GREY group

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The creation of the long-term National Development Strategy as a key document for N. Macedonia is a new practice, predicted to present and define an overarching political consensus on the strategic priorities of the country and address key issues in order to improve the overall quality of life for the citizens through sustainable development. In order to be consistent with the collective aspirations and determination of the people to achieve sustainable growth and advancement of the conditions in the key priority areas of the citizens, the NDS is predicted to be drafted as an inclusive development agenda, involving multiple key stakeholders in the process of policy making and their implementation.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Communications and Engagement Strategy are:

1. To inform and raise the awareness of the key stakeholders and target audiences nation-wide about the ongoing planning of the National Development Strategy, its future implications as the main foundation in the socio-economic improvement in the next 20 years in all spheres of societal life.
2. To engage those same audiences in the creation of NDS through various channels by which they will directly contribute to maximizing its utility by highlighting the most important issues they are faced with.

AUDIENCE INSIGHT

The thorough analyses of the underlined target audiences are contained in the document below. The general key points to be singled out are:

1. The main target audiences of the campaign are the: policymakers, government decisionmakers, central and local level government institutions, civil society organizations, business community, citizens with special focus on marginalized groups, and additionally the political parties and the media.
2. Their attitudes and behaviours are expected to be addressed and changed through the implementation of the Strategy and the proposed messaging, communication tools and engagement mechanisms in order to accomplish the Strategy's goals; however, direct involvement is expected at all levels in order to stablish connections and realize the planned cooperation between the interest groups.

STRATEGY AND IDEA

The insight gathered defined the approach to be used for the Communications and Engagement Strategy.

1. The main communication message to be used for the duration is *"Creating Future Together" (MK: „Создаваме Иднина Заедно).* The headline is further supported by a call-to-action statement "Be a part of the NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2021-2041", included in the logotype itself, as described and included in the Branding and Visuals section below.
2. The strategy encompasses various tools predicted for informing all target audiences, such as web, social media, digital display and other media outlets, as well as mechanisms for their direct engagement and participation in the drafting process, such as informational sessions, workshops etc.
3. All involved target groups will be covered in order to ensure the proper dissemination of key information and stimulate engagement.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Strategy is expected to be implemented in two runs, and choice on the proposed tools will be made subsequently on the basis of time and resource constraints. The first stage of the campaign would be focusing on the development of the methodology and introducing the idea and main concept of the NDS to the public. The second stage would refer to the development of the strategy itself and the implementation of the communication segment in order to encourage groups to get involved and inform them about the process. The agency responsible for the campaign implementation is Futura.

SCORING AND EVALUATION

Depending on the final tools used for the campaign, different key performance indicators are listed in the section below to give strategic insight and guidance in the monitoring process. It is important that these are regularly followed and updated in the course of the campaign duration in order to be able to swiftly respond to changes and make minor tweaks should there be a need.

STATEMENT OBJECTIVE

N. Macedonia is planning to prepare its new long-term National Development Strategy, which is a policy document that would offer an enabling environment for national consensus on the country's long-term development priorities. The National Development Strategy (NDS) could facilitate political consensus on strategic priorities that would address the key challenges the country is facing, map out its future socio-economic development and secure welfare and quality of life for its citizens.

Such planning needs to set the strategic framework and objectives within which the sectoral policies can be developed and implemented, taking into account available resources and wider regional and global circumstances. To define coherent economic and socio-political objectives that transcend sectors and articulate a vision for national development, the preparation of the National Development Strategy has to be comprehensive, developed through an inclusive and 'a whole of a society approach', but also taking into account the current most relevant strategic documents adopted by the Government and the Parliament, the contemporary and innovative models, as well as commitments deriving from the EU accession process and the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

This document aims to present a strategic approach for the inclusion of all relevant sides in the preparation of the National Development Strategy, the necessary and recommended tools for achieving that aim, as well as the mechanisms proposed for the effective and efficient fulfilment of the goal, having in mind the national, as well as global, state of affairs, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Specific efforts will be dedicated to reaching out to the most relevant, vulnerable, underrepresented, or marginalized groups in society to make their voices heard and allow them to participate in policymaking.

PURPOSE OF THE CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall purpose of the communication strategy is, first and foremost, to inform and raise the awareness of the key stakeholders and target audiences nation-wide about the ongoing planning of the National Development Strategy, its future implications as the main foundation in the socio-economic improvement in the next 20 years in all spheres of societal life, as well as to engage those same audiences in the creation of NDS through various channels by which they will directly contribute to maximizing its utility by highlighting the most important issues they are faced with.

PROJECT SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES & KEY PROJECT TARGETS

The specific purpose of the communication campaign will be to raise the awareness of the population nation-wide on the process of creation of the NDS and its importance, with a particular focus on the multiple benefits the country will receive from having such a strategic document in the next 20 years.

To encourage and take immediate and effective steps to partake in the creation of the NDS by addressing the apparent gaps between the current socio-economic situation of the relevant stakeholders, interest groups and the citizens at large, and their needs and expectations of the country's development in the coming period.

To inform and educate the broader public about the ongoing activities and encourage contribution to the areas where it is relevant.

ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

Efforts should be made, on one hand, to communicate with and inform the public through a tailored strategic approach given the media and content consumption habits of the main stakeholders and target audiences, which can result in increasing uptake of opportunities to get involved and ultimately strengthen the legitimacy of political decisions and increase trust in government officials. And, on the other hand, to assist and incite the involvement of the audiences and emphasize their direct benefits from the NDS. The communications and engagement campaign should be formulated in such a way that will be understood by the general public and key stakeholders, using materials with appropriate messaging that are relevant to the target audiences.

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

To best assess the current situation in the country, several types of analysis are conducted which reflect on various aspects of everyday life in the country. A special accent is put on the current COVID-19 crisis as it has impacted every sphere of life as we know it.

PESTEL ANALYSIS

PESTEL	Country's Situation
Political	- Current government led by SDSM with Zoran Zaev as a Prime Minister after winning the early parliamentary elections is 2020; Mr. Stevo Pendarovski as President of State since 2019. N. Macedonia became the 30th NATO member in 2020, which was strengthening the political stability and the government's position. - There is a thin parliamentary majority of 62-58 seats for the position which represents an issue for policymaking as it is difficult to establish the minimum quorum. It also hardens the swiftness of action required for better coping with the COVID-19 crisis and is worsened by it, as MPs which have the virus cannot attend sessions, thus further reducing the necessary quorum. - An area that needs improvement is the citizens' trust in the institutions, which can be supported by working on the judiciary and the actual non-segmented implementation of laws and policies. - The EU accession process was blocked by Republic of Bulgaria. - There are upcoming local elections in October 2021.
Economic	- The COVID-19 crisis has had a serious impact on the economy, globally, as well as in the country. Instead of the predicted GDP growth of 3.4% for 2020, there was a negative growth of 5.4%. - The last year was marked by the loss of about 55,000 job posts, pushing the unemployment rate back up to 20.4%, a rate which had been on the declining path in the last 14 years, reaching an all-time low of 16.6% in Q4 of 2019. From a gender perspective, this has especially hit women in the workforce which have shown to be a more vulnerable group in this context, hit the hardest by the ongoing socio-economic crisis. - There was a steep drop in consumer demand and private consumption as a result of the expected labour layoffs, lower and uncertain incomes, a general fall in consumer confidence, and lower net inflows of remittances from abroad. Individuals with relative

PESTEL	Country's Situation
	stable incomes increased their precautionary saving and postponed current consumption decisions, particularly on durable consumer goods.
	- The crisis has especially hit the micro-entities, which were vulnerable enough and struggling with liquidity even before the situation with the pandemic. SMEs have also suffered especially in the sectors most affected by the situation.
Social	- The pandemic has escalated the burden of psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, and insomnia. This is especially true for the more vulnerable groups such as women, younger adults and individuals of lower socioeconomic status, who are most affected by COVID-19-related mental health issues. - Due to a combination of several factors – the aforementioned unemployment, the burden of child-care due to COVID-19 measures and restrictions, as well as the imposed curfews and lockdowns which have raised the rate of cases of domestic violence, there is a need for improving the situation of women as a particular societal segment.
Technological	- The country has a well-developed fixed communications network with a tele-density of over 30 lines per 100 inhabitants, within the region average, as well as a high internet penetration rate of nearly 80% in 2019. - As ICT is one of the best prospect industry sectors for the country, with a growth rate of 2.5%-8% in the last several years, science (which is acting as an anchor as well as a stimulant for technological adoption, advancement and development) and technology can be boosted by proper funding and implementation of structural policies.
Environmental	- The air quality in some urban surroundings is a major Macedonian environmental area to improve. The two areas where the problem is most acute are Veles and Skopje, where the correlation between poor health and air quality has been recognized. The main reason for air pollution is emissions from industry and automobiles. - The most significant problems regarding water pollution are due to discharges from the mining sector, industrial plants and livestock farms, as well as from municipal water. - Need of development of a public waste management system. Currently, there are no regulations on waste handling and as a result there is indiscriminate dumping of wastes, especially industrial wastes which are a health hazard.
Legal	- More work needs to be done in the reformation of the judiciary in order to wrap up cases from the past regime and improve the image of the legal situation in the country both between the general population and among professionals. - The country's rank on the Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index has fallen to the 111th place, which is 8 places further down than in 2012, and has a low score of 35/100.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Having the country's analysis in mind and the overall situation, below is a SWOT analysis in terms of strategic communication on issues of national development Communication Objectives.

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Drafting an all-inclusive national development strategy that covers all target and interest groups of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds with the aim of sustainable and responsible growth - Planification and specific forecasting of goals in the national interest that are apolitical and for the benefit of the society at large and not particular interest groups and individuals	- The pressing COVID-19 situation is a top-of-mind topic which could lead to the drop in importance of the long-term Strategy (attitude: "this is a big issue right now; I can't think that far in the future") - The citizens can be sceptical towards the NDS and lead to a lack of participation due to a belief that "nothing can be changed"
Opportunities	Threats
- Enabling of a two-way, direct and broad communication between the Government and its citizens with participation being the cornerstone of the Government's policies and reforms - Having a chance to resolve outstanding issues, especially those so-far neglected (such as environmental issues which are pressing but not being paid enough attention) which can be strong selling points to ensure participation of the interested and affected parties	- Depending on the pandemic and its state in the coming months, it could have an impact on the available tools for engagement, thus decreasing information penetration and making the access to vulnerable groups even more difficult - The possibility of an adoption of the National Development Strategy as a tool for gaining political points by the parties, which could in turn make citizens adopt an apprehensive attitude

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

Following thorough analyses, several audiences are underlined as the main target groups for the Communication and Engagement Strategy. Each of them is expected to be involved into the process of the preparation of the National Development Strategy, undertaking various roles and levels of participation and responsibility in different ways. All stakeholders expected to be engaged in the course of the drafting of the National Development Strategy would be chosen based on their relevancy and legitimacy, as well as their know-how and capabilities, in order to be able to provide productive contribution to the process. If needed, further analysis of the audiences and communication tools usage will be provided after the finalization of the stakeholders mapping.

POLICYMAKERS

As N. Macedonia is a parliamentary democracy by its Constitution, the main policymakers are the Government and the President which constitute the executive branch, chosen by the citizens. The political situation and instability in the past years has led to having early parliamentary elections. As the past year has been marked by an extraordinary and emergency situation, the majority of the policymaking has been targeted towards the management of the trade-off between the protection of the health of the citizens and improving the economic situation.

The execution of the policies in our country is done by the public administration, which in the moment is faced with a serious challenge as a result of the pandemics and extraordinary working circumstances.

GOVERNMENT DECISIONMAKERS

The Prime Minister in our country, which is chosen by the party which won the majority votes in the parliamentary elections, and the Ministers, form the decision-making polices. After the elections, the

Prime Minister has 90 days to form his cabinet and start undertaking the adequate steps to work on his election program.

Even though N. Macedonia is a multi-party system democracy, 2 main parties prevail in the Macedonian block and 1 main party in the Albanian block, leaving the smaller parties compete for few seats in the Parliament, but without the necessary power to win the Government.

North Macedonia's democracy agenda consists of making public institutions more transparent and accountable to the public, and reconfiguring political discourse to be more inclusive and less partisan. The current situation in N. Macedonia requires that more work is done in the areas of resolving corruption affairs, which would incite hope in the citizenship and improve their trust in the institutions.

POLITICAL PARTIES

The country has a multi-party system with numerous parties which must work with each other in order to form coalition governments. The current cabinet is a coalition of SDSM, the Democratic Union for Integration, the New Social Democratic Party, Liberal Democratic Party, Party for the Full Emancipation of the Roma of Macedonia, and the Party for the Movement of Turks in Macedonia. The members of the Cabinet of North Macedonia are chosen by the Prime Minister and approved by the national Parliament, however certain cabinet level positions are chosen by both President and Prime Minister and approved by the Parliament.

The parties currently represented in the Parliament are: SDSM, VMRO-DPMNE, Liberal Democratic Party, Democratic Union, BESA, Democratic Union for Integration, Alliance for Albanians–Alternative, The Left and Democratic Party of Albanians. There are many extra-parliamentary parties, namely:

- Macedonian: YOURS Political Party, Party for European Future, United for Macedonia, MAAK-Conservative Party, Macedonian Progressive Party, Union of Tito's Left Forces, Communist Party of Macedonia, Integra-Macedonian Conservative Party, Liberal Party of Macedonia, Social Democratic Party of Macedonia
- Albanian: National Democratic Revival, Party for Democratic Prosperity
- Minority parties: Turkish Progressive Party, Movement for Turkish National Union, Democratic League of Bosniaks, Union of Roma in Macedonia, Party for the Full Emancipation of the Roma, Serbian Progressive Party in Macedonia, Serbian Party in Macedonia

However, the real situation is such that the political scene is highly polarized both between the Macedonian and Albanian parties active in the country, with two dominant political forces prevailing. At the same time, work needs to be done on establishing a calmer political discourse not only between the major parties, but also within the parties both in the position and opposition. This is of paramount importance in order so the parties can ascertain clear positions on crucial topics because of a variety of factors, but mostly related to the current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on the health system, as well as the socio-economic conditions.

CENTRAL AND LOCAL LEVEL STATE INSTITUTIONS

The country has a single level local government. Under the Law on Territorial Organization of Local Government, it is territorially organized into 80 municipalities and the City of Skopje as a separate Local Government Unit, which results from the character of the City of Skopje as the capital. Municipalities perform their responsibilities through bodies elected directly by the citizens for a term of 4 years. Municipal bodies include the Council and the Mayor.

In order to have a better relationship with the citizens and be at their disposal with the purpose of improving local community life, the country has committed to a decentralization process, which includes

the transfer of competences from central/state level to municipal level and is closely related to democratic principles and values. Local authorities can improve the capacity for cooperation with the civil society, especially when related to provision of and adherence to procedures regarding free access to information and strengthened interaction with citizens.

The perception of the municipalities can be positively affected by further improving their interaction with citizens via social networks, publication of monthly newsletters for citizens about the municipality's work, as well as public debates for citizens on issues of local importance, publication of plans for public consultations with citizens about municipal policies and minutes from meetings held with citizens.

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

In 2007, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia adopted the first Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Society and the Action Plan 2007-2011. There, the Government emphasized the importance of the civil society in general, thereby setting the ground for its cooperation with CSOs and took a systematic approach in strengthening the basic conditions for a faster and more efficient development of this sector. Ever since, there has been a continuation in the programme and several Strategies for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Society and Action Plans have been implemented on a few-year basis.

14 years later, the civil society organizations are still present a major opportunity and an area to improve when it comes to their participation in creating relevant policies and their contribution to the well-functioning of the democratic institutions, and there is still a long road to go when it comes to civic engagement. The highest impacts of civil society are seen as empowering citizens and promoting policies for human rights and equality. Only a small minority of citizens are engaged in CSOS, and no significant changes have been made in that area. As most groups of citizens are present in civil society, diversity is highly rated.

One of the main challenges that the CSOs are faced with is the lack of access to appropriate funding, and currently most are reliant on raising funds from diverse, mostly international, sources. Consequently, it makes it more difficult to follow their own programs but to work on the issues the contributor finds relevant. This situation has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis, especially since the CSOs were excluded from the Government's economic assistance measures, despite CSOs having the skills to help in tackling the crisis and the especially fast response from those working with service provision and humanitarian aid.

BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Over the past years, pre COVID-19 pandemics, the various governments were slowly reducing the fiscal deficits and focusing on maintaining a low inflation rate, a stable Denar-Euro exchange rate and low interest rates. Although the above had enabled the development of a stable macro-economic environment, the country had not been as successful in re-starting its economic growth. Although positive, the growth rates recorded were behind expectations and lower than those of the region's most dynamic countries. In the World Bank's latest rankings, N. Macedonia is ranked 17th in the world for the ease of doing business. This high ranking reflects that the regulatory environment is more conducive to the opening and operation of a local firm, as well as the other positive aspect involved in starting a business such as the culture, the living standard and the multi-lingual but highly affordable workforce.

The COVID-19 crisis, however, has severely affected an overwhelming number of enterprises in the country, which have reported significant financial losses and temporary suspension of operations, especially in the segments which were most effected such as the service sector, tourism and textile. Microenterprises, which were already vulnerable, have suffered greatly and many have completely shut

down their operations. The Government has so far announced several packages of anti-crisis measures in an effort to help the businesses and stimulate the economy, but the same had been criticized from several aspects, amongst which the transparency and the information flow which created further uncertainties, especially due to the seemingly ad-hoc changes in some eligibility criteria.

MEDIA

One of the main areas to work on in the media sector in the country is the controversial practice of financing private media from the state budget, a common occurrence throughout the years and one of the main factors which influenced the low scores of the country in terms of freedom of speech and media liberty. Even though there have been attempted legislative changes aimed at curbing clientelist relations between the media and parties, the country can still witness political party election campaigns paid from the budget, which encourages blurred lines in the relations between parties and the existing media outlets. Another point to improve is the independence and financial stability of the public service broadcaster, which would increase the efficiency of its operations and management.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, advertising revenues in the media sector have nose-dived around the world, triggering a wave of job losses. North Macedonia is no different, but the precarious financial state of many media outlets in the country even before the pandemic leaves them in a state to fight for survival. On the initiative of the journalists' union, the government has promised to fully cover the expenses of health and pension insurance for employees of almost all media outlets with at least three employees, including portals – on condition they make no pay cuts or layoffs as a part of a pack of measured in order to aid the sector amidst the health crisis.

CITIZENS

The Stakeholder Expectation Report of the research conducted by Indago is used for the purpose of analysis of this target audience. In the Report, it is noticeable that the citizens have a generally positive attitude towards the creation of a strategical document of national importance such as the NDS, with the majority finding the process very important. Additionally, they also support the notion that the general quality of life will improve if such strategy is adopted and that it would contribute to the alignment of state priorities.

The majority of the respondents think that all citizens, regardless of age, should be consulted in the process of creating the National Development Strategy and participate in its implementation, along with the government and municipalities. This stance corresponds with the public's opinion on which groups should be directly included in its creation.

Despite being a very diverse group, they share the thinking about the most important priorities for the country, namely improving the education system and the economy, better conditions in the health care system, judicial reforms and rule of law, as well as environmental topics. The majority of the participants in the organized focused groups stated that in their opinion, besides Government and public institutions, all citizens regardless of their age should take part in the implementation of the National Development Strategy. However, in order to do so, they expressed the need of transparency in the process with information available on various outlets such as the Internet, social media, online surveys, web and TV.

BEHAVIORAL ANALYSIS

What is the desired action to be taken by the target groups in order to achieve the goals?

The theory of change of the proposed campaign is summarized as follows: If the key stakeholders and target audiences understand the potential benefits of aiding the drafting of the National Development Strategy and actively communicate on its preparation to bridge the existing gaps between the current

situation and the development potential; then they (the key stakeholders) will be able to make informed decisions, support and participate in the process, leading to greater stakeholder buy-in.

PROJECT COMMUNICATION TABLES

Policymakers and Government Decisionmakers	
Desired behaviour	Taking the main role in the drafting of the NDS whilst having in mind and basing their proposed policies on the gathered information and feedback from all involved parties; developing the trust of the included sides by being more accessible and establishing a two-way communication
Benefits of adopting the recommended actions	Bridging the existing gap between the population and the executive branch, thus creating an inclusive policy-making environment, which in turn improves their image and status and aids them in the creation of relevant and truly beneficial development strategies instead of satisfying uninformed preferences
Barriers	Inertia, lack of enthusiasm and septicity; perceived Strategy complexity and increased workload which can create doubts in terms of the possibility of a successful completion and implementation of the task
Factors easy to adopt	Supplying them with specific, cohesive and concrete summary and guidelines extracted from the gathered feedback and input from all involved audiences in order to simplify and ease their work; include them in the execution of the planned activities with direct information on the purpose and expected outcomes

Central and Local Level Government Institutions	
Desired behaviour	Taking an active role in the local-level involvement of the citizens in the area under their jurisdiction and: firstly, gathering of relevant data, and secondly processing the data and passing specific recommendations to the higher-level policy- and decision- makers; having a synchronized approach between the central and local-level institutions and an ease of information sharing
Benefits of adopting the recommended actions	An improved image of the citizens of the local-level authorities due to the greater involvement and accessibility; very specific and localized information that would give a precise overview of the needs of the area and community; improved collaboration between institutions at different levels
Barriers	Lack of motivation due to unclear direct and personal benefits; the COVID-19 situation preventing direct contact and making data collection difficult; people working from home in less favourable working conditions; communication obstacles between the different levels
Factors easy to adopt	Specific guidelines on how to conduct the necessary research and data collection for all levels of the local self-government involved in the creation of the NDS in the form of questionnaires and forms which are easy to fill, in both digital and print version; establishing a clear procedure for information-passing between the central and local-level institutions that would minimize bureaucratic hold-ups and facilitate the transfer of knowledge and findings in order to ensure maximum coordination and cooperation

	Civil Society Organizations
Desired behaviour	Being an active contributor throughout the whole process of drafting the National Development Strategy in their respective fields of action and sections in which they have the adequate expertise and network to stimulate an open government approach
Benefits of adopting the recommended actions	Increased influence and participation of a network of socially active individuals who are eager to partake in the creation of such crucial national plans and policies and can play an active part in shaping the political and social life
Barriers	No clear barriers; one possibility would be the CSO's current situation – lack of resources to devote to the active participation in the creation of the NDS, or some sort of conflict of interests
Factors easy to adopt	Provide them with specific guidelines and outlined steps with concrete areas in which their expertise can be beneficial and provide input and feedback in order to catalyse the processes and to facilitate the cross-sectoral advisory bodies focused on specific issues

	Business Community
Desired behaviour	Giving specific feedback and concrete and applicable recommendations, representative of the whole business community that would favour all involved parties (not just individuals) and would strive for an improvement of the business climate in the country, having in mind the bigger socio-economic picture and the businesses' environmental impact
Benefits of adopting the recommended actions	Improved business conditions and a long-term prospect of economic growth in line with the country's strategic goals and plans
Barriers	Apprehensiveness to long-term thinking and planning vs. instant profits; withholding cooperation due to political affiliations; refusal to participate due to the perceived Government's inability to deal with the COVID-19 outbreak and the lack of Government's financial solution in the battle with the virus
Factors easy to adopt	Providing them with very specific examples of items which could be included in the NDS from which they could see clear direct benefits; engaging them at their point of media and content consumption and proactively seeking their feedback

	Citizens
Desired behaviour	Proactive involvement and sharing of issues and ideas
Benefits of adopting the recommended actions	Increased citizen participation and feeling of empowerment and relevance in the creation of the national policies and plans
Barriers	Misinformation and perception of the project as a Party and not a National project; lack of motivation due to unclear direct benefits and the feeling that their involvement is insignificant and won't matter; ignorance
Factors easy to adopt	Clear communication of the direct benefits of widespread participation in open government initiatives regarding the conditions of responsible prosperity and inclusive growth; accessible communication platform and tools through which the interested citizens would be easily able to share information

ADDITIONAL TARGET AUDIENCES

	Political Parties
Desired behaviour	Direct engagement of all parties, both in Parliament and extra-parliamentary, in the creation of the NDS, firstly as contributors with different viewpoints and promoters of debate and discourse on important topics, and secondly, as key patrons thus ensuring proper following of the final policies written in the NDS and their implementation through the years.
Benefits of adopting the recommended actions	Ideally achieving suprapartisan approach to governance and policy creation that would be in the general interest of the population as a whole rather than a mechanism or a tool for gaining political points
Barriers	General unwillingness to participate in any processes due to various reasons
Factors easy to adopt	N/A

	Media
Desired behaviour	Duly reporting on the importance, aims and objectives of the NDS and said issues and taking a partner approach to the process of drafting both in terms of raising public awareness and providing input for matters of their concern
Benefits of adopting the recommended actions	Influencing policies of their interest when it comes to the planning of different legislative measures, as well as access to first-hand information on the working of the Government and all stakeholders involved in the process
Barriers	Lack of access to information; fake news
Factors easy to adopt	Transparent information-sharing with media; clear reporting and communication guidelines

STRATEGIC DESIGN – DESIGNING THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

DEFINING THE KEY MESSAGE

Following the online meeting, it was shared that the working headline drafted with the agency Futura for the campaign is:

"Creating Future Together"

„Создаваме Иднина Заедно

The headline is further supported by a call-to-action statement "Be a part of the NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2021-2041", included in the logotype itself, as described and included in the Branding and Visuals section below.

POSITIONING STATEMENTS AND SUPPORTIVE MESSAGING PER TARGET AUDIENCE

The positioning statements are brief descriptions of the National Development Strategy and the target audience in question, and how the NDS would fill a particular need of the interest group respective to their expectations. It is meant to be used as an internal tool in order to align the communication efforts with the overall creative approach and the specific proposition for each of the target groups. The positioning statements and proposed messages provided below are based on the research done in order to prepare this Communication and Engagement Strategy and are meant as guidelines for the creative agency when developing the communication assets.

POLICYMAKERS AND GOVERNMENT DECISIONMAKERS

Having in mind the previous analysis done regarding the policymakers and government decisionmakers, for this target group it is important to highlight the direct benefits that this group would receive from their direct and proactive participation.

For the policymakers and government decisionmakers, the National Development Strategy would be the opportunity to create an open relation with the public sphere so they could improve their image and status with the general population because the upcoming policies would be relevant and beneficial for the society at large.

The creation of the strategy would be a good chance to signal the depoliticization of policymaking and decision-making, and the joint work for the creation of a sustainable future that would be of everyone's interest. "*You play a key role in the creation of our future*" emphasizes their importance in the process, and together with the provision of the necessary skills to aid this group in the drafting of the NDS, should serve as a strong stimulus to engage them and encourage their proactive participation.

CENTRAL AND LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

For central and local level government institutions, the positioning statement and messaging coincide with the ones for the policymakers and government decisionmakers as their role in the drafting of the National Development Strategy is similar i.e. they would also be expected to gather and analyze the feedback received and make specific recommendations for the segments included. The main difference is their narrower focus in the own area of influence; thus, their output would be more targeted.

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

The CSOs should be at the heart of the process of creation of the National Development Strategy, as they have a wide range of areas of action, are already dealing with many of the aspects that would be expected to be included through adequate policies and could provide direct access to the vulnerable

groups hard to reach. Their direct inclusion and engagement would foster transparency, help to empower the CSOs themselves, and facilitate future interaction and cooperation with the Government.

For the CSOs, the National Development Strategy would be the springboard that would help to empower the civil society and facilitate their interaction with the Government, so they could deliver nuanced context for policy-creation because of the provision of direct dialogue mechanisms and guided framework for participation and inclusion.

The engagement of the civil society organizations should be motivated by positive statements such as "*You add legitimacy to the process*" and/or "*We want to hear you*", in order to reinforce the message that the Government is actually open to establishing a regular and institutionalized structure for civic engagement and dialogue in the given context.

BUSINESS COMMUNITY

When targeting the business community, having in mind the aforesaid respective project communication table, the main goal would be to position the participation in the NDS creation as something that would provide a direct benefit for their work and/or area of action.

For the business community, the National Development Strategy would be a direct way to influence the business climate in the country that would be aligned with the country's sustainable interests, so they could ensure economic growth because at their disposal they would have the tools necessary to have a say in the creation of policies relevant for them.

Positive messaging framed through the lens of "*The best way to predict the future is to co-create it*" would resonate with this target audience as it would provide a reassurance for the prospects of its own sort and a form of control for the tools at their disposal that would encourage business activity throughout the economy or in specific industries. Specific attention should be paid to SMEs and entrepreneurial activity in the country to ensure an encouraging environment for starting a business.

CITIZENS

As a wide and diverse group, the population of the country are prioritizing various issues in a different way, but their motivations and interest in participating are similar and encouraged by the same drivers – hope for a better future.

For the citizens, the National Development Strategy would be the chance to have their voice heard in the matters important to them which the sustainable development plans would provide, so they could increase their relevance and empowerment in the process of policy-creation because the process would be comprehensive and inclusive.

Through the communication tools aimed at this group and listed below, it would be important to highlight that their participation would truly matter in order to overcome the feeling of insignificance. The messaging should be positive and identifiable i.e., to highlight that participation would actually align with their values ("*I participate because I want to have a stake in the creation of my future*"). Moreover, especially when it comes to the youth target segment, social media should be utilized in order to create the feeling that their respective communities expect them to participate. Messages such as "*Join **as well***", "*I shared my opinion **too***" can be used in various ways to create the feeling that the audience is a part of something bigger than themselves.

COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Having in mind the aim of Communication and Engagement Campaign and the diverse target groups covered, different communication tools would be used for the more specific stakeholders with the aim to

be efficient and maximize the effectiveness of the campaign. Shown in the table below is a draft outline of the activities foreseen, with the type of activity/proposed tool and its primary target of communication, which will be additionally explained further in the document. It is important to highlight that due to the COVID-19 crisis, these are severely restricted when it comes to offline and on-field communication, research and engagement.

Activity/ Target Audience	Policymakers	Government Decisionmakers	Central and Local Level Government Institutions	Civil Society Organizations	Business Community	Citizens	Political Parties	Media
TV (National)								
TV (Local)								
OOH								
Press Conference								
Printed Materials								
Web								
Social Media								
Newsletters								
Digital Display (National)								
Digital Display (Local)								
Call Centre								
Info Sessions*								
Workshops*								

* The info sessions and workshops could potentially be organized both offline and online, depending on the situation with the COVID-19 pandemics and the necessary conditions to be able to organize them following protocol and measures

TV (NATIONAL)

National TV will be used to communicate the aim of the ongoing process in the form of videos or TV spots as an awareness and engagement tool aimed primarily at the citizens. It is also projected that national TV stations would be present at the planned press-conferences and share the importance of the NDS and the expected input from the nationals.

TV (LOCAL)

The use of the local TV stations aims to raise local awareness about the creation of the NDS and increase the communication penetration. Its primary target audiences are the local self-government institutions and the citizens at large, which are supposed to cooperate in the creation of the local policies and development plans based on the current needs and the gaps between the present-day situation and future expectations.

OOH

Out-of-home media would be used as a part of the multichannel campaign in order to raise the awareness of the general population and all target groups about the creation of the NDS. Billboards and other out-of-home formats would be strategically planned on highly frequented sites and other key locations to share the main communication message.

PRESS CONFERENCE

In the course of the Campaign, two press-conferences are predicted to be held – one a few months in the Campaign (depending on actual start date and further definition of the schedule of activities), and one final press-conference. The first one would be intended to share information about the ongoing work, do a re-cap of the activities so far and the involvement of the different stakeholders in the process, and the working plan for the months to follow. It is not recommended that there is a press-conference related to the NDS at the beginning of the campaign due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the momentary situation in the country. The final press-conference would be aimed at presenting the results and the final National Development Strategy in different forms (videos, brochures, testimonials etc.).

PRINTED MATERIALS

Printed materials are communication products aimed at informing and educating the audiences. Leaflets, educational brochures, workbooks and similar would be prepared respective to the target group for which their distribution is intended. They would have the goal to inform and provide the necessary information. It would be beneficial and in line with the NDS's goals if the printed materials are recyclable or made from recycled paper.

In print, such as newspapers and magazines, there would be feature stories in targeted magazines aimed at the specific target groups of the Campaign, providing general information about the Strategy and the activities planned for engagement and participation of the target group, and four interviews in the duration of the project with different stakeholders.

WEBSITE

The website of the project would serve as a platform for participation of the different target groups involved, as well as a general information hub. The online platforms would be designed in ways that prioritises inclusivity and provides incentives for long-term engagement. The website would be regularly updated with news from the process as well as other relevant data. More information regarding the specificities of the website is needed at this stage.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media channels would be open specifically for the purpose of the Engagement and Communication Strategy of the NDS where different information would be disseminated in the form of informational posts about the meaning of the Strategy and its long-term implications when it comes to the development of the country, infographics, videos from the info-sessions and the workshops and also the link to the website where all interested parties could find lengthier information. The proposed channels are Facebook and Instagram, where on the former the posts would be more information-oriented with a strong-call-to-action content and a strong focus on external links to the website, info-sessions sign-up links, relevant questionaries, polls etc. through which the audience could directly engage in the process. On the latter, there would be a mixed content between short and interesting facts and educational content.

NEWSLETTERS

A monthly newsletter targeted at the respective audiences would be sent on a monthly level to inform the parties about the ongoing processes and activities and encourage them to partake in the planned undertakings for the period in question.

DIGITAL DISPLAY (NATIONAL)

Digital display on a national level would be used in three rounds in the duration of the Communication and Engagement Campaign. First round would be placed at the beginning and would be executed after the launch of the Campaign and website in order to raise initial awareness of the Campaign and would re-direct the audience to the relevant website and social media profiles. Second round would be in support of the press-conference along with the other communication tools predicted. Third round would be towards the end of the NDS drafting period, depending on the input provided by the target groups and would be tailored after the needs of the Campaign at the time being.

DIGITAL DISPLAY (LOCAL)

Digital display in the local websites is aimed at informing, raising awareness and motivating the locals in regard to

1) The existence and the process of creation of the Strategy
2) The possibility to engage and give direct input in its creation
3) The different ways in which they can contribute

The digital display campaign timing is to be finalized with the Client.

CALL CENTRE

The call centre would be mainly targeted towards the citizens of the country and more marginalized societal groups and its main aim would to be to give access for participation to less digitally capable audiences and create an idiosyncratic platform where they would be able to raise their voice on the particular issues that affect them. The call to the centre would be free of charge, and its set up and duration would only be for a limited time (proposed timing of 2 months in autumn; mid-September to mid-November).

INFO-SESSIONS

The primary purpose of the informational sessions would be to put a spotlight on the creation of the National Development Strategy and raise awareness at the specific target groups for which it is intended of its importance, as well as the level of engagement and input expected from the relevant audiences. Being primarily intended for the business community and the citizens as a body with the relevant sub-groups (youth, women, marginalized groups etc.), the informational sessions would present a great opportunity to get to these specific targets and directly address them, thus emphasizing their importance in the creation of the NDS. Given the diversity of the audiences, they would be addressed separately, with the presence of and moderated by relevant individuals for the target audiences. Given COVID-19, depending on the country's situation at the given time, the sessions would be organized online, which also makes them more easily accessible for a greater number of people.

WORKSHOPS

The workshops are aimed at all target audiences with distinct aims and purposes depending on the respective group. To begin with, they would raise awareness about the positive prospects that the NDS would have for each of the groups, and the socio-economic benefits from responsible and sustainable

prosperity of the country at large. The content of the workshops would be specifically directed at the audience with relevant content and specific information and instructions about the ways in which the group at hand would be expected to contribute to the drafting process. Their substance would be educational, providing each group with the necessary tools and mechanisms for their active involvement, thus facilitating the participation process and efficiently utilizing the provided input.

KEY COMMUNICATION METHODS PER TARGET AUDIENCE

Before delving into the proposed communication tools by the target audiences highlighted, it is important to emphasize that an initial communication should be established between the main stakeholders of the NDS (such as the Governmental bodies and the partners of the project) and the more specific target audiences (such as the local-level executives, CSOs and similar) from which active and direct engagement and participation is expected. This should be done in order to create an early partnership between the different participating sides and ensure a base on which all of the campaign tools would then build upon.

POLICYMAKERS AND GOVERNMENT DECISIONMAKERS

When it comes to policymaking and executive decision-making, there are 3 fundamental aspects: designing the policy, choosing the instruments of implementation, and seeking continuous improvement, which are expected to be established through a defined and inclusive process in order to set proper goals and outline the ways and means to achieve them. As those mainly responsible for the drafting of the National Development Strategy, the executive branch is expected to be fully devoted to the Strategy and directly involved in all stages of the drafting process. They are expected to exhibit forward thinking, having in mind the insights gathered from all target audiences, and frame the policies in consultation with the relevant Strategy stakeholders, such as inter-ministerial working groups and the involvement of NGOs, external experts and interest groups covered. Main tools for achieving this are:

1) Workshops
2) Newsletters
3) Web

Workshops

The workshops would be specifically designed for the policymakers in order to equip them with the necessary tools and provide them with in-depth information about the ways in which the NDS drafting process is going to be executed. The policymakers should be well-informed about all planned campaign activities and have clear expectations of the scope of material that would be taken into the process. They are also expected to be included in the organization of the info-sessions and workshops for the other involved interest groups in the form of moderators and facilitators.

Newsletter

Policymakers would receive dedicated newsletter with the progress and steps taken thus far in the process of the drafting of the NDS, which would cover the activities of all those involved including the different governmental bodies and institutions and would therefore ensure an even spread of information and stimulate communication and cooperation on the key points.

Web

The website, which would serve as an informational hub and platform, would provide direct access to the policymakers and governmental bodies so they are able to have direct insight into the feedback and ongoing communication with all target audiences.

CENTRAL AND LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

The government institutions and public administration are expected to be fully engaged in the drafting process, and later, its full execution. Therefore, it would be of their great benefit to actively participate in the period of the campaign in order to gain hands-on know-how which they could apply in the later stages. The main communication tools for this interest group are:

1) Printed materials
2) Newsletters
3) Info-sessions and workshops

Printed Materials

Printed material specifically designed for the government institutions would be of great benefit as they would contain educational material and specific pointers in order to simplify their work and make it easy to implement so they avoid the complexity barrier when it comes to their inclusion in the process. These materials could be also provided digitally, especially if they are structured as forms, questionnaires or fact sheets that need to be filled in with data. The materials would be written in clear and understandable language, presenting the guidelines with clarity and conciseness.

Info-Sessions and Workshops

Specific info-sessions and workshops dedicated to the government institutions would be held with the aim of informing them of the mechanisms and equipping them with the needed skills for the process of the NDS drafting.

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

The CSOs present a very strong pillar in the creation of the NDS and are of paramount importance for the Communication and Engagement Strategy, both as a target audience and a facilitator in the process. They should be allowed to undertake a serious and active role in the duration of the campaign and supporting activities in order to harness that specific societal dividend, their know-how and network and to provide them with space to raise concerns and influence the decision-making process. The CSOs involved should be assessed though their capacities and capabilities to act as a partner in the process. Their participation could enable the Government to access a diverse group of people and could be particularly effective in building a positive relationship with more marginalised groups, who may not feel comfortable taking part in formal structures and who may have limited access to digital tools for online engagement.

The following key tools would be employed in order to both educate them on the process of the drafting and engagement:

1) Web and newsletters
2) Social media
3) Info-sessions and workshops

The other tools included would serve as a support in the multichannel communication to spread awareness and encourage engagement of the given audience.

Web and Newsletters

The CSOs would be expected to be involved in the discussions on the dedicated website, through which they would be able to take an active participation in the forum and influence the level of citizen inclusion and willingness to partake in the process. Having the role of spokespeople for the groups which they cover with their areas of action, they would be expected to provide constructive recommendations.

The newsletter aimed at the CSOs would encourage their inter-group collaboration and synchronization, whilst stimulating stronger relationships between them. It would contain important updates on the process, as well as key insights from the given time period, as well as other planned activities such as upcoming info-sessions and workshops.

Social Media

Not only would the CSOs be encouraged to engage with the content on the social media channels and stimulate an ongoing conversation, but also to cross-share content to their own social media channels, thus increasing reach and ensuring that the messages reach the target audiences. The relevant CSOs would be expected to engage in their respective areas of operations by also sharing vital knowledge which they have gathered through their experiences, which can later be re-shared on the sites of the Strategy.

Info-Sessions and Workshops

The purpose of the informational sessions and workshops for civil society organizations is two-fold i.e., it is both aimed at the CSOs in order to educate them and equip them with the tools necessary for their contribution (such as specific forms and guidelines), and by them for the other relevant target audiences. They would both serve as contributors and facilitators in the drafting process of the NDS.

Follow-up

Civil society constitutes an important element of the democratic process. It provides citizens with an alternative way, alongside those of political parties and lobbies, of channelling different views and securing a variety of interests in the decision-making process. Because of this, it is expected that the CSOs would be involved not only in the process of drafting the NDS and creating the policies in their respective areas of work, but also to be actively participating and following the implementation of said policies.

It would be expected that in the course of the preparation of the NDS, different instruments to ensure public participation and direct engagement of the civil society would be formally included. The political decision-making process itself should offer opportunities for interaction between the sector and public authorities across all stages: agenda setting, drafting, decision-making, implementation, monitoring and reformulation.

Mechanisms for such involvement should include:

- Information:
  - Open and free access to public sector documents relating to the NDS and decisions regarding to its implementation across sectors and key areas
  - Access to the website with comprehensive information and key documents and announcement of public events
  - E-mail alerts announcing upcoming project and funding opportunities for implementation of said strategies included in the NDS and relevant for the CSOs
  - FAQs online or other channels to offer information presented as questions and answers, targeted towards providing practical help and guidance for the sector
  - Publicly advertised tender procedure to provide an open transparent process for service provision where it is needed
- Consultation:
  - Events, conferences, forums and seminars to inform and discuss the implementation of policy with NGOs and the public
- Dialogue:
  - Capacity building seminars to increase knowledge and capacity relevant to the implementation and cooperation between the Government and relevant CSOs

- o Training seminars for CSOs and public authorities in specific topics relevant to implementation, such as procurement, project and funding applications
- Partnership:
  - o Strategic partnership where NGOs and public authorities form a partnership to implement policy which could range from a small pilot schemes and assisting in policy consultation to a full implementation responsibility

BUSINESS COMMUNITY

The business community as a target audience has a direct interest in participating into the drafting of the National Development Strategy as it would have a long-term impact on the business environment in the country and provide them with better and sustainable working conditions. The main ways in which communication would be established are:

1) Printed materials
2) Info-sessions and workshops

The other tools included would serve as a support in the multichannel communication to spread awareness and encourage engagement of the given audience.

Printed Materials

The printed materials for this target audience would primarily take the form of interviews and stories in relevant newspapers, magazines and news and information outlets, through which they would get insights by relevant stakeholders for the importance and impact the NDS would have on the business environment in the country.

Info-Sessions and Workshops

The info-sessions and workshops targeted towards the business community would be held by relevant representatives for the sector, that would provide specific information that is of interest for the community, explain the sustainable development plans and provide more detailed information about the "doughnut" model and the concept of regenerative and distributive economies within the sustainable limits, which are of high relevance for this particular target audience. The moderator would be tasked with providing specific examples, case-studies and key-learnings where such development strategies are implemented on different levels and inciting conversation and debate on how to implement them in the local context.

CITIZENS

Many of the sub-categories are intersectional and overlap in terms of communication tools and engagement strategies. Some of the recommendations made for a specific interest group can be translated in the context and applied for the citizenship at large. The other tools included but not specifically covered would serve as a support in the multichannel communication to spread awareness and encourage engagement of the given audience.

YOUTH

It is essential to remember that the youth segment is not a homogenous category but includes a different array of people with diverse backgrounds, however, the areas such as education and training, social inclusion and diversity, and economic opportunity housing, health and mobility are of particular relevance and concern to all young people. The youth is also more vulnerable to global challenges including the long-term impact of climate change, raising inequality and high public debt and have shown determination to mobilise others in order to raise awareness among policy makers and civil society.

Active and engaged young people can be a source of government innovation and improved service, so it is essential that this potential is harnessed in the creation of the National Development Strategy. By encouraging youth to participate in this initiative, the Government can create positive impact on a personal level and with regard to the overall development of the society and the economy. Collaboration with relevant CSOs for this segment is very important. Of the aforementioned tools, a few are crucial for this segment, namely:

1) Digital platforms
   a. Web and social media
   b. Digital Display (national and local)
2) Info-sessions
3) Workshops

Digital Platforms

The communication targeted towards the youth segment needs to understand and reflect their use of media into the tailored communication strategy seeking to inform, communicate and engage with them, thus making technology and social media an indispensable part of the campaign. The online debate should be positively shaped with a simple, brief and to-the-point messaging, and avoiding patronizing or authoritarian tone of voice. The youth should be encouraged to engage with the content by being asked relevant questions and stimulated to further participate by being re-directed to the webpage which would serve as a 'safe space' where they would be able to freely share their opinions and ideas. Existing podcasts and radio stations in the country led by youth representatives can also be included as platforms for raising awareness and information spread in order to mobilize the segment with all tools available.

The digital display campaign would additionally raise the awareness of this segment about the NDS.

Info-Sessions

Online info-sessions targeted at the youth segment would be organized with the aim of informing them about the purpose of the NDS and its model of sustainable development, which is of their concern. They would also provide further information regarding the next steps that could be taken to increase their involvement and have their voices heard on the matters important to them.

Workshops

Workshops for this segment can be organized in several ways. One of those is through the official channels, such as the State University. Making most of the current situation with COVID-19 and utilizing the fact that lectures are held online, few slots of the lectures could be used for creating a debate on the topics of interest. This would be especially beneficial for the students of Law and Political Science, who have some knowledge on the working of the State apparatus and could deliver constructive feedback and opinions whilst developing their skills and know-how.

Another way would be to use the existing online platforms, and have the workshops led by relevant individuals responsible for the drafting of the NDS. Through the workshops, young people can provide the Government with fresh ideas and approaches and ensure that policy outcomes are responsive to the concerns of young people.

The topics of the workshops could also be pre-emptively defined by delivering a poll for those who sign up to vote on the specific issue they would like to discuss. Another solution would be to have the participants vote on the matter they are most interested in, and then splitting them into dedicated workshops for that particular topic.

Realizing a society for all ages is the declared goal of Governments in member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. To this end, achieving the integration and participation of older persons in society are important elements. The social inclusion of the elderly in community life is one of the indicators of the level of societal development, and at the same time a factor with strong impact on their mental and psychological health. It is important to note that when communicating with this target audience, there is a soft focus on the way in which their input will not only help themselves, but also provide valuable help for the generations to come, as it will increase their feeling of relevance in the society. Local organization of elderly people (pension clubs), the Party of the pensioners as well as CSO working for elderly standards and needs are good starting points for their involvement.

N. Macedonia is facing an increased number of older population, which, as a cohort, has been greatly affected by the great socio-economic and technological changes in the past decades. Hence, the needs for social protection and health care of older people are increasing, and there is a need for developing forms of various protection, which will enable services close to the beneficiaries for which they are intended. The social inclusion of this group is a very complex process, necessary for identifying the specific economic, health and social protection needs of the beneficiaries in order to be able to frame adequate policies enhancing the critical context for social integration in the society. The main tools proposed for their engagement in the drafting of the National Development Strategy are:

1) TV, both national and local
2) Call Centre
3) Info-sessions and workshops

TV (national and local)

This interest group is easiest to reach through traditional media channels, which will aim to inform and educate them about the goals and purpose of the NDS. Aside from video materials and commercials, the use of TV for the inclusion of this target group can be enhanced by including contact shows in the communication mix, where this population frequently participates by calling to share their opinion on the current state of affairs. Through the contact shows, the topics relevant for the elderly can be framed and discussed in a controlled environment and they would be able to freely share their thoughts. The use of local TV is especially important for the elderly from the municipalities and more rural areas of the country which are otherwise difficult to reach.

Call Centre

The primary aim of the call centre is to serve as a platform for information gathering for this specific target. As aforementioned, it would be with limited duration and in line with the schedule of the other proposed tools and can be in focus alongside the other activities which can be condensed in specific periods depending on the focus groups. So, for example, if there is a stronger focus on the elderly in the autumn months, and they are being engaged with informational sessions and workshops in that period of time, the call centre would be set up in the same time frame, thus ensuring a broad range communication and engagement coverage. The calls would be free-of-charge and the dispatcher would have a clear guideline on how to make the calls productive by having an instruction sheet with specific questions to be answered by the caller.

Another way in which it is possible to gather data and ensure participation of this target group are short, ad-hoc surveys on the street, in which the elderly have shown great interest to participate.

Info-Sessions and Workshops

The info-sessions and workshops for the elderly would have to be offline due to the low level of digital interest and literacy in this audience, so the direct participation of CSOs and other organizations primarily dealing with elderly care would be very beneficial. These sessions and workshops would be organized in specific institutions such as elderly homes, as direct contact and participation is otherwise hard to establish due to the COVID-19 crisis.

WOMEN

Gender issues are an increasingly prominent thematic area of focus in the country as thorough work on accelerating gender equality and closing critical gaps in information, access, and participation is still needed. Especially exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis, women are disproportionally affected by domestic and gender-based violence, as well as job instability and sexual harassment. This has been emphasized by the recent scandals with the messaging platform Telegram, during which the victims failed to be protected by the legislative and Government policies.

Even though N. Macedonia has adopted several laws and mechanisms to advance gender equality, gender gaps and discriminations continue across all levels. Women's participation in decision making remains limited, especially in executive bodies, they are paid less than men per hour of work and constitute a big portion of the country's economically inactive population. That is why, for the purposes of the drafting of the NDS, it is essential that women are provided with the opportunity and the necessary resources to collaborate during all phases of the policy-cycle and in the service design and delivery. This will help to build strong, long-term relationships with this cohort, and ensure that the principles of transparency, participation and gender inclusivity are at the heart of the activities.

As an intra-sectional group, communication with women as a target audience is covered by all proposed tools and activities. An overall recommendation for all communication, tools and activities of the Campaign is to have a gender-sensitive tone of voice and messaging and to actively encourage two-way communication.

It is a strong recommendation to include vocal and active CSOs and NGOs in the process of drafting of the National Development Strategy for this interest group, as they already possess a great insight and thorough information about the issues faced by women of different ages, nationalities and socio-economic background deal with on a daily basis.

MARGINALIZED AND VULNERABLE GROUPS OF CITIZENS

The marginalized and vulnerable groups of citizens are those excluded from the socio-economic, educational and cultural life, and are constituted by, but not limited to, groups excluded due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, language, and/or immigration status, such as the Roma people, the LGBT community etc. The already difficult conditions that the marginalized communities are faced with on a daily basis and the experience of marginalization for many communities are further exacerbated by the pandemic and the related shutdown of many systems, including community-based clinics, resources, and support services.

A key tool for reaching the marginalized groups in the society are the CSOs and NGOs already working with these sensitive groups, as well as the Government institutions responsible, as due to longstanding political, economic, educational, and employment marginalization, many in the communities do not have access to the technology and/or technological skills needed to be able to participate in the online debate. Worsened by the COVID-19 crisis, reaching these communities would be particularly problematic unless the existing networks are maximally utilized. Spreading information through the traditional media channels, such as national and local TV stations, would be beneficial for raising their awareness of the

topic at hand. However, two-way communication needs to be ensured by the responsible organizations which can provide direct input using a social justice lens.

<u>Follow-up</u>

The peculiar aspect of citizen participation in public policy implementation is that engagement may take place anywhere along the delivery continuum - from involvement with up-stream policy making to closer interaction with frontline service providers at the point of delivery depending on the policy in question - and that citizens can be empowered vis-à-vis public officials to monitor performance, influence decision making or even take part in the design and delivery of services.

The process of civic engagement and active participation in the implementation of the policies that would be outlined in the NDS should be ensured via different mechanisms. Firstly, the government should cultivate the ability and consciousness of citizens to participate in public policies via continuous communication and training citizens' awareness about participation as a right and obligation. Secondly, there should be an established mechanism for two-way interaction between the government and citizens. Finally, policies should be focused on strengthening information disclosure in the process of public policy implementation.

ADDITIONAL TARGET AUDIENCES

POLITICAL PARTIES

The engagement of the different political parties in the process is expected to be undertaken in order to ensure the stability and future implementation of the NDS regardless of the party in power in the country. The primary tools proposed for their current engagement are:

1) Printed materials
2) Newsletters
3) Info-sessions and workshops

The communication tools predicted for this target audience are meant to raise the awareness of the parties of the general importance of the document for the future development of the country regardless of affiliation and equip them with the necessary skills to be able to participate in the creation of the policies and their implementation.

However, it is very important to have in mind that the political situation as is would leave little space for high-level involvement by all existing parties due to internal conflicts, as well as the health crisis, socio-economic situation and overall political instability. As aforementioned, this is most notable in the refusal of the opposition to take part in Parliament as their most basic duty and responsibility.

MEDIA

The role of media in the Communication and Engagement Strategy would be two-fold. One would be their position as a communications vehicle for the other target groups and a channel for raising awareness and spreading the campaign messaging and prepared creative assets. The other role would entail their standing as a target audience which should be informed and educated on the topic in order to ensure proper reporting on the topic, as well as their active engagement. The following tools are proposed in order to realize this aim:

1) Press Conference
2) Printed materials
3) Newsletters
4) Info-sessions and workshops

Press Conference

The press conference, aside from having the general aim of informing the general citizenship and all target groups regarding the key points of the Communication and Engagement Strategy and the importance of the NDS, would serve as a good opportunity to strengthen media relations and provide them with a chance to raise important questions for clarification.

Printed Materials

This target audience would benefit from the distribution of materials easy to share in the form of informational leaflets and brochures which would contain the essential information to be spread out via this target group/communication channel. Guidebooks on reporting on the topic could also be prepared with instructions for the tone of voice, use of language, as well as key information about the point, content and aim of the NDS as a strategy for sustainable development of the country in the period to come.

Newsletters

The newsletters are deemed to be a great way for information dissemination for this target audience as it leaves space for active and timely updating of any ongoing activities or advances of the process itself. They also make way for an effective two-way communication between the main stakeholders and the media, allowing them to guide this target group throughout the course of the campaign. As it is in the interest of this target group to be proactive in terms of information-seeking, it would be expected that this tool would prove as most effective.

Info-sessions and Workshops

The informational sessions and workshops for this target audience would be aimed at: firstly, informing them of the ongoing process, advances in the drafting, as well as the activities at the time and opportunities for involvement by the other target audiences; and secondly, equipping them with the necessary skills needed to stimulate the engagement both in terms of adequate and proper reporting, and their specific participation where needed.

COMMUNICATION CHANNEL COVERAGE SUMMARY

Given the size and scope of the proposed communication tools and platforms in relation to the relevant target audiences and interest groups, a very satisfactory coverage would be ensured should all are implemented. The diversity of the tools safeguards the variety of input provided and its quality, which would provide beneficial guidelines for policy-planning and strategy development.

BRANDING AND VISUALS (FUTURA)

The logotype was developed by the agency Futura, who created the visuals in order to best transmit the campaign's point and messaging. This segment is subject to change for the time being.

The logo is colourful, modern and dynamic, consisting of graphical elements which give the feeling of movement, growth and the future. The arrows further strengthen the campaign's headline and confirm the symbolism of the logo. The slogan is placed centrally on a white background in order to stand out and me clearly legible when combined with the rest of the elements included. The colours used for the logo would be the colour-coding used throughout the campaign in order to have a synchronized visual identity across all communication channels and would be present in all creative assets.

FIGURE 1 CAMPAIGN LOGOTYPE

The co-branding guidelines proposed in the creative concept are presented in the figure below, which will be adequately applied to all creative assets such as videos, OOH (billboards, city lights and the other proposed tools), printed materials and all digital products.

FIGURE 2 CO-BRANDING GUIDELINES

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Setting measurable objectives at the outset of the campaign would be of fundamental importance. The communications objectives would need to support the goals of the Communications and Engagements Strategy and be in line with the input expected by the involved parties and stakeholders. These would need to be set out in advance of any planned activity before its execution with a clear indication of what success of that specific communication tool would look like. Communications objectives would need to move beyond counting outputs to linking the communications activity to raising awareness and stimulating engagement and ultimately creating impact.

In order to be able to make sure that the impact includes organizational, stakeholder, and societal impact/outcomes, the guidelines provided identify the major stages in the Communication and Engagement Strategy, the key steps involved, metrics and milestones to be generated or identified depending on the final chosen communication tools and the most commonly used methods for doing the needed analysis. Depending on the final channels and tools used on the campaign, below provided are some useful online analytics tools to be used throughout the active stages:

- Google Analytics – to monitor the use of the website
- Google Alerts – to monitor specific content on the web
- Hootsuite – to monitor content across all social media channels
- Simply Measured – social media reports

The model provided should serve as a guideline for monitoring throughout the duration of the Campaign. Given the scope and timeframe, the KPI analyses should be done in a continuum and updated per the feedback and data received.

INPUT/RESOURCES

The prerequisite inputs could be defined as the needed contributions in terms of objectives, budget and resources such as staff, facilities, partnerships and agencies which would be included in facilitating the process of the preparation and execution of the Campaign, as well as the drafting of the NDS itself, and are the mid-level key steps when defining the communication tools. The objectives per tool should be finalized after defining the exact approach which would be used in all phases of the Campaign; however, the general ones are:

1. The overall objective of this strategic framework is to inform and engage the given target audiences in the creation of the NDS in terms of drafting policies, programs, projects, and advisory services and analytics where such engagement can improve the final output. In this process, the Communication and Engagement Strategy aims to build on and strengthen existing engagement processes and systems between the Government and its involved bodies, the private sector, and different citizen groups at the national, regional, local, or sectoral level, as applicable.
2. In operationalizing the target audience engagement for improved results in the NDS creation, the Strategy aims to achieve the following sub-objectives:
   (a) Scaling up context-specific engagement across the policy-drafting spectrum where such engagement can contribute to improved development outcomes
   (b) Improving the quality and outcomes of the planned engagement mechanisms
   (c) Establishing the monitoring and results reporting, including feedback loops.

The methods to evaluate the inputs and resources should be based on internal and environmental analysis in which the Strategy would be executed, having in mind the current situation of the country in order to set clear expectations.

ACTIVITIES

The activities refer to the communication tools which would pass the selection process as a result of budget or time constraints, as well as extraordinary measures given the health crisis and the actions taken by the Government for its management. The key steps that would be taken in this second stage would be the exact planning and production of material such as writing, design, production, media buying, partnerships etc. The metrics for measurement would be the audience analysis and communication tables provided in terms of their needs and preferences, the content produced (e.g. informational videos, Website, social media content) and this strategic plan.

The methods used for these analyses include metadata analysis (past research done), audience and stakeholder analysis, SWOT and PESTEL, as well as the final evaluation plan that should be done for precising final outputs.

OUTPUTS

All of the actions and materials put out and received by the target audiences can be described as strategical outputs aimed at realizing the Strategy's goals. The key steps at this stage would be the

distribution of all prepared assets, exposure and reception of the information or messages by the target audiences – not only being subjected to the communication but retaining the key points.

Metrics that would be used at this stage are: media reach, impressions, social media posts, CPM, clickthrough rate of placed links (to the Website), online or offline event attendance.

The methods used for evaluation should include media monitoring, qualitative and quantitative content analysis across implemented channels and activity reports.

OUT-TAKES

The out-takes are related to the reception of the messaging by the target audiences and what they would do and take out of the placed communication assets and tools. The key steps at this stage would be the awareness, interest, engagement and consideration, assessed by metrics such as: unique website visitors and created input, return visits to the website, video views, response (e.g., social media follows, likes, tags, shares etc.), comments, subscribers (e.g., newsletter subscriptions or website notification subscriptions), unsolicited inquiries.

The most useful methods of evaluation would be web statistics, survey/poll engagement, interest and participation in the online info-sessions/workshops, direct feedback (e.g., comments).

OUTCOMES

The outcomes would be the desired behavioural change as outlined in the project communication tables where the effect the communication would have on the target audiences would be visible – is there an increased understanding of the topic at hand, has it shaped their attitude to the topic, has it increased trust in the applicability of the NDS, has it had an impact on the intention to do engage (e.g., directly participate in the planned activities or engage on the website) or increased online advocacy in the form of sharing the content and generating own as a response.

The metrics through which this could be analysed are statements of support, intent or proof of active participation (e.g., social media posts or other ways of marking their contribution), message acceptance via qualitative analysis of the content produced by the target audiences, registrations (e.g., on the website or for online or offline info-sessions or workshops, calls in the call centre).

Evaluation methods could include but would not be limited to online opinion polls distributed via the social media channels, qualitative social media analysis, database statistics, stakeholder surveys.

IMPACTS

The results caused as a result of the Communication and Engagement Strategy would be an outcome of the stimulated social change through the messaging and clues executed. Those would be measured in the end given the input created throughout the drafting process by all included interest groups and the final drafted NDS. The methods for final evaluation should include all database records (e.g., number of total participants in the info-sessions/workshops, as well as by target group/topic covered), content generated on the website (e.g., forum activity), online behaviour etc.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Crisis management is considered to be one of the vital parts of communication plans. In order to be able to best manage the possible problems and critiques directed towards the Strategy and/or the NDS, there would be pre-planned steps to have in mind and certain pointers to pay attention to.

First, assessment steps would need to be taken in order to establish the severity of the crisis and the actual risk it presents to the project at large. A clear distinction should be made between day-to-day

issues, such as negative comments on social media, and high-levels of crisis escalations, such as key stakeholder misconduct or long-term threats of damage to the NDS, in order to formulate a proper response and whether it should be agreeably addressed or if it would require an all-hands-on-deck approach.

Depending on the incident, and having identified the key persons to be informed once aware of the crisis, there should be a clear line of communication between the members in order to formulate an appropriate response. There should be a well-defined delegation of responsibilities between individuals or teams who may take action depending on the severity of the crisis, such as the PR & communications team, the social media team, executive assistants, account managers and more.

5A CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROCESS

ALERT

The first phase is outlining the actions necessary to ensure that the appropriate response team is notified as soon as possible. In case of doubts whether there is space for concern, the first response team should be alerted just in case. The system for notifying should be simple and straightforward, such as an internal chat system channel (e.g., Microsoft Teams or Slack) or email.

ASSESS

Once the respective response person or team has be notified, the (potential) crisis should be assessed by gathering any available information, classifying the incident by its severity and preparing to take subsequent action. Some key questions to be considered would be the actual occurrence and where it took place, its effect and involved parties, the potential impact and whether it poses immediate danger, and if the issue has been entirely understood.

ACTIVATE

In the case that a specific action is required, the assessment should turn into an actionable plan. There should be a channel through which the response team will communicate with the appropriate communication team members regarding their tasks and/or with other involved stakeholders for specific messaging. These tasks could include incident response team communication, initial external messaging, gathering/monitoring information, finding a meeting space, team check-in cadence, etc.

ADMINISTER

The fourth phase should focus on determining how the team would continue to assess, address, and resolve the incident should there be a need of follow-up. Once again, the type, scale, scope, and severity of the incident or crisis will determine the response. Tasks would include communication to stakeholders, involved parties, and target audiences if appropriate, as well as developing a timeline, seeking external legal or technical assistance, moderating and responding to media.

ADJOURN

Once the immediacy of the crisis would have dissipated, the responsible persons or teams should review the process and the way in which it had been handled to learn about any successes, learnings, or shortcomings, ways in which it could be avoided in the future or if further monitoring of communication/media would be necessary.

MEDIA PLANNING

MEDIA STEPS

- o Set objectives
- o Define KPIs
- o Design tactics
- o Campaign execution
- o Measure outcomes
- o Optimize results
- o Media priorities
- o Keep awareness high; extend the message to more people
- o Convince people of the project objectives

THE ROLE OF MEDIA

Increasing the exposure of the Campaign by promoting and communicating its core values and thereby bringing credibility to the Strategy.

If successful, the media would contribute to the increased awareness of the positive aspects of the Strategy.

MEDIA IMPLEMENTATION

Each flight (TV or display, national or local) will be mapped considering the objectives and its place in the project realization process. For each flight, we shall highlight the Key Action Words needed to guide us in the planning.

OPTIMIZING AND LOCALIZING THE APPROACH

Taking into consideration the vast scope of the National Development Strategy and the way it affects all citizens in the country, it is important that the communication is dispersed with wide coverage.

Regional/Local TV stations are very important and respectable among local people mainly because they cover all local problems, events, developments, economic trends and occasions. A proposed list of TV stations by region in the table below.

Regarding digital activities on the local level, by cooperating with the informative web sites in the biggest cities in each destination, sufficient coverage would be provided thus raising the awareness of the locals on the important aspects of the NDS and the ways in which they can directly contribute to its creation.

Regions & Municipalities	Relevant Local TV Station
Ohrid, Struga, Prespa and their surroundings	**TV M** - Ohrid, Struga, Vevchani, Debarca
Skopje, Kumanovo and their surroundings	**24Vesti** Skopje; **K3** - Kumanovo
Pelagonija and surroundings	**TV Tera** - Bitola, Prilep. Krusevo

Tikvesh region and surroundings	**TV KTV** -Veles, Sv Nikole, Gradsko, Rosoman, Negotino, Kavadarci, Demir Kapija
Stip, Radovish and surroundings	**STAR, IRIS** - Stip, Kochani, Vinica, Berovo, Pehchevo
Reka area, Mavrovo and surroundings	**Dibra TV** - Debar, Zupa, Mavrovo, Rostushe
Gevgelija and Dojran and surroundings	**TV Kobra -** Radovish, Strumica, Novo Selo, Valandovo, Bogdanci, Dojran, Gevgelija
Polog area (Tetovo, Popova Shapka) and surroundings	**Koha ALB** - Tetovo, Gostivar; **TV KISS MK** - Tetovo, Gostivar
Strumica and its surroundings	**Vis** - Strumica, Radovish, Gevgelija, Valandovo, Dojran

Local media vehicles will be used for targeting individuals from all areas. The creation of high awareness of the national interest with the development of the National Development Strategy is the main objective that is to be obtained by using local media.

Due to budget limitations and cost optimization from one side, and reaching the highest efficiency from another, the choice of national would be based on:

- o Target viewership pattern - affinity & ratings
- o The capability of building coverage - share of viewing
- o Cost efficiency – CPP
- o Relevance for the target
- o Budget

TV BUYING STRATEGY

- o Considering the current situation in the Macedonian market, Sitel is the biggest TV station that secures fast and high reach achievement. A recommendation from the Agency for Audio and Audio-visual Media Services that the campaign is of high national interest would prove advantageous in order to ensure additional TVC airings
- o Telma is the most urban and popular TV station in Skopje and the surrounding area. It broadcasts different programs compared to other national TV stations and provides coverage of the segment that is not covered by the biggest stations. Excellent support.
- o Alsat M – the most popular Albanian TV, with the biggest growth (RTG and SHR) among all TV stations.

DIGITAL DISPLAY CAMPAIGN ON A NATIONAL LEVEL

The digital display on a national level would be used in three rounds in the duration of the Communication and Engagement Campaign: at the beginning, executed after the launch of the Campaign and website; second round would be in support of the press-conference along with the other communication tools predicted; and lastly towards the end of the NDS drafting period, tailored after the needs of the Campaign at the time being.

The web mix would be built upon:

- o Google Analytic statistic

- o Contents of the web site
- o Quality of the sites
- o Top available position
- o CTR% based on experience from previous campaigns
- o Relevancy for the target

The focus would be put on informative and business web portals, as well as news aggregators and entertainment sites. There is a wide range of focus areas that can secure coverage of a wide audience.

It is recommended to have different banner formats on desktop and mobile. It is our strong recommendation that mobile would be included because, as per site statistics, approximately 60-70% out of total achieved impressions come from mobile versions. The most impressed formats are 300x600 in desktop version and sticky banner (320 x 100/200) on the mobile version.

Print interviews to be additionally discussed and defined for print with the Client; title selection depends on the type and topic of the interviews.

MONITORING OF THE CAMPAIGN

National TV stations are monitored by the official audience and monitoring agency – Nielsen Company. Post-buy TV reports will be prepared based on Nielsen data.

There is no official monitoring for regional and local TV stations. They would supply recorded material (part of their programs) where our spot/announcement/article is placed.

Digital campaigns will be realized through the official monitoring agency Gemius Direct Effect, where we can track achieved impressions and clicks on a daily basis. Also, the Agency would supply screenshots of all banner formats being executed.