



Institute

local governance | informal learning

ANNUAL REPORT

of ZIP Institute for 2025

HIGHLIGHTS OF A TRANSFORMATIVE YEAR DEDICATED TO EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES, PIONEERING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS, AND DRIVING POSITIVE CHANGE ACROSS KEY SECTORS.



2025 marked a year of deepened impact, national expansion, and strategic engagement for ZIP Institute. Building on our strong foundation, we expanded the Skopje Citizens' Climate Assembly model into six assemblies across the country, empowering communities in multiple regions to participate meaningfully in climate and energy decision-making. Through the MERIT Project, we advanced our investigation into hiring practices within state-owned enterprises, reinforcing our commitment to transparency, merit-based recruitment, and institutional accountability.

This year, we also strengthened regional and European cooperation by hosting and participating in conferences across Europe, fostering greater synergies between the Balkans and Western Europe. Our Energy Forum further convened key stakeholders to advance dialogue on democratic governance, energy policy, and citizen participation.

As we continue to grow, we remain dedicated to bridging research and action—working toward a more transparent, participatory, and resilient democratic society.

– Agim Selami
Executive Director, ZIP Institute



**MEF '25
WESTERN BALKANS**

Mapping the energy future
of the Western Balkans



Forum Ekonomiczne



**Empowering
Vulnerable
Communities**

Catalysing Climate Action Through Climate Assemblies



M A R E S



**Civil Society and Youth for Inclusive and
Sustainable Development through
Circular Economy in North Macedonia**



ZIP-LED INITIATIVES & COLLABORATIONS

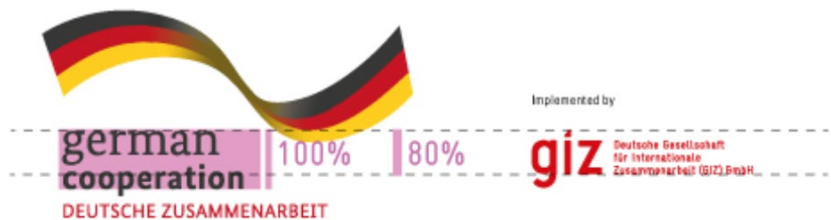


A man in a brown suit is talking to a woman in a white dress with black polka dots. They are standing near a table with a glass of wine.



MEF 2025





European Investment Bank | Global



Macedonian Energy Forum-WB 2025

In 2025, the 8th annual Macedonian Energy Forum (MEF25) was held on 16–17 June at the Hotel Double Tree by Hilton in Skopje. Organized by ZIP Institute in partnership with the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia and supported by international collaborators, MEF has grown into the region’s premier platform for shaping the energy transition across the Western Balkans.

Under the theme “Mapping the Energy Future of the Western Balkans”, the forum brought together high-level policymakers, industry leaders, experts, and innovators to discuss solutions for energy security, renewable deployment, decarbonization, and equitable transition pathways aligned with global climate goals.

The event featured a broad range of panels and discussions, including ministerial sessions on investments, strategies for a just energy transition, regional cooperation, and technology-led transformation in the energy sector. Key speakers included the Minister of Energy, Mining, and Mineral Resources of North Macedonia, Sanja Bozinovska; the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Environment and Spatial Planning, Izet Mexhiti; and Francesco La Camera, Director-General of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), among other international and regional experts.

Participants engaged on topics such as tripling renewable capacity, clean fuels development, critical raw materials, and collaborative policy frameworks to accelerate energy transition throughout the Western Balkans. MEF25 reaffirmed Skopje’s role as a key regional hub for energy dialogue and action, uniting diverse stakeholders around sustainable, resilient, and inclusive energy futures.



MERIT

MERIT: Mapping Employment Risks & Increasing Transparency

The MERIT (Mapping Employment Risks and Improving Transparency) project is a policy-driven initiative led by ZIP Institute and funded by the Southeast European Leadership for Development and Integrity (SELDI) network, aimed at strengthening merit-based recruitment and transparency within state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in North Macedonia.

The project addressed persistent vulnerabilities in SOE hiring practices, including opacity, favoritism, and exposure to corruption, through systematic data collection, analysis of recruitment procedures, and structured stakeholder engagement. MERIT culminated in the development of a policy memo translating empirical findings on recruitment risks and talent outflows into a set of actionable, institutionally grounded recommendations. These recommendations advance a dual-track reform agenda focused on improving transparency and merit-based hiring in SOEs while leveraging an enhanced, government-sponsored scholarship framework to mitigate skilled emigration and incentivize return to public service.

The proposed reforms are being developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science and MEPSO, with the objective of supporting pilot implementation and longer-term institutional adoption.



SKOPJE CLIMATE ASSEMBLY



Climate Assembly Workshops in Belgrade and Tirana

As part of regional knowledge-sharing activities, ZIP Institute participated in two workshops held in Belgrade and Tirana, focused on strengthening community engagement in sustainable energy transitions. The workshops built on the experience of the Skopje Climate Assembly, highlighting how participatory and deliberative democratic tools can inform inclusive and effective energy policymaking.

ZIP Institute's Executive Director, Agim Selami, a Fellow of the Open Society Foundations (OSF) Western Balkans, led discussions at both events. He presented the development, implementation, and outcomes of the Skopje Climate Assembly, demonstrating how structured citizen participation can contribute to more legitimate, responsive, and sustainable environmental and energy policies.

The workshops provided a platform for exchanging lessons learned and exploring how similar citizen-centered approaches can be adapted and scaled across the region, reinforcing the role of civic participation in advancing long-term sustainability goals.



Political Support and Candidate Pledge for the Assembly Recommendations

On 29 August a meeting was held between the candidate for mayor of the City of Skopje, Mrs. Kaja Šukova, the citizens-participants of the first Civil Climate Assembly of Skopje and the representatives of ZIP Institute – a civil society organization from Skopje and organizer of this first initiative of this kind in the country. The meeting is part of a series of meetings that ZIP Institute organizes with the candidates for mayor of Skopje, in cooperation with citizens, in order to ensure an inclusive and transparent process that will result in policies based on the real needs and priorities of the city's residents.

At the meeting, citizens presented and discussed key recommendations that came out of the Assembly itself, which focus on one of the most urgent and serious challenges facing the city – air pollution.

Analyses and action plans show that air pollution in the Skopje region is a systemic problem with multi-layered sources, overcoming which requires bold policy decisions, intersectoral coordination and a long-term vision. In this regard, several priority sectors for emergency intervention were highlighted:

- Heating in households,
- Road traffic,
- Industry and waste management;
- Energy efficiency and
- Urban Planning.



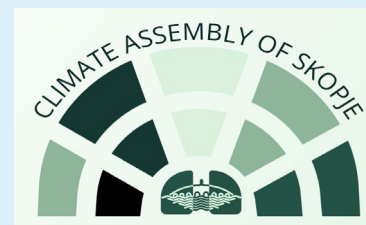
Sponsored by



Regional Meeting on Deliberative Democracy

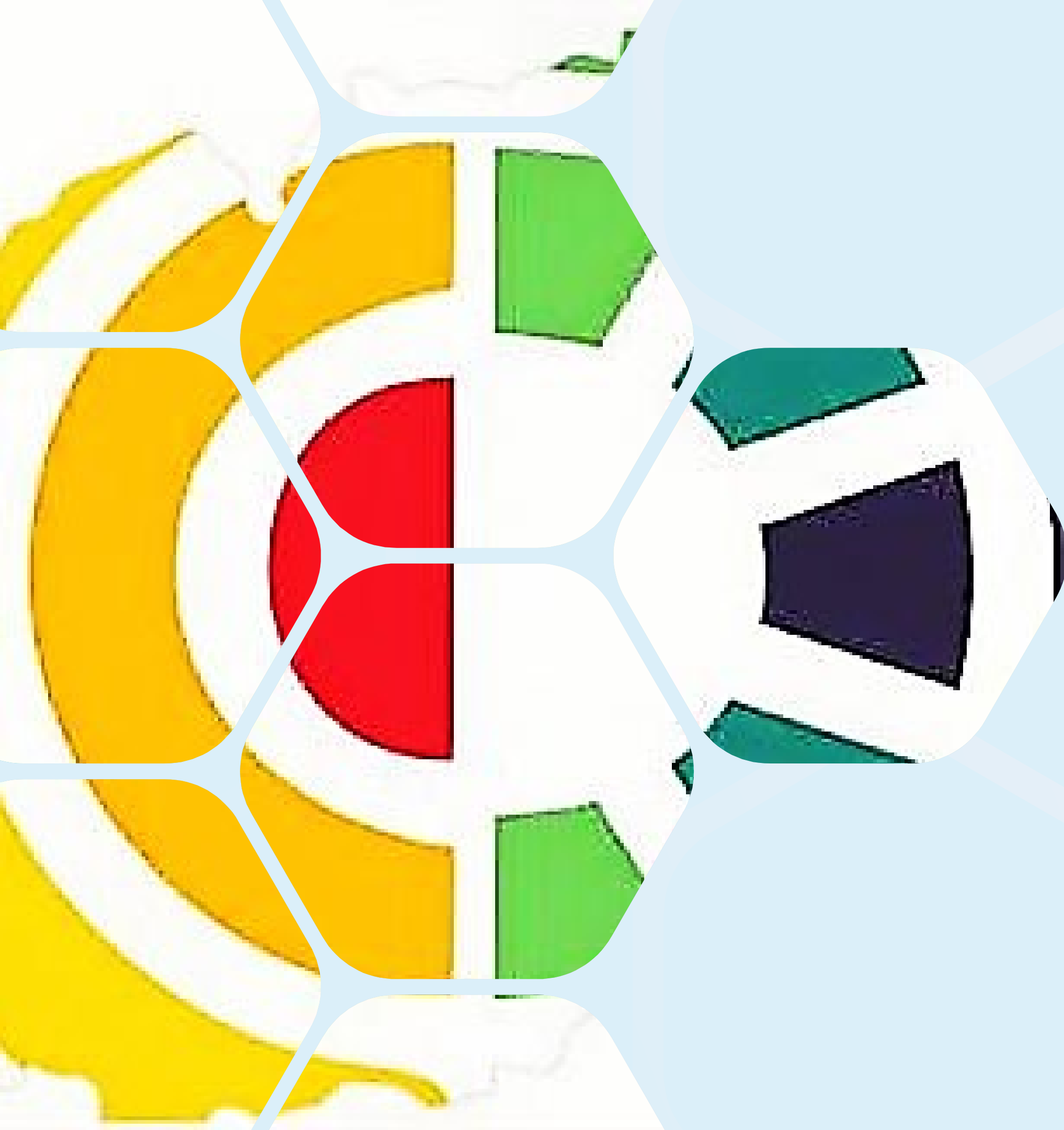
ZIP Institute was honored to be invited to the *Third Meeting of the Community of Practice on Deliberative Democracy in South-East Europe*, organized by NALAS: Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe to present the findings and lessons from North Macedonia's first-ever Citizen Climate Assembly — a landmark initiative led by our team in 2023.

Our contribution helped shape the discussion on the vital role of civil society in implementing citizen assemblies. Together with regional experts, including Nemanja Anđelković from the University of Belgrade's Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, we explored practical ways to strengthen democratic participation across South-East Europe.



Sponsored by




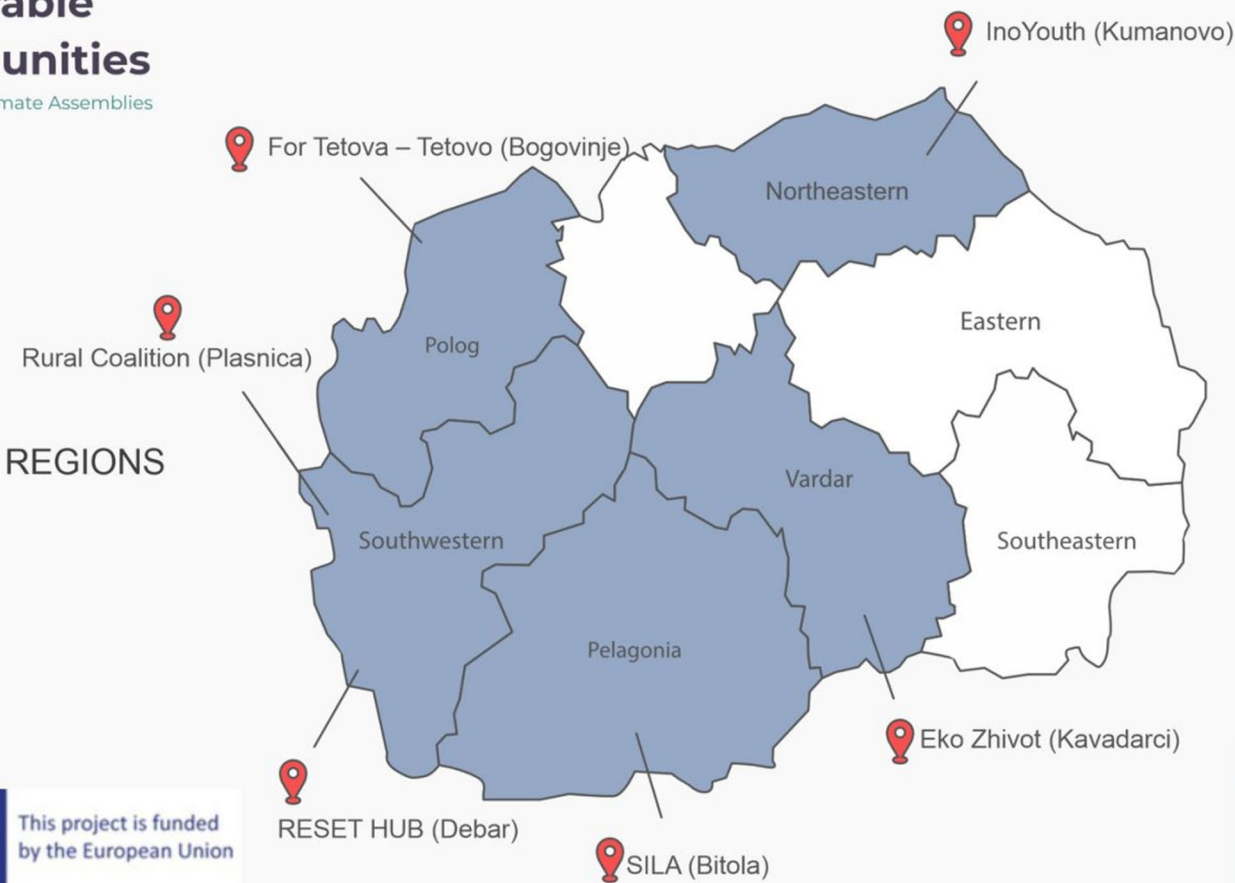


EVC

 TOTAL GRANTS
6 Grants

 REGIONAL COVERAGE
FIVE PLANNING REGIONS

 FUNDS ALLOCATED
27,500.00 EUR



EVC: Empowering Vulnerable Communities

In 2025, the project “Empowering Vulnerable Communities: Catalysing Climate Action through Climate Assemblies” was launched, with a focus on establishing the foundations for inclusive citizen participation in climate and energy decision-making. During this initial phase, activities centered on research, capacity building, and coordination with civil society and local stakeholders to prepare for the implementation of Climate Assemblies.

Key activities included the development and verification of energy poverty typologies, the identification of pilot locations across the country, and the selection and training of six civil society organizations as sub-grantees. These organizations will be responsible for organizing and facilitating Climate Assemblies in five different planning regions of North Macedonia, ensuring both geographic balance and the inclusion of energy-vulnerable communities. Training and preparatory support equipped sub-grantees with the necessary methodologies, tools, and guidance to implement the assemblies in line with project standards.

The next phase of the project will focus on the implementation of the Climate Assemblies in 2026, led by the selected NGOs at the local level, with ongoing coordination and quality assurance provided by ZIP Institute. Following the assemblies, citizen input will be consolidated into policy recommendations and disseminated to relevant stakeholders to inform local and national energy and climate policymaking.

SLAMENKA



Natural White

RGB:



Warm Straw Yellow

HEX: #FFB710

RGB: 255 /

Slamenka

As a direct result of the €8,000 grant awarded through ARNO's Circular Economy Academy, ZIP Institute is proud to present SLAMENKA — a sustainable product concept and brand developed to transform agricultural waste into a practical alternative to plastic drinking straws.

SLAMENKA is built on a simple idea: turning what is usually discarded into something useful. Large quantities of agricultural straw are often burned or wasted, contributing to pollution and lost economic value. SLAMENKA repurposes wheat stems into natural, biodegradable drinking straws designed for everyday use in cafés, bars, restaurants, and households seeking to reduce plastic waste.

The straws are produced through a simple and efficient process that preserves the natural properties of the material while ensuring functionality and ease of use. Their lifecycle continues beyond consumption: once used, the straws are collected together with food waste and delivered to local compost producers, where they become organic fertilizer. Part of this fertilizer returns to local farmers, completing a fully local and circular system.

Through this model, SLAMENKA reduces pollution, supports local value chains, and promotes regenerative agricultural practices. It demonstrates how circular economy principles can be translated into a tangible, accessible product integrated into everyday habits.

SLAMENKA stands for responsibility, simplicity, and design with purpose — straw for a better planet.



CIRCULAR ECONOMY ACADEMY





Circular Economy Academy

ZIP participated in and successfully completed ARNO's Circular Economy Academy, organized by the ARNO Organization for Social Innovation with support from the European Union through the EU Support for Civil Society and Media Organizations (IPA Civil Society Facility 2022–2023), implemented by People in Need (PIN) in partnership with ARNO, LEAD, and Ekovita.

Within the Academy, ZIP developed a circular bioeconomy business model that transforms agricultural waste—typically burned and polluting—into biodegradable drinking straws. After use, the straws are collected with food waste and composted into organic fertilizer that returns to local farmers, completing a fully local and regenerative circular loop.

Following expert training, tailored mentorship, and feasibility assessments, ZIP's concept was selected for funding and awarded an €8,000 grant to support pilot implementation and further development of the model.

Sponsored by the European Union through the EU Support for Civil Society and Media Organizations in the Republic of North Macedonia, IPA Civil Society Facility 2022–2023

9TH EUROPEAN GATHERING ON PARTICIPATION



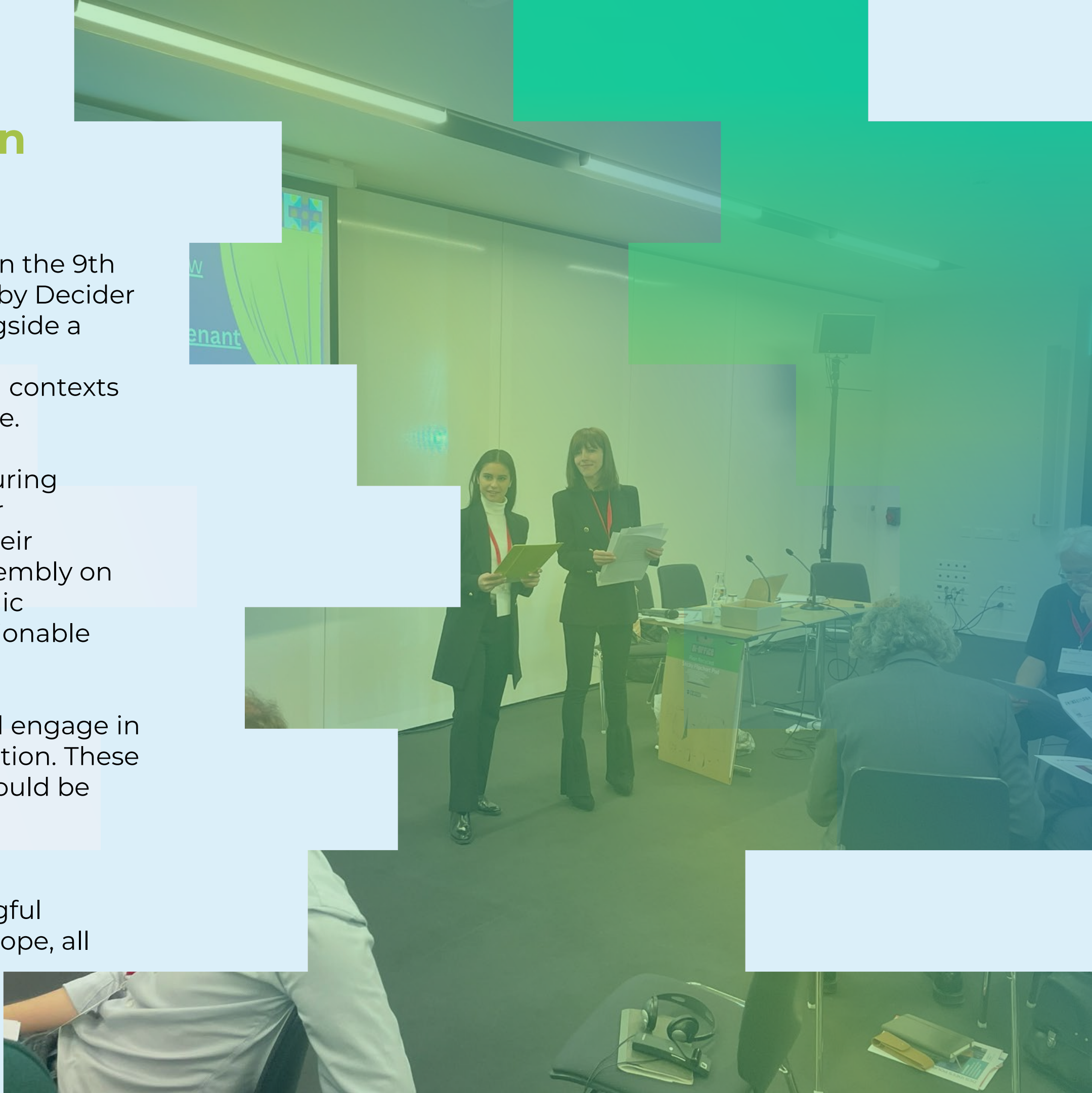
ZIP-Led Workshop at the 9th European Gathering on Participation in Strasbourg

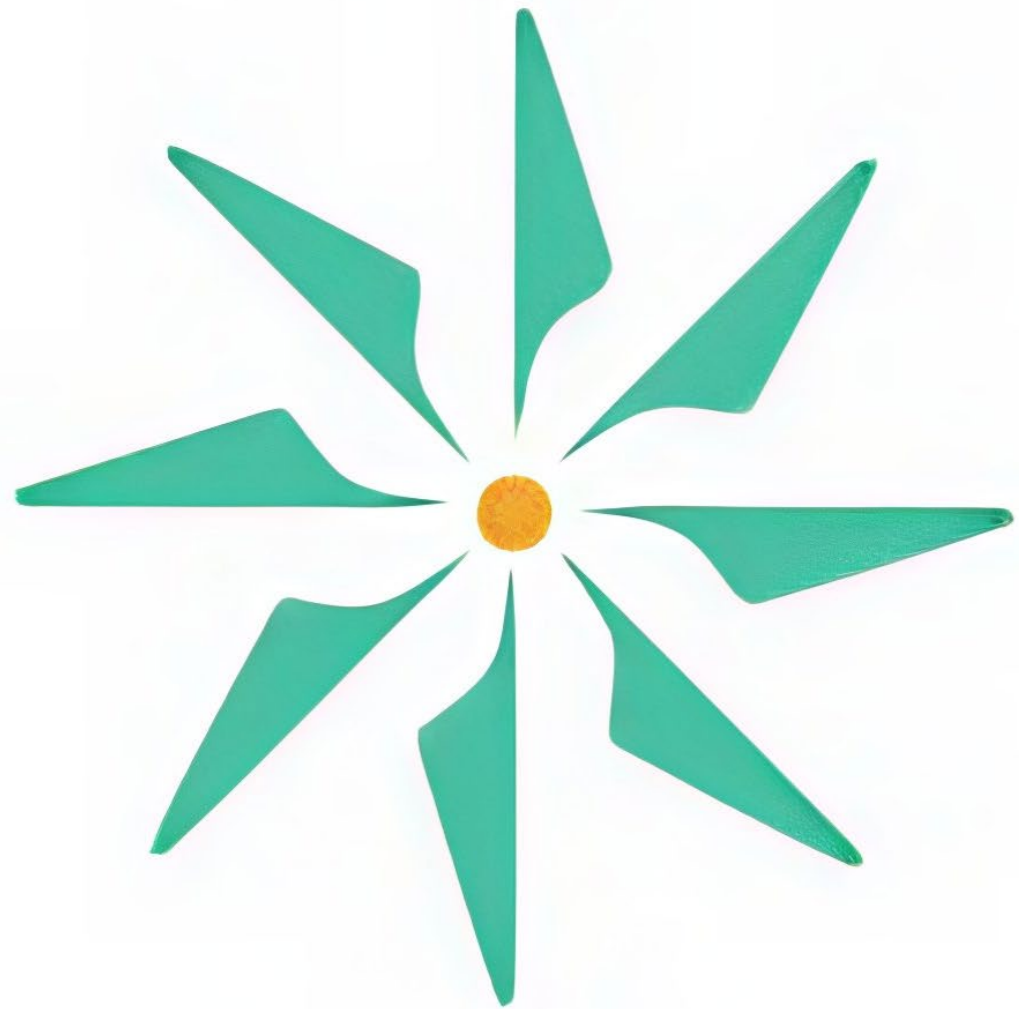
From March 17–19, ZIP Institute had the honor of participating in the 9th European Gathering on Participation in Strasbourg, organized by Decider Ensemble. As part of the event, we co-hosted a workshop alongside a Georgian NGO, focusing on the successes and challenges of implementing Citizens' Assemblies in the Balkan and Georgian contexts and how these lessons could inform similar initiatives elsewhere.

Our workshop opened with an insightful panel discussion featuring representatives from Macedonia and Georgia, who shared their experiences and perspectives on participatory democracy in their respective countries. This was followed by a mock Citizens' Assembly on the issue of air pollution, where attendees engaged in a dynamic deliberation process, ultimately generating thoughtful and actionable recommendations.

Beyond our own session, we had the opportunity to attend and engage in various workshops exploring key topics in democratic participation. These included thought-provoking discussions on whether voting should be mandatory and how artificial intelligence could reshape civic engagement and decision-making.

The gathering was an invaluable experience, fostering meaningful exchanges between organizations and experts from across Europe, all committed to strengthening participatory democracy.





M A R E S

**MARES
CONFERENCE
2025**

MARES Conference 2025

ZIP Institute was invited to speak at the MARES Conference 2025 during the panel “Navigating Policy for a Renewable Future.” The discussion focused on the importance of trust, transparency, and citizen participation in energy transitions, emphasizing that major renewable energy projects must deliver tangible benefits to the local communities they impact.



FORUM EKONOMICZNE
W KRAJOWYM
PACZU

2-4 września 2025 r.



**ECONOMIC
FORUM
POLAND**

XXXIV FORUM EKONOMICZNE W KARPACZU

2-4 września 2025 r.



Economic Forum in Poland

From 2–4 September, ZIP Institute participated in the Economic Forum in Poland, one of the largest gatherings in Central and Eastern Europe, which brought together over 6,000 visitors from across the continent.

We were honored to be invited as a contributor to the panel “The Future of Social Policy”, alongside distinguished policymakers, experts, and civil society leaders. Our Project Manager shared insights from ZIP Institute’s pioneering experience in organizing the first citizen climate assembly in North Macedonia – and in the wider Balkan region.

The discussion addressed key questions:

- How can social policies adapt to rapidly changing societal needs?
 - How should governments tackle challenges such as inequality and ageing populations?
- How do we ensure that future policies remain inclusive, sustainable, and fair?

By bringing in our regional expertise, we contributed to shaping a conversation on the importance of participatory democracy and inclusive policymaking as tools for building resilient, just, and future-oriented societies.

ZIP AWARDS & MEDIA RECOGNITION



**PRIX DE LA
PARTICIPATION**
“3 STARS”



**MERIT PROJECT
FEATURED ON MTV**



**MEF 2025 FEATURED IN
ALL MAJOR NATIONAL
MEDIA CHANNELS**



**YOUTH COUNCIL PRILEP
“ACROSS THE MAP” PODCAST
— YOUTH RECLAIMING POWER
IN NORTH MACEDONIA**

ZIP Institute gained broad national visibility through a feature on the *Across the Map* podcast, which highlighted youth engagement and civic participation initiatives in North Macedonia. Our year-long MERIT Project was also featured on MTV, where the Minister provided remarks on the initiative and its importance for strengthening transparency in state-owned enterprises. In addition, MEF 2025 received coverage across major national media outlets and television channels in North Macedonia. Internationally, the Skopje Climate Assembly received 3-star recognition at the Paris Participation Awards, recognizing ZIP’s innovative work in advancing deliberative democracy and citizen participation.

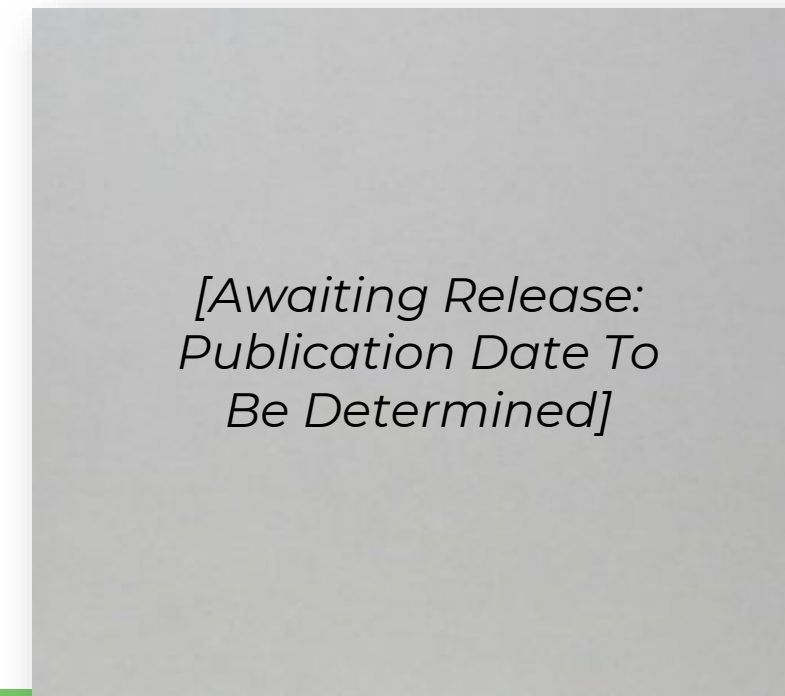
ZIP INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS



MERIT: Mapping
Employment Risks
and Increasing
Transparency
[Policy Memo](#)



Macedonian Energy
Forum MEF-WB
[Final Policy Report](#)



Online Publication
on Citizen Energy
in Central and
Eastern Europe

FINANCIAL REPORT 2025

ЕМБС: 06763065

Целосно име: Здружение на граѓани ЗИП ИНСТИТУТ за политики и добро владеење Скопје

Вид на работа: 540

Тип на годишна сметка: Годишна сметка

Тип на документ: Годишна сметка

Година : 2025

Биланс на приходи и расходи

Ознака за АОП	Опис	Претходна година	Бруто за тековна година	Исправка на вредноста за тековна година	Нето за тековна година
201	-- Расходи I. МАТЕРИЈАЛНИ РАСХОДИ, УСЛУГИ И АМОРТИЗАЦИЈА (202 до 210)	15.248.501,00			11.786.062,00
202	-- Потрошени материјали	1.365.456,00			673.086,00
203	-- Потрошена енергија	482.245,00			422.475,00
204	-- Други услуги	12.584.872,00			10.384.386,00
205	-- Превозни и транспортни услуги	289.993,00			97.211,00
209	-- Наемнини	161.167,00			145.260,00
210	-- Други материјални расходи	364.768,00			63.644,00
211	-- ДРУГИ РАСХОДИ (212 до 221)	9.610.195,00			7.226.074,00
212	-- Провизија за платен промет	129.444,00			120.898,00
213	-- Камати на кредити и заеми	31.635,00			62.254,00
214	-- Премии за осигурување	96.529,00			79.132,00
215	-- Дневници за службено патување	1.220.264,00			1.416.308,00
217	-- Негативни курсни разлики	63.233,00			
219	-- Други расходи	8.069.090,00			5.547.482,00
230	-- ПЛАТИ И НАДОМЕСТИ НА ПЛАТИ(231+232)	1.117.657,00			675.149,00
231	-- а) Вкалкулирани плати	757.020,00			453.546,00
232	-- б) Вкалкулирани надомести	360.637,00			221.603,00
235	-- ВКУПНО РАСХОДИ (201+211+222+226+230+233+234)	25.976.353,00			19.687.285,00
236	-- Остварен вишок на приходи-добивка пред оданочување(250 минус 235) ако 250>235	5.233.636,00			1.532.944,00
238	-- Остварен нето вишок-добивка (236-237)	5.233.636,00			1.532.944,00

239	-- Вкупно (235+236) или (235+237) ако 237 е поголемо од 236=252	31.209.989,00		21.220.229,00
244	-- Приходи од членарини, подароци, донации и приходи од други извори	29.796.073,00		15.986.593,00
245	-- Приходи од кирии и закупнини	8.000,00		
247	-- Други приходи	85.047,00		
248	-- Пренесен дел од вишокот на приходите од претходната година	1.320.869,00		5.233.636,00
250	-- ВКУПНО ПРИХОДИ 240+243+244+245+246+247+ 248+249	31.209.989,00		21.220.229,00
252	-- ВКУПНО (250+251)=239	31.209.989,00		21.220.229,00
438	-- Број на работници	3,00		1,00

Биланс на состојба

Ознака за АОП	Опис	Претходна година	Бруто за тековна година	Исправка на вредноста за тековна година	Нето за тековна година
1	-- АКТИВА ПОСТОЈАНИ СРЕДСТВА (002+003+008+009)	3.515.607,00	6.444.735,00	3.969.977,00	2.474.758,00
3	-- МАТЕРИЈАЛНИ СРЕДСТВА (004 до 007)	3.515.607,00	6.444.735,00	3.969.977,00	2.474.758,00
6	-- Опрема	3.515.607,00	6.444.735,00	3.969.977,00	2.474.758,00
10	-- ПАРИЧНИ СРЕДСТВА, КРАТКОРОЧНИ ПОБАРУВАЊА И АКТИВНИ ПРЕСМЕТКОВНИ СМЕТКИ (011+018+019+020+021+022+023+024)	8.132.259,00	3.768.191,00		3.768.191,00
11	-- ПАРИЧНИ СРЕДСТВА (012 до 017)	4.807.186,00	885.953,00		885.953,00
12	-- Жиро сметка	427.037,00	672.912,00		672.912,00
13	-- Благајна		26.443,00		26.443,00
14	-- Девизна сметка	4.380.149,00	186.598,00		186.598,00
20	-- ПОБАРУВАЊА ЗА ДАДЕНИ АВАНСИ, ДЕПОЗИТИ И КАУЦИИ	45.599,00	25.500,00		25.500,00
22	-- ДРУГИ КРАТКОРОЧНИ ПОБАРУВАЊА	561.486,00	1.096.700,00		1.096.700,00
24	-- АКТИВНИ ВРЕМЕНСКИ РАЗГРАНИЧУВАЊА (025+026+027)	2.717.988,00	1.760.038,00		1.760.038,00
27	-- Други активни временски ограничувања	2.717.988,00	1.760.038,00		1.760.038,00
42	-- ВКУПНА АКТИВА (001+010+028+035+038+041)	11.647.866,00	10.212.926,00	3.969.977,00	6.242.949,00
44	-- ПАСИВА - ИЗВОРИ НА ДЕЛОВНИ СРЕДСТВА	3.461.212,00			2.474.758,00
45	-- Деловен фонд	3.461.212,00			2.474.758,00
51	-- IV. КРАТКОРОЧНИ ОБВРСКИ И ПАСИВНИ ПРЕСМЕТКОВНИ СМЕТКИ (052 ДО 061)	2.953.018,00			2.235.247,00

54	-- в) Обврски спрема државата за даноци и придонеси и други обврски	260,00			475.209,00
55	-- г) краткорочни финансиски обврски	2.952.758,00			1.760.038,00
62	-- V. ПАСИВНИ ВРЕМЕНСКИ РАЗГРАНИЧУВАЊА (063 до 065)	5.233.636,00			1.532.944,00
64	-- Дел од вишокот на приходите пренесен во наредната година	5.233.636,00			1.532.944,00
69	-- ВКУПНА ПАСИВА (044+046+047+051+062+066+067+068)	11.647.866,00			6.242.949,00

Државна евиденција

Ознака за АОП	Опис	Претходна година	Бруто за тековна година	Исправка на вредноста за тековна година	Нето за тековна година
680	-- Плати(< или = на АОП 231 од БПР)	757.020,00			453.546,00
681	-- Придонеси на плати(< или = на АОП 231 од БПР)	312.930,00			188.124,00
682	-- Даноци на плати(< или = на АОП 231 од БПР)	47.707,00			33.479,00
688	-- Приходи од членарини(< или = на АОП 244 од БПР)	1.653.471,00			2.396.166,00
691	-- Приходи од донации(< или = на АОП 244 од БПР)	23.097.921,00			7.877.279,00
692	-- Приходи од други извори(< или = на АОП 244 од БПР)	5.044.681,00			5.691.148,00
695	-- Просечен број на вработени врз основа на состојбата на крајот на месецот	3,00			1,00

Распоредување на резултатот

Ознака за АОП	Опис	Претходна година	Бруто за тековна година	Исправка на вредноста за тековна година	Нето за тековна година
351	-- А. ОСТВАРЕН НЕТО ВИШОК -ДОБИВКА	5.233.636,00			1.532.944,00
353	-- Б. ОСТАТОК ОД НЕТО ДОБИВКАТА ЗА РАСПОРЕДУВАЊЕ (351-352)	5.233.636,00			1.532.944,00
358	-- ф) Дел за пренос во наредната година	5.233.636,00			1.532.944,00

Ознака за АОП	Опис	Претходна година	Бруто за тековна година	Исправка на	Нето за тековна година
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Структура на приходи по дејности

		година	вредноста за тековна година	година
4631	- 94.990 - Дејности на други организации врз база на зачленување, н.д.м.			21.220.229,00

Потпишано од:

LIRIDONA KADRI

CN=KIBSTrust Issuing Qsig CA G2,
OID.2.5.4.97=NTRMK-5529581, OU=KIBSTrust
Services, O=KIBS AD Skopje, C=MK
KIBSTrust Issuing Qsig CA G2

Изјавувам, под морална, материјална и кривична одговорност, дека податоците во годишната сметка се точни и вистинити.

Податоците од годишната сметка се во постапка на доставување, која ќе заврши со одлука (одобрување/ одбивање) од страна на Централниот Регистар.

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Institute

local governance | informal learning