Pursuant to Article 38-a of the Aviation Law ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 14/06, 24/07, 103/08, 67/10, 24/12, 80/12, 155/12, 42/ 14 97/15, 152/15, 27/16, 31/16, 64/18 and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 220/19) and Articles 7 and 9 of the Regulation on the manner, detailed criteria for granting financial support for domestic and foreign air carriers, and documentation required to be submitted by the financial support beneficiaries ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 249/22), the Commission for implementation of the financial support granting procedure hereby published the following

**OPEN CALL**

**for submission of applications for financial support for the launching of new destination/s from the airports in the Republic of North Macedonia to the airports in the ECAA/EU**

1. The subject of this open call is the granting of financial support to domestic and foreign air carriers for the launching of new routes to airports in the ECAA/EU.

2. The provider of the financial support is the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, through the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

3. The period for which financial support is granted shall be in accordance with the Program for determining the funds required for granting financial support to domestic and foreign carriers for the promotion and development of the air transport in the Republic of North Macedonia for the period from 2023 to 2025 ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 249 /22).

4. The allocation of financial support shall be carried out through an open call, in the form of a procedure for implementing an open call for the allocation of financial support.

5. The period of validity of the requests shall be 30 days following the day of public opening of the applications.

6. The documentation for an application for participation in the financial support granting procedure can be obtained every working day from 10:00a.m. to 3:00p.m. local time, at the Ministry of Transport and Communications at Plostad Crvena Skopska Opstina Str. No. 4, 1000 Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia, throughout the duration of this call or delivered electronically or downloaded from the official site of the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

7. The deadline for submission of the applications for participation in the financial support granting procedure is 31.03.2023 by 12:00 local time, in the archives of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. Applications submitted after the deadline shall not be considered.

8. The language in which the documentation for the applications to participate in the financial support granting procedure should be submitted is Macedonian, or English accompanied by a certified translation into Macedonian (by a licensed translator).

9. The public opening of the applications shall be held on 03.04.2023 at 12:00 local time, at the location specified in the application documentation. Persons authorized by the applicants shall have the right to participate in the public opening.

10. The submitted applications shall be reviewed by the Evaluation Commission, composed of nominated representatives of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia in charge of economic affairs, coordination with economic sectors and investments, the Ministry of Economy and the Civil Aviation Agency. The member representing the Ministry of Transport and Communications shall chair the work of the Commission.

11. Within 15 days following the day of the public opening of the applications, the Evaluation Commission shall evaluate the applications and prepare a Report on the conducted evaluation of the financial support applications, to then submit it to the Minister of Transport and Communications.

12. Within the said period of 15 days for evaluation, the Commission shall have the right to require the applicants to supplement or clarify parts of the documentation.

13. The evidence and documentation which the applicants need to prove their personal status, professional activity, economic-financial status and technical or professional ability are provided in the application documentation.

14. In order to qualify as a financial support applicant, the air carrier should meet the following criteria:

- to have an operating license (OL) issued by an EU/ECAA Member State in accordance with the regulations of the European Union for issuing operating licenses to air carriers,

- to have carried i.e., served at least 10 million passengers in 2019,

- to have made a profit of at least 25,000,000 (twenty-five million) euros in 2019, and

- to submit a notarized statement that it will continue to operate the destination which is subject of financial support after the end of the financial support period, for a period at least equal to the period for which it has received financial support, or otherwise, it agrees to return to the provider of financial support all the funds which were paid for that particular destination in the period during which financial support was granted.

15. The air carrier selected as a financial support beneficiary shall:

- operate each new awarded route launched from the Skopje International Airport and the Ohrid St. Paul the Apostle Airport to the airports to ECAA/EU, for the period for which the financial support is granted, at least twice a week in each of the IATA seasons, i.e. in line with the application submitted, according to a predetermined flight schedule, starting from its launch until the end of the period for which the financial support is granted, except for the week in which the New Year and the religious holidays of Catholic and Orthodox Christmas fall,

- develop a promotion and marketing plan, that may be subject to changes upon instructions of the financial support provider, and

- submit a Report on its operations to the Ministry of Transport and Communications every six months.

16. The financial support shall be granted according to the new destinations ranking criteria, in the following order:

- period of operation of the destination;

- number of weekly flights;

- attractiveness of the airport, that is, the airport with the higher number of passengers served in 2019 according to the ACI (Airport Council International) Report, in the event of more than one application submitted for the same destination; and

- number of seats offered for sale.

In case of submission of applications that are equal according to the destination ranking criteria, the principle of priority in submission of a financial support application shall apply.

After ranking the new destinations, the Commission shall calculate the funds required for each new destination according to the estimated costs which the air carrier have specified in the Operational Plan submitted along with the Application, determine a ranking list of new destinations, and propose selection of the financial support beneficiaries.

17. Each new destination subject to financial support launched during the financial support period, operated from the Skopje International Airport, should not have already been served by scheduled air transport in the past two IATA seasons from/to the Skopje International Airport.

18. Each new destination subject to financial support launched during the financial support period, operated from the Ohrid St. Paul the Apostle Airport, should not have already been served by scheduled air transport in the past two IATA seasons from/to the "St. Apostle Paul" - Ohrid Airport.

19. The financial support in relation to a new destination shall be in the maximum amount of:

- 7 euros in Denar equivalent at the middle exchange rate of the National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia on the day of invoicing, per departing passenger, for passengers carried from the Skopje International Airport to the new destination, and

- 4,5 euros in Denar equivalent at the middle exchange rate of the National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia on the day of invoicing, per departing passenger, for passengers carried from the Ohrid St. Paul the Apostle Airport to the new destination.

The financial support amount may be reduced if it is higher than 50 percent of the amount of the lowest airport fees.

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