

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
between
MINISTRY OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS FROM THE OCCUPIED
TERRITORIES, LABOUR, HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS OF GEORGIA
and
EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

IN RESPECT OF
IMPROVING NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OCCUPATIONS IN GEORGIA
THROUGH PROFESSIONAL LICENCING, RELATED SKILLS STANDARDS AND
IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

Dated 12 May 2020

This **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING** (“the **Memorandum**”) is between:

- (1) the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia (“the **Ministry**”); and
- (2) the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (“**EBRD**”),

each referred to as a “**Party**” and together as “the **Parties**”.

WHEREAS

- (A) EBRD is an international organization established under public international law pursuant to the Agreement Establishing the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development dated 29 May 1990.
- (B) The Republic of Georgia acceded to the Agreement Establishing the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and became a member of the EBRD on 4 September 1992.
- (C) The Parties wish to collaborate together on strengthening the nursing and midwifery occupations in Georgia to boost training, skills and overall performance via three core initiatives:
 - Establishing core governance principles and standards for Georgia’s forthcoming professional licencing / certification scheme for nurses (including midwives);
 - Defining related knowledge criteria, exam standards and a test-bank aligned to the new professional licencing / certification curriculum; and
 - Creating and piloting a short-term continuous learning programme aligned to the new professional licencing / certification requirements.

The Parties have come to the following understanding:

Section 1. Purpose

Insufficient education for nurses and midwives inhibits Georgia’s healthcare sector. Bachelor’s level programmes are not subject to clear teaching standards, giving rise to skills mismatches. Neither occupation is subject to professional licensing, which reduces accountability. An absence of local-language textbooks results in ad hoc learning outcomes. Demographic trends towards population ageing and Georgia’s burden of non-communicable diseases place high demand on quality healthcare provision, making timely action a priority. In addition, the Coronavirus pandemic crisis demonstrates that strengthening nursing and midwifery occupations in Georgia is essential to ensuring a prompt response to future outbreaks.

Nursing and midwifery occupations consequently underperform in Georgia, despite their high demand. Georgia’s medical workforce, in turn, is distinguished by a significant shortage of nurses and midwives, achieving one of the lowest per-capita levels in EBRD’s geography and totalling only 0.7 nurses for every medical doctor (significantly below the World Bank’s recommended ratio of 4:1, which ensures cost-effective and quality care). Georgia equally encounters critical shortages among midwives.

The Parliament of Georgia has issued a *Vision for Developing the Healthcare System in Georgia by 2030* (2017), highlighting a number of objectives and actions related to nurses and midwives’ education, training and overall performance (pp.11-13):

- 2.1.3. Increase the number of nurses to achieve an adequate balance of medical staff.
- 2.2. Support education for nurses, including the following:
 - 2.2.1. Subsidize/stimulate education for nurses from the side of the state.
 - 2.2.2. Due to the lack of nurses, support the system of re-training nurses at the transitional stage.
 - 2.2.3. Support the development of bachelor and master programmes in nursing.
- 2.3. Develop and implement tools for regulating nursing activities with active engagement of professional organizations in the field:
 - 2.3.1. Define competencies for nurses and develop the tools for assessing their professional knowledge and skills.

- 2.3.2. Gradually introduce/implement the process of registration/certification for nurses.
- 2.3.3. Ensure the functioning of a formalised system of continuing professional development for nurses and support the sustainability of the system.

The Vision includes a monitoring target to increase the ratio of nurses to medical doctors from its current 0.7:1 to at least 2:1 by 2030.

The Ministry issued a more targeted *Strategy for the Development of Nursing* in July 2019 (GoG Decree 334, 16.07.2019). The Strategy's primary objective (Goal 1) on "Promoting the improvement of the quality and availability of healthcare services" targets full take-up of professional licencing among nurses by 2025 (Outcome Indicator 1.2.2) alongside a range of quantitative sub-objectives to achieve:

Indicators		Baseline (and year)	Mid-term target by 2022	Eventual target by 2025
<i>Goal 1. Promoting the improvement of the quality and availability of healthcare services through generation of qualified human resources in nursing and creation of a sustainable professional regulation system</i>				
Impact Indicator 1.1.	In-patient mortality rate	2.6% (2017)	2.4%	2.2%
Impact Indicator 1.2.	Ratio of nurses to medical doctors	0.7:1 (2017)	1:1	1.3:1
Impact Indicator 1.3.	Patients' satisfaction with nursing services	n/a	40% of respondents	65% of respondents
<i>Objective 1.1. Developing a healthcare system focused on generating qualified human resources in nursing</i>				
1.1.1.	New nursing graduates per year	916 (2018)	+15%	+30%
1.1.2.	Number of nurses per 100,000 people	509 (2017)	550	610
<i>Objective 1.2. Developing a sustainable system of continuous professional development and regulation</i>				
1.2.1.	Share of employed nurses participating in formal system of continuous professional development	0% (2019)	10%*	50%
1.2.2.	Share of employed nurses who have gone through licencing /registration / certification processes	0% (2019)	10%*	100%
<i>Objective 1.3. Promotion and awareness-raising of nursing</i>				
1.3.1.	Students enrolled for nursing and midwifery	958 (2018)	+15%*	+30%
1.3.2.	Awareness of the significance of nursing	n/a	50% positive response*	70% positive response

Note: * Mid-term target to be met by 2023.

Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Affairs (2019) *Strategy for the Development of Nursing*.

Adequately tackling Georgia's labour shortages and skills-related deficits in nursing and midwifery will improve employment outcomes for young women and men while boosting healthcare standards nationwide. This Memorandum establishes the scope and provisions for EBRD's engagement with the Ministry towards fulfilling these imperative policy goals.

Section 2. Scope

EBRD's technical support programmes, aligning with ongoing needs within its countries of operations, promote young people's economic inclusion through equitable access to employment and skills within a range of vocational areas. Within Georgia's healthcare sector, EBRD recognises the immediate need for reforming nursing and midwifery education and licencing / certification to help boost the stock of qualified nurses active in their work and improve professional standards. These goals align with EBRD's mandate to promote transition towards inclusive market-led economies and, in particular, the embedded focus on improving economic opportunities and career pathways for young women and men.

In this spirit, the Parties agree to collaborate in achieving three joint objectives aligned with Georgia's national priorities for reforming the nursing and midwifery professions:

- A. Establish core governance principles and institutional standards for the planned professional licencing / certification scheme for nurses (including midwives), building on global best practice models and customising to the national context
- B. Establish detailed knowledge criteria, exam standards and a test-bank in line with the newly-established professional licencing / certification scheme (as established under objective A), drawing closely on EBRD local partners' experience and successful role in developing nursing and midwifery skills standards through the National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement.
- C. Design and pilot a short-term continuous learning programme to help further strengthen nurses' capacities and existing knowledge in accordance with the newly-established licencing / certification requirements.

In fulfilment of these three core objectives, EBRD, subject to its relevant rules, procedures and policies will endeavour to:

- 1. Design, procure and manage the delivery of technical support in developing the necessary background knowledge, best-practice standards and capacity to realise the above-stated joint actions.
- 2. Select and engage external experts ("Implementation Partners") to fulfil the necessary deliverables in this work, working in close partnership and consensus with the Ministry.
- 3. Finance such engagement through its technical cooperation funds. In this instance, generously provided through the Japan-EBRD Cooperation Fund.
- 4. Ensure necessary coordination among various stakeholders including (but not limited to): private and public healthcare service providers; nurse and midwife training institutions (at both the vocational and Bachelor's levels); relevant employers' and workers' organisations; and the National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement in securing holistic and sustainable outcomes under the joint objectives.
- 5. Holistically integrate the fulfilment of these goals with EBRD's existing and ongoing initiatives around promoting more effective and sustainable nursing and midwifery in Georgia through:
 - a) establishing skills standards for degree-level nursing and midwifery programmes;
 - b) developing Georgian-language nursing textbooks; and
 - c) improving outreach to male nurses.

In fulfilment of the three core objectives, the Ministry, subject to its relevant rules, procedures and policies will endeavour to:

- 1. Engage closely with EBRD in the design and delivery of technical support in developing the necessary knowledge, standards and capacity to realise the joint objectives.
- 2. Share relevant reporting, statistics and contacts with EBRD and the Implementation Partners relevant to the fulfilment of the joint objectives and the monitoring of their success including (but not limited to) performance on the formal targets established under the *Vision for Developing the Healthcare System in Georgia by 2030* and the *Strategy for the Development of Nursing*.
- 3. Select and maintain a dedicated contact person, reporting directly to the First Deputy Minister, to ensure regular and continuous engagement and exchange with EBRD and the Implementation Partners and participate in future meetings and events.
- 4. Provide a formal letter or e-mail of response on the core deliverables to emerge from the technical support, detailing the Ministry's planned steps in utilising them.
- 5. Support EBRD in acknowledging our Japanese donors in this work through relevant publicity channels (such as donor reports, case studies, press releases...) and potential publicity events.

The Parties recognise that fulfilment of these activities aligns closely with Georgia's stated policy goals under the *Vision for Developing the Healthcare System* and *Strategy for the Development of Nursing*, namely: upgrading professional competency standards and necessary appraisal tools (Objective 2.3.1 in the Vision and Objectives 1.1 and 1.3 in the Strategy); implementing the new professional licencing scheme (2.3.2 and 1.2, respectively); and supporting to establish a formal system of continuous learning (2.3.3 and 1.2, respectively).

Section 3. Communications

Any notice or other communication to be given or made under this Memorandum will be addressed and sent to the following contact points or at such other address as either Party designates by notice to the other Party:

For the Ministry:

144, Ak. Tsereteli Ave., Tbilisi 0119, Georgia

Attn.: Ms Tamar Gabunia
First Deputy Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories,
Labour, Health and Social Affairs

For the EBRD:

Tbilisi Resident Office, Merani Business Center, 31a Griboedov Street, 6th Floor, 0108 Tbilisi, Georgia

Attn.: Ms Catarina Bjorlin Hansen
Director, Regional Head Caucasus

Section 4. Final Provisions

- (a) This Memorandum reflects the views and intentions of the Parties to co-operate on a non-exclusive basis, expressed in good faith but without the creation of any legal or financial obligations or the incurrence of any liability on the part of either of them. No third party shall obtain any legal benefit from this Memorandum.
- (b) It is understood and agreed that nothing in this Memorandum will constitute, or be construed as, an offer, promise or undertaking by either Party to finance all or part of any activity or project identified in or pursuant to this Memorandum.
- (c) In the event that opportunities are identified, specific arrangements for any such activity or project would need to be agreed upon between the Parties. Each of the Parties will incur its own expenditures arising as the result of the implementation of this Memorandum, unless otherwise specified in relevant separate agreements.
- (d) Nothing in this Memorandum will limit the right of, or prevent either Party from entering into memoranda or arrangements with other parties with respect to any activity, project or area of co-operation covered by this Memorandum.
- (e) The Parties will meet periodically, but not less frequently than once every four months, to review and discuss the implementation of this Memorandum, assess the achievement of the objectives as set out herein above, and consider necessary adjustments, if any.
- (f) Nothing in this Memorandum will constitute nor be construed as a waiver, renunciation or other modification, either express or implied, of any of the privileges, immunities and exemptions granted to EBRD under the Agreement Establishing the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, international convention or any applicable law.
- (g) Any dispute arising out of, or in connection with, the interpretation or application of any provision of this Memorandum will be settled amicably through consultations.
- (h) This Memorandum will come into effect on the date when the last of the two Parties sign and will remain in effect for two years. Either Party may terminate this Memorandum before the expiry date upon submitting to the other Party of a prior written notice of its intention to terminate this Memorandum. In such case, this Memorandum will terminate 28 days after receipt of such notice by the corresponding Party.
- (i) This Memorandum may be amended by mutual written consent of the Parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Ministry and EBRD, each acting through its duly authorized representative, have signed this Memorandum in electronic format, in the English language.

For the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia:

For the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development:

Ms Ekaterine Tikaradze
Minister, Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs
11 May 2020

Mr Pierre Heilbronn
Vice President, Policy and Partnerships
12 May 2020