

PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES 2019



This document presents the program of activities of FINANCE THINK - Economic Research & Policy Institute, Skopje for the calendar year 2019. 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 2019 have been planned as follows:

1. Bridging the gaps between multinational companies and domestic SMEs in Macedonia

The overall objective of the Action is to establish and/or improve the linkages between domestic SMEs (dSMEs) – multinational companies (MNCs) operating in Macedonia, with the final goal to increase domestic business sector competitiveness.

This overarching aim is broken down into specific objectives:

- To better match demand and supply between dSMEs and MNCs through addressing value chain supply barriers and mapping potential value chains;
- To upgrade capacity of dSMEs for skills foster “selling” themselves to the MNCs; identification of opportunities, building networks, and improving efficiency;
- To reduce the technological gap between dSMEs and MNCs by improving capacity and information for standardization and licencing, elevating innovation and R&D capacity, and fostering implementation of new technologies.
- To spark networking between dSMEs and MNCs through knowledge transfer and mentoring, as well joint events.

2. Analysis of youth underemployment in Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia

The primary objectives of the proposal are:

- To investigate the interaction between underemployment and personal, household and community characteristics, in rigorous econometric manner by considering potential selectivity bias into underemployment;
- To investigate the effect of underemployment on personal wellbeing, in rigorous econometric manner by considering their potential simultaneity and wellbeing way of

measuring through self-perception; As well the following secondary objectives:

- To portray the issue of youth underemployment in Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, through simple statistics and charts, as such information has been lacking so far;
- To reveal the importance of gender differences in characterizing underemployment and its effect on worker's welfare;
- To devise credible recommendations to policymakers in the form of specific instruments to tackle underemployment.

3. “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.

4. 360o monitoring of the provision of social services at the local level: Experiences from the municipalities of Prilep and Dolneni

The overall goal of the project is to improve the delivery of social services at the local level by increasing the capacities of local stakeholders and involving citizens in this process in the municipalities of Prilep and Dolneni.



The short-term objectives of the project are:

- To analyze and monitor the provision of social services from local public institutions in all aspects (hence, 360 degrees monitoring), with a key emphasis on the PI Inter-municipal Center for Social Work – Prilep.
- To understand the extent to which the provision of public services is assisted by the private and civil sector.
- To assess the level of cooperation of local stakeholders and public institutions in delivering social services.
- To understand the perceptions and experiences of the local population regarding the delivery of social services.
- To encourage local policy-makers to make informed decisions based on evidence.
- To strengthen the capacities of all stakeholders for better delivery of social services.
- To increase public awareness about the impact of social services on personal and social well-being.

5. Good or bad tax? Reforming Macedonian personal income tax

The overall objective of the project is to assess the effect of the announced tax reform of the personal income tax.

The specific objectives include:

- To assess the impact of the announced tax reform on the poverty, income inequality, employment behaviour and the budget of the country;
- To assess the reflected and expected behaviour of the stakeholders (employers and employees);
- To steer policymakers to make informed decisions based on evidence, data and recommendations;
- To increase public awareness of the potential impact of the announced tax reform.

6. 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
1.	Bridging the gaps between multinational companies and domestic SMEs in Macedonia	<p>Following activities were already implemented:</p> <p>Meetings with stakeholders to map the potential value chains</p> <p>Conducting semi-structured questionnaire with MNCs</p> <p>Conducting focus group with representatives of domestic SMEs</p> <p>Design and delivery of training for soft skills development</p> <p>Design of visibility materials</p>	<p>Developing an interface web platform</p> <p>Design of visibility materials and TV spot</p> <p>Conducting impact evaluation of the project</p> <p>Organizing final conference to present the project findings and results</p>	December 2019
2.	Analysis of youth underemployment in Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia	Final policy study is prepared and published	<p>Organizing closing event</p> <p>Advocacy in front of the policymakers</p>	March 2019
3.	"My money, my responsibility": Participative budgeting in the municipalities in Macedonia	<p>Selection of 10-15 municipalities to participate in the project</p> <p>the Municipalities and the Mayor are approached</p> <p>Situational and stakeholder analysis prepared</p> <p>Initial meetings of the key stakeholders started</p> <p>Training on participative budgeting conducting in all municipalities</p>	<p>Organization of a public campaign:</p> <p>-Information corners</p> <p>-Public lecturers</p>	March 2020
4.	360o monitoring of the provision of social services at the local level: Experiences from the municipalities of Prilep and Dolneni	Desk research on available laws, bylaws and practices was conducted	<p>Interviews with stakeholders</p> <p>Focus groups with citizens</p> <p>Preparation of visibility materials</p> <p>Organization of a closing event</p>	May 2019

5.	Good or bad tax? Reforming Macedonian personal income tax	Literature review on tax reforms conducted	<p>Quantitative estimation of the tax reform impact</p> <p>Interviews with employers</p> <p>Focus group with employees</p> <p>Preparation of visibility materials</p> <p>Organization of a closing event</p>	June 2019
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6.	Capacity and innovation of tourism services for sustainable local economic growth – New approach through development of alternative tourist attractions	Not started yet	<p>Organization of training on soft skills</p> <p>Selection of touristic destinations</p> <p>Piloting alternative touristic destination</p> <p>Organization of a public campaign</p>	October 2019
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2. ANALYTICS

The following analytical activities have been planned for 2019:

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;

TABLE PRESENTING STAGES AND DEADLINES

	Activity	Stage	Planned tasks	Deadline
1.	Macro-monitor	Ongoing	Devising 4 issues	Continuously over 2019
2.	FT Comment	Ongoing	Devising at least 3 issues	Continuously over 2019
3.	FT Opinion	Ongoing	Devising few issues	Continuously over 2019
4.	Visual products	Ongoing	Devising at least 10 info-graphs, 5 GIFs and 3 Let's chat economics	Continuously over 2019
5.	Quality of life	Ongoing	Producing at least 2 issues	Continuously over 2019
6.	Improving data-sets	Ongoing	Improving the datasets	Continuously over 2019

3. ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION

The following advocacy and communication activities have been planned for 2019:

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 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. Updating the resource center for public spending www.fiscast.mk with large data base;
4. Building interface web platform www.kompanii.mk, with info on the supply and demand of domestic SMEs and MNCs;
5. Production of journalistic stories on topic related to tax reforms;
6. Production of videos on the alternative touristic destinations;
7. Production of a brochure on the alternative touristic destination in 5 regions;
8. Organizing TV campaign on the alternative tourism opportunities;
9. Organizing an event “Macedonian alternative touristic destinations” to promote this kind of tourism as a tool for local development;
10. Organization of a closing event on the project “Bridging gaps between domestic SMEs and MNCs in the country”;
11. Organization of a closing event within the project “360o monitoring of the provision of social services at local level: Experiences from municipalities of Prilep and Dolneni”;
12. Organization of an informative corners in 10 municipalities within the country, related to participative budgeting;
13. Organization of public lecturers on participative budgeting in 10 municipalities within the country;
14. Conducting training on soft skills (sale, promotion, culture, touristic behavior, local brand development) for stakeholders in the touristic sector from 5 regions within the country;
15. 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;
16. Organization of Annual Panel Debate on “hot” topic with prominent speakers, at the end of the year;
17. Advocating (“fighting for”) for more space for economic news in the media by stronger links with them.

TABLE PRESENTING STAGES AND DEADLINES

	Activity	Stage	Planned tasks	Deadline
1.	International publications	Ongoing	Articles, monographs, chapters in books	Continuously over 2019
2.	Policy briefs	Ongoing	Devising at least 3 issues	Continuously over 2019
3.	Resource center www.fiscast.mk	Built	Upgrading with large data set	Continuously over 2019
4.	Interface web platform www.kompanii.mk	Ongoing	Building web platform	December 2019
5.	Journalistic stories	Not started yet	Production of journalistic stories	April-May 2019
6.	Production of videos and brochure	Not started yet	Production of 3 videos on alternative touristic destinations and bilingual brochure	April-September 2019
7.	Organization of TV campaign and event "Macedonian alternative touristic destinations"	Not started yet	Organizing TV campaign on alternative tourism and closing event	July-October 2019
8.	Closing event	Not started yet	Organization of final event to present the results of the project related to the provision of social services in Prilep and Dolneni	May 2019
9.	Informative corners	Not started yet	Organization of informative corners on participative budgeting	March 2019
10.	Public lectures	Not started yet	Organization of a public lectures on participative budgeting	May-June 2019
11.	Training for touristic stakeholders	Not started yet	Organization of training on soft skills	April-June 2019
12.	Coffee with journalists	Not started yet	Organizing at least 1 meeting	April 2019
13.	Annual panel debate	Not started yet	Organizing a debate on hot economic issues	December 2019
14.	Media	Ongoing	Increasing the presence in media	Continuously over 2019

4. CAPACITY BUILDING AND NETWORKING

The following capacity building activities have been planned for 2019:

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

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

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

TABLE PRESENTING STAGES AND DEADLINES

	Activity	Stage	Planned tasks	Deadline
1.	International conference participation	Not started yet	Participate on at least two conferences	Continuously over 2019
2.	Domestic conference / round table participation	Not started yet	Participate on at least three events	Continuously over 2019
3.	Networking with municipalities	Ongoing	Networking with citizens, business sector, CSOs, Mayor, local media	Continuously over 2019
4.	Trainings	Not started yet	Attend seminars for advocacy and research skills	Continuously over 2019
5.	Literature	Ongoing	Securing relevant literature	Continuously over 2019

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