

**ПРОЕКТ „РАЗВОЈ НА МЕНТОРСКА ПРОГРАМА ЗА ВИСОКОТО
ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ ВО ЗЕМЈОДЕЛСТВОТО“, ФИНАНСИСКИ
ПОДДРЖАНА ОД ВЛАДАТА НА ШВАЈЦАРИЈА ПРЕКУ
ПРОГРАМАТА ЗА ЗГОЛЕМУВАЊЕ НА ПАЗАРНАТА
ВРАБОТЛИВОСТ - ИМЕ И ПРОЕКТОТ ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ ЗА
ВРАБОТУВАЊЕ ВО СЕВЕРНА МАКЕДОНИЈА - E4E@МК**

Scope of Work

Project Background

Increasing Market Employability (IME) is a program of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, implemented by Palladium. The IME program works on strengthening the business sector in Macedonia, improving the quality of products and services offered, expanding markets and creating an enabling environment in three selected sectors: Sustainable Agriculture, Adventure Tourism, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

The goal of the program is that more working-age women and men, youth, are engaged in sustainable, decent employment or self-employment and/or are earning higher incomes. IME will create 2,706 new and higher quality jobs through private sector development in select high-growth sectors, so more working-age Macedonians, women and youth, are engaged in sustainable, decent employment. IME's updated design enables the project to deepen assistance to a smaller number of sectors and leverage complementary Swiss and other donor programs to target resources to maximize impact and systemic change. To achieve this goal, IME Phase 2 will continue to use a market systems approach to achieve the following outcomes:

Outcome 1: Companies in select sectors grow by improving products and services and expanding markets.

Outcome 2: Improved services, policy and regulatory frameworks are conducive to companies' growth in select sectors.

Outcome 3: Private sector is incentivized to engage youth and women, and equipped with tools for identifying, attracting, and retaining them.

Activity background

The agricultural sector in the country faces increasing deficiencies in human capital, and severe mismatch between the demand and the skillset offered on the labor market. Relatively low percentage of automation of production processes is also a bottleneck for development of this industry (technologists, agronomists). Interest of students to enroll in the agriculture faculties is also decreasing. Each year less students are interested in choosing agribusiness as a profession. Universities, especially private ones are developing curricula for skills attractive for international labor market such as medicine, ICT, management, and this even more contributes towards making the agribusiness less attractive.

Therefore, more systematic, and joint efforts are necessary for enhancing the employment possibilities, especially for young people. There is a need for stronger structured cooperation between business and educational institutions such as the Faculty of Agriculture within Goce Delcev University in Stip with 2 more branches in other agricultural areas in the Country, Kavadarci and Strumica. Established cooperation of the academia with businesses would lead to developing workforce in line with the market requirement, promote success stories of young professionals and with this make the profession more interesting and attractive.

The faculty has also established UNILAB an ISO 17025:2018 accredited faculty laboratory which beside scientific research provides services for the business sector through analyses of soil, water, plant material, beverages, food, and feed. In addition to this, it helps students to implement their practical work and get additional knowledge while working with professionals, such as: farmers, international visiting experts, laboratory staff etc.

The faculty, during the studies, offers to students' excellent theoretical background and laboratory practice however the timing and methodology of the practice are not well organized. Namely, students do the practices at the end of the semester which is not always very effective because it is not a season

when they can learn processes in different agribusinesses that are related with the vegetation season. On the other hand, they have 2 days without theoretical lecturing during the study week and if those days are used for an internship in companies, will help students from the third and fourth year get acquainted with additional practical knowledge.

Therefore, IME will partner with the faculty, to create and pilot a mentorship program, a model which combines lectures and internship within selected companies in a year-round timeline. The intervention will be complemented with organizing career days. The mentorship program and career days will contribute towards companies being recognized as potential employers interested to attract and retain highly qualified professionals in the Agri sector. These set of events will also enable businesses, business associations and the faculty, to advocate for policy reform to ease participation of workforce on the labor market and create prerequisites to encourage women and youth to access employment market.

Objective

The objective of this activity is to develop a mentorship program for higher education in agriculture by creation of connection between companies and students from the third and fourth years of studies, through introduction of internships during the students' study week. This model of complementing lectures and internship is developed to combine theoretical and practical learning to be implemented in parallel. The activities will be complemented with career days to enable students to directly identify their area of interest for work and future employees. This will enable students/future agronomist to be trained in real production process, be part of it and learn the alphabet of specific production from A to Z.

Activities

Key activities:

The following activities will be undertaken for development of the mentorship program for higher education and establishment a connection between the faculty, students, and companies:

1. Developing list of companies to be included in the program. The faculty will identify at least 10 interested agribusinesses to engage students in the mentorship process and assign employees as mentors at their companies.
2. Forming the team to develop the mentorship program. The team will consist of external experts for developing mentorship program. Lead expert Natasa Janevska and representatives from the Center for Vocational Education, representatives from the faculty and companies.
3. Developing list of student mentors who will be trained to guide students throughout the internship program. (at least 5 mentors from the faculty and 10 from companies).
4. Develop the mentoring program to be used by mentors from the faculty and companies.
5. Train the mentors from both the faculty and companies. Two days of training will be organized in Shtip within the faculty.
6. Selection of students. The selection of students will be done through a survey with questionnaires where students will enunciate their opinion to suggest a company or business where they are willing to enroll for internship. Minimum of 20 selected students from study programs in Stip, Strumica and Kavadarci.
7. Develop job descriptions for internship for students to be used as a guide for mentorship program by the external expert and representatives from the Center for Vocational Education with input from mentors from the faculty and specific agribusinesses.
8. Organize a kickoff meeting in the company's facilities for students who will attend together with their mentors from the faculty.
9. Implement the mentorship program where students will execute their specific tasks within the selected agribusiness companies under mentorship by both mentors from the company and the faculty.

10. Organization of three info days “Meet your potential employer” where companies will present the needs for employment of their business and skills they require from new employees. These events will be designed to connect students to employers and gain current insight into the companies’ needs, possible job opportunities and specific responsibilities. These events will also serve to promote success stories of faculty alumni and other young people having successful careers in agribusiness.
11. Materials for students for mentoring sessions (Line 49 from Annex-II-Budget-Form UGD), should be conducted through competitive selection process of the best offer by receiving at least three offers.

Implementation Schedule

The period of performance for this scope of work is May, 2023, to December 31, 2023.

Proposed timeline for the activities includes:

Activity	Month										
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Establishment of list of companies											
Establishment of the team to develop the mentorship program											
Establishment of list of student mentors											
Develop the mentoring program											
Train the mentors											
Selection of students											
Develop job descriptions for internship of students											
Implement the mentorship program											
Organization of info days “Meet your potential employer”											

