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EU Expertise on Social Protection,
Labour and Employment

Terms of Reference for Experts

Terms of reference activities
and missions

SOCIEUX 2026-01 North Macedonia



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Terms of reference for on-site activities and missions

Action code and partner country: *SOCIEUX 2026-01 North Macedonia*

Action title: Integrated Mentorship and Reintegration Programme - Support Roma Women, Men and Children Living in Informal Settlements

Partner institution: **Ministry of Social Policy, Demographics and Youth (MSPDY)**

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

- *Activity #1 – Gender-sensitive Assessment of Institutional, Legal and Operational Gaps in Supporting Roma in Extreme Vulnerability*
- *Activity #2 – Definition of the Programme Scope and Institutional Framework for the Integrated Mentorship and Reintegration Programme*
- *Activity # 3– Development of the Operational Model and Implementation Arrangements for the Integrated Mentorship and Reintegration Programme*

Tentative dates of implementation and location:

- 1. Activity 1 – tentative dates from August 10th to October 5th, 2026**
(with an on-site mission from August 31st to September 11th, 2026 – 10 working days)
 - 1. Preparation phase:** from August 10th to August 28th, 2026
 - 2. On-site mission in Skopje:** from August 31st to September 11th, 2026
 - 3. Reporting phase:** from September 14th to October 5th, 2026
- 2. Activity 2 – tentative dates from October 19th to November 20th, 2026**
(with an on-site mission from November 2nd to November 6th, 2026 – 5 working days)
 - 1. Preparation phase:** from October 19th to October 30th, 2026
 - 2. On-site mission in Skopje:** from November 2nd to November 6th, 2026
 - 3. Reporting phase:** from November 9th to November 20th, 2026
- 3. Activity 3 – tentative dates from November 30th, 2026 to January 15th, 2027**
(with an on-site mission from December 7th to December 11th, 2026 – 5 working days)
 - 1. Preparation phase:** from November 30th to December 4th, 2026
 - 2. On-site mission in Skopje:** from December 7th to December 11th, 2026
 - 3. Reporting phase:** from December 14th, 2026 to January 15th, 2027

Expert positions and responsibilities (by activity):

- Activity #1,2&3 : Expert #1 (principal) – Social Security, Social Services, Human Rights, Gender Equality
- Activity #1,2&3 : Expert #2 – Employment Policy and Services, Economic and Social Rights

Workload:

Activity # 1- Expert #1 :Total 19 days (9 days at distance; and 10 days onsite)

Activity # 1- Expert #2 :Total 18 days (8 days at distance; and 10 days onsite)

Activity # 2- Expert #1 :Total 14 days (9 days at distance; and 5 days onsite)

Activity # 2- Expert #2 :Total 12 days (7 days at distance; and 5 days onsite)

Activity # 3- Expert #1 :Total 14 days (9 days at distance; and 5 days onsite)

Activity # 3- Expert #2 :Total 12 days (7 days at distance; and 5 days onsite)

Call for experts' reference: 26-01/MKD/1-2-3/1 ; 26-01/MKD/1-2-3/2 ;

Version - #: __

Draft

Final

Date: *May 05th 2026*

4. Background information

4.1. Country Overview

Briefly describe:

[The political and socio-economic situation, including the Human Development Index (HDI) and other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)-related indicators, etc. Include gender equality references such as the CLIP (Country-level Implementation Plan), gender country profile elaborated by EU or UN, or the Coherence Index (INDICO), among others (250 words)]

North Macedonia is an upper-middle-income country and EU candidate state, having opened accession negotiations in 2022. The country's Human Development Index (HDI reached 0.815 in 2025), reflecting overall progress in education, health and living standards. At the same time, structural challenges persist in labour market inclusion, social inequalities and access to quality public services, particularly for vulnerable groups.

North Macedonia has actively engaged with the Growth Plan for the Western Balkans and has started to deliver on implementation of the plan's four pillars of gradual integration with the EU single market, regional economic integration, fundamental reforms and increased financial support. Under the Reform and Growth Facility, a performance-based EU instrument supporting the EU accession process, the country adopted its Reform Agenda, which covers reforms in the areas of: (i) governance, public administration reform and public financial management; (ii) the green and digital transition; (iii) human capital; (iv) private sector development and business environment; and (v) fundamental rights and the rule of law

Despite improvements in employment indicators, participation rates remain low for persons with disabilities, women, youth and Roma communities. The European Commission 2025 Report highlights the need to strengthen labour-market activation measures and ensure their effective implementation for persons with disabilities, alongside improved evaluation of outcomes. The report also underlines persistent gaps in equality and non-discrimination in employment and calls for further alignment with the EU acquis in this area, including strengthening institutional capacity to implement and monitor inclusive labour and social policies.

According to the EC Report 2025, North Macedonia has made progress in aligning its social protection and inclusion policies, yet structural and operational challenges continue to affect the effective implementation of measures targeting Roma and other vulnerable groups. The Roma strategy implementation does not sufficiently address participation, empowerment and capacity development, and coordination between institutions remains limited.

Gender equality and disability inclusion are identified as cross-cutting priorities in EU cooperation with North Macedonia. The EU Country Level Implementation Plan (CLIP) under the Gender Action Plan III emphasises gender-responsive social protection, inclusive labour-market participation and strengthened institutional capacities as key areas for reform in the context of EU accession. The document also underlines gaps in strategic planning, monitoring tools and data availability, which constrain the effective design and delivery of inclusive services for vulnerable groups. The CLIP highlights the need to strengthen institutional capacities, improve policy coordination, and enhance the availability and use of disaggregated data to support evidence-based policy-making.

According to the Coherence Index (INDICO) 2025, North Macedonia scores in the medium range (40–60) for overall policy coherence for sustainable development, with comparatively lower planetary pressures but moderate performance across democratic, socio-economic, feminist and ecological transitions.

4.2. Sector Situation

Briefly describe:

[The specific institutional framework for the area of intervention (social protection or labour & employment), including key policies, systems and programmes, the legal framework, key stakeholders. Also elaborate on eventual gender equality public institutions (gender departments, focal points of the PI or any other relevant institution, ministries, secretariats, institutes with gender equality as a mandate...) is pursued in the sector. (500 words)]

Despite progress in access to social protection and employment measures, Roma families living in informal settlements or facing homelessness remain among the most excluded groups in North Macedonia. They experience multidimensional deprivation, including lack of adequate housing, limited access to education and healthcare, and persistent barriers to employment. Especially in regard to housing, Roma face situation of living in slums, abandoned places and buildings and far-away to any life opportunities to ensure adequate housing for themselves.

The institutional framework for Roma inclusion and broader social protection in North Macedonia is primarily guided by the Strategy for Inclusion of Roma 2022–2030, aligned with national priorities on inclusive growth, improved living standards, and equal access to services. The strategy promotes access to education, employment, health, housing, and social services through a combination of general and targeted measures, including affirmative action, with a strong emphasis on gender equality. It is embedded within the country's EU accession trajectory, where Roma inclusion forms part of the obligations under Chapter 23 (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights), requiring regular monitoring and alignment with the EU acquis.

This strategic orientation is further supported by EU-driven frameworks such as the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans and IPA III, which promote inclusive growth, labour market integration, and social cohesion. These instruments aim to strengthen economic convergence with the EU, enhance regional cooperation, and support reforms in employment and social protection systems. As a result, programmes addressing Roma inclusion are increasingly linked to broader reforms in labour market participation, social services delivery, and institutional coordination, ensuring coherence with EU standards and funding mechanisms.

The legal framework underpinning these policies is comprehensive and anchored in the Constitution, and key legislation addressing anti-discrimination, social protection, employment, education, housing, and health. The Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination strengthens judicial protection and enables civil society organisations to initiate cases in the public interest, shifting the burden of proof and introducing new evidentiary tools. Furthermore, laws provide a structured legal basis for equal access to rights and services across sectors. These include the Law on Social Protection, the Law on Employment and Insurance in Case of Unemployment, the Law on Labor Relations, the Law on Primary Education, the Law on Secondary Education, the Law on Health Care, and the Law on Housing, all of which explicitly prohibit discrimination and regulate access to services and benefits.

The main stakeholders are led by the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth (MSPDY) as the central coordinating authority, working in close cooperation with the Cabinet of the Minister without portfolio responsible for Roma inclusion, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Interior, and the Employment Agency.

At the operational level, implementation involves Centres for Social Work, municipalities (through the Association of Units of Local Self-Government), and NGOs active in Roma inclusion, ensuring coordination between national policies and service delivery on the ground.

Gender equality is addressed through both horizontal and sector-specific mechanisms. The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men provides the overarching framework, supported by institutional structures such as gender equality units within ministries and designated focal points. In the context of Roma inclusion, gender considerations are integrated across policies and

programmes, ensuring that women and girls are specifically targeted in areas such as education, employment, and social protection.

North Macedonia is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), and is committed to the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325). The country has also ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). The Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth (MSPDY) holds a formal mandate to advance gender equality, including the development and coordination of gender-responsive policies, implementation of gender equality measures and support to women's empowerment, notably through its Resource Center for Gender Responsive Policy Making and Budgeting.

4.3. Role of Partner Institution in the Sector

Briefly describe:

- *The role of requesting institution in the institutional framework of the sector described above (200 words max.).*
- *The sectoral and institutional needs and gaps encountered by the partner institution (400 words max.).*
- *The existing initiatives (cooperation programmes) and international cooperation partners addressing the needs and gaps identified above (200 words max.).*
- *The means through which the Partner pursues gender equality in its field of competence (200 words).*

The Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth (MSPDY) is the authority responsible for social protection, inclusion and Roma integration policies, operating under the Law on the Organisation and Work of the State Administration and the Law on Social Protection, ensuring alignment with the European Union acquis and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It coordinates the implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Inclusion 2022–2030 priorities to:

- reduce the poverty gap between Roma and the general population;
- reduce the poverty gap between Roma children and other children.

Unit for Implementation of Strategy and Decade for Roma in Department for Coordinator and Technical Support of the Minister serves as the main governmental interlocutor for Roma inclusion policies, collaborating with the Ministry for European Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education and Science, other relevant ministries and local self-government units. It also facilitates dialogue with civil society, international partners, and the Roma community itself to ensure participatory and evidence-based policymaking.

At the institutional level, the Ministry and Centres for Social Work do not have sufficient staff and technical capacity to plan and implement coordinated support for beneficiaries. In practice, this makes it difficult to organise services provided by different actors, manage individual cases effectively and ensure continuity of support for people with complex needs. Existing programmes operate largely in sectoral silos (social protection, employment, education and health), with limited coordination and insufficient case management mechanisms to support persons with complex needs, those experiencing homelessness and multidimensional poverty affecting Roma population.

To address this, the MSPDY proposed an action to develop an Integrated mentorship and reintegration programme (IMRP) targeting Roma facing homelessness and extreme social risk, and those living in substandard conditions. The action will ensure the involvement of all relevant stakeholders through a dedicated working group to be established and coordinated by the Ministry.

Roma inclusion in North Macedonia is supported through EU-funded programmes under IPA III and the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans, focusing on social inclusion, employment and access to services. Previous EU interventions have included housing support programmes such as upgrading substandard settlements, improving basic infrastructure (water, sanitation, electricity), and social housing initiatives at municipal level, as well as social mapping of Roma communities. The Regional Action for Roma Education (RARE Phase II) complements these efforts by targeting education and employability. The proposed action builds on these initiatives and focuses on strengthening coordination and service delivery for the most vulnerable groups

Gender equality is ensured through established institutional mechanisms led by the Sector for Equal Opportunities (SEM) within the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, which coordinates gender mainstreaming across government institutions. This is complemented by Coordinators for Equal Opportunities in line ministries, the Inter-ministerial Working Group on Gender Equality, and Commissions for Equal Opportunities at local level, ensuring implementation at both central and municipal levels.

5. Action Description

As per approved RCL:

5.1. Overall Objective

1. Equitable access to employment and social protection is expanded to poor and vulnerable groups
2. Gender equality is promoted with special attention to the rights of women in all their diversity

5.2. Specific Objective(s) (Purpose)

To improve coordinated access of Roma women, men and children in extreme vulnerability to social protection, education, health and employment services.

5.3. Expected Results

1. Structured mentorship programme developed and endorsed to support coordinated service delivery for Roma women, men and children in informal settlements.

2. Reinforced competences of frontline practitioners to deliver coordinated, person centred support to Roma women, men and children.

5.4. Final Deliverables

- D. 1: Gender sensitive Diagnostic Report of institutional, legal, and operational gaps in supporting Roma in homelessness and extreme vulnerability;
- D. 2: Framework for the Design of the Integrated Mentorship and Reintegration Programme;
- D. 3: Operational Model of the Integrated Mentorship and Reintegration Programme;
- D. 4: Training of Trainers delivered and prepared compendium of materials for further dissemination for Integrated Mentorship.

6. Methodology

6.1. General Methodology (of the Action)

[Describe the summary approach proposed to achieve the expected results and deliverables (400 words)]

Specify how gender equality is pursued in the activity, what specific gender-responsive methodologies and tools shall be used by experts and how the gender focal point of the partner institution and/or the Country's gender equality public institutions (gender departments, focal points of the PI or any other relevant institution, ministries, secretariats, institutes with gender equality as a mandate...) will be involved in the peer-to-peer exchange

The action is designed to support the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth in developing an integrated and operational model for the Integrated Mentorship and Reintegration Programme, responding to the identified institutional and coordination gaps affecting support to Roma women, men and children in situations of extreme vulnerability. The methodology follows approach from assessment of existing practices to the design and operationalisation of a coherent programme model.

The action builds on existing institutional mandates, practices and resources, ensuring that all proposed solutions are realistic, feasible and embedded within the current system. The approach focuses on strengthening coordination between institutions and improving the organisation of existing services across social protection, health, education and employment sectors. **The inter-institutional working group will be established in advance of the action and will function as the central coordination, consultation and validation mechanism throughout all phases of implementation.**

The implementation is structured around iterative technical exchanges and joint working sessions with the Partner Institution and the inter-institutional working group. Experts will work directly with institutional representatives to analyse current service delivery practices, identify operational bottlenecks and co-develop solutions. This process will include mapping of service pathways,

clarification of roles and responsibilities, and definition of case management and referral mechanisms supporting coordinated service delivery.

The assessment phase will provide an analysis of institutional, legal and operational gaps, which will inform the definition of the programme scope and institutional framework. This will then be translated into an operational model, defining concrete procedures, coordination arrangements and implementation requirements. The final phase will support the practical application of the developed model through training sessions with frontline practitioners, enabling them to apply the proposed approaches within their daily work.

Gender equality will be integrated as a cross-cutting and operational dimension throughout the action. The methodology will ensure that gender-related and intersectional barriers affecting Roma women are systematically identified and addressed across all stages of the programme design, including outreach, assessment, case management and service delivery pathways. Gender-responsive tools will be applied, including gender-sensitive assessment criteria, disaggregated data collection, and the integration of specific measures addressing barriers related to care responsibilities, access to services and exposure to discrimination and violence.

The Sector for Equal Opportunities within the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, including the Department for Gender Equality and the Resource Center for Gender Responsive Policy Making and Budgeting, will be actively involved throughout the action to ensure the integration of a gender perspective. Their contribution will ensure alignment with national gender equality frameworks and support the effective integration of gender-responsive approaches into the programme model.

6.2. Planned Activities (Work Plan of the Action)

The following activities are currently planned for the action:

- **Activity 1 – Gender-sensitive Assessment of Institutional, Legal and Operational Gaps in Supporting Roma in Extreme Vulnerability** – assessment of existing policies, services and coordination mechanisms to identify gaps and barriers in access to integrated support for Roma in situations of extreme vulnerability
- **Activity 2 – Definition of the Programme Scope and Institutional Framework for the Integrated Mentorship and Reintegration Programme** – definition of target groups, intervention areas and institutional roles to structure the programme within existing systems and ensure coordinated service delivery
- **Activity 3 – Development of the Operational Model and Implementation Arrangements for the Integrated Mentorship and Reintegration Programme** – development of detailed service pathways, case management procedures and coordination mechanisms to operationalise the programme in practice
- **Activity 4 – Training of Trainers on Integrated Mentorship and Case Management** –capacity building for practitioners to enable implementation and further dissemination of the programme model

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

- Activity #1, 2 & 3

6.3. Inclusion of cross-cutting issues

SOCIEUX+ recognises the importance of including cross-cutting issues in social protection, labour and employment policies and systems. The following cross-cutting issues are duly taken into account *[remove individual bullets if necessary]*:

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

7. Activities description

7.1. Tasks

Activity 1. Gender-sensitive Assessment of Institutional, Legal and Operational Gaps in Supporting Roma in Extreme Vulnerability

Prior to the start of the action, the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth will establish an inter-institutional working group, which will serve as the main consultative and information-sharing platform throughout the assessment process. The working group will include representatives from the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, the Cabinet of the Minister without portfolio responsible for Roma inclusion, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Interior, the Employment Agency, Centres for Social Work, the Association of the Units of Local Self-Government, and relevant municipalities and CSOs. The group will be mandated to contribute to the development of the programme, propose and validate measures and activities, designate contact points for case-based coordination, and support the validation of findings and results.

The activity will be implemented through a two-week on-site mission in Skopje, during which the experts will collect relevant information through consultations, interviews, focus group discussions, site visits and case-based exchanges with institutions and stakeholders. Prior to the mission, the experts will conduct a desk review of key strategic, analytical and policy documents, including the Strategy for Inclusion of Roma 2022–2030, the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2026, the EU Gender Action Plan III Country Level Implementation Plan for North Macedonia, the FRA Roma Survey 2024, the Social Mapping of Roma communities, the Analysis of Roma community mapping, and the UNECE Assessment Report on informal settlements in the City of Skopje etc.

During the mission, the experts will also engage directly with the results of previous initiatives and EU-funded interventions, assessing their scope, approaches and practical outcomes in order to identify effective practices and remaining gaps, ensuring continuity and building on existing efforts. In this phase, coordination will be ensured with the Regional Action for Roma Education Phase II (RARE) project to establish clear synergies, avoid overlaps and ensure that the proposed action brings distinct added value within the broader Roma inclusion framework.

The assessment will target existing policies, programs, and institutional capacities aimed to address the socio-economic needs of Roma women, men and children living in informal settlements and

situations of extreme vulnerability, including those experiencing homelessness, lacking civil documentation or facing multiple barriers in accessing basic services. Particular attention will be given to individuals and families exposed to multidimensional poverty and social exclusion, with a specific focus on the differentiated needs and risks affecting Roma women and girls.

The assessment will focus on existing policies, programs, and institutional capacities addressing the socio-economic needs of Roma communities and will particularly focus on the following elements:

- existing approaches to outreach and identification of Roma in situations of extreme vulnerability, in particular those living in informal settlements and without civil documentation;
- current access to rights and services, including social protection, healthcare, education and access to employment-related services, with a focus on practical barriers in access and continuity of support;
- existing case management practices, including assessment, planning and follow-up at the level of Centres for Social Work and other involved institutions;
- roles and responsibilities of institutions involved in service delivery, including the functioning of coordination and referral mechanisms;
- operational challenges related to civil registration, housing conditions and access to basic services;
- capacities and practices at local level, including municipalities, employment services and frontline service providers;
- gender-related barriers affecting Roma women in accessing services and support, including risks related to discrimination, violence and care responsibilities;
- existing programme approaches and results of previous initiatives, with a view to identifying elements that can be further developed within the future integrated mentorship and reintegration programme.

All identified findings and proposed directions will be discussed and refined with the working group, ensuring that they are operationally realistic, feasible within existing institutional arrangements and aligned with the mandate and capacities of the involved institutions. Particular attention will be given to ensuring that proposed solutions build on current practices and can be implemented within existing systems.

Gender equality and inclusion will be addressed as a cross-cutting dimension throughout the analysis. The experts will examine how gender-related and intersectional barriers affecting Roma women are currently identified and addressed within outreach, assessment and service delivery processes. The analysis will assess whether existing service pathways adequately capture differentiated needs, risks and structural barriers, including those related to access to social protection, healthcare, education and employment-related services..

The results of this process will be consolidated into a Diagnostic Report, which will provide a structured analysis of institutional, legal and operational gaps, as well as clearly defined recommendations for IMRP .

The Experts: The principal expert will lead the mission on site. Experts are responsible for the production of all deliverables of the activity. They will also be responsible for the preparation, coordination, implementation and reporting and/or coordination of the overall activity.

The experts shall conduct the activity by means of organising a field visits, meetings, focus groups and workshops with the partner institution and relevant stakeholders, based on the co-developed methodology and agenda. The experts shall hold a meeting with the EU Delegation in North Macedonia as part of their onsite mission agenda.

Activity 2. Definition of the Programme Scope and Institutional Framework for the Integrated Mentorship and Reintegration Programme

The activity will be implemented through a five-day on-site mission in Skopje, structured around targeted technical working sessions with the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth and the inter-institutional working group.

Prior to the mission, the experts will review the Diagnostic Report developed under Activity 1 and consolidate key findings relevant for defining the scope, target groups and institutional positioning of the programme. Based on the findings, the experts will support the consolidation and structuring of key elements for the future programme model, including outreach approaches, assessment methodology, case management procedures and coordination mechanisms. This will include defining core steps, minimum standards and decision points for identification of beneficiaries, individual planning, referral and follow-up. Gender-responsive considerations will be systematically integrated into the proposed framework, including in assessment tools, service pathways and coordination practices.

During the mission, the experts will facilitate structured discussions with the working group to define the purpose and scope of the Integrated Mentorship and Reintegration Programme, ensuring alignment with national strategies and existing institutional mandates.

The programme will be structured around the following main areas of intervention:

- Basic subsistence and access to rights: facilitation of access to social protection rights and services, provision of basic support (food, water and hygiene), and identification of housing solutions within existing legal frameworks;
- Health support: access to primary healthcare, mental health support and facilitation of health insurance coverage;
- Social and economic integration: support with civil documentation, access to education and skills development, and pathways towards labour market inclusion;
- Psychosocial support and mentoring: structured mentoring by trained professionals, community engagement and activities supporting social inclusion and self-confidence.

Particular attention will be given to clearly positioning the programme within existing systems of social protection, employment, health and education, avoiding overlaps and ensuring complementarity with ongoing initiatives.

The working sessions will focus on:

- defining the target groups and eligibility criteria, with a focus on Roma in situations of extreme vulnerability;
- identifying the main dimensions of intervention, including access to rights, health support, socio-economic inclusion and psychosocial support;
- mapping institutional roles and responsibilities, including central and local level actors;
- defining coordination principles and institutional arrangements, including the role of the working group in programme governance;
- establishing the core intervention logic, including the link between outreach, case management, and reintegration pathways.

The activity will be implemented through a combination of plenary sessions and smaller technical group discussions, allowing for validation and refinement of each component with the Partner Institution and relevant stakeholders.

A gender perspective will be systematically integrated throughout the discussions. The experts will support the identification of specific barriers affecting Roma women and girls, including access to services, care responsibilities and exposure to discrimination and violence. These aspects will be reflected in the definition of target groups, intervention priorities and institutional roles, ensuring that the programme framework incorporates gender-responsive principles from the outset.

All elements will be progressively consolidated and validated during the mission, ensuring that the proposed framework is operationally realistic and grounded in existing institutional capacities.

The results of the activity will be reflected in the Framework for the Design of the Integrated Mentorship and Reintegration Programme, which will provide a structured basis for the development of the operational model in the subsequent activity.

Activity 3. Development of the Operational Model and Implementation Arrangements for the Integrated Mentorship and Reintegration Programme

The activity will be implemented through a five-day on-site mission in Skopje, structured around technical working sessions with the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth and the inter-institutional working group.

Prior to the mission, the experts will review the Programme Framework developed under Activity 2 and identify key elements requiring operationalisation, including service components, institutional roles and coordination mechanisms.

During the mission, the experts will facilitate structured co-creation sessions to translate the agreed programme framework into a concrete and operational model. The discussions will focus on defining the sequence of interventions and service pathways, including outreach, identification of beneficiaries, assessment, case management and follow-up towards reintegration.

The working sessions will address:

- definition of programme components and services to be delivered across sectors;
- development of detailed service pathways and referral mechanisms between institutions;
- clarification of roles and responsibilities of involved institutions and service providers;
- identification of required human and organisational resources for implementation;
- definition of coordination mechanisms at central and local level;
- development of a monitoring and reporting approach, including indicators and data collection methods.

A gender perspective will be integrated across all components of the operational model. The experts will ensure that service pathways, case management procedures and coordination mechanisms adequately reflect the specific needs and risks affecting Roma women, including access to services, care responsibilities and exposure to discrimination and violence.

The activity will be implemented through a combination of plenary sessions and smaller technical group work, allowing for detailed development and validation of each component with the Partner Institution.

All elements will be progressively consolidated and validated during the mission, ensuring that the operational model is feasible within existing institutional capacities and can be applied in practice.

The results of the activity will be reflected in the endorsed Operational Model of the Integrated Mentorship and Reintegration Programme, which will provide a concrete basis for implementation and for the capacity building activities under the subsequent phase.

The principal expert will lead the on-site mission. He/she/they will be responsible for producing all activity deliverables (see Section **Error! Reference source not found.** below). He/she/they will be also responsible for preparing, coordinating, implementing and reporting the overall activity towards SOCIEUX+.

Minimum tasks expected from the experts shall include:

Task 1 – Preparation of the Mission

The Experts Team:

- Gains substantial knowledge of the local context; reviews any relevant background document provided by the SOCIEUX+ Team and/or the Partner institution (PI).
- Establishes in close consultation with the PI the mission's methodology and agenda (TMT – for training – and MeN); then submits them for approval by the SOCIEUX+ Team.
- Participates in a pre-departure briefing with the SOCIEUX+ Team (approximately one week before the mission).

Task 2 – Implementation of the Mission

The Experts Team:

- Reviews and finalises the mission agenda and the list of stakeholders to be consulted with the PI upon arrival; any changes to the MeN shall be communicated to the SOCIEUX+ Team in a timely manner.
- Organises, as necessary, a brief presentation of the mission's objectives and methodology for the PI and relevant stakeholders.
- Provides a briefing on the background of the request and mission's objectives to the EU Delegation, if applicable.
- Conducts consultations with the PI's executives and staff, as well as relevant stakeholders, including the EU Delegation, as per the agenda.
- Compiles the initial findings and main conclusions emerging from the peer-to-peer technical exchange in a brief presentation that will be used for the final consultation and on-site debriefing.
- Channels any material that can be useful to inform the public about the activity (pictures, interviews, brief notes or articles).
- Liaises with the SOCIEUX+ Team at every stage of the implementation regarding doubts about the eligibility of proposals raised by the PI, politically sensitive developments, or any other relevant issue that may require a formal position from SOCIEUX+.

Task 3 – Final Consultation and Debriefing.

The Experts Team:

- Presents the initial findings and main recommendations emerging from the peer-to-peer technical exchange to the PI, relevant stakeholders and the EU Delegation.
- Collects the feedback of the PI, relevant stakeholders and the EU Delegation for inclusion, as possible, in their final draft of the activity's final deliverables.

Task 4 – Finalisation and Submission of the Deliverables.

The Experts Team:

- Prepares the final deliverables for review and feedback by SOCIEUX+, the PI and eventually other stakeholders.

7.2. Deliverables

7.2.1. Pre-mission Deliverables

- MeN: A methodological note, detailing the working approach, tools and methods to be employed, a risks analysis, etc.; and an activity/mission agenda, specifying meetings and working sessions to be held, persons to meet, etc. The Methodological Note shall not exceed five pages (excluding the cover page and annexes).

7.2.2. Final Deliverables

- D1: An individual Expert Mission Report (ExMR) in SOCIEUX+ format (template provided). This report is a confidential product intended solely for SOCIEUX+'s use. The expert team may also submit a single-joint ExMR report if they prefer to do so (see instructions on the template).
- D2: An individual completed Expert Feedback Form (ExF) completed online (see instructions and link on the ExMR template).
- D3: A collective Activity Report (AcR) in SOCIEUX+ format (template provided). The mission team will produce this AcR jointly. It is intended for the Partner Institution but will probably be shared with key stakeholders of the action. The report will reflect the tasks conducted during the activity. It shall provide a meaningful contribution towards the final deliverables of the action.
- D4: A technical report representing the experts' contribution to the PI regarding the content of the peer-to-peer exchanges to attain the action's expected results and contribute to achieving its specific objectives. It is a piece of technical work on the subject of peer-to-peer cooperation. The technical report shall comply with the description provided in the ToREx and further agreed upon in the MeN:
 - **For Activity 1:**
 - **Diagnostic Report and Needs Assessment of institutional, legal and operational gaps in supporting Roma in situations of extreme vulnerability-** analysis of existing policies, service delivery practices and coordination mechanisms, with a focus on how support is implemented in practice at central and local level. It will identify main institutional, legal and operational gaps affecting access to services, continuity of support and case management for Roma women, men and children. A gender perspective will be integrated throughout the analysis, highlighting specific barriers affecting Roma women and intersectional vulnerabilities.
 - **For Activity 2:**
 - **Framework for the Design of the Integrated Mentorship and Reintegration Programme** - defining its scope, objectives and target groups. It will clearly position the programme within existing institutional systems of social protection, employment, health and education, ensuring complementarity and feasibility. It will define the core intervention logic, linking outreach, assessment, case management and reintegration pathways. A gender perspective will be integrated throughout, reflecting specific barriers and needs of Roma women and girls. The framework will serve as the basis for the development of the operational model in the subsequent activity.
 - **For Activity 3**
 - **Operational Model of the Integrated Mentorship and Reintegration Programme** - specify the sequence of interventions, including outreach, beneficiary identification, assessment, case management and follow-up towards reintegration. The model will define institutional roles and responsibilities, as well as coordination and referral mechanisms across relevant sectors. It will outline the required human and organisational

resources for implementation within existing institutional structures. A monitoring and reporting framework will be included, with defined indicators and data collection approaches. A gender perspective will be integrated across all components, ensuring that the model responds to the specific needs and risks affecting Roma women, men and children.

7.2.3. Deliverables expected from Regional or Non-EU Expert (if relevant)

In case triangular cooperation is part of the activity, the regional or non-EU expert shall elaborate distinct deliverables, namely:

- Contribute to Expert Mission Report (ExMR; dedicated section on the sharing on international and regional experiences). Additionally, an individual completed Expert Feedback Form (ExF) shall be completed online (see instructions and link on the ExMR template).
- A technical report compiling the regional models and practices showcased during the activity.

8. Reporting and submission of deliverables

8.1. 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 editable versions* (Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel; or equivalent OpenDocument format). Non-editable electronic documents, such Portable Document Format (PDF), will 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 is not allowed unless otherwise instructed in writing [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 lies solely with its authors. Neither the European Union, the European Commission, the implementation partners of SOCIEUX+, nor the SOCIEUX+ Staff are 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 must be provided in English, or in the language of the Partner Institution.

8.2. Submission and approval

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

8.2.1. Pre-mission deliverables

- Pre-mission deliverables shall be first agreed upon with the Partner Institution and then submitted to the SOCIEUX+ Team no later than five working days before the departure on mission of the Experts Team.
- Pre-mission deliverables will be shared with and reviewed by SOCIEUX+. Feedback on the deliverables should be provided to the FFM Team no later than two working days before the departure on the mission of the experts. Comments and recommendations from this feedback shall be taken into account for the implementation of the activity/mission by the experts. An updated version of the MeN, integrating the SOCIEUX+ Team's feedbacks and recommendations shall be resubmitted by the Experts Team at the earliest possible occurrence.

8.2.2. Final deliverables

- The first draft versions of the final deliverables must be submitted by the Experts Team to the SOCIEUX+ Team no later than ten working days after the completion of the Experts Team's mission.
- Feedback from the SOCIEUX+ Team on the first draft version of the report should be provided within five working days of its submission.
- The Experts Team is expected to incorporate this feedback into the draft versions within five working days of receiving the comments.
- The second draft version of the deliverables shall be submitted by the SOCIEUX+ Team to the PI for review and approval. The PI must approve or provide comments and/or requests for amendments within five working days of receipt.
- If comments and/or requests for amendments are received, the Experts Team will have an additional five working days to finalize the deliverables. Generally, only one round of feedback and revision is permitted.
- Final payments and reimbursement of travel costs to experts can only be authorised upon approval of the final version of the deliverables by the PI and SOCIEUX+.

9. Required expertise

9.1. Expertise profile

For Activities 1,2 & 3

Principal expert (Expert #1):

Area(s) of expertise: Social Security, Social Services, Human Rights, Gender Equality

Specific skill(s) & competency(ies): 1.2 P&S making and development, 3.6 Service delivery, 3.1. Organ. 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): 7
- c) Required language knowledge: [English](#)
N.B.: Translation and interpretation services may be commissioned by SOCIEUX+.
- d) Other essential qualification(s):
 - Proven experience in designing and implementing integrated social service models, inter-institutional coordination mechanisms,
 - Expertise in gender-responsive approaches and mainstreaming gender equality in social protection and inclusion policies

Additional assets (advantageous in selection):

- e) Experience working with minority groups, including Roma communities
- f) A previous experience in delivering short-term technical assistance within SOCIEUX+ actions and/or in international cooperation;
- g) Language(s): command of Macedonian and/or Montenegrin, Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian language
- h) Having passed the SOCIEUX+ e-learning '[Acting upon inequality](#)'. SOCIEUX+ aims to do no harm and contribute to the reduction of inequalities. Hence, we highly recommend doing this short e-course. It takes about 2h30.

For Activities 1,2 & 3

Expert #2:

Area(s) of expertise: *Employment Policy and Services, Economic and Social Rights*

Specific skill(s) & competence(s): 1.3 P&S making and development, 3.6 Service delivery, 5.1. Monitoring & Evaluation(M&E)

Requirements (essential/required):

- a) The education type and level required:

“Master’s” degree (or equivalent advanced academic degree or diploma requiring four 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 substituted with a combination of academic degree(s) and relevant years of work/professional experience combining the area of expertise and specific skills requested:

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

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

- b) Number of years of relevant work/professional experience combining the area(s) of expertise and demonstrated specific skill(s) & competence(s): **5**
- c) Required language knowledge: **English**
N.B.: Translation and interpretation services may be commissioned by SOCIEUX+.
- d) Other essential qualification(s):
 - Proven experience in labour market policies and employment services, including integration of vulnerable groups into the labour market
 - Demonstrated experience in developing or supporting coordination mechanisms between employment services and social protection systems

Additional assets (advantageous in selection):

- e) Experience working with minority groups, including Roma communities
- f) A previous experience in delivering short-term technical assistance within SOCIEUX+ actions and/or in international cooperation;
- g) Language(s): command of Macedonian and/or Montenegrin, Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian language
- h) Having passed the SOCIEUX+ e-learning ‘[Acting upon inequality](#)’. SOCIEUX+ aims to do no harm and contribute to the reduction of inequalities. Hence, we highly recommend doing this short e-course. It takes about 2h30.

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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 contact the SOCIEUX+ Team at experts@socieux.eu, indicating the reference of the call for experts.

9.2. Estimated workload

Activity 1

	Preparation	On-site work	Distance work	Reporting & deliverables	Total
Principal expert (#1)	4	10	0	5	19
Expert (#2)	4	10	0	4	18

Total experts	6	20	0	7	37
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Activity 2

	Preparation	On-site work	Distance work	Reporting & deliverables	Total
Principal expert (#1)	4	5	0	5	14
Expert (#2)	3	5	0	4	12
Total experts	7	10	0	9	26

Activity 3

	Preparation	On-site work	Distance work	Reporting & deliverables	Total
Principal expert (#1)	4	5	0	5	14
Expert (#2)	3	5	0	4	12
Total experts	7	10	0	10	26

10. Applications

10.1. 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 available only in English). The application process is as follows:

1. If they have not already done so, experts must create a SOCIEUX+ account by clicking “Create an account” and providing a valid email address.
2. Login details for their account will be sent to experts by email, experts should create and submit their profile for review by¹:
 - 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 the 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 format².
3. Once the SOCIEUX+ Team approves their profile, they can apply to any available calls for experts accessible under the tab “Call for Experts” and click on “Apply”.

Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis, and positions may be filled as soon as suitable candidates are identified.

Experts can be identified and selected following a non-competitive procedure, which applies only in four specific circumstances:

- Experts to be mobilized from a ‘preferred institution’, i.e. the EU MS public entity indicated by the PI in the REF as the desired and most suitable learning model and source of expertise;
- Experts to be mobilized, on the request of the PI, from a ‘supporting entity’, i.e. a national or international development partner that supports the PI on the same or a similar area of work concerned by the request;
- Experts to be mobilized to accompany a study-visit by a PI’s delegation to an EUMS, i.e. a public expert from one of the EUMS’ hosting institution;
- Experts to be mobilized from PCs or former PIs for triangular cooperation.

For more information, 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.

¹ SOCIEUX+ expert database and other management tools comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) - Regulation (EU) 2016/679.

² Europass templates for CVs are available here: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae/templates-instructions>

10.2. Selection of Experts

SOCIEUX+ primarily mobilises experts from the public administrations and mandated bodies of EU Member States, as well as 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.
- **Regional experts:** they provide significant added value, since they belong to the institutions with which SOCIEUX has already worked in the region where the action will be carried out. In addition, regional experts/s can provide a contextualized perspective on the socio-political, economic and cultural realities of the region, which reinforces the relevance, feasibility and sustainability of proposals and outcomes. Priority will be given to regional experts who are familiar with their own Country's gender equality situation and mechanisms, if applicable

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. The mobilisation of experts currently employed with specialised international agencies is limited to activities and/or actions that are jointly implemented with that expert's agency of origin, indicated as the "Supporting Entity" in the Request.

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

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

At SOCIEUX+ we value all experts as unique individuals, and we welcome the variety of experiences they bring to the Facility. As such, we have a strict non-discrimination policy. We believe everyone should be treated equally regardless of race, sex, gender identification, sexual orientation, national origin, native language, religion, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, pregnancy, or any other characteristic protected by law. If you feel that you have been discriminated against, please let the SOCIEUX+ team know as soon as possible. Every complaint will be appropriately investigated.

10.3. 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, regardless of whether their former employer collaborates with SOCIEUX+ on a specific action. Retired experts are considered public experts for all purposes, benefits, and financial compensation provided by SOCIEUX+.

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

Contracting Options:

- **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 servants 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 (+ Authorisation 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 authorised to sign temporary employment contracts under local legislation; or
 - > Service contract with institution: experts without a TIN and unable to sign an employment contract under local legislation.
- **Regional expert**: Depending on local legislation and the preferences of the expert's institution, the contract will be signed either directly with the expert or with the institution to which he/she belongs.

10.4. Financial compensations

Contracted 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 treated as public employees for all intents, purposes, benefits and financial compensation 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+. Compliance and verification are the responsibility of 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.

10.5. Travel costs

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

11. Communication & Visibility

SOCIEUX+ may use its communication channels, such as its website, newsletter and other media to share information on the implementation and results of the activities. To this end, contributions from mobilised experts are envisaged.

Small contributions for communication and visibility purposes, such as photographs, short texts and interviews, may be requested. Before and after the mission, short briefings may be organised with the SOCIEUX+ Communication Officer. These briefings will provide an opportunity to identify communication opportunities and strategies.

The correct use of SOCIEUX+ templates and visibility elements will be ensured in accordance with EU visibility guidelines.

For specific activities and events and under certain circumstances, visibility products such as brochures, folders, USB sticks, notebooks and other products may be made available to experts for face-to-face distribution.

Code of conduct

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

Experts mobilized do not represent SOCIEUX+ or the EU. Their technical opinions and recommendations are their own and do not reflect the official stance of SOCIEUX+ or the EU. They shall refrain from expressing negative opinions about the implementation of actions supported by SOCIEUX+ to third parties. However, they should be familiar with SOCIEUX+'s objectives and operations and promote its services to the best of their knowledge, whenever possible and feasible.

Experts shall perform their duties in the partner country in a manner that fully respects local institutions, policies, and cultural norms. They shall adopt culturally sensitive behavior when interacting with their local counterparts.

12. Other considerations

[.....]

13. Annexes

[...Text...]

