

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EXPERTS

Terms of reference for on-site activities and missions

Action code and partner country: *SOCIEUX 2023-23 NORTH MACEDONIA*

Action title: Development of counselling standards and services for children and youth at risk

Partner institution: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Activity/ies number(s) and title(s):

- Activity 1 – Diagnostic of current capacities and approaches to child protection and prevention

Tentative dates of implementation and location:

- **Activity 1: from 4 September (on site 18-29 September) to 13 October 2023**

Expert positions and responsibilities (by activity):

- Activity 1 : Expert 1 (principal) – Rights of the Child, Social Security Policy, Organizational structures, roles and arrangements
- Activity 1 : Expert 2 – Access to other Basic Social Services, Service delivery

Workload:

Activity 1 - Expert 1 : Total 17 days (7 days at distance; and 10 days onsite)

Activity 1 - Expert 2 : Total 16 days (6 days at distance; and 10 days onsite)

Call for experts' reference: **23-23/NMA/1**

Version - #: __

☐ Draft

☒ Final

Date: 14 June 2023

SOCIEUX+ is implemented by

Partnership led by

Co-financed by the European Union



1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Country overview

North Macedonia is a landlocked country of the south-central Balkans. It is bordered to the north by Kosovo and Serbia, to the east by Bulgaria, to the south by Greece, and to the west by Albania. The capital is Skopje. Languages include Macedonian, Albanian, plus Turkish, Romani, Serbian, Bosnian, Aromanian. It's population is of 2 103 330 people in 2021¹. The country declared its independence in 1991, and gained UN membership in 1993 under the name Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In 2005 the country became a candidate for EU membership. In 2019 the name of the country changed to North Macedonia, after ratification by Greek and Macedonian parliaments, opening way for Greece to stop blocking its neighbour's bid to join EU and Nato. In 2021 the country ranked at 0,770 in the HDI value, which puts the country in the high human development category, positioning it at 78 out of 191 countries and territories².

Stevo Pendarovski won the 2019 presidential election as a candidate of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia and the Democratic Union for Integration. He won 51.6% of the votes cast in the second round of the election. Pendarovski defeated the nationalist candidate Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova. North Macedonia's presidents are directly elected for a five-year term. The president appoints the prime minister, and legislative power is vested in parliament.

1.2 Sector situation

North Macedonia has made considerable advances on the topic of Rights of Children, notably by recently ratifying important international conventions, including the Istanbul convention, and banning all forms of corporal punishments (however, in practice, these punishments are still widely used by parents). The State, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund launched positive campaign on good parenting practices, to enable parents to be educated in ways to adequately bring up their children. Laws and reforms which continue to improve the rights of children within the family will be introduced.

To protect the rights of children, the capacities of the Ombudsman as a national institution for human rights had been strengthened, with special emphasis on the protection of children's rights. More than 60 per cent of the national strategy for deinstitutionalisation has been implemented, in terms of the transfer of money to beneficiaries, capacity building of the professionals, and in providing coordinated care at the local level. Currently there are no children under the age of 18 placed in any institution in North Macedonia³.

A process for the re-establishment of a national mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the Convention has been initiated in North Macedonia. A national strategy for the prevention and protection of children from violence 2020-2025 and an action plan 2020-2022 has been adopted in accordance with all relevant international documents, legislation and regulations. The national action plan for combatting trafficking in children 2021-2025 has been adopted and mobile teams which identified vulnerable categories has been established.

1.3 Role of partner institution in the sector

The [Ministry of Labour and Social Policy \(MLSP\)](#) has competences for creation and implementation of national policies and regulatory framework in regard to social protection and inclusion, as well on labour market and social security of pensioners. In general, MLSP through social protection activities aim for promotion and maintenance of social security of citizens, prevention of social exclusion, improvement of quality of life of citizens and strengthening the capacities of citizens for having independent, active and productive life. The MLSP oversees the implementation of the following relevant laws for this assignment: Law on Child Protection, Law on Pension and Disability Insurance, the Law on Employment and Insurance in case of Unemployment and the Law on Social Protection. The Sector for Social Protection is one of the main sectors at the level of the MLSP responsible for

¹ [Specific country data | Human Development Reports \(undp.org\)](#)

² Ibidem

³ [Experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Commend North Macedonia on Ratifying International Conventions, Ask about Corporal Punishment and Roma Children | UN GENEVA](#)

the social protection system overall (consisting of all public institutions for social protection and services).

Within this sector there are 5 departments with shared responsibilities in assessment and monitoring the quality of the social services for all age-groups categories of persons, children, adults and elderly:

- Department for social family and legal protection of children and families,
- Department for social inclusion,
- Department for protection of disability persons and elderly,
- Department for exercising the rights of social protection rights
- Department for public and private institutions for social protection and
- Department for migration, integration of refugees, foreign and humanitarian aid.

The Department for Social, Family and Legal Protection of Children and Family

- Monitors the realization of the rights and implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and reports on its implementation
- Monitoring the implementation of regulations, programs and other documents and other conventions in the field of marriage, family, parent-child relations, guardianship and adoption
- Oversight of the work of the CSW and institutions for children without parents and parental care in the area of family legal protection

The MLSP devotes special attention to the issues related to assistance and support in reintegration of people at risk, among which youth are.

The Public Institution for Care of Children with Educational and Social Problems and Impaired Behaviour "25 Maj" Skopje, in accordance with the Law on Social Protection (https://mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/zakoni/2019/28.5_zakon_SZ.pdf) and in accordance with its Statute, is defined as an institution that should provide services for care of children and young people with social and education problems and impaired behaviour. It will implement the technical advice SOCIEUX+ will provide to the MLSP. The center is involved in project with the World Bank to finance the equipment needed to set up the center for youth at risk. Since 2018, all the children and youth accommodated in this institution have been resettled into small group home with supported living. Children and youth with social problems and impaired behaviour are referred by the Social Work Centre (SWC) with a decision for a period of up to three years or until the end of the educational process according to the needs of the beneficiary. The role of SWC is preventive and advisory from social exclusion.

2 ACTION DESCRIPTION

2.1 Overall objective

Access to employment and social protection is expanded to poor and vulnerable groups

2.2 Specific objective (s) (purpose)

SO. 1: To enhance the provision of counselling and prevention services to children at risk by the network of local institutions for Children's care of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

2.3 Expected results

ER. 1: Standards and methodologies for the provision of counselling services and the set-up of prevention strategies for children at risk by the network of local institutions for Children's care of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy are set

2.4 Final deliverables

D.1: Assessment of current tools and approaches to child protection

D.2: Compilation of good practices in counselling services for children at risk

D.3: Standards and methodology of counselling services and prevention strategies for children at risk

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 General methodology (of the action)

This action will be implemented in two activities.

This first activity will take place in Skopje. Mobilized experts' task will be to do an assessment of the current tools and methods used by the social workers in "25 Maj" Skopje in delivering their counselling services to beneficiaries, whether children or families: responding to cases of child abuse and neglect, removing children from home settings that are dangerous or do not meet certain standards, working with children and their families on a reunification collaboration schedule, arranging for short and long term care of children whose families cannot take care of them etc. Experts will look at how social workers carry out essential tasks such as assessment of the person in need, creating and implementing a treatment plan, evaluating and monitoring improvement of the person in need, and how these tasks are systematised into a framework. The assessment will be accompanied by a gaps and needs analysis (or SWOT analysis) and human resource requirements to improve services, as well recommendations will be derived for further actions.

The second activity will also take place in Skopje and focus on drafting, alongside designated staff of the institution, standards and methodologies for counselling services and prevention strategies for children at risk.

3.2 Planned activities (work plan of the action)

The following activities are currently planned for the action:

- Activity 1 – Diagnostic of current capacities and approaches to child protection and prevention
- Activity 2 – Best practices and guidelines for counselling services and prevention for children at risk

The present terms of reference cover the services expected for activities of the above work plan:

- **Activity 1**

3.3 Inclusion of cross-cutting issues

SOCIEUX+ recognises the importance to include cross-cutting issues in social protection, labour and employment policies and systems. The following cross-cutting issues are duly taken into account:

- Gender equality;
- Good governance;
- Human rights (including rights of children, people living with disabilities, vulnerable groups and minorities); and,
- Social and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups.

4 ACTIVITIES DESCRIPTION

4.1 Tasks

The principal expert will lead the on-site mission. He/she will be responsible for the delivery of all deliverables of the activity (see below Section **Error! Reference source not found.**). He/she will be responsible for the preparation, coordination, implementation and reporting of the overall activity towards SOCIEUX+.

Tasks to be done by the partner institution

Preparation phase

- Make themselves available for pre mission briefings
- Make themselves available by email and provide all necessary documentation requested by experts to do their desk research
- Provide translation/interpretation of preparation documents if necessary at preparation phase (SOCIEUX+ provides interpretation during the on-site mission and translation of deliverables if necessary)
- To identify key staff who have technical skills to accompany experts during the mission

Tasks to be done by the experts

Preparation phase

- Ahead of the action to get substantial knowledge of the local context, particularly North Macedonia's policies and legal provisions on protection of children and youth at risk;
- Preliminary contacts with the Partner in view of the preparation of the mission's methodology and agenda, to be transmitted ahead of the mission to the SOCIEUX+ team for approval;
- Taking part to the pre-mission briefing with SOCIEUX+ team (around 1 week before the start of the action);
- To make themselves available for a briefing meeting with the EU Delegation in Skopje (SOCIEUX+ will introduce the experts to the focal point within the EUD);

Implementation

- During the mission, to conduct consultations with the Partner's key staff. The partner institution shall facilitate and arrange the meetings in Skopje;
- There will be a phase of observation of child workers daily work in order to gather data to produce the SWOT;
- To present the outcomes of the mission to the partner in order to discuss and take into account comments on the contents of the deliverables before their finalization;
- At the end of the mission, timely submission to SOCIEUX+ of the final deliverables (10 working days after the mission), and availability to go through an eventual round of comments and adjustments in interaction with SOCIEUX+ and the Partner;
- To channel to SOCIEUX+ Communication officer any material that can be useful to inform the public about the activity (pictures, interviews, brief notes or articles);
- To use the different templates and evaluation forms provided by the SOCIEUX+ team.

4.2 Deliverables

4.2.1 Pre-mission deliverables

- P1: A methodological note, detailing the working approach, tools and methods to employ, a risks analysis, etc. The Methodological Note shall not exceed 3 pages (excluding cover page and annexes).
- P2: A activity/mission agenda, detailing the meetings and working sessions to be held, persons to meet, etc. The Activity/mission Agenda shall not exceed 2 pages.

4.2.2 Final deliverables

- An individual Expert Mission Report (ExMR) in SOCIEUX+ format (template provided). This report is a confidential product intended solely for and use by SOCIEUX+. The expert team may also submit a single-joint ExMR report if they prefer to do so (see instructions on the template).
- An individual completed Expert Feedback Form (ExF) completed online (see instructions and link on the ExMR template).
- A collective Activity Report (AcR) in SOCIEUX+ format (template provided). This AcR is to be produced jointly by the mission team. It is intended for the Partner Institution, and will be shared, most probably, with key stakeholders of the action. The report will reflect the tasks conducted in during the activity. It shall provide a meaningful contribution towards the final deliverables of the action.
- D1. Assessment of current tools and approaches to child protection, including gaps and needs analysis (or SWOT analysis) and HR requirements to improve services.

5 REPORTING AND SUBMISSION OF DELIVERABLES

5.1 Formats

All deliverables and products of the activity (notes, reports, presentations, etc) shall comply with the formats and templates provided by the SOCIEUX+ Team.

All deliverables are to be submitted in electronic in electronic editable versions [Microsoft Word 97-2003 [doc], PowerPoint 97-2003 [ppt] and Excel 97-2003 [xls]; or in equivalent OpenDocument format). Non-editable electronic document such as in Portable Document Format (PDF) shall not be accepted.

Templates for electronic presentations during the activity/mission are provided by the SOCIEUX+ Team. These templates are in Microsoft PowerPoint format and comply with the SOCIEUX+ Corporate Image standards. These templates are to be used as a sole format by all members of the expert mission team. They are to be used for all presentations by the experts during and for the activity/mission. The use by the experts of their own, or their organisation(s), templates or formats are not allowed unless otherwise instructed in written [by email] to the experts by the SOCIEUX+ Team.

All versions of deliverables or other products used or produced during activity/mission by the experts shall include the following disclaimer:

"Disclaimer:

The responsibility of this publication sole lies with its authors. The European Union, the European Commission, the implementation partners of SOCIEUX+ and the SOCIEUX+ Staff are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein."

Please refer to the expert information package for further guidance on communication and templates.

All deliverables are to be provided in English.

5.2 Submission and approval

All deliverables versions (drafts, final or other) shall be submitted directly and only to SOCIEUX+ Team, unless otherwise instructed in writing [by email] to the experts by the SOCIEUX+ Team.

5.2.1 Pre-mission deliverables

- Pre-mission deliverables shall be submitted no later than 5 working days before the start of activity or departure of the mission of the experts, whichever is the earliest.
- Pre-mission deliverables will be shared and reviewed by the SOCIEUX+ and the Partner Institution. Feedback on the deliverables should be provided to the Principal Expert at latest 2 days before the start of activity or departure of the mission of the experts, whichever is the earliest. Comments and recommendation of this feedback shall be taken into account for the implementation of the activity/mission by the experts. Only the mission agenda shall be resubmitted with revision if requested by the SOCIEUX+ Team.

5.2.2 Final deliverables

- The first draft versions of the final deliverables are to be submitted no later than 10 working days upon completion of the activity or return of the experts.
- Feedback to the first draft version of the report should be provided 10 working days after its submission.
- Inclusion of the feedback on drafts versions is expected 5 working days upon reception of the comments by the principal expert. (In general, no more than one round of feedback and revision is required, unless the quality of the deliverables is considered unsatisfactory by the SOCIEUX+ Team or/and the Partner Institution.)
- Final versions of the deliverables should be approved or rejected no later than 10 working days upon their submission to the SOCIEUX+ Team.
- Final payments and reimbursement of travel costs to experts can only be authorised upon approval of the final version of the deliverables by SOCIEUX+.

6 REQUIRED EXPERTISE

6.1 Expertise profile

Principal expert (Expert #1):

Area(s) of expertise:

- *Rights of the Child, Social Security Policy*

Specific skill(s) & competency(ies):

- *Organisational structures, roles and arrangements*

Requirements (essential/required):

- a) The education type and level required:

“Master’s” degree (or equivalent advanced academic degree or diploma requiring 4 years of formal education) in the areas of expertise (see above), or another directly related discipline. In its absence, the master’s degree can be replaced by a combination of academic degree(s) with relevant years of work/professional experience combining the area of expertise and specific skills requested:

- An intermediate academic degree (“Bachelor”, equivalent degree or diploma requiring three (3) years of formal education) with an additional three (3) years of working/professional experience; or,
- A first-level academic degree (“License”, equivalent degree or diploma requiring two (2) years of formal education) with an additional five (5) years of working/professional experience.

The additional work experience used in calculating academic equivalence shall not count towards the minimum general professional experience.

- b) The number of years of relevant work/professional experience combining the area(s) of expertise and demonstrated specific skill(s) & competence(s):
Seven (7) years.
 - c) Relevant experience in social work with families at risk (violence, addiction, abuse)
 - d) Experience in the area of organisation and provision of social services provided to children and youth at risk
 - e) Knowledge of rehabilitation work for vulnerable persons
 - f) Required language knowledge: English
- N.B.: Translation and interpretation services may be commissioned by SOCIEUX+.

Additional assets (advantageous in selection):

- g) Language(s): Macedonian, Albanian, plus Turkish, Romani, Serbian, Bosnian, Aromanian

Expert #2:

Area(s) of expertise: *Access to other Basic Social Services*

Specific skill(s) & competence(s): *Service delivery*

Requirements (essential/required):

- a) The education type and level required:

"Bachelor's" degree (or equivalent academic degree or diploma requiring three (3) years of formal education) in the areas of expertise (see above), or another directly related discipline. In its absence, the bachelor's degree can be replaced by a combination of:

- A first-level academic degree ("License" or equivalent) with an additional two (2) years of professional experience in one or more relevant fields.

The additional work experience used in calculating academic equivalence shall not count towards the minimum general professional experience.

- b) The number of years of relevant work/professional experience combining the area(s) of expertise and demonstrated specific skill(s) & competence(s):
Five (5) years.
- c) Experience in social welfare services, community counselling centers that provide services to at risk persons
- d) Relevant experience in social work with families at risk (violence, addiction, abuse)
- e) Required language knowledge: English

N.B.: Translation and interpretation services may be commissioned by SOCIEUX+.

Additional assets (advantageous in selection):

- a) Language(s): Macedonian, Albanian, plus Turkish, Romani, Serbian, Bosnian, Aromanian

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Collaborative institutions:

Public or publicly mandated institutions from European Union Member States with relevant expertise and competencies as outlined above are also encouraged to directly apply and contact SOCIEUX+ to provide expertise and participate in these/this activity. Focal points and responsible staff may directly contact the SOCIEUX+ Team at:

experts@socieux.eu, indicating the reference of the call for experts.

6.2 Estimated workload⁴

	Preparation	Onsite work	Reporting & deliverables	Total
Principal expert (#1)	4	10	3	17
Expert (#2)	3	10	3	16
Total experts	7	20	6	33

⁴ Please note that travel days are not considered as working days.

7 APPLICATIONS

7.1 Call for experts

All calls for experts for SOCIEUX+ activities are published online on the SOCIEUX+ website. Interested experts should submit their application on the SOCIEUX+ online expert database: <https://pmt.socieux.eu> (currently only available in English). The application process is:

1. If they have not already, experts create their SOCIEUX+ account by clicking on “Create an account” using an email address.
2. Login details for their account will be sent to experts by email, experts should create and submit their profile for review by⁵:
 - a. Providing contact details
 - b. Providing information on the competencies, skills and working history of the expert. Experts are required to provide only limited information through fields marked with an asterisk. However, *experts are encouraged to complete in most detail de sections on skills and competencies as the SOCIEUX+ Team also regularly reviews profiles in the roster to identify and contact potential experts for future missions.*
 - c. Uploading of a curriculum vitae, preferably in Europass format⁶.
3. Once their profile is approved by the SOCIEUX+ Team, they can apply to any available calls for experts accessible under the tab “Call for experts” and click on “Apply.”

If more information is needed, please contact SOCIEUX+ by email at experts@socieux.eu with the reference number of the application.

Collaborative or interested institutions wishing to make expertise available for a specific call for application may directly contact the team of SOCIEUX+ at experts@socieux.eu.

7.2 Selection of experts

In principle, SOCIEUX+ mobilises experts from the public administrations and mandated bodies of EU member states, and practitioners working for social partners, including:

- Practitioners, civil servants and employees from publicly mandated bodies;
- Collaborators and employees of social partner institutions, such as trade unions and employer associations; and,
- Academic and research institutions.

Active public experts from collaborative institutions are given priority in the selection. Private consultants may also apply. Their application will be considered if an appropriate public expert cannot be identified.

Only short-listed applicants may be contacted. The selection process may include interviews by phone or other communication means.

Interested candidates may download the **Guide for Experts and Collaborative Institutions** with detailed information on contracting with SOCIEUX+ at www.socieux.eu

7.3 Contracting of public experts

Public experts can be on active duty or retired. Retired employees from international specialised agencies or cooperation agencies can also be mobilised, without regard to their former employer's collaborating with SOCIEUX+ on a specific action. Retired experts are considered as public experts for all purposes, benefits, and financial compensation provided by SOCIEUX+.

⁵ SOCIEUX+ expert database and other management tools comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) -Regulation (EU) 2016/679.

⁶ Europass templates for CVs are available here: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae/templates-instructions>

Short-listed candidates may be required to provide the contact of the employer or proof of their ability to be directly contracted under their status as a civil servant or public employee.

Various options for contracting:

- **Active French Public Expert** (Contracted by Expertise France)

Engagement letter (+ Cumulation of activities form signed by the hierarchical superior)

- **Active Spanish Public Expert**

Spanish public servant will be contracted by FIIAPP according to its internal rules.

- **UE Public Expert** (including French and Spanish retired or private experts)

- Service contract with expert (+ Authorization document from employer indicating the dates of the activity + a tax identification number (TIN) to be able to issue an invoice; or
- Umbrella company: experts who do not have a tax identification number allowing them to invoice for services in their country, but they are authorized to sign temporary employment contracts according to local legislation, or
- Service contract with institution: experts who do not have a tax identification number that allows them to work in their country and cannot sign an employment contract according to local legislation.

7.4 Financial compensations

Contract officials or active-duty or retired employees are entitled to standard fixed allowances of 350 euros per working day worked. The fees of private consultants are negotiated according to their number of years of relevant expertise and the standard scale of SOCIEUX+.

Retired experts are assimilated into public employees for all intents and purposes, benefits and financial compensation are provided by SOCIEUX+.

National regulations on remuneration and compensation of public employees and civil servants apply and may limit the payment of allowances by SOCIEUX+. The responsibility for compliance and verification lies with individual experts and their institutions of origin. The payment of income or other taxes is the sole responsibility of the mobilised experts and/or their organisations.

7.5 Travel costs

All travel expenses for the mobilised experts (public, private or international institutions) are covered by SOCIEUX following the **Guide for Experts and Collaborative institutions** with detailed information on contracting with SOCIEUX+ (version as of the date of signature of the contract).

8 COMMUNICATION & VISIBILITY

SOCIEUX + can use its communication channels, such as the web, newsletter and other media, to share information about the implementation and results of the activities. For this, contributions of the experts mobilised are expected. The experts may be requested to provide such contributions in the field of communication as photographs, provide short texts, and interviews.

Short briefings, before and after the mission, with the Communication Officer of SOCIEUX+. These briefings will provide the opportunity to identify communication opportunities and strategies.

For specific activities, visibility products, such as brochures, USB sticks, notebooks and pens, can be made available to experts for on-site distribution.

9 CODE OF CONDUCT

The experts mobilised by SOCIEUX+ will provide technical assistance from the preparatory stages of each activity to the delivery of products. The SOCIEUX+ Team will assist experts to fulfil their assignments by supporting and advising on preparing background materials before meetings. The SOCIEUX+ team will collect feedback from partner institutions and relevant stakeholders to ensure that mission reports and recommendations are delivered to national authorities, the EU Delegations in the partner countries and the European Commission.

The experts mobilised are not representing SOCIEUX+ or the EU. Technical opinions and recommendations expressed are their own. They shall not express negative opinions on the implementation of actions supported by SOCIEUX+ to third parties. Nevertheless, they shall be aware of SOCIEUX+'s objectives and functioning, and promote its services to the best of their knowledge, whenever possible and feasible.

The experts shall perform their duties in the Partner Country in a way that is fully compliant with and respectful of the local institutions, policies and cultural behaviours. They shall particularly adopt culturally-sensitive behaviour when dealing with their local counterparts.

10 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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11 ANNEXES

[...Text...]

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ABOUT SOCIEUX+

The SOCIEUX+ Facility was established and funded by the EU through the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) and Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR). The Facility is co-funded by France, Spain, and Belgium. It is implemented by a partnership composed of Expertise France (the partnership lead), Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas (FIIAPP) from Spain, Belgian International Cooperation on Social Protection (BELINCOSOC), and the Belgian Development Agency (Enabel).

The Facility's general objective is to expand and improve access to better employment opportunities and inclusive Social Protection systems in Partner Countries. Its specific objective is to enhance Partner Countries' capacity to design, manage, and monitor inclusive, effective, and sustainable employment strategies and Social Protection systems through short-term, peer-to-peer technical assistance and knowledge development.

SOCIEUX+ recognises the impact of Social Protection and employment in reducing poverty and vulnerability. It supports the efforts of partner governments in promoting inclusive and sustainable Social Protection and employment systems. SOCIEUX+ also complements the efforts made through other EU initiatives.

The Facility is an expansion of SOCIEUX Social Protection EU Expertise in Development Cooperation, established in 2013.



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