 150 million denars; and 3) the allocation of funding for the institutional support of the organisations established in line with the Law on Associations and Foundations is carried out by a Fund established by a special law, which performs the function of support, promotion and development of civil society.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2024

Activity 8.5. Preparation of a legal framework for the establishment of an independent Fund for the support to and development of civil society and co-financing of projects financed by the European Union, which will establish a transparent and reliable model for state financing.

Indicator: A legal framework has been adopted for the establishment of a Fund for the support to and development of civil society and co-financing of projects financed by the European Union, which has a budget for the support and development of CSOs and has a special program in its own budget that will support organisations that have received projects financed by the European Union; A functional analysis is made; A functional Fund has been established for the support to and development of civil society and co-financing of projects financed by the European Union (open call for selection of members in the bodies of the Fund, Decision on the selection of the members of the bodies of the Fund, number of held working meetings of the bodies of the Fund, adopted program documents of the Fund, prepared and adopted procedures for public internal financial control and accountability in operations, etc.).

Responsible Institution: General Secretariat – Organisational unit for cooperation with CSOs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: from 2nd quarter 2022 to 3rd quarter 2023

The activity is ongoing

The working group for the reform of the system of state funding of CSOs has proposed provisions of the Law on Associations and Foundations in the section State support to organisations and the Fund for Support to and Development of Civil Society, which have been reviewed and supported by the Working Group of the Ministry of Justice for drafting of the Law on Associations and Foundations in December 2023.

Priority area 2. Democratization, active participation of civil society organisations in social processes, in the policy creation and monitoring, with a special focus on the EU integration process

The second priority area contains three strategic goals, nine operational objectives with a total of 31 activities dedicated to increasing the CSOs' involvement in the process of creation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies as well as their inclusion in the EU integration processes of the country. **Out of a total of 31 activities, 16 activities are late⁶ with full implementation, three activities were fully implemented in 2022, six are being continuously implemented and six are planned for 2024.**

There is **partial progress** in the implementation of the activities to achieve the goals outlined in this priority area. No activities have been started to transform the Code of Good Practices for the participation of the civil society in the policy-making process into a mandatory by-law for all state administration bodies, and although there have been discussions, a model for the inclusion and selection of CSOs in the working groups of the state administration bodies has not been adopted yet. In the absence of a functional Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, the Council does not carry out its competence to implement the procedures for nominating and selecting representatives from CSOs in the working groups for the development of public policies. There is an **improvement** in the level of publishing draft laws on ENER by the ministries. There is **partial progress** in strengthening the partnership in the processes related to the European integration, i.e. in 2022, through an open call, the Secretariat for European Affairs prepared a register of CSOs to be included in the process of EU accession negotiations and it can be updated, but the register is not publicly available and is not based on a model for civil society participation in the accession negotiations processes

⁶ These activities may have been started and are in progress or have not been started at all, however, they are not fully implemented within the deadline set in the Action Plan of the Strategy.

because such a model has not yet been adopted by the Government. There is **no progress** in the work and the functioning of the sectoral working groups. No activities have been initiated to advance the legal framework for the right to peaceful assembly.

Competent institutions for implementing the activities from this priority area are: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society (one of the competent institutions for implementing 15 activities), Ministry of Justice (one of the competent institutions for 14 activities), General Secretariat - organisational unit for cooperation with civil society organisations (one of the competent institutions for 12 activities), Ministry of Information Society and Administration (one of the competent institutions for nine activities), Secretariat for European Affairs (one of the competent institutions for eight activities), etc.

Strategic goal 5. Increasing the involvement of civil society organisations in the process of creation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies

Operational objective 9. Advancement of the process of consultation and participation of civil society organisations in the public policy creation

Activity 9.1. Transformation of the Code of Good Practices for the Participation of the Civil Society Sector in the policy-creation process into a horizontal and mandatory by-law for all state administration bodies.

Indicator: The by-law on the participation of civil society organisations in the policy-creation process is a mandatory act for the state administration bodies.

Responsible Institution: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, General Secretariat - Organisational Unit for Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations

Implementation Deadline: 3rd quarter 2022

The activity has not been started

Activity 9.2. Development of a model for the inclusion and selection of CSOs in the working groups of state administration bodies and bodies established by strategic documents.

Indicator: The by-law on the CSOs' participation in the policy-creation process has been supplemented with provisions on the selection of CSOs in working groups and bodies established by strategic documents.

Responsible Institution: Council for cooperation between the Government and civil society, General Secretariat - organisational unit for cooperation with civil society organisations

Implementation Deadline: 3rd quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

Within the EU-funded project "Technical Assistance for Improving the Enabling Environment for Civil Society Organisations in the Republic of North Macedonia", a discussion was held on 11.5.2023 on the topic "Participation of CSOs and citizens in the policy-creation process. No follow-up actions have been taken to amend the Code/by-law for the participation of CSOs in the policy-creation process.

Activity 9.3. Advancement of the cooperation with the existing effective thematic CSOs' networks for structured dialogue in the process of creation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies.

Indicator: Number of held consultative meetings of state administration bodies with thematic CSOs' networks.

Responsible Institution: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, General Secretariat - Organisational Unit for Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations

Implementation Deadline: 3th quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

On the basis of an online survey in March 2023, with the participation of 117 CSOs, within the EU-funded project "EU support for the Citizen Resource Center - phase 2", a Survey Report has been prepared to identify CSOs' networks and a publicly available database of CSOs' networks was created - Directory of CSOs' networks⁷ with 100 networks.

There is no available data on the total number of held consultative meetings of the state administration bodies with thematic CSOs' networks, because the available data on held consultative meetings are with CSOs, also including networks. For example, during the development of the National Youth Strategy 2023-2027, the Agency for Youth and Sports held a series of consultative meetings with youth organisations, including networks of youth organisations.

Recommendation: This activity should be implemented continuously.

Activity 9.4. Implementation of a training program for administrative officials for the effective CSOs' participation in the policy-creation process.

Indicator: Number of organised trainings and number of training participants for the effective participation of CSOs in the policy-creation process.

Responsible Institution: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, General Secretariate – Organisational Unit for Cooperation with CSOs

Implementation Deadline: 3th quarter 2022

The activity has not been started

In 2023, there was no training program for administrative officials for the effective participation of CSOs in the policy-creation process.

Recommendation: This activity should be implemented continuously.

Operational objective 10. Effective stakeholder consultation in the regulatory impact assessment process

Activity 10.1. Encouraging the use of the Single National Electronic Register of Regulations (ENER) by conducting public campaigns on the possibilities of using ENER.

Indicator: Number of conducted public campaigns on the possibilities of using ENER; Percentage of draft laws published on ENER; Percentage of draft laws published on ENER for which the 20-day consultation period has been respected; Percentage of draft laws for which comments have been submitted to ENER by CSOs.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Information Society and Administration, General Secretariate

Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2022, continuous

The activity is being implemented continuously

Within the EU-funded project "EU support to the Civil Society Resource Centre - phase 2", in 2023, three information sessions were held with over 50 CSOs on "CSOs' participation in policy creation". The findings from the report "Government Mirror: Public Participation in Law Preparation Processes, 2022 Annual ENER Monitoring Report"⁸ were also shared at these information sessions.

According to the Annual Report "Government Mirror: Public Participation in Law Preparation Processes, 2023 Annual ENER Monitoring Report"⁹ in 2023, a total of 72 draft-laws submitted by the Government to the Parliament have obligation to be put on ENER, and for 37 of them (51.4%) the draft laws were previously published on ENER. Out of these 37 draft laws, the minimum deadline of 20 days for ENER consultations was not respected only in one case, i.e.

⁷ Source: <https://rcgo.mk/mrezhi/>

⁸ Source: <https://rcgo.mk/vesti/preku-gragansko-uchestvo-vo-kreiranje-politiki-do-transparentna-i-inkluzivna-vlast/>

⁹ Source: <https://rcgo.mk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/ogledalo-na-vladata-2023.pdf>

the percentage of compliance with the minimum deadline of 20 days for consultations is 97%. A total of 204 comments were submitted for 36 out of 59 draft laws published on ENER in 2023, i.e. 61% of the draft laws submitted to ENER for consultation were commented by the public.

Activity 10.2. Improving the quality of preparation of regulatory impact assessment reports through a detailed explanation of the consultation process.

Indicator: Number of conducted public campaigns on the possibilities of using ENER; Percentage of draft laws published on ENER; Percentage of draft laws published on ENER for which the 20-day consultation period has been respected; Percentage of draft laws for which comments have been submitted to ENER by CSOs.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Information Society and Administration, General Secretariate

Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2022, continuous

The activity is being implemented continuously

In May 2023, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration in cooperation with SIGMA conducted a two-day workshop on "Improving the quality of the regulatory impact assessment (RIA) in North Macedonia" with the participation of 35 civil servants. The workshop participants also discussed the quality of preparation of the RIA reports with a detailed explanation of how to fill in section 5. Consultations. In November 2023, with SIGMA support, a workshop "Improving the quality of regulation and decision-making of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia" was held for the employees of the General Secretariat.

Recommendation: If this activity remains in the next Action Plan, a new indicator should be defined to monitor the quality of preparation of RIA reports.

Strategic goal 6. Strengthening the partnership in the processes related to the European integration

Operational objective 11. Involvement of civil society organisations in the EU negotiation process

Activity 11.1. Adoption of a model for civil society participation in the EU negotiations process.

Indicator: The model for civil society inclusion in the negotiation process has been prepared on the basis of comprehensive analyses and after consultation with the civil society sector; The model has been adopted by the Government as an official document.

Responsible Institution: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, General Secretariat - Organisational Unit for Cooperation with CSOs, Secretariat for European Affairs

Implementation Deadline: 2nd quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

On 28 March 2023, the Secretariat for European Affairs held a conference on "Civil Society Organisations - Catalysts of the European Integration of North Macedonia", with the aim of defining the cooperation and participation of the civil society sector in the EU negotiation process. The models for civil society involvement in the EU negotiations were presented and discussed at the event.¹⁰

Activity 11.2. Information campaign for the CSOs' inclusion in the EU accession negotiations in line with the adopted model.

Indicator: /

Responsible Institution: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, General Secretariat - Organisational Unit for Cooperation with CSOs, Secretariat for European Affairs

Implementation Deadline: 3rd quarter 2022

The activity has not been started

¹⁰ Source: <https://www.sep.gov.mk/post/?id=13383>

Activity 11.3. Preparation of a register of civil society organisations that will be included in the EU accession negotiation process according to this model.

Indicator: A register of CSOs has been established for participation in the EU accession negotiations process; Number of registered CSOs in the register.

Responsible Institution: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, General Secretariat - Organisational Unit for Cooperation with CSOs, Secretariat for European Affairs

Implementation Deadline: 3th quarter 2022

The activity is implemented (2022)

Implemented in 2022. In the database (register) of the Secretariate of the European Affairs there are around 180 CSOs registered.

Recommendation: It is proposed in the next Action Plan to include an activity for regular updating of this registry of CSOs and to make it publicly available.

Operational objective 12. Improvement of the model for the selection of CSOs' representatives in the sectoral working groups

Activity 12.1. Implementation of broad consultations for the concept of a model for the selection of civil society representatives in the sectoral working groups.

Indicator: Conducted extensive consultations with CSOs (four consultative meetings, one at national and three at the local level, involving more than 70 CSOs' representatives).

Responsible Institution: Secretariat for European Affairs, Ministry of Local Self-Government, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Supply, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of information Society and Administration, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of economic issues and coordination with economic departments

Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

On March 28, 2023, the Secretariat for European Affairs held a conference on "Civil Society Organisations - Catalysts of the European Integration of North Macedonia", with the aim of defining the cooperation and participation of the civil society in the EU negotiation process.

Activity 12.2. Development of a concept of a model for the selection of civil society representatives in the sectoral working groups.

Indicator: /

Responsible Institution: Secretariat for European Affairs, Ministry of Local Self-Government, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Supply, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of information Society and Administration, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of economic issues and coordination with economic departments.

Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

In 2023, no activities were carried out for the preparation of a concept of a model for the selection of civil society representatives in the sectoral working groups.

Recommendation: If this activity remains in the next Action Plan, an indicator should be defined

Activity 12.3. Amendment and addition to the rules of procedure of the sectoral working groups.
Indicator: The proposed concept is included in the 12 rules of procedure of the sectoral working groups.
Responsible Institution: Secretariat for European Affairs, Ministry of Local Self-Government, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Supply, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of information Society and Administration, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of economic issues and coordination with economic departments.
Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

Drafts of the rules of procedure for the work of the sectoral working groups have been prepared, but the amendments and additions to the rules of procedure for the work of the sectoral working groups were not adopted in 2023.

Activity 12.4. Public and transparent publication of the calls for the selection of members in the sectoral working groups.
Indicator: Number of CSOs' representatives in the sectoral working groups.
Responsible Institution: Secretariat for European Affairs, Ministry of Local Self-Government, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Supply, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of information Society and Administration, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of economic issues and coordination with economic departments.
Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

There are 92 CSOs' representatives in 11 out of a total of 12 sectoral working groups, while Competitiveness and Innovation is the only sectoral working group without CSOs' representatives (situation in 2022)¹¹. In 2023, there was no call for the selection of CSOs' members in some of the sectoral groups.

Activity 12.5. Publication of minutes and other materials and documents related to the work of sectoral working groups.
Indicator: Number of published information and materials related to the work of the sectoral working groups per ministry.
Responsible Institution: Secretariat for European Affairs, Ministry of Local Self-Government, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Supply, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of information Society and Administration, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of economic issues and coordination with economic departments.
Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

One meeting of the sectoral working group for local and regional development was held in July 2023 and information about the meeting was published on the website of the Ministry of Local Self-Government¹².

¹¹ Source: <https://makpress.mk/Home/PostDetails?PostId=483087>

¹² Source: <https://mls.gov.mk/mk/%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%84%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%B8/%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE/167-%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%84%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%B8/%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8/2587-%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%BA-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B3%D1%80%D1%83%D0%BF%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD-%D0%B8-%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B3%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%ED%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD-%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%88>

Operational objective 13. Support for increasing the digital transformation of civil society organisations

Activity 13.1. Mapping and sharing good practices of digital transformation of civil society organisations.

Indicator: Number of implemented trainings of CSOs aimed at increasing digital capacities and skills, as well as the use of digital tools.

Responsible Institution: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, Ministry of Information Society and Administration

Implementation Deadline: 2nd quarter 2022

The activity has not been started

Activity 13.2. Increasing the scope of digital transformation of civil society organisations.

Indicator: Number of implemented trainings of CSOs aimed at increasing digital capacities and skills, as well as the use of digital tools.

Responsible Institution: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, Ministry of Information Society and Administration

Implementation Deadline: 2nd quarter 2022

The activity has not been started

Operational objective 14. Development of a system for monitoring the environment for civil society development

Activity 14.1. Development of a monitoring matrix with indicators and data collection mechanisms.

Indicator: /

Responsible Institution: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, General Secretariate – Organisational Unit for Cooperation with CSOs in cooperation with CSOs

Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2023

The activity is implemented (2022)

There is a matrix for monitoring the enabling environment for civil society operation as well as a mechanism for collecting data prepared by a local organisation (Macedonian Center for International Cooperation). The monitoring matrix monitors the state of the enabling environment for civil society organisations in relation to the three key areas: Basic legal guarantees of freedoms, Framework for financial sustainability of CSOs and Government-civil society relations.

Activity 14.2. Regular data collection.

Indicator: /

Responsible Institution: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, General Secretariate – Organisational Unit for Cooperation with CSOs in cooperation with CSOs

Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2023

The activity is being implemented continuously

Data is collected regularly through a survey with CSOs and desk research.

Recommendation: This activity should be implemented continuously.

Activity 14.3. Preparation of an annual report on the situation in civil society.

Indicator: /

Responsible Institution: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, General Secretariate – Organisational Unit for Cooperation with CSOs in cooperation with CSOs

Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2024

The activity is being implemented continuously

Prepared annual Report on the enabling environment for civil society development 2022¹³

Recommendation: This activity should be implemented continuously.

¹³ Извор: <https://rcgo.mk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/north-macedonia-mm-brief-2022.pdf>

Operational objective 15. Establishing a preventive mechanism against hate speech

Activity 15.1. Establishing a comprehensive educational preventive mechanism in primary and secondary education, within the civic education, aimed at accepting diversity and early overcoming of prejudices.

Indicator: Established comprehensive educational preventive mechanism within the civic education.

Responsible Institution: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Internal Affairs

Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2022

The activity is implemented (2022)

Activity 15.2. Support and implementation of public awareness campaigns for the acceptance of diversity, based on tolerance and respect.

Indicator: Number of educational campaigns to prevent hate speech.

Responsible Institution: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Internal affairs

Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2022

The activity is being implemented continuously

In 2023, police officers conducted 229 educational lectures on the prevention of hate speech: Sector for Internal Affairs (SIA) Skopje held 64 educational lectures in 23 secondary schools in the City of Skopje and 18 primary schools in 12 municipalities (Centar, Kisela Voda, Gazi Baba, Gjorce Petrov, Shuto Orizari, Karposh, Saraj, Aerodrom, Ilinden, Petrovec, Chair and Butel); SIA Tetovo within the project "Stop hate speech" held 11 educational lectures in 5 high schools in Tetovo and in 6 high schools in Gostivar, covering 2.134 students. Under the project "Safety in schools for interethnic coexistence and tolerance", lectures were conducted in 7 secondary schools in Tetovo and in 6 secondary schools in Gostivar; SIA Shtip held 3 educational campaigns to prevent hate speech in 2 secondary schools; SIA Strumica held 58 educational campaigns, 12 of them in the area of the municipality of Strumica (10 in primary and 2 in secondary schools), 28 in Valandovo (22 in primary and 6 in secondary schools), 11 in Gevgelija, in primary schools and in Radovish 7 educational lectures related to the activity "Prevention and protection from peer violence-bullying (six in primary and one in secondary school); SIA Bitola together with SIA Prilep, Krushevo, Resen, Makedonski Brod and Demir Hisar held 42 educational campaigns for the prevention of hate speech (in primary and secondary schools), especially education about the abuse of social media; SIA Kumanovo conducted 38 educational workshops in primary and secondary schools on the topic of "Hate Speech".¹⁴

Recommendation: This activity should be implemented continuously.

Activity 15.3. Systematic training for employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the area of hate speech and hate crime, their proactive role in the area of monitoring hate speech on social media and timely reaction and reporting of such acts.

Indicator: Number of trainings for employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the area of hate speech and hate crime

Responsible Institution: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Internal affairs

Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2022

The activity is being implemented continuously

¹⁴ Source: Draft- Report on the Implementation of the Strategy of the Government for Cooperation with and Development of the Civil Society 2022 – 2024, in 2023, available at: <https://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/990>

In 2023, training was carried out for 29 police officers on the topic No hate and systematic training of 73 police officers in the area of hate speech and hate crime, their proactive role in the area of monitoring hate speech and social media and timely reaction and reporting of such acts.¹⁵

Recommendation: This activity should be implemented continuously.

Strategic goal 7. Advancement of the legal framework for the right to peaceful assembly and direct participation of citizens in decision-making

Operational objective 16. Providing a legal framework for the right to peaceful assembly in accordance with international standards and its effective implementation

Activity 16.1. Implementation of consultations on the need to revise the legal framework that affects the right to assembly and the promotion of external mechanisms for independent supervision of the police.

Indicator: /

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, Ombudsman

Implementation Deadline: 3th quarter 2022

The activity has not been started

Recommendation: If this activity remains in the next Action Plan, indicator(s) should be defined.

Activity 16.2. Establishment of a working group for drafting amendments to the Law on Public Assemblies, the Law on Police and the Law on Public Order and Peace, as well as to other legislation applicable to this issue.

Indicator: /

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, Ombudsman

Implementation Deadline: 3th quarter 2022

The activity has not been started

Recommendation: If this activity remains in the next Action Plan, indicator(s) should be defined.

Activity 16.3. Preparing by-laws to respect human rights, especially on abuse of power and use of excessive force.

Indicator: /

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, Ombudsman

Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2022

The activity has not been started

Recommendation: If this activity remains in the next Action Plan, indicator(s) should be defined.

¹⁵ Source: Draft- Report on the Implementation of the Strategy of the Government for Cooperation with and Development of the Civil Society 2022 – 2024, in 2023, available at: <https://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/990>

Operational objective 17. Advancement of the legal framework that refers to the direct participation of citizens in decision-making

According to the Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy, the implementation of the six activities for achieving of this operational objective are planned for 2024.

Priority area 3. The civil society sector as a stakeholder in the social-economic development

This priority area contains five strategic goals, nine operational objectives with a total of 23 activities aimed at creating a conducive legal environment for social entrepreneurship, active involvement of CSOs in providing services in the social sphere and other activities of public interest, promotion and development of volunteering, and improving the legal framework and encouraging philanthropic donations to CSOs. **Out of a total of 23 activities, there is a delay¹⁶ in the full implementation of 13 activities, one activity was fully implemented in 2022, seven are being continuously implemented and two are planned for 2024.**

In 2023, there has been **significant progress** on social entrepreneurship with the drafting of the Law on Social Enterprises, however the law has not been adopted. Promotional and educational activities for social entrepreneurship are being continuously implemented, however, a system for financial incentives for the development of initiatives for social entrepreneurship of CSOs has not yet been established. There is **partial progress** in the implementation of the strategic goal for the promotion and development of volunteerism, i.e. the draft law on volunteerism drawn up in 2022 has not been adopted, but promotional activities are continuously carried out to increase volunteering. The situation is similar with the Law on Donations and Sponsorship in Public Activities, i.e. a draft law was prepared but it was not adopted in 2023. Activities are continuously implemented to encourage the cooperation of CSOs with the business sector and promote philanthropy.

An analysis of the possibilities for providing services provided by CSOs and financed by the state in the fields of education, health, culture, youth, rural development and others has not been done in 2023, but there is **partial progress** in developing a network of social services in the local community and involvement of CSOs as providers of social services. Not only have no activities been started to establish a functional and long-term mechanism for financing the activities of the Program for the Protection of the Population from HIV, which are implemented by CSOs, but there is a worsening, i.e., a reduction of financial resources for this purpose.

Competent institutions for the implementation of activities from this priority area are: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (one of the competent institutions for the implementation of 12 activities), the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society (one of the competent institutions for the implementation of five activities), Ministry of Justice (one of the competent institutions for five activities), Ministry of Finance (one of the competent institutions for five activities), General Secretariat - Organisational Unit for Cooperation with CSOs (one of the competent institutions for four activities), etc.

¹⁶ These activities may have been started and are on-going or have not been started at all, however, they have not been fully implemented within the deadline set in the Action Plan of the Strategy.

Strategic Goal 8. Development of Social Entrepreneurship

Operational objective 18. Creating an enabling legal environment for social entrepreneurship

Activity 18.1. Adoption of a legal, institutional and financial framework for legal recognition and development of social entrepreneurship (Law on Social Enterprises) in a broad consultative process that will recognize the entire spectrum of social enterprises and enable their legal recognition and development, and will not limit their operation; Inclusion of social enterprises with the legal form of an association or foundation in: programs to support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including start-ups (within the programs of the Ministry of Economy, the Agency for Development and Support of Entrepreneurship, the Innovation Fund, Ministry of Agriculture in the area of rural development, etc.); Enabling CSOs that employ persons with disabilities to acquire the status of a protective community in accordance with the Law on Employment of Disabled Persons; Encouraging and supporting institutions at the central and local level to use the opportunities for reserved public procurement and contracts in accordance with the Law on Public Procurement; Overcoming legal obstacles to the functioning of social enterprises (fiscal and tax aspects, access to finance, etc.).

Indicator: Comprehensive public consultations were conducted during the drafting of the Law on Social Enterprises (four consultative meetings, one at the national level and three at the local level, involving more than 70 CSOs' representatives); The Law on Social Enterprises is adopted.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

A draft Law on Social Enterprises has been prepared. On 1 and 2 November 2023, a discussion and debate on the text of the draft law was held in Skopje with representatives of state administration bodies, CSOs' representatives and the academic community. The draft law was published on ENER on 6 November 2023 and three public hearings were held in Skopje on 10.11.2023, Bitola on 15.11.2023 and Shtip on 17.11.2023. On November 28, 2023, the draft law on social enterprises was submitted to the government procedure.

Operational objective 19. Promotion, capacity building and provision of financial assistance to CSOs for the development of social entrepreneurship

Activity 19.1. Support to programs and activities for promotion and education for social entrepreneurship and social enterprises.

Indicator: Number of open calls for financing project proposals from local, national and EU funds aimed at initiating, achieving and maintaining the solvency of social entrepreneurship initiatives; Number of CSOs that have successfully implemented projects (through public calls) financed by local, national and EU sources; Number of social enterprises established by CSOs through implemented projects.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Implementation Deadline: Starting from 1st quarter of 2022

The activity is being implemented continuously

Register of social enterprises prepared by a local organisation (the Association for Social Innovations ARNO¹⁷) within a sub-grant financed by the European Union. There are 57 social enterprises recorded in the register (as of 17 April 2024).

In 2023, the implementation of several larger projects funded by the European Union that targeted support for social enterprises ([Support for the development of social enterprises](#), [Support for social enterprises following the principle – Leave no one behind](#), [Social](#)

¹⁷ Source: <https://mladipretpriemaci.mk/%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B3%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%80-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0/>

[entrepreneurship for youth employment](#)) ended. Within the project "Support for social enterprises following the principle - Leave no one behind", six sub-grants were awarded to CSOs for the development of social entrepreneurship. Within the project Social Entrepreneurship for Youth Employment, 10 sub-grants were awarded for financial support of social enterprises. Under these projects, web platforms have been created to support social enterprises as well as [video trainings for social entrepreneurs](#) are available on one of the platforms.

In September 2023, the "Third Fair of Social Enterprises" was held in front of the Center of Social Enterprises, Skopje, with the participation of about 50 stands for the promotion of products and services of social enterprises from the country, but also from Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Albania.¹⁸

Activity 19.2. Establishing a system for financial incentives for the development of social entrepreneurship initiatives of CSOs.

Indicator: Number of open calls for financing project proposals from local, national and EU funds aimed at initiating, achieving and maintaining the solvency of social entrepreneurship initiatives; Number of CSOs that have successfully implemented projects (under open calls) financed by local, national and EU sources; Number of social enterprises established by CSOs through implemented projects.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Implementation Deadline: 3th quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

Within the [Social Entrepreneurship for Youth Employment](#) project, funded by the European Union, a web platform has been developed as a tool for collecting funds in the form of crowdfunding for ideas for establishing social enterprises. The draft law on social enterprises¹⁹ envisages financial support, tax exemptions and other instruments to support social enterprises, but the draft law has not yet been adopted.

Activity 19.3. Building the capacities of CSOs that are part of the eco-system for the development of social enterprises.

Indicator: Number of open calls for financing project proposals from local, national and EU funds aimed at initiating, achieving and maintaining the solvency of social entrepreneurship initiatives; Number of CSOs that have successfully implemented projects (under open calls) financed by local, national and EU sources; Number of social enterprises established by CSOs through implemented projects.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Implementation Deadline: Starting from 1st quarter of 2022

The activity is being implemented continuously

The Center for Social Enterprises, established in 2021, continued to function from July 2023 through the project "Support to the Development of Social Enterprises" funded by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland²⁰. The National Centre for Social Enterprises with the 8 regional support centres as part of the activities of the IPA project "Support to Social Enterprises" funded by the EU have been established as a structure for the support and development of social enterprises, including for building the capacities for the development of social enterprises.

¹⁸ Source: https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/septemvri-2023-ns_article-trencevska-socijalnite-pretprijatija-kje-bridonesat-vo-kreiranje-na-novi-rabotni-mesta-za-ranlivite-nspk

¹⁹ Source: https://ener.gov.mk/Default.aspx?item=pub_regulation&subitem=view_reg_detail&itemid=81290

²⁰ Source: https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/juli-2023-ns_article-potpishan-memorandum-za-sorabotka-pomegu-ministerstvoto-za-trud-i-socijalna-politika-i-fondacite-b-nspk

Strategic Goal 9. Recognition of the specifics of CSOs as an employer

Operational objective 20. Recognition of the specifics of CSOs as an employer in the legal regulations, the operational programs and the social dialogue

Activity 20.1. Participation of CSOs in the implementation of active programs and measures for employment.

Indicator: Active measures for employment are also available for employers and workers from the civil society sector.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Employment Service Agency

Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

In 2023, part of the open calls for active measures for employment were opened to employers, social enterprises or CSOs (financial support for the creation of new jobs). Active measures such as lending to legal entities are not available for civil society sector employers. The calls for active measures for employment for natural persons do not clearly indicate whether they are available for workers in CSOs.

Activity 20.2. Analysis of the possibilities for flexible work engagements when CSOs employ persons from vulnerable categories - beneficiaries of social assistance as part of their socio-economic integration.

Indicator: Prepared analysis on the possibilities for flexible work engagements when CSOs employ persons from vulnerable categories-beneficiaries of social assistance as part of their socio-economic integration.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2023

The activity is ongoing

Within the EU-funded project "Technical Assistance for Improving the Enabling Environment for Civil Society Organisations in the Republic of North Macedonia", based on a survey (a questionnaire distributed to CSOs) a document was prepared "Civil society organisations as employers - dealing with the key challenges in the legislation" which contains a general overview of the legal framework, key areas that can improve the position of CSOs as employers and a consultation plan that includes all relevant stakeholders in the process of finding the best solutions to improve the position of CSOs as employers.

Activity 20.3. Self-organisation of the parties to the social dialogue in the civil society, i.e. association of CSOs as employers and trade union association of employees in CSOs.

Indicator: Employees in the civil society sector recognize the need for trade union association and are actively working on it.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, social partners, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2023

The activity has not been started

Activity 20.4. Analysis of comparative experiences for the CSOs' participation in the work of the Economic and Social Council.

Indicator: Prepared comparative analysis; CSOs actively participate in the work of the Economic and Social Council through their legitimately elected representatives.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2023

The activity has not been started

Strategic Goal 10. Promotion and development of volunteering

Operational objective 21. Improving the legal framework for the promotion and development of volunteerism

Activity 21.1. Amendment of the Law on Volunteering to increase civic engagement and volunteering.

Indicator: Comprehensive public consultations were conducted during the drafting of the Law on Volunteering (four consultative meetings, one at the national level and three at the local level, involving more than 70 CSOs' representatives); Amendments to the Law on Volunteering have been adopted.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

No activities were carried out in 2023. In the previous period (2021-2022), consultations were held, and a draft Law was prepared to amend and supplement the Law on Volunteering.

Operational objective 22. Encouraging volunteer activities and financial support for CSOs that promote volunteerism

Activity 22.1. Organising promotional activities to increase volunteering among citizens.

Indicator: Number of activities carried out annually for the promotion of volunteerism.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in cooperation with the National Council for the Promotion and Development of Volunteerism, the General Secretariat - Organisational Unit for Cooperation with CSOs

Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2022/ continuous

The activity is being implemented continuously

Within the EU-funded project "EU support to the Civil Society Resource Center - phase 2" a debate "Culture of volunteering - reality or challenge" was held on 5.12.2023, with more than 80 CSOs' representatives and youth²¹.

CSOs continue to implement events and campaigns for the promotion of volunteering, for example in 2023 the following were carried out: a promotional event for volunteering in Tetovo organised by the Tetovo Women's Forum and the Skopje Volunteer Center²², an event at the Bitola Youth Cultural Center for the awarding of national volunteering awards (December²³), etc.

Activity 22.2. Building CSOs' capacities for the implementation of programs and projects for volunteering.

Indicator: Number of implemented projects to encourage volunteerism financed by national or local sources, the European Union and other donors.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in cooperation with the National Council for the Promotion and Development of Volunteerism, the General Secretariat - organisational unit for cooperation with civil society organisations

Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2022/continuous

The activity is being implemented continuously

²¹ Source: <https://rcgo.mk/vesti/mladite-i-graganskite-organizacii-zaedno-debatiraa-za-kulturata-na-volontiranje/>

²² Source: <https://mia.mk/story/%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%BE%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%B5%D1%80%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BE-%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%BE-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%87%D0%B8%D0%BD-%D0%BC%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%B0%D0%BA%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%BE-%D0%B4%D0%B0-%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%88%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%B0%D1%82-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B1%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BC%D0%B8-%D0%B2%D0%BE-%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0>

²³ Source: <https://www.radiomf.mk/po-povod-svetskiot-den-na-volonterite-podeleni-nagradite-za-volonterstvo-od-mkc-bitola/>

Within the EU-funded project "Youth - agents of change", in 2023 a call for applications for financial support for youth initiatives/actions with a focus on volunteerism and activism among young people in the Republic of North Macedonia was published²⁴.

Within the EU-funded project "[Youth participation for strong and sustainable development of the community](#)", a series of activities for the promotion of volunteering were carried out, and through the grant of this project, a Strategy for the development of volunteering in the municipality of Bitola 2023-2026 was prepared. Also, within the same project, a [Manual for the management of volunteers in CSOs](#) was prepared and promoted.

Based on the Strategy for the Development of Volunteering in the Municipality of Bitola 2023-2026 and the Action Plan for the Development of Volunteering 2023-2026, and in cooperation with the Local Council for Volunteering, in October 2023 the Municipality of Bitola announced a public call for the allocation of financial resources from the Budget of Municipality of Bitola for the implementation of activities from the action plan for the development of volunteerism for the organisation of volunteer actions²⁵.

Strategic Goal 11. Encouraging citizens and the business sector to support and contribute to the civil society development

Operational objective 23. Improvement of the legal framework for donations and sponsorships in public activities to facilitate donations to CSOs

Activity 23.1. Preparation of amendments to the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities with the participation of CSOs' representatives in the working group.

Indicator: A proposal to the Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities has been prepared with the participation of CSOs' representatives in the working group.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance

Implementation Deadline: 1st quarter 2022

The activity is implemented (2023)

A draft Law on Tax Incentives for Donations and Sponsorships in Activities of Public Interest has been prepared, which has been submitted for opinion to the competent institutions and on 15.1.2024 it was published on ENER²⁶ for consultations. The draft law was drafted by a working group that includes CSOs' representatives.

Activity 23.2. Public consultations and debates with CSOs, institutions and other stakeholders on the amendments to the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities.

Indicator: Comprehensive public consultations were conducted during the preparation of the amendments to the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance

Implementation Deadline: 2nd quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

In 2023, the draft law was submitted for an opinion to the competent institutions, and a report was received from the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption for an anti-corruption

²⁴ Source: <https://cid.mk/2023/04/03/%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%BA-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D1%84%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B4%D1%80%D1%88%D0%BA%D0%B0-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%BC%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B8/>

²⁵ Source: <https://apla.mk/denes/item/13767-objaven-javen-povik-za-volonterstvo-i-organiziranje-na-volonterski-akcii>

²⁶ Source: https://ener.gov.mk/Default.aspx?item=pub_regulation&subitem=view_reg_detail&itemid=73922

check of the provisions of the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities²⁷. In January 2024, the draft law was published on ENER for public consultation, and one comment on the draft law was submitted within the stipulated period of 20 days.

Activity 23.3. Submission of amendments to the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities (government procedure).

Indicator: A draft law to amend and supplement the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities has been submitted in a government procedure.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance

Implementation Deadline: 2nd quarter 2022

The activity is ongoing

In 2023, the proposal to the law has been submitted for opinion to the competent institutions.

Activity 23.4. Preparation of amendments to the by-laws in accordance with the adopted amendments to the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities.

Indicator: Prepared and adopted regulations for the implementation of the Law.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance

Implementation Deadline: 3th quarter 2022

The activity has not been started

Activity 23.5. Building the capacities of institutions, CSOs, companies and citizens for consistent application of the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities.

Indicator: Prepared comments on the law; Conducted at least four informational events/trainings with users of the law (CSOs, institutions, companies, etc.).

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance

Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2022

The activity has not been started

Operational objective 24. Encouraging the cooperation of CSOs with the business sector and promoting philanthropy

Activity 24.1. Building the capacities of CSOs for cooperation with the business sector and collecting donations from domestic sources.

Indicator: /

Responsible Institution: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society

Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2023

The activity is being implemented continuously

In July 2023 within the "Partnerships for Donation" project funded by USAID, two training courses were conducted for 57 CSOs' representatives for collecting donations from businesses and citizens.

Recommendation: This activity should be implemented continuously.

²⁷ Source: <https://dksk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/%D0%90%D0%9F%D0%9B-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%97%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%82-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%B8-%D0%B8-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D1%81%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B7%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%B0-%D0%B2%D0%BE-%D1%98%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%B4%D0%B5%D1%98%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8.pdf>

<p>Activity 24.2. Promotion of donations to CSOs. Indicator: / Responsible Institution: Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2023</p>
<p>The activity is being implemented continuously</p>

Within the "Partnerships for Donation" project funded by USAID, a "Days for Donation" campaign was implemented in which more than 2,000 citizens, organisations and companies participated, whereas the charity bazaar of social enterprises was organized on 2.12.2023. The campaign supported 31 non-profit organisations and included 50 businesses with 2,017,212 denars donated in financial resources, goods and services and volunteer labour.

Recommendation: This activity should be implemented continuously.

Strategic Goal 12. Increasing the CSOs' participation in providing services to the community

Operational objective 25. Development of the civil society at the local level and strengthening of the cooperation with CSOs at the local level

<p>Activity 25.1. Strengthened capacities of local administration and CSOs for institutional and transparent cooperation by implementing joint projects. Indicator: Number of organised trainings for CSOs and for municipalities and number of municipalities with a fully adopted procedure for transparent financing of projects for CSOs; Number of CSOs' beneficiaries of funds according to the adopted procedures; Number of public and transparent calls published by the municipalities. Responsible Institution: Ministry of Local Self-Government, General Secretariat – Organisational Unit for Cooperation with CSOs Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2024</p>
<p>The activity is ongoing</p>

Within the Regional Programme on Local Democracy in the Western Balkans 2 (ReLOaD 2) in 2023, two training courses were conducted (Kriva Palanka and Ohrid) with a total of 28 CSOs.

<p>Activity 25.2. Adopted procedure and documentation for transparent implementation of procedure and financing of projects by local self-government units, implemented by CSOs. Indicator: Number of organised trainings for CSOs and for municipalities and number of municipalities with a fully adopted procedure for transparent financing of projects for CSOs; Number of CSOs' beneficiaries of funds according to the adopted procedures; Number of public and transparent calls published by the municipalities. Responsible Institution: Ministry of Local Self-Government, General Secretariat – Organisational Unit for Cooperation with CSOs Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2024</p>
<p>The activity is ongoing</p>

In 2022, 15 municipalities announced a public call for the allocation of funds from budget line 463 for CSOs. In only two of these 15 published calls, the objectives of the call were stated, and in all the others only the areas were given. In none of the calls for submitting project proposals for funding, the expected results to be achieved with the support were specified. In only one third of the calls, the total amount of the funds to be awarded or the amount of the

grants was stated. At the same time, in only one third of the calls for allocation of funds, the criteria for the selection of project proposals are specified.²⁸

In 2023, a total of 17 municipalities have published an open call for the allocation of funds to associations and sports clubs²⁹.

Within the Regional Programme on Local Democracy in the Western Balkans 2 (ReLOaD phase 1 and 2), eleven municipalities have adopted a methodology for public, transparent and accountable allocation of funds from municipal budgets to CSOs. In 2023, two calls were published using the adopted methodology and 30 projects were approved.

Operational objective 26. Improvement of the conditions, including the capacities of CSOs for providing services at the national and local level, with equivalent quality as other service providers

Activity 26.1. Analysis of the possibilities for providing services by CSOs financed by the state in the fields of education, health, culture, youth, rural development and others.

Indicator: Public debates were held on the possibilities of providing services by CSOs financed by the state in the fields of education, health, culture, youth and others; Conclusions and recommendations have been given for regulating the conditions and the way of providing services by CSOs financed by the state in the field of education, health, culture, youth, rural development and others; Number of registered youth workers.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Supply, Agency for Youth and Sports

Implementation Deadline: 4th quarter 2023

The activity is ongoing

According to data from the Center for Adult Education, two CSOs (Union for Youth Work and Coalition of Youth Organisations SEGA) are service providers with verified Youth Worker programs³⁰. By May 2024, a total of 43 people have successfully completed one of the two verified programs and received Youth Worker certificates³¹. An unofficial [Database of Certified Youth Workers](#) is available.

From the academic year 2023/24, there are [postgraduate academic studies in youth work](#) in Macedonia. The program is implemented at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius" and includes 4 compulsory and 3 optional subjects. Students can acquire a total of 60 ECTS.

On an open call published in August 2023, the Agency for Youth and Sports created a Database of evaluators of quality standards for youth centres³².

²⁸ Source:

https://ccc.org.mk/images/troskimk.pdf?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0BMOABHqHAbmuJMu2zAdSTe3SU9Sn8iOvkOz2OtmB4Q1I2BkD1ctyefz3h5zvSzg_aem_AdONMJ8tAukd5XvEgrdzZAKZ27W5ZXHil1bVLo4aXIRPiGoflDBqrRjsjkU9A_RuLTW

²⁹ Data based on checking the websites of all municipalities in March 2024.

³⁰ Source:

https://cov.gov.mk/%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B3%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B8/?_sf_s=%D0%A0%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%BA%20%D1%81%D0%BE%20%D0%BC%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B8&sfm_vibe_course_offline=%D0%92%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B8%D1%84%D0%B8%D0%BA%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B0

³¹ Source:

<https://smr.org.mk/%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%86%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%B8/%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%84%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0/>

³² Source: <https://ams.gov.mk/article/izvestuvane-za-chlenovi-na-baza-na-oczenuvachi-na-stadrardi-za-kvalitet-na-mladinskite-czentr>

Activity 26.2. Developing a network of social services in the local community and involvement of CSOs as providers of social services.

Indicator: Number of meetings held with CSOs to explain the novelties in the Law on Social Protection; Number of published calls for social service provision by CSOs that are service providers. Number of signed contracts with CSOs.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Implementation Deadline: 2022, continuous

The activity is being implemented continuously

In the register of licensed providers of social services kept by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, in 2023 a decision for permission to perform social protection work was issued to 38 providers of social services, 30 of which are CSOs (including the Red Cross)³³.

In 2023, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy concluded a total of 34 administrative contracts with licensed social service providers in accordance with the Methodology for establishing the prices of services in line with the norms and standards for providing social services ("Official Gazette of RNM" no. 264/19) and the Decision on determining the prices of social services in the home, for non-family protection, for professional help and support, for day care, for temporary residence, for counselling and for the postponement of family care for the year 2023. In the Budget of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy for 2023, a total of 7.8 million euros have been provided for social services³⁴. In December 2023, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy announced an open call for the allocation of funds to associations and private providers of social services, for the provision of social services in 2024³⁵.

In January 2024, 11 CSOs established a network of social service providers³⁶.

Activity 26.3. Establishing a functional and long-term mechanism for financing the activities of the Program for the Protection of the Population from HIV to be implemented by CSOs.

Indicator: Amendments and additions to the Law on Health Care have been adopted, which determine the way of financing HIV activities from the Program for the Protection of the Population from HIV to be implemented by CSOs and which enable access to services for sexual and reproductive health and reduction of harms from drug use for adolescents between the ages of 16 and 18; Developed and adopted standards for HIV prevention and support services provided by CSOs.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Health

Implementation Deadline: 2nd quarter 2022

The activity has not been started

In recent years, there has even been a decline in the area, i.e., a reduction in funds for the Program for the Protection of the Population from HIV Infection. The first cut of 40% was made for the 2022 Programme, and in 2023 the budget was cut by another 15%³⁷.

³³ Source: https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/images/2024/registar/registar_26_2_24_web.jpg

³⁴ Source: https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/januari-2023-ns_article-mtsp-skluceni-dogovorite-za-finansiranje-na-socijalnite-uslugi-so-licenciranje-davatelina-uslugi.nsp

³⁵ Source: https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/oglasio/oglasio2023/konkurs_18_mkd.pdf

³⁶ Source: <https://sos.org.mk/obedinuva-e-na-11-gra-anski-organizaciji-i-formira-e-na-mrezha-na-davатели-na-soci-alni-uslugi/>

³⁷ Source: https://lokalaktiv.mk/2024/01/29/pari_programa_prevencija/, <https://360stepeni.mk/video-namalen-budhet-za-preventsija-od-hiv-zgolemen-rizik-za-virusot-da-eksplodira/>, <https://hera.org.mk/platforma-za-hiv-soopstenie-1-dekemvri-2023/>

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

In 2023, no significant progress was recorded in the implementation of the activities from the Action Plan of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with and Development of Civil Society 2022-2024. Out of 81 activities in all three priority areas, the implementation of 32 activities (39.5%) is ongoing, but 30 of them have not been fully completed within the specified period, and the implementation of 20 activities (24.7%) planned for 2022 or 2023 has not even started. Sixteen activities (20%) are being continuously implemented, but there is a regression or stagnation in the implementation of several activities.

In the **first priority area**, out of 27 activities, there is a delay³⁸ in the full implementation of 21 activities, two activities were fully implemented in 2022, and three are being continuously implemented. In 2023, there has been **partial progress** in the preparation of the first draft of the draft law on amendments and additions to the Law on Associations and Foundations, and the biggest **setback** is in the functioning of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, which was boycotting in 2023, and the Government did not make any efforts to restore its functionality.

In the **second priority area**, out of 31 activities, 16 activities are late³⁹ with full implementation, three activities were fully implemented in 2022, six are being continuously implemented and six are planned for 2024. There is partial progress in this priority area, above all an improvement in the level of publication of draft laws on ENER by the ministries, but no activities have been started to transform the Code of good practices for the participation of the civil society sector in the policy-making process into mandatory by-law for all state administration bodies. Although there were discussions, a model for the inclusion and selection of CSOs in the working groups of the state administration bodies has not yet been adopted, and there is no progress in the work and functioning of the sectoral working groups.

In the **third priority area**, out of 23 activities, 13 activities are late⁴⁰ with full implementation, one activity has been fully implemented, seven are being continuously implemented and two are planned for 2024. In 2023, there is **significant progress** with the drafting of the Law on social enterprises, and the draft Law on donations and sponsorship in public activities, however, the two draft laws have not been adopted yet.

Working versions or draft-laws have been prepared for several key laws planned by the Strategy, but none of these laws have been enacted in 2023. There is a working version of the Law on Associations and Foundations, but according to the action plan, this law should have been passed in 2022. Draft-laws have been developed for the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities, the Law on Social Enterprises and the Law on Volunteering, but none of them have been adopted in 2023, although according to the Action Plan they should have been adopted in 2022.

Great responsibility for the implementation of the Strategy falls on a relatively newly established body - the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil

³⁸ These activities may be started and ongoing or not started at all, but they are not fully implemented by the deadline specified in the Action Plan of the Strategy.

³⁹ These activities may be started and ongoing or not started at all, but they are not fully implemented by the deadline specified in the Action Plan of the Strategy.

⁴⁰ These activities may be started and ongoing or not started at all, but they are not fully implemented by the deadline specified in the Action Plan of the Strategy.

Society. The Council is one of the competent institutions for the implementation of 44 activities, i.e. for more than half (54%) of the activities listed in the Action Plan of the Strategy. The Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society was established in 2018, and although at the beginning it had an active three-year period, due to the boycott, the Council was not functional in 2023.

The time frame for implementing the activities from the Action Plan of the Strategy is too ambitious. According to the Action Plan, 49 activities (60.5%) are planned to be completed in 2022, which significantly increases the risk of delay in the implementation of the activities. The Action Plan lists specific deadlines (mostly 2022) for some of the activities that, by their nature, should be carried out continuously.

There are no planned budget funds for the implementation of the activities of the Strategy. In the absence of budget funds, most of the activities were carried out within the projects financed by foreign donors (European Union, USAID). Some of the activities were carried out by associations and foundations within their projects financed by foreign donors or as part of their regular activities.

Recommendations

Additional efforts should be made by the responsible institutions and stakeholders for the implementation of the activities from the Action Plan of the Strategy in 2024. In order to achieve efficiency in the Strategy implementation, which for the time being records a different degree of realization per activities and a particularly low degree of realization of the key measures for development and sustainability of civil society, it is necessary for the key institutions involved in its implementation to make additional efforts for their implementation. At the same time, CSOs with their initiatives and activities can support the realization of the measures and encourage cooperation with the state administration bodies for the activities defined in the Action Plan of the Strategy.

An appeal to the new Government of the Republic of North Macedonia to give priority to the adoption of the draft laws foreseen by the Strategy that have already been drafted. In addition, the new composition of the Government should make efforts to realize the key measures for the civil society development foreseen by the Strategy, first of all, a complete reform of the state system of funding CSOs (especially the funds from games of chance and entertainment games) aimed at providing institutional support for CSOs and co-financing of projects supported by EU and other international projects.

Immediate reinstatement of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society. The three-year mandate of the current members of the Council expires this year. The General Secretary - Organisational Unit for Cooperation with the CSOs should announce an open call for the election of members of the Council from CSOs. However, the new Government should initiate a consultation/meeting with CSOs on the role and functioning of the Council in order to clearly convey and demonstrate its commitment to an independent, representative, operational and effective Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society.

Immediate start of the process for drafting the "new" Strategy for cooperation with and development of civil society with an Action Plan for the next period. Considering the low level of implementation of the current Strategy, the probability is high that the goals and activities will be "rewritten" in the next strategic document. However, the process of drafting

the Strategy for the next period should start in the middle of 2024 in order to have enough time for a full consultative process and passing of the new Strategy by the end of the year. Care should be taken when determining the **time frame** for the implementation of the activities, the volume of activities planned for one year, as well as which activities, according to their nature, should be continuously implemented. When preparing the next Action Plan of the Strategy, particular attention should be paid to determining the **indicators** for monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan of the Strategy. It is necessary to clearly define indicators that should be measurable, achievable and relevant to the planned strategic and operational goals.

Allocation of funds from the budget of the Republic of North Macedonia intended for the implementation of the activities defined in the Strategy. It is necessary to secure funds from the budget of the Republic of North Macedonia for the implementation of the activities foreseen in the Strategy, based on the needs of the state administration bodies that are the bearers of the activities. The implementation of the activities must not be allowed to depend solely on foreign donors or the regular activities of the associations. If the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society is appointed as the responsible institution for the implementation of the majority of the activities, these activities should be clearly defined in the annual work program of the Council, and the Government should provide budget funds for the implementation of the annual programs of the Council.