D8 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (ESMP)

FINAL DRAFT

Republic of North Macedonia

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AGRICULTURE MODERNIZATION PROJECT

Consulting Services for Site Selection, Urban Planning, Feasibility, Schematic and Detailed Design of an Agri-Food Platform in Skopje area (Gazi Baba Municipality)

IRD ENGINEERING

AGT INTERNATIONAL

ГРАДЕЖЕН ИНСТИТУТ МАКЕДОНИЈА

CONSULTING SERVICES FOR LOCATION SELECTION, URBAN PLANNING, FEASIBILITY, SCHEMATIC AND DETAILED DESIGN OF AN AGRI-FOOD PLATFORM IN SKOPJE AREA (GAZI BABA MUNICIPALITY)

D8 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (ESMP)

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFP	Agri-food platform
AMP	Agriculture Modernization Project
CHSP	Community Health and Safety Plan
CM	Cadastral municipalities
EHS	Environmental, Health, and Safety
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPR	Environmental Protection Report
ESF	Environmental and Social Framework
ESMP	Environmental & Social Management Plan
ESS(s)	Environmental and Social Standard(s)
EU	European Union
F&V	fruits and vegetables
IPH	Institute of Public Health
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMCSWS	Intermunicipal Center for Social Work Skopje
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MAFWE	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
MICE	Macedonian Information Centre for Environment
MoEPP	Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning
OHSP	Occupational Health and Safety Plan
OS	Observation Sites
PCE/PUC	Public Communal Enterprise / Public Utility Company
PAP	Project Affected Person/s
PMT	Project Management Team
RAP	Resettlement Action Plan
RNM	Republic of North Macedonia
VP	Vantage Points
WB	World Bank

1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 Overview

The Agrobusiness sector in the Republic of North Macedonia (RNM) is very important economic sector that participates with 19% of the total number of jobs in the production and 23% of the total percent of the production (World Bank, 2017). The turnover of the Agrobusiness is geographically evenly distributed throughout the whole country which emphasizes the unique role that the agriculture can have in the promotion of wide growth and the number of jobs in the rural areas. RNM exports fruit and vegetable, tobacco, drinks (mostly vine), sheep (sheep/lamb meat), and other food products approximately about 10% of the total export. The main markets of the country for primary agricultural export are the countries of Western Balkans, European Union (EU) and Russia.

The Government has pointed out the agriculture as one of its economic priorities. The National strategy for agricultural and rural development 2014-2020 set the goals, policies and development measures of the agriculture and rural areas in the country. The key goal of the Strategy policy is „increasing of competition of the agriculture and the food industry in North Macedonia, the rural development and sustainable management with the natural resources“.

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (MAFWE) initiated the Agriculture Modernization Project (AMP), aiming to improve the competitiveness of the agricultural sector of the Republic of North Macedonia and strengthen public institutions in the framework of the country's accession process to the European Union. The Agriculture Modernization Project is structured along three complementary components: Promoting agriculture sector competitiveness, Strengthening institutional capacity for public sector support, and Project Management. The third component, Project Management, is component that will provide overall coordination and implementation of several project activities, one of which is Agri-food platform (AFP) in Skopje that will serve as a Wholesale market.

The Agri-food platform initiative, led by MAFWE, represents a significant step toward modernizing and enhancing the fresh produce sector's value chain. It is designed to streamline the marketing of fresh produce, improve transaction conditions, facilitate the aggregation and classification of agricultural produce, and strengthen the relationships among the various stakeholders in the agricultural sector, including producers, collection centers, aggregators, wholesalers, exporters, and retailers.

The construction of the Wholesale market/Agri-food platform will result in direct economic effects and improvement of the socio-economic climate. The immediate effect will be reflected in the increased engagement of the available labor force through new employment in the activities foreseen within the AFP. The construction and commissioning of the planned contents will enable the realization of economic, cultural, and other types of social functions with direct or indirect economic effects.

1.2 Detailed Design Description

Prior the start of the design phase, preselection of the land was made, which allowed the consultant to select the three locations that were studied within the prepared Site Selection Report. In order to adjust the scope defined in the contract for consultancy services, site inspection of the proposed three locations was conducted, considering the requirements laid in the ToR and with the technical, risk and ecological criteria.

The following criteria and activities were undertaken during the analysis of the locations: location to be on a state land, with area of about 6 ha, at 20-30 minutes by vehicle from the center of Skopje, close to fast road, possibility to connect to the existing communal infrastructure water supply, sewage, electricity and telephone service.

The proposed three locations for AFP are all within the Economic Zone around the Ring Road of the city of Skopje from the interchange Hypodrom to the interchange Singelik, in the Municipality of Gazi Baba.

Because all three locations are within the Economic Zone, they are all at the areas where the agricultural land has been converted into construction land, there is no surface water in the immediate vicinity, the air quality is the same and all other environmental features of the site are more or less the same. In terms of the hydrogeological characteristics of the terrain, the entire Economic Zone is located on a terrain built of unbound rocks with low water permeability (deluvium, proluvium, dusty sand and gravel, etc.), and no permanent sources were detected at the site.

According to the summary evaluation of the proposed locations, the location 3 is the most appropriate location for the future Wholesale market/Agri-food platform (AFP).

1.2.1 Planned project activities

AFP is a modern holistic terminal wholesale market based on international best practices and experience, and consists of physically concentrating supply and demand in a single place, creating a multi-sectoral hub, including a very broad spectrum of perishable and semi-perishable food products; initially horticulture, and at a later stage fish and seafood, meat, poultry, dairy, and flowers supply chains). The AFP will provide all necessary facilities and services under one roof: cleaning, waste management, maintenance, parking, mobility and traffic control, site security, custom clearance, food safety inspections, multimodal transportation, banking and financial services, training and business development services (exports, good agricultural practices, trade, logistics), catering and restaurants, accommodation, office space for service activities, price information systems and others.

The construction of AFP will result in direct economic effects and improvement of the socio-economic climate. The immediate effect will be reflected in the increased engagement of the available labor force through new employment in the activities foreseen within the AFP. The construction and commissioning of the planned contents will enable the realization of economic, cultural, and other types of social functions with direct or indirect economic effects.

It is expected that the new proposed AFP in Skopje will establish future conditions that would guarantee food security, fair access to the marketing system for small farmers, greater transparency and live market price and systems information. Supermarkets and other downstream companies can also gain cost efficiencies through site location efficiency, larger scale aggregation and their logistics systems. In the medium & long term, once fresh produce concentration has been achieved, will generate an additional demand for storing, processing, packaging and other added value services. The available cold storage and post-harvest services in a new modern wholesale market will attract specialized companies in processing industry, potentially bringing foreign investment. This is our long-term vision for new AFP in Skopje.

1.2.2 Detailed Design - Technical characteristics

1.2.2.1 Architecture

➢ **Introduction**

The Detailed Design is developed based on the General Conditions for the operation of the entire project according to the Project Agreement, previously completed reports for different segments in the project documentation, the Project Program submitted by the Investor, as well as the Conceptual Design and the Urban Planning project developed for the location.

➢ **Location**

The location of the project is situated in the eastern part of the Municipality of Gazi Baba, on Building Parcel 12.1, within the boundaries of the planning scope defined by the Detailed Urban Plan Outside a Residential Area for the construction of an industrial zone at the bypass area from the "Hypodrom" interchange to the "Singelik" interchange, in Block 12, Municipality of Gazi Baba (Decision No. 09-2755/11 dated 01.07.2016), and is bordered by:

- To the northwest, it borders an existing canal from the tertiary network.
- To the southeast, it borders a planned but not yet constructed industrial street No. 19.
- To the southwest, it borders an existing canal from the tertiary network.
- To the northwest, it borders a planned but not yet constructed industrial street No. “C5”.

The project scope includes the following cadastral parcels: part of CP 217/18, 217/1, 217/20, 344/2, 345/2, and 349/1 – cadastral municipality Singelik 3, and part of CP 925/1, cadastral municipality Brnjaci in Skopje. The total area of the project scope within the described boundaries is 102,212 m², or 10.22 ha. The perimeter of the project scope is 1,538.36 m’.

The project solution, in addition to the primary land use class, also includes compatible land use classes within the allowed percentage of participation of the compatible land use class in relation to the primary land use class on the parcel.

The maximum allowed percentage of the total compatible land use classes in relation to the primary land use class is 40%. The percentage of compatible uses does not exceed the allowed percentage of compatible uses according to the Regulations on Standards and Norms for Urban Planning (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia” No. 142/10).

➢ **Organization of the parcel**

The Logistics Distribution Center complex consists of several independent buildings within a single building parcel, namely:

- Control gate with canopy,
- Administrative building,
- Pavilion for fruits and vegetables,
- Pavilion for farmers,
- Waste management facility,
- Pallet handling building,
- Public toilets,
- Additional technical buildings: wastewater treatment plant, water well with pump and filtration station, water reservoir, and electrical substation.

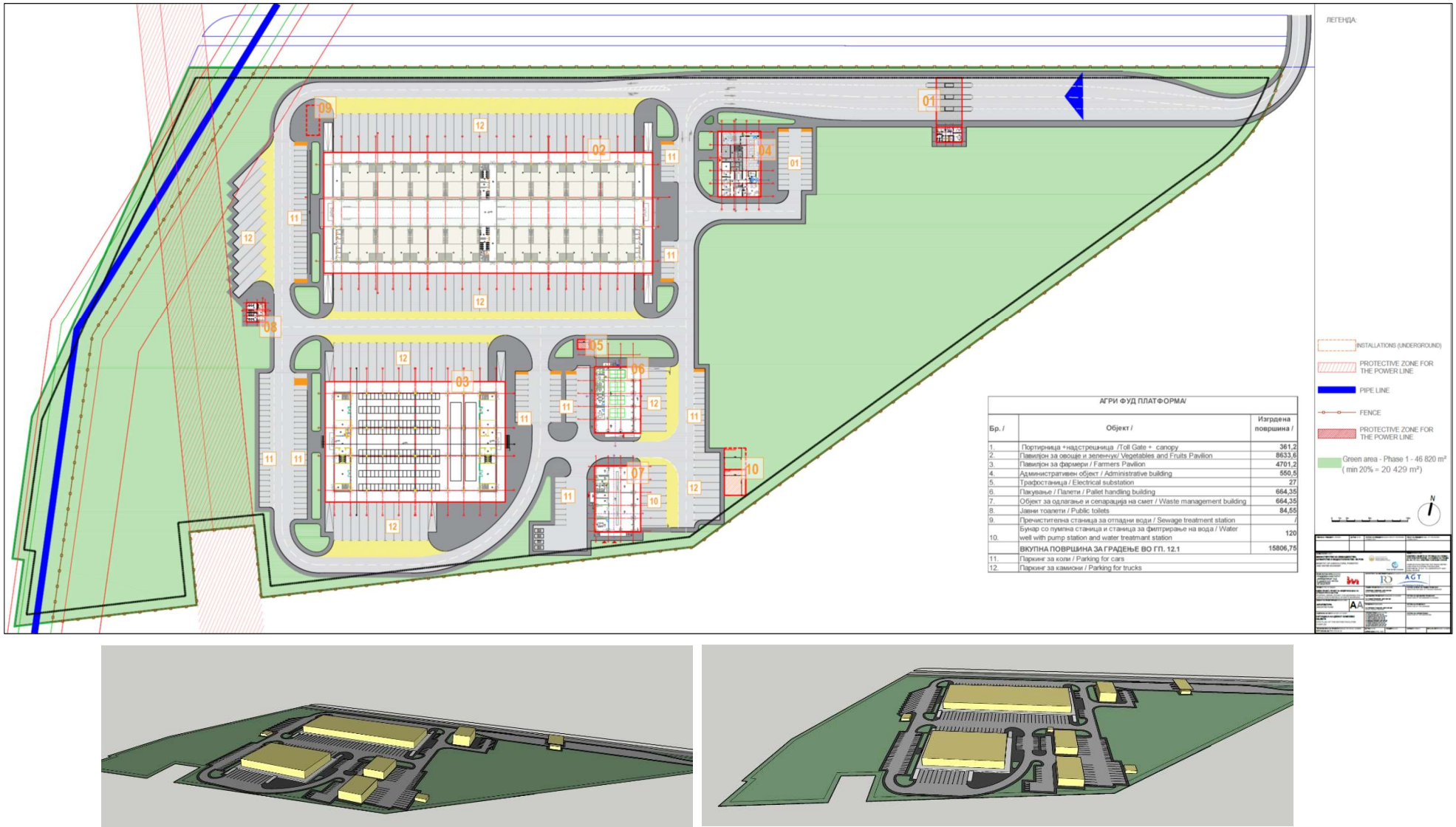


Figure 1. Schematic Design - final layout and view

The entrance to the parcel is on the eastern side and is accessed through a strictly controlled entrance, passing through control booths covered with a canopy. In close proximity is the control building, serving as the central station for access control. Traffic within the parcel is conducted through internal roadways, designed and regulated for all vehicles expected to enter the Distribution Center. Access to all buildings is provided via both vehicular and pedestrian paths, and all buildings are interconnected by traffic routes. After the control gate entrance, the administrative building is located in the northern part of the parcel, with a dedicated parking area. This building houses the management team of the center, as well as public facilities such as bank counters, a restaurant, a clinic, etc. In the central part of the parcel are the main industrial halls where the sale of agricultural products takes place. In close proximity, to the south, are two smaller buildings for waste management and for pallet handling, serving the sales halls. Surrounding all these buildings is an appropriately organized parking area for heavy and light trucks, accessible space for loading/unloading goods, access ramps for small service vehicles, etc. In the western part of the parcel, a parking lot for heavy trucks is planned, next to which is the building with public toilets. The entire site is to be secured with a protective fence.

The total number of required parking spaces for the entire complex has been calculated as: 134 parking spaces for heavy trucks, 12 parking spaces for cars for persons with disabilities, 151 parking spaces for cars. A total of 297 parking spaces for the entire complex.

In addition to the provided parking spaces for cars, 150 parking spaces for bicycles have been allocated, in accordance with the regulation of the Municipality of Gazi Baba.

As part of the entire project documentation for the complex, it is planned to install photovoltaic panels on the roofs of the five larger buildings, in order to improve the energy efficiency of the complex.

Building no. 1 - toll gate

The toll gate building is located in the northern part of the site. The building basically has a rectangular shape and it is developed only at ground level, The total net area is 67.95 m^2. The building has three entrances: the main entrance to the building, the entrance to the sanitary units and the entrance to the server room. The main entrance is provided on the northwest side of the building. The contents of the building are arranged around an access hallway. On the northeast side, to the left of the main entrance, two offices are planned: one with an area of 15.04 m^2, with capacity for two employees, and another with an area of 9.15 m^2 for one employee. The server room is adjacent to these offices. The server room is located on the southeast side of the building. It is accessed only from the outside and is used for maintenance of electrical installations, internet and computers. Right next to the main entrance, on the right side is a room for securing the building, and on its right side is a small kitchen for the needs of the employees. Parallel to these rooms are placed the dressing rooms. The dressing rooms are separate, one for men and the other for women. Each dressing room is equipped with a bench and lockers for the employees' clothing. The building has one toilet, designated for employees, located on the southwest side of the building. Within the building, on the southwest side, there are toilets designed for drivers who deliver goods, with access from the outside. The toilets are designed with two WC cubicles, separated by a wall made of plasterboard, and a vestibule with two sinks.

Building no. 1.1 - canopy

The canopy is an infrastructural object that will allow the controlled passage of vehicles of different classes. The canopy will be equipped with a total of four lanes, two of which will be intended for the entrance and the other two for the exit of the vehicles.

The canopy includes several functional facilities and installations. The canopy itself will be constructed as a concrete structure with a roof made of sheet metal, an integrated lighting system, and a built-in drainage system for stormwater. The inspection cabins will be thermally insulated and air-conditioned, equipped with a modern communication system, which enables efficient and safe inspection of vehicles entering and leaving the complex. Additionally, traffic signals will be installed, including clearly marked traffic signs and information panels, to guide and inform drivers when accessing and using it.

Building no. 2 - pavilion for fruits and vegetables

The pavilion for fruits and vegetables is located in the northern half of the plot. It is accessed directly from the entrance access road and is situated north of the pavilion for farmers. A parking area for trucks and cars used by employees is developed around the perimeter of the building. The building is positioned in the northern part of the site. Its base has a distinct rectangular shape with a 3:1 ratio. The building has a height of Ground Floor + First Floor (G+1), with a height up to the eaves of 8.83 m, and up to the ridge of 11.20 m. The capacity of the building is designed to meet the current needs of trade/consumption, specifically the space required for trading, sorting, packaging, and cold storage. The need for physical space is defined based on demand estimates, while the size of the space for each activity is determined using efficient and tested ratios of tons per square meter in accordance with best international practices. The size and scope of the new complex are based on the potential relocation of the existing Kvantashki market to new facilities.

A 5-meter-wide area is developed around the perimeter of the building for loading and unloading, extending along its entire length. On the longitudinal sides of the building, this area is covered with a cantilevered canopy.

The main entrances for visitors to the building are located on the eastern and western sides, but there is also one entrance on the northern and southern sides, which lead directly to the sales hall. Each sales unit is also directly accessible from the loading area through separate entrances. Access for service vehicles—such as forklifts and hand carts—is provided at all four corners of the building, where ramps with a 7.5% slope are planned.

The ground floor of the hall is internally organized into 32 rental units, intended to accommodate producers. Each unit includes a storage area with a designated space for a cold room, and in front of each unit, there is a marked exhibition area facing the central hall for customer movement. Each unit also has access to the exterior, leading to the loading and unloading dock. This setup allows for easier communication with the market stalls and ensures smooth handling of goods between the vehicle and the stall. On the mezzanine level of the building, additional spaces are planned to support each unit, with an approximate area of 70 m², which can be used as office space or additional storage. Access to these spaces is via independent staircases in each unit. The mezzanine also includes a designated area for a buffet/canteen/cafeteria, located in the central zone above the main sales corridor. This building also includes all accompanying auxiliary and service rooms: male and female restrooms, a restroom for persons with disabilities, a janitor's closet/hygiene room, storage rooms, and technical rooms. Since the building has large dimensions, in order to provide natural lighting and ventilation to the central hall, skylights are planned.

Building no. 3 - farmers pavilion

The farmers' pavilion is located in the southern half of the parcel. It is accessed via the main access road and entrance control, followed by a turn onto the southern internal road, which first passes by the Fruit and Vegetable Pavilion and then leads directly to the Farmers' Pavilion.

The building's capacity is designed to meet the current trade and consumption needs of small-scale producers, such as family-owned agricultural holdings. The spatial requirements were defined based on an assessment of market demand, while the size allocated to each activity was determined using efficient and tested ratios (tons per square meter) in accordance with best international practices. The size and scope of the new complex are based on the potential relocation of the existing Kvantaški Market to new facilities.

The Farmers' Pavilion has a simple rectangular shape. The building consists of a ground floor and one upper floor, with a height of 8.3 meters to the eaves and 11.2 meters to the ridge. A peripheral loading/unloading area runs along the entire length of the building. It is 5 meters wide and 1.05 meters high. The ground floor elevation is level with the docking platform, also at a height of 1.05 meters. The main entrances are located on the east and west sides of the building. To bridge the height difference, access staircases are provided on both sides, and additional platforms are included for people with disabilities. Access for forklifts and hand trolleys is ensured at all four corners of the building, where ramps with a slope of 7.5% are planned. From the loading/unloading zone, there is direct access into the building's interior via sectional doors running along the full length of the structure. The interior of the building is organized into several functional zones. On the eastern and western ends, service areas are provided, including restrooms, storage rooms, cold storage areas, technical rooms, and stairwells leading to additional space located above the ground-floor service zones. The central area of the hall, spanning the full height of the building, houses the market stall area and equipment for sorting agricultural products. There are a total of 141 permanent positions for setting up individual vendor stalls, along with 39 additional positions that can be used when the product sorting lanes are not in operation. These positions are only marked on the floor, and each vendor is responsible for arranging their stall within the leased area. Aisles are left between the stalls to allow space for both shoppers and forklifts to move through the market.

Building no. 4 - administrative building

The administrative building plays a significant role in the newly designed complex, as all technical, commercial and administrative services essential for the uninterrupted operation of all of it's functions, as well as for it's development, will be centralized within it. The administrative building is located on the northern half of the plot, immediately after the control gate entrance, as one of the main programs in the whole complex.

The building has a rectangular shape with dimensions of 17.8 m / 30.4 m and a floor height of P+1 with a ridge height of H = 9.11 m. The concept of the space distribution in the building arises from the grouping of rooms with similar or identical functions. The sizing of these rooms has been determined based on the assumption that the building will be serviced by 20-25 employees. On the ground floor, the main entrance is located on the eastern side, directly accessible from the parking area, provided for the employees of the building. The administrative building will have a small entrance control office. Programmatically, the ground floor accommodates a public service activities, such as a medical room, bank counters, currency exchange, etc., as well as a restaurant. All these premises will be leased to interested parties. In the central part of the ground floor, there is a staircase core leading to the upper

floor, as well as common restrooms and a restroom for people with disabilities, shared by all service activities. However, the restaurant and medical room have their own separate restrooms. The restaurant has a capacity for 40 guests, for which a kitchen is planned with a separate service entrance for employees, changing rooms, and restrooms with a clean and dirty corridor, as well as a storage room for products. The upper floor of the building houses the administration for the Logistics-Distribution Center. The interior of the floor is organized around a central part containing the stair core, sanitary facilities, and a kitchenette for employees. Two corridors run longitudinally on both sides of this central area, allowing circular movement within the space, while the work offices are arranged along the corridors. In this way, all office spaces are provided with natural daylight and ventilation. The office spaces are designed with easy-to-assemble and dismantle walls to enable flexibility in reorganizing work positions, the number of workstations, and so on.

Building no. 5 - pallet handling building

The pallet handling building is located in the southeastern part of the site, in close proximity to the waste managament building. The positioning of the building on the site allows for unobstructed access from all sides. The entire plot area is utilized for the development of parking surfaces to meet the needs of all buildings. On the western side of the pallet building, there is a parking area for cars, and on the eastern side, a parking area for heavy vehicles. The main entrance to the building is located on the northwestern side and is accessed via stairs. Additionally, a modular platform is provided to allow access for persons with disabilities.

The building's capacity is designed to meet the needs for pallet storage. Internally, the space is divided into several zones. The open area - the pallet hall - is where sorting is carried out by material and size, and a series of enclosed rooms (storage areas, administrative offices and restrooms) are located on the western side of the building. These rooms are elevated by +15 cm above the ground floor level to protect them from the daily maintenance activities in the main hall. For access by persons with disabilities, a ramp with a slope of 8.33% is provided.

The height of the office space is defined between the finished floor level and the dropped ceiling, with a minimum height of 285 cm. **The hall has a minimum usable height of 6 meters**. In the southern part of the building, there is a partitioned room designated for pallet repair, which is accessible from the outside by forklifts or hand trolleys via a ramp with an 8% incline. On the eastern side of the building, in the outdoor area, a docking zone 3 meters wide is provided. It serves as a space for loading/unloading and the delivery of pallets, along with parking space for heavy vehicles.

Building no. 6 - waste management

The waste management building is located in the southeastern part of the site, in close proximity to the pallet handling building. On the right side of the building, there is a parking area for trucks, and on the left side, there is a parking area for cars. At the end of the street, there is a maneuvering area and waste management space - a container area. Access to the building is provided from multiple sides. On the eastern side, there is a ramp with an 8% slope that allows access to the docking area for forklifts or hand trolleys. On the southern side, there are two entrances, and one entrance is located on the western side. The building has a rectangular shape, elevated by 1.05 m from the street level relative to the docking level. The design of the building is developed on the ground floor level, with a ridge height of H = 7.68 m. The capacity of the building is designed to accommodate space for the collection, separation, dehydration, and packaging of commercial waste. The dominant area is the space for sorting,

dehydrating, and packaging the waste. Centrally, there is a conveyor belt. On the western side of the building, there are partitioned administrative rooms, a laboratory, toilets, and a warehouse.

Building no. 7 - public toilets

Within the boundaries of the construction plot 12.1, Municipality of Gazi Baba, the construction of a sanitary unit is planned, which should represent a spatial unit in which functions indirectly connected to each other will take place. he public toilets are located on the southeastern side, in close proximity to the complex facilities for wholesale trade - Agri Food Platform, and near a designated parking space for motor vehicles as well as for heavy goods vehicles.

The building is developed on the ground floor only, with a total net area of 69.95 m^2. The sanitary facility is planned to consist of three sanitary rooms: a men's toilet, a women's toilet, and a toilet for people with disabilities. Within the entrance anteroom, lockers are provided for storing users clothing and personal belongings. The sanitary unit is planned to be built from quality modern materials, that comply with the standards of contemporary construction. The cabins are planned to be separated from each other by lightweight prefabricated partitions that are easy to maintain and use.

Technical facilities

All other necessary technical facilities should be provided on the plot, such as: a water treatment plant, a well for technical water with a pumping station and a reservoir, a substation, etc.

1.2.2.2 Traffic solution – traffic mode

The designed solution in the Main Traffic Project has been developed in accordance with the available documentation, the detailed urban plan and the urban project, as well as the legal regulations governing design in the field of traffic. The traffic regime, including the designed horizontal and vertical signage, is intended to ensure timely information for traffic participants, improve the level of service, capacity, and traffic safety within the building complex, as well as provide a proper connection of the facility to the street.

The entrance to the facility is planned from Street 19, initially with a single traffic lane, after which an additional lane in each direction opens up, making the entry/exit to the facility controlled via electronic barriers (2+2). A total of 5 buildings are planned within CP 217/18, 217/1, 217/20, 344/2, 345/2, and 349/1 – cadastral municipality Singelik 3, and CP 925/1 – cadastral municipality Brnjartsi. Around the buildings, internal roads and parking areas are planned to serve both visitors and employees.

A total of 297 parking spaces are provided within the parcel, distributed around the buildings to be constructed, in order to meet all the needs of visitors and employees. The table shows the distribution of parking spaces within Parcel 12.1, in accordance with the Urban Project.

1.2.2.3 Hydrotechnical installations

For the subject object, construction of a complex of wholesale trade facilities - Agri-food platform, with the purpose of construction B2, on G.P.12.1 (administrative building facility), Municipality of Gazi Baba Skopje, technical documentation has been prepared at the level of Detailed Design, for the design of external and internal supply and drainage installations. The project for Hydrotechnical Installations is compliant with all phases, as well as with the entire equipment that is planned to be installed in the facility.

During the preparation of the Detailed Design, the following hydrotechnical installations were included:

- Sanitary plumbing installations,

- Wastewater sewerage,
- Hydrant network,
- Atmospheric sewage.

Sanitary plumbing installations

The facility is planned to be supplied with sanitary water through a sanitary water tank. A water measuring line is led from the tank to each object on the plot. From the Φ3/4'' water meter, the water supply line with a diameter of DN40mm enters the building and climbs to the ceiling of the ground floor (height 3.0 m). From the horizontal distribution, vertical pipes are lowered to each sanitary node at an elevation of 0.5 m. The water requirements for sanitary plumbing are 1,038 l/s. The horizontal and vertical pipes are galvanized, while those in the toilets are plastic. Valves have been installed at the distribution point of each vertical and before entering the toilets. The hot water in the building will be supplied through 5 boilers with a volume of 10 liters and a large boiler of 100 liters. The canteen is supplied through a central water heater.

Faecal sewage installations

The external faecal network will be displayed through a newly designed manhole that leads to a treatment plant. The internal sewage network is designed based on the architectural foundations. The project foresees the installation of PVC sewer pipes, complete with shaped pieces, as well as installed revisions of the faecal verticals. Drainage of wastewater from the building is by gravity. Before the sewage network is discharged into the street, wastewater is purified in a treatment plant up to the second category. The dimensions of the internal fecal sewage system are determined according to recommendations from the literature as well as the type of sanitary facilities. The pipes are guided under the slab or in the wall. On the roof, the sewer verticals end with ventilation heads, the diameter of which is larger than the diameter of the corresponding vertical.

Fire hydrant network

In accordance with the Rulebook on Technical Norms for the Fire Hydrant Network, for protection of the facility, a water quantity of 10 l/s is envisaged, with simultaneous operation of two internal and one external hydrants, or two external hydrants.

From the technical water tank (supplied through a well), the pipeline is led to a hydrant pump (a pump is foreseen which should have the following characteristics Q=10 l/s and H=41 m, since the pump is common to the internal and external hydrants) where a pipeline with a diameter of DN75 enters the administrative building. There are 4 internal hydrants installed in the building.

The external hydrant network will be supplied through external underground hydrants that are placed both in front and behind the building.

A quantity of water of 10 l/s is provided, with simultaneous operation of two internal and one external hydrant, or two external hydrants.

Sanitary equipment and reinforcement

The sanitary equipment and reinforcement are taken from the architectural foundations and are in accordance with the standards and regulations for this type of facility.

Atmospheric sewage

According to the architectural and urban solution, the storm water from the roof surfaces, gutters and grates, the captured water through atmospheric verticals are led to courtyards, inspection shafts which are then taken to the side channels of the plot.

1.2.2.4 Mechanical engineering

The administrative building consists of: ground floor and first floor. On the ground floor there are: the machine room, the lobby, the restaurant and the kitchen with ancillary rooms, storage rooms, refrigerators, staff rooms, sanitary facilities with wardrobes, as well as toilets for guests in the restaurant and a toilet for people with disabilities. Also on the ground floor is a medical room with a waiting room and toilet and five offices for employees of the complex. On the first floor there is a lobby, a corridor, employee toilets, a meeting room and nine offices.

The calculation of heat loads is made for an external design temperature of -15°C, for heat gains +35°C, and the heat transfer coefficients are in accordance with the construction physics of the building, and less than or equal to the maximum permitted heat transfer coefficients according to the rulebook on energy performance of buildings.

The EN12831 standard is used for the calculation of heat loads, while VDI2078 is used for heat gains. Ventilation calculations are made in accordance with the applicable regulations for the appropriate types of rooms and the appropriate air changes.

The following internal design temperatures have been adopted:

Winter external design temperature -15°C.

- Hallway, vestibule, stairwell +18°C,
- Lobby, restaurant and kitchen, staff rooms, meeting room, medical room +20°C,
- Toilets and wardrobes with sanitary facilities +22°C.

Summer outdoor design temperature +35°C.

- For all rooms +25°C is adopted.

The Main HVAC design envisages the following installations:

- Primary source of heat energy for heating and cooling and production of DHW – high temperature heat pumps as the only energy source,
- Heating-cooling installation with fan coil units (parapet, ceiling cassette and duct for recuperators) separately for the kitchen with the restaurant and the administrative building,
- Installation for heating toilets with wall panel electric heaters,
- Installation for preparing sanitary hot water for the kitchen,
- Installation for ventilation of the restaurant and meeting room with recuperators,
- Installation for ventilation of toilets, sanitary facilities and wardrobes,
- Installation for ventilation of the kitchen with kitchen hoods and roof fans and intake of fresh treated air.

1.2.2.5 Electric installations

The following electrical installations are planned:

- High current installations: power cables and distribution boards, electric lighting installations, electrical plug installations, electrical installations for thermotechniques, installations for equalization of potential.
- Low voltage installations: Installations for automatic notification and fire alarm, Installations for structural cabling, Installation for video surveillance, Installation for access control
- Protective grounding and lightning protection installation: protective grounding, lightning protection installation.

1.3 Socioeconomic and Environment Overview of Project Area

1.3.1 Geographic characteristics

The planned project will be implemented in Skopje Planning Region, within the territory of the municipality of Gazi Baba. Municipality of Gazi Baba is one of the largest municipalities in Skopje Planning Region. It is located in the northern part of the Republic of North Macedonia. As one of the ten municipalities constituting the City of Skopje, it is located in the eastern part of the city in the upper course of the Vardar River. The municipality covers an area of 92 km^2, with a length from east to west of 10 km and from north to south of 15 km. Municipality of Gazi Baba borders the Skopje municipalities of Centar and Aerodrom to the west, Butel and Chair to the north, Ilinden and Petrovec to the south, and Arachinovo and Lipkovo to the east.

A large part of the territory of the municipality is located on flat arable land in the central, southern, and southwest parts, accounting for 65% of the total area. Two significant elevations are observed: the Gazi Baba Forest Park in the northern part and the area of Kamnik in the central part. Within the municipality, there is also a mountainous area, namely Skopska Crna Gora in the eastern part of the municipality. The lowest settlement is at 225 meters above sea level (village of Trubarevo), while the highest point in the municipality is at 1,626 meters above sea level.

Figure 2. The municipality of Gazi Baba

1.3.2 Climate features

The municipality of Gazi Baba is influenced by a continental and Mediterranean climate, which results in the occurrence of cold continental and humid periods in autumn and winter, and warm continental and dry Mediterranean periods in summer.

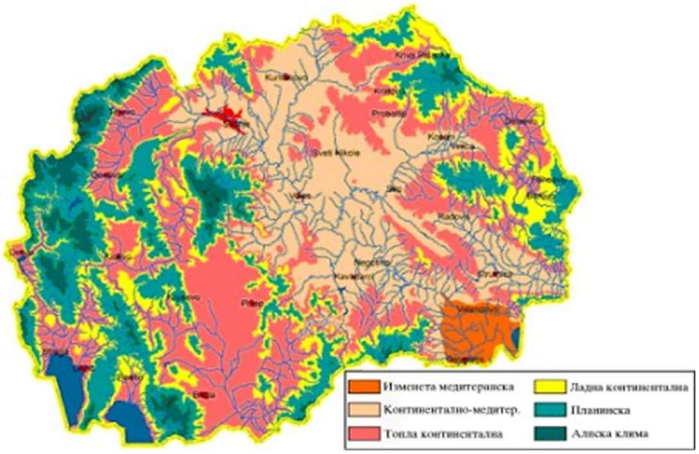


Figure 3. Climate regions in the Republic of North Macedonia

The average annual air temperature in the municipality of Gazi Baba is 13.9 ºC. In the three winter months, the average monthly temperature is 3.3 ºC. January is the coldest month of the year with an average temperature of 0.6 ºC. July and August are the warmest months of the year with average temperatures of 24.8 ºC. On average, there are 117 summer days and 53 tropical days per year in the municipality, most prevalent in July and August. Pronounced temperature inversions occur during the winter months. The average annual relative humidity is 70%. The average annual number of clear days is 70, and cloudy days are 107.

Three winds blow in the territory of the municipality of Gazi Baba: the Povardarec, Jugo wind, and northwesterly winds. It is a warm wind regularly accompanied by rain. The average wind speed is relatively low, ranging from 1.8 m/s in November to 2.5 m/s in March and 2.6 m/s in July. The maximum wind speed reaches up to 30 km/h, the average from 14 to 21 km/h, and the minimum from 1 to 5 km/h.

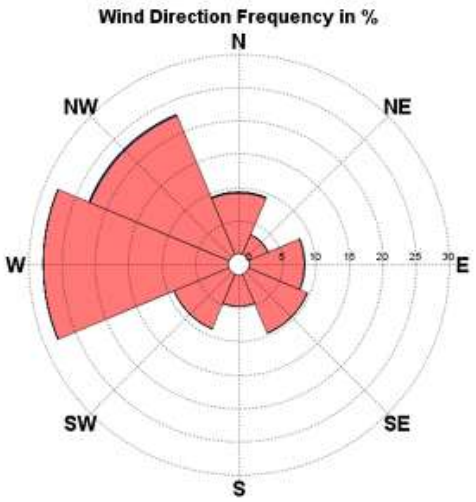


Figure 4. "Rose of the Winds" for the city of Skopje

1.3.3 Relief

The territory of the municipality of Gazi Baba is characterized by a relief consisting of various morphological elements and forms. The entire area has the shape of a spacious valley composed of two parts: a high rim and a low central part - the bottom of the valley. The largest part of the municipality's territory (the central, southwest, and southern parts) is located in the plain, with 65% of the total area being arable land. The higher part is characteristic of the Gazi Baba Forest Park, the locality of Kamnik in

the central part of the municipality, as well as the mountain Skopska Crna Gora in the eastern part of the municipality. The ridges in the alluvial plain: Gazi Baba, Kamnik, and Krst are composed of laparous and dusty-clayey sediments. As micro-relief forms, they have relatively small elevations and are located on the left side of the Vardar River.

1.3.4 Geology and Seismology

From a tectonic perspective, the Skopje Valley represents a depression, surrounded on all sides by ridges and mountainous terrains built of rocks with varying ages, ranging from the Cambrian to the Neogene. In contrast, the depression itself is composed of Neogene-Quaternary sediments, where the depressions are built from Neogene sediments, and the alluvial and alluvial-proluvial deposits along the course of the Vardar River and its tributaries are built from Quaternary sediments. From a geotectonic aspect, the municipality has a complex tectonic structure, while in terms of seismological characteristics, it belongs to an area with high seismic activity since the Skopje region is susceptible to earthquakes with magnitudes exceeding 9 degrees on the Richter scale. The Skopje seismic zone belongs to the Vardar seismic zone, which is defined by the most mobile tectonic unit in the Balkan region - the Vardar zone, where Alpine orogenic processes were highly pronounced, and they continue into the neotectonic stage.

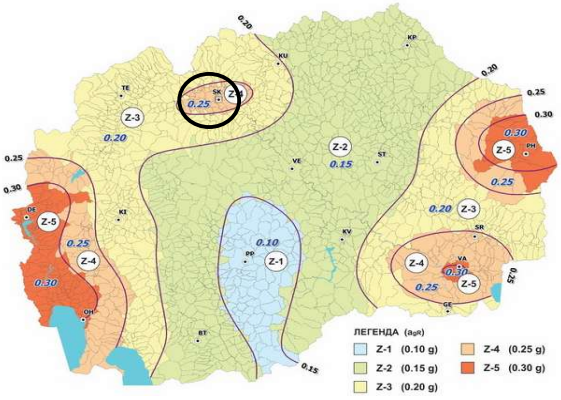


Figure 5. Tectonic regionalization map of the Republic of North Macedonia (Arsovski, 1997)

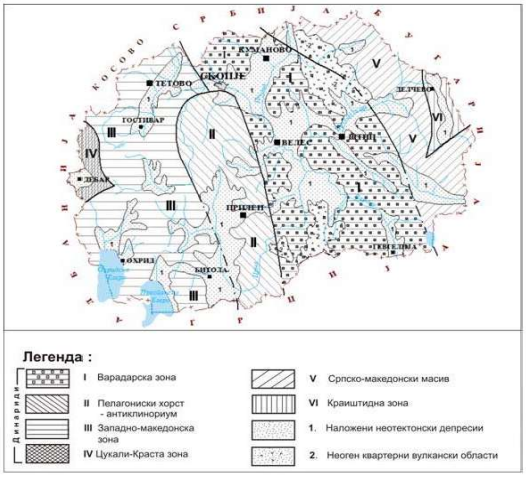


Figure 6. Map of seismic zoning of the Republic of North Macedonia (MKC-EN 1998-1:2012 Eurocode 8)

According to seismic regionalization, the Skopje Region is characterized by relatively high seismic activity, with earthquakes possible up to 9° on the MSK scale. From a regional-seismotectonic aspect, the location falls within the Vardar seismic zone, where the Skopje epicentral area is most prominent in terms of the degree of destructiveness of the effects of earthquakes, especially the earthquake of 1963. Therefore, preliminary surveys of the terrain are necessary for any construction projects. In that context, for proposed AFP in Skopje a preliminary Geotechnical Investigation Report was prepared, that includes assessment of the existing ground conditions, and provision of recommendations regarding the appropriate foundation method for the structures. Additionally, during the development of the Structural Design of the Project, seismic characteristics of the specific site were analysed with software, and static calculations and dimensioning of structural elements were carried out.

1.3.5 Hydrological characteristics

The territory of the Municipality of Gazi Baba is abundant with large and small rivers, streams, and groundwater, especially in the mountain Skopska Crna Gora. Most of the watercourses are of an intermittent nature.

Among the significant surface watercourses in the territory of the municipality of Gazi Baba are the Vardar River, as well as smaller watercourses such as Rashtanski Potok (in the village of Rashtak), Strashka (Bulachanska) Reka in the village of Bulachani, and Creshevska Reka in the village of Stajkovci. The Vardar River represents the southern border of the municipality of Gazi Baba with the municipalities of Centar and Aerodrom. Due to significant pollution, the waters of the Vardar River are not used for irrigation. Rashtanski Potok, a small and steady stream, originates at an altitude of 1,500 meters from four sources: Delidere, Rashtak spring, Kolesh Mara 1, and Kolesh Mara 2. Strashka (Bulachanska) Reka originates northeast of the village of Bulachani and part of the waters is used for irrigation. Creshevska Reka, as an intermittent watercourse, passes west of the village of Stajkovci. This watercourse, through the Deran Canal, connects to the peripheral channel from the settlement of Chento to Arachinovo. The catchment area is about 17 km^2, which may result in water discharge of 33 m^3/s. The peripheral channel, approximately 4 km long, passes from the village of Singelik to Arachinovo (from west to east) and collects all the waters coming from the mountain Skopska Crna Gora, flowing into this channel. The peripheral channel is essential for retaining water, protecting the Skopje Valley from flooding caused by uncontrolled water discharge from Skopska Crna Gora. With the construction of the peripheral channel, the water regime and local terrain conditions in the lowland east of the settlements of Chento, Singelik, and Indzikovo have changed. This peripheral channel connects the settlement of Chento and Arachinovo, flows north of these settlements, it continues to flow as Arachinovski Canal and does not enter the Economic Zone where the construction of the AFP is planned (see Figure 7).

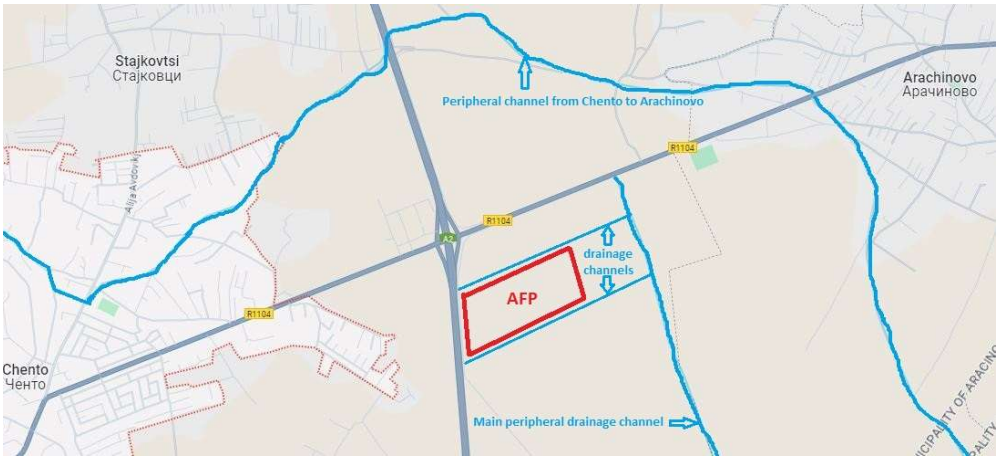


Figure 7. Drainage channels in the vicinity of the AFP location

At the east border of the Economic Zone (see Figure 7) the channel continues through the settlement Ilinden, joins the Arachinovski Canal near the settlement Rzanichino and together they form the Rzanichanski Canal, which drains the waters into the Vardar River. Consequently, the water from the present drainage channels bordering the AFP site, will flow through the main peripheral drainage channel, then through Rzanichanski Canal, and will be discharged into the recipient - Vardar River.

In order not to affect significantly the flow of water in the channels, and to prevent possible overflow, in the Detailed Design for AFP were conducted calculations for all hydrotechnical installations

including the wastewater treatment plant, and the flow of the treated water that will be discharged in the channels.

Before planning the AFP within the Industrial Zone, at the level of urban planning of the Industrial Zone[1], it is foreseen that all wastewaters from all industrial capacities within the zone will be discharged into the drainage channels after its treatment. The quantity of the wastewater that will be discharged from AFP is with minimal impact on the wastewater quantity from the whole zone. The construction activities for AFP and its operationalization will not cause reduction of the drainage channels' capacity to receive and convey the storm water.

Continuous cleaning and maintenance of drainage channels will ensure that the water level in them is maintained and possible water overflows and flooding will be prevented.

Besides surface waters, large reserves of groundwater, both well and artesian, are found in the narrower space of the alluvial plains in the municipality. Groundwater lies above impermeable substrates, i.e., beneath permeable layers consisting of coarse sand and gravel. The richest groundwater areas, with yields of 10 liters per second, are located in close proximity to the Vardar River and are connected to its level. Groundwater occurs at various depths ranging from 2 to 18 meters and can be used for irrigation and water supply. In the lower parts, groundwater is used to provide drinking water to the population through well digging.

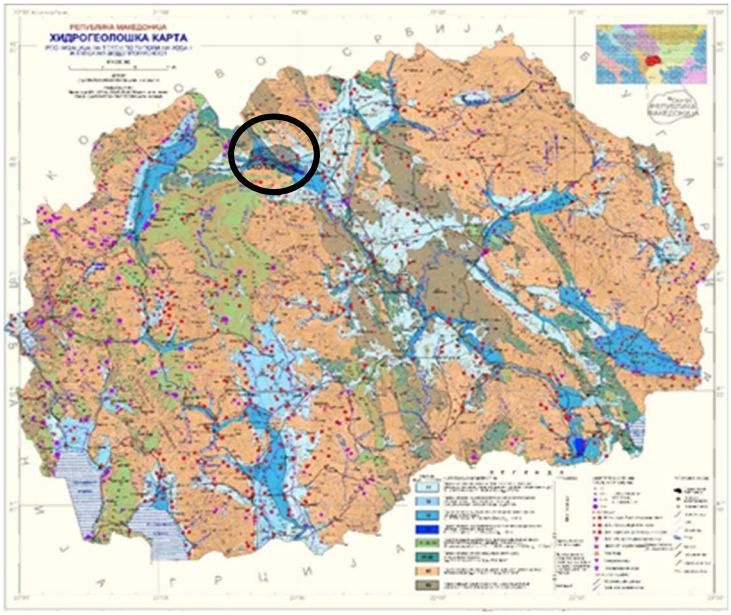


Figure 8. Basic Hydrogeological Map of the Republic of North Macedonia

In terms of the hydrogeological characteristics of the terrain, the entire Economic Zone is located on a terrain with water permeability class 11-built of unbound rocks with low water permeability (deluvium, proluvium, dusty sand and gravel, etc.). According to the Basic Hydrogeological Map of RNM, no permanent sources and no drilled wells were detected at the site or near the location of AFP.

According to the Groundwater Vulnerability Map of RNM, the terrain at the location of AFP is of low vulnerability (40-55), i.e., the terrain has high natural resistance to external adverse impacts on the groundwater quality.

[1] Urban Plan outside the settlement for the construction of an Industrial Zone at the bypass location from "Hipodrom" Point to "Singelik" Point, Municipality of Gazi Baba planning period 2015-2025

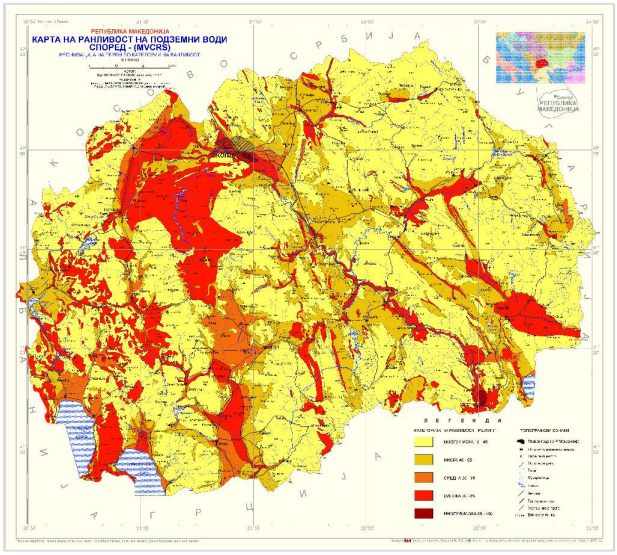


Figure 9. Groundwater Vulnerability Map of RNM[2]

In order to avoid any possible impact on groundwater sources and quality, appropriate mitigation measures are provided in this document.

1.3.6 Air quality

The monitoring of ambient air quality in the Republic of North Macedonia is conducted by three institutions, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP), Institute of Public Health (IPH), Hydrometeorological Service (Hydrometeorological Institute) which operates under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Economy.

The monitoring network of the MoEPP, managed by the Macedonian Information Centre for Environment (MICE), is an automatic monitoring network for monitoring ambient air quality. It consists of 20 fixed and 2 mobile monitoring stations. This system monitors the following pollutants: sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone, particulate matter with diameters up to 10 micrometers and 2.5 micrometers (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$).

The automatic monitoring station in Gazi Baba is approximately 7.2 km away from the future AFP location (see figure below).

Figure 10. Distance of the automatic monitoring station in Gazi Baba from the future AFP location

[2] Map prepared according to MVCRS methodology by Zlatko Ilijovski, 2013

Air quality monitoring is performed by comparing measured concentrations of pollutants in the air with the limit values, alarm thresholds, tolerance margins for limit values, target values, and long-term objectives specified in ambient air quality legislation.

No specific air quality data are available for the future AFP location. According to the national legislation it is not necessary to conduct air quality monitoring for this type of activities, and it is not expected that the AFP will affect significantly the air quality. However, in order to reduce the possible impacts to the air during construction activities, as well as during operation of AFP, appropriate mitigation measures are proposed in this document.

1.3.7 Waste management

Waste management in the municipality is an area of utmost importance in ensuring a healthy environment, achievable through a comprehensive approach by competent authorities at national and local levels, as well as industrial capacities operating within the territory of municipality of Gazi Baba. The main contributors to waste generation in the municipality include households, agricultural activities, industry, and healthcare facilities. The types of waste generated include municipal waste, inert waste, agricultural waste, packaging waste, special types of waste, hazardous/non-hazardous industrial waste, and medical waste.

Inadequate waste management across all segments (collection, transportation, treatment, and disposal) can directly impact soil, surface water, and groundwater pollution, which can indirectly affect public health in the municipality of Gazi Baba.

In 2007, the Council of municipality of Gazi Baba established the Public Communal Enterprise (Public Utility Company), PCE/PUC "Gazi Baba 2007", established to perform activities from the communal area that are of public interest and local importance.

However, during the last few years this PCE is no longer active. Accordance to the latest information[3], collection and transport of waste from the area of the Municipality of Gazi Baba, like in other municipalities under the jurisdiction of nder the City of Skopje, the is carried out by the Public Enterprise “Komunalna Higiena” established by the City of Skopje. This Public Enterprise perform communal waste activities in the urban area of the municipality and in the rural areas, which includes the following settlements: Brnjarci, Bulachani, Rashtak, Indzhikovo, Jurumleri, Madzari, Ekonomija, Ergele, Drma, Singelik, Smilkovci, Strachinci, Stajkovci, Creshevo, Trubarevo, Viniche, Idrizovo, Nova Kolonia and Goce Delchev.

Solid communal/municipal waste is collected in different types of waste bins, then it is transported with the special vehicles of the PE and is unloads into mobiles transfer stations from where it is taken to the Drisla landfill, which is the city sanitary landfill of the City of Skopje. Inert waste (construction debris) is collected upon notification by an individual or legal entity to the Public Enterprise “Komunalna Higiena” which carries a waste container depending on the needs of the entities and transports it to the Drisla landfill.

In the direction of achieving the national goals, undertaking joint measures and activities aimed at encouraging the separate collection of waste electrical and electronic equipment, the municipality has concluded contracts with waste management companies for primary selection, namely:

[3] Local Environmental Action Plan (LEAP), 2020-2026: https://gazibaba.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/leap_na_OGB_2020_2026.pdf

- "Ekon Electron" - The municipality enables the collective operator to collect and transport the collected equipment from the collection centers in the municipality;
- "Elkolect" - The collective operator has the obligation to provide support and cooperate with the municipality of Gazi Baba for the collection, reuse, processing and recycling of waste electrical and electronic equipment, as well as to establish collection centers and other infrastructure for the separate collection of waste equipment for reuse, use, processing and recycling;
- "Nula Otpad" - The collective operator will set up equipment for the primary selection of waste electrical and electronic equipment at locations approved by the municipality of Gazi Baba.

1.3.8 Noise

The main sources of noise emitted into the environment in Skopje, including the municipality of Gazi Baba, are transportation vehicles in road traffic, construction activities, commercial and service facilities, and industrial installations. Identified sources of environmental noise generally originate from: neighborhood noise, traffic noise, and industrial facilities noise.

Traffic is the dominant source of noise in the city of Skopje and the municipality of Gazi Baba as part of it. Particularly significant in terms of noise are the major streets and boulevards, where the frequency of vehicles is high, especially during peak traffic hours resulting in traffic jams. The road network in the municipality of Gazi Baba has a total length of 61 km and consists of 11 main and 12 collector streets. Major streets, i.e., main and collector streets, and intersections where the vehicle frequency is enormous are particularly significant in terms of noise. With the increase in the number of vehicles in traffic, the frequency increases rapidly, reaching periods when traffic jams easily occur from year to year.

Other significant sources of noise in the municipality that can also have a significant impact on the environment are stationary sources, namely restaurants and cafes, car washes, auto repair shops, and other economic entities, as well as industrial subjects. Generally, the impact of these entities has a significant character due to poor spatial planning and their location near residential or other sensitive receptors.

1.3.9 Flora and fauna

This chapter summarizes the findings from the study on flora, habitats, invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals conducted in March 2024 as part of the Initial Environmental and Social Assessment Report for the area planned for construction. Through a combination of literature review and field survey, the biodiversity in the project area was assessed and valorized.

1.3.9.1 Results

- **Flora and habitats**

The proposed location for the Agri-food platform in the Skopje area (Gazi Baba municipality) lies within intensively cultivated agricultural land, predominantly sown with cereal monocultures for many years. Due to this, the area is not classified under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), but falls under EUNIS habitat category I:

I – Regularly or recently cultivated agricultural, horticultural, and domestic habitats

I1 – Arable land and market gardens

This habitat includes croplands used for annually or regularly harvested crops, such as cereals, sunflowers, legumes, fodder, and root crops. The ecological value depends on cultivation intensity and the presence of natural field margins.

Peripheral areas contain ruderal vegetation, though not in representative condition due to their narrow and fragmented distribution. Phytosociologically, the vegetation belongs to:

Class SIS – Sisymbrietea (Anthropogenic vegetation of disturbed sites in temperate Eurasia)

Order Sisymbrietalia sophiae (Ruderal annuals on disturbed soils in nemoral and steppe zones)

Alliance Hordeion murini (Mediterranean ruderal winter-annual grasslands)

- **Invertebrates**

A significant portion of the project area comprises arable land and agroecosystems that support diverse terrestrial invertebrate groups, including mollusks, spiders (Araneae), myriapods, beetles (Coleoptera, especially Carabidae), grasshoppers (Orthoptera), ants, bees (Hymenoptera), and butterflies (Lepidoptera).

The invertebrate fauna is currently under study, based on limited literature (11 references), some of which are outdated or lack precise data. A total of 276 invertebrate species have been recorded in the broader area, mainly typical of agricultural habitats.

For spiders (Araneae), 120 species from 18 families were recorded, with the most represented being Linyphiidae (36), Gnaphosidae (22), and Lycosidae (17), primarily in Madzari, Mralino, and Trubarevo.

Regarding Orthoptera, 54 species from 13 families were identified, with Acrididae (23 species) being dominant. Notable localities include Petrovec and Madzari.

Only three praying mantis (Mantodea) species were noted, as well as isolated records for Dermaptera, Blattodea, and other insect groups.

Ground-beetles (Carabidae) are the most documented beetles, with 53 species in Mralino and Madzari, 11 in Petrovec, and 9 in Trubarevo.

Butterflies (Lepidoptera) remain poorly studied, with only 13 species recorded from Gazi Baba and Trubarevo, mostly Pieridae.

For dragonflies and damselflies (Odonata), 10 species from 5 families were noted in Ilinden, Madzari, Trubarevo, Petrovec, and Miladinovci.

A total of 34 taxa were recorded during the field research conducted for this project, namely: *Harpalus distinguendus distinguendus, Harpalus dimidiatus, Harpalus serripes, Pseudoophonus rufipes, Amara aenea, Calathus fuscipes fuscipes, Calathus melanocephalus, Nebria brevicollis, Dermestes laniarius, Leptura quadrifasciata, Stenurella melanura, Coccinella septempunctata, Propylea quatuordecimpunctata, Mordella sp., Lagria hirta, Gnaptor spinimanus, Enoplopus dentipes, Cantharis obscura, Rhagonycha fulva, Melanotus sp., Cetonia aurata aurata, Valgus hemipterus, Trypocopris vernalis, Galeruca sp., Dorcus parallelipipedus, Nicrophorus vespilloides, Silpha obscura orientalis, Vespa crabro, Pyrrhocoris apterus, Mantis religiosa, Forficula auricularia, Gryllomorpha dalmatina, Scutigera coleoptrata,* and *Scolopendra cingulata.*

- **Amphibians and Reptiles (Amphibia & Reptilia)**

The field survey of amphibians in the project area was conducted over three consecutive days, from March 18 to 20, 2024. The research was carried out during the morning hours, when amphibian

activity is typically higher. The survey covered both the proposed site and its immediate surroundings to include a broader range of potential habitats.

Based on field observations and literature review, two amphibian species were recorded*: Bufo bufo* (Common toad / Обична кратава жаба) and *Hyla arborea* (European tree frog / Гаталинка). Out of the 14 amphibian species known to occur in North Macedonia (Sterijovski & Arsovski, 2020), these two represent 14.2% of the national diversity for this group.

The reptile survey was conducted on the same days and in the same areas. A total of three species were recorded through literature and field observations: *Lacerta trilineata* (Balkan green lizard / Голем зелен гуштер), *Podarcis muralis* (Wall lizard / Сидна гуштерица), and *Dolichophis caspius* (Caspian whip snake / Жолт смок). Given that 32 reptile species are documented for North Macedonia (Sterijovski et al., 2014), these findings represent 9.3% of the country's total reptile fauna.

- **Birds (Aves)**

During the ornithological research conducted at the project locations, special emphasis was placed on the qualitative identification of bird species inhabiting the area, focused on identifying bird species present, assessing their population density, and mapping their distribution. Monitoring was carried out from two Vantage Points (VP), which also served as Observation Sites (OS) for migratory bird monitoring. These locations were selected based on terrain accessibility and strategically positioned to cover all habitat types within the project area. For accurate and comprehensive data collection, the research followed the Guidelines for Field Observation, Inventory, and Monitoring of Biodiversity and Habitats issued by the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP) of Republic of North Macedonia.

The bird survey recorded the following 25 species: *Columba livia*, *Columba palumbus*, *Streptopelia decaocto*, *Accipiter nisus*, *Buteo buteo*, *Upupa epops*, *Falco tinnunculus*, *Ardea alba*, *Lanius collurio*, *Corvus corone*, *Corvus corax*, *Poecile lugubris*, *Parus major*, *Hirundo rustica*, *Delichon urbicum*, *Galerida cristata*, *Sturnus vulgaris*, *Luscinia megarhynchos*, *Passer domesticus*, *Motacilla cinerea*, *Fringilla coelebs*, *Linaria cannabina*, *Carduelis carduelis*, *Emberiza cirlus*, and *Emberiza melanocephala*.

- **Mammals (Mammalia)**

Considering both the available scientific literature and field research, a total of 9 mammal species have been recorded in the broader project area. These species include *Erinaceus roumanicus* (Northern white-breasted hedgehog), *Microtus mystacinus* (East European vole), *Apodemus sylvaticus* (Long-tailed field mouse), *Apodemus agrarius* (Striped field mouse), *Nannospalax leucodon* (Lesser mole rat), *Canis aureus* (Golden jackal), *Vulpes vulpes* (Red fox), *Mustela nivalis* (Weasel), and *Martes foina* (Stone marten).

1.3.9.2 Valorization

- **Flora and habitats**

The registered plant species in the project area belong to ruderal flora and vegetation, which thrive in human settlements and anthropogenically influenced environments. These biotopes are formed not through productive human activities, but due to construction work like roads, railways, and abandoned areas. Ruderal plants are adapted to extreme conditions, including variations in water, temperature, and mechanical disturbances such as trampling and grazing. They quickly colonize these habitats as pioneer

species, eventually forming stable communities. The plants in the area are cosmopolitan, with no endangered or endemic species present.

- **Invertebrates**

The evaluation of terrestrial invertebrate valorization revealed that there are no significant, endemic, or rare species that will be directly negatively impacted by pre-construction, construction activities, or the operation of the Wholesale market.

- **Amphibians and Reptiles (Amphibia & Reptilia)**

According to the National Red List of Amphibians (Sterijovski & Arsovski, 2020), *Hyla arborea* is classified as Near Threatened (NT), while *Bufo bufo* is assessed as Least Concern (LC). Both species are also listed as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List (Global and European, Version 2023-1). *Hyla arborea* is included in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive, while *Bufo bufo* is not on any of the Directive's Annexes. Under the Bern Convention, *Hyla arborea* is listed in Appendix II, and *Bufo bufo* in Appendix III. Neither species appears on the CITES List. *Hyla arborea* is protected on the National List of Strictly Protected and Protected Wild Species, whereas *Bufo bufo* is not. Both species are not endemic to the region.

The valorization analysis of reptiles in the project area reveals a consistent status across various national and international conventions and regulations. All species are categorized as Least Concern (LC) in the National Red Lists, as well as in the IUCN Global and European Red Lists. Under the Bern Convention, all species are listed in Appendix II. None of the species appear on the CITES List. All reptile species are protected under the List of Strictly Protected and Protected Wild Species. Additionally, there are no endemic species within the project area.

- **Birds (Aves)**

The small number of bird species and their limited populations in the project area is due to habitat degradation and disturbances from the nearby highway. A total of 25 bird species were recorded, with two species—Great egret (*Ardea alba*) and Red-back shrike (*Lanius collurio*)—listed in Annex I of Directive 2009/147/EC for special protection. Five species are permanently protected, three are temporarily protected, and two are non-protected according to the National Law on Hunting. Eight bird species have legal protection under the National Law on Nature Protection, with five classified as strictly protected and three as protected. None of the recorded species are threatened according to the IUCN Red List. No migratory bird flocks were observed during the surveys.

- **Mammals (Mammalia)**

Species valorization was performed based on the IUCN Global and European Red List, National Red List of Mammals, EU Habitats Directive, Bern Convention, Bonn Convention, and relevant national legislation. Of the 9 species recorded, *Canis aureus* (Golden jackal) is listed in Annex V of the EU Habitats Directive, while *Mustela nivalis* (Weasel) and *Martes foina* (Stone marten) are protected under Appendix III of the Bern Convention. No rare, endemic, or threatened species were found in the project area. According to the applied criteria, no mammal species in the broader project area are considered to be of particular conservation concern.

1.3.10 Cultural heritage

The region of the municipalities of Gazi Baba, Aracinovo and Ilinden is one of the regions whose existence can be traced along five millennia. During this period people created buildings, objects and values that make Macedonian cultural heritage recorded. The archaeological excavations serve to complement the historic documents and to prove the greatness of the ancient region.

Many archaeological sites from the Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Age prove that there was a continuity of living in this region. The Neolithic period is dated in 8000-3000 BC. The region is part of the Neolithic group Anzabegovo-Vrshnik. The archaeological sites from the Neolithic period in the region, regarding the ceramics found, can be dated in the Neolithic cultural group of Anzabegovo-Vrsnik. More than 50 archaeological sites from Neolithic period are found in the region. Because of agricultural activities and building material of these sites, the sites are not well preserved.

The Bronze and Iron Age are dated between 3000-600 BC in the region. The archaeological sites from this period usually include settlements and necropolis.

The peak of the culture in the region in the antiquity was the Hellenistic, Antique and Roman period, which covered the period of 500 BC-400 AD. Usually these archaeological sites are presented through settlements and necropolis. The remains are visible also through the fragments of building materials and ceramics.

The Byzantine and Medieval period in the region is dated in 500-1500 AD. This is the period of decline of the culture in the region. So far, in the region early-Christian and Medieval basilicas have been excavated. The Islamic architecture is presented through mosques and tekjes in the villages and cities. The traditional architecture is presented through the rural and urban traditional architecture. Many houses in the villages in the region have traditional local features. Also, in the region can be seen many houses with traditional architecture.

There are no archaeological sites, buildings, complexes and Intangible Cultural Heritage or Associations registered near the construction site. However, there is a possibility of finding a chance finds on the site and near the construction site.

1.3.11 Social Baseline

1.3.11.1 Demography

It is important to note that the location of the AFP is selected in proximity to the center, and it is designed to have the possibility for ease food distribution for Skopje and access to the main customers to the wholesale market, but also well connected to the main axes of communication with the Balkan Region to promote logistics activities. Also, it is significant to underline that Skopje is the capital of the country and in Skopje (Skopje Region) are the biggest suppliers and buyers. The AFP (wholesale market and logistics area) that will be constructed in the vicinity of Skopje. In this context, the municipalities affected by the project are Gazi Baba, Arachinovo, and Ilinden, all of which fall within the Skopje Planning Region.

In line with the last conducted census of the population in Macedonian state (2021), the municipality of Gazi Baba has 69,626 resident population. The number of households in the municipality of Gazi Baba was 22,509, and the total number of dwellings was 26,543. In the municipality of Arachinovo, the total number of households was 2,848, and the total number of all types of living quarters or dwellings was 2,815. Ilinden had 5,481 households and 6,628 dwellings in Census 2021.

Comparing the data of the number of population, households and apartments from the last conducted censuses (Census 2002 and Census 2021), there is a noticeable decrease in the total number of the population in the municipality of Gazi Baba. However, there is an increase of population in the municipality of Ilinden by 9.7% (or 1,541 inhabitants). The population in the municipality of Arachinovo increased at a similar rate. Regarding the gender distribution, in the Skopje Region live more female than male population. In fact, women made up 51.02% of the total population in Skopje Region. The share of women in total enumerated population in last Census (2021) in the municipality of Gazi Baba was 50.50% of the total population (or 35,161 inhabitants are female and 34,465 male).

The detailed examination of the age structure of the population, a certain aging trend of the population in Gazi Baba municipality can be observed. The age category of 0-14 years from 20.15% in the 2002 Census decreased to 16.97% in the last census, in 2021. Also, it is significant to underline the fact that the active population (or population at age category of 15 to 64 years) decreased, and the age category of the population of 65 and over increased by 8.64%. Actually, the male population of the municipality of Gazi Baba decreased by 0.59% in the analyzed period of 20 years or between the two last conducted censuses. National statistics report that the population of the municipality of Arachinovo increased in the last 20 years. After analyzing the age distributions of the population in the 2002 and 2021 Censuses, a decline of 6.18% is noted in the age group of 0-14 years. But the municipality of Arachinovo has a low population rate in the 65+ age category. According to the gender structure, the number of males is significantly higher than the female population. According to the data collected from the two last population censuses, the population of the municipality of Ilinden increased by about 10%. In regard to the analysis of the age distribution, a certain aging trend of the population in the municipality of Ilinden can be observed. The age category of 0-14 years from 20.33% in the census in 2002 decreases to 16.48% in the last census, in 2021. But it is significant to note the fact that the active population included in the age category of 15 to 64 years decreased, and the age category of the population of 65 and over increased by less than 10%.

In the project affected municipalities of Gazi Baba, Arachinovo and Ilinden, the number of live births has some oscillations. In the municipality of Gazi Baba, the total number of live births decreased by 42, however in the municipality of Arachinovo it increased by 43. Analysis of the available statistical indicators about the migration of the population, for the period 2018-2022 indicates a positive migration balance (+117) in the project affected municipality of Ilinden. In contrast, the municipality of Arachinovo exhibits a more substantial negative migration balance (-32) compared to the municipality of Gazi Baba (-5).

According to their ethnic affiliation, 89.50% of the population in the project affected municipalities declared themselves as Macedonians, 26.94% as Albanians, etc. Regarding the religious affiliation, Orthodox Christian population is the largest in the project affected municipalities and constitute 52.79% of total population. The Muslims (Islam) are the second religious community with the share of 30.77%.

1.3.11.2 Infrastructure

The Skopje Planning Region is the main hub of the country and has the most developed transport infrastructure. European corridors VII and X pass through the region.

The road infrastructure of the project affected municipalities mainly relies on the transport corridors, as well as the ring road. Through the territory of the project affected municipalities of Gazi Baba, Arachinovo and Ilinden or Skopje Planning Region there are motorways as well as regional roads

of first, second and R29 category. Based on the insights into the statistics related to the local road network, in 2022, in terms of the structure of the road network, the total length of the asphalt and cobbled roads in the project affected municipalities is bigger than earth roads. The total length of asphalt and cobbled streets is 490 km (82.9% of total roads). The municipality of Ilinden has the longest road network.

Skopje Region, more precisely the city of Skopje is central railway knot. The total length of the railway network is 94.78 m, 37.3 km of which are part of Skopje railway knot, 31.68 km is length of the Skopje-Volkovo – border with Serbia line, 18.8 km part of railway line Tabanovce-border with Serbia, and 7 km part of the line Skopje-Kichevo. There are a total of 15 railway stations in Skopje.

Skopje Region hosts one of North Macedonia's two national airports, located in Petrovec, which is crucial for the region's role as a business and administrative center. In addition, there is a sports airport with a grass runway in Stenkovec, approximately 13.5 km from the project site.

The municipalities of Gazi Baba, Arachinovo, and Ilinden have full coverage of telecommunication and electricity networks, with Gazi Baba supplied by 320 transformer substations and multiple energy production sources. Part of the gasification system in Gazi Baba is operational, designed primarily for industrial and energy facilities, comprising a trunk gas pipeline, urban gas distribution networks, and two Main Metering and Regulating Stations (MMRS) located in Skopje North ("Zelezara") and Skopje South ("Ohis") for gas supply regulation and distribution.

1.3.11.3 Land use

Based on the insights into the available statistical database, the total forest area in Skopje Region, in 2022, was 82,543 ha. The most abundant species of the forest fund are the broad-leaved species with 44,894 ha in the Skopje Region. The total number of households in the project affected municipalities that own forest is 1,285[4]. The area under forests in the municipality of Gazi Baba is in total 1,037.31 ha, in the municipality of Arachinovo is in total 117.82 ha and 169.23 ha in the municipality of Ilinden. Areas under broad-leaved trees dominate in the project affected municipalities. There are in total 1,251.78 ha covered with pure stands of broad-leaved species (Census in Agriculture, 2007, State Statistical Office).

On the territory of the municipality, there is also the park-forest Gazi Baba, with an area of about 100 ha, which is located in the very center of the city of Skopje. Due to the location of the forest, the municipality of Gazi Baba receives the epithet of the greenest municipality within the city of Skopje.

The analysis of the statistical database on agricultural holdings shows that on average in the Skopje Region, as the wider project location area, there are 17,465 agricultural holdings with 29,189 ha of the total available area of holdings. The rate of total utilized area is 84.84% or 24,765 ha. The average size of the agricultural holdings in RNM, in 2016, was 2.07 ha. The average size of agricultural holdings in Skopje Region is only 1.67 ha.

The distribution of agricultural land use in 2022 across the municipalities of Skopje, Arachinovo, and Ilinden highlights distinct patterns in land utilization. In Skopje, the total agricultural area spans 54,943 hectares, with a clear dominance of pastures, accounting for 67.14% of the total agricultural land (36,885 ha). Cultivated areas represent a smaller portion of the agricultural landscape, covering 18,043 hectares or 32.84% of the total. Conversely, Arachinovo showcases a significant emphasis on cultivation, with 90.90% of its 1,769 hectares of agricultural land (1,608 ha) being dedicated to cultivated areas.

[4] In the municipality of Gazi Baba, 929 households own a forest, however in the municipality of Arachinovo, that number is much lower (only 181 families own forests), and the smallest number is in the municipality of Ilinden (175 families own forests)

Pastures occupy only a minor portion, representing just 9.1% (161 ha) of the total agricultural land. Ilinden mirrors Arachinovo's trend, with an even more pronounced dedication to cultivated land. Out of its 4,799 hectares of agricultural land, 96.75% (4,643 ha) is used for cultivation, while only 3.10% (149 ha) serves as pasture. This data suggests that Ilinden is highly oriented towards intensive agricultural activities, focusing primarily on crop production rather than livestock grazing.

According to the databases of the official statistics the production of potatoes, wheat, tomatoes, and peppers in the Skopje Region is developed. In the Skopje region, in 2022, 26,703 tonnes of potatoes were produced. In the same year, in second place was the production of wheat with 23,014 tons. Then followed the production of pepper (with 22,729 tons) and tomatoes (with 22,472 tons).

Regarding the land use of the project-affected parcels, it is important to note that these parcels are cultivated with annual crops. In 2024, they were planted with wheat.

1.3.11.4 Economy / Employment

In 2022, the total number of the working age population in the project affected Skopje Region was 474,066 persons. In fact, the activity rate was 55.1%, and the employment rate was 48.8%. The unemployment rate decreased to 11.5 %, in the same year.

According to the processed data of the last conducted Census of population (2021), the total working population aged 15 and over, in the municipality of Gazi Baba was 25,331 persons, in the Municipality of Arachinovo it was 1,332 persons and 7,400 persons in the municipality of Ilinden. The total number of active enterprises in 2021 was 3,370.

North Macedonia is traditionally characterized as an agricultural country, with around 44% of the population (985,000 inhabitants) living in the rural areas. The total number of registered enterprises in the agriculture sector in the project affected municipalities was 73. It should also be noted that the two municipalities are rural, while the population in the municipality of Gazi Baba live in both rural and urban environments. In terms of the gender composition of those employed in agriculture, males form the majority.

In the municipality of Arachinovo in 2021, there was not a single large active company, but a total of 24 large companies were registered in the other two project affected municipalities. More than two-thirds of the total number of enterprises in the project affected municipalities are small enterprises, and others or less than one-third are medium and large enterprises.

According to the insights into the available statistical data about the working age population in the project affected municipalities, that number was 81,607 persons. The percentage of female population is bigger in the municipalities of Gazi Baba and Ilinden. The highest rates of working population, in project affected municipalities, were in the category of 65 years and older.

The municipality of Gazi Baba is the most industrial municipality in the territory of the city of Skopje, with a great tradition of several decades in the existing industrial zones, and many brand companies from the leading industries - pharmacy and chemical industry, metal industry, food industry, logistics industry, retail trade and wholesale, automotive industry, IT industry, health centres, beer and wine industry, etc...

The industrial zone located on the North Ring Road of the city of Skopje is intended for light, non-polluting industry, logistics (warehouses, distribution centers, transport terminals), as well as large shopping centers and commercial spaces. The zone is territorially spread over 270 ha, and is organized

into 14 blocks, of which 11 relate to light industry and logistics, while 3 relate to shopping centres and business premises. The AFP is located in the North Ring Road Industrial Zone.

Economic Industrial Zone “Arachinovski rid” is located in the municipality of Arachinovo and intended for light industry.

Due to its geographical location and rich infrastructure, the municipality of Ilinden is an excellent environment for industrial and economic development. There are 9 local economic zones in the municipality of Ilinden, as well as the Technological Development Industrial Zone Skopje 1 and Skopje 2 in Bunardzik. All economic zones are connected to road, water and electricity infrastructure, and there is also the possibility of connecting the primary gas infrastructure.

1.3.11.5 Education

In the municipality of Ilinden, there is a kindergarten called "Goce Delchev". Based on the insights into the statistical data related to the municipality of Ilinden, a significant increase in the number of children in kindergarten in recent years is noticeable. There is no kindergarten in the municipality of Arachinovo. According to the available information, a significant part of the children from this municipality are enrolled in kindergartens in the municipality of Gazi Baba.

There are two kindergartens ("Children's Joy" and “25 May”), with 11 clones (Sunflower, Pomegranate, Violet 1, Violet 2, Mimosa, Sun, Carrot, Clover, Spark, Poni and Violet) in the municipality of Gazi Baba. The total number of enrolled children in institutions for care and education or kindergartens in the municipality of Gazi Baba, in 2022 was 1,691 (878 boys and 813 girls). Based on the insight into the statistical data of the last few years, the number of children enrolled in kindergartens has been increasing.

There are a total of 11 primary schools on the territory of the municipality of Gazi Baba. In the settlement of Brnjarci, there is an elementary school “Krste Misirkov”. The distance between this school and project location is about 2 km, located in the residential part of the settlement Brnjarci.There are three elementary schools in the municipality of Arachinovo. There are three elementary schools in the municipality of Ilinden.

There are five secondary schools in the municipality of Gazi Baba. In the municipality of Ilinden, there is a secondary school “Ilinden” in the settlement Ilinden.

In the municipality of Gazi Baba there are a total of three universities, two of which are private ("Faculty of Social Sciences" and “International Balkan University”), and one is state ("St. Cyril and Methodius"), which together include more than 50 faculties and 9 research institutes.

1.3.11.6 Healthcare Facilities

According to the Health Map of the Republic of North Macedonia (2021), the project affected municipalities of Gazi Baba, Arachinovo and Ilinden belong to the Skopje Healthy Region. The area of the Skopje Healthy Region covers an area of 1,858 km^2 (607,007 inhabitants in total, Census 2021). The health care in the Region is organized through the developed network of state and private health institutions. In the Skopje Health Region, there are the following health institutions: University Clinics, Stomatological Clinics, two Health Stations, two Health Centres, General Hospital, Institutes of Medical Faculty and Other Health Institution, Special Hospital for Pulmonary Disease and TBC, Special Hospital for psychiatric diseases, two Centres for Treatment and Rehabilitation, Institute for Public Health and five other Special Hospitals.

Within the territory of the Municipality of Gazi Baba, there is the "Zelezara" Health Center, which provides healthcare services to the municipalities of Gazi Baba, Arachinovo, Petrovec, and Ilinden. Additionally, the area includes the "Chento" Polyclinic and the private hospital "Remedika." Additionally, there is a home visit and treatment unit, medical practices "Kolonija Idrizovo," "Autokomanda," "Creshevo," "Majdari," "Bulachani," "Creshevo", "Zhitishe - n. Chanto", as well as over 40 private general medicine practices, multiple private dental practices, the private ophthalmology hospital "Cornea Medica", physical therapy practices, and 13 pharmacies. Two general clinics and two dental clinics are operational in the municipality of Arachinovo. Additionally, there are two pharmacies within the municipality's territory. In the municipality of Ilinden, there are around ten private clinics and dental clinics, as well as several pharmacies.

The closest medical institution to the project location of AFP is the private general clinic ELIFE, located in the settlement of Arachinovo. The distance between the project location and the Polyclinic Chento[5] is about 3 km. Access to the Chento polyclinic is available via the main street in the Chento settlement. Additionally, this route is the shortest path between the project location and the Chento polyclinic.

1.3.11.7 Social Services

Institutions responsible for implementing social protection in the project-affected area include the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the City of Skopje, and local municipalities. Additionally, under legal provisions, civil associations and individuals may also provide social services.

National legislation defines three types of institutions for delivering social services: Centers for Social Work; Institutions for Out-of-Home (Family) Protection, offering assisted living, foster care, and residential placements; and Centers for Social Service, which provide daily and temporary home- or community-based services.

Centers for Social Work fall under the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and serve one or more municipalities with public authority. The Intermunicipal Center for Social Work Skopje (IMCSWS) covers the Skopje Planning Region, i.e. all municipalities within the City of Skopje and surrounding municipalities, including Arachinovo and Ilinden.

IMCSWS operates with a dual structure: Monetary Assistance Services are territorially dispersed across Skopje's municipalities, while Social Protection Services are categorized by needs (e.g., disability, family, elderly) and centralized at IMCSWS headquarters in the city center.

The Intermunicipal Center for Social Work Gazi Baba manages monetary assistance services for Arachinovo and Ilinden. Although Ilinden had a local unit opened in 2022, it has since closed, requiring beneficiaries to submit claims at the Gazi Baba office.

Skopje Region saw substantial increases in both household and individual beneficiaries, making up a disproportionately high share of recipients, due to the higher population.

Gazi Baba municipality reflects a highly dependent population, with substantial social support needs, especially in income security, child development, and elderly care.

The proportion of women among heads of households increased in both national and regional data, more markedly in Skopje, suggesting growing female-led vulnerability.

[5] Polyclinic is a medical institution where the doctors offer care and advice relating to many different medical conditions. Chento Polyclinic, operating 24 hours a day, provides treatment for a wide range of medical conditions, from serious injuries to minor colds.

1.3.11.8 Vulnerable People or People at Risk

National law defines "social problems" as events or situations that make it difficult for individuals or communities to meet basic needs, often due to complex social events, natural disasters, or deviant behaviors. "Social risks" refer to conditions that may impede an individual's social functioning, such as motherhood, illness, old age, death, injury, or disability. The Law emphasizes the need for organized social support to overcome these challenges.

The 2022 Annual Work Report of the Intermunicipal Center for Social Work Skopje highlights various vulnerable groups within the community, such as the permanently unemployed, people with low education, those with mental and physical disabilities, drug abusers, children in conflict with the law, former prisoners, and individuals who lack personal documentation or are living in substandard conditions. Additionally, the report identifies marginalized groups, asylum seekers, and individuals with deviant behavior as vulnerable categories in need of support.

Municipality of Gazi Baba recognizes several categories of vulnerable citizens, including people in social risk, those affected by natural disasters, multi-child families, single parents, and individuals with disabilities, and provides financial or in-kind support. Similarly,

Municipality of Arachinovo reports a higher elderly population due to immigration, requiring social services and care. Vulnerable citizens in Arachinovo are provided with minimum assistance, care allowances, child allowances, and education support.

In Ilinden, the municipality's social protection activities for 2023 focus on assisting vulnerable families, those affected by natural disasters, and informing families about their social rights. The municipality also provides one-off financial assistance for newborns, subsidizes childcare for socially disadvantaged families, and prioritizes enrollment for children of single parents in local educational institutions.

1.3.11.9 Non-discrimination and equal opportunities for women and men

The country continues aligning its national legislation with the acquis and international standards on non-discrimination and gender equality. However, while the legal framework has evolved, implementation gaps remain significant. Traditional gender roles are still deeply rooted in society, with women largely responsible for unpaid domestic work and care. Despite legal progress, including the recent formal recognition of intersectional discrimination as a severe form of discrimination, such practices persist in daily life.

Women from ethnic minorities—particularly Roma and Albanian women in rural areas—face multiple layers of discrimination. Roma girls experience high rates of early marriage, low school attendance, and social exclusion. In municipalities like Arachinovo, predominantly Albanian and rural, traditional views reinforce gender inequality. Many women believe men should be financial providers, while women should care for children and work only if necessary. These attitudes limit women's roles in public and economic life.

A socio-economic survey of the Kvantashki Market revealed that gender-sensitive issues remain a challenge across ethnic lines. Labor market data shows high inactivity rates among rural and ethnic minority women, who also face significant barriers to owning property. Traditional norms often prevent women from being landowners or economic decision-makers, contributing to financial dependence. Only 10.4% of farm holders are women, and just over 12% have a role in production-related decisions.

Young rural women increasingly reject agriculture as a viable future, opting to stay in rural areas only if alternative employment is available. Internal migration data between 2014 and 2019 show that 35.1% of movements were from village to city, with women accounting for over 70% of total migrations across all regions. Skopje attracted nearly 44% of all internal migrants.

The government has introduced several support measures aimed at improving the status of rural women. These include financial incentives for starting businesses within agricultural households, which can reach up to 600,000 denars under the IPARD III program, and a 2024 social security scheme offering maternity and sick leave for registered women farmers.

Despite these efforts, the lack of sex-disaggregated and intersectional data remains a major barrier to developing effective, evidence-based policies. The Gender Equality Index, last published in 2021, assessed 81 municipalities on gender gaps, enabling conditions, and responsiveness to gender needs. Results show substantial inequality. Arachinovo ranked 78th, Ilinden 47th, and Gazi Baba 24th—all with low overall scores. The City of Skopje performed relatively better, ranking 8th with a score of 56, though still reflecting the need for broader systemic improvements.

1.4 Purpose and Scope of the ESMP

In accordance with the WB's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), and Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) for Agriculture Modernization Project (AMP), for moderate risk subprojects, such as the project for Agri-food platform (AFP), a site-specific ESMP is required in order to identify, evaluate and prevent potential environmental and social risks and impacts.

Based on the ESMF for AMP, Initial Environmental and Social Assessment developed in the first phase, and detailed engineering design, it is developed this site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), that incorporates the technical provisions of the detailed design, and inform the detailed design accordingly.

The purpose of this site-specific ESMP is to predict potential effects and improve the environmental and social aspects of AFP project by minimizing, mitigating or compensating for negative effects. This document is developed as part of the Detailed Design Package, which is in accordance with the ToR for Consulting Services for Detailed Design of an Agri-Food Platform in Skopje area (Gazi Baba Municipality). This site-specific ESMP will be part of the bidding document for CW Contractor selection.

The ESMP outlines the anticipated environmental and social impacts associated with the implementation of the project for Agri-food platform (AFP) across all project phases—construction, operation, and decommissioning. It identifies key impacts, proposes mitigation measures, assigns institutional responsibilities, and estimates associated costs to ensure that potential negative effects are prevented, minimized, or adequately managed.

Table 1 presents the ESMP in a structured format. Each row corresponds to a specific impact and includes the following key components:

- **Project Phase** – Indicates whether the impact arises during construction, operation, or decommissioning.
- **Environmental/Social Impact** – Describes the nature of the expected impact.
- **Mitigating Measure(s)** – Lists actions to eliminate or reduce the identified impact(s).
- **Cost (EUR)** – Specifies the amount that needs to be obtained for implementing mitigation measures.

- **Institutional Responsibility** – Identifies the parties responsible for implementing and monitoring of each measure during installation or operation.

This table serves as a practical tool for project implementers, contractors, supervising authorities, and relevant institutions to ensure environmentally and socially responsible project execution.

1.5 Application of the ESMP

This ESMP will be part of the contract that the MAFWE/PIU will sign with the CW Contractor for implementation of the AFP project activities. The proposed preventive and/or mitigation environmental and social measures in this plan must be executed by the CW Contractor and therefore the respected documentation related to applying these measures (e.g., records on OHS training performed for all workers before start of activities, all developed OHS plans, etc.).

The implementation of the measures prescribed within the framework of the ESMP will be a mandatory requirement for the CW Contractor during the implementation of the construction activities.

The implementation of proposed measures by the CW Contractor and Contractor's subcontractors will be monitored by the Supervising Engineer by doing visual checking, reviewing the records of evidence that the measures have been applied, and if the measures have not been applied, will require the CW Contractor to provide applying of the measures as soon as possible. If there are any non-compliances, they need to be recorded and the Report containing them needs to be sent immediately to the officials from the MAFWE (PIU). The Environmental/Social Specialist engaged by the MAFWE will report the non-compliance and accidents/emergencies cases to the World Bank immediately upon occurrence. Each incompliance needs to be addressed and the evidence of the appropriate measures taken need to be kept.

The main responsibilities of the PIU are in regard to the Project implementation, project coordination, monitoring activities and reporting.

Good communication between all involved stakeholders (Contractor, Supervisor, municipal staff, Environmental Inspector, Communal Inspector and PIU from MAFWE) is very important for providing continuous performance of the project activities and successful completion of overall project.

2 INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 National Environmental Laws, Regulations, Guidelines, and Standards

The environmental legal framework within the RNM contains overarching laws covering such areas as Environmental Protection, Water, Waste, Nature Protection, Hunting, Noise Protection, Air Quality and Cultural Heritage, which transpose the main obligations of the environmental EU Directives.

The Law on Environment ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 53/05, 81/05, 24/07, 159/08, 83/09, 48/10, 124/10, 51/11, 123/12, 93/13, 187/13, 42/14, 44/15, 129/2015, 192/2015, 39/16, 99/18, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" Nos. 89/22 and 171/22), is a horizontal legal framework and regulates, inter alia: the principles for environment protection and sustainable development, planning aspects and documents for environment protection, subjects and instruments for environment protection, environment monitoring and information system, public involvement in environment matters, environment labelling, financing issues and supervision aspects. The objectives of this law include conservation, protection, renewal and improvement of the quality of the environment, protection of the life and health of the people; protection of the biological diversity; rational and sustainable use of natural resources and implementation and improvement of the measures aimed at overcoming the regional and global problems of the environment. This law regulates the administrative procedure for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for projects that will likely result in significant environmental impacts. It sets legal basis for defining the content of the EIA Study, the stakeholder engagement and public involvement process. The requirements of the EU EIA Directive 2014/52/EU have been transposed within the Law on Environment. The general EIA procedure and relevant by-laws that more closely regulate the EIA procedure are given in the Initial ESA Report.

Access to information related to the environment and public participation in the decision-making process related to the environment are prescribed in the Law on Environment and in accordance with the following ratified conventions:

- Espoo Convention ratified by the Republic of North Macedonia (Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context) ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 44/99);
- Aarhus Convention ratified by the Republic of North Macedonia (Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters) ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 40/99).

For the projects determined, after the screening process, not to have significant environmental impacts, such as the AFP project, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP), in accordance with the Law on Environment, will decide that it is not necessary to carry out the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure, but that it will be necessary to prepare an Environmental Protection Report (EPR).

The relevant by-laws that have been adopted in order to regulate the preparation, submission and approval of the EPR are given in the Initial ESA Report.

Other relevant national environmental laws (including deriving by-laws) that more closely regulate the environmental assessment and protection of different environmental media and areas are elaborated below. In addition to national legislation, RNM has also ratified a large number of international agreements and conventions along with the ongoing process of transposing the acquis into the national legal and policy framework.

The Law on Ambient Air Quality ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 67/04, 92/07, 35/10, 47/11, 59/12, 100/12, 163/13, 10/15 and 146/15, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 151/21) and accompanying by-laws sets the air quality standards and regulates air quality monitoring, air protection measures, air quality assessment, planning documents for air quality management, inspection and supervision, etc.

The Law on Nature Protection ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 67/04, 14/06, 84/07, 35/10, 47/11, 148/11, 59/12, 13/13, 163/13, 41/14, 146/15, 39/16, 63/16, and 113/18, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 151/21) regulates the nature conservation and promotion via protection of the biological and landscape diversity as well as the natural heritage. It identifies the principles for nature protection, inter alia: principle for sustainability, precautionary principle, prevention principle and user-pays principle and sets the legal bases for protection of habitats, ecosystems and species. In addition, the law regulates the legal bases for establishment of a coherent ecological network, including the European Natura 2000 Network. The law also determines the planning documents for nature protection and the legal bases for protected areas (establishment, categorization, management). RNM has also ratified numerous international agreements for nature protection.

The Law on Waters ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 87/08, 6/09, 161/09, 83/10, 51/11, 44/12, 23/13, 163/13, 180/14, 146/15, and 52/16, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 151/21) introduces watershed management approach and regulates the legal status and manner for integrated water management, water infrastructure, conditions and manner for water economy, conditions for issuing water use and water discharge permits, etc. The objectives of this law are to ensure availability of a sufficient amount of quality water in accordance with the principles of sustainable management of the water and protection, preservation and continuous improvement of the available water resources. There are a number of by-laws that prescribe the necessary water and wastewater quality, water classification, categorization, emission standards and the norms for the quality of pre-treatment, disposal and purification of wastewaters, conditions, manner and emission limit values for discharges of wastewater after their treatment, standards for wastewater emissions (hazardous and harmful substances) into the sewer or drainage system, etc.

The Law on Waste Management ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 216/21) regulates the principles and objectives of waste management, strategies, the plans and programs for waste management, the rights and obligations of the legal and natural persons in relation to waste management, the manner and conditions under which it can to collect, transport, reuse, treat, store, processing and disposal of waste, import, export and transit of waste, establishment of the information system, as well as financing and supervision over waste management. Other waste management laws include:

- Law on the Management of Electrical and Electronic Equipment and Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 176/21);
- Law on Management of Batteries and Accumulators and Waste from Batteries and Accumulators ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 176/21);
- Law on Management of Packaging and Waste Packaging ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 215/21);
- Law on Management of Additional Waste Flows ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 216/21);

- Law on Extended Liability of the Producer for Management of the Certain Waste Flows ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 215/21).

There are a number of accompanying by-laws that covers categorization and handling with different types of waste including hazardous waste, different permits necessary for handling with different types of waste, waste storage, management, packaging etc.

The Law on Protection Against Environmental Noise ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 79/07, 124/10, 47/11, 163/13, and 146/15, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 151/21) and accompanying by-laws regulates protection against noise in the environment and determines measures for mitigation of harmful effects of the noise on human health, including normative, urban planning and technical measures. The law excludes noise in working and living environment.

There is no national legislation on Climate Change. A Law on Climate Action, harmonized with the EU legislation in this area, has been drafted, but not yet adopted. The RNM has ratified several Conventions and adopted the National Environment and Climate Change Strategy (2014-2020), and the Third National Plan on Climate Change (2013).

The laws for ratification of convention on climate change are the following:

- Law on Ratification of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 61/97);
- Law on Ratification of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 49/04).

The other relevant national environmental legislation includes inter alia:

- Law on Urban Planning ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" Nos. 32/20, and 111/23);
- Law on Forests ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 64/09, 24/11, 53/11, 25/13, 79/13, 147/13, 43/14, 160/14, 33/15, 44/15, 147/15, 07/16, and 39/16);
- Law on Urban Greenery ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 11/18);
- Law on Construction ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 130/09, 124/10, 18/11, 36/11, 54/11, 13/12; 144/12, 25/13, 79/13, 137/13, 163/13, 27/14, 28/14, 42/14, 115/14, 149/14, 187/14, 44/15, 129/15, 217/15, 226/15, 30/16, 31/16, 39/16, 71/16, 132/16, 35/18, 64/18, and 168/18, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 244/19, 18/20, and 227/22);
- Law on Construction Land ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 15/15, 44/15, 98/15, 193/15, 226/15, 31/16), 142/16, and 190/16, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 275/19);

Law on Protection of Cultural Heritage ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 20/04, 71/04, 115/07, 18/11, 148/11, 23/13, 137/13, 164/13, 38/14, 44/14, 199/14, 104/15, 154/15, 192/15, 39/16, 11/18, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 20/19).

2.2 National Laws, Regulations and Standards on Social Protection and Land Issues

The Labor Relations Law ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 62/05, 106/08, 161/08, 114/09, 130/09, 149/09, 50/10, 52/10, 124/10, 47/11, 11/12, 39/12, 13/13, 25/13, 170/13, 187/13, 113/14, 20/15, 33/15, 72/15, 129/15, 27/16, and 120/18, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" Nos. 110/19, and 267/20) sets provisions that create a legal ground for workers'

right to freedom of work, dignity and protection of the interests of workers in the employment relationship, established by concluding an employment contract, which cannot contain less favorable conditions then those prescribed by this, other laws and collective agreements.

Other laws (including deriving by-laws) that more closely regulate labor and working conditions are the following:

- Law on Pensions and Disability Insurance ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 53/13, 170/13, 43/14, 44/14, 97/14, 113/14, 160/14, 188/14, 20/15, 61/15, 97/15, 129/15, 147/15, 154/15, 173/15, 217/15, 27/16, 120/16, 132/16, 35/18, 220/18, and 245/18, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" Nos. 180/19, 275/19, 31/20, and 267/20);
- Law on Minimum Wage ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 11/12, 30/14, 180/14, 81/15, 129/15, 132/17, and 140/18, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" Nos. 124/19, and 239/19);
- Law on Volunteering ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 85/07, 161/08, and 147/15, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" Nos. 124/19, and 103/21);
- Law on Peaceful Settlement of Labour Disputes ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 85/07, 27/14, 102/14, and 30/16);
- Law on Occupational Safety and Health ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 92/07, 136/11, 23/13, 25/13, 137/13, 164/13, 158/14, 15/15, 129/15, 192/15, 30/16, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 18/20);
- Law on Employment of Disabled Persons ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 44/00, 16/04, 62/05, 113/05, 29/07, 88/08, 16/08, 99/09, 136/11, 129/15, 147/15, 27/16, and 99/18);
- Law on Employment and Work of Foreigners ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 217/15, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 163/21);
- Law on Protection Against Harassment at the Workplace ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 79/13, and 147/15, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 103/21);
- Law on Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 258/20).

International Labor Standards (conventions and recommendations) are legal instruments drawn up by the ILO's constituents (governments, employers and workers) and setting out basic principles and rights at work. Republic of North Macedonia has ratified 80 ILO conventions, including all 10 Fundamental Conventions, all 4 Governance Conventions and 66 Technical Conventions.[6] In the country the following Fundamental and Governance (priority) ILO Conventions are ratified and in force:

➢ Fundamental Conventions:

- C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (and P029 - Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930) (No. 29)

[6] ILO, 2024, Ratifications for North Macedonia: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11200:0::NO:11200:P11200_COUNTRY_ID:103555. Accessed on April 4th, 2024.

- C087 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87)
- C098 - Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)
- C100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)
- C105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)
- C111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)
- C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (Minimum age specified: 15 years) (No. 138)
- C155 - Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)
- C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)
- C187 - Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187)

➢ Governance (Priority) Conventions:

- C081 - Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81)
- C122 - Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122)
- C129 - Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129)
- C144 - Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144).

The Law on Public Health ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 22/10, 136/11, 144/14, 149/15, and 37/16) regulates the implementation of basic public health functions and tasks, the work of the public health system, preparation for and response to public health emergencies, and public health financing. The public health is based on principles of responsibility for the public health and the leading role of the state in preserving and advancement of the public health; comprehensive measures and activities targeting the whole population and socio-economic determinants of the health and the most important risk factors; multidisciplinary base and intersectoral cooperation; and partnership with the population.

In line with this law, the Ministry of Health decides whether the IHR Core Capacities of the Republic of North Macedonia on health emergencies and/or urgent circumstances reported by the country's regional public health centers (PHCs) are of international importance. The Institute of Public Health (IPH) has been given defined roles and responsibilities of the IHR (2005) National Focal Point.

According to The Law on Crisis Management ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 29/05, 36/11, 41/14, 104/15, 39/16, 83/18 and "Official gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 215/21), a crisis management system has been set up for the prevention, early warning and handling of crises (other than a state of war or state of emergency) that represent risks to the goods, health and lives of people and animals, and which are the result of natural disasters and epidemics or other risks and dangers that directly jeopardize the constitutional order and the security of the Republic of North Macedonia, or a part of it.

Other laws regulating matters concerning the public and occupational health and safety are the following:

- Law on Health Protection ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 43/12, 145/12, 87/13, 164/13, 39/14, 43/14, 132/14, 188/14, 10/15, 61/15, 154/15, 132/15, 154/15, 192/15, and 37/16);
- Law on Occupational Safety and Health ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 92/07, 136/11, 23/13, 25/13, 137/13, 164/13, 158/14, 15/15, 129/15, 192/15, 30/16, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 18/20);
- Law on Sanitary and Health Inspection ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 71/06, 139/08, 88/10, 18/11, 53/11, 164/13, 43/14, 144/14, 51/15, 150/15, and 37/16);

- Law on Road Traffic Safety ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 169/15, 226/15, 55/16, 11/18, and 83/18, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 98/19);
- Law on Protection and Rescue ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 36/04, 49/04, 86/08, 124/10, 18/11, 93/12, 41/14, 129/15, 71/16, 106/16, and 83/18, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 215/21);
- Law on Public Works ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 95/12, 163/13, 42/14, 44/15, 147/15, and 31/16);
- Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 24/21).

International Health Regulations (2005) (amended in 2014 and 2022 (entered into force on 31 May 2024)).

The Expropriation Law ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 95/12, 131/12, 24/13, 27/14, 104/15, 192/15, 23/16, and 178/16, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" Nos. 122/21 and 11/23) regulates the confiscation and restriction of the right to property and real estate rights for the purpose of realizing public interest established by law, establishing public interest; expropriation procedure and the procedure for determining market compensation. The public interest established by this law is the regulation, rational use and humanization of space, protection and improvement of the environment and nature by construction of buildings and carrying out works of importance to the state and local self-government units, provided by the space planning acts.

Public interest is also determined for the confiscation of construction land natural persons are entitled to, and which according to the space planning acts defining the building plot is outside the defined building plot and which cannot be subject to privatization, according to the Law on Privatization and Lease of State-Owned Construction Land ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia ", Nos. 4/05, 13/07, 165/08, 146/09, 18/11, 51/11, 27/14, 144/14, 72/15, 104/15, 153/15, 23/16, 178/16).

Expropriated real estate is a subject to a fair compensation that cannot be lower than the market value of the real estate. The market value of a real estate is determined under conditions and manner determined by this law, according to methodology, rules and standards in line with the Appraisal Law ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 115/10, 158/11, 185/11, 64/12, 188/14, 104/15, 153/15, 192/15, and 30/16). The right to claim compensation for expropriated real estate becomes never obsolete.

Taking into account that the land intended for the construction of AFP is given under concession, the Law on Agricultural Land considers as relevant.

- Law on Agricultural Land ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 135/07, 17/08, 18/11, 42/11, 148/11, 95/12, 79/13, 106/13, 164/13, 39/14, 130/14, 166/14, 72/15, 98/15, 154/15, 215/15, 7/16, 39/16 and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" Nos. 161/19, 178/21, 91/23, 218/24, and 235/24) regulates the use, disposal, protection, and conversion of agricultural land. The termination of the lease agreement is regulated by this law, Article 35, which stipulates that a long-term agreement will be terminated if the land is converted from agricultural to construction use.

Since the land designated for the construction of the AFP is state-owned but currently under lease, it will be necessary to terminate the lease agreement and provide appropriate compensation to the lessee due to the early termination. The project area intended for the AFP was originally leased under a

30-year long-term contract with the company "SINDJELICK" for Agriculture and Livestock. The termination of the agreement occurs by force of law. More precisely, according to the Law on Agricultural Land, Article 35 states that the lease agreement ceases to be valid when agricultural land is permanently repurposed and no longer considered agricultural land, as is the case with the land designated for the construction of the AFP. According to the same law, when repurposed agricultural land into construction land, a Damage Assessment Report must be prepared. This report should assess any potential damage resulting from the termination of the lease agreement for state-owned agricultural land or the termination of the agreement for the use of pastures. The report must be prepared by the Bureau for Court Expertise or an authorized appraiser if the agricultural land within the planned area is subject to a lease agreement for agricultural land or a pasture use agreement (Article 49). If the lessee has constructed a building or other infrastructure on the affected plot, a valuation of such structures must be conducted to ensure the lessee is compensated for any investment or damage resulting from the land's repurposing. The valuation of the investments, structures, damage emerged from the termination of the contract with the tenant will be calculated by Law on Appraisal, or in cases of appeal of the appraisal will be regulated with the Law on Expertise and Law on Extra-Juridical Proceedings. Following the termination of the lease agreement, proper marking of the boundaries of the affected land designated for the AFP construction is required.

An annex to the lease agreement has been signed, confirming the reduction in the amount of land the lessee will continue to cultivate. Following the adoption of the decision to construct the AFP, an Annex[7] was added to the long-term lease contract for the state-owned land in this region. In this context, the lessee, "SINDJELICK" for Agriculture and Livestock, initially leased a total of 714.81 hectares of state-owned land. With the signing of the Annex, the total leased area was reduced by 126,472.3 m². This represents a reduction of 1.77%, and the total leased land now amounts to 702.16 hectares, or 702 hectares, 16 ares, and 36 m². It is significant to note that following the Law on Cadaster, appropriate documentation is needed to finalise the change of the cadaster culture or the usage of the project affected land plots in the Agency for Real Estate Cadastre of the Republic of North Macedonia.

The assessment and valuation of the project affected land is regulated by following laws and methodologies:

- The Law on Appraisal ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", Nos. 115/10, 158/11, 185/11, 64/12, 188/141, 104/15, 153/15, 192/15 and 30/16) regulates the performance of appraisal, the areas, conditions and manner of performing appraisal, the subjects performing appraisal, the conditions and the procedure for taking a professional exam, for issuing or revoking the appraisal license, award and reimbursement of the costs for performed appraisal the competence, organization and operation of the Chamber of Valuers of the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as other issues related to appraisal.
- The procedure of valuation of agricultural land is defined by the Methodology for Assessment of the Market Value of Real Estate ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", Nos. 54/12, 17/13, 21/13 and 142/14). This methodology is applied when estimating the market value of real estate in an expropriation procedure. According to the Article 37 of the Expropriation Law, the market value of expropriated property and property

[7] Annex agreement between the lessee, Company "SINDJELICK" for Agriculture and Livestock and MAFWE, represented by Minister Cvetan Tripunovski, was concluded on December 19, 2024, with archival number 39-12355/1. The annex agreement is an integral part of the main agreement No. 02-4197/1, concluded on April 21, 2004.

that is given as compensation shall be determined by a qualified appraiser by the governmental body Bureau for Forensic Expertise.

- The assessment of the value of plantations, crops, and cultures is conducted in accordance with the Methodology for the Assessment of the Value of Assets in Agriculture ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 171/11 and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" Nos. 81/19, 84/23 and 89/23); the Announcements on Agricultural Product Prices at green markets, wholesale markets, and livestock markets and the Statistical Review of Crop Production, Fruit Growing, and Viticulture, which provides average yields of crops and plantations by municipality (announcements from the State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2019-2024).
- Law on Expertise ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", Nos. 115/10, 12/14, 43/14, 104/15, 148/15, 192/15, and 64/18) regulates the performance of expertise, the areas, conditions and manner of performing the expertise, the entities performing expertise, the conditions and the procedure for taking the professional exam for issuing, extending, terminating or revoking the expertise license for performing expertise in appropriate area, income and compensation of costs for the performed expertise, establishment, competence, organization and operation of the Chamber of Experts, as well as other issues related to the expertise.
- The Law on Extra-Judicial Proceeding ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", No. 09/08) establishes the rules of procedure according to which the courts act and decide on personal, family, property, and other legal conditions and relations determined by this or another law. In that view, the court in extra-judicial proceedings determines compensation for an expropriated property after it establishes the important facts and approves a decision which defines the type and amount of compensation in case when the beneficiary of expropriation and property owner didn't reach an agreement.

It is important to change the data or cadaster culture / usage of the project affected land or land intended for construction of the AFP. The change of cadaster data in the State Agency for Real Estate Cadaster are regulated by the following law:

- Law on Real Estate Cadaster ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 55/13, 41/14, 115/14, 116/15, 153/15, 192/15, 61/16, 172/16, and 64/18).

In some cases, issues related to compensation for land and property may be resolved by implementing the Law on Obligations ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 18/01, 78/01, 04/02, 59/02, 05/03, 84/08, 81/09, and 161/09), according to which compensation is provided in money for legal owners of land and properties (or those whose rights are recognized under national laws) for damages or losses arising from investors/contractors (or others) when accessing land or preventing access to land and/or properties.

Other laws and associated by-laws regulating matters concerning the land acquisition are the following:

- Law on Ownership and Other Real Rights ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 18/01, 92/08, 139/09, and 35/10);
- Law on Construction Land ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 15/15, 44/15, 98/15, 193/15, 226/15, 31/16, 142/16, and 190/16, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 275/19);

- Law on Construction ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 130/09, 124/10, 18/11, 36/11, 54/11, 59/11, 13/12, 39/12, 144/12, 25/13, 70/13, 79/13, 137/13, 163/13, 27/14, 28/14, 42/14, 115/14, 149/14, 187/14, 44/15, 129/15, 217/15, 226/15, 30/16, 31/16, 39/16, 71/16, 132/16, 35/18, 64/18, and 168/18, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" Nos. 244/19, and 18/20);
- Law on General Administrative Procedures ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 124/15);
- Law on Administrative Disputes ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 62/06, and 150/10, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 96/19);
- Law on Acting Upon Illegally Constructed Buildings ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 23/11, 54/11, 155/12, 53/13, 72/13, 44/14, 115/14, 199/14, 124/15, 129/15, 217/15, and 31/16);
- Law on National Spatial Data Infrastructure of the Republic of Macedonia ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 38/14).

The Law on Free Legal Assistance ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 101/19) sets the general rules for provision of free legal assistance, types and range of free legal assistance, donors and users of free legal assistance, their obligations and responsibilities, the procedure in which the right to free legal assistance, financing, reward and compensation for the free legal assistance is exercised, free legal assistance in cross-border disputes, transparency and accountability in the provision of free legal assistance, special legal aid procedures, supervision of the application of this law and other issues related to free legal assistance. The aim of this law is to enable and improve the conditions for access to justice in such a way that not only those in need, but also low-income individuals, can receive free legal assistance. Low-income individuals are considered those whose monthly incomes are not higher than one minimum net salary in the Republic of North Macedonia. It also allows expertise, court and administrative fees to be covered by the Ministry of Justice.

The Law on Financial Support of Socially Vulnerable Categories of Citizens ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 269/2023) regulates users, the amount, how to provide and pay financial support to socially vulnerable categories of citizens.

The immediate participation of citizens in the decision-making process, such as individual or collective involvement of the inhabitants of the municipality in decisions on matters of local importance at different levels of decision-making, is regulated by the Law on Local Self Government ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 5/02).

The way citizens are informed; cases of public exclusion from council sessions; the manner and procedure for submitting proposals for the work of the municipal authorities and the procedure thereof; the way public stands are organized, polls conducted and proposals collected by citizens; are prescribed in the Statute of the Municipality.

Municipal authorities, council committees and public services established by the municipality are obliged, without compensation, to inform citizens of their work, as well as of plans and programs relevant to the development of the municipality, in a manner determined by the statute. The municipality is obliged to provide citizens with access to basic information about the services it provides to them, in a manner and under conditions governed by the statute.

Each citizen has the right, individually or together with others, to submit proposals for the work of the municipal authorities and municipal administration. The mayor is obliged:

- to create conditions for submitting proposals;
- within 60 days at the latest, from the date of proposal receiving, to provide the applicant with an explanatory reply and
- to submit proposals, which do not relate to matters under the municipal authorities, to the relevant competent authority and to notify the applicant thereof.

Laws regulating the Stakeholder Engagement are the following:

- Law on Access to Public Information ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 13/06, 86/08, 06/10, 42/14, 148/15, 55/16, and 64/18, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 101/19);
- Law on Urban and Spatial Planning ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 199/14, 44/15, 193/15, 31/16, 163/16, 64/18, and 168/18);

Law on Acting upon Complaints and Proposals ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 82/08, 13/13, 156/15, and 193/15) and Rulebook on the Manner of Action upon Complaints and Proposals ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 2/09).

2.3 Institutional Responsibilities on National Legislation

2.3.1 Environmental Institutional framework

Environmental Impact Assessment of certain projects is required to be carried out in the Republic of North Macedonia in accordance with Articles 76-94 of the Law on Environment. This is a full scope EIA procedure, based on EU's EIA Directive 85/337/EEC as amended by 97/11/EEC and 2003/35/EC), transposed into to the Law on Environment.

According to the Law on environment, a competent institution for the implementation of the procedure for assessment of the environmental impact of projects is the Department of environment under the Ministry of Environment and physical planning (MoEPP).

The Department of environment is in charge of the following responsibilities:

- Management of waste, air, chemical substances, noise and other areas of the environment;
- Expert tasks in the protection of the nature, waters and soil from pollution;
- Provides expert assistance and runs the procedure for the evaluation of the environmental impact and the procedure for issue of integrated environmental licenses;
- Manages the cadaster for the environment and the Registry of polluting materials and substances and their features;
- Executes the monitoring of the environment, and
- Provides other tasks defined by the regulations in the area of the environmental issues.

➢ **Institutional Responsibility for EIA Procedure (full scope, Study level)**

As per the provisions of the national legislation, the EIA procedure is conducted according to the scale of the project.

Under the national EIA procedure, projects are classified in two groups: projects listed in Annex 1 are all subject to compulsory EIA while in Annex 2, are generally certain projects for which the need for implementation of the EIA procedure is determined (as defined in the Decree on determining the projects and the criteria on the basis of which the need for conducting the procedure for environmental impact assessment is determined ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 74/05, 109/09, 164/12, and 202/16, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 175/22)).

The procedure starts when the proponent of the sub-project (such as the AFP project) submits a

Notification Letter to the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP). Notification Letter should be prepared according to the requirements of the national legislation containing information about the sub-project proponent, project scope, and main project activities, identification of the potential environmental impacts and evaluation of the impacts. Upon receipt of the Notification Letter submitted by the sub-project proponent, based on project location, sensitive/protected areas, planned project activities and potential impacts, the Department of environment under the MoEPP decides whether a proponent is required to implement the full EIA procedure.

- **Institutional Responsibility for EPR (shorter scope)**

For the small-scale projects that could have moderate impacts on the environment, after receipt of the Notification Letter submitted by the sub-project proponent, the MoEPP shall request the sub-project proponent to develop EPR (AFP project is a sub-project that have moderate impacts). Environmental Protection Report (EPR).

The EPR prepared by the proponent should be submitted to the responsible institution (MoEPP/Municipality/City of Skopje, depending on type of the project). The responsible institution will issue a Decision approving the EPR following its review. The issued Decision should be submitted together with the EPR and sub-project proposal to the MAFWE Project Management Team.

2.3.2 Social and Resettlement Administrative/Institutional framework

The Law on Expropriation regulates the procedure for the expropriation of property for projects that are of public interest and the connected rights for real estates (immovable properties).

Construction of linear and other communal infrastructure, for the benefit of the City of Skopje or Local Self-government, falls under a project of national/public interest. The legal justification of why the project is believed to be in the public interest is submitted together with the request for expropriation (as part of the same process), to the Expropriation Authority, by the expropriation beneficiary.

The Expropriation Authority, in this case the Property and Legal Affairs Department within the Ministry of Finance, upon the proposal for expropriation, schedules debate where owner of the property or the holders of other property rights of the property that is subject to expropriation and

Proposer of the expropriation are invited. At the hearing the existence of public interest is determined, then the right of ownership and other property rights, as well as the type and amount of compensation and other facts and circumstances relevant to the process of expropriation.

The Authority must, after submission of the proposal for expropriation to the owner of the property or the holders of other property rights of the property, to schedule and hold a hearing on the proposal within 15 days of submission of the proposal to the owner of the property or the holders of other property rights of the property.

The hearing may end up with an agreement for compensation (payment in money or providing other suitable property), and for the amount of the fee if it is determined in money, as well as timeframes for payment. This agreement as an executive document and by signing of the agreement is considered the expropriation process and procedure for the determination of compensation as completed and final.

If agreement is not reached the expropriation authority, relying on the facts set out in the procedure will issue a decision on expropriation. The decision on expropriation can be appealed to the Administrative Court within 15 days of receipt of the decision.

Following institutions, each with different roles and responsibilities, are main actors in the process of expropriation.

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy is the project developer. It conducts transformation of agricultural land into construction land and can be consulted during the process of creation of packages for compensation. Also, it can be consulted in the process of estimating compensation for lost crops.

State Attorney's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia is Governmental institution which takes a measures and legal means for legal protection of property rights and interests of the Republic of N. Macedonia and performs other duties prescribed by law.

Ministry for Transport and Connections is the governmental body responsible for issuing permits for construction and monitoring the process of expropriation in means of completion of the process of expropriation.

The Real Estate Cadaster Agency holds and registers the information on ownership rights of the land in Republic of North Macedonia. It can be consulted during the process of obtaining valuable and valid information on ownership and current land use/leasing.

The following institutions offer wide spectrum of assistance that can enable, support and facilitate the consultation process for implementation of RAP.

Ombudsman can be consulted on various legal advices related to litigations of PAPs with the governmental bodies.

Local level:

The Inter-municipal Centre for Social Work established by the Government that can be consulted during the process of realization of RAP. The Center can give valuable input into identification, communicating and addressing of the vulnerable social groups, thus giving appropriate direction for setting compensation means/packages for such groups.

Local community level: Official representatives of the municipalities can be consulted for and actively involved in the preparation and execution of resettlement processes in their area of jurisdiction. They might be consulted and involved as mediators in the processes of redressing the complaints/grievances, before those are deposited with the Grievance Redress Committee.

2.3.3 Government Agencies related to the project

Agency for Financial Support in Agriculture and Rural Development (AFSARD) was established in 2007 by the national Assembly for the purpose of successful implementation of the measures of agriculture policy and rural development policy in the RNM. It provided efficient management of the funds under the both the national budget and the EU pre-accession assistance for rural development.

The competences of the Agency include: implementation of the measures for direct payment in agriculture, interventions in the agriculture products market, implementation of the production quotas, implementation of the rural development measures, implementation of the EU funds from the pre-accession assistance for rural development and implementation of the agriculture measures funded under the government assistance.

Activities of the Agency include: receiving, recording and processing of applications for financial support; authorization of funds payment; organization of financial and accounting activities; internal audit; organization, implementation and coordination of the administrative and technical controls and on-the-spot controls; data collecting and processing; keeping databases and registers and preparation of reports and analyses.

The Agency announces calls and criteria for allocation of financial support, approves financial

support in compliance with the criteria, concludes contracts with the beneficiaries of the financial support, conducts on-the-spot control prior to and after the approval of the application, authorizes the eligible expenditures of the claimants before the payment of funds, follows-up the project implementation and conducts a procedure against beneficiaries who have used the funds otherwise than provided for in the contract.

Food and Veterinary Agency (FVA) is an independent governmental institution responsible for carrying out the activities in the field of food safety and animal feed, implementation, control, supervision and monitoring of veterinary activities in the field of animal health protection , their well-being, veterinary public health, as well as control of national reference and authorized laboratories that provide adequate support for the needs of the Agency.

Agency for Real Estate Cadaster (AREC) is established for the purposes of performing the works for establishment and maintenance of the real estate cadaster, the management of the geodetic-cadaster information system, as well as for establishment, maintenance and public access to the National Spatial Data Infrastructure. The Agency for Real Estate Cadaster acts in the capacity of a legal person with its rights, liabilities and responsibilities as stipulated by the Law on Real Estate Cadaster and for its operation reports to the GRNM.

AREC's responsibilities include: establishment and management of geodetic-cadaster information system, performance of basic geodetic works, real estate survey, registration of real estate rights, establishment and maintenance of real estate cadaster, geodetic works for special purposes of significance to the country as defined by the Government, production of state topographic maps, administration of a Spatial Units Register, establishment, maintenance and public access to the National Spatial Data Infrastructure, and supervision over the work of the sole proprietors–authorized surveyors and trade companies for geodetic works.

Public Enterprise for Management of Pasture (PEMP) has been established by the Government in order to manage the state-owned pastures. According to Law on pasture, PE on Pastures creates a pasture management program every year. This program determines the natural conditions of the pasture, its restoration, development, measures for breeding, protection, promotion and extension of pastures.

2.4 Applicable World Bank Environment and Social Standards (ESS) and EHS Guidelines

The World Bank (WB) Environmental and Social Framework (2018) enhances the World Bank's commitment to sustainable development through ten Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs) that are designed to support Borrowers' environmental and social (E&S) risk management.

Standards relevant for this project are the following:

ESS 1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts sets out the Borrower's responsibilities for assessing, managing and monitoring environmental and social risks and impacts associated with each stage of a project supported by the Bank through Investment Project Financing (IPF), in order to achieve environmental and social outcomes consistent with the Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs).

ESS 2: Labor and Working Conditions recognizes the importance of employment creation and income generation in the pursuit of poverty reduction and inclusive economic growth. Borrowers can promote sound worker-management relationships and enhance the development benefits of a project by treating workers in the project fairly and providing safe and healthy working conditions.

ESS 3: Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management recognizes that economic activity and urbanization often generate pollution to air, water, and land, and consume finite resources that may threaten people, ecosystem services and the environment at the local, regional, and global levels. However, more efficient and effective resource use, pollution prevention and GHG emission avoidance, and mitigation technologies and practices have become more accessible and achievable.

ESS 4: Community Health and Safety addresses the health, safety, and security risks and impacts on project-affected communities and the corresponding responsibility of Borrowers to avoid or minimize such risks and impacts, with particular attention to people who, because of their circumstances, may be vulnerable.

ESS 5: Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement recognizes that project-related land acquisition and restrictions on land use can have adverse impacts on communities and persons. Project-related land acquisition or restrictions on land use may cause physical displacement, economic displacement, or both.

ESS 6: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources recognizes that protecting and conserving biodiversity and sustainably managing living natural resources are fundamental to sustainable development. Impacts on biodiversity can also adversely affect the delivery of ecosystem services.

ESS 8: Cultural Heritage recognizes that cultural heritage, in its many manifestations, is important as a source of valuable scientific and historical information, as an economic and social asset for development, and as an integral part of people's cultural identity and practice. ESS8 sets out measures designed to protect cultural heritage throughout the project life cycle.

ESS 10: Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure recognizes the importance of open and transparent engagement between the borrower and project stakeholders as an essential element of good international practice. Effective stakeholder engagement can improve the environmental and social sustainability of projects, enhance project acceptance, and make a significant contribution to successful project design and implementation.

The Environmental, Health, and Safety (EHS) Guidelines are technical reference documents that provide Good International Industry Practice in investment projects. The standard states that the applicability of the EHS Guidelines is tailored to the hazards and risks established for each project based on the results of an environmental assessment in which site-specific variables, such as host country context, assimilative capacity of the environment, and other project factors, are taken into account.

Considering the type of technology and location of the project the main areas of EHS assessment includes:

- Environmental assessment, e.g., waste streams, wastewater, air quality, noise emissions, biodiversity treats etc.;
- Occupational health and safety such as physical hazards, personal protective equipment, communication, and training;

Community health and safety, e.g., hazards for the surrounding communities. The risks and impacts of the project have been assessed throughout the construction and operation phases. The Environmental and Social Management and Monitoring Plan has been developed based on the findings of the Initial Environmental and Social Assessment Report will list the identified issues and determine appropriate management actions and monitoring procedures for mitigation.

2.5 Gap Analysis: WB ESF and National Legislation

According to the Macedonian Law on the Environment, potential environmental impacts of the proposed project must be evaluated by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process (screening process, process of defining scope of the EIA Study, and review process). If the project is considered that does not have significant environmental impacts after screening process, such as the construction of the Wholesale market/Agri-food platform (AFP) in Skopje, then it is not necessary to carry out the EIA procedure, but to prepare an Environmental Protection Report (EPR), which assess environmental impacts, determines the potential negative impacts of the project on environmental media and propose mitigation measures.

On the other hand, WB requires an evaluation of the proposed project through an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) that meets WB, International Finance Corporation (IFC) and other applicable international guidelines and requirements. The Bank requires that all environmental and social risks and impacts of the project be addressed as part of the environmental and social assessment. The WB Environmental and Social Standards set out the requirements for Borrowers relating to the identification and assessment of environmental and social risks and impacts and mitigation measures associated with projects supported by the Bank through Investment Project Financing.

Within the Macedonian Law on the Environment the requirements of the EU EIA Directive 2014/52/EU have been transposed. However, there is a gap for social assessment required by World Bank, which is not included in this procedure as well as in preparation of EPR. Due to that reason the Initial ESA for the projet as well as this site-specific ESMP provides Environmental and Social Impact Assessment. They include assessing, managing and monitoring environmental and social risks and impacts associated with each stage of a project in order to achieve environmental and social outcomes consistent with the WB ESSs.

Regarding the national Law on the Environment, this project does not have significant environmental impact, and consequently, for the Project for construction of AFP is necessary to prepare an Environmental Protection Report (EPR). The content of the EPR is legally prescribed in the Rulebook for the form and content of the Environmental Protection Report, according to the types and activities for which a Report is made, as well as in accordance with the performers of the activity and the scope of activities performed by legal entities and persons, the procedure for their approval, as well as the manner of conducting the Register of approved Environmental Protection Reports. In accordance with this regulation the EPR does not contain Environmental (and Social) Monitoring Plan.

On the other hand, regarding the WB requirements for environmental and social protection for the project that are classified with moderate risk (such as Agri-Food Platform), an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) and Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) were prepared. The site-specific ESMP specify specific impacts, mitigation measures and monitoring plan along with implementation responsibilities. Due to the gap in the Macedonian environmental legislation in regard to the preparation of Environmental and Social Monitoring Plan, this document (this site-specific ESMP) identifies monitoring objectives and specifies the type of monitoring, with linkages to the impacts assessed in the environmental and social assessment and the mitigation measures that are described in this document. The site-specific ESMP includes Environmental and Social Monitoring Plan matrix, provides specific description and details of monitoring measures, capturing parameters to monitor, monitoring methods, where and when those parameters need to be monitored and by whom, and frequency of monitoring. Given the nature of the project, a **RAP** has been prepared to address potential impacts on tenants,

landowners, or in general to the PAPs in the project affected areas. While the AFP will primarily be constructed on state-owned land, a small portion of land from two privately owned parcels will need to be expropriated to construct an access road. The RAP outlines measures to mitigate these impacts, ensuring fair compensation and livelihood restoration, with particular attention given to vulnerable groups, including women-headed households.

Access to information related to the environment and public participation in the decision-making process related to the environment in RNM are in accordance with Espoo and Aarhus Convention and they are prescribed in the national Law on the Environment. According to the Law on the Environment disclosure of EIA documents and public consultations is mandatory for EIA Studies. When it is assessed that the project does not have significant environmental impacts after screening process, and it is prepared Environmental Protection Report (EPR) for this project, according to the national environmental legislation there is no need for access to information related to the environment and public participation.

The World Bank Access to Information Policy, which reflects the Bank's commitment to transparency, accountability and good governance, includes the disclosure obligations that relate to the Bank's Investment Project Financing. In accordance with the E&S requirements of the World Bank, regardless of whether the project has or has not significant environmental and social impacts, the Borrower should provide access to information and public participation.

Due to the gap in national environmental legislation for EPR, regarding environmental information disclosure obligations and public participation, this document (site-specific ESMP) complies with the WB disclosure requirements and takes into account the public participation as a process of extreme importance for preparation and realization of the Project for construction of the AFP in Gazi Baba. The public participation during the project preparation process is implemented through: organized meetings for introducing the project and obtaining feedback, direct communication with the stakeholders, official correspondence, site visits, communication with the local people, etc. The developed site-specific ESMP and RAP will be disclosed and public consultation meetings with the identified stakeholders and PAPs, as well as with the broader public will be organized.

3 IDENTIFIED RISKS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IN CONSTRUCTION PHASE

Construction activities for the project are expected to impact air quality, noise levels, waste generation, water resources, soil stability, and biodiversity. The following measures will be implemented to mitigate these risks and ensure compliance with environmental regulations.

Air Quality Management

To control emissions and dust, standardized fuel will be used, and machinery will be regularly maintained and turned off when idle. Dust suppression will be achieved through water spraying and covering of material stockpiles and transport loads. Cleanliness of roads and the construction site will be maintained, and transport routes will be optimized. A Traffic Management Plan will be enforced to further reduce emissions.

Noise and Vibration Control

Construction noise and vibration will be minimized by operating only during daytime hours (07:00–19:00), using low- noise equipment compliant with EU Directive EC/2000/14, and regularly maintaining

all machinery. Equipment emitting over 90 dB(A) will be avoided, and workers exposed to high noise levels will be provided with personal protective equipment. Local communities will be informed of scheduled activities.

Waste Management

Various types of waste, including surplus excavated material, communal, biodegradable, hazardous, and packaging waste, will be classified and handled according to the national Law on Waste Management. Licensed service providers will collect and transport waste, reusable materials will be sorted for recycling, and the unusable waste fractions will be transported to the Drisla landfill. Biodegradable waste will be managed on- site in cooperation with local authorities. Workers and subcontractors will receive training in proper waste management procedures.

Water Protection Measures

Drainage channels and groundwater sources will be protected from contamination through minimal site disturbance, proper storage of hazardous materials, and strict control of washing and servicing activities. Mobile toilets and technical water supplies will be managed through licensed providers. Spills will be addressed immediately using absorbent materials, and contaminated soil will be treated as hazardous waste.

Soil Protection and Restoration

To prevent soil degradation, construction will be confined to necessary areas, and topsoil (humus) will be preserved for future restoration. Equipment movement will be restricted, and off- site maintenance will be mandatory. Hazardous materials will be stored on impermeable surfaces, away from sensitive areas. Upon project completion, construction zones will be cleaned and rehabilitated.

Biodiversity

Project activities may pose risks to biodiversity through habitat fragmentation, chemical use, noise, waste mismanagement, and increased human presence. To address these, natural habitats will be preserved and restored where disturbed. Green corridors and buffer zones will support species movement and ecological connectivity.

Chemical contamination will be reduced by limiting pesticide and fertilizer use and promoting mechanical or biological alternatives. Construction and traffic- related disturbance will be minimized through strict site boundaries and staff training on wildlife protection.

To prevent fires, awareness programs will target local stakeholders; indigenous vegetation will be used to control invasive species and enhance habitat resilience.

Proper waste management is crucial- excavated materials, packaging, oils, and construction waste will be safely stored, collected, and transferred to licensed operators, with landfill siting avoiding sensitive areas. All staff will receive training on biodiversity values and waste handling.

Overall, biodiversity measures are integrated into project design, and will be implemented during works, and monitored in cooperation with relevant authorities and ecological experts.

Cultural Heritage Protection

Construction activities may pose a risk to undiscovered cultural heritage (chance finds) through excavation, vehicle movement, and vibrations from heavy machinery. To mitigate this, a Chance Find Procedure will be implemented, requiring the immediate suspension of work upon discovery, notification of cultural heritage authorities, and protection of the site until it is properly assessed. Construction planning will aim to minimize ground disturbance, and all works will comply with the Law on Protection of Cultural Heritage.

Contractors must follow all instructions from heritage authorities to ensure any archaeological or cultural assets are preserved, documented, or recovered appropriately.

3.2 SOCIAL MANAGEMENT IN CONSTRUCTION PHASE

The construction phase of the AFP will bring both opportunities and risks for local communities. While short- term economic benefits such as job creation and increased demand for local goods and services are expected, construction activities may also impact community health, safety, and land use. To manage potential risks- such as traffic disruptions, dust, noise, social tensions, and occupational hazards- the CW Contractor will implement a comprehensive set of social management measures.

Community Health, Safety, and Security

Construction near cultivated land and business premises may expose communities to dust, noise, traffic disruptions, and safety risks. The influx of a non- local workforce may cause social tensions and health risks. To manage these risks, the CW Contractor will develop a Community Health, Safety, and Security Management Plan, including safety signage, fencing, secure storage of materials, and a grievance mechanism. Measures will include public information campaigns, traffic safety plans, emergency preparedness, and strict security conduct protocols. A Code of Conduct will govern worker behavior, focusing on community respect, gender sensitivity, and health awareness, including training on gender- based violence and harassment and human trafficking.

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)

Construction poses risks such as accidents, exposure to chemicals, noise, dust, and proximity to high- voltage lines. The CW Contractor will implement a site- specific Occupational Health and Safety Plan (OHSP) aligned with national legislation and WB standards. The OHSP will define roles, safety protocols, PPE requirements, dust control measures, training, and emergency response plans. All subcontractors must comply. Safety inspections, vehicle maintenance, and a Worker Grievance Mechanism will support continuous monitoring. Supply chain risks will be managed through contracts with approved, compliant vendors.

Land Use

The project involves permanent land use changes from agriculture to industrial use and partial expropriation for access roads. An Abbreviated Resettlement Action Plan (ARAP) will guide mitigation. The municipality will lead the expropriation process, and land boundaries will be clearly marked. Affected parties, especially former tenants, will be informed and have access to a grievance mechanism.

Economic Impacts

The construction phase of the Agri– food Platform (AFP) is expected to generate positive short-term economic benefits for the local communities over 2-3 years. Increased demand for goods and services from the construction workforce will stimulate local businesses, including shops, cafes, agricultural producers, and service providers in affected municipalities such as Gazi Baba, Arachinovo, and Ilinden.

Employment opportunities created during construction will provide income and skill development for local workers, with a focus on prioritizing hiring from the project area. The CW Contractor will develop and implement a Recruitment Plan in cooperation with the Employment Agency of the RNM to ensure fair, transparent, and inclusive hiring practices.

To manage labour conditions, a Labour Management and Monitoring Plan will be prepared, ensuring all workers have formal contracts and access to a grievance mechanism. This grievance system will be widely publicized via local municipal websites and contractor platforms.

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), which is part of the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), outlines how stakeholders will be identified, informed, and engaged throughout the construction of the Wholesale Market in Gazi Baba. It promotes transparent communication, inclusive participation, and accessible grievance management to reduce social risks and support informed decision-making.

The SEP ensures communication in Macedonian and Albanian language, meaningful consultation with local communities—including women, youth, and vulnerable groups—and coordination with the Municipality of Gazi Baba. It establishes a grievance mechanism, promotes equal access to project benefits as outlined in the Gender Action Plan (Annex 1), and adjusts engagement based on ongoing feedback.

Gender equality is a key focus, with a target to achieve at least 10% female participation in the construction workforce, including encouragement for women in technical roles. The Contractor will implement a Gender Equality Strategy and conduct training to raise awareness about gender- based discrimination and violence, supported by educational materials and a Code of Conduct.

Prior to construction, a Local Procurement Assessment will identify suitable local suppliers to maximize economic benefits within the project area.

Gender Equality and Inclusion

Given the underrepresentation of women in the construction sector, there is a risk of unconscious bias and intersectional discrimination during hiring. The influx of male workers may also increase the risk of gender- based violence and harassment, particularly in rural project- affected communities.

To address these risks, a gender equality approach will be adopted, promoting the employment of women- especially from local areas- in both technical and non-technical roles. Where qualifications are equal, female candidates will be prioritized. A family- friendly work environment and flexible arrangements will be encouraged.

A gender- sensitive Code of Conduct and grievance mechanism will be implemented, ensuring confidentiality and accessibility, including for digitally illiterate women. All related measures are outlined in the Gender Action Plan (Annex 1).

3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IN OPERATION PHASE

During the operation phase, the Agri- food Platform (AFP) may experience environmental impacts related to air quality, noise, waste generation, water pollution, and soil contamination.

Air Quality

Emissions from light and heavy vehicles, along with possible accidental releases of oils or chemicals, may degrade air quality. Fire incidents could also contribute to atmospheric pollution. To mitigate these impacts, speed limits and idle reduction policies will be enforced, along with designated traffic routes. Energy efficiency will be promoted through solar panel installations and use of LED lighting. Additional tree planting around the site will contribute to improved air quality. Fire risks will be managed through regular risk assessments, staff training, installed fire suppression systems, and emergency response procedures.

Noise Pollution

Operational noise will result from vehicle traffic, loading/unloading activities, and equipment such as HVAC systems and generators. Mitigation measures include restricting noisy operations during sensitive hours, enforcing speed limits, and maintaining equipment regularly. Low- noise machinery will be prioritized in future purchases. Communication channels will be established with nearby residents to address concerns, and all activities will comply with local noise regulations.

Waste Management

The AFP will generate various waste streams, including communal, packaging, biodegradable, and hazardous waste. A Waste Management Plan (within waste management facilities) will guide the separation, collection, and treatment of all waste. This includes composting systems for organic waste, recycling programs, and strict protocols for hazardous waste handling. A Cleaning & Waste Management Coordinator (or committee) will supervise waste- related activities, supported by staff training and spill response equipment, to ensure proper disposal practices.

Water Pollution

Water pollution risks stem from physical (sediments), chemical (exhaust and leaks), and biological (organic waste) sources entering drainage systems. These will be controlled through the use of atmospheric sewers with oil and sand separators, an on- site Wastewater Treatment Plant, appropriate traffic and waste management measures. Groundwater will be protected by requiring vehicle maintenance areas to have impermeable surfaces, drainage grids, and oil separation systems, operated by trained staff.

Soil Contamination

Soil pollution may occur if waste is improperly disposed of or if vehicle maintenance is performed at inadequately protected locations. The Cleaning & Waste Management Coordinator will ensure appropriate waste handling practices. Any service station or truck center established on- site will operate under strict environmental standards, with all maintenance activities conducted on impermeable surfaces and managed by qualified personnel.

Biodiversity

The operation phase of the AFP project poses several potential threats to biodiversity, such as chemical contamination, induced fire, and accidental harm on animals.

Use of chemical pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers will be minimized.

Native vegetation planting will be promoted to prevent the spread of invasive species. Awareness campaigns, workshops, and training will be conducted among farmers, stakeholders, and local communities to reduce the risk of fires and promote sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation practices.

3.4 SOCIAL MANAGEMENT IN OPERATION PHASE

The operation phase of the AFP will have significant social implications for surrounding communities, the local workforce, and other stakeholders. As activities increase within the facility, it is essential to manage potential risks to community health and safety, ensure safe and fair working conditions, and promote inclusive economic opportunities. The Project Operator will implement targeted social management measures to address traffic- related risks, occupational hazards, and workforce needs while actively promoting gender equality, local procurement, and transparent engagement with affected communities. These efforts aim to create a safe, inclusive, and economically beneficial environment throughout the operation of the AFP.

Community Health and Safety

The operation of the AFP is expected to increase traffic volumes due to the regular movement of workers, traders, suppliers, and delivery vehicles. This increased traffic may cause congestion and elevate the risk of road accidents, posing potential dangers to both local community members and project personnel. To mitigate these risks, the Project Operator will develop and implement a Community Health and Safety Plan (CHSP). This plan will include measures such as widening access roads to reduce congestion, enforcing traffic management protocols, and conducting community awareness campaigns focused on traffic safety, emergency preparedness, and health risks.

The influx of personnel during operation may put additional pressure on local medical services in case of accidents or health incidents. However, with appropriate planning, including the provision of dedicated medical facilities within the AFP premises, the demand on local healthcare is expected to remain manageable. The Project Operator will maintain coordination with local health providers and emergency services to ensure timely and effective response if needed.

Occupational Health and Safety

Operational activities at the AFP, such as loading, unloading, handling heavy materials, and the use of machinery, carry inherent risks of workplace accidents and injuries. Additionally, exposure to agricultural chemicals and environmental conditions may pose health hazards to workers. To address these challenges, a site- specific Occupational Health and Safety Plan (OHSP) will be developed in compliance with national regulations and international standards, including ESS2 on Labor and Working Conditions. The OHSP will emphasize safe transportation and traffic management, mandatory safety training, and the provision and enforcement of personal protective equipment (PPE) for all staff.

In accordance with the Environmental and Social Incident Response Toolkit (ESIRT, March 2023), the Contractor must promptly report to the Bank any incident involving:

- Fatalities – Any worker or community death linked to project activities.
- Serious Injuries or Life-Threatening Events – Incidents requiring hospitalization, surgery, or resulting in permanent disability or loss of limb.
- Multiple Injuries – Any incident affecting more than one worker or community member in a single event.
- Severe Occupational Illnesses – Diagnosed conditions attributable to workplace exposures that require extended medical leave or treatment.
- Community Health and Safety Incidents – Events that cause serious injury or death to community members, including traffic accidents involving project vehicles.

The Contractor is responsible for recording, investigating, and reporting these incidents immediately through the agreed communication channels, following ESIRT timelines and formats.

Regular inspections and maintenance of machinery and equipment will be conducted to minimize risks, alongside ongoing safety awareness initiatives that highlight traffic and workplace hazards. Emergency preparedness will be strengthened through clear protocols, evacuation plans, and medical aid provisions, all coordinated closely with local health authorities. Regular drills and safety training sessions will ensure that workers are prepared to respond effectively to emergencies. Continuous monitoring and strict enforcement of occupational health and safety standards will be essential to protect both workers and the surrounding community throughout the operational phase.

Economic Development and Local Procurement Opportunities

The operational phase of the AFP will require a dedicated workforce to manage day-to-day activities efficiently. These roles will span logistics, handling, trading, administrative support, maintenance, and facility operations. Additionally, the presence of wholesalers, horticultural growers, buyers, and other stakeholders will necessitate workforce support to ensure smooth and effective operations. Although the total number of employees engaged during this phase will be limited, the recruitment process will prioritize transparency and inclusiveness to promote fair and equitable access to employment opportunities.

Prior to the commencement of operations, a thorough assessment will be conducted to identify local suppliers that meet the necessary quality standards. This assessment is critical to integrating local businesses into the AFP supply chain, thereby fostering local economic growth and sustainability through increased procurement opportunities.

Gender equality and non- discrimination will be fundamental principles guiding employment practices throughout the operational phase. The Operator will actively promote fair treatment and inclusivity, ensuring that women have equal access to employment opportunities. This commitment is supported by engagement with women who have expressed interest in participating in AFP activities, as evidenced by focus groups and interviews conducted during the social baseline study at the Kvantaski market. Regular communication will continue to maintain and expand this engagement.

To ensure transparency and accountability, a grievance mechanism will be established to effectively address any concerns or complaints raised by employees or community members. This mechanism will be designed for accessibility and timely resolution of issues. The grievance form will be made available on the Operator's website to ensure ease of access for all stakeholders.

The Operator, in collaboration with the Employment Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia, will initiate transparent recruitment processes. Job vacancies will be publicly announced with clear application procedures, guaranteeing equal opportunities for all applicants and promoting fair employment practices. A Labour Management and Monitoring Plan will be developed and implemented to ensure that all workers receive formal employment contracts.

Furthermore, the Operator will develop and enforce a Strategy for Gender Equality, which will be incorporated into the Code of Conduct for workers. A Gender Action Plan will be designed to promote gender inclusivity and prevent discrimination within employment practices. Together, these initiatives will contribute to a fair, inclusive, and sustainable operational environment that supports local economic development while upholding social responsibility.

3.5 DECOMMISSIONING

The decommissioning of the Agri-Food Platform (AFP) may result in negative impacts on soil, surface and groundwater, and air quality. To minimize these effects, several measures will be implemented.

Temporary stocks of goods and auxiliary materials should be sold or otherwise removed. All waste materials must be handed over to authorized waste management companies, in compliance with national waste regulations. Contracts must be established with licensed operators for each waste type.

Equipment will be sorted into usable and non-usable categories. Usable items will be preserved for future use or sale, while unusable equipment will be managed as waste in accordance with legal provisions.

Given the seismic stability and solid construction of the existing buildings, they may be adapted for other uses with minimal investment. However, if no further use is planned, the buildings must be dismantled. In such cases, the Operator is required to obtain approval for demolition under the Construction Law and submit a Demolition Project. This plan must include measures for managing construction waste and restoring the site to its original condition.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The ESMP identifies measures and actions in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy that reduce potentially adverse environmental and social impacts to acceptable levels. This site-specific ESMP includes ESMP matrix, where environment and social risks/impacts, mitigation measures, institutional responsibilities and estimated costs for the implementation of mitigation measures are presented in a tabular form given bellow.

Table 1. Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP)

Phase	Environmental / Social Impact	Mitigating measure (s)	Cost (EUR)	Institutional responsibility	Remarks
			Install / Operate	Install / Operate	
	Environmental Management				
Construction	Emissions of pollutants to air: - Occurrence of fugitive dust emission during loading and unloading of the earth and construction materials, vegetation and stones; - Emission of exhaust gasses from the construction machinery and transport vehicles; - During the application of the asphalt will occur fugitive emissions of volatile organic compounds.	- For reduction of the exhaust gasses emission, it is recommended to use standardized fuel for the mechanization and transport vehicles; - Cleaning of the access roads and the construction site and planned and safe removal or stockpiling of the earth and construction materials; - Covering and stabilizing the piles of construction material and waste; - Minimizing emissions through regular spraying with water during the construction works; - Planning of the route and the loading and unloading factor are of great significance for reduction of the fuel consumption, emission of exhaust gasses and fugitive dust emission; - Maintenance of the construction machines and equipment in good working condition and their exclusion when not used; - Avoid working on machinery in so-called “idle” mode, turn off the mechanization when it is not necessary; - The vehicles which will transport aggregate material to be covered constantly during transportation outside the construction scope, along the public roads; - Implementation of Traffic Management Plan.	1000-1500 €	- CW Contractor - Supervisor - Environmental Inspector	
	- The noise and vibration will occur as a result of the work of construction machinery and transport vehicles that will be engaged during this phase, or they will be used at the construction site for excavation of the soil and construction of the subgrade of the route.	- Shutting down the engines of transport vehicles and construction machinery at times when there is no need for their operation. The entire machinery involved in the activities and all the transportation vehicles should be technically valid, which is a pre-condition for decreased noise and vibration. - Use of contemporary “silent” work equipment which satisfies the requirements of the EC/2000/14 Directive of	1000 €	- CW Contractor - Supervisor - Environmental Inspector	

		the European Union regulating the noise emissions into the environment by outdoor equipment; - The construction activities to be carried out in the daily periods (Ld) between 7:00 and 19:00 o'clock; - Careful planning of construction procedures due to minimizing emitted noise (in time and intensity); - It is necessary to avoid equipment that emits noise over 90 db(A); - Control of the machinery and regular maintenance of the equipment in order to avoid high noise levels; - The workers operating with equipment generating noise level higher than 80 dB(A) continuously for 8 hours or more should use personal protective equipment suitable for protection against noise and vibrations; - Information for the local population about the project activities.			
	Waste generation primarily composed of: - Surplus of excavated earth material from clearing, i.e., from plaining the terrain, earth material, sand and stones from excavation; - Mixed communal waste generated from the workers; - Organic biodegradable waste, including vegetation and tree debris, generated from land clearing activities; - Hazardous waste contaminated soil from possible release of motor oil and liquid fuel from the mechanization or transport vehicles; - Construction waste from execution; - Packaging waste from delivered construction materials and equipment.	- Selection and classification of all types of waste according Article 60 of the Law on waste management ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 216/21); - For management the communal waste the CW Contractor should sign a contract with service provider who will collect the waste, and has a license for waste management, more precisely license for collection and transporting waste, according Articles 60 and 64 of the Law on waste management ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 216/21); - During the construction activities surplus of excavated earth will be generated, and rocks, stones (inert waste – quantity of waste will not be used during the construction activities) and selected waste from the construction activities (construction waste). All this waste should be treated by the CW Contractor according Article 44 of the Law on waste management ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 216/21) and with agreement with Municipality of Gazi Baba; - Due to achieving high level of resource usage and support economic development, the legal and physical entities are to undertake measures and activities in order to achieve	3000-4000 €	- CW Contractor - Supervisor - Environmental Inspector	

		reuse and recycle of waste material, especially paper, metal, plastic and glass; - For further handling the selected biodegradable waste on the location, the CW Contractor should act according to Article 79 of the Law on waste management ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 216/21) and with agreement with Municipality of Gazi Baba; - Hazardous waste (contaminated soil with waste oil and/or fuel from accidental leakage from mechanization and transport vehicles), the CW Contractor to remove and forward to the collector of waste (which have license in accordance the bylaws for waste management), with who a contract will be signed, i.e., the Contactor will act according the provisions of the Law for additional waste flow ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 216/21); - During the construction period larger quantity of soil will be removed. After finishing the construction activities, it is necessary estimate the possibility for reuse of this removed soil from the ground, in order to avoid additional costs for dislocation; - After finishing the activities on the site, the waste should be neatly stockpiled on disposal area for inert waste. - For further treatment of the selected waste from package (temporarily storing various package at precisely determined and marked location), the CW Contractor should act according the Article 31 of the Law for management of waste from packing ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 215/21); - Regular servicing of the vehicles and mechanization during the construction activities in order to prevent possible leakage of motor oil and/or fuel. The service should be done in locations authorized for this activity; - The CW Contractor should provide education and training to staff, and subcontractors on waste management practices to promote waste reduction and proper disposal methods;			

		- The CW Contractor should maintain the location clean and not to stockpile waste in or outside its borders, and all the waste should be immediately removed from the location.			
	Pollution of watercourses: - Physical pollution - At the location of future AFP are present drainage channels bordering the site. The solid particles can be deposited in this drainage channels after being washed off from the surfaces of future AFP and access road whereby they may clog them. Physical pollution can also occur if there is improper disposal of construction waste in the drainage channels. - Chemical pollution - indirectly through drainage channels come from the exhaust gases from the construction machinery and vehicles. Physical-chemical pollution can also occur if liquid materials, such as oils, waste oils and petroleum derivatives are released directly into the bordering drainage channels (indirectly into the watercourses), due to their inadequate handling, keeping and storage. Released into the waters, oils and petroleum derivatives create a film on the surface of the watercourse, which negatively affects the dissolved gases and the amount of light that penetrates the water course, stops the supply of oxygen, and they also have a toxic effect on the river fauna. - Biological pollution can occur if the municipal and biodegradable waste is directly disposed of in drainage channels, and indirectly to pollute the watercourses. Biological pollution can also occur if sanitary water is improperly managed. Groundwater pollution: - Groundwater pollution can occur if the waste is improperly managed (possible leakage of pollutants during raining), if the maintenance and cleaning of the mechanization is at inadequately protected location, and if an accident occurs and there is a leakage of fuel, oils and lubricants. In case of	- The CW Contractor should ensure compliance with certain measures, such as ensuring minimum work on the site during the preparatory activities, the removal of vegetation and earth to be kept to a minimum; - Applying the best techniques and good construction practices during construction; - Construction techniques to be selected and performed based on the geotechnical and hydrotechnical, geological and hydrological characteristics of the site; - Minimizing sediment and reducing impacts to the water in the bordering draining channels with application of the aboved measures; - Application of air pollution mitigation measures, in order to minimize the physical pollution (reducing dust emissions) and chemical pollution (reducing exhaust gases emissions) of the water in drainage channels, and indirectly of the water in the recipient watercourses; - It is not allowed to wash ready-mixed concrete mixers containing alkaline cement or cement residues, as well as other equipment and machinery in the draining channels or near them; - The CW Contractor should conclude a contract with an authorized company for the supply of technical water and sanitary water; - Placing mobile toilets on the site and concluding an Agreement with the licensed company that will install and clean them; - Provision and application of equipment/containers for the evacuation of possible leaks of fuels, oils and chemicals, and contaminated soil with fuels, oils and chemicals; - In cases of unwanted spillage of oils, fats and fuels on the soil, immediately to stop with the construction activities, mandatory use of sawdust, sand or other absorbent material, and removing the contaminated soil layer, so that the pollutants do not infiltrate the soil and reach the	2000 €	- CW Contractor - Supervisor - Environmental Inspector	

	unwanted leakage of fuel, oils and lubricants, a quick reaction is needed, during which all toxic substances would be collected, which would not allow them to penetrate into the soil, and thus also into the groundwater.	groundwater. The contaminated soil layer should be treated as hazardous waste; - Regular inspection of construction machinery for possible leaks before they are put into operation; - By implementing the measures to improve waste management, the impact of waste on the quality of the soil and groundwater will be prevented; - Places for storage of building materials, hazardous substances, all types of waste, places for parking and maintenance of construction machinery and transportation vehicles should not be placed in close proximity to the drainage channels, i.e., they should not be placed at a distance of less than 50 m from the drainage channels; - The storage and handling of hazardous substances should be in a way that prevents any contact, intentional or unintentional spillage into the drainage channels and soil (and indirectly groundwater). The storage should be in appropriate containers, according to the manufacturer's recommendations, and on concrete surfaces, and they should be managed by trained professional staff; - Storage, servicing or maintenance of the equipment and any refueling, storage or servicing is not allowed at a distance of less than 50 m from the drainage channels.			
	Impacts on soil: - soil degradation due to land excavation, - humus layer removal, - temporary soil erosion and compaction, - soil pollution from accidental spillage of fuels, oils, waste oils, due to their inadequate handling, keeping and storage, accidental spillage of fuel, oils and lubricants from construction machinery and vehicles, - soil pollution from cement milk spills, suspensions during concreting, from leachate infiltration from uncontrolled and inappropriate waste management, finishing construction works and inappropriate disposal of construction material,	- The CW Contractor should ensure compliance with certain measures, such as ensuring minimum work on the site during the preparatory activities, the removal of vegetation and earth to be kept to a minimum, and all temporary facilities on the construction site (access roads, places for storing materials, parking places, etc.) should be carried out in the minimum scope that is necessary for the performance of the construction works; - The movement of construction machinery and means of transport should be limited only within the construction site; - Applying the best techniques and good construction practices during construction;	1000-2000 €	- CW Contractor - Supervisor - Environmental Inspector	

	and if the maintenance and cleaning of the mechanization is at inadequately protected location. - During partial compaction of soils, there is a temporary loss of their geo-mechanical suitability for reuse and application. But if the soil is strongly compacted, there is a permanent loss of its functions and the process is irreversible.	- Construction techniques to be selected and performed based on the geotechnical and hydrotechnical, geological and hydrological characteristics of the site; - The humus material should be stored in a suitable location and covered until the moment of its reuse. In doing so, its contamination with other materials should be avoided, and erosion during storage should also be prevented; - Placing mobile toilets on the site and concluding an Agreement with the licensed company that will install and clean them; - Provision and application of equipment/containers for the evacuation of possible leaks of fuels, oils and chemicals, and contaminated soil with fuels, oils and chemicals; - In cases of unwanted spillage of oils, fats and fuels on the soil, immediately to stop with the construction activities, mandatory use of sawdust, sand or other absorbent material, and removing the contaminated soil layer, so that the pollutants do not infiltrate the soil. The contaminated soil layer should be treated as hazardous waste; - Regular inspection of construction machinery for possible leaks before they are put into operation; - By implementing the measures to improve waste management, the impact of waste on the quality of the soil (and groundwater) will be prevented; - The storage and handling of hazardous substances should be in a way that prevents any contact, intentional or unintentional spillage into the soil (and indirectly groundwater). The storage should be in appropriate containers, according to the manufacturer's recommendations, and on concrete surfaces, and they should be managed by trained professional staff; - When carrying out construction activities, no servicing of the construction equipment or refueling should be carried out, but outside the construction site by an authorized service technician and the construction machinery should be serviced and maintained regularly; - Washing of vehicles, machines and concrete mixers must be strictly controlled and carried out in specially designated			

		areas, outside of the project scope, in order to avoid soil contamination; - Avoiding carrying out the construction activities during unfavorable conditions (rain, strong winds); - After completion of the construction works, it is necessary to properly clean the construction sites.			
	Biodiversity threats: Habitat modification and fragmentation	Preserve existing natural habitats and restore degraded areas: - maintaining buffer zones to support diverse invertebrate populations - creating green corridors around the agro-food platform to protect adjacent habitats and facilitate wildlife movement - establishing hedgerows, wildlife corridors, and green infrastructure to connect fragmented landscapes and enhance habitat connectivity - Promoting practices for restoration of native habitats when needed;	1000-2000 €	- MAFWE - Project designer - Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning - Local government - Supervisor	Integrate measures during project design
		- regenerating habitats - ensuring the condition of the habitat - Area and habitats affected by the construction should be minimized during the planning of the construction site and construction works; - Promoting practices for restoration of native habitats when needed;	1000-2000 €	- CW Contractor - Environmental Consultant - Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning	To be implemented after construction; involve ecological experts
	Biodiversity threats: Chemical contamination	- Minimize the use of chemical pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers	1000-1500 €	- CW Contractor - CW Environmental Consultant - Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning - MAFWE	Prefer mechanical or biological control methods; monitor use and impact
	Biodiversity threats: The disturbance, vibrations, intensified traffic and noise	- Careful planning of construction works: Limit workers to construction sites and prohibit disturbance of local flora and fauna. Specifically, do not allow disturbance of natural habitats outside of construction zones, as well as disturbance of animals and hunting of game, birds, etc.; collection of bird eggs; etc.	1000-1500 €	- CW Contractor - Environmental Inspector - Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning - Local Authorities	Include in construction protocols; ensure staff awareness and regular on-site supervision

	Biodiversity threats: Induced fire	- Raise awareness among workers : Provide training,	2000-3000 €	- Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning - MAFWE - Local Authorities	Focus on prevention; integrate into local outreach and awareness programs
	Biodiversity threats: Invasive Species	- establishment of indigenous natural vegetation	1000 €	- Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning - CW Environmental Consultant	Prevents spread of invasives; supports habitat restoration
	Biodiversity threats: Disposal of waste in the surrounding area	- Raise awareness about the importance of proper waste disposal - To deal with excess excavated material, it is necessary to construct suitable landfills. When choosing landfill location, should be respected criteria such as avoiding catchment areas of rivers, avoiding areas with sensitive habitats, i.e. valuable landscapes. - Waste of any other nature should be properly collected, stored, and handed over to licensed companies that deal with this type of waste.	1000-2000 €	- CW Contractor - Local Authorities -	Include in staff training and public outreach
	Biodiversity threats: Excess excavated soil and sand	- Raise awareness about the importance of proper waste disposal - To deal with excess excavated material, it is necessary to designated disposal sites. When choosing the location, should be respected criteria such as avoiding catchment areas of rivers, avoiding areas with sensitive habitats, i.e. valuable landscapes. - Waste of any other nature should be properly collected, stored, and handed over to licensed companies that deal with this type of waste.	1000-2000 €	- CW Contractor - Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning - Waste Management Companies	Raise awareness on proper disposal
	Biodiversity threats: - Packaging waste - Rubble and construction waste - Communal waste from the camps of the workshops (construction sites)	- Raise awareness about the importance of proper waste disposal - To deal with excess excavated material, it is necessary to designated disposal sites. When choosing the location, should be respected criteria such as avoiding catchment	2000 €	- CW Contractor - Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning - Local Authorities	Raise awareness on proper disposal; ensure safe storage; use designated

		areas of rivers, avoiding areas with sensitive habitats, i.e. valuable landscapes. - Waste of any other nature should be properly collected, stored, covered/protected from scattering, and handed over to licensed companies that deal with this type of waste.		- Waste Management Companies	landfills; all waste must be handled by licensed operators and in line with regulations
	Biodiversity threats: Waste oils and lubricants (from construction machinery)	- Training for workers about the proper waste disposal - To deal with excess excavated material, it is necessary to designated disposal sites. When choosing the location, should be respected criteria such as avoiding catchment areas of rivers, avoiding areas with sensitive habitats, i.e. valuable landscapes. - Waste of any other nature should be properly collected, stored, and handed over to licensed companies that deal with this type of waste.	2000 €	- CW Contractor - Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning - Environmental Inspector - Waste Management Companies	Raise awareness; ensure proper collection and storage; hazardous waste must be handled by licensed operators in accordance with environmental regulations
	Biodiversity threats: Increased presence of workers, construction machinery and vehicles in the area	- Ensure that all personnel are informed and aware of the importance of protecting species, habitats, fauna, and flora and are informed about wildlife encounter procedures. Ensure that information and awareness training is documented. - Monitor that there is no unnecessary damage to habitats and other natural resources from construction works and access roads - Limit workers to construction sites and prohibit disturbance of local flora and fauna. Specifically, do not allow disturbance of natural habitats outside of construction zones, as well as disturbance of animals and hunting of game, birds, etc.; collection of bird eggs; etc.	500-1000 €	- CW Contractor - Environmental Consultant - Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning - Supervisor	Provide documented training on biodiversity protection; monitor habitat condition; restrict movement to designated areas only
	Biodiversity threats: Risk of accidental harm on animals	- Raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity	1500 €	- CW Contractor - Environmental Consultant	Raise awareness among workers on biodiversity

				- Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning	values and species protection
	Impacts on cultural heritage - potential loss or partial damage to the chance finds. These impacts derived from multiple sources relating to construction, such as vehicle and machinery activities, including transport of people and equipment within the working area. In the construction phase, the working area will be peeled in order to start construction activities. As a result of the construction works, the earth for a certain area will be peeled and destroyed. There will be disturbances due to the presence of humans and equipment. Also, in the working area for the working construction mechanization such as excavators, bulldozers, loaders, should be placed. Vibration and pollution from these activities can affect indirectly the chance finds. On the other side, some of these activities in the construction area can directly and immediately affect the chance finds.	- The responsible person should take care to give clear instructions to the involved workers, on how to behave towards the chance finds; - Implementation of the Law on Protection of Cultural Heritage ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 20/04, 115/07, 18/11, 148/11, 23/13, 137/13, 164/13, 38/14, 44/14, and 199/14, Article 49-a), related to management of monumental units and cultural landscapes (in accordance with the Macedonian legislation); - Implementation of Chance Find Procedure - If a chance find is discovered, the CW Contractor should stop work, notify the Cultural heritage authorities and put a cordon around the chance find. The CW Contractor will not disturb any chance find until a designated heritage specialist is contacted who can identify the find, record it and identify the importance. - If during the pre-construction or construction atívities chance finds are discovered that may indicate the existence of archaeological heritage, measures will be applied in accordance with the legislation, which treats the protection measures according to the Law on Protection of Cultural Heritage (published in the "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 20 of 2 April 2004, Articles 65, 66 and 67). The CW Contractor is obliged immediately to inform the operator and the Ministry of Culture and to follow their instructions. The construction works will be temporarily suspended, while the competent authorities decide whether research is needed or all protection measures should be applied. The CW Contractor should follow the instructions given by the competent authorities for protection of the cultural heritage.	0-5000 €	- CW Contractor - Supervisor - Ministry of Culture and competent authorities for protection of the cultural heritage	
	Social Management				
	<u>Impacts on community Health Safety and Security</u> - **Exposure to Hazards During Construction Activities**	The CW Contractor is to develop a **Community Health, Safety, and Security Management Plan** for the construction phase. This plan **has** to regulate potential risks to the health,	2000 €	- CW Contractor - Supervisor - PMT	

	(The project site is in proximity to the privately owned cultivated land plots, leased land parcels, and the premises of two or three companies. This increases the risk of exposure to construction-related hazards for employees, tenants, visitors, and landowners, who are identified as sensitive receptors. These hazards include dust emissions, noise pollution, and potential accidents during construction activities.) - **Traffic Disruptions and Increased Congestion During Construction** (The use of the regional road R1104 for transporting equipment and materials to the AFP construction site is expected to increase vehicular traffic, particularly at the turning point to the project area. This surge in traffic may disrupt the regular flow and lead to congestion. The heightened traffic volume also poses potential safety risks to local road users, including community members, nearby businesses, and agricultural landowners.) - **Potential Social Conflicts and Health Risks Due to Non-Local Workforce Influx** (Involvement of a non-local workforce, including workers from abroad, may introduce risks of social conflict with local communities. Cultural differences, language barriers, and differing social norms could lead to misunderstandings and tensions. Additionally, potential misconduct by security personnel, such as abuse of power or disrespect towards local inhabitants, may exacerbate community grievances. Furthermore, the influx of temporary workers increases the risk of exposing surrounding communities to both transmittable and non-transmittable diseases. This health risk is particularly significant if proper health and safety protocols are not strictly implemented.)	safety, and security of the local population. It should also include working practices and protective measures for individuals and communities living near the project area who may be exposed to disturbances caused by project activities. The plan is an integral part of the project documentation and must be prepared and approved before the commencement of construction works. The project area to be marked and a safety distance between the public and the non-fenced areas of the project site can be ensured by implementation of warning signs and prohibition signs to highlight clearly that the project is a restricted area, and no access can be allowed to unauthorized staff. The hazards mentioned could be mitigated and reduced by the application of prevention measures, such as the following: - Informing the nearby communities about the proposed project`s construction schedule and the commencement of the civil works, and the associated risks and to inform about especially required behaviour pattern by means of stakeholder engagement, disclosing of relevant project related information, as well as proposed prevention, mitigation, and emergency response measures. Communities will also be informed of the proposed prevention, mitigation, and emergency response measures to minimize health and safety risks. - Installation of appropriate signalling and information boards will help to avoid any adverse events or incidents related to the entry of the population (as well as grazing of livestock) in the territory of the project area. - Securing the site at the borders and place entrance prohibition and other warning signs. - Secure storing of any construction material and equipment. - Usage of blowers, vacuums, or water to remove dry materials from vehicles avoiding, this way, the deposition of mud or soil on the roads. - **Granting free and easy access to an independent and effective grievance mechanism for local people.**		- Inspection authorities	

		- Prevention or minimization of the potential for community exposure to hazardous materials. - Control of transport safety by means of road safety program for employees and community members targeting fatigue and safe driving, providing safety training for the drivers, ensure regular maintenance of vehicles. - Development of accident prevention/emergency preparedness policy and measures. - Assisting and collaborating with the community and the local government agencies in their preparations to respond effectively to emergency situations. - In case security services are contracted, assure that those providing security are not implicated in past abuses, are adequately trained, have appropriate conduct towards the citizens and other workers, and act within the applicable law. - The Contractor shall develop a **Traffic Management Plan** for the transportation of materials and workers to the construction site. - The Contractor shell implement a **worker`s Code of Conduct** and not disturb or interfere with the inhabitants of local communities close to the Project Area and shell respect their houses, land plots, cultures, animals, properties, customs, and practices. The established Code of Conduct will address the following issues: safety rules, zero tolerance for substance abuse, environmental sensitivity of areas around the Project Area, the dangers of STDs and HIV/AIDS, gender issues (in particular, sexual harassment) and respect for the beliefs and customs of the populations and community relations in general (drawing special attention to the risks of prostitution and human trafficking). In that context it will be significant to provide the workers with induction training about gender sensitivity and GBVH, human trafficking and prostitution and ways of identifying risks and reporting related observations or incidents, as well as awareness on gender sensitivity. It is important to undertake meetings with			

		community members about additional health and safety issues. - If a worker's camp is established, its proximity to villages shall be thought of as enough to provide an opportunity for the workers to use the community services in their free time (food and hygienic supplies, etc.), but not enough to disturb the population with noise and security lights at night.			
	<u>Impacts on Occupational Health and Safety</u> - **Occupational Health and Safety Risks During Construction** **(**The risks include potential injuries from accidents during excavation, cement work, welding, working at heights, operating moving machinery, and working in confined spaces. Additionally, workers may be exposed to hazardous chemicals, flammable materials, and extreme weather conditions, such as intense heat or cold. There is also a risk of electric shock and burns when handling live electrical components. The construction will take place near or under a transmission line, which generated an unpleasant sound at the time of the site visit (March 21st, 2024). Additionally, there is a risk of workers being exposed to dust and noise due to construction activities.) - **AFP Supply Chain Risks** (Risks associated with the AFP supply chain may arise during the selection of contractors and subcontractors responsible for construction activities. These risks include potential non-compliance with OHS standards, labor standards, environmental regulations, and socio-economic safeguards.) - **Workforce Expansion Risks During Construction** (The construction phase will require a significant expansion of the workforce, including engineers, skilled, semi-skilled, and non-skilled workers. This	The project CW Contractor will develop an Occupational Health and Safety Plan (OHSP) for the construction phase. OHSP for the construction phase should be site specific and must follow the national law, WB Environmental and Social Standard 2 and appropriate EHS Guidelines. The objective of OHSP is to ensure the health and safety of all personnel in order to concur with and maintain smooth and proper progress of work at the site and prevent accident which may injure personnel or damage property of the CW Contractor, and all involved sub-contractors. In general, the OHSP should address the set of significant aspects: - Identify roles and responsibilities of the personnel involved within the Project to include the EHS manager, construction manager, supervisor, and other subcontractors' responsibilities. - Identify in details information in relation to formulation of safety committees, communication protocols, first aid personnel and facilities, first aid training programs, occupational health and safety culture, quality system, reporting requirements, competence and job safety training, safety inspections, recruitment procedures, safety audits, risk assessment, etc. - Identify in detail the hazards which may be associated with various activities taking place and the various measures to be implemented to reduce such risks including the requirements for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This includes for example hand tools, face shields, dust masks, goggles, gloves, access equipment, lifting equipment, mobile working equipment, etc.	2500 €	- CW Contractor - Supervisor - PMT - Inspection authorities	

	increase introduces risks such as non-compliance with OHS standards, inadequate training, inconsistent safety monitoring, and potential labor rights violations.)	- Establish training requirements for workers to comply with health and safety procedures and protective equipment. It is important to train the workers on an ongoing basis on communicable diseases, hygiene equipment, the correct use of PPE, etc.
		- If dust or pollutant emissions are found to be excessive, construction activities should be stopped until the source of such emissions have been identified, and adequate control measures are implemented.
		- Apply basic dust control and suppression measures during the construction phase (regular watering of all active construction areas during the dry weather conditions as a dust suppression measure; proper planning of activities that cause dust to take place simultaneously in order to reduce the dust incidents over the construction period; proper management of stockpiles and excavated material (e.g., watering, containment, covering, bunding); proper covering of trucks transporting aggregates and fine materials (e.g., through the use of tarpaulin); avoiding the dust producing activities during the periods of strong winds; limitation of the traffic speed on the mobile construction side on the 15 km/h for trucks on the construction sites).
		- Develop a regular inspection and scheduled maintenance program for vehicles, machinery, and equipment to be used throughout the construction phase for early detection of pollution sources to avoid unnecessary pollutant emissions.
		- Proposed mitigation measures regarding electromagnetic radiation by overhead transmission line:
		  - To comply with the standards for the minimum heights of the conductors according to the applicable national legislation to avoid the effects of electricity, electromagnetic radiation, and electric shock.
		  - To respect the minimum depths of laying the cables (relevant for cable line).
		- The CW Contractor is expected to adopt and implement the provisions of the OHSP throughout the Project			

		construction phase. Also, the CW Contractor will develop and implement an Emergency and Preparedness Response Plan and Worker Grievance Mechanism for construction phase. - AFP supply chain risks will be regulated with the signed Contracts with Contractors and sub - contractors according to the best approved procurement procedures and list of approved suppliers.			
	Land use - **Land Use Change Impact** (The construction of the AFP will result in the permanent conversion of project-affected land plots from agricultural to non-agricultural useThe construction of the AFP will result in the permanent conversion of project-affected land plots from agricultural to non-agricultural use. The facility will be built on state-owned land that was leased to a tenant for agricultural purposes until 2024. The tenant cultivated the land with annual crops and was informed about the project. A settlement was reached to terminate the lease agreement without compensation. At the tenant's request, the remaining portion of the land will be clearly marked to allow for continued cultivation. - **Expropriation of privately owned land** Additionally, the development of the access road will involve both private and state-owned land, further altering existing land use patterns. These changes may impact local agricultural activities and modify land accessibility for surrounding communities.)	MAFWE will develop an **Abbreviated Resettlement Action Plan (ARAP)** to mitigate the negative land use impacts. Also, MAFWE / PMT will implement the following measures: - MAFWE / PMT to inform the owners of the neighbouring land plots about the construction of AFP, commencement of the work, schedule of the project activities, etc. - The municipality to carry out the process of expropriation to meet the needs for construction of the access road to the AFP. - MAFWE to inform the tenants of the neighboring land parcels about the initial plans for planned second phase of construction of AFP. - Establish a grievance mechanism to receive and address the specific concerns of the tenant/s of the land intended for construction of AFP.	Costs for expropriation will be covered by the budget of the project affected municipality	- Municipality of Gazi Baba - PMT / MAFWE - State Bureau fo Expertize	
	Economic Impacts During Construction The construction phase of the AFP is expected to generate positive economic impacts for the local community: - **Business Opportunities and Employment Generation:** During the construction period, local businesses are	CW Contractor to prepare a **Plan for employment and training of the employees**. CW Contractor will employ workers, but certain priority should be given to the workers in the project area. CW Contractor in cooperation with the Employment Agency of Republic of North Macedonia, more specifically with the Employment Center in Skopje, should announce their employment needs with a clear application	1000 €	- CW Contractor - PMT / MAFWE - Agency for employment of RNM / Employment Center in Skopje	

	anticipated to benefit from increased demand for goods and services. Although employment opportunities associated with the first phase of AFP construction are short-term (2–3 years), they are expected to provide income and skill development for local workers. - **Boost to Local Markets:** Construction workers are expected to purchase food and other necessities from local markets, creating a demand surge for agricultural products and small business services such as local shops, cafes, and service providers. This increased consumption could stimulate the local economy and support small-scale producers.	procedure to provide equal opportunities for all and transparent employment practices. The beneficial impact will be further increased by applying enhancement procedures / measures are detailed below: - Develop (prior to construction) and implement a Recruitment Plan for the project implementation. - Develop and implement Labour Management and Monitoring Plan to ensure that all workers (including subcontractors) have employment contracts. - Ensure all workers (including subcontractors) have access to the Grievance Mechanism. Regarding the gender issue, it will be useful to establish a female employment target at 10% for the construction workforce. It is important to have the possibility additionally to motivate the women to be engaged in the technical jobs. Prior to the start of the project activities, an **Assessment for local procurements** should be made. The assessment will include the identification of local suppliers that meet the required quality standards. Particular attention will be paid to the vulnerable categories of people affected by the project activities, as well as to gender equality. Regarding the gender equality, the CW Contractor will pay special attention to develop and implement a strategy to promote gender equality and to prevent any form of discrimination against women, and especially regulate it in the Code of Conduct for workers. In that context, it is important to provide specific **training to workers to raise awareness about gender related issues (including GBVH)** to address and to deal with discrimination in the workplace, to promote open discussion, practical solutions, additional training and printed (leaflets, etc.) and other type of educative and informative materials (video clips, etc.) from different sources. It is important to emphasize the **usage of the grievance mechanism** created for this project. The Grievance Form will be made available on the website of the			

		CW Contractor and project affected municipalities (Gazi Baba, Arachinovo and Ilinden).			
	The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), as part of the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), outlines the approach for identifying, informing, and engaging all relevant stakeholders throughout the construction of the Wholesale Market in Gazi Baba. It ensures transparent communication, public participation, and grievance management to support inclusive decision-making and minimize social risks during project implementation.	Key principles and measures of the SEP include: - Communication and sharing of relevant information with all Identified and interested stakeholders early in the project. - Sharing clear and accessible information in Macedonian and Albanian. - Consulting with local communities, including women, youth, and other vulnerable groups. - Establishing a Grievance Mechanism that allows people to raise concerns safely and easily, including in non-digital formats. - Ensuring coordination with the Municipality of Gazi Baba and other institutions. - Promoting equal participation and access to project benefits, as detailed in the Gender Action Plan (Annex 1). - Monitoring feedback and adjusting engagement activities as needed.	1500 €	- CW Contractor - PMT / MAFWE - Municipality of Gazi Baba - Media - NGOs	
	There might be a risk of unconscious bias towards female job applicants, since women are traditionally underrepresented in the construction sector. In this term, intersectional discrimination could be even greater. Potential gender-based violence and harassment in the working environment, as well as in project affected small and rural communities, due to the large- scale influx of male workers, are foreseen as risks to be addressed.	- Gender equality approach in order to overcome stereotypes about women being less capable than men in physically demanding and technically skilled jobs. - Hiring women on technical and non- technical job positions, created for purposes of the AFP construction phase. If possible, women should be inhabitants of the project affected area, and then of the region. - When equally qualified, favoring the female over the male job candidate. - Introducing family- friendly approach with flexible work arrangements, making balancing work and family responsibilities. - Introducing gender sensitive Code of Conduct for the personnel of the project. - Establishing gender sensitive Grievance mechanism which will guarantee the protection of personal identity and confidentiality of matters reported. - Providing a form of Grievance mechanism for digitally illiterate part of the female population.	2000 €	- CW Contractor - PMT / MAFWE - Municipality of Gazi Baba	

		- Ensuring that all matters related to the project, where required, can be communicated in Albanian language. All necessary mesures for overoing the gender issues are given in the Gender Action Plan (Annex 1).			
	Environmental Management				
Operation	- Exhaust gases are expected from heavy/light vehicles that will move and park within the parking area for all tenants, suppliers and customers/buyers; - During the use of the access road and peripheral roads (roads designed to facilitate fast and smooth car and truck traffic.), it's anticipated that exhaust emissions from mobile sources, such as cars and trucks (which will be utilized for transporting goods, waste, delivering raw materials, etc.), will be released into the ambient air; - Unintended release of oil, chemical substances, and toxic vapors into the air due to malfunctions or accidents; - In the event of fires caused by various causes, smoke and exhaust gases may be generated in the air.	- Enforce speed limits and idle reduction policies to reduce unnecessary emissions; - Designate specific routes and loading/unloading zones to streamline traffic flow and minimize congestion on the access road and peripheral roads; - Implement Traffic Management Plan such as traffic signals and signage to optimize vehicle movement and reduce idling; - All expanding project areas should consider extending the installation of solar panels for electricity generation to further reduce reliance on fossil fuels and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions; - Explore opportunities for energy efficiency improvements, such as LED lighting upgrades and energy management systems, to minimize overall energy consumption; - To improve the landscape in the surroundings and to contribute to the improvement of air quality, it is recommended to plant more trees, as well as their continuous maintenance; - Develop and implement fire prevention protocols, including regular fire risk assessments and employee training programs; - Install fire suppression systems, such as sprinklers and fire extinguishers, in key areas to quickly contain and extinguish fires if they occur; - Establish emergency response procedures and evacuation plans to ensure the safety of employees and visitors in the event of a fire and other emergencies;	Included in operation and maintenance costs	- MAFWE/ Operator or Entitled Entity - Inspection authorities	
	- Noise generated from the movement of heavy and light vehicles, including delivery trucks, customer vehicles, and service vehicles within and around the Market area;	- Implement scheduling restrictions for noisy activities, such as loading and unloading, during sensitive hours to minimize disturbance to nearby residents; - Enforce speed limits to reduce noise pollution;	Included in operation and maintenance costs	- MAFWE/ Operator or Entitled Entity - Inspection authorities	

	- Noise generated from loading docks, forklift operations, and machinery used for transporting goods and materials during loading and unloading activities; - Noise emitted from refrigeration units, HVAC systems, generators, and other mechanical equipment necessary for Market operations.	- Ensure regular maintenance and lubrication of machinery and equipment to reduce noise emissions and prevent the amplification of noise from mechanical sources; - Install and use equipment with noise-reducing technologies and invest in quieter models for future equipment purchases to lower overall noise levels; - Establish communication channels with nearby residents and businesses to address noise concerns, gather feedback, and collaboratively develop noise mitigation strategies; - Adhere to local noise ordinances, regulations, and standards to ensure regulatory compliance and minimize the project's impact on the surrounding environment and community.			
	The following types of waste and respective impact are expected to be generated: - Communal waste, generated by the workers, this includes non-recyclable and non-organic waste resulting from cleaning activities, maintenance, and general operations within the Market. This waste stream may lead to increased landfill usage and potential environmental contamination if not properly managed; - Packaging Waste, packaging materials from delivered goods, including cardboard, plastics, and other packaging materials. Improper disposal of packaging waste can contribute to visual pollution and environmental degradation, particularly if not recycled or reused; - Biodegradable (Organic) Waste, food waste from unsold produce, food preparation, and waste from restaurants or food vendors within the Market. Organic waste, if not properly managed, can emit greenhouse gases such as methane when disposed of in landfills, contributing to climate change; - Hazardous Waste, includes unwanted leakage of motor oil or fuel, requiring swift reaction and proper containment in special containers or tanks	- Develop and implement Waste Management Plan (within waste management facilities) where the separation of different types of waste streams, including communal waste, packaging waste, biodegradable waste, and hazardous waste, is planned; - Provide designated bins and containers for each waste stream within waste management facilities to facilitate proper segregation by staff, customers, users, visitors; - Install composting bins or systems on-site within waste management facilities to facilitate the collection and processing of organic waste generated within the market; - Establish partnerships with private company or local recycling facilities to ensure that recyclable materials are collected and processed effectively; - Educate the staff/customers/users on the benefits of composting and provide guidance on proper waste separation practices; - Provide information signs and materials throughout the market to promote proper waste disposal and recycling habits; - Develop and implement Emergency and Preparedness Response Plan which include:	Included in operation and maintenance costs	- MAFWE/ Operator or Entitled Entity - Inspection authorities	

	to prevent negative environmental impacts. Improper handling of hazardous waste can lead to soil and water contamination, posing risks to ecosystems and human health.	- strict protocols for the handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste, including motor oil, fuel, and cleaning chemicals; - training for staff on proper handling procedures and emergency response protocols in case of spills or leaks; - installation of spill containment systems and emergency response equipment to minimize the risk of environmental contamination. - Supervise waste management of all wastes generated by the operation of the market, considering all environmental aspects, by establishing a waste management committee or appointing a Cleaning & Waste Management Coordinator.			
	Pollution of watercourses: - Physical pollution - can occur as presence of solid particles from residues of earth, sand, and solid particles from the friction of the tires of light and heavy vehicles. These solid particles can be deposited in this drainage channels after being washed off from the surfaces of AFP site and access road. Physical pollution can also occur if there is not appropriate waste management of generated wastes (wood, cardboard and plastic, waste packaging from cleaning products, etc.).; - Chemical pollution - indirectly through drainage channels come from the exhaust gases from the light and heavy vehicles that will move within the site, park and loading at the AFP site. - Biological pollution - can occur if the municipal and biodegradable waste generated from the operation of the market is not properly managed, and directly disposed of in drainage channels, and indirectly to pollute the watercourses. - A land area would be eventually reserved for the future construction of a service station and truck center for light and heavy vehicles. These facilities will ensure fuel supply, washing and small repairs	- Atmospheric sewage will filter out oil and sand from water collected from building roofs and external pavements, then direct it into the side channels of the plot; - Provide and/or organize adequate sewage and pollution control. All wastewater (sanitary and storm water), will be collected and treated through the Wastewater treatment Plant whitin the project location; - Organize and manage traffic circulation within the site and apply air pollution mitigation measures, in order to minimize the physical pollution (reducing dust emissions) and chemical pollution (reducing exhaust gases emissions) of the water in drainage channels, and indirectly of the water in the recipient watercourses; - Cleaning & Waste Management Coordinator to supervise the waste management of all wastes generated by operation of the market, taking into consideration all environmental aspects; - To provide adequately protected location to the company that will provide fuel supply, washing and small repairs for all kinds of vehicles, in order to provide protection of groundwater from pollution. The maintenance and cleaning of the vehicles should be on concrete surfaces, provided with grid for holding mechanical impurities and	Included in operation and maintenance costs	- MAFWE/ Operator or Entitled Entity - Inspection authorities	

	for all kinds of vehicles. The development and operation of these premises will be leased to a company wishing to invest here. Groundwater pollution: - Groundwater pollution can occur if the maintenance and cleaning of the vehicles is at inadequately protected location.	oil separators and should be managed by trained professional staff; - Waste management is planned on-site for all wastes that will be generated from AFP operations, it is foreseen to be employed Cleaning & Waste Management Coordinator, in order to provide appropriate waste management of all wastes, so the biological pollution will not be an issue.			
	- Soil pollution can occur if there is not appropriate waste management of generated wastes from the operation of the market (municipal waste, biodegradable waste, wood, cardboard and plastic, waste packaging from cleaning products, etc.), and directly disposed on soil. The AFP beside other services will offer waste management, it is foreseen to be employed Cleaning & Waste Management Coordinator, in order to provide appropriate waste management of all wastes, so this should not be an issue. A land area would be eventually reserved for the future construction of a service station and truck center for light and heavy vehicles. These facilities will ensure fuel supply, washing and small repairs for all kinds of vehicles. The development and operation of these premises will be leased to a company wishing to invest here. - Soil pollution can occur if the maintenance and cleaning of the vehicles is at inadequately protected location.	- Cleaning & Waste Management Coordinator to ensure the Waste Management Plan is being implemented and supervise the waste management of all wastes generated by operation of the market, taking into consideration all environmental aspects; - To provide adequately protected location to the company that will provide fuel supply, washing and small repairs for all kinds of vehicles, in order to provide protection of soil from pollution. - The maintenance and cleaning of the vehicles should be on concrete surfaces, provided with grid for holding mechanical impurities and oil separators and should be managed by trained professional staff.	Included in operation and maintenance costs	- MAFWE/ Operator or Entitled Entity - Inspection authorities	
	Biodiversity threats: - Chemical contamination	- Minimize the use of chemical pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers	Included in operation and maintenance costs	MAFWE, Cleaning & Waste Management Coordinator	Awareness materials

	Biodiversity threats: - Induced fire	- Raise awareness among farmers, stakeholders, and visitors: - Provide training, workshops, and educational materials on sustainable farming practices and biodiversity conservation.	Included in operation and maintenance costs	MAFWE, MoEPP, Local Municipality, CW Contractor	Implemented before and during construction; should involve local community engagement
	Social Management				
	Community Health and Safety Impacts During Operation **Increased Traffic Congestion and Road Safety Hazards:** - The movement of workers, traders, suppliers, and delivery vehicles to and from the AFP site is expected to cause heightened traffic congestion. - This increased volume of traffic raises the risk of road accidents, potentially endangering both community members and AFP staff. - Insufficient traffic control measures may further exacerbate safety risks near the project site and surrounding areas. **Strain on Local Medical Services:** - The influx of personnel during AFP operations may increase the demand for medical services in the event of accidents, injuries, or health incidents. Local healthcare facilities may experience added pressure, potentially leading to reduced availability of medical care for community residents. **Emergency Response Challenges:** - In case of accidents or hazardous incidents, insufficient emergency preparedness may delay effective response, increasing risks to health and safety.	The Project Operator will develop a **Community Health and Safety Plan (CHSP) related to the operational phase**. Access to the AFP will be widened, thereby the impact on local traffic will be reduced during the operational phase. - Regarding the local medical services, it is significant to note that with the right measures in place the risks and pressures of medical services are considered very low and therefore, the pressure on local services will be low. It is important to note that in the AFP, premises for medical services are planned. - Effective traffic management and enhanced emergency preparedness are necessary to mitigate therisks and ensure the safety of workers, traders, suppliers, buyers and local residents. - Conduct community awareness campaigns on traffic safety, emergency response, and health risks.	Included in operation and maintenance costs	Operator Or entity entitled Inspection authorities	
	<u>Occupational Health and Safety risks during Operation of AFP</u> **Increased Traffic and Transportation Risks:**	Project Operator will develop an Occupational and Health and Safety Plan (OHSP) related to the operational phase.	Included in operation and maintenance costs	Operator Or entity entitled Inspection authorities	

	- Significant movement of workers, suppliers, and traders to and from the AFP site is expected to increase traffic congestion, raising the risk of transportation-related accidents. - Safe transportation practices and traffic management measures will be required to minimize risks to both workers and community members. **Workplace Accidents and Injuries:** - Regular activities such as loading, unloading, handling of heavy materials, and equipment operation may expose workers to risks of accidents and injuries. - Specific hazards may include slips, trips, falls, mechanical injuries, and incidents related to machinery operation. **Exposure to Hazardous Materials and Environmental Conditions:** - The handling of agricultural products, chemicals, and operational machinery may expose workers to hazardous materials. - Adequate safety measures, personal protective equipment (PPE), and proper training are essential to mitigate health risks. **Demand for Medical Services:** - Given the high number of employees and stakeholders, there may be an increased demand for medical services in the event of workplace accidents or health incidents. - Coordination with local medical facilities is necessary to ensure adequate emergency response. **Emergency Response Challenges:** - In the event of accidents or hazardous incidents, inadequate emergency preparedness can lead to delayed response times, increasing health and safety risks for workers and nearby communities.	- The OHSP to be project and site specific and take into account national requirements, mainly the specifics of the local Macedonian workforce. - It should also comply with international standards, in particular, but not limited to, ESS2 Labor and Working Conditions, which recognize the importance of avoiding or mitigating adverse effects on workers' health and safety and require the development of a project-specific health and safety plan in line with Good International Practice (GIP). - Implement a Traffic Management Plan to regulate the safe movement of vehicles and equipment. - Ensure proper safety training for workers. Project Operator to ensure that all staff are adequately trained. - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is to be provided to workers, and its use must be strictly enforced. - Conduct regular inspections and maintenance of machinery and equipment. - Carry out safety awareness campaigns focusing on traffic safety and workplace health. - Effective monitoring and strict adherence to OHS standards during the operational phase are crucial for safeguarding workers' health and safety and minimizing risks to the community. - Effective emergency response measures, including evacuation plans and medical aid, will be required to handle accidents or hazardous situations swiftly. - Establish clear emergency response protocols and coordinate with local health services. - Regular drills and safety training should be conducted to prepare workers for emergency scenarios.			

	<u>Economic Development and Local Procurement Opportunities During Operation</u> **Employment Opportunities and Transparent Recruitment:** - The operational phase of the AFP requires a dedicated workforce to manage its day-to-day activities efficiently. This includes roles in logistics, handling, trading, administrative support, maintenance, and facility operations. The presence of wholesalers, horticultural growers, buyers, and other stakeholders will also demand workforce support to ensure smooth operations. - Although the number of engaged employees will be limited, the recruitment process will prioritize transparency and inclusiveness. **Local Procurement Assessment:** - Before the start of the operational phase, it is necessary to identify local suppliers that meet the required quality standards to support AFP's operational needs effectively. This ensures the integration of local businesses into the supply chain, contributing to local economic growth and sustainability. **Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination:** - There is a need to promote gender equality and prevent discrimination against women in the workplace, ensuring fair treatment and inclusivity in employment opportunities during AFP operations. Additionally, engaging with women who have shown interest in participating in AFP activities is necessary to support gender inclusivity. During the preparation of the social baseline, focus groups and interviews with women in the Kvantaski market were conducted. Regular communication is established with women who have expressed interest in participating in AFP activities. **Grievance Mechanism:**	- The Operator should prepare a Plan for employment and training of the employees. Operator, in cooperation with the Employment Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Employment Center in Skopje, will initiate transparent recruitment processes. Job vacancies will be publicly announced with clear application procedures to guarantee equal opportunities for all applicants and promote fair employment practices. - Develop and implement Labour Management and Monitoring Plan to ensure that all workers have employment contracts. - Prior to the start of the operational phase, an Assessment for local procurements should be made. The assessment will include the identification of local suppliers that meet the required quality standards. - Operator will develop and implement a Strategy for Gender Equality to promote fair treatment and prevent discrimination against women, especially through the Code of Conduct for workers. - A Gender Action Plan will be designed and enforced to ensure gender inclusivity in employment practices. - A grievance mechanism will be established to address concerns and complaints from employees and community members. - The Grievance Form will be made accessible on the Operator's website to ensure transparency and easy access for all stakeholders.	Included in operation and maintenance costs	Operator Or entity entitled Inspection authorities	

	- There is a need to establish a grievance mechanism to effectively address concerns and complaints from employees and community members, ensuring transparency, accessibility, and timely resolution of issues.				
Decommissioning	Negative impacts on all environmental media: - Soil, - Water (surface and groundwater), - Air.	- The temporary stocks of products and auxiliary materials from warehouses should be used up or, if certain quantities remain, they must be removed from the site after the works are completed. - Disposal of all waste materials by handing them over to an authorized company, i.e. for each type of waste, a Contract should be concluded and handed over to a company that holds an appropriate Permit for managing the appropriate type of waste, in order to further handle all waste in accordance with the legal regulations on waste management. - Selection of the equipment into non-usable and usable. Unusable equipment, as it is waste, should be handled as provided in the previous measure for dealing with all types of waste. Preservation of the usable equipment until its reuse or sale. - After taking the above measures, since the buildings of solid construction are built seismically stable, they can easily be converted and adapted for any other activity with a relatively small investment. If the space is not planned to be converted for another type of activity, then it is necessary to remove all buildings from the site and the Operator, in accordance with the Construction Law, is obliged to submit a request for approval for the removal of a building together with the Project for the removal of a building that will provide measures for managing construction waste and restoring the environment to its original state.	Included in operation and maintenance costs	- MAFWE/ Operator or Entitled Entity - Inspection authorities	

4.1 Monitoring and Reporting

The ESMP identifies monitoring objectives and specifies the type of monitoring, with linkages to the impacts assessed in the environmental and social assessment and the mitigation measures described in the tabular ESMP in the previous chapter. Specifically, the Environmental and Social Monitoring Plan provides detail description of monitoring measures, including the parameters to be measured, methods to be used, monitoring locations, frequency of monitoring. This site-specific ESMP includes monitoring plan matrix, capturing parameters to monitor, where and when those parameters need to be monitored and by whom. It provies the reson for parameter monitoring and planned cost, i.e. from where financial resources will be provided. The Environmental and Social Monitoring Plan is presented in a tabular form given bellow.

Table 2. Environmental and Social Monitoring Plan

Environmental media/ condition / Social aspect	Phase	What parameter will be monitored?	Where the parameter will be monitored?	How the parameter will be monitored?	When the parameter will be monitored (frequency)?	Why the parameter is being monitored?	Cost (EUR)	Institutional Responsibility
							Install / Operate	Install / Operate
	Pre-construction	All required permits have been acquired prior to work and kept on site (e.g., building permit, application of works, fire protection study aligned with the WB EHSG). Contractor and subcontractors have valid operating licenses.	In the premises of the CW Contractor	Visual check	Before the start of the work activities		-	CW Contractor; Supervisor; PMT/MAFWE
All environmental media **Waste generation**	Pre-construction	Contracts with licensed companies for different types of waste	In the premises of the CW Contractor	Visual check if all necessary contracts are provided	Before the start of the work activities	In order to provide management of all wastes according to the legal requirements	1000-2000 €	CW Contractor; Supervisor; PMT/MAFWE
All environmental media **Waste generation**	Pre-construction	Training of the CW Contractor's and sub-contractor's staff	In the premises of the CW Contractor	Visual check of the documents that provide info about appropriate training of the staff	Before the start of the work activities	In order to provide management of all wastes according to the legal requirements	1000-2000 €	CW Contractor; Supervisor; PMT/MAFWE
Soil and groundwater	Pre-construction	Contract with the licensed company that will install	In the premises of the CW	Visual check if the contract is provided and the toilets are	Before the start of the work activities	To provide appropriate management	1000-2000 €	CW Contractor;

Environmental media/ condition / Social aspect	Phase	What parameter will be monitored?	Where the parameter will be monitored?	How the parameter will be monitored?	When the parameter will be monitored (frequency)?	Why the parameter is being monitored?	Cost (EUR)	Institutional Responsibility
							Install / Operate	Install / Operate
		mobile toilets and clean them, and positioned mobile toilets on the site	Contractor and at the agreed locations on construction site	plased at the agreed locations		with the communal wastewater in order to protect environmental media and sensitive receptors (soil, water, people, biodiversity)		Supervisor; PMT/MAFWE
Public information	Pre-construction	Notifications to the public and relevant institutions in the municipality	In the premises of the CW Contractor	Visually	Before the start of the work activities	To ensure public information	Included in the SEP - 1500 €	CW Contractor; Supervisor; Professional OHS; PMT/MAFWE
Traffic safety	Pre-construction	Traffic Management Plan; Notification of the start of activities to the local population	Municipal board and municipal web sites	Visually	Before the start of the work activities	To prevent accidents and traffic safety	Included in the SEP - 1500 €	CW Contractor; Supervisor; Professional OHS; PMT/MAFWE
Health and safety	Pre-construction	Implementation of preventive measures for the health and safety of the workers and the residents (Fencing on the construction site, warning signs and hazard warning signs, procedures and rules of	At the locations where the construction activities are carried out (within the project location)	Visual checks of the fencing of the construction site, safety signs, personal protective equipment and clothes etc.	Unannounced controls during work activities	To be in compliance with national health and safety regulation and standards To prevent health and safety risks – mechanical injuries and	Included in the project budget	CW Contractor; Supervisor; Professional OHS; PMT/MAFWE; Authorized Inspector of Labor and Social Policy

Environmental media/ condition / Social aspect	Phase	What parameter will be monitored?	Where the parameter will be monitored?	How the parameter will be monitored?	When the parameter will be monitored (frequency)?	Why the parameter is being monitored?	Cost (EUR)	Institutional Responsibility
							Install / Operate	Install / Operate
		conduct to be followed etc.)				accidents on the construction sites		
Health and safety	Pre-construction	OH&S Plan; Fire protection plan; Emergency procedures	In the CW Contractor's premises	Visual inspection	Before starting the work activities	To prevent health and safety risks	Included in H&S Plan - 2000 €	CW Contractor; Supervisor; Authorized Inspector of Labor and Social Policy; Professional OHS; PMT/MAFWE
All environmental media **Noise generation**	Construction	Regular control (inspection) and maintenance (service) of the vehicles, construction machines and equipment	In the premises of the CW Contractor	Checking the documentation of conducted inspections and services	Semi-annually	To avoid generation of large quantities of exaust gases to the air, and high noise levels, and to prevent possible leakage of motor oil and/or fuel, in order to protect environmental media and sensitive receptors (ambient air, soil, water, people, biodiversity)	500-1500 €	CW Contractor; Supervisor
All environmental media	Construction	Selection and classification of all types of waste according to the	At site locations provided for temporary	Visual checks	Regular controls during the performance of the activities	To ensure that wastes will be properly managed as	500-1500 €	CW Contractor; Supervisor

Environmental media/ condition / Social aspect	Phase	What parameter will be monitored?	Where the parameter will be monitored?	How the parameter will be monitored?	When the parameter will be monitored (frequency)?	Why the parameter is being monitored?	Cost (EUR)	Institutional Responsibility
							Install / Operate	Install / Operate
Waste generation		legal requirements	storage of waste until it is handed over to a licensed company			foreseen in the ESMP in order to protect environmental media and sensitive receptors (soil, water, people, biodiversity)		
All environmental media **Hazardous waste generation**	Construction	Storage and handling of hazardous substances	At the agreed appropriate locations for storage of hazardous substances on site	Visual check if the hazardous substances are stored in appropriate containers that do not provide leakages and at the concrete surfaces, and visual check of the documents that provide info about appropriate training of the staff	Regular controls during the performance of the activities	To prevent any contact, intentional or unintentional spillage into the drainage channels and soil (and indirectly groundwater)	500-1000 €	CW Contractor; Supervisor

Environmental media/ condition / Social aspect	Phase	What parameter will be monitored?	Where the parameter will be monitored?	How the parameter will be monitored?	When the parameter will be monitored (frequency)?	Why the parameter is being monitored?	Cost (EUR)	Institutional Responsibility
							Install / Operate	Install / Operate
All environmental media **Hazardous waste generation**	Construction	Placement and appropriate usage of equipment/containers for the evacuation of possible leaks of fuels, oils and chemicals, and contaminated soil with fuels, oils and chemicals	At the agreed location for storage of this type of equipment/ containers on site	Visual check if the fuels, oils and chemicals, and contaminated soil with them are stored in appropriate equipment/containers that do not provide leakages and at the concrete surfaces	Controls during the performance of the activities	To prevent leackages of fuels, oils and chemicals, in order to protect the soil and groundwater quality	500-1500 €	CW Contractor; Supervisor
Engaged workforces	Construction	Register / evidence of engaged workforces	Office On site	Document review	Before official start of the construction phase / Semi-annual	Realization of mitigation measures. Administration and documentation the phase	Within H&S Plan - 2500 €	CW Contractor; Supervisor; PMT/MAFWE; Communal inspector
Stakeholder engagement	Construction	Number of meetings, information, leaflets, complaints, etc.	Office, On-site, Local media, Information to stakeholders	Review and updating of the prepared SEP based on the evidence of the following indicators; public meetings held, attendance o meetings, discussed topics, received comments and complains, explained complaints, addressed	Semi-annually	Realization of mitigation measures. Administration and documentation the phase	Within the SEP - 2000 €	CW Contractor; Supervisor; PMT/MAFWE; inspector, Municipality of Gazi Baba

Environmental media/ condition / Social aspect	Phase	What parameter will be monitored?	Where the parameter will be monitored?	How the parameter will be monitored?	When the parameter will be monitored (frequency)?	Why the parameter is being monitored?	Cost (EUR)	Institutional Responsibility
							Install / Operate	Install / Operate
				complaints, etc. Updated Complaint Log (number and type of complaints received, log of grievances, etc.)				
Community health, safety and security	Construction	Number of accidents, risks, injures, leaflets, informative bulletins, boards, signalization, complaints, etc.	Office, on-site, field	Monitoring of the Community health, safety and security plan and other documents. Implementation of the campaign for community safety during the timetable of construction activities, number of meetings and other implemented activities	Semi-annually	Implementation of mitigation measures Administration and documentation the phase	Included in the other plans	CW Contractor; Supervisor; PMT/MAFWE; inspector
Occupational health, safety and security	Construction	Completed plans, number of accidents, risks, injures, leaflets, informative bulletins, boards, complaints, etc.	Office On site	Monitoring of the Occupational health, safety and security plan, Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan, etc.	Semi-annually	Implementation of mitigation measures Administration and documentation the phase	Included in the other plans	CW Contractor; Supervisor; PMT/MAFWE; Labor inspector
Plans and assessment for local procurement	Construction	Completed plans, number of employees, period,	Office and field	Monitoring of the implementation of completed plans and assessment for local procurement	Construction	Completed plans, number of employees, period,	Included in the other plans	Office, affected municipalities, Employment

Environmental media/ condition / Social aspect	Phase	What parameter will be monitored?	Where the parameter will be monitored?	How the parameter will be monitored?	When the parameter will be monitored (frequency)?	Why the parameter is being monitored?	Cost (EUR)	Institutional Responsibility
							Install / Operate	Install / Operate
		qualifications, training, etc.				qualifications, training, etc.		Center in Skopje
Community health, safety and security	Operation	Number of accidents, risks, injures, leaflets, informative bulletins, boards, etc.	Office and field	Monitoring of the Community Health and Safety Plan, Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan	Semi-annually	Implementation of mitigation measures. Administration and documentation the phase	Included in operation and maintenance costs	Operator Municipality
Occupational health, safety and security	Operation	Number of accidents, risks, injures, leaflets, informative bulletins, boards, etc.	Office and field	Monitoring of the Occupational health, safety and security plan, Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan	Semi-annually	Implementation of mitigation measures. Administration and documentation the phase	Included in operation and maintenance costs	Operator
All environmental media	**Decommissioning**	If it is necessary to remove all buildings from the site, in accordance with the Project for the removal of a building, to monitor the implementation of measures for managing construction waste and restoring the environment to its original state	At the site location	Visually	During the removing of buildings	In order to mitigate the negative impacts on all environmental media (soil, surface and groundwater, air)	Included in operation and maintenance costs	MAFWE

4.2 Capacity Assessment and Needs

To support timely and effective implementation of environmental and social project components and mitigation measures, and to strengthen environmental and social management capability in the institutions responsible for implementation of ESMP, the ESMP recommend the establishment or expansion of the parties responsible, and training of the staff.

CW Contractor, MAFWE/ Operator or Entitled Entity should evaluate the existing capacity of the relevant departments, personnel, and systems in managing the environmental and social impacts of the project and to implement the proposed mitigation measures. It is necessary to identify gaps in resources, skills, or systems that may hinder the effective implementation of the ESMP.

5 CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

5.1 Consultations During Project Preparation

Following the kick-off meeting held on November 10th, 2023, several locations in the municipality of Gazi Baba were visited to identify the most suitable site for the construction of the AFP.

Figure 11. Kick-off hybrid meeting, held on November 10th, 2023, in the premises of the CEIM

On November 13th, 2023, site visits and discussions took place involving representatives from MAFWE/PIU, the design team, and environmental and social experts to evaluate the proposed locations. During the site visits, the project team, along with PMT representatives (see figures below), assessed the advantages and disadvantages of each proposed site for the AFP construction. The municipal staff expressed their commitment to supporting the project's implementation.

Figure 12. Site visit and discussions with the representatives of the municipality of Gazi Baba

During the project preparation phase, consultations were conducted with the identified key stakeholders to identify and appropriate assess potential impacts, gather feedback, and ensure that community concerns were considered in the project design. The consultations aimed to understand the social, economic, and environmental implications of the project, as well as to provide transparent information regarding project objectives, land acquisition, compensation mechanisms, and expected timelines. The socio-economic survey was conducted successfully. During the survey and in subsequent discussions, the respondent expressed significant interest in various aspects of the construction of modern wholesale market, particularly regarding the future management of the AFP in Gazi Baba.

Key activities during this phase included:

- Engagement with local authorities to discuss the project idea and later land acquisition processes and regulatory compliance.
- Discussions with local people about the construction of AFP.
- Distribution of project information about the benefits and potential impacts of construction of AFP in Gazi Baba.

Consultations with the municipality were held as part of the development of the Abbreviated Resettlement Action Plan (figure below). The expropriation process has been initiated to acquire the necessary land plots for the construction of the access road.

Figure 13. Consultations with the representative of the municipality of Gazi Baba about the expropriation

5.2 Consultations During Project Implementation

Consultation activities will continue throughout the project implementation phase to maintain transparent communication and address any arising concerns. Regular meetings with stakeholders, including municipality of Gazi Baba, landowners, and government agencies, will be held to provide updates on project progress, construction activities, and any changes to the project plan.

Key activities during this phase include:

- Periodic public meetings to update communities on construction progress and address concerns.
- Continuous engagement with affected landowners.
- Implementation of a grievance mechanism to ensure community members can voice concerns and receive timely responses.
- Information dissemination through local media, community notice boards, and digital platforms to keep stakeholders informed.

Special attention will be given to vulnerable groups to ensure their voices are heard and their concerns addressed effectively.

The first phase of the project, which includes site selection, the development of a feasibility study, and the Environmental and Social Assessment (ESA), is completed after approval of the Initial Environmental and Social Assessment Report (ESAR) and the outline for the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) for the construction and operation of the AFP in Gazi Baba. During the next phase, the Consultant will hold a consultation meeting with local stakeholders to present the schematic design for the selected site. The meeting will be announced on the websites of MAFWE and the Municipality of Resen. All comments and feedback received will be appropriately integrated into the ESMP.

5.3 Reporting Back to Stakeholders

To maintain trust and transparency, regular reporting back to stakeholders will be conducted throughout the project lifecycle. This will include:

- Sharing progress reports on construction milestones, environmental and social safeguards, and implementation of mitigation measures.
- Providing updates on grievance redress activities and resolutions of community concerns.
- Organizing feedback sessions to gather community insights on project impacts and address any residual issues.

All reports and updates will be made available to stakeholders through accessible channels, ensuring that project-affected persons are fully informed and engaged in the project's development.

6 GRIEVANCE REDRESS

6.1 Grievance Redress Mechanisms

MAFWE / PMT is truly committed to receiving and responding to all comments or complaints in relation to the Project, either verbally or in writing. MAFWE / PMT establishes and will manage a General Program Grievance Mechanism. MAFWE / PMT recognizes that consultation is an ongoing process, and different concerns may arise as the Project moves into construction and operation phases. Annexes 2 and 3 include details on the Grievance Mechanism, as well as the Comment Submission Form and Recording Grievances in Log (Annex 4).

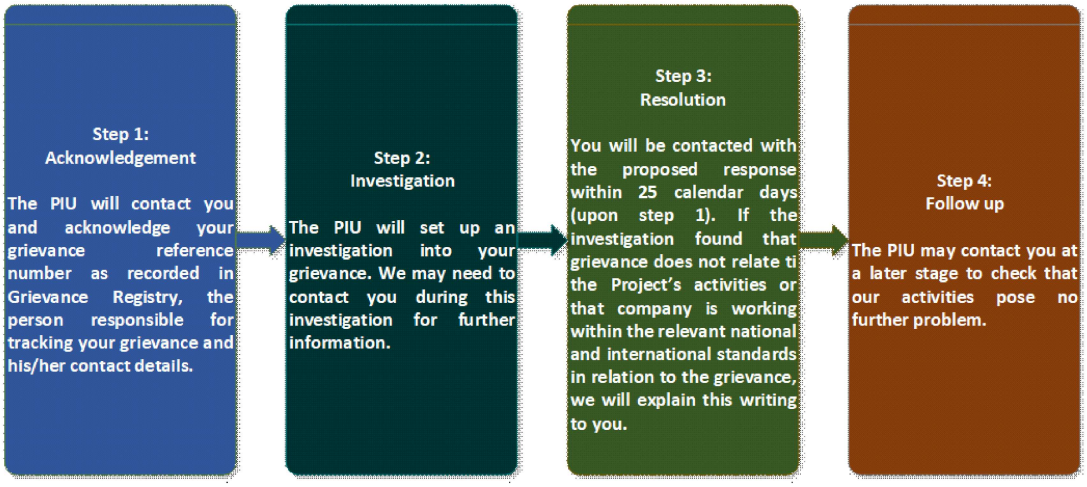
Communities and individuals who believe that they are adversely affected by a World Bank (WB) supported project may submit complaints to existing project-level grievance redress mechanisms or the WB's Grievance Redress Service (GRS). The GRS ensures that complaints received are promptly reviewed in order to address project-related concerns. Project affected communities and individuals may submit their complaint to the WB's independent Inspection Panel which determines whether harm occurred, or could occur, as a result of WB non-compliance with its policies and procedures. Complaints may be submitted at any time after concerns have been brought directly to the World Bank's attention, and Bank Management has been given an opportunity to respond. All information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank's corporate Grievance Redress Service (GRS), are presented on the following web site - http://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/products-and-services/grievance-redress-service.

In compliance with the World Bank's ESS10 requirement, a specific grievance mechanism will be set-up for the project. Dedicated communication materials (GRM pamphlets, posters) will be created to help residents familiarize themselves with the grievance redress channels and procedures. A GRM guidebook/manual will also be developed, and suggestion boxes installed in the project affected municipality of Gazi Baba. In order to capture and track grievances received under the project, a dedicated GRM Management Information System/database/ register is defined.

Within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy of North Macedonia, Agriculture Modernization Project (https://amp.mk/contact/), will be established a Grievance mechanism online, including grievance log. The aim of this mechanism is to inform all relevant stakeholders for the procedures for submitting a complaint/suggestion regarding the SEP and receiving a response of the submitted grievance.

PMT within the MAFWE will implement a Grievance Mechanism to ensure that it is responsive to any concerns and complaints, particularly from affected stakeholders and communities. A grievance mechanism will be implemented to ensure that the PMT/Contractor is responsive to any concerns and complaints particularly from affected stakeholders and communities.

The PMT will go through the following steps to deal with the grievance:



Any comments or concerns can be brought to the attention of the company verbally or in writing (by post or e-mail) or by filling in a grievance form. The grievance form will be made available in the premises of the municipality of Gazi Baba that are easily accessible for all relevant stakeholders, alongside a description of the grievance mechanism as well as on the construction sites.

The following timeframe will be used:

- ✓ Written acknowledgement of receipt of the grievance: within 5 days of receiving the grievance;
- ✓ Proposed resolution: within 15 days of receiving the grievance.

Specifically nominated and trained members of staff will record grievance information in a grievance log. This will include:

- Stakeholder name and contact details;
- Details of the grievance and how and when it was submitted, acknowledged, responded to and closed out.

For ESMP related to the AFP in Gazi Baba will be established Form for submitting comments and suggestions on ESMP (Annex 1) and Form will be published together with the prepared ESMP document for each the municipality of Gazi Baba.

For the purposes of receiving comments from the stakeholders PMT will establish Grievance Form for the construction phase of the project that will be available in printed and electronic form. Printed version will be available at the construction site and in the municipality of Gazi Baba were the construction activities will be performed.

The Construction phase Grievance Form for AFP project in Gazi Baba will be revealed on the:

- Websites of the Agriculture Modernization Project (https://amp.mk/contact/) and the municipality of Gazi Baba, where the project activities will be implemented; and
- Available printed copies in the premises of the municipality of Gazi Baba (when the construction work activities will start) and the premises of the project affected local communities (located near the project areas).

The grievance can also be submitted directly to the Contractor that will forward any such received concerns/comments to the PMT without postponement to allow the PMT (within MAFWE) to further process the concerns/comment (i.e. verify, acknowledge and respond to the grievance in the timeframes defined below). The Contractor is obliged to hand out the Project Grievance - explain the grievance

mechanism to the concerned citizen(s)/local population and forward the filled-in Grievance Form to the PMT, but also, to undertake all proposed corrective actions to react on received grievance.

All complaints will be verified by the PMT in the Grievance Log (Annex 3) and assigned a number and acknowledged within 5 calendar days. The Log will have all necessary elements to disaggregate the grievance by gender of the person submitting it as well as by type of grievance. Each grievance will be verified in the log with the following information: a) description of grievance, b) date of receipt of grievance and when acknowledgement returned to the complainant; c) description of actions taken (investigation, corrective measures, and preventive measures); d) date of resolution and closure provision of feedback to the complainant.

In cases when the grievance/complaint is indefinite or not clear enough, the PMT will assist and provide advice in formulating/redrafting the submission, in order for the grievance/complaint to become clear, for purposes of an informed decision by the PMT, in the best interests of persons affected by the Project.

If the PMT is not able to address the issues raised by immediate corrective action, a long-term corrective action will be identified. The complainant will be informed about the proposed corrective action and follow-up of corrective action within 25 calendar days upon the acknowledgement of grievance. In situation when the PMT is not able to address the particular issue verified through the grievance mechanism or if action is not required, it will provide a detailed explanation/ justification on why the issue was not addressed. The response will also contain an explanation on how the person/ organization that raised the complaint can proceed with the grievance in case the outcome is not satisfactory. At all times, complainants may seek other legal remedies in accordance with the legal framework of Republic of North Macedonia, including formal judicial appeal.

For the workers, which will be engaged for the implementation of the project activities, a separate grievance mechanism will be available.

The process is shown in the following figure.

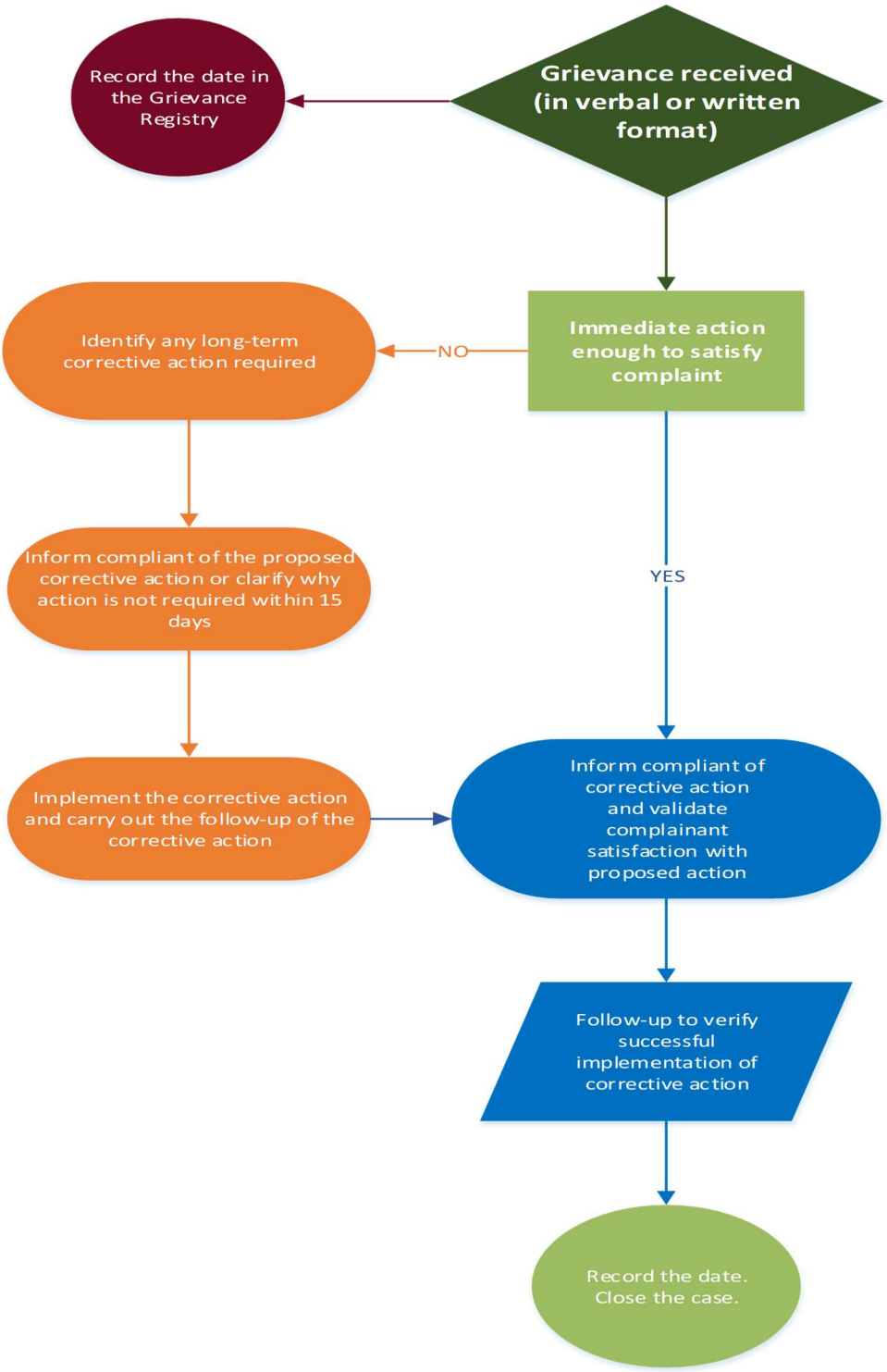


Figure 14. Steps within the Grievance procedure

Information boards in the project affected municipalities (Gazi Baba, Arachinovo and Ilinden) will provide local residents with information on stakeholder engagement activities, construction updates, contact details for the Contractors etc. The Contractors will set up information desks/boxes, on the construction sites on visible and easily accessible places where they can meet and share information about the project and receiving grievances.

6.2 Recording Grievances

The Grievance Focal Point will maintain local grievance log (Annex 3) to ensure that each complaint has an individual reference number and is appropriately tracked and recorded actions are completed. When receiving feedback, including grievances, the following is defined:

- Type of appeal;
- Category of appeal;
- People responsible for the execution of the appeal;
- Deadline for resolving the appeal;
- Agreed action plan.

The PMT Safeguard Specialist and focal point will ensure that each complaint has an individual reference number and is appropriately tracked and recorded actions are completed. The log should contain the following information:

- Name of the complainant, his/her location and details of his / her complaint;
- Date of reporting by the complaint;
- Date when the Grievance Log was uploaded onto the project database;
- Details of corrective action proposed, name of the approval authority;
- Date when the proposed corrective action was sent to the complainant (if appropriate);
- Details of the Grievance Committee meeting (if appropriate);
- Date when the complaint was closed out;
- Date when the response was sent to the complainant.

Monitoring and evaluation of the stakeholder process is important to ensure MAFWE is able to respond to identified issues and alter the schedule and nature of engagement activities to make them more effective. The following characteristics/commitments/activities will assist in achieving successful engagement:

- Sufficient resources to undertake the engagement;
- Inclusivity (inclusion of key groups) of interactions with stakeholders;
- Promotion of stakeholder involvement;
- Sense of trust in MAFWE shown by all stakeholders;
- Clearly defined approaches; and
- Transparency in all activities.

PMT has an obligation to prepare Monitoring Reports.

The first report will be Semi Annual Report for environmental and social aspects and reports from the public hearing's events.

Field Coordinators will be responsible for:

- Collecting data from the construction sites on the number, substance and status of complaints and uploading them into the single regional database;
- Maintaining the grievance logs on to the complaints received at the regional level;
- Monitoring outstanding issues and proposing measures to resolve them;
- Submitting quarterly reports on GRM mechanisms to the PMT Environmental and Social Specialist.

The PMT Safeguard Specialist will be responsible for:

- Summarizing the number, substance and status of complaints and uploading them into the single project database;
- Monitoring outstanding issues and proposing measures to resolve them;
- Submitting quarterly reports on GRM mechanisms to the PMT Environmental and Social Specialist.

PMT within the MAFWE will submit biannually Reports to the WB, which shall include Section related to GRM which provides updated information on the following:

- Status of GRM implementation (procedures, training, public awareness campaigns, budgeting etc.);
- Qualitative data on number of grievances received \ (applications, suggestions, complaints, requests, positive feedback), highlighting those grievances related to the WB ESS 2 and 5 and number of resolved grievances;
- Quantitative data on the type of grievances and responses, issues provided and grievances that remain unresolved;
- Level of satisfaction by the measures (response) taken;
- Any correction measures taken.

Community Relations/Liaisons Manager from the local branch of MAFWE, if engaged, would be responsible for:

- Establish good relationships with all identified stakeholders;
- Organize the public hearing events for sub – projects
- Notice the stakeholder's comments on sub-projects and records their appeals
- Prepare Semi Annual Reports and submit them to the Project Director.

The PMT will be responsible for monitoring of all Project related stakeholder engagement activities, ensuring the fulfilment and updating of this SEP, and reporting to the stakeholders.

ANNEXES

Gender Action Plan (GAP)

for

Agri-Food Platform (AFP) – Gazi Baba

KE9. Social Development Specialist, Ruzica Cacanoska, PhD

May 2025

Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFP	Agri-Food Platform
AMP	Agriculture Modernization Project
EHS	Environmental, Health, and Safety
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ESMP	Environmental & Social Management Plan
ESS(s)	Environmental and Social Standard(s)
EU	European Union
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GM	Grievance Mechanism
ILO	International Labor Organization
MAFWE	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
MoEPP	Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning
OHSP	Occupational Health and Safety Plan
ARAP	Abbreviated Resettlement Action Plan
RNM	Republic of North Macedonia
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
ToR	Terms of Reference
WB	World Bank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gender Action Plan (GAP) for the construction of the Agri-Food Platform (AFP) in Gazi Baba represents a strong commitment to gender equality and inclusive development. Through targeted actions and community-focused strategies, the project aims to create equitable opportunities and sustainable socio-economic benefits for all community members, with a particular focus on empowering women and preventing discrimination throughout the project lifecycle.

The GAP is designed to ensure that women have fair access to employment opportunities, participation in decision-making processes, and socio-economic benefits derived from the project. It is aligned with national and international legal frameworks, including the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", Nos. 6/12, 30/13, 166/14, 150/15 and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" Nos. 53/21, 39/25), The Labor Relations Law ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 62/05, 106/08, 161/08, 114/09, 130/09, 149/09, 50/10, 52/10, 124/10, 47/11, 11/12, 39/12, 13/13, 25/13, 170/13, 187/13, 113/14, 20/15, 33/15, 72/15, 129/15, 27/16, and 120/18, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" Nos. 110/19, and 267/20), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Additionally, the plan is guided by the World Bank Gender Strategy (2016–2023): Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction, and Inclusive Growth, which emphasizes closing gender gaps in access to jobs, control over resources, and decision-making. The strategy aligns with the World Bank Environmental and Social Standard 1 (ESS1) and Environmental and Social Standard 10 (ESS10), which require gender-responsive measures to promote equal opportunities and prevent gender-based discrimination throughout project implementation.

The development of the GAP was informed by a socio-economic survey, including a focus group discussion with women from the Kvantaski Market and local cooperatives. These consultations identified key barriers faced by women, such as limited access to resources, lack of decision-making power, and socio-cultural challenges. Based on these findings, the plan outlines strategic actions aimed at enhancing women's economic empowerment, building capacity, ensuring workplace safety, and supporting women-led businesses and cooperatives.

A critical component of the GAP is stakeholder engagement, which focuses on raising awareness about gender equality and promoting inclusive participation. Engagement with local women's groups, cooperatives, and community organizations is prioritized to foster dialogue, receive feedback, and ensure that women's voices are integrated into project decision-making processes.

To ensure effective implementation, the GAP is monitored through a structured implementation table that outlines specific actions, objectives, responsibilities, and compliance with legislative frameworks. A robust monitoring and evaluation framework is established to track progress, address challenges, and ensure accountability. Additionally, an accessible grievance mechanism is in place to enable the reporting and resolution of gender-based issues in a confidential and secure manner.

The GAP is a part of the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) for the AFP. It ensures that gender considerations are included in all project activities, enhancing women's participation in decision-making and economic opportunities. The GAP is linked with the Grievance Mechanism under the ESMP, providing safe channels for reporting gender-based concerns. This integrated approach strengthens social inclusion and ensures project benefits are shared fairly among community members.

Overall, the GAP for AFP is committed to creating a more inclusive, equitable, and supportive environment for women, encouraging their active involvement in economic activities, enhancing their

social and economic well-being, and strengthening community resilience. By aligning with local legal framework and international standards, including those established by the World Bank, the GAP aims to set a benchmark for gender-responsive development in the implementation of the project.

INTRODUCTION

The Gender Action Plan (GAP) for the Agri-Food Platform (AFP) in Gazi Baba is committed to promoting gender equality, empowering women, and preventing discrimination throughout the project lifecycle. This plan is designed to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where women can fully participate in economic activities and benefit from the socio-economic opportunities generated by the project. By addressing gender disparities and enhancing women's access to resources, the GAP aims to foster sustainable development and social cohesion within the community.

The GAP for the AFP was developed in alignment with the requirements outlined in the **Terms of Reference (ToR)** for the project. A comprehensive **socioeconomic and gender assessment** was conducted, highlighting the roles and tasks of men and women, their access to resources, technologies, and services, as well as identifying gender-based inequalities and constraints faced by individuals involved in the horticulture value chain. This assessment also included an evaluation of compliance with core labor standards to ensure fair treatment and equal opportunities for all.

Field survey, including focus group discussion was carried out to gather qualitative and quantitative data, providing insights into the socio-economic realities of women and men in the project area. Findings from these consultations informed the development of the GAP, ensuring that the strategic actions are evidence-based and responsive to the identified needs and challenges.

The recommendations derived from the assessment were integrated into the GAP, outlining specific measures to address gender-based inequalities, promote equitable access to project benefits, and enhance women's participation in decision-making processes.

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE GAP

Primary objectives of the Gender Action Plan are to:

- Ensure women have equitable access to employment opportunities and are actively included in decision-making processes.
- Promote women's socio-economic empowerment by enhancing their participation in project-related activities.
- Prevent discrimination and provide a safe and respectful work environment for all women involved in the project.
- Support women-led businesses and cooperatives through capacity-building initiatives and local procurement opportunities.
- Strengthen community awareness of gender equality and women's rights to foster greater social inclusion.

Through these objectives, the GAP aims to transform AFP into a model of gender-inclusive development, contributing to long-term community resilience and economic growth.

2. GENDER ANALYSIS AND BASELINE ASSESSMENT

A detailed gender analysis was conducted to understand the socio-economic conditions of women in the project area, including their role in agriculture, access to markets, and participation in local economic activities. The assessment identified key barriers such as limited access to resources, lack of representation in decision-making processes, and socio-cultural challenges. These findings informed the

development of strategic actions aimed at enhancing women's participation and addressing existing inequalities.

2.1 Demographic and Socio-Economic Baseline

2.1.1 Project-Affected Municipalities and Key Demographic Aspects

The project-affected municipalities for construction of AFP include **Gazi Baba**, **Arachinovo**, and **Ilinden**, which are part of the Skopje Planning Region. These municipalities represent diverse demographic profiles:

- **Gazi Baba**: Characterized by a mix of urban and peri-urban settlements, with significant economic activities and access to regional markets. Women are predominantly engaged in small-scale agriculture, market trading, and household-based economic activities.
- **Arachinovo**: A predominantly rural community with high representation of ethnic minorities. Traditional gender roles significantly limit women's economic participation and decision-making. Women are mostly involved in informal agricultural work.
- **Ilinden**: Economically active with industrial and agricultural operations. Women in Ilinden face challenges in accessing formal employment and decision-making roles.

2.1.2. Gender Distribution and Economic Participation

From economic perspective, it is important to bear in mind that North Macedonia is traditionally characterized as an agricultural country, with around 44% of the population (985,000 inhabitants) living in the rural areas. The total number of registered enterprises in the agriculture sector in the project affected municipalities was 73. It should also be noted that the two municipalities are rural, while the population in the municipality of Gazi Baba lives in both rural and urban environments. In terms of the gender composition of those employed in agriculture, males form the majority. Regarding rural women, it is important to add that they are the least active in the labor market, especially women in the age category of 40-59 years. A high percentage stems from most of their home, childcare, care for the elderly, and other home responsibilities that are unpaid labor. Even in cases of paid women work labor, women earn only 33% of what men earn in the same sector. In 2020 there were 175,088 registered agricultural businessmen in the only register of agricultural holdings. Of these, 38,328 were registered women as agricultural holding carriers. Regarding rural women position, it is important to mention the underdeveloped infrastructure and limited supply of public services in the rural areas. In that context, lack of childcare services is often seen as significant limitation for women in rural areas to seek for employment.[1]

According to baseline data collected for this project, women constitute nearly half of the population in the project-affected areas, but remain underrepresented in formal employment sectors. Traditional gender roles restrict their involvement in decision-making and property ownership, particularly in Arachinovo. The socio-economic baseline data highlight the need for targeted gender-sensitive interventions to bridge these gaps.

- **Employment Rate**: Women's employment rates are lower than men's, particularly in rural areas where traditional roles prevail.
- **Access to Resources**: Limited access to land ownership and credit opportunities is a significant barrier for women's economic empowerment.

[1] More information in D6, Initial Environmental and Social Assessment Report for AFP, Sub-section 5.2.4. Economy and Employment.

• **Decision-Making**: Women are underrepresented in local governance and community decision-making structures.

2.2. Socio-Economic Survey

2.2.1 Focus-group discussion with women and interviewing

This chapter focuses on the women's role in agriculture, as well as the women on the Kvantaski Market. For this part, besides the used secondary basis of information, a semi-interview with a woman who works in a wholesale enterprise at the market, was conducted. Also, two semi-structured interviews with female key informants, and a women focus group, who sell or used to sell agricultural products at the Wholesalers Market, were conducted. The research data represent a guide for identifying challenges and opportunities, which women engaged with agriculture, or work at the market face, as well as providing data for the sectors that women are not involved in. The empirical data will be considered when providing solutions and ways for decreasing inequality between men and women and increasing women's inclusion in the food systems.

The focus-group discussion for women's inclusion on the Kvantaski Market, was conducted on February 26, 2024, in the village of Stajkovci. Three women participated in the discussion, aged between 18 and54. One of them had a higher education, while the other two had finished high school education. Two of the women are married, with three kids each, and one participant is at her fourth year at high school. All three of them have experience of working at the Kvantaski Market. Two of them are currently involved with work in the market, while the third one occasionally visits the market. She doesn't sell her products at the market, mainly because of the high entrance fees for a car, fees for staying there, and due to the bad conditions, she as a woman, experiences. All three of the women, are engaged in agriculture, namely, for two of them, it is an additional job, while one of them is registered individual farmer, and she rents a selling space at the market. The other woman is employed as elementary school teacher, and she is additionally engaged in agriculture, while the third one is a fourth-year high school student, and she works at the market as member of her family.

Two interviews with women key informants, were conducted on the February 23 and 24, 2024. Two of the women have more information about the market, due to their last 10-year regular presence at it. In the last years they have visited the market at least once in two months. Two of the women live near the market and are at the age of 44 and 52. They both have finished high school education, and they are both employed. They come to the market in the morning and in the afternoon, depending on their work schedule. All participants in the research are well acquainted with the AFP construction plans (some of them informed about it when the Market Study was conducted, and the others from people working at the Kvantaski Market).

The following themes emerged out of the thematic analysis of the focus group discussion, and the semi structured interviews:

• **The number of women at the Kvantaski Market is minor.** There are currently three women working at the market. One of them works together with her brother, and another one, a farmer, has rented a selling space, and is helped by her daughter. Actually, there are two women who are constantly present at the market, and only one (a daughter of one of the women) who comes occasionally to help with the work at the market The respondents pointed out that they know two other women, obtaining products from the market, but they always come together with their husbands.

• **All women engaged in the work at the Kvantaski Market, are Macedonians.** "Only Macedonian women come at the market as buyers as well", state the women participants in the research.

• **The working environment at the Kvantaski Market is very unpleasant for women.** They stated that they have numerous examples of sexual harassment from the rest of the traders and their employees (sexually based remarks, courting, gestures, gossips, or spreading rumors for sexual activities that never occurred, etc.), thus, they feel insecure and not protected enough at moments. The women key informants have experienced some sexually based remarks this year. The unpleasant work climate contributes to women quitting their job at the market, or to be joined by their husbands, so they can work.

• **Inappropriate work conditions for women at the Kvantaski Market.** Women point out that there is no separate toilet at the market. A general notion of all women who participated in the research, is that the toilets are in an awful condition, they are not well maintained, so they avoid them as much as possible (one of the women do not take fluids when working at the market, even during the summer). The women key informants stated that they are not pleased with the hygiene maintenance of the market, at all. One of them pointed out that during the summer months, an unpleasant smell from rotten fruits and vegetables spreads at the market. There are often piles of garbage at the market, due to the poor garbage disposal, and dogs freely roam throughout the market grounds.

• **No clean drinking water and no sewage network.** The water used at the market comes from wells, and they avoid using tap water. In cases of rain falls, there are no conditions for work, and certain areas are partly flooded. In cases of heavier rainfall and wind, a while ago, a couple of trees had fallen at the places intended for the traders. The market was not cleaned out of the fallen trees and drifts for two weeks, and part of the traders were unable to do their job or worked in very difficult circumstances. Two of the women key informants, point out that they have an information that the water is not safe for drinking, as well as, for washing or refreshing the fruits, even though, that is practiced in some cases.

• **Protest at the Kvantaski Market.** The traders protested at the Kvantaski Market in 2022, due to the bad conditions and the enforced work fees. The women participated in the protest as well. Traders have formed an ***Association of Farmers and Traders Spring 2023***, in Skopje, to gain their rights. A vice president of the association is a woman.

• **Repercussions from the protest.** After the protest, the traders had negative repercussions, and an additional increase in the rent and parking fees. A new price increasement is announced for the current 2024. A woman, participant in the protest, stated that she was called for a talk by the market's owner, who said to her, that he was gentler with the sanctions towards her, because she is a woman.

• **The suggested AFP location is favorable.** The focus-group participants, as well as, the women key informants, expressed their positive reactions for the chosen location, and showed their readiness to work at the AFP. However, all the participants in the research, think that more attention should be paid to providing appropriate working conditions, as well as security and protection of the women at the AFP.

Two weeks after the focus group discussion, one of the participants raised questions about the management of the AFP and expressed her concerns regarding this matter.

Suggestions and recommendations from the women included in the socio-economic survey for AFP construction are as follows:

• Provision of subventions and additional facilitation of women's access to the AFP, and to coordinate this measure with the Rural Woman Program, implemented in 2019.

• Education about and popularization of AFP, and to work on including the women form other ethnicities in the AFP. All women who are engaged with agriculture, should engage in trading as well.

• 24 hours security should be provided at the AFP, which will include women as part of the personnel as well.2.

• More sanitary facilities at the AFP, and women/ men toilets must be separated.

• A woman corner at the AFP, where women could meet, organize, invite guests form other associations, so they can develop other activities aimed at larger women inclusiveness.

• Women to be included in the AFP management that will have greater understanding for their specific needs and demands.

• To set up appropriate monitoring of the AFP work. Special boxes, or spaces, for putting traders' appeals. At least one woman must be included in the Appeal Committees.

• The state institutions to carry out regular control of the AFP, and all regularities to be processed accordingly, and not to cover them up.

To sum up, the socio-economic survey and focus group discussion revealed significant gender disparities in access to employment in Kvantaski market, economic opportunities, etc. Women in rural areas, particularly in Arachinovo, face restrictions due to traditional gender roles, which limit their participation in the workforce and decision-making processes. Gender gaps in property ownership further contribute to economic vulnerability, as land and assets are often registered under male family members, impacting women's financial independence and social mobility.

The findings from these focus group discussion and interviews form the foundational basis for the Gender Action Plan, ensuring that the identified gaps and community feedback are integrated into the project's strategic actions.

2.2.2 Key Findings from Socio-Economic Survey and Focus Group Discussion

• **Limited Female Representation at Kvantaski Market:** The socio-economic survey found that the number of women working at Kvantaski Market is significantly low, with only three women participating in the focus group discussions. It was challenging to find women who are actively working at the market. As a result, women who live near the market area and visit it regularly were included as key informants.

• **Workplace Harassment and Safety Issues:** Women working at the Kvantaski Market reported numerous incidents of sexual harassment, including inappropriate remarks, gestures, and rumours, contributing to a sense of insecurity. There are no separate toilet facilities for men and women, which worsens the working conditions for female workers.

• **Infrastructure and Hygiene Deficiencies:** The market lacks basic facilities like clean drinking water, appropriate sanitary facilities, and proper sewage networks, making it particularly challenging for women. Women participants emphasized the need for gender-sensitive infrastructure in AFP, including separate sanitary facilities and safer working environments.

• **Recommendations from Women Participants:** Women suggested several improvements for AFP, including:

- 24-hour security with women personnel.
- More sanitary facilities separated by gender.
- A designated "Women's Corner" at AFP for networking and organizational activities.
- Inclusion of women in AFP management to better understand and address gender-specific needs.

[2] This was emphasized at the focus-group with the women.

• **Preparedness to Relocate to AFP:** Despite the challenges at Kvantaski Market, women expressed their readiness to work at AFP, provided that working conditions are improved, and their security concerns are addressed.

2.3 Legislative Framework for Gender Equality

The Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", Nos. 52/91, 1/92, 31/98, 91/01, 84/03, 107/05, 3/09; 13/09, 49/11, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia", Nos. 6/19, 36/19) enshrines the principles of equality and non-discrimination, guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedoms to all citizens regardless of sex, race, color, national or social origin, political or religious beliefs, property, or social status.

Laws in the field of equal opportunities are following: Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 201/15, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia", Nos. 53/21, 39/25); Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia", No. 258/20); Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia", Nos. 6/12, 30/13, 166/14, 150/15 and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" Nos. 53/21, 39/25). The Labor Relations Law ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 62/05, 106/08, 161/08, 114/09, 130/09, 149/09, 50/10, 52/10, 124/10, 47/11, 11/12, 39/12, 13/13, 25/13, 170/13, 187/13, 113/14, 20/15, 33/15, 72/15, 129/15, 27/16, and 120/18, and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" Nos. 110/19, and 267/20) guarantees fair and equal treatment for all workers, including women, in employment. It ensures that employment contracts provide conditions that are not less favorable than those set by law or collective agreements. The law protects against gender-based discrimination in hiring, wages, promotions, and working conditions. It promotes equal pay for equal work, access to training, and career advancement opportunities for both men and women. This legal framework supports gender equality by ensuring women have the same rights and opportunities as men in the workplace.

The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia ratified the Istanbul Convention in 2017. The ratification law contains a list of 31 laws which are currently in force and need to be amended in order to be brought in line with the Istanbul Convention, including the Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence; the Law on Social Protection; the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination; the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men; the Law on Family; the Law on Protection of Children; the Law on Police; the Law on Courts; the Law on Criminal Procedure, as well as laws on education, administration and health, and the Law on Personal Data. In 2018, a decision on establishing a national coordinating body to combat domestic violence within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, as well as an Implementation Action Plan 2018- 2023, were adopted.

Additionally, the GAP is guided by the World Bank Gender Strategy (2016–2023): Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction, and Inclusive Growth, which focuses on closing gender gaps in employment, access to resources, and participation in decision-making processes. This strategy is aligned with the World Bank Environmental and Social Standard 1 (ESS1) and Environmental and Social Standard 10 (ESS10), which mandate the implementation of gender-responsive measures to promote equal opportunities and prevent gender-based discrimination throughout project activities. These international standards, alongside national legislation such as the Labour Relations Law (267/20) and the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, provide a strong legal foundation for enforcing gender equality within the AFP project.

Republic of North Macedonia has demonstrated a strong commitment to advancing gender equality through alignment with International Labour Organization (ILO) standards and conventions. The country has ratified several key ILO conventions, including Convention No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) and Convention No. 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities, which promote equal treatment and opportunities in the workplace. In 2023, North Macedonia further strengthened its legal framework by ratifying ILO Convention No. 190 on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, underscoring its dedication to creating safe and inclusive working environments.[3]

2.4. Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Republic of North Macedonia, as an UN member state and a candidate country for EU membership, continually improves the national legislation by its alignment with international conventions and acquis in the areas of non- discrimination[4] and equal opportunities for women and men. Yet, significant discrepancies exist between legal framework and its implementation.

Despite the ongoing cultural shift, stereotypes and traditional men/ women roles are still dominant in the country. Women bear most of the burden of unpaid housework and care.

Intersectional discrimination (any discrimination on two or more discriminatory grounds that are simultaneously and inseparably linked) is even more noticeable but legally recognized as a severe form of discrimination just recently with the amendments to the Law on Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia", No. 258/2020, article 4 (13)).

Roma and Albanian women, especially in rural areas, are particularly vulnerable.

Roma girls and women are subject to early marriage, have the lowest rates of school attendance, and are generally marginalized in the political, social, and economic spheres.

The population of municipality of Arachinovo is dominantly of Albanian ethnicity. At the same time, Arachinovo is a rural municipality. The age and gender structures reveal that within the community, there is a strong perception among Albanian women that men are primarily responsible for providing financial support for their families. Women are generally expected to focus on raising children and only seek employment in cases of financial necessity. Additionally, there is a prevailing belief that men are better suited for high-level positions compared to women.

Findings of the socio- economic survey of the Kvantashki Market, where only few women of Macedonian ethnic origin work, implies that, when it comes to gender sensitive issues, regardless of the ethnicity, they remain equally challenging.

Gender gaps appear in the labor-market, with high inactivity among rural and ethnic minority women. Women living in rural areas have the lowest employment rates, in comparison with men from rural areas, and with the urban population in general.

There is also a significant gender gap in ownership and control over property and assets. Traditionally, property is registered in the man's name. Women's lack of owning assets contributes to their economic vulnerability and the lack of financial independence is a major contributing factor to gender-based violence in the country, especially to the unreported one.

[3] ILO, https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/north-macedonia-ratifies-ilo-convention-190-eliminating-violence-and, accessed on May 18th, 2025.

[4] The Law on Prevention and Protection from Discrimination ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia", No. 258/20), article 5, prescribes that any discrimination based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, belonging to a marginalized group, language, citizenship, social origin, education, religion or religious belief, political belief, other belief, disability, age, family or marital status, property status, health status, personal quality and social status or any other basis, is prohibited.

Access to resources and opportunities for economic and social strengthening between men and women in rural areas is limited, thus, the number of female farm holders within the total number of farmers is only 10.4%, and only 12.01% of women own low- participation land in the decision- making process relevant to production activities. Due to women's unfavorable position as a part of the workforce and in terms of family income, young women in rural areas often do not see their future in agriculture and are only prepared to stay in rural areas if they are able to get another type of employment[5].

According to the Regional Development Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2031 ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia", No. 76/21), from 2014 to 2019, 35.1% of internal migrations were in the village- city direction, 21.6% took place from city to village, migration between villages participated with 34.7%, and intercity with only 8.6%. In doing so, 43.7% of total immigration was to the Skopje Planning Region. In total internal migrations, women participate with over 70% in all regions.

The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia tends to improve the position and role of rural women through irreversible financial support for starting an additional activity of a female member of an agricultural holding. The approved investments are financed by the Rural Development Financial Support Program of up to 180,000 denars. This support will increase to 600,000 denars with the implementation of IPARD III.

Another measure undertaken by the Government of the RNM is the adoption of the Programme for Social Security Support to Women Engaged in Agriculture 2024 ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia", No. 12/24), according to which registered individual women farmers are entitled to maternity leave and sick leave, by measures that include financial support.

The lack of reliable sex disaggregated data and data on intersectional discrimination across sectors, are significant obstacles to developing evidence-based policies and proper measures. In 2021, the country published its second Gender Equality Index. It is an indicator of the status of women and men in different areas of life, providing a comprehensive overview of the municipalities' work to bridge the gender gap on a local level, provide conditions that facilitate the life in the municipality and implement policies focused on women's needs. It analyzed the situation in 81 municipalities, in three main domains: gender gaps,[6] enabling conditions[7] and gender responsive municipality.[8]

The second national Gender Equality Index in North Macedonia was released in 2023. The index was developed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the State Statistical Office, in cooperation with the European Institute for Gender Equality. The Gender Equality Index in North Macedonia in 2022 was 64.5 out of a maximum score of 100, which was an improvement of 2.5 points compared to the previous measurement in 2019.[9] The aim of the Index is to support evidence-based and informed decision-making, helps to understand where improvements are most needed and thus supports policymakers in designing more effective gender equality measures.

[5] National Strategy for Rural Development 2021- 2027 ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia", No. 16/21), https://dejure.mk/zakon/nacionalna-strategija-za-zemjodelstvoto-i-ruralniot-razvoj-za-period-2021-2027-godina

[6] Gives a review of the differences between women and men in the municipalities relating to the spheres of economy, education and political engagement.

[7] Compares the presence and availability of assistance and services in the municipalities that are relevant and crucial for women.

[8] Illustrates the municipality efforts made in the implementation and creation of policies, programs and allocation of budget assets for overcoming systemic obstructions for women, i.e., it analyses how the municipal strategies, programs and budgets impact the actual improvement of women's life.

[9] State Statistical Office, Gender Equality Index for North Macedonia 2022 - Measuring Gender Equality, 2022.

The assessment of gender equality conditions across the project-affected municipalities reveals significant disparities. Among the 81 municipalities analyzed, Arachinovo is ranked 78th with an overall score of 24, indicating very low levels of gender equality. Ilinden follows with a rank of 47 and a score of 38, while Gazi Baba is positioned at 24th place with a score of 47. Despite the variation in ranking, all three municipalities are categorized as having low gender equality. In contrast, the City of Skopje, which functions as a separate administrative unit comprising 10 municipalities, is ranked 8th with a notably higher overall score of 56. This illustrates the need for targeted interventions to enhance gender equality in the project-affected areas.

3. STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The Agri-Food Platform aims to promote gender equality and empower women through inclusive economic opportunities. To achieve this, specific measures should be considered to enhance women's participation in both, operation and supply chain of the AFP. These measures are informed by the findings from Social Baseline, the Focus Group Discussion and the Individual Interview conducted with women from the Kvantaski Market and two interviews with key informants as part of the socio-economic survey.

During the focus group and interviews, women expressed concerns about poor working conditions, lack of sanitary facilities, and experiences of harassment at the Kvantaski Market. They highlighted the need for safer work environments, fair access to job opportunities, and representation in decision-making processes. The women also shared their willingness to relocate to AFP, if conditions are improved, and security measures are strengthened.

These insights have directly shaped the following strategic actions within the AFP:

- Employment and Economic Empowerment;
- Promoting Women-Led Enterprises and Cooperatives;
- Facilitating Women`s Access to Local Procurement Opportunities;
- Capacity Building and Skills Development and
- Gender Sensitive Infrastructure and Workplace Safety.

3.1 Employment and Economic Empowerment

The AFP should prioritize gender-inclusive recruitment processes, ensuring that women have fair access to employment opportunities across all stages of the project. This includes roles in logistics, management, quality control, and field operations. Special efforts should be made to encourage applications from women in rural areas and marginalized communities.

To address the challenges identified in the focus group, AFP should implement workplace policies that promote safe and respectful working environments, including protection against harassment and discrimination. Gender-sensitive facilities, such as separate sanitary units and secure spaces for women, should be established to support their inclusion and safety.

3.2 Promoting Women-Led Enterprises and Cooperatives

Women from the focus group expressed a desire for greater economic opportunities and access to market spaces. To support this, AFP should actively promote the development and growth of women-led enterprises and cooperatives, particularly in the agricultural sector. Through targeted capacity-building programs, women entrepreneurs should receive training in business management, financial literacy, and sustainable agricultural practices. These initiatives are intended to empower women to expand their businesses, improve product quality, and access larger markets through the AFP network.

Additionally, AFP should facilitate networking opportunities and mentorship programs, connecting women entrepreneurs with experienced business leaders and potential investors. This strategic support aims to increase women's economic independence and enable their active contribution to local and regional economies.

3.3 Facilitating Women's Access to Local Procurement Opportunities

To further enhance women's economic participation, AFP should prioritize women's access to procurement opportunities within its supply chain. This could include encouraging women-owned businesses to supply goods and services for AFP operations, ranging from agricultural products to logistical support and facility maintenance.

AFP should work closely with local women's cooperatives and associations to identify potential suppliers and streamline their participation in procurement processes. Information sessions and training workshops should be organized to build capacity and understanding of procurement standards, enabling women-led businesses to compete effectively.

3.4 Capacity Building and Skills Development

To enhance women's participation and ensure their safety within the AFP, targeted capacity-building and infrastructure improvements are essential. Regular training programs should be conducted to strengthen women's technical skills, financial literacy, and business management capabilities. These initiatives would empower women to actively engage in AFP operations and contribute to its economic activities. Additionally, workshops on gender sensitivity and workplace safety should be organized for all staff and contractors to promote a culture of respect and inclusiveness.

3.5. Gender-Sensitive Infrastructure and Workplace Safety

To further support women's involvement, AFP facilities should be designed with gender-sensitive considerations, including separate sanitary facilities and safe working environments. Implementing specific workplace safety measures that address women's health and security needs is crucial for creating a supportive and secure atmosphere. These steps are aimed at providing women with equitable opportunities while ensuring their well-being and protection within AFP operations.

4. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND AWARENESS

Stakeholder engagement is crucial for the effective implementation of the GAP at the AFP. Engaging with local women's groups, cooperatives, and community organizations helps ensure their voices are heard and their needs are considered. The AFP aims to raise awareness about gender equality, women's rights, and anti-discrimination measures through community outreach and informational sessions. These initiatives encourage women's involvement in project activities, providing opportunities for participation, training, and leadership. This approach promotes inclusivity and strengthens community development within the AFP.

5. GAP IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

The **GAP Implementation Table** outlines the key proposed actions, objectives, timelines, and responsibilities necessary to promote gender equality and empower women within the AFP project. It serves as a structured roadmap for translating gender-sensitive strategies into practical measures, ensuring that women have equal opportunities in employment, decision-making, and economic participation. The table also highlights monitoring mechanisms to track progress, address challenges, and ensure compliance with national and international gender equality standards. Through coordinated

efforts among stakeholders, the implementation of the GAP aims to create a safe, inclusive, and empowering environment for women in all phases of the project.

Gender Action Plan Implementation Table

Measure/Action	Objective	Implementation Timeline	Responsibility	Monitoring and Verification	Legislative Reference
Promote equal employment opportunities for women in AFP operations	Increase women's participation in the workforce	Operational Phase	Operator, Contractors	Employment records, gender-disaggregated data	Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men
Facilitate market access for women-led businesses and cooperatives	Support women's economic empowerment	Operational Phase	Operator, Local Government	Market access records, surveys with women-led businesses	Labour Law of North Macedonia
Conduct gender sensitivity and workplace safety training	Enhance awareness and protection of women in the workplace	Pre-Construction and Operational Phase	Operator, Contractors	Training attendance sheets, feedback forms	Law on Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination
Implement gender-sensitive infrastructure at AFP facilities	Ensure safe and accessible facilities for women	Pre-Construction and Operational Phase	Operator, Design Team	Site inspections, facility assessments	Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men
Establish a grievance mechanism for gender-based issues	Provide safe channels for reporting gender-related grievances	Operational Phase	Operator, MAFWE	Grievance log, resolution reports	CEDAW, ECHR
Support local women's groups and cooperatives through capacity building	Strengthening women's skills and participation in AFP activities	Pre-Construction and Operational Phase	Operator, Local NGOs	Training records, community engagement reports	Labour Law of North Macedonia
Ensure compliance with labor laws and non-discrimination policies	Promote fair treatment and equal opportunities for women	Operational Phase	Operator, Contractors, MAFWE	Audit reports, site inspections, staff interviews	Law on Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is a vital component of the GAP for the AFP. This framework is designed to systematically measure progress in promoting gender equality and empowering women throughout the project lifecycle. By establishing gender-sensitive indicators, it enables effective tracking of women's participation, access to opportunities, and inclusion in decision-making processes. Regular monitoring and evaluation ensure that gender-focused initiatives are impactful and aligned with project objectives. The findings from these assessments will be used to refine strategies, address gaps, and enhance the overall effectiveness and sustainability of gender-sensitive measures within AFP. The GAP Implementation Table outlines specific indicators for monitoring the effective implementation of the Gender Action Plan.

7. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The successful implementation of the GAP for the Agri-Food Platform (AFP) requires a well-structured framework of responsibilities among key stakeholders. Each responsible party plays a crucial role in ensuring that gender equality principles are effectively integrated into project activities. This includes promoting women's participation, ensuring safe and inclusive work environments, and addressing gender-specific challenges in line with national and international standards.

The involvement of project operators, government institutions, local authorities, community organizations, and civil society partners is essential for achieving the objectives of the GAP. Their coordinated efforts help create an enabling environment where women can access economic opportunities, participate in decision-making processes, and work in safe and dignified conditions.

Clear roles and responsibilities not only support effective implementation but also contribute to monitoring progress, ensuring accountability, and addressing any gaps or issues that may arise during the project lifecycle. This collective commitment to gender equality strengthens the social impact of AFP and aligns with its mission to promote sustainable and inclusive development.

To ensure effective implementation of the GAP in the Agri-Food Platform (AFP), the following key parties are recommended to take specific responsibilities:

The AFP Operator should take responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of the GAP, prioritizing gender-sensitive recruitment, workplace safety, and equal opportunities for women. This should include maintaining secure and inclusive work environments, providing appropriate facilities, and preventing harassment or discrimination. Additionally, the Operator is expected to monitor compliance with gender-sensitive policies in procurement and employment, ensuring fair participation for women-led enterprises in AFP activities. The Operator also holds primary responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of GAP measures.

A Gender Focal Point (GFP) should be appointed within the AFP Operator team to oversee all gender-related activities. The GFP should act as a liaison between women employees, women-led enterprises, and community women, ensuring that their concerns are heard and addressed. This role includes monitoring gender-sensitive practices within AFP operations and ensuring that any grievances related to gender issues are promptly managed and resolved.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (MAFWE) / PMT should provide oversight and support in implementing gender-sensitive policies that are aligned with national regulations. It should ensure that the GAP is consistent with broader agricultural and socio-economic policies. Additionally, MAFWE is expected to collaborate with the AFP Operator for effective monitoring and reporting on gender-based indicators, contributing to the overall success of gender equality measures within the project.

The Local Government of Gazi Baba in cooperation with the municipalities of Arachinovo and Ilinden should play a crucial role in supporting local engagement and outreach activities, especially for rural women. This includes facilitating community awareness programs focused on women's rights and economic opportunities at AFP. Furthermore, the local government is expected to participate in monitoring visits and community consultations to ensure inclusive representation and address community concerns effectively.

NGOs and Women's Associations should collaborate in capacity-building programs aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs and cooperatives. These organizations are expected to support awareness campaigns and training programs that promote gender equality and women's rights. They should also act as key partners in identifying vulnerable women and helping to facilitate their inclusion in AFP activities, ensuring that marginalized voices are represented and supported.

The Environmental and Social Monitoring Team should be responsible for monitoring compliance with gender-sensitive infrastructure and workplace safety at AFP. The team is expected to ensure that grievance mechanisms are accessible and responsive to gender-related issues. Additionally, ESMT should

regularly report on progress, identify any gaps in implementation, and recommend necessary improvements to strengthen gender equality within the project.

8. GRIEVANCE MECHANISM FOR GENDER-BASED ISSUES

This GAP is an integral part of the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) for the Agri-Food Platform. The GAP outlines specific measures to promote gender equality, empower women, and prevent discrimination throughout the project lifecycle. It aligns with the broader environmental and social objectives of the ESMP by ensuring that gender considerations are systematically integrated into project planning, implementation, and monitoring.

The GAP not only addresses gender-specific vulnerabilities but also enhances women's participation in decision-making and economic activities linked to AFP operations. Its implementation is closely monitored within the ESMP framework, using gender-sensitive indicators and regular evaluations to track progress and effectiveness. Furthermore, the grievance mechanism established under the ESMP is gender-responsive, providing safe and accessible channels for women to report concerns and seek resolution.

Through this integration, the GAP strengthens the social impact of the ESMP, contributing to inclusive development and ensuring that the benefits of the project are equitably shared among all community members.

The Grievance Mechanism under the ESMP for AFP is designed to provide a safe and accessible way for all stakeholders, including women, to report concerns or complaints. This mechanism is linked with the GAP to ensure that gender-based issues, such as discrimination or harassment, are handled with sensitivity and confidentiality.

Key features include:

- Easy Access: Women and other stakeholders can easily report issues.
- Confidential and Safe: Complaints are handled privately to protect those who report.
- Gender-Sensitive Handling: Issues affecting women are addressed with care and understanding.
- Monitoring and Follow-up: All complaints are tracked, and solutions are implemented to improve conditions.

This connection between the ESMP and GAP helps ensure that women's voices are heard and their concerns are addressed effectively.

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ANNEX 2 FORM FOR SUBMITTING COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ESMP

Form for submitting comments and suggestions for ESMP	
Main description of the project **Electronic version and hard copy of (Name of the Document) are available on**: ➢ Sub-project Proponent Notice Board Contact Person: Address: Phone number: e-mail: ➢ Sub-project Proponent (web page) ➢ Project Office WB (web page) Contact Person: Address: Phone number: e-mail:	
If you have any comments/suggestions or amendments to the proposed measures of (Name of the Document), please submit it to the responsible persons from the List in the 14 days period after the announcement of (Name of the Document) (date of announcement: ……)	
Please, submit your comments (grey fields) for improvement of (Name of the Document) submit it on the mentioned e-mail addresses of the responsible persons for the project implementation (PMT responsible person for communication with the stakeholders)	
Referent number: _____ (fulfilled by the responsible persons for the project implementation)	
Name and surname of the person who provides comment*	
Contact information*	**E-mail:** _____ **Phone:**_____
Comment:	
Signature _____	**Date** _____

ANNEX 3 CONSTRUCTION PHASE GRIEVANCE FORM FOR AFP PROJECT IN GAZI BABA

Reference Number	
Full name (optional) ☐ **I wish to raise my grievance anonymously.** ☐ **I request not to disclose my identity without my consent.**	
Contact information **Please mark how you wish to be contacted (mail, telephone, e-mail).**	☐ **By E-mail:** _____ ☐ **By telephone:** _____ ☐ **By Post:** ***Please provide mailing address:*** _____ _____
Preferred language of communication	☐ **Macedonian** ☐ **Albanian** ☐ **Other:** _____
Gender	☐ **Male** ☐ **Female**

Description of Incident for Grievance	What happened? Where did it happen? Whom did it happen to? What is the result of the problem?

Date of Incident / Grievance	
	☐ **One-time incident/grievance (date _____)** ☐ **Happened more than once (how many times? _____)** ☐ **On-going (currently experiencing problem)**
What would you like to see happen?	

Signature: _____
Date: _____

Please return this form to:
Attention: _____
E-mail: _____
Agriculture Modernization Project (AMP)
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
Str. Aminta III no.2, 1000 Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia

ANNEX 4 GRIEVANCE LOG TEMPLATE

Grievances				*Grievance resolution*		
ID.	*Name Surname / Contact details of person that reported grievance*	*Date received*	*Details of complaint/comment*	*Responsibility*	*Actions taken*	*Date resolved*