MACEDONIA 2025
Helping Build a Stronger Nation

MACEDONIA2025 | POLICY & PROGRAM IMPACT BRIEF

CONNECTING MACEDONIA2025 PROGRAMS TO THE WORLD BANK GROWTH & JOBS REFORM AGENDA

Evidence-based program and government-advocacy mapping

The central message

The World Bank's Growth and Jobs Report argues that Macedonia needs a more productive, competitive and inclusive growth model to escape the middle-income trap. Its recommended reforms fall under three pillars: (1) stronger economic governance and competition; (2) technology adoption, energy efficiency and innovation; and (3) skills development and fuller participation in the labor market.

THREE DECADES OF PROGRESS — BUT NOT ENOUGH

Over three decades, Macedonia advanced to upper-middle-income status, reduced poverty to below 19% by 2024 and became one of the region's most open economies. Yet progress toward EU living standards remains slow: the country has spent 17 years at upper-middle-income level and reached only 42% of average EU27 GDP per capita in 2024. The World Bank concludes that faster convergence requires stronger productivity, competition, productive investment and human capital. (World Bank, Growth and Jobs Report, June 2026, pp. 9–12.)

42%

of EU27 GDP per capita

Macedonia, 2024

17 years

at upper-middle-income level

Slow income convergence

136%

trade as a share of GDP

World Bank, June 2026

Macedonia2025's business development, structured policy advocacy with the Government, and educational initiatives contribute to selected priorities across all three pillars. Documented cooperation includes proposals on regulatory reform, digital public services, FDI attraction, diaspora return and education policy. These contributions complement—not replace—government-led reforms and are described according to their reported implementation status.

At a glance: reform recommendations → Macedonia2025 contribution

WORLD BANK PILLAR	MACEDONIA2025 PROGRAMS	CONTRIBUTION PATHWAY
1 **Governance & competition**	Government advocacy and regulatory reform; Country Dashboard; policy analysis; Summit; Mavrovo Investment Forum	Reform proposals and cross-sector dialogue on B-READY, regulatory simplification, employment of foreigners and FDI; investment connections and competitiveness benchmarking.
2 **Technology & innovation**	GoDigital; business digitalization advocacy; Science & Technology Park initiative; Bitove Family Program; Connect2MK; LEADER; MIF	SME digital maturity and strategies; digital public-service proposals; innovation ecosystem coordination; expert-led upgrading and investment connections.
3 **Skills & participation**	Kellogg; Queen's/Smith; LEADER; scholarships; STEM; education-strategy advocacy and public-administration training	Management and leadership skills, access to learning and mentoring, and contributions to education-policy and administration capacity-building discussions.

2025 delivery snapshot — selected verified outputs

BUSINESS CAPABILITY

30 digital maturity assessments; **15** digital strategies; digital-solution implementation support for **5** firms (GoDigital).

10 companies matched with global specialists (Connect2MK); **4** MSMEs supported by Canadian experts (Bitove Family).

553 professionals and business leaders reached through trainings, workshops and webinars.

EDUCATION & LEADERSHIP

5 Kellogg executive scholars; **5** Queen's/Smith executive education scholars.

27 LEADER participants; **121** Atanas Bliznakoff scholarship beneficiaries, **75%** receiving tailored mentorship.

109 science teachers trained; science kits provided to **21** schools; over **970** pupils engaged through related science activities.

Source: Macedonia2025 Achievements 2025 and Annual Report 2025.

Pillar 1 | Better economic governance and fair competition

WORLD BANK RECOMMENDATION.

Improve the efficiency and transparency of public spending; strengthen competition and state-owned enterprise governance; make regulation more predictable; and improve trade and investment conditions, including logistics and market access.

HOW MACEDONIA2025 CONTRIBUTES

- **Country Dashboard and economic research:** tracking growth enablers, benchmarking Macedonia against peer countries and using evidence to inform public debate and reform priorities.

- **Government advocacy and business-environment reform:** Macedonia2025's strategic cooperation with the Government encompasses business-location reform linked to World Bank B-READY, proposals to simplify employment of foreigners, regulatory simplification (including the Regulatory Guillotine), E-Visa and E-Passport proposals, support to FDI-attraction reform, and investment-brand promotion.

- **Macedonia2025 Summit and business forums:** convening companies, diaspora professionals, investors and institutions around competitiveness, exports, investment and policy obstacles.

- **Mavrovo Investment Forum (MIF 2026):** an announced, structured investment-readiness and investor-matching initiative for growth-ready companies; its expected outputs should not yet be presented as completed transactions.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE WB AGENDA

These initiatives strengthen the information, networks and engagement needed for improved business conditions and productive private investment. Their influence on regulations, competition enforcement and institutional quality depends on the decisions and follow-through of public authorities.

Pillar 2 | Technology adoption, innovation and energy efficiency

WORLD BANK RECOMMENDATION.

Improve firms' ability to absorb technology and innovate, strengthen domestic linkages with foreign investors, make innovation support more effective, and reduce high energy intensity through efficient and cleaner production.

HOW MACEDONIA2025 CONTRIBUTES

- **GoDigital:** firm-level digital maturity assessment, preparation of tailored digital strategies, consultant support and assistance with practical implementation. This directly targets adoption capacity and digital modernization of SMEs. Parallel government-facing advocacy includes proposals on digitalization of public services for businesses and engagement in the Science & Technology Park working group (July 2026 update).

- **Bitove Family Entrepreneurship Program (with Catalyste+):** international senior advisors help MSMEs strengthen operations, production, organization and marketing through intensive company-specific mentoring.

- **Connect2MK:** matches domestic firms with diaspora expertise and potential commercial or investment connections, supporting knowledge transfer, internationalization and company capabilities.

- **LEADER Project:** practical business education in strategy, finance, marketing and growth helps entrepreneurs and managers make better operational and investment choices.

- **MIF:** designed to link investment-ready businesses with strategic partners and capital; the potential channel is growth financing and access to know-how, not a verified investment outcome at this stage.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE WB AGENDA

The most direct contribution is firm-level capability building: helping companies identify technology gaps, adopt digital solutions and benefit from expert knowledge. Energy efficiency and decarbonization are important areas of thematic alignment, but the available program evidence does not establish measured energy or emissions savings.

Pillar 3 | Develop skills and mobilize human capital

WORLD BANK RECOMMENDATION.

Improve transitions from education to employment, develop job-relevant skills and lifelong learning, increase women's participation and reduce barriers to formal, productive and better-paid work.

HOW MACEDONIA2025 CONTRIBUTES

- **Zafirovski Executive Education Program (Kellogg):** develops strategic leadership and general-management skills in experienced executives, supporting stronger corporate decision-making and organizational performance.
- **Executive Education Program in Canada (Smith School of Business, Queen's University):** practical leadership and strategic-execution education for managers and entrepreneurs, with international learning and networking.
- **LEADER Project (Ivey):** case-based training and coaching for young professionals and entrepreneurs, helping connect knowledge to business creation and expansion.
- **Atanas Bliznakoff Scholarships and Talents Today – Leaders Tomorrow:** financial support, professional mentorship and career exposure for university and high-school students, contributing to the school-to-work talent pipeline.
- **Science and Me, Ohrid Hi-Tech Excellence Camp and Supporting Girls in STEM:** strengthen teaching practice and early science/digital skills, and encourage girls' participation in STEM-related fields. Macedonia2025 also reports initiating policy proposals for the Education Strategy 2026–2032 and supporting public-administration training.
- **Accepted initiatives by the Government:** Diaspora in the Government operational plan for Active employment measures, Initiative for lower taxes for returnees, Science & Technology Park (STP) etc.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE WB AGENDA

These initiatives respond to skills mismatch through managerial upskilling, mentoring and the development of future talent. Programs supporting girls in STEM and disadvantaged students contribute to inclusion, but should not be equated with direct evidence of higher national female labor-force participation or lower youth unemployment.

From activities to credible impact evidence

The strongest current claim is that Macedonia2025 is actively contributing to the implementation ecosystem for the World Bank's reforms, with verified reach and service-delivery results. For an even clearer impact narrative, distinguish three evidence levels:

EVIDENCE LEVEL	WHAT CAN BE REPORTED	ILLUSTRATIVE MEASURES
Outputs — already documented	Companies assessed or mentored; strategies prepared; participants and scholars supported.	GoDigital assessments and strategies; LEADER participants; scholarships; science teachers trained.
Outcomes — track with follow-up	Changes within firms and participants resulting from the programs.	Digital solutions still used after 6–12 months; sales or exports of advised firms; promotions; new skills applied; internships and employment.
National impacts — contextual, not attributable	Growth, productivity, wages, employment and EU convergence outcomes identified by the World Bank.	Use as country-level benchmarks; do not attribute macroeconomic movements directly to Macedonia2025.

Conclusion

The World Bank's reform agenda and Macedonia2025's portfolio converge on better economic governance, stronger and more innovative enterprises, and a more skilled workforce. Strategic advocacy adds an important policy-level dimension to this contribution: Macedonia2025 does not only support companies and individuals directly, but also initiates proposals, convenes partners and supports government processes intended to improve the business environment. Documented adoption and delivery should be distinguished from proposals still under discussion.

Government advocacy reference: Macedonia2025, Strategic Cooperation with the Government, Economic Development Committee, 13 July 2026, slides 2–4. Initiative statuses are reproduced as reported in that presentation and are not independently verified.

Source notes and program references

World Bank foundation: World Bank (June 2026), Growth and Jobs Report — Escaping the Middle-Income Trap, Key Messages and Overview (pp. 9–17), and policy reform roadmap (chapter 6).

Macedonia2025 foundation: Platform for Prosperous Future (seven growth-enabling areas); Macedonia2025 Achievements 2025 and Annual Report 2025. Output figures refer to 2025 unless otherwise indicated.

- Macedonia2025 vision and strategic pillars — https://www.macedonia2025.com/en/about-us/who-we-are
- Platform for Prosperous Future — https://www.macedonia2025.com/en/about-us/platform-for-prosperous-future
- Country Dashboard — https://macedonia2025.com/en/what-we-do/country-dashboard
- Business-environment projects — https://www.macedonia2025.com/project-category/business-environment/
- Vision for Accelerated Growth — https://www.macedonia2025.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Vision-for-Accelerated-Growth-Plan-of-reforms-and-measures.pdf
- Macedonia2025 Annual Report 2025 — https://www.macedonia2025.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Annual-report-2025-compressed-1.pdf
- Macedonia2025 Achievements 2025 — https://www.macedonia2025.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Achievements-2025.pdf
- GoDigital description (2023 report) — https://www.macedonia2025.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/2023-AR-1_11zon-1.pdf
- Bitove Family Entrepreneurship Program — https://www.macedonia2025.com/en/what-we-do/business-development/bitove-family-entrepreneurship-program
- Connect2MK — https://www.macedonia2025.com/en/what-we-do/business-development/connect2mk-program

- LEADER Project — https://www.macedonia2025.com/en/what-we-do/business-development/the-leader-project
- Mavrovo Investment Forum 2026 — https://www.macedonia2025.com/en/mif
- Zafirovski Executive Education — https://www.macedonia2025.com/index.php/en/news/zafirovski-executive-education-program-open-call-scholarships
- Executive Education Program in Canada — https://www.macedonia2025.com/index.php/en/news/open-call-scholarships-macedonia2025-executive-education-program-canada
- Atanas Bliznakoff scholarships — https://macedonia2025.com/en/what-we-do/leadership-development/atanas-bliznakoff-scholarships-for-student-excellence
- Science and Me — https://macedonia2025.com/en/what-we-do/leadership-development/science-and-me-empowering-young-science-educators-to-inspire-future-innovators
- Supporting Girls in STEM — https://www.macedonia2025.com/en/what-we-do/leadership-development/supporting-girls-in-stem

Interpretation note: Mapping each program to a World Bank pillar is a qualitative analytical assessment, not a claim that the World Bank evaluated or endorsed Macedonia2025 programs.