

# SHADOW REPORT

FROM MONITORING WORK  
AND EFFECTS OF  
THE SECTOR WORKING  
GROUP ON PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION REFORM

*January – December 2020*







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This project is funded  
by the European Union



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research in action



## SHADOW REPORT FROM MONITORING WORK AND EFFECTS OF THE SECTOR WORKING GROUP ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM IN THE PERIOD JANUARY – DECEMBER 2020

### ORIGINAL TITLE:

ИЗВЕШТАЈ ВО СЕНКА ОД СЛЕДЕЊЕТО НА РАБОТАТА И ЕФЕКТИТЕ НА СЕКТОРСКАТА РАБОТНА ГРУПА ЗА РЕФОРМА НА ЈАВНАТА АДМИНИСТРАЦИЈА ЗА ПЕРИОДОТ ЈАНУАРИ – ДЕКЕМВРИ 2020

### Publisher:

Foundation Open Society – Macedonia

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CIP - Каталогизација во публикација  
Национална и универзитетска библиотека „Св. Климент Охридски“, Скопје

35.075.2:341.171(4-672EУ:497.7)"2020"(047)

LAZAROV, Goran

Shadow report from monitoring work and effects of the sector working group on public administration reform [Електронски извор] : January - December 2020 / [authors Goran Lazarov, Aleksandar Kolekeski, Irina Jolevska ; translation from Macedonian language Katerina Dimishkovska]. - Skopje : Foundation Open society - Macedonia, 2021

Начин на пристапување (URL): <https://www.dijalogkoneu.mk>. - Текст во PDF формат, содржи 46 стр. - Наслов преземен од екранот. - Опис на изворот на ден 15.09.2021. - Превод на делото: Извештај во сенка од следењето на работата и ефектите на секторската работна група за реформа во јавна администрација : јануари - декември 2020. - Фусноти кон текстот. - Библиографија: стр. 46

ISBN 978-608-218-356-5

1. Kolekeski, Aleksandar [автор] 2. Jolevska, Irina [автор]

а) Процес на пристапување во ЕУ -- Секторски работни групи -- Македонија -- Извештаи

COBISS.MK-ID 54960133

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This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Foundation Open Society – Macedonia, Eurothink: Center for European Strategies, Reactor – Research in action and Center for Civil Communication and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

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# FOREWORD

The project “CSO Dialogue – Platform for Structural Participation in EU Integrations” is committed to ensuring structural participation of the civil society that expresses the views of citizens to impact key sector-wide reforms under the EU accession process. The sector working groups (SWGs)<sup>1</sup> are perceived as exceptionally important mechanism for consultations and civil society participation, and a forum for development of national policies and design of reform processes in the country. Hence, the second edition of 12 shadow reports on performance of sector working groups in 2020 is an attempt to bring this mechanism closer to the citizens and to critically analyse their organizational setup, functionality and efficiency.

For the purpose of the second edition of 12 shadow reports on performance of sector working groups in the period January – December 2020, project researchers monitored 17 from total of 19 meetings held by these working groups. Findings from observing SWG meetings and analysing sector policies were discussed at 11 interviews conducted with IPA coordinators from line ministries responsible for relevant sector groups, and with 34 civil society representatives that participate in SWGs. Moreover, changes noted in 2020 compared to 2019 are supported by responses obtained to 312 freedom of information requests inquiring about SWG performance in the course of 2020.

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1 The sector working groups are a formal mechanism for consultations and cooperation among the executive authorities (ministries), civil society organizations, the donor community, and other interested parties. By the cut-off date for this report, 12 sector working groups with competences in different areas are established in the Republic of North Macedonia, in order to ensure the sector-wide approach.



The general assessment implies certain progress in SWG performance despite the extraordinary year which, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has raised challenges for the overall society. Progress is primarily noted in respect to transparency in SWG operation, notably by means of greater access to published information that are of importance for SWGs. Furthermore, 2020 was marked by organization of 19 plenary sessions, compared to only 12 sessions held in 2019. However, despite the mild increase in the number of meetings, SWGs still do not meet pursuant to the frequency anticipated under the rules of procedure, which could guarantee a commitment to sector policies and reform implementation. SWGs demonstrated a satisfactory level of functionality, as stipulated in their respective rules of procedures, but these documents fall short in defining the role and position of civil society organizations within SWGs. Having in mind that the central focus of the project “CSO Dialogue – Platform for Structural Participation in EU Integrations” is put on civil society organizations and their efficient involvement in policy shaping, this report stresses the need for advancing the role played by civil society organizations in sector working groups.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## SECTOR WORKING GROUP ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

**FORMED:** 2015

**NUMBER OF SWG MEMBERS:** 38, institutions x 16 members, civil society organizations x 12 members, and donor community x 10 members

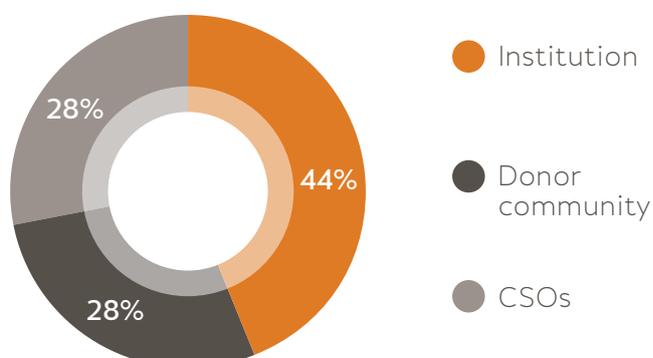
**NUMBER OF MEETINGS HELD IN 2020:** two plenary sessions, 30.06.2020 and 27.11.2020

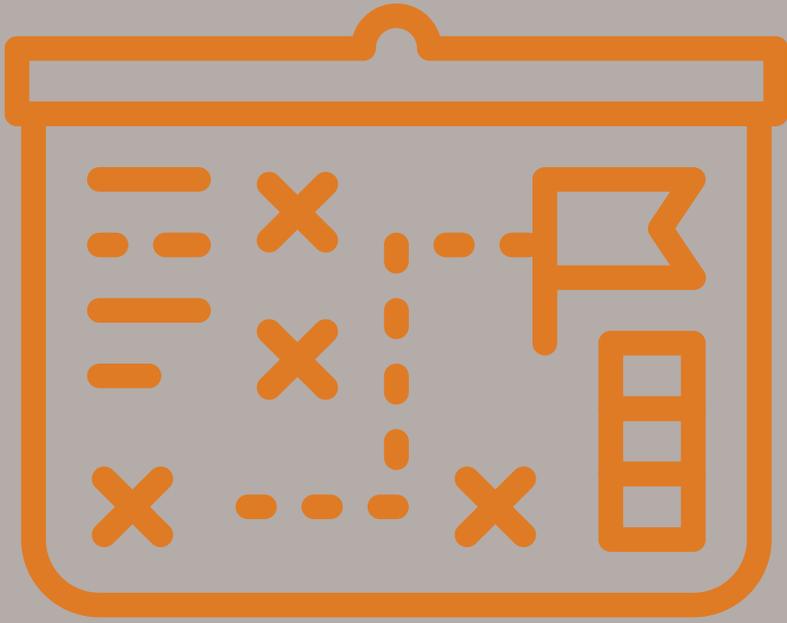
**SWG CHAIR:** Ministry of Information Society and Administration

**CO-CHAIR:** EU Delegation to the Republic of North Macedonia

### **CHART 1.**

**Distribution of various representatives in SWG  
Public Administration Reform**





# METHODOLOGY APPROACH

For the purpose of this report, the project team combined several research methods for data collection, processing and analysis. Research work was comprised of desk analysis and field/online survey.

The desk research component included in-depth analysis of documents, laws and strategies that are of significance for this sector working group (*for more information see **BIBLIOGRAPHY***). Moreover, the project team submitted **25 freedom of information requests** to the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) as the institution competent for operation of this sector group. Responses to all 25 information requests were disclosed in timely manner.

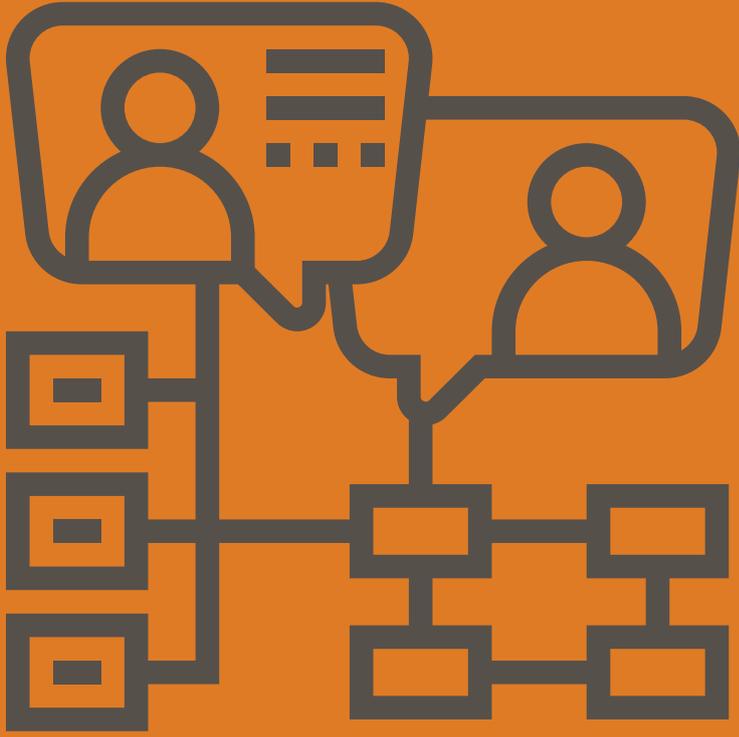
As regards field/online survey, the project team **interviewed**<sup>2</sup> the coordinator from the ranks of civil servants at MISA, and organized a **focus group**<sup>3</sup> with civil society representatives that participate in this sector working group. The focus group was attended by eight from total of twelve civil society representatives. At the same time, in the capacity of observers, project researchers attended two meetings held by this sector group in the monitoring period.

According to the monitoring methodology, performance of sector working groups is assessed in respect to five segments:

- SWG functionality;
- civil society participation in SWG;
- CSO capacity for contribution and participation in SWG work;
- effects from SWG work; and
- IPA.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with the coordinator from MISA was conducted on 11.05.2021.

<sup>3</sup> Focus group with civil society representatives that participate in SWG Public Administration Reform was held on 04.05.2021.



# PART 1

## SECTOR POLICIES

### STRATEGY ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM 2018-2022

The key reform document governing work in this sector is the Strategy on Public Administration Reform 2018-2022<sup>4</sup> and the Action Plan.<sup>5</sup> In 2020, implementation of SPAR continued on the basis of the revised Action Plan from December 2019.<sup>6</sup>

In May 2021, MISA published its Annual Report on Implementation of SPAR's Action Plan in 2020<sup>7</sup>. Draft versions of both documents were shared for contributions from civil society organizations that work on these topics.

According to the annual report for the period January-December 2020, 18 from the total of 108 activities are fully implemented, 24 activities are under implementation, while 66 activities are late or their implementation has not started. Hence, 2020 timeframe of activities is marked by implementation rate of 18%.

In November 2020, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration opened the process for drafting new laws

<sup>4</sup> Strategy on Public Administration Reform 2018-2022, available at: <https://bit.ly/3v2vdWC>

<sup>5</sup> SPAR Action Plan, available at: <https://bit.ly/3u6Vodi>

<sup>6</sup> Action Plan for the Strategy on Public Administration Reform 2018 -2022 (2019 revision), available at: <https://bit.ly/2Sg7jsl>

<sup>7</sup> Annual Report on Implementation of SPAR's 2020 Action Plan, available at: <https://bit.ly/3x7Gupf>



on **public sector employees**<sup>8</sup> and **administrative officers**,<sup>9</sup> aimed at addressing problems that have emerged during enforcement of existing legislation that was adopted five years ago. MISA's initial intent was to draft amendments to these laws on the basis of practical remarks from those that work on their enforcement, but analyses or remarks obtained in respect to both laws have shown the need for changes to more than 1/3 of articles/legal provisions and therefore a decision was made to draft completely new laws that would be based on those currently in effect.

Debate around the Law on Senior Management Service<sup>10</sup> remained active throughout 2020. This law should reduce political interferences and should enhance capacity of persons holding managerial positions. The Government approved the Law on Senior Management Service in December 2019,<sup>11</sup> but this piece of legislation did not pass the parliamentary procedure in 2020. At the same time, in November 2020<sup>12</sup> MISA withdrew the proposed law from parliamentary procedure due to the need for further precision of certain provisions therein, which should be aligned with amendments to the Law on Public Sector Employees and the Law on Administrative Officers.

Another piece of legislation whose procedure remained opened throughout 2020 is the **Law on Amending the Law on General Administrative Procedure**. Start of the process for drafting this law was announced on ENER<sup>13</sup> as early as July 2019, but no additional information has been made available since then. The need to accelerate procedure for adoption of this law is one of key recommendations noted by the EC in its Progress Report for RNM.

In 2020, MISA formed a working group tasked with drafting amendments to the **Law on Organization of State Administration Bodies**, which is expected to unblock the process that was initiated back in 2018. Members of this working group include civil society representatives.

8 Notification on start of the process for drafting the Law on Public Sector Employees, available at: <https://bit.ly/3v8yROO>

9 Notification on start of the process for drafting the Law on Administrative Officers, available at: <https://bit.ly/3wiMjj6>

10 Draft Law on Senior Management Service, available at: <https://bit.ly/3ozRGYR>

11 Minutes from the session of the Government of RNM held on 11.12.2019, available at: <https://bit.ly/3gioWzV>

12 MISA withdrew the Proposed Law on Senior Management Service submitted by previous minister Manchevski, Sloboden pecat, 11.11.2020, available at: <https://bit.ly/3hJNfZN>

13 Notification on start of the process for drafting the Law on Amending the Law on General Administrative Procedure, available at: <https://bit.ly/3f7wRkf>

## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT ON PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES<sup>14</sup>

There are 1,332 active public sector institutions in the Republic of North Macedonia, and they account for total of 131,183 employees. Analysis of data from the 2020 report allows the conclusion that majority of these employees belong to public activities such as education (32%), health (19%), administration (14%), public utilities (9.6%). Compared to 2019, the number of public sector employees is decreased by 1,717 persons.

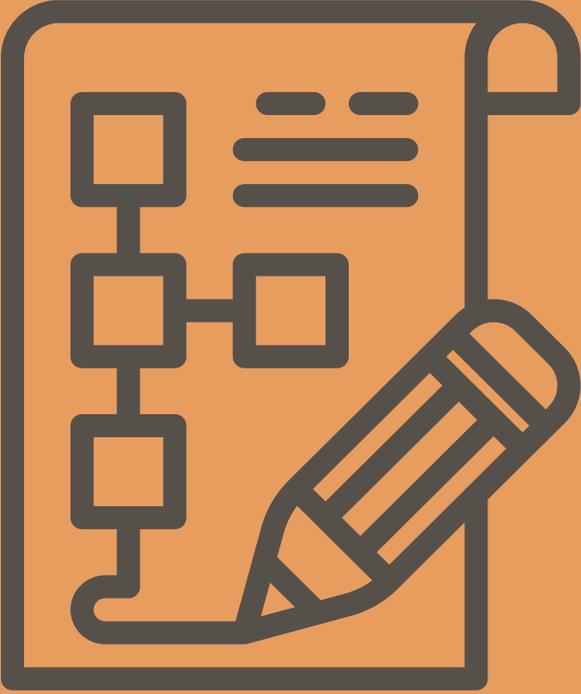
### PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION DIGITALIZATION

The public health crisis caused by COVID-19 proved to be an excellent indicator about the importance of the need for public services to be digitalized. One of the basis tenants under SPAR concerns provisions of quality, fast and easily available services that would rely on modern technologies and innovative use through continuous technical upgrades and adequate capacity-building.

According to information from the semi-annual report for the period January - June 2020, three strategic documents were developed in the first half of the year, as follows: analysis of the current situation, long-term ICT strategy and action plan, but these are still not publicly shared.

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<sup>14</sup> 2020 Annual Report on Public Sector Employees, available at: <https://bit.ly/3fQx1Mf>



# PART 2

## SWG FUNCTIONALITY

### 2.1 RULES OF PROCEDURE

In 2020, no significant changes are observed in respect to regulations that **govern operation** of SWG Public Administration Reform. As noted in the last year's Shadow Report from Monitoring Work and Effects of SWG Public Administration Reform,<sup>15</sup> operation of this sector group is regulated by the rules of procedure<sup>16</sup> that were not subject to changes in the course of 2020. In particular, this document provides all rules, procedures and scope of work for this sector group, while a separate annex provides the **list of members** and their contact information. In 2020, composition of this sector group was not changed in respect to representatives from institutions, donor community and the civil society. However, changes were made to personnel representing the institutions due to change of job positions and therefore the rules of procedure need to be updated with addition of new members.

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15 Shadow Report from Monitoring Work and Effects of SWG Public Administration Reform, available at: <https://bit.ly/3f3bSik>

16 Rules of Procedure for SWG Public Administration Reform, available at: <https://bit.ly/3pvMYvw>



As regards enforcement of provisions from the rules of procedure in the practice, several remarks noted in the last year's report are still valid and they concern failure to organize and hold the number of anticipated meetings and untimely delivery of invitations for SWG meetings to all members of this sector working group. At the same time, topics discussed at meetings held in 2020 were exclusively focused on strategic documents for IPA III, accounting for incomplete performance of SWG competences regulated under the rules of procedure, where it is stipulated that this sector group should make proposals for contents of sector and cross-sectoral policies, strategies and development programs within the realm of public administration reform.

More information on enforcement of provisions from the rules of procedure related to organization of SWG meetings is available in **PART 5: EFFECTS FROM SWG WORK.**

In respect to **transparency**, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration continues its inactivity, i.e. its official website<sup>17</sup> does not host any information related to work of this sector group, such as the acts of establishment (decision on SWG establishment and the rules of procedure), as well as press releases, minutes and materials from SWG meetings. At the same time, in 2020 MISA did not take any activity (public events, briefing with journalists, media campaigns, etc.) that would increase dissemination of information to the broader public about work and decisions taken within this sector group.

**Representatives from the Ministry of Information Society and Administration** are of the opinion that the rules of procedure should be revised in order to expand SWG composition with all institutions that are part of the Strategy on Public Administration Reform, thus allowing a more substantial discussion at SWG meetings in respect to implementation of activities anticipated under this strategy.

There is still certain confusion among **civil society representatives** in respect to their role within the sector working group. In spite of the fact that they are full-fledge members, there is a feeling of not making significant contribution to SWG work. Hence, they have stressed the need for the rules of procedure to be amended in order to precisely define their role and to allow their involvement in all stages for developing documents that are produced by this sector group.

<sup>17</sup> Official website of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, available at: <https://www.mioa.gov.mk/>

## 2.2 ANNUAL WORK PLAN AND ANNUAL WORK REPORT

Annual plans and annual reports are not envisaged as activities in the rules of procedure adopted by SWG Public Administration Reform, but if these are created in transparent and inclusive manner, they could significantly boost effectiveness and organization of work within this sector group. The situation in respect to annual work plans and annual work reports remains unchanged from findings noted in the 2019 Report, i.e. in the course of 2020 SWG Public Administration Reform did not develop such documents.

According to **representatives from MISA**, the primary function of SWG Public Administration Reform is to participate in defining priorities and indicators for assistance funds under IPA and to develop the necessary documents, which was performed in 2020. Guided by this definition of the sector working group, these representatives are generally satisfied with activities taken by this sector group in the course of 2020.

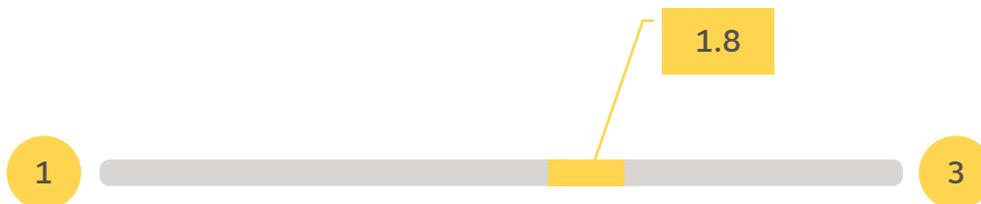
On the other hand, civil society representatives noted that development of annual work plans whose definition would include all SWG members will significantly increase their efficiency within this sector working group. Through the annual plan they would be able to influence topics that will be discussed at SWG meetings, while the pre-defined calendar of SWG meetings would allow them greater space for coordination with all stakeholders that are not part of this sector working group.

## ASSESSMENT ON SWG FUNCTIONALITY

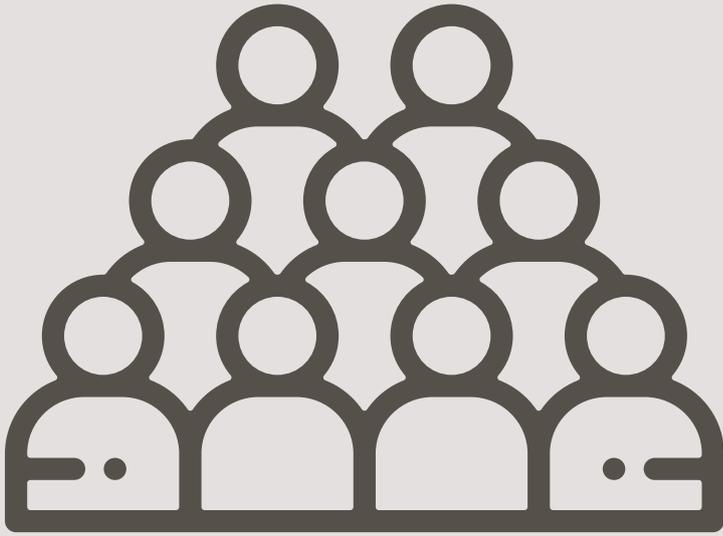


According to the methodology for monitoring work and effects of sector working groups, **SWG functionality** is measured against 14 standards and 8 indicators that focus on creation of relevant work documents by SWG s (rules of procedure, annual plan and annual report) and their enforcement in the practice. All standards and indicators are assigned a numeric value, whereby 1 is the lowest and 3 is the highest score.

**Average score for functionality of SWG Public Administration Reform in this monitoring period is calculated at 1.8.**







# PART 3

## CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION

The list of CSOs that participate in SWG Public Administration Reform is not changed compared to last year, which means that the same twelve civil society organizations participate in this **sector group with the status of members:**

- Foundation Open Society - Macedonia;
- Institute for Human Rights;
- Progress – Institute for Social Democracy;
- Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis”;
- Macedonian Center for International Cooperation;
- European Policy Institute;
- Association for Development Initiatives ZENITH;
- Metamorphosis Foundation;
- National Democratic Institute;
- International Foundation for Election Systems;
- International Republican Institute;
- Macedonian Young Lawyers Association.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Websites of CSO members in SWG Public Administration Reform: Foundation Open Society – Macedonia, Institute for Human Rights, Progress – Institute for Social Democracy, Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis”, Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, European Policy Institute, Association for Development Initiatives ZENITH, Foundation Metamorphosis, National Democratic Institute, International Foundation for Election Systems, International Republican Institute, Macedonian Young Lawyers Association



The list of civil society organizations is given as annex to SWG rules of procedure, but it fails to include detailed information on persons appointed as their representatives in this sector group.

For both plenary sessions held in 2020, **invitations** to civil society representatives were delivered only three days before the scheduled meeting, thus acting in violation of the deadline from the rules of procedure set in duration of at least 10 days before the scheduled meeting. Invitations for both sessions included all **necessary documents**, i.e. agenda and materials to be reconsidered at these sessions. As regards minutes from SWG meetings, these are distributed to all SWG members, but with a delay of several months after the relevant meeting was held.

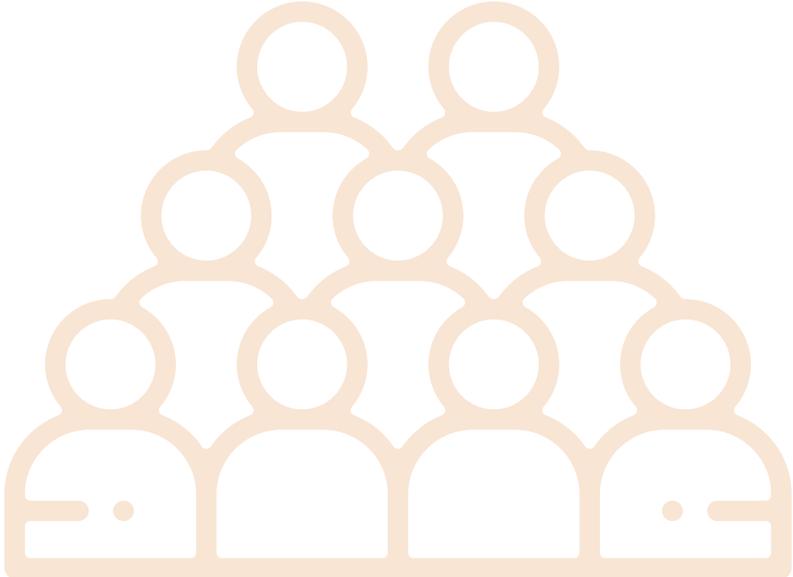
Attitude of SWG chair at meetings is transparent and open to all SWG members. All meetings leave sufficient space, usually by the end, for all members, including civil society representatives, to join discussion by sharing opinions and recommendations within the realm of topics being discussed. However, the focus of plenary sessions held in 2020 was mainly put on representatives from relevant institutions, i.e. presentation of already drafted documents.

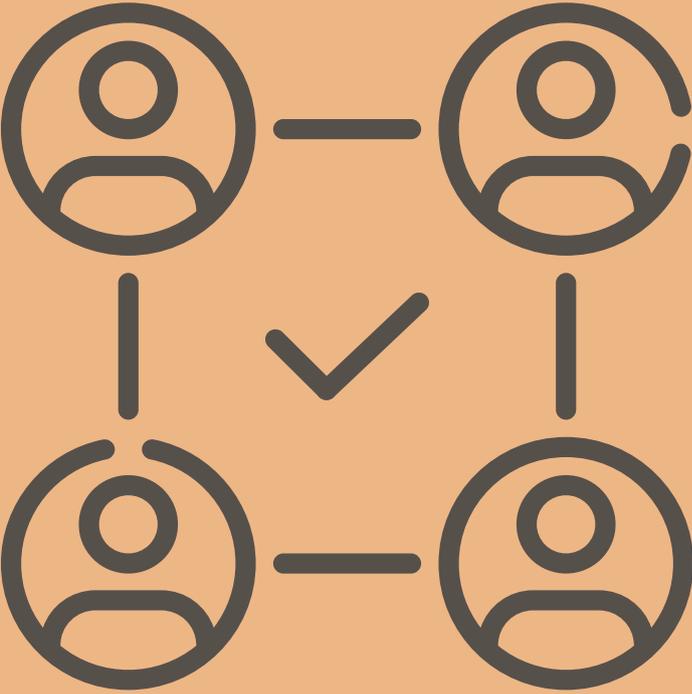
Civil society representatives indicate that in order to ensure greater participation in work of SWGs they need to be afforded opportunities to propose agenda items, i.e. engage in two-directional discussion about topics that will be reconsidered at these meetings.

## ASSESSMENT ON CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION

According to the methodology for monitoring work and effects of sector working groups, **civil society participation in SWG** is measured against 9 standards and 3 indicators that focus on the number and the status of CSOs involved in SWG work. Moreover, they cover regular and timely delivery of invitations and necessary materials for SWG meetings, as well as opportunities afforded to CSOs to join discussions before, during and after meetings. All standards and indicators are assigned a numeric value, whereby 1 is the lowest and 3 is the highest score.

Average score for civil society participation in SWG Public Administration Reform in this monitoring period is calculated at 1.8.





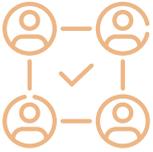
# PART 4

## CSO CAPACITY

The number of 12 civil society organizations ranks SWG Public Administration Reform among working groups marked by highest civil society participation compared to others. However, civil society representatives believe their role in this sector group is pro-forma and does not allow them to make meaningful contribution to SWG work.

They have inferred such observation on the basis of several reasons. First, civil society representatives indicate that their participation in the sector group could not be assessed as efficient having in mind the slow dynamics of SWG meetings (two plenary sessions annually) and minimum communication among SWG members beyond these meetings. An example thereof was given in the fact that civil society representatives have not been involved in planning and development of strategic responses and action fiches and were able to see these documents only several days before the meeting organized for their presentation. In their opinion, on the account of the importance of such documents that set priorities and indicators for IPA III assistance, the civil society should have been involved much earlier and at operational level.

Furthermore, civil society representatives reported that during and after SWG meetings they are always afforded space to make comments



and proposals, but have never received feedback whether their proposal are taken into consideration or not. Such was the case in respect to strategic responses for IPA III whereby, in spite of the short deadline for submission of comments, CSOs had managed to organize among them and submit comments, but did not receive any response about the status of their proposals.

Another reason is seen in the fact that single topic discussed at SWG meetings in 2020 concerned strategic responses to IPA III, which has not left any space for more detailed and meaningful discussion of actual policies in this sector.

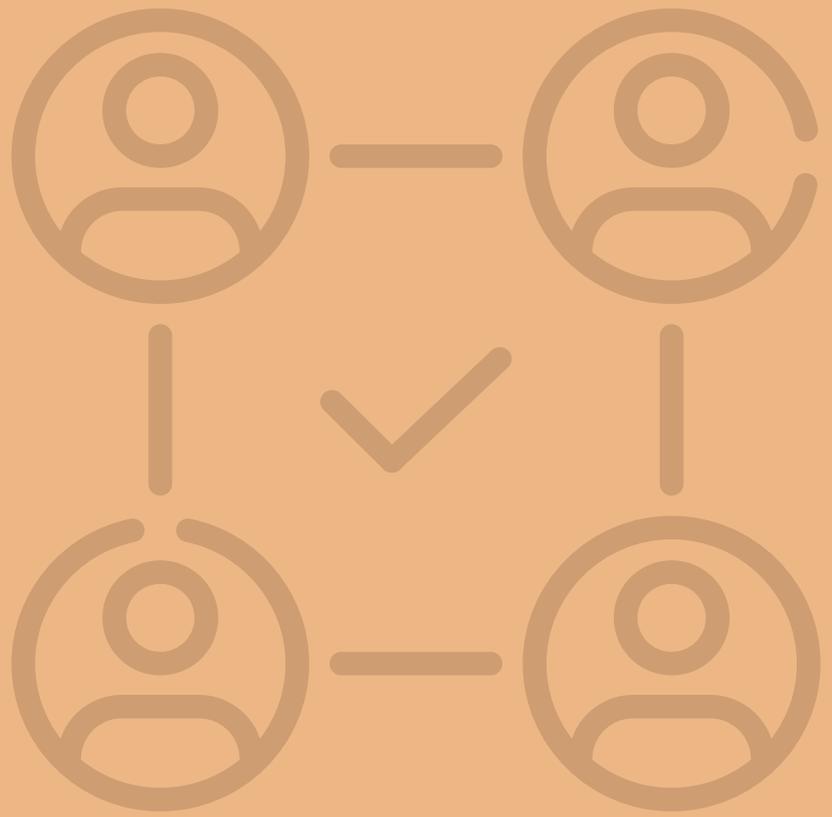
However, it should be noted that for certain issues CSOs participating in this sector group also engage in consultations and other channels and methods beyond the work of this sector group (e.g. other working groups, public events and discussions, policy briefs, etc.).

## ASSESSMENT ON CSO CAPACITY

According to the methodology for monitoring work and effects of sector working groups, **CSO capacity** for contribution and participation in SWG is measured against 5 standards and 2 indicators that focus on ability, knowledge and skills disposed by CSOs. Moreover, they concern proactivity on the part of CSOs in respect to organization of consultations and information sessions, production of analyses, research papers and policy briefs, as well as engagement in advocacy for important issues falling within SWG scope of work. All standards and indicators are assigned a numeric value, whereby 1 is the lowest and 3 is the highest score.

Average assessment for CSO capacity for contribution and participation in SWG Public Administration Reform in this monitoring period is calculated at 2.5.







# PART 5

## EFFECTS FROM SWG WORK

### 5.1 PLENARY SESSIONS

In 2020, SWG Public Administration Reform held only two plenary sessions, thereby failing to comply with the minimum of four meetings annually, as regulated under the rules of procedure, i.e. one meeting per quarter. Due to the public health crisis, both plenary sessions were held as online events via the platform **WEBEX**, with technical support from the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA).

**The first** plenary session was held on 30.06.2020 and concerned presentation of action fiches and strategic responses for IPA III in respect to public administration reform:

- **Window 2:** Good Governance, Acquis Alignment, Good Neighbourly Relations and Strategic Communication, key thematic priority: public administration reform and enhanced digitalization;
- **Window 3:** Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity, key thematic priority: digital economy and society.

**The second** plenary session was held on 27.11.2020 and implied verification of strategic responses to IPA III.

Representatives from institutions, donor community and the civil society were invited and attended both plenary sessions.

More information on invitations, materials and topics on plenary sessions is available in **PART 3: CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION**.



## 5.2 BASIC INFORMATION ON IPA III PROGRAMMING (2021-2027)

The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) concerns the programming period 2021-2027. The European Commission introduced this instrument together with the new EU multiannual financial framework. IPA programming took place throughout the entire 2020 and was initiated with development of PAF indicators,<sup>19</sup> followed by strategic responses and action fiches.

IPA III is introduced with adoption of the Regulation on Establishing the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance and the Regulation on Implementing Rules and Principles for IPA III<sup>20</sup> by the European Union, and is coherent to other funds, programmes and instruments of the Union, primarily the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument. According to its structure, IPA III is organized into 5 windows:

1. Rule of Law, Fundamental Rights and Democracy;
2. Good Governance, Acquis Alignment, Good Neighbourly Relations and Strategic Communication;
3. Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity;
4. Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth;
5. Territorial and Cross-Border Cooperation.

<sup>19</sup> Performance Assessment Framework (PAF)

<sup>20</sup> Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) COM/2018/465 final.

**TABLE 1:**  
*IPA III windows and thematic priorities*

<p><b>WINDOW 1:</b> RULE OF LAW, FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY</p>	<p><b>WINDOW 2:</b> GOOD GOVERNANCE, ACQUIS ALIGNMENT, GOOD NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONS AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Judiciary;</li> <li>◆ Fight against corruption;</li> <li>◆ Fight against organized crime;</li> <li>◆ Migration and border management;</li> <li>◆ Fundamental rights;</li> <li>◆ Democracy;</li> <li>◆ Civil society.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Good governance;</li> <li>◆ Administrative capacity and acquis alignment;</li> <li>◆ Good neighbourly relations and reconciliation;</li> <li>◆ Strategic communication, monitoring, evaluation and audit.</li> </ul>
<p><b>WINDOW 3:</b> GREEN AGENDA AND SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIVITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Environment and climate change;</li> <li>◆ Transport, digital economy and energy.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WINDOW 4:</b> COMPETITIVENESS AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Education, employment, social protection and inclusion policies, and health;</li> <li>◆ Private sector development, trade, research and innovation;</li> <li>◆ Agriculture and rural development;</li> <li>◆ Fisheries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>WINDOW 5: TERRITORIAL AND CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION</b></p>	
<p>This window is comprised of a separate list of thematic priorities given in Annex 2 to the IPA III Regulation.<sup>21</sup> Modalities for implementation of this component include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ cross-border cooperation with IPA countries;</li> <li>◆ participation in micro region strategies.</li> </ul>	

<sup>21</sup> COM/2018/465



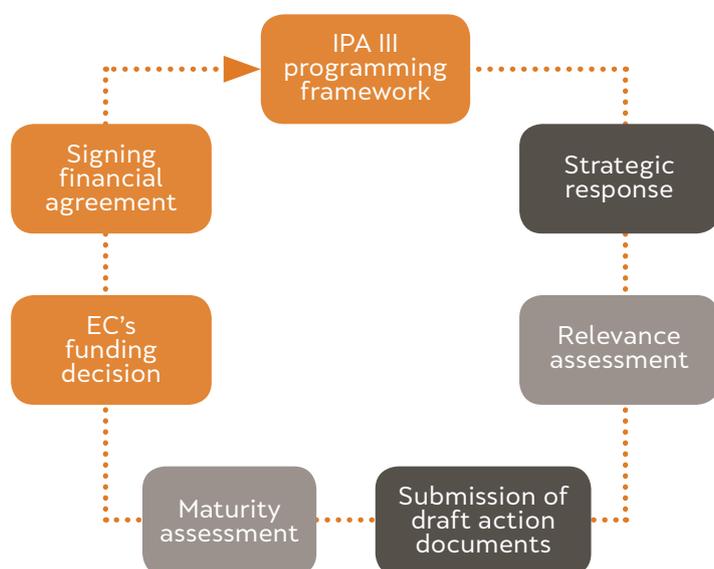
According to the IPA III Regulation, the European Commission proposes a programming framework for the period 2021-2027 that includes all priority areas eligible for funding. Based on this programming framework, each IPA III country develops its strategic responses, elaborating links between EU priorities and those under national and sector strategies, followed by development of projects in the next phase.

IPA III does not include specific financial allocations per beneficiary country. Actually, countries will have to compete for the total of 14.162 billion euros available on the basis of their capacity and project proposals. However, IPA III introduces the principle of fair share in order to ensure certain balance and proportionality in distribution of IPA III funds among beneficiary countries.

IPA III programming is pursued in two stages.

- 1. Relevance assessment.** In this stage, the country develops summary action fishes with elaboration of proposed projects. The European Commission assesses these fishes in terms of their relevance.
- 2. Maturity assessment.** This stage implies development of action documents, but only for projects that have passed the relevance assessment, followed by detailed elaboration. The European Commission assesses projects in terms of their maturity. After action documents are approved, the country presents the European Commission with tender documents for projects approved in both stages, followed by signing of financial agreements for individual action documents.

**CHART 2.**  
**IPA III programming cycle**



The process for developing strategic and action documents for the years 2021 and 2022, but also for next programming years, is anticipated to take place within the existing sector working groups (SWGs), established under the sector-wide approach from IPA II.

In the second half of 2020, under coordination from the Secretariat for European Affairs, sector working groups developed and presented the European Commission with 22 ac-

tion fishes, of which 10 for the year 2021<sup>22</sup> and 12 for the year 2022.<sup>23</sup>

**TABLE 2. 2021 and 2022 action fishes for IPA III**

ACTION FISHES 2021			
INDICATIVE TITLE OF THE ACTION	INDICATIVE BUDGET	CO-FINANCING RATIO	
		EU	MK
1. EU for Efficient Judiciary and Enhanced Prevention of Corruption	10 million euros	85%	15%
2. Civil Society Facility	3 million euros	/	/
3. EU for Modern Administration	10 million euros	100%	0%
4. EU for Good Governance	9 million euros	89%	11%
5. EU Integration Facility	5 million euros	100%	0%
6. EU for Environmental Standards	12 million euros	83%	17%
7. EU for Clean Air	14 million euros	86%	14%
8. EU for Prespa	23,7 million euros	76%	24%

22 <https://www.sep.gov.mk/data/file/Dokumenti/Akciski%20fisea/2021.zip>

23 <https://www.sep.gov.mk/data/file/Dokumenti/Akciski%20fisea/2022.zip>



9.	Preparation of European Transport Corridors Projects	9,5 million euros	100%	0%
10.	EU for Green Growth	27,5 million euros	73%	27%
ACTION FISHES 2022				
INDICATIVE TITLE OF THE ACTION		INDICATIVE BUDGET	CO-FINANCING RATIO	
			EU	MK
1.	Private Sector Development <sup>24</sup>	9,2 million euros	87%	13%
2.	EU in Support of the Fight against Organized Crime	5,2 million euros	88%	12%
3.	EU for Improved Border Management, Migration and Asylum Policy	7,8 million euros	90%	10%
4.	Civil Society Facility	3 million euros	/	/
5.	EU Integration Facility	10 million euros	100%	0%
6.	Union Programmes	15,4 million euros	50%	50%
7.	EU for Modern Waste Water Systems	53 million euros	50%	50%
8.	ЕУ за безбедни патишта	20 милиони евра	50%	50%
9.	EU for Quality Employment and Equal Opportunities	6,6 million euros	91%	9%
10.	EU for Health	5,9 million euros	85%	15%
11.	EU for Trade Facilitation	8,1 million euros	72%	28%
12.	EU for Development of Agriculture	6 million euros	83%	17%

### 5.2.1 Strategic response and action fiche for education, employment and social policy

Strategic responses in the sector on public administration reform are part of **Window 2**: Good Governance, **Window 3**: Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity, and **Window 1**: Rule of Law, Fundamental Rights and Democracy, as a cross-cutting thematic priority.

<sup>24</sup> Sector fiche with remaining funds under Component I from IPA I for the years 2012 and 2013

**TABLE 3 . Strategic response and action fiche  
for public administration reform**

SWG	STRATEGIC RESPONSE	KEY THEMATIC PRIORITY	ACTION FICHE	ACTION FICHE OBJECTIVES
SWG PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM <sup>25</sup>	WINDOW 2: GOOD GOVERNANCE, ACQUIS ALIGNMENT, GOOD NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONS AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION <b>Thematic priority 1: Good governance</b>	(1) Support implementation of the public administration reform and state reorganization  (3) Support the statistical system to comply with requirements from EU acquis and enhance the statistical system for production and dissemination of official statistics on Macedonian economy and society as baseline for decision-making based on relevant information  (2) Enhance the system of public finance, promote transparency, accountability, fiscal discipline and efficiency in public resource collection, management and spending	(2021) <i>EU for Modern Administration</i> - 10 million euros, 100% EU financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Intake and carrier path of new, qualified and committed young people in the public administration;</li> <li>◆ Intake of administrative officers with high-demanded competences on higher level positions in the administration;</li> <li>◆ Retention of well-qualified and experienced administrative officers, for example those working in IPA, EU integration and PAR structures, IT personnel and other specific job profiles.</li> </ul>
	WINDOW 3: GREEN AGENDA AND SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIVITY <b>Thematic priority 2: Transport, digital economy and energy</b>	(2) Digital economy and society – improved access to digital technologies and services for business entities and citizens		

25 In coordination with the EU Delegation and SEA, for this sector MISA decided to apply the method of sector budget support, which should ensure utilization of more IPA III funds for public administration reform. In practice, sector budget support means that budget funds are intended to finance an agreed plan of expenditure for a given sector and they are calculated and disbursed through government systems, sometimes accompanied by additional report on specific sectors. What distinguishes this method from the others is advanced financing which the country should secure for certain project, i.e. the country will be refunded only if projects are fully implemented according to anticipated indicators.



<p>- <i>Cross-cutting thematic priority</i> WINDOW 1: RULE OF LAW, FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY <b>Thematic priority 2: Fight against corruption</b></p>	<p>(2) Enhance the institutional system for corruption suppression</p>		
<p>- <i>Cross-cutting thematic priority</i> WINDOW 1: RULE OF LAW, FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY <b>Thematic priority 6: Democracy</b></p>	<p>(1) Transparent, inclusive and credible political and election system</p>		

### 5.3 OPERATIONAL MEETINGS

In 2020, MISA organized a total of eight operational meetings with representatives from the Secretariat for European Affairs and the EU Delegation. Civil society representatives that are SWG members were not invited at these meetings and majority of them were not even informed about organization of such meetings by the sector group. At the same time, minutes are not compiled from operational meetings that could be later shared with civil society representatives.

### 5.4 COVID-19 AND IPA II PROJECTS

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to reallocation of funds from IPA II projects to finance relief measures tackling the health crisis. IPA II funds anticipated for public administration reform were not reallocated for projects related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## ASSESSMENT ON EFFECTS FROM SWG WORK

According to the methodology for monitoring work and effects of sector working groups, **effects from SWG** work are measured against 3 standards and 8 indicators that focus on changes effectuated by SWG work through planning and monitoring, and methods for foreign aid coordination. All standards and indicators are assigned a numeric value, whereby 1 is the lowest and 3 is the highest score.

**Average score for effects from work of SWG Public Administration Reform in this monitoring period is calculated at 1.7.**





# PART 6

## GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE 12 SECTOR WORKING GROUPS

The obligation for gender mainstreaming in work of sector working groups (SWGs) arises from the national legislation, but also from the Country Indicative Strategy Paper for the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance 2014–2020 (IPA II)<sup>26</sup>, the European Union’s Gender Action Plan (GAP II)<sup>27</sup> and the broader EU acquis. As elaborated in the previous Shadow Report, GAP II stresses the need for gender mainstreaming in programs and assistance programming,<sup>28</sup> while IPA II treats gender equality as cross-cutting issue and as separate priority area for support.<sup>29</sup>

This year was hallmarked by the public health crisis, which furthered already existing gender gaps and inequalities. The COVID-19 pandemic had negative impact on

<sup>26</sup> European Commission, Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II), Revised Indicative Strategy Paper for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2014-2020). Available at: <https://bit.ly/3hxZE2W>

<sup>27</sup> Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through European Union (EU) External Relations 2016-2020 (GAP II). Available at: <https://bit.ly/2Quy3oo>

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> European Commission, Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II), Revised Indicative Strategy Paper for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2014-2020). Available at: <https://bit.ly/3hxZE2W>



women's participation in the labour market in RNM, whose activity rate was already low before the crisis. According to the most recent data available, 62.3% of women<sup>30</sup> in the country are economically inactive, compared to 37.7% of men.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, 77% of health sector employees in RNM are women,<sup>32</sup> which means that women - at the time of crisis - found themselves at the frontline of this struggle. Women are more represented in sectors that have been most affected by the crisis. For example, 80% of textile industry workers are women.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, under conditions of pre-existing and deepened inequalities, addressing these issues by gender mainstreaming in work of all bodies and institutions, including SWGs, gains an even greater importance. .

## 6.1 FINDINGS FROM MONITORING SECTOR WORKING GROUPS

### 6.1.1 SWG meetings

In the course of 2020, SWG meetings rarely included discussion on policy impacts in terms of gender equality as a cross-cutting theme. Information and data collected by the cut-off date for this report<sup>34</sup> allow the conclusion that, as noted in the 2019 report, only two sector groups have integrated the gender perspective in their work: SWG Education, Employment and Social Policy and SWG Agriculture and Rural Development. This refers to the conclusion that SWGs have still not recognized their key role in promoting gender equality by means of gender mainstreaming in development and implementation of sector policies.

### 6.1.2 Trainings

Recommendations made under the 2019 Shadow Report concerned specially designed training for SWG members on gender mainstreaming

30 State Statistical Office (MAKStat Database 2019). Active population according to economic activity, gender and age. Economic inactivity of women. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3yt39Ov>

31 State Statistical Office (MAKStat Database 2019). Active population according to economic activity, gender and age. Economic inactivity of men. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3yt39Ov>

32 ILO (2020). Covid-19 and the World of Work NORTH MACEDONIA Rapid Assessment of the Employment Impacts and Policy Responses, available at: <https://bit.ly/3mGGtV7>

33 Ibid.

34 By the cut-off date for this report, information and data were collected from line ministries responsible for eight sector working groups: SWG Justice, SWG Public Administration Reform, SWG Local and Regional Development, SWG Education, Employment and Social Policy, SWG Home Affairs, SWG Transport, SWF Public Finance Management, and SWG Agriculture and Rural Development.

that would be complementary to already existing gender equality training for administrative officers.

Namely, in 2017 the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP), with the support from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN), developed an e-training course on gender equality intended to enhance knowledge of public administration employees. This training course is comprised of two modules, basic and advanced, and is administered by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) through the E-learning Management System, which is accessible only to administrative officers.

Defeating is the fact that, in 2020, this basic module of the gender equality training was attended by only three administrative officers and nobody attended the advanced module. For comparison, in 2019 the basic module was attended by 359 and the advanced module was attended by 54 administrative officers. From its introduction to present, the gender equality training was attended by a total of 11,017 administrative officers. However, this figure pales into insignificance against the fact that, by 31.12.2020, public sector institutions employ a total of 131,183 persons.<sup>35</sup> Here it should be noted that this training course is available only to administrative officers, but not to other groups of public sector employees.<sup>36</sup>

In October 2020, under the Project for Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) and in cooperation with UN WOMEN, MLSP organized four one-day trainings on strategic planning, which featured gender mainstreaming elements. These trainings were attended by professional and management staff members and those involved in strategic planning and policy/program development at institutions, including coordinators and deputy coordinators for equal opportunities. In total, all four trainings were attended by 32 staff members from 13 line ministries and 1 state institution. In December 2020, a two-day online training was organized on gender mainstreaming in strategic planning and gender responsive budgeting, attended by 33 staff members from 14 line ministries.

<sup>35</sup> Ministry of Information Society and Administration. 2020 Report from the Register of Public Sector Employees. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2T3DTxW>

<sup>36</sup> Pursuant to Article 14 of the Law on Public Sector Employee ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" no. 27/14, 199/14, 27/16, 35/18 and 198/18 and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" no. 143/19 and 14/20), job positions of employees in public sector institutions are categorized into four groups: administrative officers, officers with public authority, service providers assistance/technical staff.



## FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The work approach applied by SWG Public Administration Reform has not changed in the course of 2020 and therefore many shortcomings indicated in 2019 were perpetuated in this monitoring period as well. The rules of procedure need to be urgently changed in order to reflect practices learned throughout the long-standing existence of this sector working group.

**1.** SWG Public Administration Reform continued its low work dynamics throughout 2020 and held only two plenary sessions, which is identical to the situation observed in 2019. Such work dynamics is inadequate for development of strategic and planning documents and for monitoring results achieved under existing strategies and plans. Both meetings in 2020 were focused on the same topic, i.e. strategic documents for IPA III, again avoiding any discussion on actual policies in the context of the public administration reform. Hence the need for the rules of procedure to be changed in order to distinguish between plenary sessions and operational meetings. More specifically, plenary sessions would imply discussion of strategic documents related to IPA, while operational meetings – organized more frequently and attended by all members – should focus on discussing implementation track record under current policies and strategies. Such approach would allow civil society representatives to be involved in all stages for developing documents that are produced by this sector group.

**2.** The Strategy on Public Administration Reform 2018-2022 entered its four implementation year. CSOs are not part of the three bodies tasked with coordination and monitoring implementation of activities anticipated under this strategy. Hence, involvement of SWG Public Administration Reform in

the capacity of advisory body for implementation of SPAR 2018-2022 could bring new energy and vision through participation of CSOs in strategy implementation.



**3.** The rules of procedure need to be amended in order to define the model for selection of civil society representatives, as well as their role and mandate in this sector group. The current approach does not allow full utilization of CSO capacity.

**4.** Moreover, the sector working group should develop its annual work plan in the first quarter of the year and, when possible, it should define topics for plenary sessions in advance, as well as the schedule of plenary and operational meetings. All SWG members should be involved in development of such annual plans. Operation without previously defined dynamics and without actual indicators to measure SWG performance opens numerous possibilities for incomplete utilization of this sector group's potential.

**5.** Another problem perpetuated from last year concerns low transparency in operation of this sector working group. For illustration, MISA's website does not host even the most basic information on this sector group, such as documents for its establishment, the rules of procedure, and the like. Similar is the situation in respect to information about meetings held and decisions taken by the sector working group. MISA should immediately publish on its website all documents related to work of this sector group and should start creating specific activities that would contribute to informing the general public about reform policies discussed within this sector group.

## FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN TERMS OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE 12 SECTOR WORKING GROUPS

**1.** Most SWGs have still not recognized the importance of gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting theme in their work. Although some line ministries have engaged in gender analysis of particular policies or have performed gender-responsive budgeting for individual programs, oftentimes these documents are not discussed and are not taken into account at SWG meetings. Hence the need for gender mainstreaming in work of all SWGs and use of gender analyses on state-of-affairs in specific sectors as baseline for policy development, implementation and evaluation.

**2.** It is recommended for e-training on gender equality to become part of the framework of generic competences and annual training programs, thereby underscoring its mandatory implementation and ensuring greater coverage in terms of trained administrative officers. Moreover, it is equally important for training materials to be regularly, timely and continuously updated, in order to avoid the risk of outdated content. While implementation of specially designed training course on gender mainstreaming in strategic planning represents a step forward, it is still early to assess its effects. It is recommended for participants in such trainings and workshops to mandatorily include SWG members. In order to ensure that such training gains an even greater importance, it would be desirable to evaluate knowledge of training participants and to regulate organization of such trainings on regular instead of ad-hoc basis.

**3.** Given that recommendations from 2019 Shadow Report are not fully taken into consideration, valid is the recommendation for involvement of coordinators and deputy coordinators for equal opportunities in SWGs, including civil society representatives with expertise and experience in the field of gender equality, as support for gender mainstreaming in all SWGs.

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