



**Contracting authority:** European Commission

**EU Sector Reform Performance Contract (SRPC) on Skills  
Development and Matching for Labour Market Needs**

**Annex A.1 – Grant application form - Concept note**

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Deadline for submission<sup>1</sup> of concept notes:

**21/10/2019 at 13:00 (Brussels date and time)**

(in order to convert to local time click [here](#)<sup>2</sup>)

Number & title of lot	LOT 1: Support to the Development of International Partnerships
Title of the action:	ESCAPE – Employment, Support, Counselling to Meet Labour Market Needs
Name of the lead applicant	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung e.V. (FES)
Nationality of the lead applicant <sup>3</sup>	German

Dossier No	
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(for official use only)

<sup>1</sup> Online submission via PROSPECT is mandatory for this call for proposals (see section 2.2.2 of the guidelines). In PROSPECT all dates and times are expressed in Brussels time. Applicants should note that the IT support is open from Monday to Friday 08:30 to 18:30 Brussels time (except for public holidays).

<sup>2</sup> An example of a time converter tool available online:  
<http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>

<sup>3</sup> An organisation's statutes must show that it was established under the national law of the country concerned and that the head office is located in an eligible country. Any organisation established in a different country cannot be considered an eligible local organisation. See the footnotes to the guidelines for the call.

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<sup>6</sup> This link will lead you to the 'privacy statement' published as annex A13 to the practical guide general annexes.

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## Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
AC	Activity Cluster
CSO(s)	Civil Society Organization(s)
DDA	NGO Democracy Development Agency
EaP	Eastern Partnership (of the EU)
EDEC	NGO Education Development and Employment Center
ESC	Employment Support Centers
ESS	Employment Support Services
EU	European Union
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ILO	International Labour Organization
LEPL	Legal Entity under Public Law
LLL	Lifelong Learning
LMIMS	Labour Market Information Management System
MCC	Millenium Challenge Corporation
MIDPLHSA	Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
MoESD	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PPP	Public-Private-Partnership
PwD	People with Disabilities
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SESA	LEPL State Employment Support Agency (to be set up by the MIDPLHSA)
SRPC	Sector Reform Performance Contract
SSA	LEPL Social Service Agency
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VET	Vocational Education and Training

## 1. CONCEPT NOTE

### 1.1. Summary of the action

<b>Obj.</b>	<p><b>OO:</b> To foster the employability and employment of people in Tbilisi, Adjara, Imereti, Kakheti, Kvemo-Kartli, Samegrelo and Shida-Kartli.</p> <p><b>SO1:</b> To improve quality of employment services provided by the SESA in the fields of job placement and career counselling for unemployed and jobseekers in the target regions through the exchange of international experiences and increased institutional capacities of the SESA.</p> <p><b>SO2:</b> To improve skills development and competences of unemployed disadvantaged groups by implementing a new model of intensive coaching and providing key competences training for “hard to employ” individuals by CSOs in the framework of a Public-Private-Partnership with SESA.</p>
<b>TG</b>	<p><b>TG1:</b> 50 SESA employees / <b>TG2:</b> 232.000 unemployed in the targeted regions / <b>TG3:</b> 15 job coaches at DDA and EDEC (Tbilisi &amp; Imereti) / <b>TG4:</b> 2.700 “hard to employ” in Tbilisi &amp; Imereti (long-term unemployed, low achievers, early school leavers, NEETs) / <b>TG5:</b> 5 CSOs active in the field of social inclusion in the regions Adjara, Kakheti, Kvemo-Kartli, Samegrelo and Shida-Kartli.</p>
<b>FB</b>	<p><b>FB1:</b> SESA as an institution / <b>FB2:</b> Unemployed including “hard to employ” citizens and their family members in the selected regions (~500.000) / <b>FB3:</b> Employers (~160.000 active business entities in the selected regions). <b>FB4:</b> ~10.000 “hard to employ” in the 5 other targeted regions.</p>
<b>OP</b>	<p><b>Op 1.1:</b> SESA's LMIMS (WorkNet) is enhanced with an electronic job matching mechanism and interoperates with other government agencies' databases. <b>Op 1.2:</b> 50 SESA staff have received national and international trainings on job matching, share knowledge and replicate best-practices in Georgia. <b>Op 1.3:</b> ~232.000 unemployed individuals, 7 major business associations &amp; their ~1900 member companies, 50 municipalities (in the target regions) + 10 administrations of Tbilisi Districts have been informed about the new ESS provided by SESA. <b>Op 1.4:</b> ESS based on revamped LMIMS and trainings have been evaluated and lessons learned are integrated. <b>Op 2.1:</b> A new model of intensive coaching jointly developed by SESA and CSOs is developed to boost employability, skills and competences. <b>Op 2.2:</b> 2 Employment Support Centers (ESC) have been established and are operative in Tbilisi and Kutaisi. <b>Op 2.3:</b> 15 ESC job coaches are intensively trained (~300h) to offer services to the “hard to employ”. <b>Op 2.4:</b> 40 NGO employees from Adjara, Kakheti, Kvemo-Kartli, Samegrelo &amp; Shida-Kartli receive trainings from the job coaches. <b>Op 2.5:</b> At least 2700 representatives of disadvantaged groups have undergone intensive coaching to develop employability skills and competences and are actively searching employment opportunities. <b>Op 2.6:</b> Training courses on employability skills, competences and soft skills for the jobseekers have been evaluated and the methodologies &amp; curricula improved accordingly.</p>
<b>Act</b>	<p><b>AC to OP1.1:</b> Workshops to assess current ESS; gathering “lessons learned” from the DDA/FES pilot project; needs assessment for enhanced LMIMS; re-programming of LMIMS. <b>AC to OP1.2:</b> Study visits of SESA staff to Germany &amp; Austria; development of training modules on best EU-practices; networking/knowledge-sharing events with EU partners, organization of “Trainings of trainers” for SESA staff to create a pool of trainers for job counsellors. <b>AC to OP1.3:</b> Awareness-raising campaigns/activities (posters in public spaces, ads, public presentation to relevant stakeholders, conferences) in selected regions, with on- and offline tools &amp; targeting specific groups (youth, unemployed, jobseekers, business associations and CSOs). <b>AC to OP1.4:</b> Evaluation by users and providers, and review &amp; update on a regular basis of the Employment Support Services provided by SESA. <b>AC to OP2.1:</b> Needs assessment of lacking skills of “hard to employ”; exchange of best practices about intensive coaching from other EU Countries (Germany, Austria); development of a new model adapted to Georgia. <b>AC to OP2.2:</b> Mission identification, set up, activity plan and visibility actions (outreach activities, promotional tours, presentation of success stories) for 2 ESC in Tbilisi and Kutaisi. <b>AC to OP2.3:</b> Development of a training curriculum for job coaches on “hard to employ” in close cooperation with EU partners; compilation of training guidelines in Georgian language; trainings in cooperation with EU partners to form job coaches; study trips to Austria for job coaches; replication of trainings for the future team in charge of “hard to employ” in the target regions. <b>AC to OP2.4:</b> Job coaches act as multipliers and present to NGOs employees from the regions Adjara, Kakheti, Kvemo-Kartli, Samegrelo and Shida-Kartli the training guidelines, introduce them to intensive coaching techniques, and follow-up methodologies via seminars/workshops. <b>AC to OP2.5:</b> Intensive counselling of “hard-to-employ” individuals, design and implementation of training courses on employability skills; follow up and support of jobseekers during the job search and application process. <b>AC to OP2.6:</b> Evaluation by “hard to employ” unemployed, and review &amp; update of the trainings/services offered to them on a regular basis; validation conference with SESA, ministries, NGOs &amp; EU partners on the trainings/services offered and possible replication to other regions.</p>

## 1.2. Description of the action (max 2 pages)

### i. Background to the preparation & specific analysis/study (context analysis)

FES, SESA, DDA and EDEC jointly developed this action to foster the employability and employment of people in selected regions of Georgia as well as in the capital of Tbilisi. With an implementation period of 36 months, the project builds on the **applicants' strong expertise** as well as on previous efforts of the Employment Support Services (ESS) of the SSA and a FES/DDA employability pilot project that currently tests an employment mechanism in Tbilisi's Nadzaladevi area since September 2019. The piloted mechanism consists of profiling, categorizing and personal counselling of jobseekers, and matching their skills and preferences with employers' needs. The need for both, the pilot project and the presented action, stems from the fact that Georgia's competitiveness and development are hindered because of **insufficient public employment services, poor placement rates and the lack of an active labor market policy**, especially in the regions. In order to address these problems, the MIDPLHSA is currently establishing a new employment agency (SESA) which will be one of the three co-applicants. The SESA plans to set up regional offices all over Georgia in 2020. In Tbilisi and 6 regions (Adjara, Imereti, Kakheti, Kvemo-Kartli, Samegrelo and Shida-Kartli) a new ESS model is going to be implemented. The action will support this vital process by feeding **lessons learned** from **partner institutions in EU member states**, especially Germany and Austria, and from the pilot project into the work of SESA. In its second component, the action will **strengthen skills development** by implementing new support services for "hard to employ"-individuals. Drawing again on the positive experience of Austria/Germany, an **intensive counselling ("coaching")** approach will be developed and implemented in Tbilisi and Imereti by CSOs. The realization that root causes of long-term unemployment are very often complex social-psychological problems that need intensive counselling has increasingly informed employment policies in Austria/Germany, which is why their experience is worth sharing in Georgia. SESA intends to refer "hard to employ" jobseekers to independent service providers that can counsel and train the beneficiaries more adequately. Moreover, the project rests on the assumption that CSO job coaches are more likely to gain trust of "hard to employ"-beneficiaries than public officials.

### ii. Explain the objectives of the action given in the table in Section 1.1.

The main objective is to foster the employability and employment of jobseekers in 7 regions where SESA is going to set up regional offices tasked with implementing the new ESS model. **SO1** aims to **improve quality and inclusiveness of SESA services in the field of job placement and career counselling** for unemployed and jobseekers through the **exchange of international experiences and institutional capacity development** of SESA. The need to pursue SO1 stems from the fact that employment services are largely dysfunctional, as illustrated by low job placement rates: in 2019, over 85.000 jobseekers registered on the WorkNet portal, but merely 7.875 vacancies were posted and only 814 job placements are reported. The need to improve the quality and effectiveness of ESS provision is evident. In fact, the ESS of the SSA so far suffered from a clear lack of visibility towards its TG. **SO2** aims at **developing skills and competences for the "hard to employ"** with the help of **intensive coaching** by CSOs in the framework of a PPP with the SESA. In Georgia, approximately 111.000 people aged 15-24 were regarded as NEETs in 2017 (24,8% of that age group). They form part of the larger body of disadvantaged groups of people experiencing personal difficulties that prevent them from fully taking part in social and economic life. It is evident that they are limited in taking up employment not only by a lack of information on available jobs, but also by personal obstacles: from a lack of key competences to social skills to complex psychological problems. In these cases, intensive coaching, tailored on the individual's needs, combined with training and qualification offers, is necessary. **Establishing international partnerships and exchanging experiences** with public and private institutions from Austria and Germany will be key to achieving these objectives.

### iii. Describe key stakeholder groups, their attitudes towards the action and any consultations held.

Core stakeholders are the FES, SESA and the 2 NGOs DDA and EDEC. **FES** is a globally active German political foundation present in Tbilisi since 1994, that promotes social democracy, equality and social justice. FES has gained substantial experience and expertise on employability and employment mechanisms not only during its pilot project, but also due to its **decade-long work with trade unions and employers' associations**. **SESA** will be set up as a LEPL by the MIDPLHSA by the end of 2019. Its core function will be the institutionalization of workable ESS. **DDA** is a Tbilisi-based NGO that focuses on alleviating poverty, social inclusion and is implementing the ESS pilot project in Nadzaladevi, Tbilisi. **EDEC** is a Kutaisi-based NGO that operates in the fields of civil society and economic development, education and child protection and inclusion, and has long experience in consulting and training SSA staff, especially with regards to **PwD and IDPs**. All 4 organizations agree on the necessity of establishing fully functioning, easily accessible and efficient ESS that serves as a part of a skills-matching process and a tool to decrease unemployment in Georgia. Extensive consultations were held with representatives of all 3 co-applicants. The **MIDPLHSA** was consulted, including the **Minister and Members of Parliament currently involved in drafting the employment service act**. Other important stakeholders have **strong working relationships** with the applicants and have been regularly consulted by FES/DDA in the framework of the pilot project, most notably other government agencies (**MoESD, MoES, MoA**), **Tbilisi Municipality, trade unions, employers' and business associations. Women and youth organizations**, as well as **human rights and socially oriented NGOs** regard the action as an important additional effort in promoting equal opportunities for women and youth. All stakeholders approached

confirmed the need for enhanced public and private employment services and highlight specifically **the skills mismatch and the information asymmetry in job placement as core problems** of Georgian economic development. International cooperation partners (**Volkshilfe Wien, Arbeitsmarktservice Austria, Bundesagentur für Arbeit Germany**) have been contacted by the core stakeholders, expressed their willingness to cooperate and provided ideas for the design of the action.

#### **iv. Intervention logic, expected outputs, outcome(s) and impact, main risks and assumptions**

The project proposal acts on 2 fronts: First, it **significantly improves the quality of ESS provision** and fosters the **matching process between employers and jobseekers** and, second, it ensures that **disadvantaged groups from the labour force are equipped with key competences to find and retain jobs**. The project fosters the **quality of ESS provision (SO1)** by improving accessibility, design, functions and interoperability (with other databases) of the existing electronic job matching tool (WorkNet) (OP1.1); by fostering knowledge-sharing between experts from the EU and Georgia in the field of job matching and ensuring continuous training of relevant public agents (OP1.2); by advertising the newly created services to the relevant public (OP1.3) and by carrying out an ongoing evaluation of the newly implemented ESS (OP1.4). The involvement of international partners ensures that best-practices of partner countries are integrated into the enhanced ESS. In its **second component**, the project contributes to **improving employability (SO2)**. SESA, EDEC and DDA jointly develop a new model of intensive coaching designed for boosting skills and competences (OP2.1), 2 pilot NGO-led Employment Support Centers (ESC) are created in Tbilisi and Imereti (OP2.2), 15 highly specialized ESC job coaches are intensively trained in order to offer tailor-made services (OP2.3). ~2.700 representatives of disadvantaged groups will receive intensive training to develop employability skills and be closely coached during the search of employment opportunities (OP2.5, expected placement rate: 40%). The 15 job coaches will act as multipliers and train relevant staff of other NGOs active in the other 5 targeted regions in order to reach a wider range of “hard to employ” unemployed and replicate best practices (OP2.4). It is essential to rely on CSOs, as they guarantee independence from the state, discretion, an informal and supportive atmosphere and are thus perceived as providing a “safe space”. Thus, the project pursues a **holistic and complementing** approach by concentrating on both **skills’ development** of individuals and **improved employment services** provided by the interplay of public authorities and CSOs. The main **risks** - job seekers/employers do not rely on WorkNet, “hard to employ” are hard to reach, other NGOs might lack motivation to apply coaching model – will be addressed by targeted awareness raising, professional training and other mitigation strategies. **Assumptions:** 1) strong government commitment toward the improvement of public ESS and the establishment of PPPs 2) ESCs fill an existing gap, 3) NGOs reach a different public of users than SESA, 4) NGOs create safe spaces for disadvantaged groups.

#### **v. Type of activities proposed, description of linkages/relationships between activity clusters**

The activities strongly build on each other. **“Capacity building” activities** include trainings, seminars, study visits and workshops with EU partners that will make possible the transfer of know-how and good practices to the Georgian stakeholders. As a result, they will be in a better position to foster employability in the target regions. In parallel, **“analysis and assessments” activities** are necessary to determine the needs in order to be able to enhance the ESS system in Georgia, update the WorkNet LMIMS, and adapt it in order to properly address the needs of the TG. **“Awareness-raising” activities** with campaigns, promotional tours, visibility actions, conferences in the target regions are an important part of the project as currently only few unemployed citizens trust the ESS system and rely on it. This will as well raise awareness among major businesses, companies and local authorities. After the new system will be updated and new coaching model will be implemented, jobseekers will be better supported in their job search. All along the project cycle, the enhanced WorkNet, the new methodologies and techniques of intensive coaching will be monitored in the context of **“reviewing” activities** on a regular basis to enable it to improve and fit the needs and constraints of the TG. To ensure **sustainability**, concrete deliverables will be produced (manuals in Georgian language, etc.) and made available for the institution and CSOs. Furthermore, the 2 Employment Support Centers (ESC) will ensure that further NGOs get informed and trained on intensive coaching for “hard to employ” and will work on the visibility of this new method to advance it even after the project ends. Combined, these complementary types of activities will have a positive impact on the provision of ESS and increase overall inclusiveness.

#### **vi. Explain relevant cross-cutting issues.**

The action directly contributes to fostering the **right to work as a human right** (cf. UDHR Art. 23) and key factor for **sustainable development** (cf. **SDG No. 8**). By boosting the employability of jobseekers in general, and **women, disadvantaged groups, long-term unemployed and youth** in particular, it empowers citizens as **rights-holders** and contributes to the realization of **equal opportunities as key democratic value**. Yet, only if there is adequate infrastructure to re-integrate unemployed into the labor market provided by the government as **duty-bearer**, the right to work is fully being fulfilled. Therefore, the action not only focuses on **skills development of individuals**, but also aims to increase **inclusive access** to government services. The Action will be designed in a **gender-sensitive way**: As the employment rate of women is currently 14 percentage points lower than that of men, focussing on the increased employment of women will contribute to furthering **gender equality**. Thus, the applicants will e.g. make sure that **at least 50 per cent** of all future beneficiaries will be women and that the **awareness raising campaign will target women, thereby increasing equality of access to public services provision**.



### 1.3. Relevance of the action (max 3 pages)

#### 1.3.1 Relevance to the objectives/sectors/themes/specific priorities of the call for proposals

##### i. Describe the relevance of the action to the objective(s) and priority(ies) of the call for proposals.

Consistent with the call's global objective, the action will foster employment and employability in the target regions. Through increased institutional capacities of the SESA (training, modernized job placement portal etc.) and the implementation of a **promising model of intensive counselling/LLL & key-competences training** for "hard to employ" individuals", it will significantly advance the accessibility and quality of services provision in **1) Skills anticipation and matching** and **2) Skills development** and. **Establishing international partnerships** (incl. knowledge transfer, networking, mutual learning, study trips) between the Georgian co-applicants and equivalent public and private institutions from Austria (Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich, Volkshilfe Wien) and Germany (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) is **at the heart of the action** and **a promising way to launch new ways of state-civil society cooperation (PPP)** in the field of employment services in Georgia. Only such a **joint effort** by public institutions and CSOs allows to address the diverse **key target groups** of the call (from employers to NEETs) in an adequate manner.

##### ii. Relevance of the action to any specific subthemes/sectors/areas: N/A

##### iii. Expected results (in the guidelines) to be addressed.

The project will contribute to achieving two of the three expected results outlined in the guidelines. By significantly enhancing the quality of SESA's digital & analogue service provision it will **(1) make relevant skills-matching services more accessible and effective in Georgia as whole, especially career-guidance, counselling and job intermediation**. Through the innovative coaching model implemented by CSOs, it will **(2) make relevant lifelong learning skills provision in the target regions more accessible**. Accessibility and popularity of these service provisions will furthermore be boosted by targeted awareness-raising campaigns for unemployed individuals and employers.

#### 1.3.2 Relevance to needs/constraints of the target country/regions, synergy with other EU initiatives

##### i. State clearly the specific pre-project situation in the target country/countries, region(s)

Although the official unemployment rate has shown a steady downward trend in Georgia since 2009 and reached 12,67 % in 2018 (Geostat), **unemployment and poverty remain top issues of concern** to the population (NDI 2019). Youth unemployment is high.<sup>7</sup> **Gender inequality** remains a serious concern (rank 78 out 189 countries<sup>8</sup>, gender pay gap of 35.2 % according to UN Women). Academic research supported by FES in 2016 suggest that the **official unemployment rate significantly underestimates the real scale of the problem**; a revision of the statistical methodology is long overdue and has meanwhile been announced (but not yet implemented) by Geostat. In NDI's recent public opinion poll, 21 % of the national sample reported themselves to be unemployed and looking for a job, while a mere 38 % considered themselves to be employed. Hidden unemployment, especially in self-subsistence agriculture, offers part of the explanation for the obvious gap between statistics and public perception. Moreover, qualitative research conducted by FES and DDA in one district of Tbilisi in 2018 strongly suggests that the public expects state institutions to solve the job problem – also in NDI's survey, 76 % agreed that the "government is fully responsible for the state of the economy". Yet, mostly due to a lack of capacity, **a genuinely active employment policy is lacking**. Trust in public institutions is in decline, a worrying fact because this poses an imminent threat to Georgian democracy. On the other hand, employers find it hard to recruit the staff they need, especially if skilled workers are required. Both employers and jobseekers traditional rely on **informal channels to find suitable candidates or a job**, a method that clearly shows its limits in the Georgian case (ETF 2019). The locally available workforce often does not have the relevant skills and qualifications for vacant jobs. Yet what is even more problematic for individuals is **the lack of (locally available) opportunities for skills development and training**. Overall, the problem needs to be solved by **improving the qualification of the workforce in relevant skills** and **improving public and private ESS and their accessibility** for jobseekers, which is reflected in the **two-pronged approach of the action**.

##### ii. Detailed analysis of the problems to be addressed and how they are interrelated at all levels.

**Two interrelated key problems** pose a challenge to significantly improve employability and employment in Georgia that can only be addressed by a joint PPP effort. **P.1: Ineffective employment service provision:** As evidenced by the **low placement rates** referenced above, the ESS of the SSA are currently only very modestly contributing to reducing the information mismatch on the Georgian labour market. In fact, ESS of the SSA **have been set up only in 2013** and are thus still at an **early stage of their institutional capacity building efforts**. **Exchange of experience and know-how with international partners and local NGOs is therefore key**. Next to specialized programs, the job portal **WorkNet** forms the core of the ESS, where automatic matching of jobseekers and vacancies is, at least in theory, possible, but so far not implemented. However, in a situation where still **28 % of respondents claim to never use the internet** (NDI 2019) and

<sup>7</sup> According to the FES youth study in Georgia (2016), 34% of young people were unemployed and 85% consider unemployment as the most important problem in Georgia (<http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/georgien/13150.pdf>)

<sup>8</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>



**socially vulnerable households may be cut off from power supply** in case of non-payment of electricity bills, **relying on electronic matching only is clearly not sufficient**. Moreover, many jobseekers lack the skills necessary to deal with the WorkNet. **Personal counselling, therefore, remains indispensable**. The **implementation** of the new model of public employment services was **slow**, as remarked by the latest **EU Association Implementation Report on Georgia**. The **transformation** of the ESS into a separate LEPL – the SESA – offers **a chance to speed up the process**. At the same time, as the proper functioning of the future SESA is *sine qua non* for any project aiming to considerably improve public ESS provision, **failing to support the SESA would aggravate the problem**. **P.2: Insufficient support to skills development**: Due to the lack of active, anticipating public employment policies, there is a significant **skills mismatch, especially in the regions**. Long-term unemployed in particular find it hard to (re)-integrate into the job market. There is a serious lack of professional trainings and counselling offers. This problem will be addressed by setting up a replicable CSO-led coaching mechanism for individuals, complementing efforts by the government. This mechanism will provide analysis of the potentials and employment opportunities of beneficiaries, career guidance, qualification and training needs, referral to educational institutions as well as matching with potential employers.

**iii. Refer to any significant plans undertaken at national, regional and/or local level.**

The Action perfectly fits into the **national priorities** set out in the Georgia's Socioeconomic Development Strategy 2020 which aims to support the effective functioning of the labour market by developing state and private **mediation services** and **streamlining (re-)training** for the unemployed. By improving the **skills-development & matching process**, the project also addresses the significant challenge of the **skills mismatch** in Georgia as outlined in the Regional Development Programme 2018-2020. As the **SESA**, that is currently being set up, is co-applicant, the **results** of the action will **have a direct positive impact** on its work and feed into future strategies of the Georgian government.

**iv. Previous actions.**

The action is an immediate follow-up on a **pilot project** implemented by DDA and FES in Nadzaladevi, where a **CSO-based employment mechanism** is tested with support of the SSA. Lessons learned from this ongoing pilot effort (started in Sept. 2019) will be taken into account when further conceptualizing the action. In its counselling component the project draws on the **extensive experience** of DDA in its work on alleviating **poverty** and of EDEC in the **field of education, inclusion and work with PwDs and IDPs**. Moreover, the project is directly informed by **policy papers** and **research** published by FES in the last couple of years that provide **extensive analyses** on the Georgian labor market and concrete policy recommendations for economic and employment policies.

**v. Potential synergies with other initiatives, in particular by the European Commission.**

The action directly contributes to the implementation of the **Association Agreement** between the EU and Georgia (**esp. Ch. 14**) by fostering **exchange of knowledge and good practices** on employment and equal opportunities. By actively involving the EA and NGOs and creating **complementary partnerships** between them, the project significantly promotes CSO engagement in skills development for employment as outlined in the **EU's Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society in Georgia**. The applicants intend to cooperate closely with the Technical Assistance project that is part of the SRPC on Skills Development and Matching for Labour Market Needs.

**vi. Explain the complementarity with other initiatives supported by the EU and by other donors.**

The Action will closely take into account results of the concluded **Twinning Project** "Capacity Building of the Employment Support Services (ESS) in Georgia". In the course of the project, other donors' activities will be constantly monitored in order to detect possible synergies and avoid unnecessary overlap, especially with regards to international donors' (GIZ, MCC, SDC/UNDP) efforts to promote VET in Georgia, and the ILO-implemented project on "Inclusive Labour Market for Job Creation".

**1.3.3. Target groups / final beneficiaries, needs / constraints, how the action will address these needs**

**i. Description of each of the target groups / final beneficiaries: see 1.3.3. ii**

**ii. Identify the needs and constraints.**

**TG1:** SESA currently plans to recruit **50 staff** all over Georgia and implement the new ESS model in the target regions of this action. The staff will form the core of all future ESS in the country and have therefore an outstanding role in the process. Most likely, they will come from various educational and professional backgrounds and will be in need of substantive on-the-job training, especially in applying the updated and revised WorkNet database. A key challenge will be to limit high staff turnover, which has been a significant problem so far. It is thus imperative to create attractive working conditions, provide training and to not over-burden new staff.

**TG2: 232.000 unemployed** in the targeted regions: they form a diverse and heterogenous group. It is difficult to identify their needs and constraints as a group, which is why an approach focussing on the individual case is needed. Rather than ascribing stereotypical characteristics to the unemployed, the action aims to shed light on the complexity of the phenomenon of unemployment, to underline the need for an individual approach, and to relieve the unemployed of the social stigmata associated with being out-of-work.

**TG3: 15 job coaches** will be recruited by DDA and EDEC in Tbilisi and Imereti (Kutaisi). They will be young-to mid-career professionals with relevant qualifications (e.g. pedagogues, psychologists, social workers) and will receive intensive training – before and on-the-job. This is needed as the approach is new in Georgia, therefore a lack of experience in implementing it is evident. Subsequently, they will train new coaches in NGOs in the other 5 targeted regions.

**TG4:** It is estimated that the above-mentioned 15 job coaches can coach 60 beneficiaries a year, which would result in **2700 beneficiaries coached** in the course of the action. The beneficiaries will be “**hard to employ**”- individuals, who are limited by various reasons to take up employment – from lacking the relevant key competences (social skills) to psychological, physical or other limitations. The need for an individualised approach of ESS is here even higher than with TG2, of which TG4 forms a sub-group.

**TG5: 5 Social-oriented NGOs** will be identified towards the end of the action. They will be social service providers that show an interest in replicating the ESC-approach in their respective regions, making use of the, by then, established PPP cooperation model between SESA & NGOs. They will receive trainings by the TG4.

**FB1:** It is expected that if **SESA** begins to work successfully, it will be expanded significantly. The institution would thus benefit to a great deal from the involvement of its staff from the very start of the action.

**FB2: ~500.000 people:** in addition to the **TG2 & TG4, family members** of unemployed can benefit from the action if increased employment results in higher household income, and improved living standards.

**FB3: ~160.000 employers** will benefit from increased availability of staff; as most (96 %) companies in Georgia are SMEs with limited capacity for HR recruitment, they will especially be interested in efficient public and free-of-charge ESS.

**FB4: ~10.000 “hard to employ”:** if further NGOs (TG5) apply the job coaching approach in other regions of Georgia, more “hard to employ” individuals can benefit from improved ESS.

**iii. Relevance of the proposal to the needs / constraints of the target groups and final beneficiaries.**

**TG1 and TG3:** Updating and expanding LMIMS and providing trainings as well as experience-sharing with EU partners will provide the SESA employees as well as the CSO job coaches with much needed skills to carry out their professional duties.

**TG2 and TG4, FB2/FB4:** Improved public and private ESS are essential to increase employment chances for Georgia’s unemployed, especially those “hard to employ” with different kind of reasons that prevent them from being successful on the labour market.

**TG5:** Experience-sharing of the action will provide incentives for CSO social service providers to develop into new, meaningful activities in their respective regions.

**FB1:** The action will contribute to sustainable institution-building, and with that, to good governance in Georgia.

**FB3:** Employers receive improved access to potential employees, can reduce staff recruitment costs, and have the chance to develop their business activities with less constraints concerning the availability of qualified staff.

**iv. Participatory process ensuring participation by the target groups and final beneficiaries.**

During the pilot project, TGs indicated the **need to increase support for individual skills development**, but also to improve **counselling offers** and **matching mechanisms** to better be able to find a job. SSA staff clearly pointed to **institutional capacity development as a major success factor** for an effective functioning of the SESA. Besides this participatory conceptualization of the action, **feedback of the target groups** (e.g. via online surveys for beneficiaries) will be integrated into the service provision of SESA. Moreover, boosting skills of unemployed is by its very nature a participatory, emancipatory approach as this will be enable them a **more equal access to opportunities**.

**1.3.4. Particular added-value elements**

**Any specific added-value elements of the action.**

DDA and EDEC have **extensive experience** in working with the TGs, including vulnerable people and those difficult to reach out to. A particular added value is the 25-year long experience of FES of working with CSOs, the government, trade unions and other relevant stakeholders in Georgia<sup>9</sup>, the EaP countries and the EU which makes the FES the **perfect broker to set up (state-civil society) partnerships and platforms** both at the national and international level. Furthermore, FES enjoys a high reputation and has provided **valuable policy advice** to government, parliament and political parties in Georgia. Through the involvement of the different partners, both the **local and national dimensions** are covered. Given the fact that the then newly set up SESA is highly involved in the project as co-applicant, **sustainability** of the action will be **very high**, results are likely **to feed into new government strategies** and good practices will be **easy to replicate in other regions**. The awareness raising campaign as integral part of the project and participation of SESA will furthermore contribute to a **very high visibility of the project**.

<sup>9</sup> Including the implementation of an EU-funded grant on „Promoting Social Dialogue in Georgia” from 2010-2012.