UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Call for Expressions of Interest

Deadline: 20th of July 2020

UNEP is looking for an Implementing Partner to provide technical support for greening small-medium enterprises (SMEs) in Georgia. As part of the EU-funded "European Union for Environment" (EU4Environment) programme (2019 – 2023), UNEP is leading a component on promoting ecological value-chains and product innovation (hereafter "eco-innovation") among Georgian SMEs.

SMEs play a crucial role in Georgia's economy, employing over 67% of the domestic workforce and accounting for 62% of the country's gross value added[1]. This means that the collective environmental footprint of SMEs is greater than that of large enterprises. Eco-innovation is one of the key enabling instruments identified by the European Union (EU) and Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, including Georgia, for the transition to a greener, more resource-efficient and fairer economy. Eco-innovation helps SMEs in reducing inputs, recovering materials and minimising waste, as well as extending product and/or service lifetime. The EU and UNEP see eco-innovation as a strategic business approach that drives sustainable practices throughout companies' entire value chains. With EU support and involvement, UNEP developed an internationally applicable eco-innovation approach through multi-stakeholder engagement process.

In light of the above, UNEP is looking for a national Implementing Partner to contribute to the delivery of activities under "Output 2.6 Ecological value-chain and product innovation" as part of "Result 2: Circular economy and new growth opportunities" under the national EU4Environment workplan for Georgia (agreed on in close consultation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture as well as the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia in early 2019).

The national Implementing Partner will lead the below-listed activities to promote eco-innovation among SMEs in Georgia. UNEP will provide technical and overall guidance and will ensure quality control of products. The national Implementing Partner may also contribute to regional activities involving further EU4Environment project countries. All work will be conducted in close consultation with the European Commission and the EU Delegation in Georgia, who will be informed in advance of all activities and invited to open and participate therein. The national Implementing Partner will also take account other support provided by the EU to promote innovation in Georgia.

Activity 1: Conduct a workshop (including identification of participants and facilitation of logistics) to train Georgian businesses and government representatives on UNEP's eco-innovation methodology developed in collaboration with the European Commission. The workshop will also showcase case studies of eco-innovation from EU Member States. [September 2020]

Activity 2: Conduct a market assessment and policy/policy instrument analysis of the eco-innovation landscape in priority sectors/sub-sectors in Georgia (to be selected in consultation with the Georgian government, UNEP, and other EU4Environment partners). This will involve screening and developing an inventory of policy instruments and methods already available, and where eco-innovation could be mainstreamed (overall, as well as in particular sectors). This should also include recommendations to address specific policy gaps and

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[1] OECD (2019). Access to Green Finance for SMEs in Georgia: Green Finance and Investment.

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identification of priority actions for a government roadmap on promoting eco-innovation in different sectors of the Georgian economy. [October 2020]

Activity 3: Organize a national validation workshop of the report(s) produced as part of Activity 2 – with relevant stakeholders from the government (ideally at an inter-ministerial policy dialogue platform) and private sector. The aim of the workshop is to acknowledge the analysis/recommendations made and propose actionable steps to implement these. [November 2020]

Activity 4: Identify Georgian participants, collect and document national existing best practices (case studies) as well as overall facilitation of a regional event (in virtual format) in the second half of 2020 to introduce and train public institutions, national technical institutions and SMEs from across the EaP region to the concept and techniques of eco-innovation. The event will share experiences and best practices on eco-innovation among SMEs and showcase successful government policies for promoting eco-innovation in key SME sectors. The workshop will also showcase case studies of eco-innovation from EU Member States. [December 2020]

Activity 5: Design and launch a nation-wide call for proposals to identify SMEs for technical advisory services to implement and upscale eco-innovation measures. The EUD social media channels may be used for disseminating the information about the call. [December 2020]

Activity 6: In consultation with UNEP, EUD and the international eco-innovation expert, jointly assess the eco-innovation potential of current production processes and/or business models of a minimum of 8 local SMEs (identified through Activity 5). [January-March 2021]

Activity 7: Provide technical assistance the development or revision of at least 5 (five) SMEs' business strategies and underlying business models on a case-by-case basis, following the steps outlined in UNEP's eco-innovation manual[2] (developed in collaboration with the European Union). The list of selected enterprises will be shared with the EUD and EU4Environment implementing partners. [March-July 2021]

Activity 8: Prepare communication materials, with a focus on story-telling, and organize a final web-streamed national workshop to review concrete implications and suggestions developed for SMEs, including broader recommendations for the private sector as well as for further policy development. [Exact timing to be determined]

Activity 9: Distribute information materials and facilitate the participation of selected Georgian industry representatives in EU and other relevant international technical fairs related to eco-innovation, resource efficiency and cleaner production. [Exact timing to be determined]

All activities will be implemented in full compliance with EU visibility requirements, including those that are specific for Georgia, as well as taking account of, and in close coordination with, other SME-focused activities carried out by EU4Environment implementing partners.

Eligibility

This call for expressions of interest is open to any not-for-profit organization, think tank, university or research centre. While it is advantageous if the applying entity is based in Georgia, applications from entities outside the country are also welcome.

Previous experience in sustainable consumption and production, resource efficiency and/or circular economy is essential. Existing connections with Georgian networks of governments, representatives of private sector (particularly SMEs) and/or civil society are required.

Proficiency in English and Georgian languages is required. Russian is an advantage.

Application

To express interest in this assignment and/or receive further details on the project, please send a succinct description (max. four A4 pages, font size 11) of your organization's profile and experience no later than **Monday 20th of July 2020** to Alex Leshchynskyy at the UNEP Europe Office **(e-mail: alex.leshchynskyy@un.org)**

The expression of interest should provide details on the relevant experience and previous work of the organisation (including publication links) in the field of eco-innovation, resource efficiency and cleaner production and/or circular economy in Georgia and other Eastern Partnership countries.

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