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# WB21-MKD-ENE-03

North Macedonia, Strengthening the Transmission Network in the Southeast Region of North Macedonia - Component 1

# Stakeholder Engagement Plan

September 2022





Infrastructure Project Facility, Technical Assistance 7, TA2017050 R0 IPA

The Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) is a financing facility launched in December 2009 by the European Commission, together with the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the European Investment Bank (EIB), Bilateral Donors, and Western Balkans countries with the purpose to deliver funding for strategic investment projects in beneficiary countries. Eligible sectors include infrastructure development in the environment, energy, transport, social and digital sectors as well as private sector development. KfW and the World Bank subsequently joined the Framework. In July 2017, the KfW became a partner organisation.

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# **Abbreviations**

Abbreviation	Meaning
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ESP	Environmental and Social Policy
ESMP	Environment and Social Management Plan
EEP	Elaborate for Environmental Protection
EU	European Union
GIIP	Good International Industry Practice
IFI	International Financing Institution
IPAM	EBRD's Independent Project Accountability Mechanism
IPF7	Infrastructure Project Facility, Technical Assistance 7
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
LARF	Land Acquisition and Resettlement Framework
МоЕРР	Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning
MW	Mega Watt
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NTS	Non-Technical Summary
OG	Official gazette
PAP	Project Affected Persons
PR	Performance Requirement
PUE	Public Utility Enterprise
RES	Renewable Energy Sources
RNM	Republic of North Macedonia
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SPP	Solar Power Plant
WBIF	Western Balkans Investment Framework
WPP	Wind Power Plant



#### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Project Context

This document is Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), and it was developed by Electricity Transmission System Operator of the Republic of North Macedonia (hereinafter referred to as "MEPSO") in order to clearly communicate to all interested and affected parties the stakeholder engagement program, which is to be implemented throughout the entire Project cycle.

The Project consists of two components as further described in Section 2 below. This SEP refers to the Project including both components, either individually or as a package.

This SEP describes the engagement activities being undertaken for the Project during planning, construction and operation. It has been prepared alongside the E&S documentation, for the purposes of the Project.

This SEP also includes recommendations for stakeholder's engagement and information disclosure in relation to COVID-19.

#### 1.2 Objective and Scope of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan was developed by MEPSO in order to clearly communicate to all interested and affected parties the stakeholder engagement program, which is to be implemented throughout the entire Project cycle. The SEP identifies relevant stakeholders, defines communication channels and plans regarding the construction of the planned project.

The objective of this SEP is to improve and facilitate Project-related decision-making and create opportunities for active involvement of all stakeholders in a timely manner, and to provide possibilities for all stakeholders to voice their opinions and concerns that may influence Project decisions. The purpose of the SEP is, therefore, to enhance stakeholder engagement throughout the life cycle of the Project, and to carry out stakeholder engagement in line with the Macedonian laws, as well as the requirements of EBRD's Environmental and Social Policy (ESP), 2019 and Performance Requirement 10

This SEP will be updated as necessary.



# 2. Project Description

#### 2.1 Background and Project Objective

In order to meet the goals of the European Union for the integration of energy from Renewable Energy Sources (RES), North Macedonia makes efforts to maximize the integration of these energy sources into the national power system. Due to the favourable climate conditions, the investments in the RES (wind power, solar power and hydropower) are most cost-effective in the south-eastern region of North Macedonia. Therefore, it is expected that the most significant investments in utilization of RES are/will be located mostly in this region (Figure below).

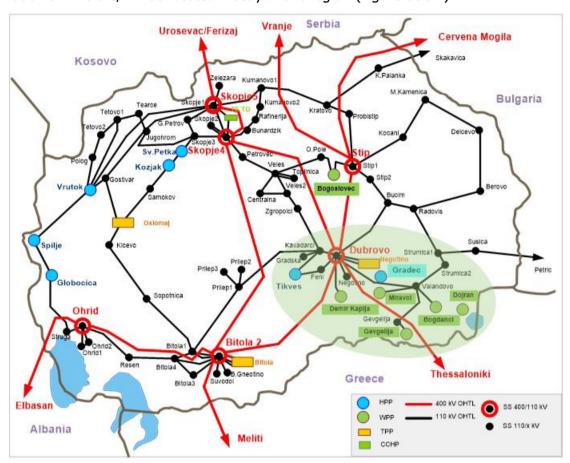


Figure 2.1: Macedonian grid and project area mid-term topology

Source: MEPSO

Note: The Project region is depicted in green pattern

MEPSO already faces several requests for new connections of RES in the local transmission grid in the wider Project region. Newly installed capacities of RES – wind power plants (WPP), big and small hydro power plants (HPP) as well as solar power plants (SPP) - up to 350 MW, are expected in a mid-term horizon in this region. In addition, new WPP - 536 MW, HPP - 185 MW SPP - 250 MW are foreseen until year 2040, in a long-term horizon.

Transmission grid in the southeast region of Macedonia (110 kV transmission line Dubrovo – Valandovo – Strumica 2 – Strumica 1, approx 57.5 km long line) is approaching the end of the lifecycle and lacks capacity for connection of new renewable electricity sources to the network. As such, it is a candidate for reconstruction due to ageing process. In addition, in the midterm forecasted regimes, there are contingency cases with a higher risk to the security of supply.



The main objective of the Project is the strengthening the transmission network in the Southeast Region of North Macedonia. The Project is expected to provide:

- Increased security of supply, and
- Secure and reliable integration of planned RES in the southeast region of the country, which consequently contribute towards reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

# 2.2 Project Components

The Project consists of the following two components:

- Design, construction and operation of a new 400/110 kV substation Miletkovo at approximate distance of 8 km from the existing 110/35 kV substation Valandovo, in the area of the village Miletkovo. This new substation will be connected with the existing 110 kV transmission network in the Project region and with the existing 400 kV transmission line Dubrovo Thessalonica (GR), by in-out connection (Component 1 or Subproject 1).
- Reconstruction of the existing 110 kV transmission line Valandovo Strumica 2 –
   Strumica 1 by upgrading its transmission capacity (Component 2 or Sub-project 2).

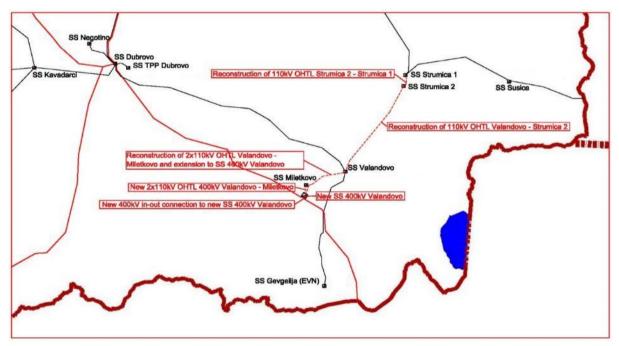


Figure 2.2: Elements of the Project



# 3. Regulatory Requirements for Stakeholder Engagement

#### 3.1 National Legislation for Stakeholder Engagement

Requirements for public disclosure and consultation activities, related to preparation of project documentation and related strategic and other studies are covered under the following laws:

- Law on Spatial and Urban Planning<sup>1</sup> regulates the system of spatial and urban development of Macedonia, including public information and participation throughout the process of development and adoption of urban and spatial planning documents.
- Law on Environment<sup>2</sup>. This law and its associated secondary legislation set out the requirements for undertaking environmental impact assessment (EIA) of potential environmental impacts of public and private projects which are likely to have a significant impact on the environment before development consent / construction permit is granted in the form of approval for project implementation.

In summary, the procedures for disclosure and consultations include the following steps:

- The public is informed about details of disclosure of the draft plan/document (where the hard copy is available for review, the dates and time when it can be reviewed) through the media and citizens/organizations are invited to send comments and/or attend public consultations;
- Public consultations are held in an appropriate local venue (e.g. city hall) and the plan/document is presented;
- Comments received from all stakeholders are processed and the plan/document is revised to reflect them. A report on which comments have been adopted and which have not, with a justification, is delivered together with the draft plan/document to relevant authorities who judge whether the comments have been meaningfully considered and addressed;
- All comments are responded to in written form.

The public has to be involved in every stage of the EIA procedure and all decisions made during the process must be published in the appropriate media, web sites of the relevant governmental bodies (national/local) and newspapers on the Macedonian language and the language of dominant ethnic community. The following documents are to be publicly disclosed as part of the EIA procedure:

- Notification of intent for project implementation
- EIA Screening & Scoping Decision
- Announcement of Availability of the Environmental Impact Assessment Study (EIA Study)
- MoEPP Decision on granting consent to, or rejecting the application for the project.

However, based on the respective screening procedure carried out for the purposes of the Project, both components of the Project have been categorised as non-EIA projects. Hence, MEPSO will be requested to prepare a Report ('Elaborate') for Environment Protection<sup>3</sup> for each of the components, in compliance with the requirements stipulated in the Macedonian Law on the Environment.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, no. 32/20

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, no. 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, 129/15, 192/15, 39/16 and 99/18

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> In Macedonian: `Елаборат за заштита на животната средина'.



For these non-EIA projects, the following documents will be publicly disclosed, in line with local legislation:

- Notification of intent for project implementation
- EIA Screening Decision

Other applicable laws which foresee disclosure of project information or enable access to information, including mechanisms for grievances and appeals, include:

- The Law on Construction<sup>4</sup>
- The Law on Access to Public Information<sup>5</sup>
- The Law on Acting upon Complaints and Proposals<sup>6</sup>.
- The Expropriation Law<sup>7</sup>.

In 1999, North Macedonia signed up to the terms of the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (1998). The Aarhus Convention grants the public rights regarding access to information, public participation and access to justice, in governmental decision-making processes on matters concerning the local, national and transboundary environment. It focuses on interactions between the public and public authorities.

#### 3.2 EBRD Environmental and Social Policy

EBRD has set out a comprehensive set of specific Performance Requirements (PRs) that projects are expected to meet. PR 10 (Information Disclosure and Stakeholder Engagement) of EBRD's Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) 2019 emphasises the importance of an open and transparent engagement between the project, its workers, local communities directly affected by the project and other stakeholders as an essential element of good international practice and corporate citizenship. Stakeholder engagement involves stakeholder identification and analysis, stakeholder engagement planning, disclosure of information, consultation and participation, a grievance mechanism, and ongoing reporting to relevant stakeholders.

In accordance with PR 10, projects are required to develop and implement a Stakeholder Engagement Plan appropriate to the nature and scale of the risks, impacts and development stage of the project, and conduct stakeholder engagement on the basis of providing local communities that are directly affected by the project and other relevant stakeholders with access to timely, relevant, understandable and accessible information.

EBRD requires that project developers establish and maintain an effective grievance mechanism, ensuring that any stakeholder complaints and concerns are received, handled and resolved effectively, in a prompt and timely manner.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, 130/09, 124/10, 18/11, 36/11, 54/11, 13/12, 144/12, 25/13, 70/13, 79/13, 137/13, 150/13, 163/13, 27/14, 28/14, 42/14, 115/14, 149/14, 187/14, 44/15, 129/15, 30/16, 31/16, 39/16, 71/16, 132/16 and 35/18)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, no. 13/06, 86/08, 06/10, 42/14, 148/15, and Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, no. 101/19

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, no. 82/08, 13/13, 156/15, 193/15

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" no. 95/12, 131/12, 24/13, 27/14, 104/15, 192/15, 23/16, 178/16



# 4. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

Key stakeholders who are to be informed and consulted about the Project are:

- A) Affected or likely to be affected by the project (Project-affected parties); and
- B) May have an interest in the project (Other interested parties).

#### 4.1 Stakeholder Identification

The following table presents the stakeholder identification and analysis of the approach for communicating these individual stakeholders.

Identified stakeholder	Specific issues or interests	Communication and engagement objective	Communication and engagement methods			
Project-affected parties						
<ul> <li>Local residents:</li> <li>a) living in the project footprint whose property will be affected with project activities</li> <li>b) whose property will be affected with project activities, but living outside of the project footprint</li> <li>c) Whose paths of movement will be affected during the construction or during operation of the transmission line</li> </ul>	Acquisition of property (Land, Crops and objects)  Potential interest in health issues related to project  Disruption of daily routine and paths of movement of people	and other relevant local authorities	Communication during the process of land acquisition and/or resettlement, within the possibilities.  Online presentation materials.  Media/press releases.  Online social media (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram), Official website, Viber & WhatsApp, other.  Telephone calls.  Direct email communication.  Public and individual consultation meetings, if possible.  Public announcement on visible public locations along the alignment (stores, schools, markets)  Disclosing information on the extent, timing and duration of planned works and any expected disruptions and inconveniences on the central bulletin board of the five affected municipalities, at least two weeks prior to the start of any construction works, and a week prior any significant change in the construction phase that is of particular interest to the local affected population			
<b>Businesses</b> that will be directly affected with the project and whose operation relies upon this project, either by and assets acquisition process or by connecting to the	Acquisition of property (Land, Crops and objects)  Disruption of estab-	Providing timely information on risks and disturbances associated with the construction and	Media/press releases.  Online social media (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram), Official website, Viber & WhatsApp, oth-			



Identified stakeholder	Specific issues or interests	Communication and engagement objective	Communication and engage- ment methods
grid.	lished routine and paths of movement of transport of workforce and materials  Operational matters: integration into the grid	operation period	er. Direct email communication. Public and individual consultatior meetings, if possible.
Other interested parties	.5		1
<b>General public</b> in the affected municipality and wider	Existence of Project related construction activities.	Providing timely information on Pro- ject benefits and risks	Online presentation materials. Media/press releases. Public consultation meetings, if possible. Online social media (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram), Official website, Viber & WhatsApp, other.
Relevant government authorities, ministries and public institutions, including:  • Ministry of Infrastructure and Communication  • Ministry of Finance  • Ministry of Economy  • Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning  • Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy  • Ministry of Labour, and Social Policy  • Ministry of Culture  • State Labour Inspectorate  • State Environmental Inspectorate  • Ministry of Interior  • Institution for Protection of Cultural Heritage  • National Energetic Resources  • Municipalities: Valandovo, Strumica, Gevgelija  • Local Public Utility Companies in all three municipalities	control of compli- ance with local legis- lation	Consultations with relevant government authorities concerning Project activities in the framework of permitting procedures  Reporting based on national legislation requirements	Online individual consultation
Interested non-governmental organizations (NGOs) Environmental NGOs, Social Welfare NGOs, Other NGOs  All organizations that have not yet demonstrated a specific interest in this Project, shall be provided with opportunities to voice their opinions or concerns throughout Project preparation and implementation.  Note: Any organizations interested	in protection of the environment and human health	Providing timely information, com- munication and consultations	Online individual consultation meetings as necessary. Public consultation meetings, if possible Direct email communication Media/ press releases  Online social media (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram), Official website, Viber & WhatsApp, other.



Identified stakeholder	Specific issues or	Communication and engagement	Communication and engage-
Tueritarieu stakeriolaer	interests	objective	ment methods
in the Project can send their contact details to the PIU to be included in the Table of NGO/CSOs provided in Annex 4 of this SEP and notified directly about Project events.			
MEPSO employees (and PIU), and relevant Trade Unions	Stakeholders of high significance for the Project's success who are directly or indirectly engaged in Project planning and implementation	information about the planned Project activities	MEPSO internal communication channels. Trainings as necessary.
Contractors or subcontractors during construction, monitoring and supervision of works, and their employees, and maintenance related workers	Stakeholders of high	code of conduct and work safety and health regulations, environmental pro-	Information through tender procedure and contracts. Communication via supervising engineers. Toolbox talks at construction sites on health and safety topics. Monthly reports on progress of works to be submitted by contractors during construction works. Trainings. Email communication.
Businesses	Involvement in development of the project activities suitable to their needs and capacities	Informed businesses who will need to adjust their investments and operations to the planned outcomes of the project	
Donors and Other International and Supranational Organizations  The European Union  Western Balkans Investment Framework  Other	Stakeholders of high significance for the Project's success who are directly or indirectly engaged and involved in project planning and financing of its implementation	Realization of the addressed support and finances	Direct email communication.  Media/ press releases. Online social media (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram), Official website, Viber & WhatsApp. Public consultation meetings, if possible.

Table 4.1: Stakeholder Analysis and Communication Requirements

# 4.2 Disadvantaged / Vulnerable Individuals or Groups

Disadvantaged / vulnerable individuals or groups are potentially disproportionally affected and less able to benefit from opportunities offered by the project due to specific difficulties to access and/or understand information about the project and its environmental and social impacts and mitigation strategies.

During assessments and preparation of this SEP, potential groups in the wide area around the project who might be affected by this project, differently due to their gender, age, ethnicity, religion and other cultural, physical or other attributes (i.e. due to the digital divide, without internet ac-



cess, rural areas, poor farmers), were examined. This assessment shows that there are no vulnerable or disadvantaged individuals in the project affected area that will be affected with the activities of this project and/or might require different channels of communication.

Hence, if MEPSO, during project implementation, identifies vulnerable groups affected by this project, it will be added to this SEP and appropriate communication methods will be identified and engagement activities will be conducted with this vulnerable group/s.

#### 4.3 Gender Considerations

Gender considerations have been incorporated into the SEP and the future engagement methods. Engagement activities are designed to allow women to participate, i.e. focus groups and workshops. There are multiple methods for women to get involved in consultations and provide feedback on different aspects of the Project. Women will be consulted on the Project activities, further details on consultation methods are provided in Section 6 of this document.



# 5. Previous Stakeholder Engagement Activities

In order to ascertain appropriate project option and accordingly project design that will meet all business and IFIs requirements, as well as the requirements from technical aspects, MEPSO has started the consultation process with institutional stakeholders at an early phase.

In late September 2021, there was a serial of meetings with administration from the affected municipalities, as well as their local Public Utility Companies and local museums. The objective behind these meetings was the idea to present the Project, its components and activities that will be undertaken in this regard to the institutional stakeholders that will be affected the most and who can provide relevant information during the main design, as well as support for successful realization of planned project activities during the construction phase.

The main purpose of these consultations was to seek feedback from the key statutory stakeholders in regard to the suitability and acceptability of the proposed preferred Project option, with emphasis to the key spatial planning, environmental and social constraints that may influence the further development process of the Project.

MEPSO agreed with the concerned municipalities to closely cooperate for obtaining necessary administrative permits and information within their domain of authority, for the needs of the further Project development and implementation.

Additionally, online presentation to the institutional stakeholders on a national level (ministries) was conducted, following the Project presentations held with municipalities in live.

Municipalities were communicated in direction of establishing cooperation regarding this project and information share regarding available project documentation and request to publish the same documentation on the municipal websites (or share a link to original project's website).

A leaflet giving the key Project information was prepared in the course of the Project's E&S assessment. Distribution of the leaflet to the local population in the concerned municipalities was conducted by MEPSO's Public Relations team.

In addition to this, printed copies of Project documentation (SEP and Scoping report) were set disposed at a designated location in all three municipalities.

An overview of the stakeholder consultation process to date is given in Appendix 5.



# **6. Stakeholder Engagement Programme**

#### 6.1 COVID-19

The new situation with the outbreak of the pandemic COVID-19 disease, caused by SARS-CoV-2 virus, changed the familiar and widely used methods for information disclosure and stakeholder engagement.

In order to avoid, to the maximum extent where possible, the exposure to the risk of transmission of the infection, the stakeholder engagement and information disclosure methods for this project were tailored in accordance to the recommendations given by the most relevant international and national health organizations and relevant actors who are modelling and defining the good international industry practice (GIIP).

EBRD has published a good practice guide on <u>public consultation during the Covid-19 pandemic</u>. A list of websites on public consultations and information disclosure in the COVID-19 times, as well as GIIP, is presented in Appendix 6.

# **6.2 Proposed Strategy for Information Disclosure and Consultation**

For the Project's purposes, MEPSO will use different methods of stakeholder engagement approach in order to ensure continuous communication with all interested stakeholders and to make all necessary information available and accessible to the public. MEPSO, in cooperation with the affected municipalities, as well as local communities affected by the Project will ensure that local residents and businesses living or operating in the vicinity of the Project footprint are regularly informed about the Project development especially addressing start of construction activities and its impacts on the local residents and businesses.

In order to present the Project design and to inform the interested and affected stakeholders on the potential impacts and mitigation measures that are planned to be implemented in this regard, MEPSO will carry out public consultations and information dissemination that will reflect main issues of relevance to the Project in all three municipalities. If circumstances allow, these consultations will be held with physical presence (with full implementation of COVID 19 protection measures), otherwise online method and means will be used.

MEPSO will inform all stakeholders about the exact date, time and venue where and how the presentation will be held, at least 7 days in advance (but preferably 2 weeks), by disclosure through the social media, websites of the MEPSO and three municipalities, local media (newspapers, online news portals) and the bulletin boards of the municipality. The announcement of the online public meeting will also, be posted in the affected settlements, in order to specifically target the local population living in these communities. In addition, NGOs listed in Annex 4 to this SEP will be directly contacted and informed of the public disclosure event.

It is foreseen, also, a separate disclosure event to be held online where E&S disclosure package shall be promoted and discussion upon it will be conducted live on available free communication platforms with the interested stakeholders and people who will register to participate.

An E&S Public disclosure package for Project, on English and Macedonian language, will contain:



- Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP),
- Non-technical Summary (NTS)
- Land Acquisition Resettlement Framework (LARF).

All project promotional documentation will be published on <u>MEPSO</u> web site, and the web sites of <u>Municipality of Valandovo</u>, <u>Municipality of Strumica</u> and <u>Municipality of Gevgelija</u>. Documents will be prepared in English and Macedonian language and available upon their official approval. Documents will remain disclosed throughout the project life cycle. All interested parties can comment on the presented documentation for the given period of thirty days.

Documents will be also disclosed on the EBRD website during a disclosure period as required by the EBRD's Environmental and Social Policy and will remain publicly available throughout the life of the Project. All interested parties can comment on the presented documentation for the given disclosure period.

The presentation of the E&S documentation for the project will be aimed at providing information to the public about the construction and operation of the planned motorway.

All justified comments and proposals will be considered and appropriately addressed. The PIU will publish a summary report of all relevant issues raised, including explanations for inclusion or exclusion of proposals.

All available Project information and documents will be disclosed to the public at least 2 weeks in advance of any planned presentation event. If necessary, separate online and individual meetings and direct communication will be held to ensure that the stakeholder engagement is gender and ethnic minority responsive.

A summary of all stakeholder engagement and disclosure requirements listed above is provided in Table below.

	Activity	Timing/further detail	Responsibility
1	Organise at least three online/in live public consultation meetings for Project Presentation to the public and non-institutional stake-holders.  Encourage written proposals and comments. Provide timely access to the doc-	Stakeholders will be informed about the exact date, time and venue where a meeting will be held, at least seven days in advance (but preferably 14 days), by disclosure through the websites of the MEPSO, local media and the bulletin boards of the Municipalities, as well as affected settlements. Registration for online meetings will be mandatory.	MEPSO/PIU
	uments before any meeting (at least 2 weeks)	NGOs listed in Annex 4 to this SEP will be directly contacted and informed of the online public meeting.	
2	Ensure that the following Project documents are published on the websites of MEPSO and three municipalities:  This SEP  E&S Assessment Report  Land Acquisition and Resettlement Framework  Project Grievance Form and Public Grievance Leaflet  Non-technical Summary  Environmental and Social Management and Monitoring Plan  National EIA	All available Project information and documents will be disclosed to the public as soon as available, but at least 2 weeks in advance prior to the public meeting.	MEPSO/PIU



	Activity	Timing/further detail	Responsibility
	Print and keep hard copies of documents at premises of MEPSO, and Municipalities of Valandovo, Strumica and Gevgelija.		, and the second
3	Organise individual consultation meetings	As needed or requested by the MEPSO, Municipality or by any identified stakehold- er groups/individuals	MEPSO /PIU
4	Document all opinions, remarks and possible solutions with regards to the Project raised by stakeholders during consultation meetings, and address appropriately		MEPSO /PIU
5	Publicize information about the ex- tent, timing and duration of planned construction works, and any expected disruptions and inconveniences via the websites of the MEPSO and af- fected municipalities		MEPSO /PIU
6	Publicise relevant information regarding project activities via the websites of the MEPSO and affected municipalities, as well as at the visible locations throughout the affected local communities		MEPSO /PIU and Contractor

Table 6.1: Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Disclosure Requirements

#### **6.3** Future Project Phases

Throughout the life of the Project, MEPSO, PIU and the Contractor(s) engaged to undertake the Project will continue to engage with stakeholders and this Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be updated to reflect Project progress. The SEP will be updated annually and prior to construction commencing. Issues raised during the construction process will be documented and a response provided through the mechanisms described in this SEP.

Printed copies of E&S public disclosure package will be available in MEPSO premises. In addition, printed copies of E&S Report and relevant project documents will be available on construction site, the Contractor's office, upon beginning of construction works and the affected municipality.

During construction, Information Boards will be installed at the entrance of larger affected settlement by the main Contractor, and will serve as a media tool/channel for communications with the local residents. Information in relation to the Grievance Mechanism will also be included. The Contractor will secure sites prior to any construction activities taking place and will ensure appropriate construction and warning signs are in place. Contractor will place Grievance box on a visible place at the Construction site, along with printed copy of SEP and sufficient number of copies of Grievance form.

All presentation materials, as well as relevant project documentation, will be available on the website of <u>MEPSO</u>, during the lifetime of the project.

Any information regarding this project in the operational phase will be publicized on the MEPSO website, and social media it operates.



# 7. Resources and Responsibilities

A Project Implementation Unit (PIU) will be appointed by MEPSO which will be responsible for Project implementation, including implementation of the activities planned with this SEP. The PIU will incorporate necessary organizational structure, capacity and competencies, appropriate to the nature and scale of the Project and commensurate with the level of its environmental and social risks and impacts. The PIU will be in regular communication with EBRD.

For the purpose of effective realization of planned stakeholder engagement activities, the PIU will use its own financial means. The Contractor will be responsible for its own costs made on behalf of the required stakeholder engagement activities for this project.

A responsible person will be appointed by PIU for implementation of this SEP during the entire Project cycle, and in charge of communicating with the communities. Her/his contact information shall be updated if needed.

Contractor/s in charge of carrying out specific Project activities will also be required to implement the relevant provisions of SEP (for more details, see Chapter 6). The grievance mechanism requirements will be laid out in the tender documentation and contracts signed with the contractors.



#### 8. Grievance Mechanism

MEPSO, on behalf of this project, will establish a grievance procedure whereas all stakeholders will be informed on grievance mechanism, contact persons from MEPSO responsible for implementation of grievance mechanism as well as the forms of submitting complaints.

Project Grievance Leaflet and Grievance Form (Annex 1) is available on MEPSO and Municipalities (Valandovo, Strumica and Gevgelija) web sites and also in printed copies in the local MEPSO premises, as well as in premises of all three affected municipalities. In case if municipality receive grievances (in printed form or by e-mail) it will have to deliver those forms to MEPSO local project office within 3 days' period, who will immediately forward it to PIU for further processing. Additionally, any comments provided by stakeholders can be communicated personally or by telephone or in writing in the grievance form.

A Grievance Form may be also submitted to the Contractor in the stage of construction works. Grievance Leaflet and Form will be available on construction site on Macedonian language in printed forms whereas Leaflet will be hung on the construction site bulletin board in order to be visible to the public and interested parties. Contractor is obliged to forward all fulfilled grievances to the project's contact person in PIU.

All grievances will be recorded in a Grievance Registry (Annex 3) and acknowledged in 7 calendar day period. The stakeholder-complainant will be informed by MEPSO about proposed corrective measures and actions taken within 15 calendar days upon the acknowledgement of grievance. In case if MEPSO is not able to solve the issue or in case where action is not required MEPSO will provide explanation and justification to the complainant how to further proceed with the grievance in case if complainant is not satisfied with the outcome. Complaints can address other legal remedies in accordance to Macedonian national laws and regulations.

PIU, in cooperation with Supervision Engineer will monitor the way in which grievances will be handled and keep recording the process in Grievance Registry including those delivered by the Contractor whereas the Registry will serve as a basis for completion of grievance management reports that will be included into the Annual Environmental and Social reports to the Bank.

PIU will publish and regularly update all relevant documents and grievance procedures on MEPSO website as well as provide hard copies of Grievance Forms to the affected municipalities. PIU will provide feedback to all stakeholders who fulfilled Grievance form by e-mail or mail. PIU will communicate with all relevant stakeholders and will inform them about any changes in the project dynamics where all updates will be published on MEPSO and municipality's web sites and provided leaflets to the local communities in the affected project area.

At all times, complainants may seek other legal remedies in accordance with the legal framework of Republic of North Macedonia, including formal judicial appeal.

All projects financed by EBRD shall be structured to meet the requirements of the EBRD Environmental and Social Policy which includes ten Performance Requirements (PRs) for key areas of environmental and social sustainability that projects are required to meet, including PR10 Information Disclosure and Stakeholder Engagement. In addition, EBRD's Independent Project Accountability Mechanism (IPAM), as an independent last resort tool, aims to facilitate the resolution of social, environmental and public disclosure issues raised by Project-affected people and civil society organisations about EBRD financed projects among Project stakeholders or to determine whether the Bank has complied with its ESP and the Project-specific provisions of its Access to Information Pol-



icy; and where applicable to address any existing non-compliance with these policies, while preventing future non-compliance by the Bank.

# Contact information for enquiries and grievances:

Attention: Kabinet

Electricity Transmission System Operator of the Republic of North Macedonia (MEPSO)

Address: ul. Maksim Gorki 4, Skopje, North Macedonia

Tel: + 389 2 314 98 14

E-mail: info@mepso.com.mk

A separate grievance mechanism will be available for workers.



# 9. Monitoring and Reporting

MEPSO together with local authorities from the three affected municipalities will be responsible for monitoring PIU implementing activities in the sphere of Project's Stakeholder Engagement, as well as communication channels, particularly with the PAPs<sup>8</sup>.

In order to summarize stakeholder engagement process, the PIU will prepare separate monitoring report (Stakeholder Engagement Activities Report) whereas the first report should be produced six months upon start of the Project construction activities and will be continued on a semi-annual basis until competition of construction works. After Project completion PIU will develop annual Monitoring report during the operation phase. Monitoring reports should contain information about:

- Consultation meetings with stakeholders (place, time, issues discussed, mitigation measures provided by PIU)
- Grievances identified in the reporting period (and all detailed information about it)
- PIU will also report on stakeholder engagement activities (on annual basis), to the EBRD and WBIF.
- Each Stakeholder Engagement Activities Report for this Project will be published on the MEPSO web site for public review and further comments.

PIU will invite external monitoring by interested NGO/CSO in the local area to monitor implementation of SEP activities.

Indicators to be monitored during SEP implementation are:

- All stakeholders are communicated prior project activity starts.
- Dissemination of information availability and accessibility of Project documents; frequency of distribution of information, reached stakeholders;
- Realization of planned engagement activities the number and level of participation by specific stakeholder groups;
- Number of vulnerable groups identified and communicated
- Minutes of meetings created;
- Correction actions delivered;
- Numbers and type of grievances
- Compliance with the grievance mechanism Completed records in grievance log (Annex 3)
- Percentage of grievances resolved within prescribed timelines
- Number of repeated grievances.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> PAP - Project Affected Person: Person (whether natural or legal) experiencing either physical or economic displacement



#### **Annexes**

- Annex 1: Project Grievance Form
- Annex 2: Project Grievance Mechanism
- Annex 3: Project Grievance Register
- Annex 4: Contact Information of Identified Stakeholders
- Annex 5: Previous Stakeholder Engagement Activities
- Annex 6: List of Relevant COVID 19 Online Resources
- Annex 7: Distribution of printed project documentation to the municipalities and MEPSO's main
- premises

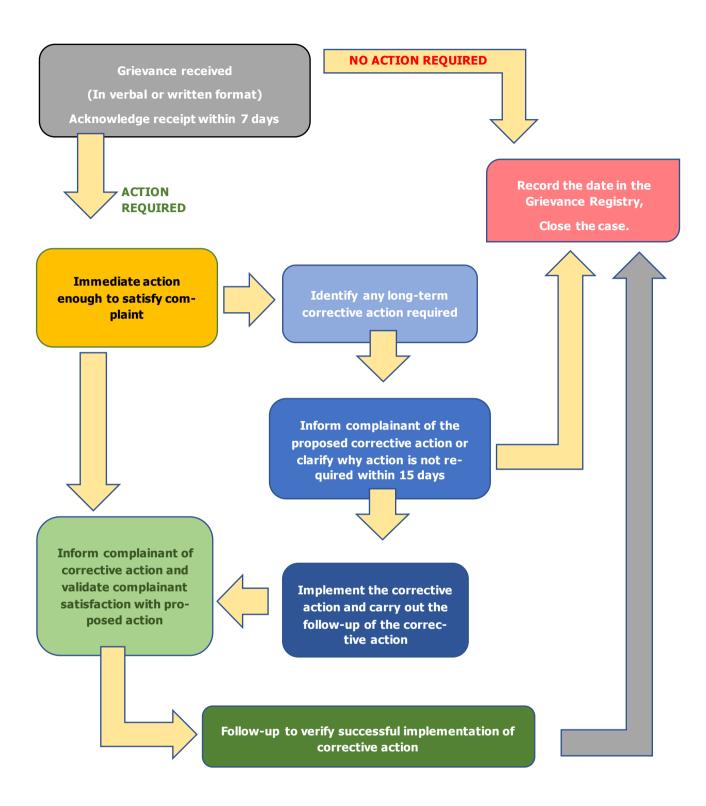


# **Annex 1: Project Grievance Form**

Reference No:			
Full Name and Sur- name:			
(You can remain <u>anony-</u> <u>mous</u> if you prefer or request not to disclose your identity to the third parties without your con- sent)			
Contact information:	By Post: (Please provide postal address)		
Please mark how you wish to be contacted (mail, telephone, e-mail)	• By phone:		
	By e-mail:		
Preferred language of communication:	Macedonian Other:		
<u>-</u>	<b>/grievance/complaint:</b> What happened? Where did it happen? at is the result of the problem?		
Date of inci- dent/grievance:	One-time incident/grievance (date)		
dent/grievance.	Happened more than once/how many times? ()		
	On-going/currently experiencing problem		
What would you like to	see happen to resolve the problem? Other comments?		
Signature:	Date:		
Please return this form to: Kabinet	erator of the Republic of North Macedonia (MEPSO)		
email: info@mepso.com.n	ul. Maksim Gorki br. 4,		
tel. + 389 2 314 98 14	1000 Skopje		
www.mepso.com.mk	Republic of North Macedonia		



# **Annex 2: Project Grievance Mechanism**





# **Annex 3: Project Grievance Register**

The Project Grievance Register, kept in digital format, as a spreadsheet file, should contain the following information:

#### **ENTRY:**

Initiation

Location of residence

Type of problem

Name and surname

Contact information

Date of entry

Acknowledgement for reciept of Grievance

#### **PROBLEM:**

Description of the Problem

Proposed solution

Actions to be undertaken for problem solving

#### **EXIT:**

Date of closure

Grievance's Follow-up

Results of the intervention

Recurrence Y/N



# **Annex 4: Contact Information of Identified Stakeholders**

Name of Stakeholder: (Organization/Institution/PAPs)	Contact data		
NGO/CSOs			
Macedonian Ecological Society (MES)	Boris Trajkovski, str.7, no.9A, 1000 Skopje Tel: (02) 2402 773, Fax: (02)2402 774 Mob: 078 371 175 contact@mes.org.mk		
The Ecologists' Movement of Macedonia (DEM)  - Skopje	Vasil Gorgov 39/6, 1000 Skopje Tel: (02) 3220-518 dem@dem.org.mk		
Centre for environmental research and information "Eko-svest" — Skopje	Nikola Kljusev 14, 1000 Skopje tel: (02) 3217-247 mob: 072 726-104 info@ekosvest.com.mk		
Front 21/42	Orce Nikolov 83A, 1000 Skopje Tel/Fax: (02) 3122-546 mob: 075 433-231 contact@front.org.mk		
Macedonian Green Centre	Bul.Vodnjanska 35/12, 1000 Skopje Tel/Fax: (02) 310-9373 Mob: 078 205 217 zeleni@zeleni.org.mk		
Bird Study and Protection Society of Macedo- nia	PMF - Gazi Baba BB, 1000 Skopje, 02/3117-055; 078/254-736 brankom@ukim.edu.mk		
Owl Protection Association	Jurij Gagarin 28-5/3, 1000 Skopje 070/999-859 macedonian.owl.trust@gmail.com		
GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS			
Ministry of Economy	ul. Jurij Gagarin 15, 1000 Skopje tel: +389 2 3085 347 e-mail: info@economy.gov.mk		
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy	ul. Aminta Treti br. 2 1000 Skopje tel: (02) 3134 477 info@mzsv.gov.mk		
Ministry of Finance	ul. Dame Gruev br.12 1000 Skopje Tel: +389 2 3255-300 finance@finance.gov.mk		
Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning	ul. Ploshtad Presveta Bogorodica br.3, Skopje infoeko@moepp.gov.mk www.moepp.gov.mkv		
Ministry for Transport and Communication	ul. Plostad Crvena Skopska Opstina br. 4, Skopje Tel: + 389 (0)2 3145 497 E-mail: <u>info@mtc.gov.mk</u> www.mtc.gov.mk		
Institution for Protection of Cultural Heritage	ul. Pavel Satev br. 3 1000 Skopje Tel: +389 2 551 7700 contact@uzkn.gov.mk www.uzkn.gov.mk		
AD Vodostopanstvo na RSM – Skopje	ul. 3-ta Makedonska Brigada br.10A, Skopje		



	* *
	tel: 02-5116-401 \ 02-5116402
	contact@vodostopanstvo.mk
	advodostopanstvoinvesticii@gmail.com
A1	ul. Plostad Presveta Bogorodica br. 1, Skopje
	komunikacii@a1.mk
	kontakt@a1.mk
Macedonian Telekom	ul. Kej 13-ti Noemvri br. 6, 1000 Skopje,
	IR@telekom.mk
	press@telekom.mk
EVN Makedonija, AD Skopje	ul. Lazar Licenoski br.11, 1000 Skopje
	Tel.: +389 2 3205 000
	e-posta: info@evn.mk
National Energy Resources	Blvd. Sveti Kliment Ohridski br. 58B
National Ellergy Resources	Tel: 02 6090137
	E-mail: contact@mer.com.mk
Javna protovijstio za drakavni patiekta	
Javno pretprijatie za drzhavni patishta	ul. Dame Gruev br.14,
(Public Enterprise for State Roads)	1000 Skopje
	contact@roads.org.mk
	Tel: 02 3118-044
Zheleznici na Severna Republika Makedonija	Blvd.3 Makedonska Brigada 36, Skopje, 1000
Transport AD-Skopje	+389 (0)2/3248-701; 3164-255
	www.mztransportad.com.mk
	mztransportad@mztransportad.com.mk
Zheleznici na Republika Severna Makedonija	ul. Jordan Mijalkov 50 b Skopje
	Tel. ++ 389 (0)2 3227 903
	E-mail: <u>info@mzi.mk</u>
ESM (ELEM)	Blvd. 11. Oktomvri 9, 1000 Skopje
	02/3149–278
	02/3149-134
	contact@elem.com.mk
	www.elem.com.mk
Agency for Real Estate Cadastre	Trifun Hadzi Janev 4,
rigency for item bounce canada c	1000 Skopje,
	Telefon: (02) 3204 800
	info@katastar.gov.mk
	www.katastar.gov.mk
JP Nacionalni shumi - Skopje	Adresa: ul.Pero Nakov 128 Skopje
JP Nacionaliii Siiuliii - Skopje	Tel: +389 2 2581 080 - Centrala
	Tel: +389 2 2581 080 - Centrala Tel: +389 2 2581 083 - Direktor
	komunikacii@mkdsumi.com.mk
	www.mkdsumi.com.mk
LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT	
Municipality of Strumica	Sando Masev br.1; 2400 Strumica
Francipality of 3d diffica	info@strumica.gov.mk
	00389(0) 34 348 030
IDVD KOMUNALEC Christian	www.strumica.gov.mk
JPKD KOMUNALEC – Strumica	24-ti Oktomvri 2
	Strumica
	contact@komunalec-strumica.com.mk
	www.komunalec-strumica.com.mk
NU Zavod za zastita na spomenicite na kulturata i	27mi Mart br. 2. 2400 Strumica
muzej Strumica	Telefon: +389 34 345 925
(Museum of Strumica)	www.muzej-strumica.mk
	<u>zavodmuzej@yahoo.com</u>
STRUMICA – GAS, Strumica	e-mail: info@strumicagas.mk
•	Tel. 034 – 348 – 113
	034 – 348 – 003
	www.strumicagas.mk



Municipality of Valandovo	Ivo Lola Ribar br.3, 2460 Valandovo,		
	e-mail: <u>gradonacalnik@valandovo.gov.mk</u>		
	tel: 034/382-044		
	faks: 034/382-044		
	www.valandovo.gov.mk		
JP KOMUNLEN SERVIS VALANDOVO	034/ 381-538		
	e-mail: kontakt@ksv.mk		
	www.ksv.mk		
Municipality of Gevgelija	Dimitar Vlahov 4, 1480 Gevgelija		
	Tel. +389 34 213 843; 034 611 353		
	Tel/faks ++38934 611 373		
	e-mail: <u>gevgelijao@t-home.mk</u>		
	e-mail: kabinet@gevgelija.gov.mk		
	www.gevgelija.gov.mk		
JPKD KOMUNALEC – Gevgelija	7-mi Noemvri br. 50, Gevgelija		
	Tel.: 034/212-808; 034/214-808		
	Email: komunalecqevqelija@yahoo.com		
	www.komunalecgevgelija.mk		
Nacionalna ustanova Muzej - Gevgelija	Marshal Tito br.26, Gevgelija		
(Gevgelija Museum)	Tel: 034 213 660; 034 218 673		
	email: bobanhus@yahoo.com		
	www.muzejgevgelija.mk		



### **Annex 5: Register of Previous Stakeholder Engagement Activities**

No.	I I 13TA / WANIIA	Stakeholder Engagement Event	Present Stakeholders	Number of people communicated / consulted	Key issues discussed	Method
1	21/09/2021, 12.00h House of Culture, Valandovo	Project presenta- tion to the Institu- tional stakeholders	Municipality of Valandovo; Municipal Public Utility Enterprises (PUEs) MEPSO; IPF7 Team and E&S Ex- perts	11	<ul> <li>Project Presentation</li> <li>Acceptability of the proposed / preferred Project option</li> <li>Sensitive location(s) to be avoided by further Project design</li> <li>Grievance mechanism</li> </ul>	Meeting <sup>9</sup>
2	22/09/2021, 12.00h Municipality of Gevgeli- ja	Project presentation to the Institutional stakeholders	Municipality of Gevgelija; Municipal PUEs; MEPSO; IPF7 Team and E&S Ex- perts	11	<ul> <li>Project Presentation</li> <li>Acceptability of the proposed / preferred Project option</li> <li>Exact location of the new 400/110 kV substation in Miletkovo area</li> <li>Potential grievances that might occur from farmers (land owners/users) due to the land acquisition process</li> </ul>	Meeting <sup>10</sup>
3	22/09/2021, 12.00h Army House, Strumica	Project presenta- tion to the Institu- tional stakeholders	Municipality of Strumica; Municipal PUEs; National Institution Strumica Muse- um; Strumica Gas; MEPSO;	15	<ul> <li>Project Presentation</li> <li>Acceptability of the proposed / preferred Project option</li> <li>Exact location of the new 400/110 kV substation in Miletkovo area</li> <li>Potential grievances that might oc-</li> </ul>	Meeting <sup>11</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Meeting was held in accordance with the propositions and measures during COVID-19 times, defined by the Government. For more, please check Official Governmental Online Resource in North Macedonia. <a href="https://koronavirus.gov.mk/">https://koronavirus.gov.mk/</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Meeting was held in accordance with the propositions and measures during COVID-19 times, defined by the Government. For more, please check Official Governmental Online Resource in North Macedonia. <a href="https://koronavirus.gov.mk/">https://koronavirus.gov.mk/</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Meeting was held in accordance with the propositions and measures during COVID-19 times, defined by the Government. For more, please check Official Governmental Online Resource in North Macedonia. <a href="https://koronavirus.gov.mk/">https://koronavirus.gov.mk/</a>



No.	Date / venue	Stakeholder Engagement Event	Present Stakeholders	Number of people communicated / consulted	Key issues discussed	Method
			IPF7 Team and E&S Experts		cur from farmers (land own- ers/users) due to the land acquisi- tion process	
4	29/09/2021, Online / MEPSO Head office		Line Ministries; MEPSO; IPF7 Team and E&S Ex- perts; Private infrastructure com- panies	22	<ul> <li>General technical features of the Project</li> <li>Acceptability of the proposed / pre- ferred Project option</li> </ul>	Online meeting
5	12/10/2021	Information request	National Institution Strumica Museum	2	<ul> <li>Identification of the exact location and boundaries of the protected cultural heritage site Gradishor - Mramor</li> </ul>	Official correspondence
6	23/03/2022	Call for collabora- tion	Municipality of Strumica, Valandovo and Gevgelija	3	<ul> <li>Letter for invitation for collaboration and information share</li> </ul>	Official corre- spondence
7	28/03/2022, Municipality of Gevgelija	Distribution of printed materials and leaflet	Municipality administration representatives	3	<ul> <li>Location where to store printed materials and what documentation to be shared on the municipal website</li> </ul>	Direct communi- cation
8	28/03/2022, City of Valandovo	Distribution of leaflet	Local population living near the alignment	5	<ul><li>Brief Project description,</li><li>Grievance mechanism</li></ul>	Direct communi- cation
9	28/03/2022, Municipality of Valandovo	Distribution of printed materials and leaflet	Municipality administration representatives	2	<ul> <li>Location where to store printed materials and what documentation to be shared on the municipal website</li> </ul>	Direct communication
10	29/03/2022, City of Strumica	Distribution of leaflet	Local population living near the alignment		<ul><li>Brief Project description,</li><li>Grievance mechanism</li></ul>	Direct communication
11	29.03.2022, Municipality of Strumica	Distribution of printed materials and leaflet	Municipality administration representatives	2	<ul> <li>Location where to store printed materials and what documentation to be shared on the municipal website</li> </ul>	Direct communi- cation



#### **Annex 6: List of Relevant COVID 19 Online Resources**

[EBRD] Stakeholder engagement (PR10). EBRD briefing note. Covid-19

https://www.ebrd.com/covid19-consultation.pdf

Official Governmental Online Resource in North Macedonia.

https://koronavirus.gov.mk/

■ [WHO] COVID -19

https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

[ILO] COVID -19

https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/lang--en/index.htm

[EIB] Guidance note to EIB promoters on environmental and social performance in EIB-financed operations in response to the COVID-19 outbreak crisis (Annex 4 – Stakeholder engagement)

http://www.eib.org/attachments/covid19 guidance note to promoters annex4 stakeholders eng agement en.pdf

 [IFC] Interim Advice for IFC Clients on Safe Stakeholder Engagement in the Context of COVID-19

https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/30258731-0e7d-4cb2-863c-a6fb4c6d0d95/Tip+Sheet Interim+Advice StakeholderEngagement COVID19 May2020.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=n9s.b9a



# Annex 7: Distribution of printed Project Documentation to the Municipalities and MEPSO's Main Premises

# Gevgelija ОПШТИНА ГЕВГЕЛИЈА



#### Valandovo





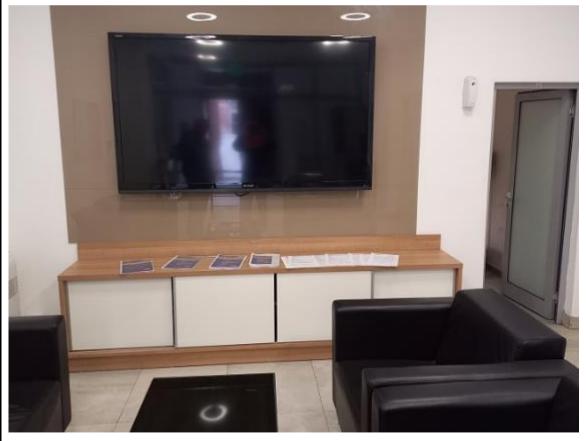
#### Strumica





#### MEPSO Head Office (Skopje)







# **Annex 8: Project's Leaflet**

# **Annex 8.1 Project's Leaflet in English**

(given under separate cover)

# **Annex 8.2 Project's Leaflet in Macedonian**

(given under separate cover)