



For the past several years the freedom of media in Macedonia has been seriously jeopardized. The European Commission reports noted that the country is seriously regressing and that “there is a lack of independent informing and objective information available to the public” while the Freedom House reports label the Macedonian media as “partially free” because most of them are related to certain political and business interests that influence their contents. In the democratic societies the media play a key role in shaping the public opinion. Media pluralism is especially important because it enables various political ideas and opinions to freely and equally circulate in the public. This means that each medium should try on its side to provide a so-called inner pluralism of news, i.e. to present all opposed opinions and views on one topic. The broadcasters, especially the televisions have a big importance in informing the citizens on the pluralism of views and opinions in the society.

General project goal is to increase pluralism and transparency in the media environment or increase access to information of the citizens through content production and to create an atmosphere with informed and active citizens who understand how to voice their interests, act collectively and hold public officials accountable.

Specific project objective is to create informed citizenry able to shape their future through articulation of preferences, debates and deliberations presented in an informative political magazine “Top Theme – On Your Side”.

The target group of the project is the general public, citizens and viewers as information users, civil society organizations, marginalized groups, young leaders and successful women, public office holders and politicians, experts, civil activists. The target group will also be the journalists, those involved in the project but also the others, who will be exposed to a new, different functioning of the medium via the implementation of the activities, and thus contribute to improved contents, more active citizens and involved viewers. Direct users will be the viewers as information users and the civil society organizations. The target location will be the whole territory of Macedonia.

Expected project **results** are:

1. Improved media content;
2. Informed and motivated citizens able to engage with their communities and governing structures (discussion on socially important issues that influence the future of the society);
3. Innovative methods for engaging viewers in discussions on newsworthy stories.

The project results will be achieved through three groups of **activities**.

The project **product** will be informative political magazine with a working title "Top Theme - On Your Side", which would be broadcasted three times per week. The use of new mediums will ensure interaction with the audience that the traditional mediums such as the television cannot achieve because of the nature of their functioning. Other project products will be: publications that will contain the results from the conducted researches, trainings for civil society journalism, competitions for photography and stories with newsworthy potential.

MCIC will implement the project in **partnership** with Television Telma.

The implementation **period** is 1 October, 2016 - September 30, 2018.

The required **financial resources** are provided by the Agency for International Development (USAID).

The **budget** is MKD 7,376,400.