

**Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the
Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social
Affairs (MoIDPLHSA)**
144, Ak. Tsereteli Ave. Tbilisi 0119
Georgia

5 October 2020
Ref. nr. 2020-602

Re. Study on Inclusive Skills for Innovative Enterprise in the Agribusiness Sector – European Training Foundation (ETF) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

Dear Deputy Ministers Tamila Barkalaia and Giorgi Bunturi,

We would like to invite the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs to participate in a stakeholder engagement process for a research study that we have recently launched.

The European Training Foundation (ETF) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) launched a joint initiative to identify, analyse, and share good practices from innovative enterprises in seven countries: Egypt, Georgia, Morocco, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The enterprises are in the agribusiness sector and have adopted inclusive skills development strategies and practices in their business development to respond to the growing challenges posed by the impact of the COVID-19 measures on economies.

While companies face enormous challenges to cope with the economic impact of COVID-19, they also seek to exploit new opportunities, and enhance their innovation capability adapting business models, organizational models, sustainability and profitability of production and supply chains as well as services delivery.

EBRD's Agribusiness Strategy 2019-2023¹ sets out how the Bank will support the sector in its countries of operations (the ETF's partner countries). It does this by providing finance, technical cooperation and policy dialogue in support of a more responsible, sustainable and innovative agribusiness sector through gains in efficiency, skills and innovation. Lack of skills and limited access to information and technology, coupled with gender and diversity gaps, hinder new business opportunities. Given that the agri-food sector plays a

¹ <https://www.ebrd.com/what-we-do/sectors-and-topics/agribusiness/overview.html>

large role in employment in most EBRD countries of operations, it offers huge opportunities to strengthen value chain linkages (for example, between primary agriculture and agroprocessing) and to enhance employment, entrepreneurship and skills, in particular for women, youth and remote regions, for instance by collaborating with education providers and agribusiness companies. ETF facilitates policy and practise discussions promoting cooperation and partnerships among agribusiness companies, public and private universities and VET schools, with the aim to improve training delivery, employment and skills for key workers, women and young people

In this context, the ETF and the EBRD have the objective to document good practice and use them to inform future support actions to the benefit of the agribusiness sector, and of skills for enterprise development for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience.

The study aims at (i) identifying innovative enterprises and their inclusive skills development practices, and (ii) deriving from these practices lessons to inform policies and support actions for enterprises. In turn this should influence virtuous skills investments programs that will lead to increase enterprises' performance, inclusion and fulfilment of societal benefits.

The output of the study will be a set of country cases and a final report that will build on country cases across seven countries and benchmark them against EU developments and practices in the agribusiness sector.

The study will be implemented through an applied research action, which will envisage (1) consultation with relevant national stakeholders (2) in depth analysis of innovative companies in view of identifying good practices, (3) a validation workshop to share results of country cases studies and recommendations.

Further to the national focus, the study will have an international dimension, including an international dissemination event which will take place in 2021.

In order to incorporate your valuable knowledge and viewpoints, we would welcome your participation during the national stakeholder engagement process, scheduled for October 2020. This will take the form of focus groups or bilateral interviews, and a subsequent verification workshop. Owing to the current constraints related to COVID-19, these will be online engagements of 1-2 hours each.

The engagement will be led by Lela Maisuradze, the national expert leading this project in Georgia, together with Ergon, a Netherlands-based consultancy overseeing the coordination of this research project. Both remain available for further details and clarifications on the process. Please liaise with them directly through the contact details below.

Contacts:

Lela Maisuradze, National expert - Georgia, lema777@yahoo.com

Catherine Morgans, Consultant - Ergon, catherine.morgans@ergonassociates.net

Yours sincerely,



Anastasia Fetsi
Head of Operations Department

ETF – European Training Foundation



Catarina Bjorlin Hansen
Regional Director, Caucasus

EBRD – European Bank for Reconstruction and Development