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Civil Society and Youth for Inclusive and
Sustainable Development through
Circular Economy in North Macedonia



“Civil Society and Youth for Inclusive and Sustainable Development through Circular Economy in North Macedonia” project

FINAL EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Terms of Reference



October 2026



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Country	Republic of North Macedonia
Project name	Civil Society and Youth for Inclusive and Sustainable Development through Circular Economy in North Macedonia
Implementing lead organisation	People in Need North Macedonia, with the office in Skopje
Partner organisations	• Organisation for Social Innovations - Association for Developing New Options (ARNO) - Skopje • Association Leaders for Education, Activism and Development (LEAD) - Skopje • Association of Citizens EKOVIDA (NGO Ekovita) - Negotino
Location	The communities of North Macedonia
Donor	European Union EU Support to Civil Society and Media Organisations in the Republic of North Macedonia, IPA Civil Society Facility 2022-2023 Programme
Project length	15 April 2024 – 29 December 2026
Project budget	447,994 EUR, from which 350,000 EUR is provided by the EU and 97,994 EUR are co-financed by PIN internal funds
Duration of final evaluation	Approximately 23 days
Estimated start date (field phase)	Second half of November 2026

1. General overview

North Macedonia continues to face significant challenges in transitioning towards a circular economy, particularly in waste management, where low recycling rates, limited public awareness, and the continued dominance of a linear economic model hinder progress towards environmental sustainability. Despite the country's commitments to aligning with the European Green Deal, the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, and EU environmental standards, the implementation of relevant policies and legislation remains

challenging. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and young people have an important role to play in supporting this transition by promoting sustainable practices, raising environmental awareness, advocating for policy improvements, and encouraging innovative circular economy solutions. However, limited organisational capacities, technical knowledge, and access to resources constrain their ability to effectively contribute to these processes.

The “Civil Society and Youth for Inclusive and Sustainable Development through Circular Economy in North Macedonia” project in North Macedonia, implemented by People in Need (PIN) in partnership with ARNO, LEAD, and Ekovita, was designed to address these challenges by strengthening the capacities of CSOs, empowering young people, and promoting the integration of circular economy principles into vocational education. Through a human rights-based and inclusive approach, the project aimed to enhance the organisational and technical capacities of at least 35 CSOs, increase awareness and engagement among youth, and support vocational high schools in incorporating circular economy topics into their educational practices. The project also promoted cooperation between civil society, local authorities, educational institutions, and the private sector to encourage sustainable business models and resource-efficient practices. Through capacity-building activities, awareness-raising initiatives, and financial support to third parties (FSTP), the project sought to foster innovative solutions in waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and upcycling, while strengthening local ownership and community participation in the green transition.

As the 32.5-month (the project was extended for 2.5 months) project approaches its completion, this final external evaluation aims to assess its overall relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation will examine the extent to which the project has achieved its intended objectives, particularly in strengthening CSO capacities and resilience, increasing youth awareness and participation in circular economy initiatives, and promoting the integration of circular economy principles into vocational education. It will also assess the effectiveness of the financial support mechanisms in enabling CSOs to develop and implement innovative circular economy initiatives, as well as the project's contribution to strengthening cooperation among civil society, educational institutions, businesses, and local authorities. Particular attention will be given to the project's inclusiveness, geographical outreach, and ability to respond to the needs of target groups, including grassroots CSOs and young people outside Skopje.

Furthermore, the evaluation will assess the extent to which the project's results and benefits are likely to be sustained beyond its implementation period, including the continued



application of acquired knowledge and skills, the sustainability of supported circular economy initiatives, and the potential for integrating circular economy practices into educational and community structures. It will identify key achievements, challenges, lessons learned, and good practices, while providing practical and actionable recommendations for future programming.

By analysing project results, stakeholder perspectives, and progress against established indicators, the final external evaluation will provide an evidence-based assessment of the project's contribution to advancing circular economy practices and supporting North Macedonia's green transition. The findings will inform future interventions by PIN and its partners, contributing to the design of more effective, inclusive, and sustainable circular economy initiatives in North Macedonia.

Background

1.1. Implementing partners

People in Need (PIN): An International non-governmental organisation with extensive experience in strengthening civil society, promoting inclusive governance, and managing EU-funded projects, including capacity-building initiatives and Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) schemes.

ARNO: A North Macedonian organisation with over 10 years of experience in supporting green businesses and social enterprises through capacity building, mentorship, and financial support.

LEAD: An organisation specializing in youth engagement and education, with experience in strengthening teaching practices, supporting high schools, and promoting student-led initiatives focused on climate change, human rights, and civic activism.

Ekovita: An organisation with practical expertise in agricultural circular economy models, particularly mushroom cultivation, insect production, and composting, contributing technical knowledge and hands-on experience in sustainable practices.

Project summary

The “Civil Society and Youth for Inclusive and Sustainable Development through Circular Economy in North Macedonia” project focuses on two main outcomes: (1) strengthening the role, capacities, and resilience of civil society in promoting circular economy (CE) and

zero-waste practices; and (2) empowering youth to engage in circular economy education and waste reduction. Key interventions included: a Circular Economy Academy for CSOs; tailored capacity-building and mentoring support for grassroots CSOs; Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) for innovative circular economy and waste reduction initiatives; exchange of regional and EU best practices; youth awareness-raising through documentary screenings and debates; small-scale support for youth-led initiatives; and integration of practical circular economy approaches, including waste reuse, recycling, and upcycling, into agricultural and textile-leather vocational high school education. Till the end of the project by the end of December 3 activities are left to be finalized: facilitating experience sharing among North Macedonian CSOs, youth-centric CE workshops and Skopje meet-up for CSOs.

2. Objective and scope of evaluation

The Final Evaluation, which will be carried out by an external evaluator/or evaluation company selected through an open call and procurement procedures by PIN, aims to assess progress towards project objectives achieved throughout the entire project implementation, identify any areas for refinement or enhancement, including potential gaps or overlooked aspects, and provide realistic and actionable recommendations for future programming and policy initiatives. The evaluation will focus on lessons learned (best practices and challenges) to ensure the long-term impact and sustainability of the project.

This evaluation will cover the project's entire implementation phase, from 15 April 2024 till 31 December 2026, focusing on the Development Assistance Criteria (DAC) of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Coherence, and Sustainability. This approach will provide a results-driven analysis, contributing to evidence-based decision-making and future programming improvements.

The geographical scope of the evaluation will encompass all targeted communities, and stakeholders such as the donor, partner organizations, school teachers and students, Youth Centres, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), **and** trainers. The project team and partners will compile a list of beneficiaries and stakeholders, including their contacts, before the evaluation begins for the selected evaluator or company. The evaluator will then use this list to select stakeholders for interviews, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of the project's performance and stakeholder perspectives.

Specifically, the **Final Evaluation** will focus its scope around the following workstreams:



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- Assessing the added value and effectiveness of the **Circular Economy Academy** in strengthening CSOs' capacities to design, develop and open circular businesses and promote CE concepts, as well as their ability to develop, implement, and scale innovative circular economy models.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of tailored capacity-building activities and mentoring support provided to grassroots CSOs, particularly those outside Skopje, in enhancing their organisational resilience, internal governance, and engagement in circular economy and zero-waste initiatives.
- Assessing the effectiveness and impact of the **Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP)** schemes in supporting innovative circular economy initiatives, including waste reduction, reuse, recycling, upcycling, and behavioural change, as well as the sustainability and potential for scaling up supported initiatives.
- Examining the extent to which the project has facilitated collaboration, networking, and knowledge exchange among CSOs, local authorities, businesses, and other relevant stakeholders, including the added value of transferring regional and EU best practices.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of youth engagement and awareness-raising activities, particularly documentary screenings and debates using the **One World in Schools (OWIS) methodology**, in increasing young people's knowledge, attitudes, and participation in circular economy and waste reduction initiatives.
- Assessing the contribution of small-scale support provided to youth centers in mobilising young people and enabling youth-led circular economy initiatives, including their potential for continued engagement beyond the project's duration.
- Assessing the contribution of small-scale support provided to agricultural and textile-leather high schools in supporting practical based education.
- Examining the extent to which **circular economy principles and practical approaches have been integrated into agricultural and textile-leather vocational high schools**, including teachers' capacities, students' practical skills, and the potential for sustained integration into educational practices.
- Assessing the project's inclusiveness and geographical outreach, particularly its ability to engage grassroots CSOs, young people, and educational institutions outside Skopje, while considering gender equality, equitable participation, and the application of a human rights-based approach.
- Identifying the major challenges encountered during project implementation, assessing the effectiveness of mitigation and adaptive management measures, and examining factors that facilitated or hindered the achievement of intended results.

- Reflecting on **lessons learned, good practices, and sustainability prospects**, including the continued application of acquired knowledge and skills, the viability of supported circular economy initiatives, and opportunities for strengthening cooperation among CSOs, youth centres, schools, local authorities, and businesses beyond the project's duration.

3. Methodology

The evaluation is expected to be conducted primarily through qualitative research methods, combining desk research with direct field activities. The approach should ensure in-depth insights through tools such as interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews, aimed at capturing the experiences, perspectives, and outcomes relevant to the project.

Desk research: review of the project documentation, including the project proposal, logical framework, ITT, reports to the donor, MEAL documentation, communication strategy/materials, mid-term evaluation report, reports prepared by partners and any other related documents.

Direct field activities: expected data collection methods include interviews with the project team and project partners (PIN, LEAD, ARNO, EKOVIDA). Individual or group interviews, focus group discussions with target groups (CSOs, school teachers, students, youth workers, project trainers and experts, representatives of institutions/ministries, the donor, and other stakeholders). To ensure feasibility and adherence to the timeline, the evaluator/company should select a representative sample from these groups.

The evaluator will be responsible for developing and agreeing with PIN the evaluation design and methodology in order to meet the above stated objectives. The methodology should be informed by the Development Assistance Criteria (DAC) of Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability. The evaluation will incorporate elements based on the Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) methodology. In addition to analysing the six criteria identified by the OECD-DAC, qualitative insights (e.g., perceptions of beneficiaries, success stories), data quality assurance, accountability mechanisms, learning and adaptation will be given attention. Furthermore, cross-cutting elements, along with communication and visibility, will be integrated within these six criteria and assessed both as part of and separately from them. Below are the main evaluation questions PIN and our partners want to be covered in the evaluation report. The

list is non-exhaustive, and the evaluator may suggest changes and additions (when preparing the Inception Report and during the field phase based on initial findings):

N	DAC Category	Proposed questions
1.	Relevance	- To what extent have project objectives and activities addressed the needs of CSOs, youth, and vocational high schools in North Macedonia? - How relevant have capacity-building activities and financial support been in promoting circular economy and zero-waste practices? - Have implementing partners demonstrated adequate capacities to achieve project outcomes, and what lessons can be learned?
2.	Coherence	- To what extent have project outcomes contributed to the donor's broader goals and the sustainability of its policies in the region, and how does the project align with the donor's principles, policies, and long-term objectives while adding value? - How well has the project aligned with national policies, the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, and the European Green Deal? - To what extent has the project complemented existing circular economy initiatives and strengthened cooperation among stakeholders?
3.	Effectiveness	- To what extent have the expected project results been achieved, and what have been the main successes and challenges? - How effectively have capacity-building activities, mentoring, and FSTP schemes strengthened CSOs' capacities, supported circular economy initiatives, and enhanced stakeholder collaboration? - To what extent have youth engagement activities and the integration of circular economy principles into vocational education improved young people's awareness, knowledge, skills, and participation?



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4.	Efficiency	• How efficiently have financial, human, and technical resources been used to achieve project results? • How effective and timely have FSTP schemes, mentoring, and support to youth centres been in responding to beneficiaries' needs? • What implementation challenges and delays occurred, and how effectively were they addressed?
5.	Impact	• What changes has the project contributed to in CSOs' capacities, practices, and engagement in circular economy initiatives? • To what extent has the project contributed to changes in youth awareness, attitudes, and behaviours, including through the integration of circular economy practices into vocational education? • Have there been any unintended positive or negative effects, particularly regarding gender equality, inclusion, and community engagement?
6.	Sustainability	• To what extent have CSOs, youth centres, and vocational schools demonstrated ownership and capacity to sustain project results, including acquired knowledge, skills, and partnerships? • How sustainable are the circular economy initiatives supported through FSTP, and what opportunities exist for replication or scaling up? • What additional measures are needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of project outcomes?

5. Evaluation timeframe and expected deliverables

Timeframe: The evaluation is expected to take a maximum of 23 working days (non-consecutive days are acceptable) and the desk research and fieldwork be conducted in mid and end-November. The evaluator is expected to allocate about 20% of the time for a desk review of project documents and preparation of inception report, 60% to field work data collection and data analysis, and 20% to the final report preparation and presentation of findings and recommendations.

Indicative timeline for expected deliverables:

Deliverable	Completion date	Breakdown of the tasks
Desk research and preparation for the Inception Report, including methodology, workplan, and data collection tools.	16-20 November 2026 (4 workdays)	Desk review and initial preparation of the Inception Report, including methodology, work plan, and data collection tools
		Development of data collection tools and integration of desk research findings into the Inception Report.
		Submission of the Inception Report to PIN for review and confirmation, including findings from desk research, methodology, and planned data collection tools.
		Revisions based on feedback, finalisation of the work plan, and approval of the agenda.
Fieldwork preparations	23-24 November 2026 (2 workdays)	Submission of the list of stakeholders and beneficiaries to the evaluator/company (done by PIN).
		Selection and recruitment of interviewees by the evaluator, with additional recommendations provided as guidance by PIN and partners, and submission of the draft fieldwork plan, including selected interviewees, methodology, and logistical details, based on random sampling.
		Submission of the final fieldwork plan and agenda, following revisions based on feedback.
Field work/data collection – field visits in the communities and Skopje.	25 November -8 December 2026 (10 workdays)	Conduct field visits for data collection in the communities of North Macedonia and in Skopje, based on the detailed work plan and agenda agreed
Draft report submitted to PIN and partners for review and comments	Tentatively by 15 December 2026 (5 workdays)	Submission of draft report to PIN and partners for review, including key findings and recommendations
Final report with incorporated feedback and Online presentation of findings and recommendations to	TBC second half of December 2026 (2 workdays)	Submission of the final report with incorporated feedback
		Preparation and delivery of the online presentation of key findings and

stakeholders, including representatives of EU		recommendations to PIN, partners and other relevant stakeholders.
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The timeframe can be adjusted based on the recruitment process and the approval of the Inception Report.

6. Evaluation report

The evaluation report Executive summary should not exceed the limit of 3 pages, and the remaining parts of the report should not exceed 30 pages (excluding annexes). The suggested structure for the report is:

- Executive summary;
- Introduction;
- Methodology;
- Limitations;
- Findings and lessons learned;
- Conclusions;
- Recommendations;
- Annexes.

Audience for the Evaluation Results

The evaluation results will be shared with the donor, project partners, as well as with PIN HQ.

7. Management arrangement specification

The evaluator will report to and liaise with the PIN Focal Person, the Project Manager, on all matters and decisions related to this assignment supported by the Regional MEAL Advisor EaP and Balkans. The evaluator/company will be responsible for all the logistics arrangements. The evaluator will be responsible for initially contacting stakeholders to coordinate meetings. If any issues arise during this process PIN and partners will assist in arranging meetings with all the representatives as selected by the evaluator. For the FGDs, PIN and partners will be responsible for inviting participants (the evaluator will have the space to choose the participants) and arranging their transportation to a location chosen by either the evaluator or PIN/ partners.

8. Evaluation budget and payment modalities

The total budget allocated for the final evaluation of the project is **EUR 5,700.00**, inclusive of all taxes. PIN is seeking to engage a local or regional expert/company to carry out the evaluation to avoid additional expenses related to long air travel, translation or other associated costs.

The payment will be made in two instalments:

- First instalment (40%) upon approval of the proposed methodology, tools, and workplan.
- Final instalment (60%) upon submission and approval of the final evaluation report, along with all required annexes and supporting documentation, by PIN.

Please note that **PIN reserves the right to deduct up to 0.5% of the total contract amount for each day of delay** in delivering the agreed outputs. This deduction, if applicable, will be applied to the final payment.

9. Requirements

Both **individual consultants and consulting companies** with relevant expertise are eligible to apply. Applicants must demonstrate proven experience in conducting **final project evaluations** for the last 5 years, particularly in the fields of **Civil Society, Circular Economy, Environmental issues, and/or cross-cutting themes** such as gender, inclusion, or governance. Experience with **EU-funded projects** will be considered an asset. Fluency in English is required, while the knowledge and practical application of the Macedonian language will be considered as asset.

10. Application procedures

All interested candidates are invited to submit their applications to applications.mk@peopleinneed.net, with the subject line: **CE NM Final Project Evaluation – [Your Full Name and/or Company Name]**.

The **application deadline is 4 November 2026**.

Applications must include the following documents:

- Curriculum Vitae (CV),

- Letter of Interest, indicating availability, motivation and proven experience in conducting final project evaluations (2 pages max.),
- Draft proposed methodology for conducting the evaluation (2 pages max.),
- Detailed budget breakdown as part of the financial offer,
- Previous publications or examples of similar evaluations conducted in 2 copies.
- Contact details of three professional references, preferably from similar assignments.

Only complete applications received by the deadline will be considered. Shortlisted candidates will be contacted for further clarification or interview.

11. The evaluation of the applications

The received applications will be assessed against the following evaluation criteria:

#	Criteria	Evaluation Weighting
1.	Technical aspect: Quality of an outline methodology presented by the evaluator/ evaluation company.	Sub-total 60 points
2.	Previous experience in evaluating EC-funded projects.	Subtotal 20 points
3.	CV quality and competences of staff performing the task (years of experience in evaluations, type and scope of evaluations conducted, courses and studies completed relevant to the field of evaluation); including experience of work in the context of circular economy.	Subtotal 20 points
Total score	The selection process will consist of two stages: First Stage – Application Review and Evaluation: All submitted applications will be reviewed to verify their completeness and compliance with the required documentation. Applications meeting the	100 points



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	eligibility and documentation requirements will then be assessed against the established evaluation criteria, with a maximum score of 100 points. Second Stage – Interviews: The three (3) candidates achieving the highest scores in the first stage will be shortlisted and invited to an interview. Only candidates who successfully pass the first stage will be eligible to proceed to the second stage. The interviews will provide an opportunity to further assess the shortlisted candidates' technical expertise, relevant experience, and suitability for the assignment.	
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