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# BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS CHAMPIONS

## Goals

Improve the productivity and capacity of MSMEs, including building their resilience to crises

Improve Business Support Organizations' services to MSMEs

Improve and increase inclusive economic opportunities for women

## Duration

September 2022 – August 2026

## USAID Funding

\$999,996

## Implementing Partner

Strategic Development Consulting

## Key national partners

- Office of Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs
- Ministry of Economy
- Ministry of Labor & Social Policy
- Public-Private Dialogue Platform

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## BACKGROUND

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in North Macedonia are the economy's backbone and a major engine of growth and employment. Despite their potential, MSMEs struggle to improve their productivity, increase their competitiveness, and harness talent. Additionally, women in North Macedonia are not economically empowered to take on managerial positions—they receive unequal pay, and fewer jobs are available to them in highly paid industries.

Business support organizations (BSOs) provide services to MSMEs to help businesses grow and become more competitive. In North Macedonia, BSOs, though fragile, demonstrate high potential to provide services tailored to women and to contribute to the country's economic future.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

USAID is partnering with Strategic Development Consulting to 1) conduct a policy analysis and develop recommendations to support government efforts to strengthen MSME resilience in the face of economic crises; 2) help BSOs improve their capacities to respond to their member MSMEs' needs; and 3) improve BSO services to promote women's economic empowerment and economic equity.

Through this activity, USAID will provide grants to jump-start better BSO service delivery, thereby boosting BSO relevance to their members. Other grants will support innovative initiatives of BSOs as well as civil society organizations, businesses, and educational institutions to enhance the work of BSO members. Further, we will provide grants to organizations for mainstreaming gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

## EXPECTED RESULTS AND IMPACT

- The government will be more able to support stronger MSME resilience in the face of crises.
- BSO membership bases and service satisfaction will increase.
- New and improved BSO services for MSMEs will be developed based on member needs.
- BSOs and MSMEs will incorporate newly developed and improved gender-balanced practices.



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