



FINANCE THINK
OUT OF THE BOX



**PROGRAM OF
ACTIVITIES
2020**

This document presents the program of activities of the Economic research & policy Institute “Finance Think” Skopje for the calendar year 2020. The plan is structured around four pillars of Institute’s work:

1. Research

2. Analytics

3. Advocacy and communication

4. Capacity building and networking

1. RESEARCH

Research activities for 2020 have been planned as follows:

1. Interactive and multi-stakeholder mechanism for tracking fulfillment of economy-related political promises

The aim of the project is to promote monitoring and measurement of economic goals and results of political-government programs, by using evidence, findings and data and by encouraging multi-stakeholder engagement. The action will achieve the following results:

- A framework for measuring economic goals and results has been set, in the context of political and governmental programs, through the use of evidence, findings and data;
- Skills have been developed for stakeholders to critically analyze the possible and achieved results of political promises in the area of economics;
- Stakeholders enrich public discourse through critical, argumentative and lively debate on the feasibility, results and cost of political promises in the economy.

2. Promoting evidence and dialogue for enhancing state aid's effect onto consumer welfare in North Macedonia

The objective of the action is to promote evidence and foster dialogue on the role of state aid for consumer welfare in North Macedonia. The specific objectives of the action include:

- To understand existing forms of state aid in North Macedonia (direct subsidies, tax exemptions, discounted loans etc.) and their (mutual) consistency within the overall anti-trust legislation in the country;
- To produce robust evidence on

whether state aid distorts competition on the market, with application on the paramount governmental program for subsidizing companies in North Macedonia and dwelling on the 'market economy operator' principle;

- To improve the dialogue among stakeholders, as well raise public awareness, on state aid, alignment with EU Acquis and consumer welfare.

3. Economic compass – measuring the effects of proposed tax and social policies by the political parties

The purpose of the project is to assess the effects of economic, social and part of the development policies that political parties will propose in their election programs for the 2020 parliamentary elections, using the MK-MOD Microsimulation Tax & Benefit Model. The project will result in:

- Political parties' economic programs are better structured,
- Reduced populist elements, unrealistic promises, and a "trial and error" approach to economic / social policies,
- Political parties have higher skills to use data, results and findings, as well as to show a more open mind to the use of data, results and simulations in policy making,
- The public has a clearer picture of the boundaries of economic policies, hence better aligned expectations with reality.

4. Socio-economic assessment of the medium- to long-term effects of Covid-19 on child-related sectors

The aim of the project is to conduct a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the mid- to long-term effects of Covid-19 on the sectors related to children, namely: social protection, education and health care. The analysis will perform a quantitative simulation, using micro-data, on the effects of the crisis on child poverty and related indicators. In a separate section, the analysis will focus on the implications of and on public finance in relation to these sectors.

5. Gender equality in the workplace: Monitoring at the local level

The main objective of the project is to promote and encourage gender equality and non-discrimination in hiring and in the workplace. The short-term goals of the project include:

- assessing employers' attitudes to gender inequality and discrimination in hiring and in the workplace and the mechanisms for their prevention and protection;
- to examine the experiences of workers in relation to gender inequality and discrimination and to assess whether they are reduced to isolated cases or systematically occurring;
- to help policymakers make informed decisions based on evidence, data and recommendations;
- to encourage social dialogue between key stakeholders (workers, employers and policymakers);
- to raise public awareness of the regulatory framework for protection against gender inequality and discrimination in hiring and in the workplace.

6. "My money, my responsibility": Participative budgeting in the municipalities in Macedonia

The overall purpose of the project is to enhance local-stakeholders' practice and participation in the local budgeting process and to increase the effectiveness of the municipal-money spending.

The particular objectives/tasks of the project include:

- To increase participation of local stakeholders – civil society, business community, citizens, local media - in the municipal-budgeting processes;
- To increase awareness of local citizens for how spending of municipal money affects their quality of life;
- To increase the credibility and effectiveness of local governments' decisions related to the spending of public money, as well raise awareness for the (need for) transparency related to it.

7. Capacity and innovation of tourism services for sustainable local economic growth – New approach through development of alternative tourist attractions

The overall goal of the project is to improve local economic development by building capacities of local stakeholders involved in the supply chain, increasing quality of services and development, launching and selling alternative tourist attractions. This general objective is divided into specific objectives that involve specific interventions on three fronts:

- To encourage municipalities by improving skills and strengthening the capacities of local stakeholders (tourism service providers, business sector, non-governmental organizations) for: communication, service delivery, service culture / behaviour, leadership in tourism, branding, promotion and tourism guidance;
- To develop alternative tourist attractions that promote traditional culture and environmental aspects of municipalities;
- To launch and promote developed alternative tourist attractions in five destinations, and to develop a large network of links between local, regional and national stakeholders.

TABLE PRESENTING STAGES AND DEADLINES

Activity	Stage	Planned tasks	Deadline
<p>1. Interactive and multi-stakeholder mechanism for tracking fulfillment of economy-related political promises</p>	<p>Not started yet</p>	<p>Setting a measurement framework with economic goals and results in form of an interactive web platform</p> <p>Conducting Delphi questionnaire for economic consensus</p> <p>Conducting training with stakeholders</p> <p>Mentoring economic program and texts</p> <p>Producing interactive tools</p> <p>Media participation on current economic issues</p>	<p>May 2022</p>
<p>2. Promoting evidence and dialogue for enhancing state aid's effect onto consumer welfare in North Macedonia</p>	<p>Mapped existing forms of state aid and connection to EU Acquis Chapter 8.</p> <p>Assesment of the current anti-trust and state aid regulation framework, with special focus on its alignment with the EU Acquis.</p>	<p>Devising evidence-based conclusions and policy recommendations to gauge the causal effects of state aid onto market distortion.</p> <p>Conducting consultative meetings with direct beneficiaries</p> <p>Conducting workshop and capacity building activities for stakeholders</p> <p>Producing a set of dissemination and awareness-rising tools</p>	<p>February 2021</p>
<p>3. Economic compass – measuring the effects of proposed tax and social policies by the political parties</p>	<p>Not started yet</p>	<p>Meeting with political parties</p> <p>Obtaining inputs and simulations</p> <p>Presenting the results to the political parties</p> <p>Informing the public debates</p> <p>Production of visualizations</p>	<p>December 2020</p>

4.	Socio-economic assessment of the medium-to long-term effects of Covid-19 on child-related sectors	Not started yet	Quantitative analysis of the effects on the Covid-19 on the social protection, education and health care among the children	June 2020
5.	Gender equality in the workplace: Monitoring at the local level	Conducted desk analysis Conducted interviews with employers	Conduction of focus groups with citizens Preparing policy brief and visual products Organizing local promotional campaign	June 2020
6.	“My money, my responsibility”: Participative budgeting in the municipalities in Macedonia	Organized information corners in 12 municipalities Organized public lecturers Organized 8 Town Hall Meetings between local authorities and citizens	Impact evaluation of the Town Hall Meetings on the participatory budgeting process Development of advocacy tools and promotion materials Organizing regional forum on PB process	March 2020
7.	Capacity and innovation of tourism services for sustainable local economic growth – New approach through development of alternative tourist attractions	Organized soft-skills training for tourism providers Developed and piloted alternative touristic trails	Organization of a public campaign Promotion of developed tours	April 2020

2. ANALYTICS

The following analytical activities have been planned for 2020:

1. Delivering 4 issues of the Macro-monitor – the macro-observer of the national economy with a forward looking elements;
2. Delivering at least 3 FT Comments – a commentary of important national and international documents, reports, strategies and so on, concerning Macedonia;
3. Delivering few issues of FT Opinion – a condensed and swift reaction to the moves of the daily economic policy and trends;
4. Producing visual products: at least 10 Info-graphs, 5 GIFs and 3 Let's chat economics on 'hot' economic topics;
5. Producing at least 2 issues of "Quality of life" publication
6. Improving the economic datasets to be available for analysis purposes by the other NGOs and other interested parties, and presenting those data in an easily understandable format for non-economists;

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	Activity	Stage	Planned tasks	Deadline
1.	Macro-monitor	Ongoing	Devising 4 issues	Continuously over 2020
2.	FT Comment	Ongoing	Devising at least 3 issues	Continuously over 2020
3.	FT Opinion	Ongoing	Devising few issues	Continuously over 2020
4.	Visual products	Ongoing	Devising at least 10 info-graphs, 5 GIFs and 3 Let's chat economics	Continuously over 2020
5.	Quality of life	Ongoing	Producing at least 2 issues	Continuously over 2020
6.	Improving data-sets	Ongoing	Improving the datasets	Continuously over 2020

3. ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION

The following advocacy and communication activities have been planned for 2020:

1. Continuous publication of research results and findings in form of articles in international peer-reviewed journals; monographs; chapters in books and so on;
2. Devising at least three policy briefs on issues pertinent to the economic development in North Macedonia and stemming out of current research – so as to advocate for innovative solutions and to educate citizens on their potential contribution in solving the problems;
3. Setting a measurement framework with economic goals and results in form of an interactive web platform

4. Production of journalistic stories on topic related to gender discrimination at the workplace;
5. Production of videos on the participative budgeting process;
6. Organization of a closing event on the project “Gender equality at the workplace: Monitoring at local level”;
7. Organization of regional forums on participative budgeting process;
8. Conduction of training on analysis, interpretation, use and visualization of data and research findings;
9. Organization of “Coffee with journalists” few times per year, to secure friendly and intense communication with the journalists, so as to be able to affect the discourse of the public economic debate;
10. Advocating (“fighting for”) for more space for economic news in the media by stronger links with them.



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	Activity	Stage	Planned tasks	Deadline
1.	International publications	Ongoing	Articles, monographs, chapters in books	Continuously over 2020
2.	Policy briefs	Ongoing	Devising at least 3 issues	Continuously over 2020
3.	Interactive web platform with measurement framework	Not started yet	Building the interactive web platform	December 2020
4.	Journalistic stories	Not started yet	Production of journalistic stories	May – June 2020
5.	Production of videos	Ongoing	Production of 3 videos on PB process	May 2020
6.	Closing event	Not started yet	Organization of final event to present the results of the project related to the gender discrimination at the workplace	June 2020
7.	Regional forums	Not started yet	Organization of regional forums on PB process in 8 municipalities	September 2020
8.	Training for stakeholders	Not started yet	Organization of training on skills for analysis, interpretation, use and visualization of data and research findings	December 2020
9.	Coffee with journalists	Not started yet	Organizing at least 1 meeting	October 2020
10.	Media	Ongoing	Increasing the presence in media	Continuously over 2020

4. CAPACITY BUILDING AND NETWORKING

The following capacity building activities have been planned for 2020:

1. Participation in at least two international conferences to present results of ongoing projects and/or to build network with international researchers;
2. Participation at domestic conference, round tables, forums and other similar events, so as to present ongoing research and build networks with domestic researchers, other NGOs, government representatives and media;

3. Networking with citizens, CSOs, business community, local government, Mayor and media within the project “My money, my responsibilities”;

4. Cooperating with political parties, economic policymakers, economic journalists within the projects related to economy-related political promises;

5. Initiating cooperation (leading to Memos of understanding) with reputed domestic institutions and other NGOs conducting similar or complementary activities;

6. Participation at seminars for equipping with advocacy skills and research methods;

7. Securing a referent literature, mainly research methods and econometrics.

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	Activity	Stage	Planned tasks	Deadline
1.	International conference participation	Not started yet	Participate on at least two conferences	Continuously over 2020
2.	Domestic conference / round table participation	Not started yet	Participate on at least three events	Continuously over 2020
3.	Networking with municipalities	Ongoing	Networking with citizens, business sector, CSOs, Mayor, local media	Continuously over 2020
4.	Cooperation with political parties	Ongoing	Cooperation with political parties, economic journalists and policymakers	Continuously over 2020
5.	Trainings	Ongoing	Attend seminars for advocacy and research skills	Continuously over 2020
6.	Literature	Ongoing	Securing relevant literature	Continuously over 2020



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