Macedonia

Enabling economic growth and market system development

Increasing Market Employability (IME) programme aims to create jobs and increase incomes for unemployed and underemployed women and men in Macedonia, with a particular focus on youth.

Increasing Market Employability (IME) is a programme of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, implemented by Swisscontact with the assistance of PREDA Plus. IME programme will work to strengthen the business sector in Macedonia, improve quality of products and services offered, expand markets and create an enabling environment in three selected sectors: Tourism, Creative Industries and Green Economy.

IME will implement activities that will contribute to the increased income of men and women, youth in particular, by increasing the competitiveness of small businesses in key sectors and farmers. It is important that the focus is placed on ensuring systemic changes which are sustained. This will allow youth and women to access markets, generate income and adopt system dynamics in the mid- to-long term.

TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
Three tourism destinations in Macedonia, Ohrid, Mavrovo and Krushevo will be assisted to exploit the full potential of their historical, natural and cultural heritage through Univerzity of St. Gallen’s methodology for collaborative destination management, improved service delivery and enriched touristic offer. This will attract more tourists, which in turn will lead to economic growth and employment.

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
Software and IT services and Product Design sub-sectors will be supported. IME will facilitate change so that software development and product design services by Macedonian companies enjoy large market penetration in the country and international markets as well.

GREEN ECONOMY
Focus will be laid on Organic Agriculture and Sustainable Building sectors. Organic Agriculture and producers will have easier and more affordable access to inputs and will offer a variety and consistent supply of organic produce. Sustainable building service providers will provide integrated, sustainable and effective energy saving solutions.
Increasing Market Employability programme recognizes gender equality and youth and women economic empowerment as key factors for accelerating and achieving sustainable economic growth.

Approach

IME programme’s approach is to facilitate change - within the selected sectors - that will trigger industry-wide economic growth and job creation, using a robust results framework and system to assure the quality of the overall results in compliance with Donor Committee for Enterprise Development standards.

Activities

The programme targets systemic changes in the market systems to increase growth in the selected sectors, by addressing the key underlying causes for the bottlenecks that hamper job creation. The aim is to produce sector-wide change and have sizable results that affect in a robust way the job creation in the whole market segments that are targeted.

The IME programme will implement activities that will provide access to knowledge, skills, technologies and delivery mechanisms for targeted producers and stimulate demand for local products and services.

The programme will also provide information on access to financing and facilitate improved policy dialogue. In doing so, IME will assist the selected sectors in creating decent jobs and achieving sustainable economic growth.

IME objectives

The goal of the programme is that more working age women and men, in particular young, are engaged in sustainable, decent employment or self-employment and/or are earning higher incomes.

The programme seeks to encourage change across the sectors, utilising a market-based approach; one that incorporates effective stakeholder platforms, providing the direction required to achieve sustainable change.

This will be achieved by implementing activities that will lead to:

- Growth of Enterprises in Tourism & Hospitality, Creative Industry and Green Economy by expanding the existing market and accessing new market opportunities.
- Enhanced access to improved services (skills support functions, financial services) for enterprises in the three sectors.
- More conducive policy and regulatory framework for private sector growth in targeted sectors.

The expected key results of the programme are to create more than 2,000 jobs, with special consideration to employment opportunities for youth and women, and increase the net income of more than 1,000 companies by €1.5 million over a period of 4 years.