

## REPORT ON PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

Due to ongoing COVID-19 safety concerns, consultation modalities have been adapted as noted below.

On March 31, 2020, the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) for the Kosovo Connecting Youth Project (CYP) was disclosed in Albanian, Serbian and English on the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA) website (image 1) and on the Your Priorities online platform (image 2). The ESMF with an invitation to provide comments was also sent directly to relevant stakeholders by email (see table 1 for complete list).

A public announcement was made on the MLGA Facebook page (image 3) and relevant stakeholders were tagged (municipalities, ministries, NGO) automatically informing their followers of the notification. The public announcement was made in Albanian, Serbian and English with a language-specific link to the Your Priorities virtual consultation platform. The ESMF document, a power point (image 4) and video presentation (image 5) were made available on the project-tailored platform. Each of these tools provided a summary of the CYP project (objectives, target beneficiaries, activities), description of anticipated social and environmental impacts, and the environmental and social review process during project implementation. Comments could be provided in Albanian, Serbian and English with real-time translation available.

The virtual consultations took place between March 31-April 9, 2020. In addition to the online platform, there was a dedicated email, physical address and phone line for collecting responses. During this period, a total of 41 questions/comments were received via the online platforms while 1 comment and 2 questions were submitted via email. Majority of the questions/comments received were requests for clarifications about the project targeting, activities and timing, which have been answered as indicated above. There were no question/comments about environmental and social impacts and review process that would require a change to the ESMF. A complete list of comments is provided in the questions and answers section of this annex.

*Image 1: ESMF disclosure and public announcement on MLGA website*



Image 2: Your Priorities virtual consultation platform for CYP ESMF

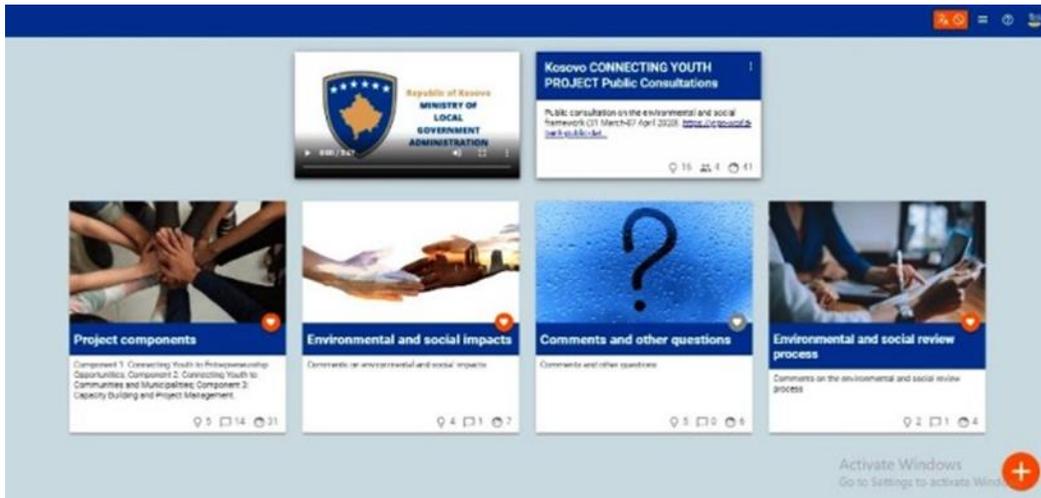


Image 3: Invitation to virtual consultations made via MLGA facebook page



<https://www.facebook.com/271521783259793/posts/851064258638873/>



Table 1: Overview of stakeholders that received the ESMF and invitation to consultations by email

| <b>Ministries</b>                                    |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Name</i>  | <i>Name</i>                                       |
| <i>Ministry of Finance</i>                           | <i>Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment</i> |
| <i>Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport</i>          | <i>Ministry of Economic Development</i>           |
| <b>Municipalities/other public entities</b>          |   |
| <i>Deçan</i>   | <i>Skënderaj</i>                                  |
| <i>Gjakovë</i>                                       | <i>Shtime</i>                                     |
| <i>Glllogoc</i>                                      | <i>Shtërpce</i>                                   |
| <i>Gjilan</i>  | <i>Suharekë</i>                                   |
| <i>Dragash</i>                                       | <i>Ferizaj</i>                                    |
| <i>Istog</i>   | <i>Viti</i>                                       |
| <i>Kaçanik</i>                                       | <i>Vushtrri</i>                                   |
| <i>Klinë</i>   | <i>Zubin Potok</i>                                |
| <i>Fushë Kosovë</i>                                  | <i>Zveçan</i>                                     |
| <i>Kamenicë</i>                                      | <i>Malishevë</i>                                  |
| <i>Leposaviq</i>                                     | <i>Novo Bërdë</i>                                 |
| <i>Lipjan</i>  | <i>North Mitrovica</i>                            |
| <i>Obiliq</i>  | <i>South Mitrovica</i>                            |
| <i>Rahovec</i>                                       | <i>Junik</i>                                      |
| <i>Pejë</i>  | <i>Hani i Elezit</i>                              |
| <i>Podujevë</i>                                      | <i>Mamushë</i>                                    |
| <i>Prishtinë</i>                                     | <i>Graçanicë</i>                                  |
| <i>Prizren</i>                                       | <i>Ranillugë</i>                                  |
| <i>Partesh</i>                                       | <i>Klllokot</i>                                   |
| <b>NGOs/CSO</b>                                      |   |
| UNICEF   |   |
| Youth Initiative for Human Rights - Kosovo (YIHR KS) |   |
| NGO TOKA   |   |
| Kosovar Youth Council                                |   |
| KCSF   |   |
| ICK  |   |
| NGO Advancing Together                               |   |
| Prosperity Initiative in Kosovo (PIKS)               |   |
| PEN - Peer Educators Network                         |   |
| NGO Young Active Gracanica                           |   |
| SHL Kosova   |   |
| Community Building Mitrovica                         |   |
| OEK Sinergija  |   |
| GAIA Kosovo  |   |
| The Balkan Forum                                     |   |
| Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in Kosovo       |   |
| Center for Peace and Tolerance Gracanica             |   |
| YMCA in Kosovo                                       |   |
| Kosovo 2.0   |   |

|                                       |
|---------------------------------------|
| Centre for Equality and Liberty (CEL) |
| Transnational Queer Underground -TQU  |
| Syri Vision                           |
| Community Development Fund            |

## **Questions and answers per topic received via the Your Priorities platform**

### **Component 1: Connecting Youth to Entrepreneurship Opportunities**

**Question:** How can I be part of this project, and where should my ideas be described or sent? Is there any direct contact?

**Answer:** Project support is eligible to youth with specific characteristics as described in ESMF pg. 3. At the start of each incubation support cycle, the implementing partners will make an open call for applications, conduct outreach through local organizations and organize face-to-face information sessions in target communities. There will also be clinics to apply to the initial training and coaching services. MLGA will also keep the public informed about project activities through social media.

**Question:** Will the implementing partners be selected competitively?

**Answer:** Yes, the Ministry of Local Government Administration will conduct a competitive procurement process for about three implementing partners (IPs). It is anticipated that IPs will be either international or national NGOs, with a track record of similar implementation, or consortiums of NGOs/firms.

**Question:** Very good to see that young person's outside Pristina will be able to get this support. How will the municipalities be chosen?

**Answer:** The project will target all 38 municipalities, but the support will be phased. The phasing of the municipalities will be based on the performance scores (and eligibility) achieved in the Performance Management System. Within municipalities, underserved and disadvantaged communities will be selected to target support geographically as well as on target groups.

**Question:** When will they fill out face-to-face information-sessions for the project reflecting the situation with Covid-19?

**Answer:** When feasible, stakeholders and potential beneficiaries will be informed about the schedule of information sessions.

**Question:** Providing subgrants for start-ups requires a great deal of support or the business efforts fail. What kind of support is planned?

**Answer:** We agree. To succeed, young microentrepreneurs will be provide technical, soft (e.g. communication), and business and financial management skills for their selected enterprise, and support to develop clear and simple business plans based on careful assessments of the market and value chains. In addition to training, young entrepreneurs will be assigned professional coaches to (i) guide youth in the process of microenterprise incubation; and (ii) provide support on any issue that could become an obstacle to the success of their microenterprise. Youth who receive microgrants will be assigned mentors to help solve day-to-day business problems and advise them on actions and management for sustainable microenterprise management. Business mentors will be skilled business persons (in the same sector) paid as consultants to mentor microentrepreneurs for up to 12 months.

**Comment:** Sustainability of projects. Maintenance and sustainability of small enterprises should be taken into consideration, because short-term ideas are always being attempted to be created which, once the project is completed, disappear. Therefore, attention should be paid to sustainability & maintenance (enterprises should be funded for a longer period if needed).

**Answer:** The survival of project supported microenterprises has been an important consideration in its design. Young entrepreneurs will be provided hands-on, consistent, and intensive mentoring and coaching support for up to 12 months after startup, and will be supported to build professional networks and mentoring relationships. Where appropriate, the mentoring program will facilitate young entrepreneurs' graduation to other microenterprise/SME support and access to finance programs in Kosovo. In addition to microgrants, the project provides subgrants for facilities and services, such as childcare, elderly care, and places to work (incubation centers, workshops) that will give young entrepreneurs the best possible chance at business survival.

**Question:** Do people have to pay grants?

**Answer:** Aspiring micro-entrepreneurs will be required to provide a matching grant of at least 5 percent of the grant value in a cash contribution; those with existing businesses will likely be required to contribute 15 percent. Subgrantees from disadvantaged groups will receive a waiver from the contribution requirement.

**Question:** Hello, Can I participate in this project, where should I apply?

**Answer:** Project support is eligible to youth with specific characteristics as described in ESMF pg. 3. At the start of each incubation support cycle, the implementing partners will make an open call for applications, conduct outreach through local organizations and organize face-to-face information sessions in target communities. There will also be clinics to apply to the initial training and coaching services. MLGA will also keep the public informed about project activities through social media.

**Question:** How can I become part of the project? Otherwise I am a graduate in Management. I have completed Management. Do you have contacts? How can i contact you?

**Answer:** Thanks for your interest. Project support is eligible to youth with specific characteristics as described in ESMF pg. 4. At the start of each incubation support cycle, the implementing partners will make an open call for applications, conduct outreach through local organizations and organize face-to-face information sessions in target communities. There will also be clinics to apply to the initial training and coaching services. MLGA will also keep the public informed about project activities through social media.

**Question:** How can I be part of the project?

**Answer:** Thanks for your interest. Project support is eligible to youth with specific characteristics as described in ESMF pg. 4. At the start of each incubation support cycle, the implementing partners will make an open call for applications, conduct outreach through local organizations and organize face-to-face information sessions in target communities. There will also be clinics to apply to the initial training and coaching services. MLGA will also keep the public informed about project activities through social media.

**Question:** Ensuring sustainability and pairing with access to finance chain, all possible grantees I would strongly recommend being tied up with Kosovo Credit Guarantee Fund, that will ensure an additional smooth loan to micro or startup businesses to mitigate their operational costs.

Given the target group age that is from 19 - 24 yrs, this is very critical age, that requires a very echo-system entrepreneurship package, that ensures balanced impact and make sure that there is no artificial external influence just because of the grant or project opportunity. Our strong recommendation is to create an assessment of profiling the future beneficiaries on common characteristics of entrepreneurial spirit.

**Answer:** Project beneficiaries will be supported to graduate into other forms of entrepreneurship assistance and grant programs. Beneficiary assessments will be conducted to tailor training, coaching, and mentoring activities for the specific group of young people selected, and to identify complementary services.

**Question:** Entrepreneurship plays a critical role in boosting economic growth and development, so the entrepreneurship education is very critical for this project. We do strongly recommend that Training Center for Entrepreneurship must be cross integration of Municipality, NGO's and Mentorship volunteering. In general, the entrepreneurship is combination of technical skills combined with required education of entrepreneurship, that must be developed at certain initial youth age. Hence, I would strongly recommend engaging and encourage schools, including vocational training centers, and Municipal employment services to promote and provide continued guidance on entrepreneurship and self-employment for young people.

**Answer:** Because several specialized institutions are needed to provide youth with the skills required to start a business, youth will be connected with different types of service providers relevant to their business area.

**Comment:** Due to pandemic development of COVID 19, the outbreak of COVID-19 will certainly affect the Entrepreneur and Startup Ecosystem, as a result of some of the preventive measures taken by governments worldwide to control the pandemic, small businesses, startups, and entrepreneurs have come out to be one the most vulnerable groups that have been directly affected by these measures. Therefore, I think that is very necessary to keep on hold the specific design of the component elements including sectors and type of businesses because the economic situation is very unpredictable, moreover, the forthcoming project must be synchronized with other aid projects on the economy of Kosovo in order to be able to create a sustainable force of the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Some other questions:

When it is expected the final solicitation for NGO's to apply for the implementation of this project?

Are you planning to conduct any public consultation with local NGO's in terms of requirements of NGO's and capacities?

**Answer:** The project will include a Contingent Emergency Response Component to support the post-COVID response, coordinated with other COVID interventions in the country.

The exact timing of the procurement of implementing partners is not known at this point. As it is a competitive process, it will be widely advertised. Prior to this, a mapping of potential implementing partners will be conducted to check absorption capacity, experience and potential geographic coverage.

## **Component 2: Connecting Youth to Communities and Municipalities**

**Comment:** The shared facilities are a very good idea, as often in Donor project, the grants given are not enough to pay for all the equipment needed for a business. Also if the business does not survive, the facilities are there for others to continue to use. Very good change to the approach to grants in Kosovo.

**Answer:** Thank you.

**Question:** How will you make sure that the municipalities don't misuse the funds? I see that the young entrepreneurs will play a role in the selection but municipalities may not follow this?

**Answer:** Three methods will be used to ensure that funds are being spent as planned.

1) There will be several requirements for subgrant transfers to municipalities for livelihood facilities, such as evidence of: (i) link to microenterprises supported by the project; (ii) facility selection being based on participatory needs assessment and planning (confirmed in a community check meeting), (iii) the economic benefit and services for marginalized youth, etc.

2) Social accountability actions will be conducted to ensure that all local actors are accountable to the beneficiary youth and communities in the use of project funds and the delivery of project objectives. Specifically, community checks (following a social audit methodology) will be conducted twice a year. Municipalities and implementing partners will present a transparent and accessible report to target communities on participation, progress and finances. Semiannual community scorecards will be facilitated by the implementing partners with support from a cadre of youth selected for monitoring and oversight roles.

3) Additionally, the MLGA's annual financial audit will be extended to municipalities to review the subgrants procedures and end-use reviews.

**Comment:** I hope everything will be fine.

**Answer:** Yes thank you.

### **Component 3: Capacity Building and Project Management**

**Question:** Will the project support the skills development of youth officers in the municipalities?

**Answer:** Yes, the project will finance capacity building and peer-to-peer learning of municipalities, showcasing of good practices from municipalities around youth programming, cross-learning events, etc. The project will also support the MLGA and MCYS to better understand and support municipalities in engaging youth in local governance, and in developing local approaches to local fragility issues and the mainstreaming of climate considerations in municipal investments.

**Comment:** The reality is that in many municipalities, although there are dedicated youth staff in the DKRS, they do not have an active youth action plan (there are no cases at all), as well as many municipalities do not have youth activities during the year and / or do not share any annual youth budget. I think this would be a challenge for youth mobilization in this project or even a response from the youth in the application.

**Answer:** The project will support MLGA to develop a sustainability strategy and action plan with municipalities to enhance socio-economic youth programming and budgeting to address the gaps that you mention. The aim of the strategy and action plan will be to promote the sustainability of youth inclusion in entrepreneurship and citizen engagement in municipalities through provision of guidelines for post-project implementation, incentivized through the municipal performance grant system

**Comment:** The project does not include the involvement of Youth NGOs in any component. Youth NGOs also in the UN for SDG implementation are seen as key actors for youth engagement at the local level. Especially considering that they can easily mobilize marginalized youth. In sub-component 3A I would suggest mapping local NGOs in municipalities that work with and for youth as a primary focus. I see that the involvement of the third sector would be a good opportunity for the project to succeed locally.

**Answer:** The implementing partners will be either international or national NGOs or consortiums of NGOs/firms with experience working with youth. The implementing partners will work with existing, local youth groups, including the Local Youth Action Councils, youth centers, youth NGO representatives, to organize local youth groups to work with communities and municipalities for the activities defined under Component 1 and Subcomponent 2A

**Comment:** I saw that NGOs are the implementing partners for all of component 1, and that there is a mapping already happening. Perhaps this needs more clarity in the documents.

**Answer:** A mapping of potential implementing partners will be conducted to check absorption capacity, experience and potential geographic coverage. The mapping will identify potential implementing partners, which will be selected through a competitive procurement process.

**Comment:** The best projects were in agriculture, livestock, orchards and other products that can be realized for short, medium and long term periods. Given the situation that is hitting us in finance, food and business, I think we need to focus as much as possible on production, to be in step with the times and after this pandemic not to feel the damage caused during this time period. Allocate funds for those who have work projects (to be observed) and not for abusers.

**Answer:** All project activities will be tailored to local markets and the specific needs of beneficiaries. A consultant or firm specializing in private sector development will be engaged to identify the types of goods and services that are in demand in each selected municipality and associated value chains. To avoid misuse of funds, microgrant payments will be transferred to beneficiaries in tranches upon receipt of agreed evidence.

**Question:** If during the training period, what are the modules of training development and what capacities can this commitment and the acquired knowledge have?

**Answer:** At each stage of the business support cycle, aspiring micro entrepreneurs will gain access to necessary soft skills, entrepreneurship learning and relevant ICT skills to be able to establish and manage a micro business. There are no prior knowledge prerequisites to participate.

### **Environmental and social impacts**

**Question:** Can micro-businesses be funded in nature protected areas by the project (eg small kiosks in natural tourist sites).

**Answer:** Activities in Kosovo's protected areas and sensitive or critical natural habitats are not eligible for financing under this project.

**Question:** How will the project ensure that more disadvantaged people are supported?

**Answer:** 30 percent of project beneficiaries will be disadvantaged (definition provided on pg. 4 of ESMF). The project will provide tailored services to ensure that disadvantaged youth can access project benefits. Outreach to these groups will be facilitated by local NGOs (supporting internally displaced persons, returnees, RAE, and disabled) and relevant state agencies (e.g. Centers for Social Welfare). The project will particularly encourage applications from youth with multiple factors that make them disadvantaged (such as RAE women, or disabled rural youth, etc.) and they will be supported to make applications. Based on individual assessments of their constraints to start a micro-enterprise, transport, childcare, access to social workers and psychosocial support will be provided as needed. In addition, microgrants will be provided in high potential sectors to make the project activities more attractive for disadvantaged youth.

It is likely that the project would support enterprises related to agriculture, for example, as well as tourism and food production, which have potential within rural communities.

**Comment:** The environmental impacts of the project could be positive if the recipients of the subgrants set up small businesses that help solve local environmental problems.

**Answer:** The project will support young women and men who are interested in supporting their communities through environmental products and services (e.g. recycling, air quality monitoring, solar energy products, climate-smart agriculture). Climate change considerations will be embedded in the technical entrepreneurship trainings and ideas meetings to encourage beneficiaries to consider potential mitigation and adaptation measures as business opportunities, including ways to capitalize on climate conscious behavior of young consumers (e.g. an app facilitating a plant-based diet, tourism using emissions-free transportation). Specialized technical assistance will be provided to assist any microentrepreneur interested in establishing microbusinesses that promote climate co-benefits and/or stimulate behavior-change.

**Question:** Will the project pay for agricultural costs such as fruit trees?

**Answer:** The project is likely to support microenterprises related to agriculture, including food production. The specific needs of microbusinesss will be stated in the individual business plans developed collaboratively by participating youth and their coaches.

**Comment:** The municipality of Ranilug has no form of fire protection in the 21st century. We are witnessing increasing temperature amplitudes, summers are getting warmer, so the frequency of fires is increasing. This directly causes negative consequences for the environment, as well as for the safety, life and health of people.

**Answer:** Livelihood facilities under subcomponent 2B will be constructed/rehabilitated according to national building standards, including standards for prevention of fire hazard.

**Comment:** Knowing that for a long time the regulation of river beds has started, would it be possible to invest in their enrichment with different types of fish and monitor the purity of the water, perhaps the degraded rivers would sometimes be restored ... ! Important. even the awareness of the people for their preservation and importance!

**Answer:** Project component 2 will engage youth in local environmental governance and appoint climate change ambassadors for local action. This will allow youth to engage around local environmental priorities, as the example provided here.

### **Environmental and social review process**

**Question:** Is Environmental Impact Assessment required for each livelihoods sub-project?

**Answer:** For the type of activities planned under this Project it is unlikely that an EIA is required under the national legislation (The Law No.03/L-214 On Environmental Impact Assessment), but the environmental review process described in ESMF chapter 12 will determine this.

**Comment:** Kosovo has laws on environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment (EIA and SEA) that belong mainly to institutions (government / ministries / municipalities) but what is missing is the evaluation of an activity (project or business) in carbon footprint. . it would have been better to predict the CO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub> emissions of each initiative. Then the project is correlated with the

SDG components. How much does the environmental vigilance component (conditional for each project) include.

**Answer:** Mentors with knowledge and experience on energy efficiency, renewable energy, and the green economy will be engaged to support young entrepreneurs to develop niche products with climate co-benefits across sectors. Climate considerations will be mainstreamed into livelihoods investments. The project has set targets on number of enterprises (30) and livelihood facilities (150) that will be expected to support climate change adaptation or mitigation.

**Comment:** TMM Best Possible Technique KTNSRR Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Wild Flora CSO Civil Society Organization EBRD European Bank for Reconstruction and Development TP Compliance Override EC European Commission KEE European Economic Community EU European Union PVMS Environmental and Social Action Plan KSHE Energy Service Company DQM Department of Environment and Sustainability KDMS.

**Answer:** Thank you.

### **Other comments/questions**

**Question:** How will the project allow us to comment when it has already started? Is this the only public consultation?

**Answer:** During implementation, we will continue to organize consultations on project progress and results on this online platform. Across all components, young men and women will be engaged in youth-led monitoring through a process of community scorecards and community check meetings. Specifically, community checks (following a social audit methodology) will be conducted twice a year. Municipalities and implementing partners will present a transparent and accessible report to target communities on participation, progress and finances. We welcome you to stay engaged and to continue providing feedback through this platform.

**Question:** Am I interested in knowing how long the project will take?

**Answer:** The planned project period is 2021-2026.

**Question:** I begged you if we have a chance, since we are also older, I have a lot of ideas and I paint a lot for the protection of the environment, so maybe with a group of young people I would have the opportunity to realize a lot of ideas.

**Answer:** Based on an assessment of socio-economic exclusion of youth in Kosovo, the project targets marginalized youth that otherwise have very few economic opportunities ages 19-24 (for young women the age criteria is extended to 29 years). Other eligibility criteria are available on pg. 4 of the ESMF.

**Question:** Will we be able to support small businesses in Kosovo municipalities and what are those businesses that will be supported

**Answer:** The project will provide microgrants for ICT-related microenterprises, support sectors with high-earning potential and microenterprises that have a focus on social and environmental services.

**Question:** Will there be a demand in factories that pollute the environment to have air pollution prevention through air filters to prevent them

**Answer:** This activity is outside of the scope of the project.

**Question:** River cleaning and disinfection, planting of special types of wood, afforestation, Wastewater treatment. Cleaning of meadows, pastures and other areas. How can we participate to win the project?

**Answer:** The project will support collaboration between selected young citizens and municipal leaders in developing environmental governance plans and introducing climate co-benefits oversight mechanisms to mitigate the effects of climate change and ensure all municipal investments are climate friendly and resilient. Calls for participation in these activities will be issued at the local level.

**Comment:** The first step is to request the various factories that do the big air pollution. Prevent my request for filters. The countries that are most polluted should be cleaned. Citizens who do their throwing should be photographed and notified to the law enforcement agencies for a Kosovar.

**Answer:** Comment is not project related.

### **Questions and answers per topic received via e-mail**

**Question: Citizen (31.03.2020):** I have only one question regarding the public presentation, will it be done after April 7 and with which address exactly.

**Answer:** As a result of the restrictions due to COVID 19, public consultations are being conducted with a video-presentation published on an online platform at <https://connecting-youth-p166093.yrpri.org/community/1255>, where you can ask questions or provide comments about the project.

I would like to inform you that the deadline for questions / comments is until April 7, 2020.

### **Comment received by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) on 06.04.2020:**

MCYS provided basic information about youth demographics in Kosovo from 2018 (source Kosovo Agency of Statistics), a summary of the legal framework related to youth and key objectives of the latest Youth Strategy 2019-2023.

**Answer:** Thank you for the information provided. The legal framework is considered in the preparation of the project (including through references to relevant legislation in the project appraisal document) and that the project is in line with the objectives of the Youth Strategy 2019-2023 to improve youth participation at the local level and provide relevant market skills for young people.

**Question: Citizen (09.04.2020):** Hello, I would like to ask you how it is necessary to apply for a grant for starting a small business (enterprise) within the Project, the commitment of Kosovar youth and entrepreneurship, and when is the deadline for application for this project.

**Answer:** At the start of each incubation support cycle, the implementing partners will make an open call for applications, conduct outreach through local organizations and organize face-to-face information sessions in target communities. There will also be clinics to apply to the initial training and coaching services. MLGA will also keep the public informed about project activities through social media.