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# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## Partner country

Republic of North Macedonia and Kosovo

## Contracting authority

Citizens Association Initiative for European Perspective (IEP)

## Country background

According to the EU Report for 2023, North Macedonia needs to intensify the work to achieve full alignment with the cornerstone Directives on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment. This negatively impacts all other environmental sectors, infrastructure investments and overall public participation and perception. Quality and healthy living environment are one of the basic preconditions for a quality life of all citizens in the Republic of Macedonia. Unfortunately air pollution is increasing from year to year, the situation is deteriorating and it becomes alarming, and there is lack of air quality monitoring and no legislative developments on air quality. On the other hand, water is one of the key elements for achieving sustainable environmental development. But according to analysis and reports, there is absence of water management planning documents and quality strategy. Waste management is one of the most serious environmental issues in Macedonia and are present in almost all areas of the existing waste management system and in all relations in the society. In the EU Report for 2023, it is highlighted that Kosovo needs to take ownership and all the necessary measures in the environmental sector and to that end, increase the capacities of the environmental authorities at the central and local level, implement structural reforms and ensure interinstitutional cooperation. Air quality, notably pollution, continues to be a major health threat. Kosovo needs to increase capacities and set realistic recycling targets to implement its integrated waste management and circular economy.

## Current situation in the sector

The Strategy for Local Economic Development of Municipality of Gostivar 2021-2025 outlines initiatives like sewerage construction, waste clean-up, and green space expansion to combat environmental degradation. New legal provisions emphasize green urban planning by the local government, aiming to bolster the green economy and environmental protection. Solid waste treatment, managed by PUC "Komunalec," covers urban and suburban areas, with plans for regional waste treatment to enhance collection and rehabilitation efforts, thus improving tourism. Rehabilitated green areas around the river Vardar are not connected in a structured way, and GIZ studies provide effective solutions for three combined pedestrian and cycling bridges, adapted as for persons with disabilities, focus on pedestrian tracks, within the area of city park, or nearby areas. The Program for development of Polog planning region 2021-2026 has observed that one of the sources for pollution of river Vardar is solid waste, therefore, special attention should be paid to the protection of the river from such pollution. In Kosovo, riverbed organization initiatives aim to address illegal landfills threatening local ecosystems, particularly the habitat of the endangered Illyrian Mrena fish. Unfiltered streams flowing into the Morava River compound pollution issues, highlighting the need for riverbed adaptation to prevent waste dumping and transform the area into a recreational space for residents, thereby safeguarding the environment. Additionally, for this project, MOU will be signed with: the municipalities in Kosovo (Gjilan, Vitia, Kllokot, Partesh), on conducting common activities and sharing of responsibilities for the implementation of the project; the ministry of education, for cooperating on school participation; cleaning service providers, including clean-up, collection and transportation/storing of waste; recyclers, including transportation/storing recycling of waste.

## Related programmes and other donor activities

The Project is related with the Strategy for Local Economic Development of Municipality of Gostivar 2021-2025 and the Program for development of Polog planning region 2021-2026. At the policy level, the action will contribute to the improvement of the legislative and policy framework related to waste management and environmental protection, particularly in the cross-border context. This will be achieved through the establishment of cross-border partnerships and joint initiatives between relevant stakeholders, leading to the identification of best practices and the sharing of knowledge and experiences. The action will also contribute to the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the one for the Adriatic and Ionian Region, promoting sustainable development and cross-border cooperation. The action also synergizes with other development initiatives, such as the European Green Deal, the EU's enlargement strategy, and the regional cooperation initiatives in the Western Balkans. The project is in line with key EU policies in the spheres of human rights. The European Union is founded on a shared determination to promote peace and stability and to build a world founded on respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. These principles underpin all aspects of the internal and external policies of the European Union (activity - Conference for presentation and discussion of the Environmental protection law). The municipalities and IEP have extensive project management experience with EU and other donors’ funding. Furthermore, the action is in line with a several approved projects in both municipalities: in the vicinity of the place of intervention in Vitia, there are several approved projects of enhancing the infrastructure, of several local roads toward the villages. Approved infrastructure projects for local roads leading to villages in Vitia enhance the region's accessibility and attractiveness to tourists, which can potentially lead to future investments. In Gostivar, a park has been established as a trademark of the municipality, and ongoing interventions aim to make it even more appealing to visitors. By completing these interventions, the park's impact will double. The ongoing projects will be complemented, such as: The "Congress of Monastery" where a primary objective of the project is to improve accessibility in the area by upgrading the road surfaces, extending the surface water channel, and expanding the bridge. This project is implementing by Municipality of Vitia and supported by Donation from Helvetas, Performance Grant 2022; Another ongoing project is “Infrastructure improvement project in the center of the city of Vitis”, implemented by Municipality of Vitia, and financed by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation. The project aims to had a positive impact on the quality of life in the city by improving infrastructure, enhancing public spaces, and improving accessibility.

# OBJECTIVES & EXPECTED OUTPUTS

## Overall objective

The overall objective (Impact) to which this action contributes is: to contribute on reducing the environmental pollution and increasing the quality of life of the citizens in the border region of Kosovo and North Macedonia. The specific objective no.1 of the action is to reduce river pollution through common actions for preventing illegal waste dump and; The specific objective no.2 of the action is to create preconditions for green transport for citizens.

## Specific objective(s)

**The specific objective of this contract is as follows:** Тo engage three (3) junior experts in the Environmental and Construction fields to oversee the construction works of the pedestrian bridge and the development of the local park in the Gostivar municipality.

## Expected outputs to be achieved by the contractor

**The expected output of this contract is as follows:** Engaged three (3) junior experts in the Environmental and Construction fields to oversee the construction works of the pedestrian bridge and the development of the local park in the Gostivar municipality.

# ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

## Assumptions underlying the project

The project is based on the assumptions that:

SO1: There is a willingness and cooperation from the local communities to participate in preventing illegal waste dumping in the targeted areas.

SO2: There is a demand for green transport among citizens and that they will utilize the preconditions created by the project.

Result 1: The ground made available by clearing illegal dumpsites will be used for recreational purposes by the local community.

Result 2: The constructed infrastructure will be used effectively and maintained properly by the relevant stakeholders.

Result 3: The urban equipment provided will be used and maintained by the local community.

Result 4: The awareness raising activities will be effective in promoting sustainable urban development among the targeted population.

Result 5: The capacity building activities will effectively enhance the local institutions' and youth's abilities to address environment protection issues.

## Risks

Identified risks within the project application, are:

* Physical risks: Natural disasters such as floods, landslides, and earthquakes can damage the infrastructure created and negatively impact the progress of the project. Mitigation: The project team should conduct a thorough risk assessment and ensure that the infrastructure created is robust enough to withstand such disasters. The team should also work with local authorities to identify safe locations and construction methods that are resistant to natural disasters.
* Environmental risks: The project may face resistance from local communities who rely on waste collection and sorting for their livelihoods. Mitigation: The project team should work closely with local authorities and communities to understand their needs and involve them in the project planning process. The team should also conduct a detailed study of the socio-economic conditions of the target areas to ensure that the project does not negatively impact the local communities.
* Political risks: Political instability and conflict in the region may negatively affect the implementation of the project. Mitigation: The project team should keep a close eye on the political situation in the region and work with local authorities to ensure that the project is not affected by any political instability. The team should also work with stakeholders to identify alternative plans in case of unforeseen political events.
* Economic risks: Fluctuations in exchange rates or changes in economic conditions could impact the project's budget and funding. Mitigation: The project team should conduct a thorough financial risk assessment and identify potential sources of funding and revenue streams. The team should also explore the possibility of obtaining insurance to cover potential financial losses.
* Social risks: Social tensions and conflicts between different ethnic or cultural groups in the region may negatively impact the implementation of the project. Mitigation: The project team should work closely with local authorities and stakeholders to identify potential social risks and develop strategies to mitigate them. The team should also prioritize social inclusion and work to engage and involve all members of the local community in the project.

# SCOPE OF THE WORK

## General

### Description of the assignment

The assignment is designed to engage three (3) junior experts to oversee the construction of the pedestrian bridge and the development of the local park, both in the Municipality of Gostivar, which are associated with the “Bridging regions” project. The experts will be primarily selected from among last-year undergraduate students or recent graduates of relevant faculties. The junior experts will assist in on-site visits, document construction progress, monitor environmental standards, support stakeholder coordination, and prepare monthly and final reports summarizing activities, challenges, and lessons learned. The assignment provides a learning-by-doing opportunity for the selected junior experts who will work under the the guidance/supervision of senior municipal staff /mentor and the project coordinator in Gostivar municipality. This approach is designed not only to contribute to project implementation but also to strengthen the capacities of the Gostivar municipality to undertake similar interventions in the future, by creating potential staff with expertise in the future. This model supports long-term institutional sustainability, enabling municipality to more effectively plan, manage, and execute similar interventions beyond the duration of the project. All of the information/documentation needed will be provided/ensured by the Municipality of Gostivar and will be at the disposal of the selected junior experts.

The Contractors will work closely with the representative nominated by Gostivar municipality, as a Contracting authority. The maximum budget for this service contract is EUR 1,800 (global price) per expert for six months, in total for 3 experts, EUR 5,400 as outlined in Budget Line 5.7.6.

The payments will be made in MKD at the exchange rate determined for the given accounting period, according to the guidelines from the donor and the partnership agreement between the Contracting Authority and the Contractor. Payment will be distributed into one instalment: Instalment 1 – 100% upon completion of the assignment and delivery of the reports.

All experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on.

### Geographical area to be covered

Municipality of Gostivar, North Macedonia.

### Target groups

Target groups within the project “Bridging regions” are local inhabitants of Municipality of Vitia (47,370 inhabitants) and Municipality of Gostivar (81,042 inhabitants); active citizens of both municipalities: students from Vitia and Gostivar; teachers from Vitia and Gostivar; environmental maintenance workers from public utilities of Vitia and Gostivar; women entrepreneurs; people with disabilities; youth; local CSOs in both regions: long term unemployed; ethnic minorities (Roma community, informal waste collectors of plastic, metal and glass). Final beneficiaries are: local inhabitants of Gostivar Municipality and Vitia Municipality (in total 128,412), indirect beneficiaries are the population that lives along the course of the Vardar and Morava River, potential tourists within the Vitia and Gostivar region.

## Specific work

## The specific work for each of the three (3) environmental and construction junior experts is to oversee the construction works of the pedestrian bridge and the development of the local park in the Gostivar municipality. These are the subtasks:

1. Assist in regular on-site visits during the construction works of the pedestrian bridge and the development of the local park, both in the Municipality of Gostivar, to observe and report on the implementation process.
2. Support the documentation of construction progress (bridge and park) through note-taking, photographing, and simple progress reporting.
3. Learn about and help monitor compliance with environmental standards, including proper waste handling, noise and dust control, accessibility features end etc.
4. Provide basic administrative and coordination support during meetings between project stakeholders (municipality, contractor, project team (if applicable)).
5. Prepare and submit monthly (progress) reports, draft and final reports detailing activities conducted, observations, challenges, and recommendations (supported by photos), summarizing the outcomes of the engagement and insights gained during the assignment, reflecting lessons learned and personal reflections on the experience.
6. Perform additional relevant tasks as assigned by mentors or the municipal focal points to support successful implementation.

The contractor must also comply with the latest Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU-funded external action, laid down and published by the European Commission (if applicable).

## Project management

### Responsible body

The municipality of Gostivar, acting as co-applicant 1, is responsible for developing the Terms of Reference (ToR) and tendering documentation for the required service and as a Contracting Authority as well as for inviting selected experts to submit a bid, in accordance to this ToR and Tender Dossier documentation. Additionally, the Gostivar municipality will be responsible for selecting the best candidate and for providing information/documentation/access, etc., to the selected junior experts **to** oversee the construction works of the pedestrian bridge and the development of the local park in the Gostivar municipality.

### Management structure

The project “Bridging regions” is implemented by the Municipality of Vitia, Kosovo, as lead applicant in partnership with the Municipality of Gostivar, as co-applicant 1, and the Initiative for European Perspective, as co-applicant 2. Project management is organized with a Steering Committee (one representative from each partner) and a project team (persons receiving salaries from the project). The Steering Committee has the responsibility to monitor the overall project progress (including fulfillment of objectives, schedule, milestones, etc.), to discuss and agree on actions in case of deviations from the project plan, to approve project deliverables, to consider legal issues and to resolve management differences.

### Facilities to be provided by the contracting authority and/or other parties

N/A.

# LOGISTICS AND TIMING

## Location

The communication between the Contracting Authority and the Contractor will take place offline at physical locations or online through digital platforms, specifically via the following email: zgrainca@gmail.com or telephone: 076 474 930.

## Start date & period of implementation of tasks

The intended start date is 22nd of August and the period of implementation of the contract will be 6 months from this date. Please see Articles 19.1 and 19.2 of the special conditions for the actual start date and period of implementation.

# REQUIREMENTS

## Staff

Note that civil servants and other staff of the public administration of the partner country, or of international/regional organisations based in the country, shall only be approved to work as experts if well justified. The justification should be submitted with the tender and shall include information on the added value the expert will bring as well as proof that the expert is seconded or on personal leave.

### Key experts

All experts who have a crucial role in implementing the contract are referred to as key experts. The profiles of the key experts for this contract are as follows:

**Qualifications and Requirements:**A university degree (or near completion of a degree) in one of the following fields:

* Civil Engineering
* Environmental Engineering/protection
* Architecture
* Urban Planning
* or a related or related fields

\*Note: Candidates must be last-year undergraduate students or recent graduates from accredited faculties.

* Interest in gaining practical experience in infrastructure development and environmental monitoring.
* Basic understanding of construction processes and environmental standards.
* Strong observational, documentation, and communication skills.
* Ability to work collaboratively and follow instructions from supervisors.
* Availability for fieldwork and regular site visits in the Municipality of Gostivar.
* Basic computer skills, including the use of Microsoft Office and photo documentation tools..
* Basic knowledge of technical documentation related to infrastructure works (e.g., construction plans, bills of quantities, environmental impact mitigation).
* Good communication and reporting skills.
* Ability to work independently and as part of a team in a multicultural environment.
* Fluency in Albanian and/or English will be considered an advantage.

**Experience is not required, but it will be considered an advantage to have:**

* Academic or practical exposure to infrastructure development projects, preferably in areas related to construction supervision, site monitoring, or environmental assessments.
* Experience gained through internships, coursework, student field projects, or volunteering on relevant urban development initiatives.
* Previous participation in projects involving municipal or donor-funded initiatives (EU, UNDP, etc.).

### Other experts, support staff & backstopping

CVs for experts other than the key experts should not be submitted in the tender but the tenderer will have to demonstrate in their offer that they have access to experts with the required profiles. The contractor shall select and hire other experts as required according to the needs. The selection procedures used by the contractor to select these other experts shall be transparent, and shall be based on pre-defined criteria, including professional qualifications, language skills and work experience.

The costs for backstopping and support staff, as needed, are considered to be included in the tenderer's financial offer.

## Office accommodation

N/A

## Facilities to be provided by the contractor

The contractor shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular, it must ensure that there are sufficient administrative, secretarial, and interpreting provisions to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. It must also transfer funds as necessary to support its work under the contract and to ensure that its employees are paid regularly and in a timely fashion.

## Equipment

**No** equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the contracting authority / partner country as part of this service contract or transferred to the contracting authority / partner country at the end of this contract. Any equipment related to this contract which is to be acquired by the partner country must be purchased by means of a separate supply tender procedure.

# REPORTS

## Reporting requirements

Each of the 3 contractors must submit **monthly reports** in English through e-mail to the Contracting Authority and will work closely with the representative nominated by the Gostivar municipality (project coordinator), as a Contracting Party. However, all reports will be reviewed and approved by the Municipality of Gostivar. Also, to submit the following reports in English in one original and one copy:

* **Draft report (1st report)** to be produced for the first 3 months of the start date & period of implementation of tasks.
* **Final report (2nd report)** - The deadline for sending the final report is 15 days before the end of the Contract and must include all the remarks/comments from the Contracting Authority (if any).

All of the reports must be supported by photos of the construction/reconstruction process and work on the spot of the bridge and park in the Gostivar municipality.

## Submission and approval of reports

The report referred to above must be submitted to the Project Coordinator identified in the contract. The Project Coordinator is responsible for approving the reports.

# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

## Definition of indicators

Monitoring the execution of the specific tasks within the timeline and the completion rate of each task against the agreed-upon schedule and ensuring that the tasks are prepared according to specifications.

## Special requirements

The experts (each of them) should submit the following:

- CV of the junior expert

- Motivational letter

- Declaration on honour on exclusion criteria and selection criteria (in attachment)

- Statement of exclusivity and availability (in attachment)

The deadline for submitting the proposals is the 21-st. of August, 16.00 (local time) via the following email: zgrainca@gmail.com with subject: Application for junior expert in the Environmental and Construction fields to oversee the construction works of the pedestrian bridge and the development of the local park in the Gostivar municipality.