ANNEX II: TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION 2

1.1. Partner country 2

1.2. Contracting authority 2

1.3. Country background 2

1.4. Current situation in the sector 2

1.5. Related programmes and other donor activities 2

2. OBJECTIVES & EXPECTED OUTPUTS 2

2.1. Overall objective 2

2.2. Specific Objective(s) 3

2.3. Expected outputs to be achieved by the contractor 3

3. ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS 3

3.1. Assumptions underlying the project 3

3.2. Risks 3

4. SCOPE OF THE WORK 3

4.1. General 3

4.2. Specific work 4

4.3. Project management 4

5. LOGISTICS AND TIMING 4

5.1. Location 4

5.2. Start date & period of implementation of tasks 4

6. REQUIREMENTS 5

6.1. Staff 5

6.2. Office accommodation 7

6.3. Facilities to be provided by the contractor 7

6.4. Equipment 7

7. REPORTS 7

7.1. Reporting requirements 7

7.2. Submission and approval of reports 8

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION 8

8.1. Definition of indicators 8

8.2. Special requirements 8

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## Partner country

Republic of North Macedonia.

## Contracting authority

University “Goce Delcev” Shtip, Republic of North Macedonia.

## Country background

The Republic of North Macedonia is a small, landlocked country in the Balkans, bounded on the north by Serbia, on the east by Bulgaria, on the west by Albania and on the south by Greece. Republic of North Macedonia has a small, open economy that is vulnerable to economic developments in Europe and dependent on regional integration for continued economic growth.

The European Territorial Cooperation, better known as Interreg IPA Programme supports regional cooperation between Republic of Greece and the Republic of North Macedonia. The Programme's overall objective is to enhance territorial cohesion by improving living standards and employment opportunities and etc. The cross-border cooperation programme promotes enhanced cooperation and progressive social policy, inclusion and coherence between EU and candidate countries, and through IPA it could be further developed and ensure sustainable results.

The project “Business eco-system as an integrated system, Be In” is consistent with Priority Axis 1.1. Development and Support for Local Economy, specific objective 1.1 Create employment opportunities for educated graduates by exploiting comparative advantages of the cross-border area, preferably with the use of innovative tools and practices.

The location of the activities within the framework of the project “Business eco-system as an integrated system, Be In” are between the four border regions in Greece, Kilkis, Pella, Serres and Thessaloniki and the Southeast planning Region from North Macedonia.

The project will support creation of integrated business eco-system for business and entrepreneurship in the cross-border area. Through networking, synergies and optimization of the existing functions and innovative solutions the new challenges will be solved.

## Current situation in the sector

This project creates an integrated business eco-system for business and entrepreneurship in the cross-border area. The idea behind this project lies on the impact that the acceleration activities have both on labour force and on business entities, on the one hand business entities that employ experts and invest on education and training activities could adopt faster to the challenges of the social, economic, technological and political environment. But this is by far not adequate. All new challenges require networking, synergies and optimization of the existing functions and innovative solutions. On the other hand, well trained individuals choose to leave the countries, attempting to achieve the best offer for the qualifications in regions away from the cross-border area. The project has already defined the number of jobs creating, which is objective and coherent indicator that describes -even partial- the dynamic of an economy. It also reveals a plain and simple process, how business entities grow and how individuals match their competences with the required by the market qualifications, actually how the demand meets the supply.

Project aimed to overcome the classic logic of endowments, although that is effective in the short term, it doesn’t effectively answer a major challenge; how could business entities adopt to change, and how jobs opportunities could be created inside a changing business eco-system. This project creates an integrated eco-system based on the following principles; knowledge, in the form of the identification of current needs -both on the demand and the supply side - and acceleration; in the terms of enhancing developmental actions, by amplifying the desire to take risks from the business side, and strengthening the transformation of the ideas into actions, in the individual level. Some of the main challenges in the cross-border area, as they are well defined in the OP are the potential risks that could be transformed into threats for social cohesion and economic development; For instance, the inefficient networking, the high mobility of skilled personnel the lack of self-assessment of unskilled and the ineffective matching between the demand -business entities- and the supply -individuals/labour force- could act as detergents and could jeopardize the potential that the cross-border area has. The coherent approach proposed by the project’s circulation takes into account the overall structure of the existing business eco-system, attempting to boost ideas, assist entrepreneurship and match the demand and the supply. SMEs, start-uppers research institutions active in the field of widening the business opportunities will be engaged in a well-designed knowledge – acceleration and assist activities. This project supports SMEs, enhances and promotes business ideas and mainly helps young people to transform ideas into activities, reducing in parallel the burden of the information and knowledge cost. One of the innovative actions of this project is that by boosting qualifications on individual level and the available tools -for enterprises- this project closes the gap between the misinformed and well-informed entities and professionals. This project defines the problems and the outputs in both short-term and long-term. On the one hand there are well-defined problems of the identification of needs and the optimization of available solutions and on the other the potential risks that could become important issues in the future. The approach of the project is innovative, as it by-passes the classic approach of boosting the development with endowments and it provides a framework of networking, and knowledge-based tools. Thus, leaving opportunities for funding as innovative tools could be of wide use in the near future, this project aims at the core of the problem in the cross-border area. The project aim to creates a stable synergy with long lasting effects among all the public entities, research institutions and local stakeholders through the joint actions to provide expertise, networking, knowledge and support.

## Related programmes and other donor activities

N/A

# OBJECTIVES & EXPECTED OUTPUTS

## Overall objective

The overall objective of the project of which this contract will be a part is as follows:

This project deals with all the challenges set by the OP while it provides a comprehensive framework that allows networking, mobility and employment in the cross-border area.

The actions of the project and its outputs are designed in order to provide results both in the short and in the long run. The main objective is the creation of a coherent, integrated and innovative business eco-system that allows networking, boosting ideas while it assists individuals to develop their skills and business entities to increase their capacity. The MO addresses and focuses on the expected results of the call, as it facilitates the process of opening new jobs opportunities, by boosting the demand and the supply side. Along with the MO there are also three targeted sub-objectives (TO).

TO1 – Expanding knowledge with the cross-sectional and qualitative (in-depth interviews) surveys, it will illustrate insights and trends, while it will reveal important weaknesses that the project will focus.

TO2 – Assisting and boosting ideas. Support and assistance to the operations of the existing SMEs, by developing a toolkit in order to strengthen current operational capacity (digital marketing tools, Ad-hoc business support, pool of experts, workshops and seminars for new developments and preparation for future needs).

TO3 - Openness and Promotion. Umbrella actions in two directions; joint efforts, for a harmonized presentation of the intervention and identity building, and promotion and dissemination events, for engaging stakeholders and community of the cross-border area and

TO4 - Creating employment opportunities for educated graduates, integrated framework of employment opportunities for qualified graduates.

## Specific objective(s)

The specific objectives of this contract are as follows:

* Engagement of 5 (five) external mentors to conduct mentoring programme for graduated students, young entrepreneurs which have innovative business ideas.
* Designed approach to up scaling of SME innovation;
* Conducting mentoring programme by the 5 (five) engage external mentors in a period of 12 (twelve) months;
* Support of the involved stakeholders to meet protentional investors such as business angels, venture capital funds;
* Organization of thematic workshops for capacity building of the selected members, participants;
* Preparation of materials (scripts, presentations) for the participants, shared on the platform, E-library of the project with open access;

Organization of a Demo days, bringing together entrepreneurs, eco-system players, incubators and investors from the cross-border region.

## Expected outputs to be achieved by the contractor

The expected outputs of this contract are as follows:

* Conducted an on-line call for applicants;
* Selection of 20 (twenty) participants;
* Each mentor has mentoring programme for 30 (thirty) hours per month in a period of 12 (twelve) months for the selected participants;
* Each mentor will conduct 6 (six) workshops in a period of 12 (twelve) months in the field of business economics, marketing, management, accounting, finance for the selected participants;
* Мentors will also maintain online or physical consultation meetings, according to the need of the participants;
* Mentors will prepare writing materials (scripts, presentations) for start-ups and will be shared on the platform, section E-library of the project;
* Mentors would conduct one demo day at the end of mentoring support with physical presence for the stockholders;
* 20 (twenty) participants trained to run their own business;

# ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

## Assumptions underlying the project

Good cooperation between all parties involved in the project. Continuous communication and provision of information between the Project Team and the Contractor (Mentors) and functional and effective co-operation between Contracting Authority and the selected Contractor (Mentors);

Тhere is a sufficient interest among all involved parties, final beneficiaries.

## Possible assumptions related to project implementation:

Clear and full understanding of the contract objectives and purposes;

Continuous communication and provision of information between the Project Team and the engage external experts;

Functional and effective co-operation between Contracting Authority and the selected Contractor, engage external experts and interest by the final beneficiaries for inclusion in the envisaged project activities

The Contractor needs to possesses appropriate expertise, experience and capacity for delivering above listed services.

The project will facilitate current process of matching of supply and market demand, developing capacity and networking. SMEs will benefit from this project directly -by participating in its actions, attracting young professionals and qualified experts and indirectly, by being a part of this eco-system that will gradually adopt to the new paradigm, of not avoiding risk and being a part of a knowledge environment.

The project actions would provide specific insights on the comparative advantages both of the individuals and most importantly will illustrate the gap between the desired qualification and the current labour force strengths. This engaged external experts would be consisted by experts in business development, management, marketing and innovation, having a dual role, on one hand it will serve as the scientific committee, providing guidance, analysis, reports on trends and development, and on the other hand it will closely plan and implement tools and assistance to all the participators individuals and SMEs. The engaged external experts would provide an e-library which would contain (with open access) all the material, educational, forms, experts’ reports and will be also a knowledge hub, in which calls will be uploaded and networking will be facilitated. Also, good practices, stories and incentives of graduates and young professionals will be shared and available. An event hosted during the implementation of the project will act as a pilot event for future also implementation. This will bring together individuals -young professionals and graduates- and SMEs attempting to match the supply and the demand.

## Risks

No risks are identified.

# SCOPE OF THE WORK

## General

### Description of the assignment

The contract should support the Contracting Authority in process of the implementation of project through providing of external expertise, mentors in the field of SME sector and support of students, young entrepreneurs through the capacity building programmes and support protentional entrepreneurs in the development of sustainable businesses.

Consultant will be responsible for the implementation of the capacity building of the target groups through conducting and implementation of mentoring programmes. The engage external mentors should facilitate one demo day events, each mentor should conduct 6 (six) thematic workshops according to the need of the participants, serial of on-line support consultation meetings, preparation of writing materials (scripts, presentations) for start-ups which will be shared on the platform, section E-library of the project.

### Geographical area to be covered

The geographical area that is covered by the INTERREG IPA CBC Greece – Republic of North Macedonia Programme.

### Target groups

Project target groups are: Individuals, graduated students, young unemployed people, young entrepreneurs, helpful entrepreneurs, SMEs and business support organizations.

The project supports SMEs, enhances and promotes business ideas and mainly helps young people to transform ideas into activities, reducing in parallel the burden of the information and knowledge cost. One of the innovative actions of this project is that by boosting qualifications on individual level and the available tools-for enterprises-this project closes the gap between the misinformed and well-informed entities and professionals.

## Specific work

* Engagement of 5 (five) external mentors to conduct mentoring programme, which would help to all interested stakeholders, graduated students, young entrepreneurs and other parties which have innovative business ideas. They need to designed approach to up scaling of SME innovation;
* Conducting mentoring programme by the 5 (five) engage external mentors for the 20 (twenty) selected participants. Each mentor has 30 hours per month in a period of 12 (twelve) months;
* The 5 (five) external mentors need to prepare pioneer member listing, with all members who will work in order to make something different, after published on-line public call for applying of participants. The on-line call for applicants will be published on the website and on the Facebook page of the faculty and the University;
* The 5 (five) external mentors during the membership programme the involved stakeholders must learn new skills for running their own business;
* The 5 (five) external mentors during the membership programme the involved stakeholders need to motivated and support them through connection with successful, passionate and helpful entrepreneurs, which are going to be members of the Start-ups club;
* The 5 (five) external mentors during the membership programme need to support involved stakeholders / members through a variety of mentoring programmes as well as helping them to understand various aspects of the start-up journey through focused knowledge sessions for previously define needs;
* The 5 (five) external mentors during the membership programme need to support involved stakeholders / members to meet protentional investors such as business angels, venture capital funds;
* The 5 (five) external mentors during the membership programme need to track the growth of the member’s work and motivate them not to give up of transforming the idea into real business;
* The 5 (five) external mentors during the membership programme need to conduct workshops in order to help members to dive into certain concepts that are challenging to understand;
* The 5 (five) external mentors during the membership programme need to create of repository with their own materials and book recommendations for the members. They need to organize an archive within the frame of the start-ups club;
* The 5 (five) mentors will determine the needed topics for the work-shops with participants. The topics will be in the field of business economics, marketing, management, accounting, finance, which are needed to start up their own business. The workshops will be implemented on-line and will be 6 workshops from each mentor;
* Mentors should have prepared and materials (scripts, presentations) that will be shared on the platform and will attract the E-library of the project that will be with open access.
* The 5 (five) external mentors during the membership programme need to appoint regular meetups for networking of all interested parties in the cross-border region;

The 5 (five) external mentors during the membership programme would organize a Demo days for bringing together entrepreneurs, eco-system players, incubators and investors from the cross-border region; They need to conducted and facilitated the demo days (open sessions);

## Project management

### Responsible body

University of "Goce Delcev" is the Contracting Authority of this Contract and responsible body for managing the contract, Engagement of 5 (five) external mentors under the project “Business eco-system as an integrated system” Be IN, Shtip, Republic of North Macedonia.

### Management structure

University of “Goce Delcev” Shtip, Republic of North Macedonia.

The project implementation will be subject to monitoring and control by the Rector of the University of “Goce Delcev” Shtip, Republic of North Macedonia and furthermore by independent controllers appointed to the Managing Authority for Greece – Republic of North Macedonia INTERRREG IPA Cross Border cooperation Programme. As per the present contract the Managing Board of the Contracting Authority reserves its right to monitoring and control of the implementation of the tasks assigned through the Project Manager and Technical Coordinator.

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

N/A. No facilities shall be provided by the Contracting Authority.

# LOGISTICS AND TIMING

## Location

Mainly the operational base for the project will be set up in the town of Strumica, South-east planning region, Republic of North Macedonia, where UGD Shtip has a decentralized unit.

## Start date & period of implementation of tasks

The intended start date is 17.05.2022 and the period of implementation of the contract will be 12 (twelve) months from this date. Please see Articles 19.1 and 19.2 of the special conditions for the actual start date and period of implementation.

# REQUIREMENTS

## Staff

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

### Key experts

Key experts are defined and they must submit CVs and signed Statements of Exclusivity and Availability.

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

**Key expert 1: Team leader**

Qualifications and skills

* The expert shall have Bachelor Degree (Master or PhD are preferable) in area of Economics or in other field related to the tasks to be provided;

General professional experience

* At least 5 (five) years relevant work experience in the field of Economics, experience in the cooperation with SME’s sector, in advising of SMEs and students, young entrepreneurs;
* Excellent management and organizational skills;

Specific professional experience

* Participation in realization of at least 1 (one) project related with economic surveys and analyses;
* Very good working knowledge of analytic and research methods related with the economy and SME’s sector;
* Professional experience in relation with conducting of capacity building measures – training, workshops or seminars;
* Excellent knowledge in English language.

**Key expert 2:**

Qualifications and skills

* The expert shall have at least Bachelor Degree in area of Economics or in other field related to the tasks, assignment to be provided;

General professional experience

* At least 3 (three) years relevant work experience in the field of Economics, experience in the cooperation with SME’s sector, in advising of SMEs and students, young entrepreneurs;
* Excellent management and organizational skills;

Specific professional experience

* Participation in realization of at least 1 (one) project related with economic surveys and analyses;
* Very good working knowledge of analytic and research methods related with the economy and SME’s sector;
* Professional experience in relation with conducting of capacity building measures – training, workshops or seminars;
* Excellent knowledge in English language.

**Key expert 3:**

Qualifications and skills

* The expert shall have at least Bachelor Degree in area of Economics or in other field related to the tasks, assignment to be provided;

General professional experience

* At least 3 (three) years relevant work experience in the field of Economics, experience in the cooperation with SME’s sector, in advising of SMEs and students, young entrepreneurs;
* Excellent management and organizational skills;

Specific professional experience

* Participation in realization of at least 1 (one) project related with economic surveys and analyses;
* Very good working knowledge of analytic and research methods related with the economy and SME’s sector;
* Professional experience in relation with conducting of capacity building measures – training, workshops or seminars;
* Excellent knowledge in English language.

**Key expert 4:**

Qualifications and skills

* The expert shall have at least Bachelor Degree in area of Economics or in other field related to the tasks, assignment to be provided;

General professional experience

* At least 3 (three) years relevant work experience in the field of Economics, experience in the cooperation with SME’s sector, in advising of SMEs and students, young entrepreneurs;
* Excellent management and organizational skills;

Specific professional experience

* Participation in realization of at least 1 (one) project related with economic surveys and analyses;
* Very good working knowledge of analytic and research methods related with the economy and SME’s sector;
* Professional experience in relation with conducting of capacity building measures – training, workshops or seminars;
* Excellent knowledge in English language.

**Key expert 5:**

Qualifications and skills

* The expert shall have at least Bachelor Degree in area of Economics or in other field related to the tasks, assignment to be provided;

General professional experience

* At least 3 (three) years relevant work experience in the field of Economics, experience in the cooperation with SME’s sector, in advising of SMEs and students, young entrepreneurs;
* Excellent management and organizational skills;

Specific professional experience

* Participation in realization of at least 1 (one) project related with economic surveys and analyses;
* Very good working knowledge of analytic and research methods related with the economy and SME’s sector;
* Professional experience in relation with conducting of capacity building measures – training, workshops or seminars;
* Excellent knowledge in English language.

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

### Other experts, support staff & backstopping

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

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

## Office accommodation

Office accommodation for each expert working on the contract is to be provided by the Contractor.

## Facilities to be provided by the contractor

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

## Equipment

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

# REPORTS

## Reporting requirements

The contractor will submit the following reports in English language in one original:

* **Inception Report** of maximum 5 (five) pages to be produced the first month after the signing of the contract, the first staps from the start of the implementation of the task. In the report the contractor shall describe the access and the methodology which is going to be used by key experts.
* **Monthly reports with time - sheet** from the 5 (five) engage key experts, with detail description of their work. These monthly reports shall be submitted to the Team leader no later than 5 (five) days after the end of each month.
* **Final report** - the report shall contain a sufficiently detailed description of the 12 (twelve) months services for the previously identified final beneficiaries, detail description of the achieve results withing the framework of the contract.

## Submission and approval of reports

The report referred to above must be submitted to the responsible person, project coordinator/manager identified in the contract. The project coordinator / manager is responsible for approving the reports.

The contractor must submit and sign delivery – acceptance sheet for the implemented activities at the end of the contract period which should be accompanied by invoice for the balance payment of the contract.

# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

## Definition of indicators

Prepared:

* Performed mentoring programme;
* Trained 20 (twenty) entrepreneurs;
* Designed approach to up scaling of SME innovation;
* Demo days event;
* Thematic workshops;
* Prepared writing educational materials, shared on the platform and e-liberty;

## Special requirements

N /A.