



WORK PLAN

2021

Macedonia2025 is a non-profit, non-political organization with primary focus on economic and leadership development, working in partnership with business, government and academia to generate opportunities and build capacities for economic growth.



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Introduction and Background

Macedonia2025 is a non-profit, non-political organization with primary focus on economic and leadership development, working in partnership with business, government and academia to generate opportunities and build capacities for economic growth, therefore helping build a stronger nation.

Our Vision

International, independent, nonpartisan, non-profit “think & do” tank founded in 2007 by Macedonian expatriates who envision a proactive way of contributing to the economic and democratic development of Macedonia. With headquarters in Skopje and supporters around the globe, we encompass a wide array of programs that enable expatriates to give back to their homeland.

Our Mission

We are dedicated to helping create a prosperous economic climate and a “stronger nation” that will improve opportunities for citizens, companies, and foreign investors. We promote sustainable economic growth through fostering competitiveness, entrepreneurship, innovation and value-based leadership.

Core Values

- We envision programs, advocacy and research facilitating creation of an advanced knowledge and transformation of Macedonia into a vibrant economy
- We energize the Macedonian citizens, businesses, academia and Diaspora through collaboration, networking and social engagements
- We evolve the leadership, managerial and entrepreneurial capacities of the Macedonian leaders of tomorrow globally through talent development programs
- We excel in efficient execution of all programs and maximum leverage of our donors' support
- We promote ethical approach to business as a fundamental pillar of a healthy and prosperous society

Board of Directors, Staff, and Membership Bodies

The management structure of Macedonia2025 is composed of a Board of Directors (currently 15 directors) and led by Chairperson. The Board of Directors includes a dynamic membership base, made up of exceptionally successful business leaders and innovators of Macedonian origin. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) leads day-to-day operations and strategic planning. The CEO, Dr. Nikica Mojsoska Blazhevski, heads a team of highly skilled professionals who specialize in economic policy, business finance, Western Balkan political economy, and corporate communications. The Macedonia2025 team is dedicated to building a better future for Macedonia.

The organization activities and programs are also supported by two additional distinct bodies: Advisory Board and the Ambassadors' Club. Macedonia2025's Advisory Board is a body consisting of world-leading experts that collaborate with Macedonia2025 to help make our country's economy, society, and quality of life better. Furthermore, an auxiliary support network called the Ambassadors Club supports Macedonia2025.

As a network of exceptional individuals, the Ambassadors join their efforts to assist in the implementation of Macedonia2025's projects and events, adding value to the networking opportunities within the organization, as well as contributing to the expansion of the Macedonian market and fundraising opportunities.

Strategic Objectives

We accomplish our mission by implementing programs and activities in four strategic objectives. Each year we develop and design our programs in consultation with the business community in Macedonia, our expatriates around the globe, the international economic and diplomatic institutions, as well as our own research, insights and observations.

Below we present our objectives, as well as the major programs and activities that we will implement within each objective in 2021.

Objective 1: Accelerating the growth and competitiveness of Macedonian Businesses

We are dedicated to attracting foreign investment, supporting the competitiveness of Macedonian companies and stimulating export development. We work on supporting the steady development of entrepreneurs and startup companies, helping them grow and concur foreign markets.

This objective will be achieved through the following programs:

1.1. The Bitove Family Entrepreneurship Program: Supporting the growth of Entrepreneurs (CESO)

Macedonia2025 in cooperation with the Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO SACO) offers its services to Macedonian micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). We are thankful to the Bitove family for financing this program.

CESO SACO is a leading non-profit economic development organization with nearly 50 years of experience, dedicated to sustainably reducing poverty and fostering economic growth in Canada and globally. CESO SACO provides senior Volunteer Advisers, with experience in diverse sectors and industries to assist small entrepreneurs/MSMEs in improving their business operations by providing skills development, training, coaching, mentoring and related best practices, business tools, processes and systems.

Normally, Macedonia2025 covers the Advisors' fee and transport to Macedonia. It is up to the selected company to cover the Advisors' accommodation, meals and local transport. However, due to the circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the program will be implemented online. Therefore, the selected companies will not have any expenses, as the Advisors will not be travelling to Macedonia.

In 2021, Macedonia 2025 will support 14 companies from Macedonia to receive expertise virtually from the CESO advisors, and we will work on improving the assessment of the program in terms of its contribution to the growth of participating companies.

1.2. Macedonia2025 Summit

The Macedonia2025 Summit is a dynamic platform for sharing knowledge, connecting business and inspiring innovation and change in Southeast Europe. We stay committed to organize the 10th edition of the Summit in 2021. We are again committing ourselves to organizing an excellent event, with distinguished speakers, discussing the most pressing and relevant topics for the country and the region, as well as bringing in many of our diaspora professionals.

Due to the measures put in place to slow the spread of Covid-19, Macedonia2025 will be organizing the Summit 2021 in a hybrid format, with limited in-person audience (depending on venue capacity and current measures). The Summit will be a one-day event, with approximately 30 speakers.

1.3. The LEADER Project

The LEADER Project is a student-driven overseas economic development program. It was founded in 1991 by MBA students from the Ivey Business School with the mandate of empowering promising entrepreneurs in frontier markets to envision, launch, and/ or scale new ventures. Through this approach, LEADER aims to enable high-potential individuals to develop local business solutions that create opportunities for their communities. Each year, LEADER sends a team of Ivey students to a number of sites, where they teach foundational business administration and entrepreneurial skills. Since its inception, LEADER has provided thousands of promising business people with the analytical tools and decision-making skills to improve local economic conditions.

We expect over 30 participants to take part in the LEADER project in 2021. Due to the circumstances related to the Covid-19 pandemic, the training is going to be conducted online. Macedonia2025, together with the Canadian Executive Service Organization (SECO SACO), is going to award free of charge CESO SACO consultancy to the top three pitched business ideas.

1.4. Towards reducing the Bureaucracy Burden (supported by Civica Mobilitas)

"Towards reducing the bureaucratic burden" is a project with a main goal to improve the business environment by reducing the bureaucratic burden on companies, and initiating reforms in that direction. The "Bureaucracy Index" is the tool which quantifies the bureaucratic burden on companies and is therefore the first step in advocating for removal of unnecessary procedures and administration for companies. The "Bureaucracy Index" is a simple and transparent quantification of the term "red tape", which is mentioned in the media every day, but rarely in any quantitative terms. The Institute of Economic and Social Studies (INESS) in Slovakia established the Bureaucracy Index in 2016. The aim is to determine a comprehensive list and subsequent costs of the bureaucratic burden (in terms of time and financial cost) for small and medium sized enterprises in a given country. The analyzed regulation is divided into 4 groups: human resources (salaries, contributions, employment and dismissal, working hours, etc.); administering operations (taxes, waste, official vehicles, etc.); certification and services (health and safety at work, inspection of electrical installations, fire extinguishers, etc.); and other (archive keeping, post-terminal registration, etc.).

This Project seeks to establish a methodology for calculating the Bureaucracy Index in Macedonia. The "Bureaucracy Index" is prepared in cooperation with domestic and foreign experts from various fields, where for a specific model company, all administrative requirements/obligations that the state requests from companies are identified.

The main objective of the project is reducing the bureaucratic burden on companies in order to grow faster, increase employment and exports, and provide an international comparison of the bureaucratic burden, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises.

In 2021, Macedonia2025 will continue its work on the implementation of the project, calculation of the Bureaucracy Index for 2020 and creation of policy recommendations.

1.5. Digitalization/Visualization of the Dashboard

The Country Dashboard consists of fourteen measures/indicators. Seven track economic metrics, while the remaining measure the most important (in our view) drivers for growth - 'Growth Enablers'. The Dashboard provides a streamlined view of the economic conditions and progress made over time in Macedonia, placed in comparative context with the region and with historic baseline data. The comparative data is drawn from a selection of 34 countries. These 34 data points are selected as a country peer group, based upon several indicators, including their status as upper middle-income countries, according to the World Bank. Furthermore, the peer group was selected based on the World Economic Forum's (WEF) suggested peer group for Macedonia. Thus, the Country Dashboard also provides a ranking of the country within the 34 countries and tracks progress in relative terms.

In 2021, Macedonia2025 is going to work with a Macedonian center for digital tools, Brainster, to digitize the Dashboard and to allow users to customize data requests. At the beginning of the year, the entire digital solution is planned to be finalized and embedded on the Macedonia 2025's website.

1.6. Connect2MK

Macedonia2025's mission is to shape Macedonia's future by promoting sustainable economic growth that will improve opportunities for citizens, companies, and foreign investors. Our goal is for Macedonia to become the leading economy and most prosperous country in the region. To this end, we have developed a platform that will connect Macedonian businesses with professional expatriates from around the world, therefore helping them grow and prosper in an international environment, through mentoring programs, partnership opportunities and/or investments.

In 2021, we will remain dedicated to helping Macedonian businesses grow and prosper, and match over 50 Macedonian businesses with professional expatriates. Furthermore, we will improve the platform based on initial data and feedback from users, in order to further automatize the matching process.

1.7. Attracting FDIs

Macedonia2025 remains dedicated to attracting FDIs to Macedonia. In 2021, Macedonia 2025 will continue to supporting the authorities and foreign investors in attracting FDIs.

Objective 2: Accelerate leadership development and support young talents

We evolve the leadership, managerial and entrepreneurial capacities of top Macedonian leaders of tomorrow, supporting promising young talents to reach their full potential and become successful professionals. This objective will be achieved through the following programs:

2.1. Zafirovski Executive Education Program (Kellogg)

The Zafirovski Executive Education Program of Macedonia2025 in partnership with the Kellogg School of Management (KSM) provides scholarships for Macedonian business leaders to the globally renowned Kellogg Executive Development Program. The program aim is to enhance the competencies and performance of Macedonian business leaders and contribute to the further development of the Macedonian economy and workforce.

The program consists of three weeks at the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University and additional opportunities for: mentoring, networking and experiential learning. Zafirovski Executive Education Program is offering scholarships for the following two programs:

- Executive Development Program (EDP)
- Enterprise Leadership Program (ELP)

The alumni of the program are to be engaged by holding at least one Alumni event. Kellogg alumni, together with a Macedonia2025 team member responsible for education programs, will hold interviews for the prospective participants. Furthermore, Macedonia2025 has made possible for interested parties to meet informally with Kellogg Alumni members by launching the event 'Ask a Kellogg Alumni'. These meetings can take place in person, or online - through a platform attached to our website.

Due to a health pandemic, 9 candidates recruited in 2020 were postponed to attend the program in 2021. In 2021, 3 EDP candidates will attend a mix of virtual and in-person delivery of the EDP Program, while the other 6 candidates are postponed to attend the program in 2022.

2.2. Support Fund for Talented Students ‘Talents Today – Leaders Tomorrow’

The aim of the program is to actively and continuously support talented young people in the country to realize their full personal and professional potential. In this way, Macedonia2025 actively contributes to a more inclusive society and realizes its mission - supporting the economic development of the country and improving the living standard of the citizens.

The Support Fund for Talented Students “Talents Today - Leaders Tomorrow” provides financial means to help talented youth. These scholarships provide the selected ten students with the opportunity for continuous talent and skills development through mentoring, participation in international competitions, trainings, and internships in prominent companies.

In 2021, scholarships will be awarded to 10 individuals, where the total financial support for each candidate amounts to 60,000 MKD. The scholarships are provided through donations and cooperation with Macedonia 2025’s corporate and individual partners, including our Ambassadors Club.

2.3. 21st Century Schools Programme

Macedonia2025 is partnering with the British Council and London School of Economics (LSE) in implementation of the project titled ‘21st Century Schools Programme’. The British Council is the main partner in this project, which aims to equip students aged 10-15 years across the Western Balkan region with critical thinking, problem solving, and ICT skills. Apart from learning critical thinking and problem solving, children learn practical programming and have the opportunity to practice their skills through physical computing. To compete in the global job market, skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, digital literacy and creativity are key to success. As part of the program, each school in the Western Balkans is provided with a number of micro:bit devices - pocket sized computers which children can programme onto and use across subjects to solve every day problems. It allows students to learn in a fun, interactive and innovative way.

The three-year education programme is designed and implemented by the British Council and funded by the UK Government. Macedonia2025, together with LSE, is responsible for the evaluation of the impact of this Programme, regarding the improvement of the learning process and the skills of young people. For that purpose, we are providing a baseline and ex-post analysis/report through conducting in-depth-interviews and questionnaires with the relevant stakeholders, i.e. policy makers, school leaders, teachers and pupils.

Macedonia2025 successfully completed the first, second and third part of the evaluation, and it will continue to evaluate the British Council's '21 Century Schools Programme' until 2022, when all primary schools in the country have successfully implemented the Programme into the teaching practices.

In 2021, Macedonia2025 will conduct the fieldwork for the endline study, and will submit the endline country report.

2.4. Ohrid Hi-Tech Excellence Camp

Ohrid Hi-Tech Excellence Camp is a weeklong program that takes place in Ohrid. Participants follow a curriculum delivered by certified STEM lecturers, with the aim of further developing their coding and robotics skills. The program delivery focuses on modern, highly effective teaching and learning methods, consisting of both theoretical and practical sessions at the medium/advanced coding and robotics levels. Participants work in groups or in pairs to complete a customized project, and receive a certificate for program completion. This program, in particular, aims at providing an opportunity for Macedonian youths from all over the world to create networks, to establish friendships, strengthen and build on native Macedonian culture, explore local nature and our cultural heritage, and experience Macedonian cuisine and specialties. All this, while students improve their coding and robotics skills.

In 2021, Macedonia 2025 will implement the program for the first time. We will work on the project application, promotion of the program and seeking for financial donors from Macedonian companies. Implementation of the program is expected for June/July. Furthermore, in 2021, Macedonia2025 will seek funds to realize this program in the coming years.

2.5. Online fundraising campaign “No Child Left Offline”

At the Summit 2020, Macedonia2025 has started an online fundraising campaign entitled “No Child Left Offline”. The funds for the purchase of the equipment in the amount of 12,000 Canadian dollars were collected through this online donation, from individual donors of Macedonian origin from several countries.

In 2021, Macedonia2025 will donate laptops to children from socio-economically disadvantaged families, who do not own a laptop/computer and are not able to follow online classes.

2.6. Atanas Bliznakoff Scholarships for Student Excellence (Atanas Bliznakoff Foundation)

Scholarships are awarded to full-time students enrolled in the first cycle of studies at all faculties at “Ss. Cyril and Methodius University” in Skopje, who have achieved exceptional results and success in the previous cycle of education. Furthermore, scholarships are awarded to those who have achievements and motivation for personal and professional development, but also who do not have sufficient funds to continue their education.

For the academic year 2021/2022, 40 high school students who enroll in the first year of studies at “Ss. Cyril and Methodius University” in Skopje, will each receive a scholarship of 120,000 MKD per year. The right to use the scholarship lasts as long as the conditions are regularly met, including the completion of the first cycle studies.

In 2021, Macedonia2025 will work on the selection process of the scholarship candidates, using a digital tool, a platform that enables our organization to take advantage of the available technologies, making the scholarship selection processes more consistent, secure, efficient, and effective, thus ensuring high transparency and objectivity.

2.7. Russian Academy for National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA)

Macedonia2025, in collaboration with RANEPA, will provide tuition scholarships for Undergraduate and Masters Studies at RANEPA, for the 2021/2022 academic year.

In 2021, Macedonia2025 will complete the administrative selection of the candidates, improve connection and cooperation with RANEPA and increase the engagement with the RANEPA alumni.

2.8. Supporting Girls in STEM

In 2021, Macedonia2025 will work on two new programs that aim to support women/girls in business and STEM education, Girls in STEM and Women Equality.

The programs aim to reduce the gap in education of young women and men, reduce the professional segregation of women in low-paying occupations and professions with low opportunities for advancement, and reduce the stereotypical division of “male” and “female” occupations. This will reduce gender differences in the labor market (activity, employment and wages) and women will have a greater role in economic development and greater economic independence.

Women Equality is a project that promotes an environment in Macedonia and Serbia for sustainable development by increasing gender equality, as well as empowering girls and young women to follow STEM education and professional careers. In 2021, Macedonia2025 will actively work on the implementation of these two programs.

Objective 3: Build strong partnerships and linkages worldwide

We are dedicated to building strong partnerships and working together towards building a stronger nation. We represent a platform for all Macedonians around the globe to unite, help and join our efforts in supporting the economic and democratic growth of Macedonia.

This objective will be achieved through the following programs and activities:

3.1. Advisory Board

Macedonia2025's Advisory Board is a body consisting of world-leading experts that collaborate with Macedonia2025 to help make our country's economy, society, and quality of life better.

The Advisory Board provides expert guidance, recommendations, analysis, quality assurance, access to funding and research for Macedonia2025. The Advisory Board is a prestigious group. Members are leading experts in their field or sector of business. They have qualifications from world-renowned institutions or have business experience with leading or pioneering companies.

In 2021, Macedonia2025 strives to expand its network of Advisory Board members and increase engagement with the members of the board.

3.2. Ambassadors Club

Macedonia2025's Ambassadors Club (AC) is a group of successful professionals of Macedonian origin from around the world. As a network of exceptional individuals, the Ambassadors join their efforts to assist in the implementation of Macedonia2025's projects and events, adding value to the networking opportunities within the organization, as well as contributing to the expansion of the Macedonian market and fundraising opportunities. The Ambassadors' potential contribution is shaped by their physical location and expertise, varying from year to year. The Ambassadors Club members work together in subdivisions, the so-called Affinity Clubs:

- Finance and Economics
- Business Development and Consulting
- Entrepreneurship
- Strategic Operations
- IT

The AC's Affinity Clubs work towards the mission and objectives of Macedonia2025.

In 2021, Macedonia2025 will grow the pool of Ambassadors Club Members by over 25%, and organize at least one event led by the members of the club. Furthermore, the AC Members will be more involved in the Summit 2021, by suggesting and inviting speakers and participants.

Ambassadors Club Members will have meetings on a quarterly basis, and meet more regularly within the affinity clubs.

3.3. Expansion of diaspora network

In 2021, Macedonia2025 will seek to increase its diaspora network on social media, and unite them in the goal of helping Macedonian businesses and individuals. The Macedonian professional diaspora members that share our mission and vision will have a chance to partner with our organization in order to strengthen the Macedonian economy.

3.4. Connect2MK, Online platform for connecting businesses with diaspora

One of Macedonia2025's goals is to connect professional diaspora around the globe to support the economic growth of Macedonia. Our organization tirelessly works on increasing its diaspora engagement by establishing a growing body of supporters and friends among Macedonian expatriates. To this end, we have developed a platform that will connect Macedonian businesses with professional expatriates from around the world, therefore helping them grow and prosper in an international environment, through mentoring programs, partnership opportunities and/or investments.

One of the main goals of our organization, Macedonia2025, is to use the potential and connections with the diaspora for economic development and business growth. Connect2MK connects Macedonian businesses with appropriate experts from the diaspora, who will offer:

- 1) Mentoring opportunities
- 2) Partnership opportunities
- 3) Opening up possibilities for investment

In 2021, Macedonia2025 will increase the number of Macedonian businesses that use the platform and have received the above-mentioned opportunities.

Objective 4: Advocate to improve the Macedonian business environment

We advocate for a transparent and corruption-free society by providing expert guidance and research on key economic challenges. From here, we improve the business environment and utilize the support from our expatriates for economic progress of the country.

This objective will be achieved through the following programs:

4.1. Quarterly Economic Report

The Quarterly Economic Report gives updates on economic developments based on the available early warning indicators and high frequency data.

The report will continue to monitor the economic developments on a quarterly basis throughout 2021.

4.2. Policy Contributions

In 2021, the Macedonia2025 team will publish four articles on relevant issues, as well as four position papers for policy reforms. Some of the topics include analysis on digitalization and the extent to which the average Macedonian citizen has mastered the skills needed for functioning in the modern digital economy.

4.3. Platform for Prosperous Future

The Platform for Prosperous Future represents a natural extension of the Macedonia2025 activities and programs directed towards building a stronger nation and a stronger society. Its main objective is to support an alignment of the interests of all political parties and other relevant stakeholders, concerning the key areas and key priorities that will put the country on a path of high growth and living standard. The Platform aspires to contribute towards creating a stronger society: developed economy, competitive and striving businesses, dynamic business environment, society characterized by strong democracy and rule of law, and high quality of life. Hence, it identifies the key priorities and areas which can bring us there: provides a snapshot of the current context and presents the aspirational future.

In 2021, Macedonia2025 will continue with the promotion of the platform. While we act as a conductor, we need broad acceptance and support from many actors to drive towards the common goals. Additionally, by the end of 2021, Macedonia2025 will prepare an action plan(s) with broad engagement of political parties and business leaders.

4.4. President Center for Policy Education (PCPE)

Macedonia2025 is one of the partner organizations of the Presidential Center for Political Education.

In 2021, Macedonia2025 will engage in the development of the Program and the mission of the center. In addition, as a partner organization, Macedonia2025 will support some of the activities of the PCPE, one of which being the Presidential School of Politics.

4.5. Country Dashboard: Measuring Economic Growth

The Country Dashboard consists of fourteen measures/indicators. Seven track economic metrics, while the remaining seven measure the most important (in our view) drivers for growth - 'Growth Enablers'. The Dashboard provides a streamlined view of the economic conditions and progress made over time in Macedonia, placed in comparative context with the region and with historic baseline data. The comparative data is drawn from a selection of 34 countries. These 34 data points are selected as a country peer group, based upon several indicators, including their status as upper middle-income countries, according to the World Bank. Furthermore, the peer group was selected based upon the World Economic Forum's (WEF) suggested peer group for Macedonia. Thus, the Country Dashboard also provides a ranking of the country within the 34 countries and tracks progress in relative terms.

In 2021, Macedonia2025 will update the dashboard on a quarterly basis to reflect only the most current forecasting and economic indicators. Furthermore, Macedonia2025 is committing to a review of the Dashboard (both indicators and the peer countries) to make it a more precise and useful tool for all interested parties, in tracking the progress of the country towards a "stronger nation". The renewed Country Dashboard will be made up of fifteen measures/indicators. Six of those will track the economic growth, while the remaining nine will mimic and measure the most important (in our view) drivers for growth - 'Growth Enablers'. While our organization is aware that we cannot directly influence the economic indicators, we believe that our programs and actions contribute towards creating both short and long-term conditions for growth, i.e. we do affect the Growth Enablers.

4.6. Digital Agenda MK2025

Accelerating the process of digitalization and advancing the digital skills of the Macedonian countries is the main goal of the "Digital Initiative MK2025", initiated by Macedonia2025.

"Digital Initiative MK2025" is part of the mission of Macedonia 2025, which through its activities strives for development by encouraging cooperation and connecting the Macedonian diaspora with the academic, political and business community.

In 2021, Macedonia2025 will continue to collaborate with all interested parties in order to support the country to advance in the area of digitization and digital skills. By the end of 2021, a series of activities will follow, which will accelerate the process of digitization in the country.