



NOVEMBER

Strategy of the City of Skopje for Cooperation with the NGOs



Skopje, 2007

STRATEGY OF THE CITY OF SKOPJE FOR COOPERATION WITH NGOS

Work Group:

Lovren Markik – City of Skopje
Mirjana Apostolova – City of Skopje
Emilija Georgievska – City of Skopje
Svetlana Milenkova – CIRa
Vaska Draskovik – CIRa
Igor Kostovski – CIRa

Skopje, November 2007.

The content of this publication does not necessarily represent the view or the position of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje.

This Strategy has been developed by the Center for Institutional Development – CIRa, as a part of the City of Skopje Strategy for Cooperation with Civic Organizations Project, implemented by CIRa in cooperation with the City of Skopje, and funded by the OSCE – Spillover Monitoring Mission to Skopje.

The City of Skopje, in a participative process, together with civic associations and foundations from the area of Skopje, and with the aim to establish effective cooperation mechanisms and build partner relations for increasing the influence in the decision making process and policy creation, and to synergize resources, developed a Strategy for Cooperation with Civic Associations together with an Implementation Action Plan.

The Skopje City Council, supported by the Commission for Relations between Municipalities and Support to Civic Associations and Foundations, adopted the Strategy on its 54th session which was held on 19 November 2007.

On this occasion, I would like to express my gratitude to the Center of Institutional Development – CIRa, The OSCE Mission in Skopje, the Skopje City Council, but especially to all civic associations actively participating in the creation of the Strategy.

I hope we will continue working together on its implementation with the same professionalism and dedication.

Mr. Trifun Kostovski

Mayor of the City of Skopje

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INTRODUCTION

The civic society within the boundaries of the City of Skopje is a large and versatile community. A large number of civic organizations registered on the territory of the City of Skopje base their activities at the local level, but the number of the organizations functioning at the national level is not small either. It is precisely this potential of the civic sector and the competencies of the City of Skopje that clearly define the need for an all-inclusive strategic approach in the defining of the cooperation between the City of Skopje and civic organizations.

In 2005, the City of Skopje adopted a new organizational structure which introduced the Sector for International Cooperation and Support to Civic Associations and Foundations, with the Department for Cooperation and Support to Civic Associations and Foundations as a part of it. The Departments' main task has been to initiate, coordinate and develop cooperation between the City of Skopje and the civic sector on the City of Skopje's territory. Acknowledging the need for a long-term partnership between these two parties, as well as the need for their active involvement in decision-making processes, the City of Skopje decided to improve the quality of cooperation with civic organizations by means of developing a strategy.

To that end, the Center for Institutional Development (CIRa) in partnership with the City of Skopje and financially supported by OSCE – Spillover Monitoring Mission to Skopje, have completed a strategy development project for the cooperation of the City of Skopje with civic organizations, accompanied by action plans for strategy implementation.

The Strategy of the City of Skopje for Cooperation with Civic Organizations has been developed by the Center for Institutional Development (CIRa) as a project implementer, and the strategy development process was coordinated by a six-member work group, including three City of Skopje representatives and three CIRa representatives.

GENERAL REMARKS AND NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

In the context of this strategy, civic organizations include all civic associations and foundations performing activities partially or fully in the territory of the city of Skopje. These civic organizations do not include other forms of association (e.g.: political parties, trade unions, chambers of commerce, etc.), and the said forms are not the subject of interest in this strategy.

The basic principles followed by this strategy are the rights and responsibilities determined by the positive legal acts which regulate and describe the area: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights², European Convention on Human Rights and Freedoms³ (including its protocols), Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia⁴, The Law on Civic Associations and Foundations⁵, the National Strategy of the Government for Cooperation with the Civic Sector 2007-2011⁶, Skopje City Strategic Plan 2006-2009⁷, and other legislation related to the civic sector.

Following the above mentioned documents, the administration of the City of Skopje will base its future cooperation with the civic sector on the following principles: partnership, mutual trust, participation and consultation, transparency, independence and accountability.

¹ General Assembly of the United Nations (1948) Universal Declaration of Human Rights

² General Assembly of the UN (1966/67) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

³ Council of Europe (1950) European Convention on Human Rights.

⁴ Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no. 52/91 (1991) Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia.

⁵ Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no. 31/98 (1998) Law on Civic Associations and Foundations.

⁶ Government of the Republic of Macedonia, General Secretariat (2007) Strategy for Cooperation with the Civic Sector 2007-2011.

⁷ City of Skopje (2005) Strategic Plan 2006-2009.

STRATEGY TIME FRAME AND OBJECTIVES

City of Skopje Strategy for Cooperation with the Civic Organizations is a midterm planning document which covers the period 2007 – 2010. Its main goal is to ensure active involvement of civic organizations in the processes of defining development activities and initiatives of the City of Skopje, as well as to create preconditions for establishment of effective partnerships.

The main goal of the strategy is described in detail through a series of ten objectives, and the implementation of each of the identified objectives is based on an action plan. The realization of the objectives mainly relies on establishing mechanism for cooperation, passing of sector programs and strategies, and on precise field and other activities.

The ten identified objectives include:

- Establishing mechanisms of cooperation between the City of Skopje and civic organizations;
- Increasing the information flow between the City of Skopje and civic organization;
- Increasing and strengthening of the City administration's capacity in order to improve the quality of its functions and services;
- Developing strategic partnerships between the City of Skopje and civic organizations;
- Increasing the degree of environmental protection and improving city sanitation;
- Increasing the participation of civic organizations in the planning processes and the development of specialized strategies,
- Providing support for the city administration to deal with health-social-educational problems in the city,
- Increase civic organizations' participation in the processes of strengthening inter-ethnic relations,
- Increase the level of ICT use, and
- Provide support to the City administration in the affirmation of gender equality and equality between the sexes.

The key stakeholders in the implementation of the strategy are the administration of the city of Skopje and the civic organizations. However, since according to the Law on Territorial Division⁸ the territory covered by the city includes ten municipalities, obviously for the implementation of some parts of this document it will be necessary to establish good communication and cooperation with the administration of the ten Skopje municipalities.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

In general, the development of the Strategy of the City of Skopje for Cooperation with the civic organizations was based on two general directives: legal framework (previously described) and the results from the opinion poll of the city administration and the civic organization active on the territory of the city.

The results from the poll, in a form of a report⁹, provide an overview of the current cooperation of the city with the civic sector and map the needs, desires and possibilities for

⁸ Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no. 55/2004 (2004) Law on Territorial Organization of the Local Self-Government in the Republic of Macedonia.

⁹ Center for Institutional Development - CIRa (2007) Analysis of the City of Skopje's Cooperation with Civic Organizations - Report.

expanding it. Doubtlessly, these results confirmed the existence of a satisfactory cooperation between the city and the civic sector, which needs to be developed both in terms of quantity and quality. The main reasons for developing the cooperation were the need for increased and more frequent exchange of information, opening of new information channels, as well as increasing the ways and means for exchange of information (information scope).

The newly planned cooperation is envisioned as multiparty and dispersed, i.e. at the same time increasing the cooperation with both the sector for cooperation with civic organizations of the city administration, the Skopje mayor's office and Skopje Municipal Council.

The possibility for expansion and deepening of the cooperation of civic organizations and the city of Skopje is needed and possible in almost all of the segments of city authority. However, identified as most potential were the following areas: education, social welfare, environmental protection, public utility services, human rights and freedoms, sports and youth, culture, use of IT, gender equality, interethnic relationships and local economic development.

Special attention was given to the need of involving the civic sector in the planning processes in the sectors/departments of the city administration, as well as the need for increasing the scope of the cooperation in the area of development of projects and fundraising.

The Strategy is based on the *win-win* concept and the model of long-term cooperation (as an alternative to the predominant ad-hoc cooperation), which synergistically complements the resources of the civic organizations on one hand, and the administration of the City of Skopje, on the other, and which will lead to multiple improved results in comparison to the current cooperation.

This model of cooperation will doubtlessly lead to bigger openness and trust between the key stakeholders of this strategy, as well as increased quality of mutual contacts. At the same time, this model of cooperation will have a positive influence on the content of the cooperation, by decreasing the direct financial support of the civic organizations, directing it towards cooperation and partnerships on project concepts for the benefit of the citizens of the city of Skopje. Finally, the model will contribute to institutionalization of the cooperation and creation of sustainable relations between parties, enabling joint coordinated action and achieving visible community change.

METHODOLOGY

The process of strategy development was designed and implemented in several segments, in the period May - September 2007. The first phase covered preparation of questionnaires, intended to determine the existing situation of cooperation and the vision for its up building, as well as their distribution to the civic sector and city administration.

The research was implemented through self-administering, quantitative and qualitative questionnaires in the period from 28 May to 12 June 2007 and it provided a realistic picture which served as a baseline for the strategy. Questionnaires were distributed by e-mail to a sample of 91 organizations. From a total number of distributed questionnaires, in the given period 34 fully answered questionnaires were received, which provides a 37,4% of feedback.

The questions were grouped in several areas, and were related to: information on the organization or the sector/department in the City of Skopje, general knowledge and views on the cooperation between civic organizations and the City of Skopje, and the vision on future cooperation and development needs.

After the analyses, compiled conclusions were prepared which showed the degree and content of the existing cooperation of the City of Skopje with the civic organizations. They showed the positive aspects, but also the problems in the cooperation, detected the insufficient flux of mutual information sharing and gave the main directions for the document.

The analyses report was submitted to all civic organizations who participated on the first general workshop with the aim to present the project and to stimulate active involvement of civic organizations in its implementation.

Implementing three topic related workshops, each covering separate areas of action, we started implementing the second phase of the project with the goal to define strategic objectives and the activities to implement the objectives. Defining the strategic objectives special attention was put on their compatibility and support given to the objectives defined in the City of Skopje Strategic Plan 2006-2009. The results of these three workshops were integrated leading to the common strategic objectives and the related activities. This ended the second implementation phase.

The thus defined objectives and activities were subject of work of the Working Group consisting of representatives of CIRa and the City of Skopje administration, and for their implementation action plans were developed during the five workshops, finishing the contents of the draft text of the Strategy.

In addition to this, the fifth workshop was also intended to collect opinions from the representatives of civic organizations on the criteria for establishment of discussion groups consisted of representatives of the city administration and civic organizations, as well as in relation to the procedures for submitting project proposals and criteria for their selection. The key conclusions from the discussions were used as ground in developing proposal criteria and procedures.

The final part of the project implementation included presentation of the draft strategy to representatives of the City of Skopje and civic organizations. Comments and improvements presented and proposed on this, sixth, final workshop were than reviewed by the working group, followed by the preparation of the final text of the Draft Strategy of the City of Skopje for cooperation with civic organizations, that was submitted to the City of Skopje authorities.

The process of Strategy adoption took place in two phases, draft and proposal phase, in order to provide opportunities for debate and incorporation of the suggestions made by Skopje City Council members.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The overall strategy for cooperation between the City of Skopje and the civic organizations is based on ten strategic objectives, each covering a separate interest area and each contributing to the implementation of the overall - main goal of the strategy.

A strategy cannot be implemented through the separate implementation of its strategic objectives since they are all interconnected and lead into the same direction. In the case of the strategy of the City of Skopje for cooperation with the civic organizations this interrelatedness of the strategic objectives is especially strong, mainly because of the complexity of approach and the scope of planned results.

The text below briefly presents and explains the strategic objectives, as well as the activities related to them.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: ESTABLISHING MECHANISMS FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CITY OF SKOPJE AND THE CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

The City of Skopje has a goal to institutionalize and develop sustainable cooperation with civic organizations. Thus through a series of activities it plans to establish new and improved mechanisms of close cooperation. Valuing human and financial resources accumulated in the civic sector, there was an idea to establish joint working and advisory bodies which will be supporting the city administration. Alongside, the town clearly expressed the wish to support this kind of cooperation with available resources.

Due to the high number of interest areas for the City of Skopje, and the active local civic sector in the same areas, it is planned to institutionalize the cooperation based on two-tier hierarchy. Namely, each area of interest of the city and the civic sector will result in establishing of an advisory body (discussion group) which will delegate one member in the hierarchically higher City Forum for cooperation of the City of Skopje with civic organizations (City Forum). Such mechanism will on one hand provide participation of all segments of the civic sector in the work of the Forum, and on the other hand will develop maximum cooperation in all areas of common interest.

The members of all thematic advisory bodies (thematic discussion workgroups) shall be elected exclusively by civic organizations registered in the resource base foreseen in Activity 1.1, on a 2-year rotation principle, while forum members shall be elected by votes of the members in each thematic group. The City administration reserves the right to add to the thus elected civic organizations' representatives other representatives of other civic organizations that it believes will significantly help improve the City Forum's work. Just like in the case of the discussion workgroups, members of the City Forum shall have a two-year term.

In order to contribute to the efficiency of the thematic discussion workgroups, the said workgroups shall consist of a maximum of 7 members of civic organizations, and one civic organization will be allowed to participate in the work of no more than two discussion workgroups, while in only one of them it will have the right to vote and the right to be elected into the City Forum. This democratic approach to the election of civic organizations' representatives will undoubtedly ensure better and quality cooperation between the City of Skopje and civic organizations.

As regards discussion groups, based on the results of the workshops organized in the strategy development phase, the following discussion workgroups are proposed to be established: culture, environment and utilities, education, sports and recreation, local and regional development, urban planning and traffic, youth, psychological, social protection and

healthcare, support to the disabled, PAS abuse, trafficking in human beings, human rights and liberties and equal opportunities for men and women.

Still, the total number of discussion workgroups is not final and can be changed by means of revoking, fusing or establishing new discussion thematic groups at the initiative of the City Forum, or the Sector for International Cooperation and Cooperation with and Support for Civic Associations and Foundations. It is strongly recommended that the number of meetings, as well as the activities initiated by it, be one of the major criteria for deciding whether a certain discussion workgroup's existence is justified or not.

This goal will be achieved by implementing the following activities:

- 1.1 Development of a resource data base of civic organizations
- 1.2 Establishing discussion groups on separate areas and selection of members from the civic organizations in the City Forum for cooperation and coordination of the City of Skopje with civic organizations
- 1.3 Establishing a City Forum for cooperation and coordination of the City of Skopje with civic organizations (City Forum)
- 1.4 Adopting and announcing of criteria for support of submitted projects and procedure for application
- 1.5 Establishing and implementation of mechanisms for protection of the copyrights of submitted project proposals
- 1.6 Announcing a call for submitting project proposals

Responsible body: Sector for international cooperation, and cooperation and support for civic associations and foundations

Time frame: December 2007 – May 2008

	2007			2008												2009												2010																	
	O c t	N o v	D e c	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c						
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Comment: Having in mind the need, the strategy of the City of Skopje for cooperation with civic organizations incorporates a part which refers to the criteria for evaluation of submitted project proposals, as well as mechanisms for support of project proposals, in a form of draft document provided as annexes to the strategy. Development of the final versions of these two documents, as well as their adoption, remains within the authority of the city administration, i.e. the City Council of Skopje.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: INCREASED INFORMATION FLOW BETWEEN THE CITY OF SKOPJE AND CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

In general, the activities which comprise the second strategic objective can be grouped in three segments. The first segment represents an addition in the work of the discussion groups from the previous strategic objective, i.e. their expansion and supplementing them through an e-communication with all other interested civic organizations in certain area. This mechanism has a

goal to provide full participation and information of the civic sector to all topics which will be subject of discussion of the working groups.

The establishment of the City Center for Support of Civic Organizations (City NGO Center) is the planned core which will coordinate the future cooperation between the civic organizations and the City of Skopje administration. As an additional support to the civic sector it is planned that the Center, besides other services, will offer expert support in providing and interpretation of the legislation related to the functions performed by the city authorities. As an addition to this, and in order to strengthen and further canalize the cooperation between the city of Skopje and local civic organizations a network will be established of contact points in each of the organizational units of the city administration.

Finally, valuing the need for monitoring and evaluating the quality and scope of the cooperation, one of the activities within this strategic objective provides continuous collection and annual announcement of summary indicators for the degree of cooperation between both stakeholders.

This goal will be achieved through the implementation of the following activities:

- 2.1 Establishing of joint e-mail groups by areas
- 2.2 Establishing discussion blogs within the web site of the City of Skopje
- 2.3 Establishing a network of contact people by areas within the city administration as main contact points for civic organizations
- 2.4 Establishing a city center for support of civic organizations (City NGO Center)
- 2.5 Providing expert support and information to civic organizations in interpreting the legal regulation in direct relation to the competencies of the City of Skopje and the decisions of the City of Skopje
- 2.6 Developing and announcing an annual activity and financial report on the cooperation of the city of Skopje with civic organizations

Responsible body: Sector for international cooperation, and cooperation and support for civic associations and foundations

Time frame: January 2008 – December 2010

	2007			2008												2009												2010														
	O c t	N o v	D e c	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c			
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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: INCREASING AND STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATION IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF FUNCTIONS PERFORMED AND SERVICES PROVIDED

The idea behind this goal is the contribution of the civic organizations towards the improvement of quality in performing functions and provision of services by the city administration. Present experience of many civic organizations, as well as the access they have

to positive experiences from other local self governments in the world, but also in the country, are reasons enough to use this potential.

The improvement in the quality of functions and services performed is seen as interventions in several segments. Namely, the implementation of the strategic objective anticipates “scanning” the needs and delivering additional trainings for the city administration, use of tested good practices, introduction of a principle of continuous assessment of quality of provided services, introduction of new working procedures in the communication with clients and ongoing monitoring of the degree and quality of implementation of planned activities in each organization units of the city administration.

The following activities are part of this strategic objective:

- 3.1 Training needs assessment for the city administration
- 3.2 Delivering a series of trainings for the city administration
- 3.3 Development and adoption of a Code of Conduct for the staff of the city administration
- 3.4 Establishing a library of world good practices applying to the work and responsibilities of the City of Skopje
- 3.5 Introducing a principal of evaluation of the quality of services
- 3.6 Selection and application of good practices in the work of the city administration
- 3.7 Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of annual plans and programs

Responsible body: Sector for international cooperation, and cooperation and support for civic associations and foundations

Time frame: December 2007 – December 2010

	2007			2008												2009												2010														
	O c t	N o v	D e c	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c			
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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE CITY OF SKOPJE AND CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

Developing strategic partnerships between the city of Skopje and certain civic organizations is needed because of several reasons. The main among them are: maximum use of potentials and resources of certain civic organizations “specialized” in certain areas of work, reduction of expenses of the city administration in these areas and significant improvement of situation in the mentioned areas. One more reason is the fact that strategic partnerships reflect coordinated cooperation in which investments and action are joint using all available resources of key actors and stakeholders, which will lead in sharing joint success and benefits for the community and the groups which are targeted by activities and initiatives of the city and the civic organizations.

In general, the implementation of activities is directed to improvements of the overall situation in the field of environmental protection and significant improvements of the city waste management by implementing of a series of measures, including selection and recycling of waste. The measures for improvements of the situation will be based on analyses done during the mapping process of the current situation in the city. Of course, besides direct measures which will be undertaken in this area, the planned activities for raising public awareness for

keeping the city clean and protect environment, will both fully strengthen the efforts and investments to achieve this strategic objective. Thus, it is fully justifiable that activities within this strategic objective are seen as a small strategy for environmental protection. This is supported by the planned need for additional protection of areas which are already officially protected.

Besides the generally accepted need for drastic improvement of the situation in these two areas, the strategic objective puts special attention to the protection of stray dogs, as a long-term problem of the city, as well as the need to protect, develop and broaden city green areas in many parts of Skopje, accentuating the example with the park in Gazi Baba.

Concretely, the activities which create the strategic objective are:

- 5.1 Establishing partnerships for protection of the park forest in Gazi Baba and its declaration as a city park
- 5.2 Mapping the environmental quality
- 5.3 Mapping the degree of city waste management
- 5.4 Development and implementation of measures for improving the situation
- 5.5 Raising the awareness for managing city waste and environmental protection
- 5.6 Developing a program for caring for stray dogs
- 5.7 Development and implementation of measures for selection and recycling waste
- 5.8 Raising the level of protection in protected areas

Responsible body: Environmental Protection Sector (leader) and Waste Management Sector

Time frame: January 2008 – December 2010

	2007				2008				2009				2010			
	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J
	c	n	v	a	e	a	p	a	u	u	u	e	c	v	e	a
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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6: INCREASING THE PARTICIPATION OF CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS IN THE PROCESSES OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIALIZED STRATEGIES

We have already mentioned that the strategic objectives six and seven are a little bit more specific from the others. More precisely, strategic objective six unites development strategies which are priority for better development of the city in the future period. Namely, having in mind that on one hand the Law on Self-government gives citizens a possibility to engage in the discussions of the local administration directed towards defining measures for creating better community living conditions, and on the other hand civic organizations represent the voice of the citizens, than we can justify this strategic objective. Securing active participation of civic organizations in the process of planning and development of specialized strategies, the City of Skopje secures accountability, responsibility and transparency of work as well inclusion of citizens in the process of identification of development needs, which is certainly in the spirit of

decentralization and requirements for participative action and decision making. In accordance with all above, representatives of civic organizations identified the need to develop and adopt the following strategies:

- 6.1 Developing a strategy for urban development
- 6.2 Developing a strategy for development and promotion of the tourism in the City of Skopje
- 6.3 Developing a strategy for development of sports, recreation and physical culture in the City of Skopje
- 6.4 Developing a strategy for development of culture and protection and promotion of the city cultural heritage
- 6.5 Developing a strategy for artisan development
- 6.6 Developing a strategy for development of small and medium size businesses

Responsible body: Sector for international cooperation, and cooperation and support for civic associations and foundations

Time frame: January 2008 – June 2009

	2007			2008												2009												2010														
	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D			
	c	o	e	a	e	a	p	a	u	u	v	e	p	t	v	c	a	e	a	p	a	u	u	v	e	p	t	v	c	a	e	a	p	a	u	u	v	e	p	t	v	c
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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 7: PROVIDING SUPPORT TO THE CITY ADMINISTRATION IN DEALING WITH CITY HEALTH-SOCIAL-EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS

Similar to the previous, the seventh strategic objective comprises of a group of programs and policies necessary for improving of concrete situations in the area of social welfare, education and health insurance for the citizens of Skopje. We are witnesses that many civic organizations are active for a long time in these areas and have achieved significant changes and improvements. Due to this experience it can be expected that significant part of the implementation of this strategic objective will be in the hands of the appropriate civic organizations. Doubtless, their active and complete participation will enable identification of gaps and overlaps of activities of all actors active in this area of interest, which will on its part contribute to the definition of clear activities and measures, as well as to the identification of possibilities for better cooperation, communication and coordination. At the same time, this will additionally increase the quality of programs to be prepared.

Below is a list of activities that are part of this strategic objective:

- 7.1 Developing a program for fight against narcotics
- 7.2 Adopting a city policy and development of program for supporting people with handicap
- 7.3 Development of program for culture integration of children with special needs
- 7.4 Development of program for informal education

- 7.5 Development of program for the accessibility of high schools for all students, including high school students with handicap
- 7.6 Development of support program for gifted students and their future career counseling
- 7.7 Development of program to support orphans
- 7.8 Development of program for prevention and fight against family, schoolyard and street violence
- 7.9 Development of program for promotion of mental health
- 7.10 Development of program offering support to children and their more active involvement in the education process
- 7.11 Development of program for including street children in the education system
- 7.12 Development of program for health protection of underprivileged families
- 7.13 Development of program for supporting high school student from underprivileged families
- 7.14 Development of program for encouraging volunteerism among youth
- 7.15 Development of program for consumers' protection

Responsible body: Sector for public activities

Time frame: January 2008 – June 2010

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 8: INCREASE CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS' PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESSES OF STRENGTHENING INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

Similar to the previous one, the eighth strategic objective incorporates a set of activities necessary to improve certain specific conditions regarding inter-ethnic relations of Skopje's citizens. There are a large number of civic organizations working in this field, with many years of experience and visible accomplishments and improvements. It is precisely because of their experience that we expect that those civic organizations will play an important part in the implementation of this strategic objective.

The following is a list of activities within this strategic objective:

- 8.1. Campaign to raise public awareness about easing inter-ethnic relations

8.2.Training on respecting cultural and religious differences

8.3.Campaign to promote religious and cultural diversity in Skopje

Responsible body: Sector for public activities, in coordination with the Inter-ethnic Tolerance Commission

Time frame: January 2008 – February 2010

	2007			2008												2009												2010											
	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
	c	t	v	a	e	a	p	a	u	u	v	e	c	t	v	a	e	a	p	a	u	u	v	e	c	t	v	a	e	a	p	a	u	u	v	e	c	t	v
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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 9: INCREASE THE LEVEL OF ICT USE

The increase in ICT use primarily refers to activities related to the development of the e-Skopje Strategy, i.e. projects and activities related to e-services; brining ICT closer to all citizens, especially young people, the elderly and people with disabilities; information society development, i.e. networking, coordination and cooperation between institutions and bodies working in the field of ICT use, both horizontally and vertically. This objective also includes creating opportunities for electronic communication and efficient use of computer and communication technology in the work of City of Skopje's bodies on one hand and civic associations on the other.

This strategic objective will be implemented by means of the following activities:

- 9.1.e-Skopje Strategy development
- 9.2.Develop a portal for the City NGO Forum
- 9.3.Develop and support virtual networks of NGOs and institutions
- 9.4.Develop and support online forums on issues of interest to the citizens of Skopje
- 9.5.Develop and support electronic discussion groups
- 9.6.Develop a strategy on availability of ICT to people with disabilities

Responsible body: IT Sector

Time frame: January 2008 – January 2009

	2007			2008												2009												2010														
	O c t	N o v	D e c	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A v g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c			
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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 10: PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THE CITY ADMINISTRATION IN THE AFFIRMATION OF GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUALITY BETWEEN THE SEXES

Integrate the issue of gender equality into local community development plans and policies, and activities to strengthen the capacity of the local authorities to promote gender equality.

Furthermore, strengthen the capacity of the Gender Equality Commission within the Skopje City Council, and capacity strengthening of NGOs involved in human rights. This objective would be implemented by means of capacity building of the Gender Equality Commission and NGOs involved in human rights for lobbying and advocacy for implementation of laws addressing human rights, raising public awareness as to the importance of inclusion of vulnerable groups of women and children in social life and policy development, as well as support for the City of Skopje in its networking and knowledge sharing with other stakeholders.

This strategic objective will be implemented by means of the following activities:

- 10.1. Develop a City of Skopje Action Plan for gender equality and equal opportunities
- 10.2. Develop a program for the work of the Gender Equality Commission of the Skopje City Council
- 10.3. Deliver a campaign to raise awareness about gender equality and equality between the sexes.

Responsible body: Sector for public activities, in coordination with the City of Skopje Gender Equality Commission

Time frame: January 2008 – January 2009

	2007			2008												2009												2010											
	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
	c	v	e	a	b	r	r	y	n	l	g	p	t	v	c	n	b	r	r	y	n	l	g	p	t	v	c	n	b	r	r	y	n	l	g	p	t	v	c
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COMMENT

Despite numerous attempts to include as many civic organizations in the process of strategy development as possible, it was impossible to have a full scope. Thus, and due to the great importance that this strategy holds for increasing and improving the cooperation of the city administration and the civic organizations, it is necessary to make sure it is at every moment available to the whole community of civic organizations. For this purpose, it is strongly recommended after the strategy is adopted by the members of City Council, its text to be placed on the official city internet site.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEWING

The implementation of the strategy is based on a strict hierarchical structure, i.e. the implementation of all of the activities in each strategic objective leads to its achievement, and the achievement of all strategic objectives leads to the achievement of the main strategy goal. These reasons make it necessary to plan the answers of two questions: whether all strategic objectives have the same priority and whether all activities comprising each strategic objective have the same priority?

In general, based on the activities they include, the strategic objectives of this strategy can be divided in two groups: consequential and independent. The first five strategic objectives make the consequential activities, i.e., in most cases, the implementation of each activity is a condition for the implementation of the one that follows. As different to these, the activities which make the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and the tenth strategic objective are independent from implementation aspect. Having this in mind, the implementation of each of the first five strategic objectives must be seen as implementation of programs, while the implementation of the last five strategic objectives will be based on independent project implementation of their activities. The period of implementation of activities of the second group of five strategic objective are directly dependent on two parameters: secured means for implementation of activities and priority of the activity. The priority of the activities of these five strategic objectives needs to be defined immediately after the adoption of the strategy and their enforcement, while it is recommendable that their implementation is performed through development of project proposals, i.e. their implementation. Leaders of such project proposals will be the city of Skopje and interested civic organizations, which will secure resources from foreign and other donors.

Finally, this principle of activity implementation directly influences the priorities of implementation of the strategic objectives. Namely, using the concept of project implementation of activities of the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and the tenth strategic objective, they are not of highest priority and their implementation would be conducted during the whole period of strategy implementation, i.e. till 2010. As for the other five strategic objectives it is possible and needed to define of the ones with highest priority. Based on discussions with representatives of the administration of the city of Skopje, the strategic objective three related to the increase and strengthening of the capacity of the city administration was referred as one with highest priority. But having in mind the main objectives of the strategy, the first strategic objective becomes doubtlessly the highest priority. Besides, it is strongly recommended to implement the second strategic objective immediately after the implementation of the second activity of the first strategic objective, i.e. after establishing the discussion groups.

At the end, we need to mention that the time frames for implementation of the activities from the sixth to the tenth strategic objective are not defined. Namely, the priority of implementation of these activities will be mainly defined based on the interest among potential donors. In other words, this tentative schedule can only be a guideline and be applied in extreme cases, if there is no interest among "external" founders of activities.

FUNDING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Given the strategy scope and time period, its implementation will require significant financial resources. Possible sources of funding, in addition to the City of Skopje's budget, could include international donations, domestic institutional support, and the public-private partnership model. To that end, the objectives and activities need to be promoted to international donors, the business community, and interested domestic institutions and this promotion would be performed by the City Forum and the Sector for International Cooperation, and Cooperation and Support for Civic Associations and Foundations

The initial step in securing funding for the implementation of the strategy would be to organize a donor conference where all three segments previously designated as possible donors would be invited (international donors, the business community, and interested domestic institutions). However, a step preceding this strategy would include the development of project proposals for activities related to strategic objectives 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, as well as a draft program for implementation of a series of activities stemming from the first five strategic objectives.

Given the predefined priorities for implementation of the strategic objectives, it is possible to organize more than one donor conference, but in that case the first one must include programs based on the first 3 strategic objectives, which are of highest priority.

MONITORING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Any strategy is by its nature a dynamic and “living” document, otherwise it would only be a snapshot of the current situation. For these reasons, the strategy dictates a need for continuous monitoring of the strategic document’s implementation.

Given the diversity and the broad focus of the activities included in the strategic objectives, it would be impossible to locate the competency and responsibility for their implementation in just one organizational unit (sector or department) of the City of Skopje’s administration, but rather its implementation should be delegated to several such units, for example: Urban Planning Sector, Environmental Sector, etc. However, the thus delegated system for implementation of action plans requires a single point from which activities would be coordinated.

As previously demonstrated, every action plan identifies the organizational unit within the City administration (sector or department) responsible for its implementation. On the other hand, coordination of the implementation of each individual strategic objective is under the charge of the Sector for International Cooperation, and Cooperation and Support of Civic Associations and Foundations, with the exception of strategic objective 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Monitoring of the implementation of the seventh, eighth and tenth strategic objective will be the responsibility of the Public Activities Sector, the implementation of the ninth strategic objective is entrusted to the IT Sector, whereas monitoring of the implementation of the fifth strategic objective will be the joint responsibility of the Environmental Protection Sector and the Public Utility Services Sector. In order to eliminate possible obstacles resulting from the overlapping responsibilities for strategic objective 5, implementation will be under the charge of the Environmental Protection Sector.

In this regard, once the strategy is adopted by the Skopje City Council it is strongly recommended that it is followed by the development of an implementation monitoring plan, fully based on the parameters provided by the individual action plans. Logically, the said sector in the City administration should be in charge of the development of such a plan, i.e. coordinate the overall strategy implementation.

Still, the City of Skopje is not the only party interested in the successful implementation of the strategy. Responsibility for the strategy’s implementation is shared between the City of Skopje and the civic organizations as directly involved in its development and implementation. Therefore, it is necessary to provide a mechanism which will ensure involvement of civic organizations in the processes of strategy monitoring and reviewing. To that end, the strategy calls for involvement of the City Forum of the City of Skopje for Cooperation and Coordination with Civic Organizations. Its involvement actually completes the mechanism for monitoring strategy implementation, by having the sectors or departments in charge of monitoring implementation of activities coordinate their work with the sector for international cooperation and cooperation and support for civic associations and foundations, which will in turn provide summarized information to the City Forum.

STRATEGY OF THE CITY OF SKOPJE FOR COOPERATION WITH NGOS

November 2007

