

**Connecting Georgian SMEs with potential buyers,  
partners, or investors in priority EU export markets**

To support Georgian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in expanding their businesses internationally, the proposal is to implement a ‘EU-link’ programme: Connecting Georgian SMEs with potential buyers, partners, or investors in priority EU export markets. This initiative is designed to assist Georgian SMEs in navigating foreign markets by providing financial assistance for engaging local experts who can facilitate market entry activities.

## 1. Contextual Background

Over the past decade, Georgia has made significant strides in positioning itself as a dynamic, open, and business-friendly economy. Strategic reforms in governance, trade liberalization, and regional integration have created a favorable environment for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to grow, innovate, and compete internationally. However, despite notable progress in trade diversification and private sector development, many Georgian SMEs still face substantial challenges in accessing foreign markets—particularly in the European Union (EU).

As a signatory of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), Georgia enjoys preferential access to the EU single market—one of the largest and most lucrative in the world. Yet, translating this access into tangible export success remains a complex task for many Georgian enterprises. Barriers such as limited knowledge of EU regulations and standards, insufficient connections with potential buyers or partners, and a lack of market-specific expertise continue to impede SME internationalization.

Furthermore, many SMEs operate with constrained financial resources and limited internal capacity, making it difficult to absorb the risks and costs associated with entering unfamiliar markets. The need for tailored support — especially in the form of market intelligence, matchmaking, and localized advisory services — has become increasingly evident. At the same time, Georgia’s civil society and business support ecosystem, including chambers of commerce and trade associations, are playing a growing role in assisting businesses with these challenges, though capacity gaps remain.

Recognizing these realities, the “EU-link” Program was conceived as a strategic instrument to support Georgia’s economic integration with the EU and beyond. The program addresses a critical gap in the current export support infrastructure: the ability of SMEs to engage high-quality, in-market advisors who can help them navigate the intricacies of EU market entry. By subsidizing access to experienced EU-based consultants, “EU-link” empowers SMEs with the tools, connections, and expertise needed to pursue new growth opportunities in competitive international environments.

This initiative aligns with national economic priorities, including:

- Export diversification to reduce dependency on traditional markets;
- SME development and job creation, particularly in regional areas;
- Strengthening Georgia’s international trade capacity, in line with the Government’s SME Development Strategy and the 2021–2025 Export Development Strategy;
- Advancing the country’s EU integration agenda by facilitating alignment with EU standards, business practices, and market expectations.

In this context, “EU-link” is more than just a co-financing scheme—it is a catalytic mechanism designed to unlock Georgia’s export potential, deepen commercial ties with Europe, and promote inclusive, sustainable economic development across the country.

## 2. Program Overview

The “EU-link” is an initiative designed to strengthen the global competitiveness of Georgian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Its primary goal is to facilitate the successful entry and sustained presence of Georgian businesses in international markets, particularly within the European Union. This objective aligns with Georgia’s broader economic development agenda and the opportunities presented by agreements such as the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA).

The “EU-link” program empowers SMEs by providing targeted financial and strategic support to bridge the gap between domestic market readiness and foreign market engagement. Specifically, the program subsidizes the costs associated with hiring experienced, EU-based advisors who possess deep market knowledge and access to valuable local networks. These advisors play a key role in helping Georgian companies position their products or services in new markets, facilitate key business introductions, build strategic partnerships, and understand legal, regulatory, and cultural barriers that could otherwise hinder market entry.

SMEs that have identified suitable international markets, particularly in the EU—where they see clear business opportunities, are eligible to apply for this support. Through the program, these businesses can engage qualified advisors who will:

- Provide strategic market entry guidance and analysis tailored to the SME’s product or service.
- Facilitate introductions to local buyers, partners, distributors, and relevant stakeholders.
- Support business matchmaking and negotiations with potential clients or partners.
- Help maintain local contacts and represent the SME’s interest in the target market.
- Assist in navigating local regulations and operational logistics for setting up a local presence if needed.

To promote inclusivity and local participation, the programme works in close coordination with Georgian civil society organizations (CSOs), chambers of commerce, and business associations. These partners play a key role in mobilizing local SMEs, raising awareness about the program, and guiding potential applicants through the preparation process.

Participation in the program is straightforward. Interested SMEs must independently identify an EU-based advisor that fits their needs and the market(s) they are targeting. They are then required to obtain a service proposal and a professional resume from the advisor, which will form the basis of their application. Applications must clearly demonstrate the strategic intent behind the engagement, the relevance of the target market, and the expected business outcomes.

The “EU-link” program is open to all sectors of the economy, with limited exceptions (e.g., defense-related industries or products prohibited under international trade rules). It provides a co-financing model that covers up to 70% of the advisor’s service fees, with a maximum co-finance amount of 3,500 USD per enterprise. This financial support reduces the risks and costs associated with international expansion, making it more accessible for a wider range of Georgian SMEs, especially those in emerging or innovation-driven sectors. SMEs are required to cover at least 30% of the advisor’s service fee and no co-financing funds will be disbursed unless the 30% self-contribution is verified.

Participating SMEs will go through the following stages:

1. **Preparation and advisor identification:** The SME identifies a suitable EU-based advisor or consulting firm that meets eligibility criteria and obtains a detailed service proposal outlining the scope of work, objectives, timeline, expected deliverables, and the total cost.
2. **Application submission:** The SME submits an electronic application to participate in the program.
3. **Screening and evaluation:** UNDP evaluates the application and decides whether to provide co-financing support to the applying SME.
4. **Implementation:** Upon approval, the SME begins engagement with the selected advisor and implements the planned activities.
5. **Completion and reporting:** After completing the engagement, the SME must submit documentation confirming the successful delivery of advisory services and proof of payment for its share of the service fee (at least 30% of the total cost).
6. **Disbursement by UNDP:** Following review and formal acceptance of the submitted documentation, UNDP will disburse up to 70% of the advisor's total service fee directly to the advisor's designated business account.

The total implementation period per SME must not exceed 6 months. Disbursement of the approved co-financing amount by UNDP is typically processed within 2–3 weeks following final approval. By equipping Georgian businesses with the right expertise, networks, and financial backing, the “EU-link” program lays the foundation for long-term export success and contributes to the diversification and modernization of Georgia's economy.

### 3. Eligibility Criteria

To ensure the most effective use of resources and to maximize impact, the “EU-link” Program has established a clear set of eligibility criteria for participating small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). These criteria are designed to ensure that participating companies are both prepared for international expansion and capable of leveraging the program's support to achieve meaningful and sustainable outcomes.

#### 1. Business Status and Registration

- The applicant must be a natural person (sole proprietorship) or legal entity registered in Georgia at least 1 year prior to submitting an application to the programme (registered in accordance with Georgian legislation) and produce goods and/or provides services on the territory of Georgia.
- At least 50% of the applicant's ownership must be held by Georgian citizen-resident natural persons and/or resident legal entities registered in Georgia.
- The applicant's average annual income for the last years must exceed 50,000 GEL but be under 60 million GEL. As proof of its annual income, the applying entity shall submit duly certified financial statements (income statement) and/or an audit report.
- The applicant shall not represent a legal entity created through direct or indirect shareholding by the state and/or municipality, as well as JSC Partnership Fund.
- The applicant shall not be registered in the Register of Debtors.
- The applicant shall not be subject to any insolvency, liquidation, bankruptcy or similar proceedings (in accordance with the Law of Georgia on Rehabilitation and the Collective Satisfaction of Creditors' Claims).

## **2. Size of the Enterprise**

- The applicant must qualify as a small or medium-sized enterprise, as defined by the National Statistics Office of Georgia:
  - Small enterprise: Fewer than 50 employees and an annual turnover not exceeding 12 million GEL.
  - Medium enterprise: Fewer than 250 employees and an annual turnover not exceeding 60 million GEL.

## **3. Export Readiness and Market Focus**

- The applicant must demonstrate a clear interest and readiness to expand into international markets, with a focus on the European Union.
- The enterprise must present a defined export strategy or market entry plan, indicating:
  - Identified target market(s);
  - Rationale for market selection;
  - Expected business outcomes (e.g., partnerships, sales, establishment of local presence).
- Preference will be given to SMEs that have:
  - Participated in export readiness programs (e.g., trainings or trade missions);
  - Existing or past experience in international trade;
  - Demonstrated product/service demand in the target market.

## **4. Advisor Engagement Requirements**

- Applicants must identify a qualified EU-based advisor independently prior to application submission.
- The advisor must:
  - Be a natural person or a representative of a registered consultancy or trade service provider in the target market;
  - Have demonstrable expertise in the target sector or industry;
  - Possess a proven network of relevant contacts (e.g., buyers, regulators, trade associations) in the destination country;
  - Have no financial or family ties to the applicant, to ensure objectivity.
- The applicant must submit:
  - A detailed quotation for the advisor's services;
  - The advisor's CV and/or professional portfolio (if working with an individual consultant) or company profile and CV(s) of employee(s) assigned to this task (if working with an advisory firm);
  - A description of the advisor's role and planned deliverables.

## **5. Sectoral Scope and Restrictions**

- The program is open to SMEs across all economic sectors, including but not limited to:
  - Manufacturing and light industry;
  - Agriculture and food processing;
  - ICT and digital services;
  - Creative industries;
  - Renewable energy and green technologies.
- The following sectors are excluded from participation:
  - Arms and defense-related industries;
  - Tobacco and alcoholic beverage production (unless used in cultural or artisanal contexts);
  - Gambling and adult entertainment;

- Activities prohibited under national or international trade and human rights laws.

## **6. Financial and Administrative Requirements**

- The applicant must be able to co-finance at least 30% of the total advisor's cost from own or other private resources.
- The company must maintain proper financial records and be prepared to undergo basic financial and compliance checks as part of the evaluation or disbursement process.
- The enterprise must commit to participating in follow-up monitoring and impact assessment activities after project completion.

## **7. Application Limitations**

- Each SME may submit only one application per funding cycle.
- Approved applicants are eligible for a maximum of one co-financing support per calendar year, subject to budget availability and performance under the program.

# **4. Eligible Activities**

To qualify for support under the program, the proposed activities must be directly linked to the SME's market entry goals. Examples of eligible activities include, but are not limited to:

## **1. Market Positioning and Promotion**

- Development of market positioning strategies tailored to the target country;
- Crafting or adapting marketing materials to meet local expectations and regulatory requirements;
- Advising on brand positioning, product packaging, and value propositions in the foreign market;
- Supporting participation in trade fairs, exhibitions, and B2B matchmaking events (only the costs related to the consultant's advisory role will be reimbursed; expenses such as travel, accommodation, or trade fair entry fees for the advisor will not be covered by the program).

## **2. Partner Identification and Networking**

- Identifying and vetting potential buyers, partners, distributors, and agents;
- Organizing introductory meetings with potential buyers, industry representatives, chambers of commerce, business associations, and other stakeholders in the foreign target market;
- Arranging and participating in business meetings, exploratory visits, and networking events;
- Support business matchmaking and negotiations with potential clients or partners;
- Building a local contact database in the foreign market and relationship roadmap for the SME.

## **3. Local Market Intelligence and Regulatory Support**

- Conducting market research and competitor analysis relevant to the SME's product or service;
- Providing insights on consumer behavior, pricing strategies, and local business practices;
- Advising on applicable legal, regulatory, or technical standards for product entry;
- Identifying required certifications, licenses, and documentation for export compliance.

## **4. Operational Set-Up and Representation**

- Advising on business registration, local representation, or entity formation (if applicable);
- Supporting negotiation and setup of distribution channels or sales offices;
- Providing temporary local representation services, if in accordance with the advisor's expertise;
- Guiding SMEs through logistics, customs, and/or fulfillment setup in the target country.

## **5. Other Tailored Advisory Services**

- Developing or refining the SME's market entry strategy and implementation plan;

- Advising on go-to-market strategies and business model adaptation;
- Coaching or mentoring on cross-cultural communication, negotiation, and local business etiquette.

**Note:** The program does not cover general administrative support, translation services, or non-strategic consulting unrelated to market entry. It also does not fund the SME's internal costs such as travel, salaries, or equipment.

## 5. Advisor Requirements

To ensure the quality and relevance of the advisory services provided, the **“EU-link” Program** has set specific eligibility criteria for consultants/advisors engaged by participating SMEs. The selected advisor must meet all the following conditions:

### 1. Location and Registration

- Must be based in the European Union and possess legal registration in their country of operation;
- May be an individual consultant/advisor, a firm, or an advisory organization.

### 2. Professional Qualifications

- Must hold at least a bachelor's degree or equivalent in a relevant field (e.g., international business, marketing, trade law, economics); In the case of a firm, this requirement must be fulfilled by the employee(s) assigned to this task.
- Additional certifications or credentials in export development, trade promotion, or business consultancy are desirable.

### 3. Relevant Experience

- Must have a minimum of 3 years of experience in providing international business advisory or market entry services;
- Proven experience in supporting SMEs from emerging markets (especially Eastern Partnership countries) is considered an asset;
- Sector-specific expertise matching the SME's product/service category is strongly preferred.

### 4. Local Market Knowledge

- Must demonstrate a strong understanding of the local market, including:
  - Industry dynamics and market demand;
  - Sector-specific regulations;
  - Key stakeholders and a network of relevant contacts (e.g., buyers, regulators, trade associations) in the destination country;
  - Business practices and cultural nuances.

### 5. Professional Integrity and Independence

- Must not have any financial, ownership, or family ties to the applicant SME;
- Must provide services in a transparent, impartial, and ethical manner;
- Must be willing to provide documentation and verification upon request by the programme administrator.

## 6. Application Process

### Step 1: Preparation and Advisor Identification

- Before applying, SMEs must first identify an appropriate EU-based advisor or consulting firm that aligns with their market entry goals.
- The advisor must meet all eligibility criteria (see Advisor Requirements) and be capable of delivering services that directly support the applicant's entry into a specific international market.
- The SME must prepare the following:
  - A detailed service proposal/quotation/proforma invoice outlining the scope of work, objectives, estimated number of days required to complete the tasks, timeline, expected deliverables, and the costs.
  - A CV and/or professional portfolio of the advisor (for individual consultants) or company profile and CV(s) of employee(s) assigned to this task (for advisory firms);

Applicants are encouraged to consult with local chambers of commerce, business associations, or CSOs for support in finding and vetting suitable advisors.

### Step 2: Application Submission

- The Programme will issue open Calls for Applications inviting eligible SMEs to submit proposals. Multiple calls may be announced throughout the implementation period; in each call, approximately 10–15 SMEs will be selected, for an overall total of around 30 programme beneficiaries. Applications for participation in the programme must be submitted within the timeframe specified in the Programme announcement. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be reviewed.
- The application must include:
  - Completed application form (provided under Annex 1);
  - Extract from the Registry of Entrepreneurs and Non-Entrepreneurial (Non-Commercial) Legal Entities;
  - Financial statement (income statement) for the last year, duly certified by an authorized person and/or an audit report (to confirm annual income).
  - Export strategy or market entry plan, which includes the following information:
    - Identified target market(s);
    - Rationale for market selection;
    - Expected business outcomes (e.g., partnerships, sales, establishment of local presence, etc.);
  - The advisor's CV and/or professional portfolio (if working with an individual consultant) or company profile and CV(s) of employee(s) assigned to this task (if working with an advisory firm) (in English);
  - A detailed service proposal/quotation/proforma invoice (in English, in USD), including the following information:
    - Scope of work;
    - Objectives of the engagement;
    - Estimated number of days required to complete the tasks;
    - Timeline;
    - Expected deliverables (e.g., reports, market analysis, contact database, etc.);
    - The total cost of the service.



- A detailed service proposal/quotation/proforma invoice (in English, in USD) for the portion of the service (clearly outlining the scope of work, objectives, estimated number of days required to complete the tasks, timeline, expected deliverables) the SME requests to be financed by UNDP.
- Applications must be submitted in English.
- The applicant must quote the cost of services in the USD. The co-financing amount will also be paid in USD.

**Note:** The maximum co-financing amount provided by UNDP is 3,500 USD per SME. In addition, the SME is required to contribute at least 30% of the total service cost as co-financing.

### **Step 3: Screening and Evaluation**

- Evaluation of the application and decision-making on whether to provide co-financing support to the selected business entity will be made by a special committee established within the framework of the programme. The committee's mandate and composition will be determined by UNDP.
- The evaluation process includes:
  - **Administrative review:** eligibility and application completeness check (based on applicant and advisor criteria).
  - **Technical assessment:** evaluation of the application and decision-making on the co-financing support.
- The evaluation process takes approximately 4 weeks, depending on the volume and complexity of applications received.
- **Approval and Notification of the Decision:** If approved, the SME will receive a formal notification letter, which outlines:
  - Approved activities and timeline;
  - Approved co-financing amount (up to 70% of the advisor's total cost, with a maximum of 3,500 USD);
  - Payment conditions and reporting requirements;
  - Rights and responsibilities of both parties.
- The SME must confirm acceptance of these conditions and notify UNDP within 10 working days of receipt to proceed.

### **Step 4: Implementation**

- After accepting the terms and conditions, the SME may begin the engagement with the advisor.
- The SME is responsible for overseeing the advisor's work and ensuring that the agreed scope is delivered in a timely and professional manner.
- The SME must keep records of:
  - Advisor's invoices and payment receipts;
  - Deliverables produced (e.g., reports, market analyses, contact lists);

### **Step 5: Completion and reporting**

- **Final Report:** Upon completion of the engagement, the SME must submit a final report summarizing the activities conducted, outcomes achieved (such as introductions made, meetings held, and/or market opportunities identified), reflections on the effectiveness of the advisor's support and next steps. The final report must be accompanied by the following supporting documentation:
  - The final invoice from the advisor showing the total cost of services, as well as a separate invoice for the portion of services the SME requests UNDP to co-finance;

- Proof of payment from the SME for its share of the service fee (at least 30% of the total cost);
  - Deliverables produced during the engagement (e.g., reports, strategy documents, market analyses, contact databases).
- In cases of incomplete documentation or discrepancies, the programme administration may request clarification or additional materials.

#### Step 6: Disbursement by UNDP:

- Under this program, beneficiary SMEs will not receive direct financial transfers. Instead, UNDP will disburse the approved co-financed amount directly to the advisor's/service provider's designated business account, typically processed within approximately 2–3 weeks of final approval.
- UNDP's co-financing will cover up to 70% of the advisor's total service fee, with a maximum contribution of USD 3,500 per SME.
- **The disbursement will only be made after the final report is approved by UNDP and the SME has submitted proof of payment** for its share of the service fee, which must constitute at least 30% of the total cost.

## 7. Evaluation of Applications

### Administrative review: eligibility and application completeness check

The first step involves an initial assessment to determine whether the applicant (potential beneficiaries) and the advisor meet the programme's eligibility requirements, as well as to verify the completeness of their applications and the accuracy of the information provided. For verification purposes, UNDP reserves the right to request clarifications and/or additional information.

Applications that pass this administrative review, meet all eligibility criteria, and submit complete documentation will be shortlisted for further evaluation.

### Technical assessment: evaluation of the application and decision-making on the co-financing support

All applications evaluations and the final decision whether to approve or reject them will be made by a designated committee. The committee's mandate and composition are determined by UNDP.

Committee members have the right to request clarifications or additional information. The committee may make a decision with specific preconditions, which will be communicated to the beneficiaries in advance.

The evaluation committee will assess application according to the following criteria:

	Criteria	Criteria description	Maximum score
1.	<b>Applicant profile, experience, and market understanding</b>	The applicant clearly outlines its core business activities, including main products or services, years of operation, and relevant export experience. The proposal identifies specific target export markets the company aims to enter or expand into within the next 18 months and demonstrates demand for its	25

	Criteria	Criteria description	Maximum score
		products/services in those markets. The rationale for market selection is well explained.	
2.	<b>Relevance and justification of the requested support</b>	The application clearly explains the primary objective and expected business outcomes (e.g., partnerships, sales, establishment of a local presence, etc.). It explains why the requested support is critical for the company's export development and how it will enhance competitiveness and facilitate entry into international markets. The proposal is technically sound, coherent, and includes a well-defined role for the advisor, along with planned deliverables and outcomes.	25
3.	<b>Credibility of the selected advisor</b>	The applicant provides complete and accurate information about the selected advisor/service provider. This includes the advisor's CV and/or professional portfolio (if working with an individual consultant) or a company profile and CV(s) of employee(s) assigned to this task (if working with an advisory firm). The advisor's professional portfolio, reputation, and relevant experience are appropriate for the proposed activity. Submitted documents clearly demonstrate the advisor's expertise in the target sector and their network of relevant contacts (e.g., buyers, regulators, trade associations) in the destination country.	20
4.	<b>Organizational preparedness and management capacity</b>	The applicant demonstrates readiness to implement the proposed activities in collaboration with the advisor. The timeline is realistic, and responsibilities are clearly assigned within the organization (e.g., a designated staff member or project team managing the process). The organization shows sufficient operational capacity and project management arrangements.	10
5.	<b>Budget justification and financial coherence</b>	The proposed budget is realistic and aligned with the scope of support requested. The applicant provides a detailed breakdown of the total project cost, the portion requested from UNDP, the SME's contribution, and any other funding sources (if any).	10

	Criteria	Criteria description	Maximum score
6.	<b>Overall assessment: completeness, structure, and consistency of the application</b>	The application is well-organized, internally consistent, and complete. All required documents are submitted, and the provided information is accurate, clearly presented, and supportive of the proposal's objectives.	10
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>Max. 100</b>

All decisions on the selection of beneficiaries will be made approximately within 4 weeks following the application submission deadline. An evaluation report will be prepared for each application.

A positive decision will be made if the application meets the following conditions:

- ✓ The applicant receives at least 50% of the maximum score in each evaluation criterion and achieves a total score of 70% or higher.
- ✓ The total cost of the advisory service, the SME's financial contribution, and the requested co-financing amount from UNDP are in line with the programme's funding requirements.

Each call is expected to support approximately 10–15 SMEs, depending on budget availability and programme performance. In cases where multiple applications receive the same score, priority will be given to those submitted earlier, in line with a first-come, first-served approach.

SMEs whose applications receive a positive decision and are approved by the programme's evaluation committee will be formally notified of the decision in writing.

## 8. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) component of the "EU-link" Program plays a critical role in ensuring the program's accountability, transparency, and long-term impact. It is designed not only to track outputs and assess compliance but also to generate insights into the effectiveness of market entry support for Georgian SMEs. Through a combination of regular reporting, stakeholder feedback, and performance measurement, the M&E system ensures that resources are used effectively and that lessons learned contribute to the continuous improvement of the program.

### 8.1. Objectives of M&E

The M&E framework is designed to achieve the following core objectives:

1. **Track and Measure Program Outputs**
  - Monitor the number and profile of participating SMEs;
  - Document the type and scope of activities supported;
  - Track engagement with EU-based advisors and the services provided.
2. **Assess Program Outcomes and Impact**
  - Evaluate changes in the SME's international business capacity;
  - Measure progress in market entry, sales growth, and export diversification;
  - Understand how advisory support translates into tangible business results.

3. **Ensure Accountability and Compliance**
  - Verify the proper use of co-financing funds;
  - Confirm the delivery of agreed-upon advisory services;
  - Ensure adherence to program rules, eligibility requirements, and ethical standards.
4. **Inform Learning and Adaptation**
  - Collect qualitative and quantitative feedback from SMEs and advisors;
  - Identify challenges and bottlenecks in the application or implementation process;
  - Adjust program guidelines, tools, and support mechanisms based on evidence.

## **8.2. M&E Tools and Processes**

### **1. Baseline Data Collection**

- At the application stage, SMEs will be required to provide baseline data related to:
  - Current export activities (if any);
  - Annual turnover and export sales;
  - Target markets and existing international contacts;
  - Business goals for market entry.
- This information will form the foundation for measuring progress and impact.

### **2. Final Report and Documentation Review**

- Upon completion of the advisor engagement, the SME must submit a comprehensive final report that includes:
  - A description of activities undertaken;
  - Deliverables produced by the advisor (e.g., market research, contact lists, strategies);
  - Key outcomes such as introductions made, meetings held, and market opportunities identified;
  - Reflections on the effectiveness of the advisor's support and next steps.
- Program administrators will review this report alongside:
  - Invoices and payment confirmations;
  - Feedback from the advisor (optional but encouraged);
  - Any supporting evidence (photos, promotional materials, etc.).

### **3. SME Feedback and Satisfaction Survey**

- All participating SMEs will be invited to complete a post-engagement satisfaction survey, which captures feedback on:
  - The quality and relevance of the advisor's services;
  - The usefulness of the program in supporting market entry;
  - Administrative experience and suggestions for improvement.

### **4. Follow-Up Interviews and Case Studies**

- A selected sample of SMEs will be contacted for follow-up interviews within 6–12 months of program completion.
- These interviews will:
  - Assess medium-term business developments, including any new export contracts or partnerships;
  - Identify capacity gains, such as increased international marketing knowledge or improved product-market fit;
  - Gather qualitative insights for success stories or case studies.

- High-performing SMEs may be featured as part of showcase case studies, which can be used in promotional materials, donor reports, or export support events.

## **5. Site Visits and Spot Checks**

- Randomly selected SMEs may be subject to on-site verification visits to confirm the accuracy of reports and financial documents.
- These visits are primarily for compliance but also serve to build trust and engagement between program managers and beneficiaries.

## **6. Aggregated Results and Program-Level Evaluation**

- On an annual basis, the program will consolidate and analyze data to report on key performance indicators (KPIs), such as:
  - Number of SMEs supported;
  - Number of new market entry initiatives launched;
  - Volume/value of new export contracts initiated;
  - SME satisfaction rates;
  - Lessons learned and recommendations.
- These findings will be shared with key stakeholders, including government agencies, donor organizations, and business support networks, to ensure transparency and inform strategic planning.

## **7. Continuous Learning and Improvement**

The M&E framework is not simply a reporting mechanism—it is a tool for learning and continuous improvement. Insights from monitoring activities will inform adjustments to:

- Application and selection procedures;
- Advisor engagement guidelines;
- Sectoral priorities or geographic focus areas;
- Capacity-building and pre-engagement support for SMEs.

## **9. Beneficiary Responsibilities and Terms of Participation**

- The beneficiary has a duty to ensure necessary conditions for conducting the field/documentary monitoring by the UNDP or/and an external audit company.
- The beneficiary shall provide the UNDP with accurate, timely, and complete information about the implemented project for monitoring and control purposes.
- The beneficiary has a duty to allow the UNDP to draft and publish stories, photographs and video materials about the co-financed project and the beneficiary experience.
- The beneficiary shall not hinder the monitoring and evaluation activities conducted by the UNDP or third parties designated by them for a period of 2 years after project completion.
- The beneficiary is obliged to mention the EU and the UNDP as supporting organizations in communication channels used for project-related matters for 1 year from the start of the co-financing project contract.
- The beneficiary is obliged to submit all the necessary information (in a timely, accurate, and complete manner) within 14 calendar days of the request for information.

### **9.1. Conflict of Interests**

A potential beneficiary of the programme will not be eligible for co-financing under the programme if the beneficiary or its founder/shareholder/cooperative shareholder owns a share/stock/cooperative share in a company that supplies goods/services to them within the framework of the programme.

### **9.2. Procurement Procedures, Fraud, and Corruption**

According to the Programme requirements, beneficiaries must adhere to the highest ethical standards from the beginning of their involvement in the Programme until the fulfilment of their obligations. The terms below shall have the following meanings: (1) “Corruption” means offering, giving, receiving or soliciting, directly or indirectly, any item of value to influence the actions of another party; (2) “Fraud” means intentional or negligent omission or misrepresentation of facts by a party in order to obtain financial or other gains or to avoid an obligation; (3) “Collusion” means a secret deal between two or more parties, knowingly or unknowingly, aimed at achieving an unlawful purpose, which also includes exerting harmful influence on the actions of a third party; (4) “Coercion” means to harm, or a threat to harm the people or their assets, directly or indirectly, in order to influence their participation in the procurement or project implementation; (5) “Obstruction” means: (1) deliberately destroying, falsifying, altering, or concealing evidence for investigation, or giving false testimony to impede an investigation related to corruption, fraud, conspiracy, or violence; and/or intimidating or threatening any party that has helpful information for the investigation, to prevent the disclosure of this information, or (2) actions that significantly impede the exercise of the inspection and audit rights.

### **9.3. Consent to the Terms and Conditions of the Programme**

When submitting an application, a potential beneficiary expresses consent to the following:

- The information provided in the application is accurate and truthful.
- The applicant is familiar with the announced terms and conditions of the Programme, eligibility criteria, requirements, and stages for Programme participation.
- The applicant is not subject to any insolvency, liquidation, bankruptcy or similar proceedings (in accordance with the Law of Georgia on Rehabilitation and the Collective Satisfaction of Creditors’ Claims.
- The beneficiary consents that the UNDP and its partner organization are authorized, at any time, without prior notice, to verify any information specified in the application through third parties and/or using other existing sources.
- The beneficiary agrees that the UNDP and the UNDP’s partner organization may, in accordance with established legal procedures, without limitations and at any time, search for, receive, and/or process information about the beneficiary available in the JSC CreditInfo Georgia database, in order to establish the beneficiary is fulfilling its credit obligations in good faith within the framework of the Programme.
- If it is established that information specified in the application or some of its part is inaccurate, whether due to intentional/negligent provision of incorrect information by the applicant and/or due to reasons associated with the third party, the Programme reserves the right to make a negative decision unconditionally and to disqualify the applicant.

- If the UNDP incurs material and/or non-material, direct and/or indirect damages due to incorrect information provided in the application by the applicant, the applicant assumes full responsibility for such damages.
- The UNDP shall not be held responsible for any direct/indirect costs associated with filling out the application form, preparing accompanying documentation, and/or submitting the application for participation in the Programme.
- The application cannot be perceived by the applicant and/or any other interested party as any form of direct/indirect commitment taken by the UNDP.

#### **9.4. Personal Data Protection**

By participating in the program announced within the framework of the United Nations Development Programme, you consent to the collection, processing, and storage of personal data. This data may include, but is not limited to, name, surname, age, gender, registration number, phone number, email address, audiovisual materials, and location data, among other. Your personal data will be used solely for the purpose of implementing the mission and mandate of the United Nations Development Programme. The protection of personal data will be ensured by the participating parties in accordance with the Law of Georgia on Personal Data Protection<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The Law of Georgia on Personal Data Protection <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/document/view/5827307?publication=3>



## Annex 1 – Application Form

### 1. Primary Contact Person

1.1. Name	
1.2. Surname	
1.3. Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male
1.4. Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 14-29 <input type="checkbox"/> 30+
1.5. Current position at the company	
1.6. Telephone number	
1.7. E-mail	
1.8. Additional contact person, his/her telephone number and e-mail	

### 2. Background information on the SME

2.1. SME name in Georgian	
2.2. SME name in English	
2.3. Brand name in Georgian <sup>2</sup>	
2.4. Brand name in English	
2.5. Website and/or a social network URL (if any)	
2.6. Legal status	
2.7. Identification number	
2.8. Date of registration	
2.9. 4-digit code of the business activity and category, based on the 'National Classification of Economic Activities of Georgia, Rev 2' <sup>3</sup>	
2.10. Please indicate the number of employees in your enterprise over the last year	<input type="checkbox"/> 250 or more employees <input type="checkbox"/> 50 to 250 employees <input type="checkbox"/> 10 to 50 employees <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer than 10 employees
2.11. Please indicate the average annual revenue of your enterprise for the last 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds 60 million GEL <input type="checkbox"/> 12 million GEL - 60 million GEL <input type="checkbox"/> 2 million GEL - 12 million GEL <input type="checkbox"/> 300,000 GEL - 2 million GEL <input type="checkbox"/> 50,000 GEL - 300,000 GEL
2.12. Name and surname of the main authorized person / director	

<sup>2</sup> The name under which your enterprise operates in the market, and which is associated with the products or services you offer to customers.

<sup>3</sup> National Classification of Economic Activities of Georgia, Rev 2 [https://www.geostat.ge/media/70150/NACE-Rev\\_2\\_GE\\_2023.pdf](https://www.geostat.ge/media/70150/NACE-Rev_2_GE_2023.pdf)

2.13. Sex of the main authorized person / director	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male
2.14. Age of the main authorized person / director	<input type="checkbox"/> 14-29 <input type="checkbox"/> 30+
2.15. Phone number of the main authorized person / director	
2.16. E-mail of the main authorized person / director	
2.17. Legal address of the enterprise (region, municipality, city, street)	
2.18. Physical address of the enterprise (region, municipality, city, street)	
2.19. Please list shareholders (owners) and their respective ownership shares (%)	

### 3. Information about the SME activities and the requested support

3.1 Brief description of business activities: What is your main field of activity? What goods and/or services do you produce, and how long have you been engaged in this activity? (no more than 150 words)	
3.2 Have you exported goods and/or services during the last 3 years?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3.3 If you have exported goods/services during the last 3 years, please indicate the export country/ies	
3.4 Approximately what percentage of your revenue comes from exports?	<input type="checkbox"/> More than 50% <input type="checkbox"/> 20% - 50% <input type="checkbox"/> 5% - 20% <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5% <input type="checkbox"/> I do not have any exports
3.5 Have you participated in any international trade shows during the last 3 years?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3.6 Does your enterprise currently hold any international quality standard(s), certification(s), accreditation(s), and/or license(s) for its goods and/or services? If yes, please specify the relevant certificate(s) or documentation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3.7 In which target export market(s) do you plan to start and/or continue exports during the next 18 months? Please name a maximum of 3 target countries. Please briefly explain why you chose these countries and what makes you believe there is a strong demand for your products or services in these markets. (no more than 150 words)	
3.8 Please describe the advisory service you plan to acquire, including its scope, timeline, and key objectives. Explain why this support is essential for your SME's export	

<p>development, and how it will contribute to specific outcomes such as entering new markets, forming partnerships, increasing sales, establishing a local presence, etc.</p> <p>Please describe the advisor's role and planned deliverables and clarify how their support will improve your export potential and facilitate entry into new international markets.</p> <p>(no more than 150 words)</p>	
<p>3.9 Please provide brief information about the selected advisor (individual consultant or advisory firm) you plan to engage. Include relevant details such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Professional background and portfolio;</li> <li>– Expertise in the target sector(s);</li> <li>– Experience with export development, market entry, partner identification and networking, local market intelligence, and/or regulatory support services;</li> <li>– A proven network of relevant contacts (e.g., buyers, regulators, trade associations) in the destination market.</li> </ul> <p>If the advisor is a company, include their website, a short description of their services, and contact details of the relevant representative (name, position, email, and phone number).</p> <p>(no more than 150 words)</p>	
<p>3.10 Please provide information about the costs associated with the requested support, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) the total cost of the advisory service – invoice from supplier on total costs (outlining the scope of work, objectives, timeline, and total cost for services).</li> <li>(2) the portion of the cost the SME requests to be co-financed by UNDP - invoice from supplier on portion of services and relevant costs (outlining the scope of work, objectives, timeline).</li> <li>(3) the portion to be covered by the SME as its financial contribution.</li> <li>(4) the source of any additional funding (if applicable), including grants or support received from other donors or public agencies for the same purpose.</li> </ol>	
<p>3.11 Please describe your company's capacity to effectively work with the selected advisor and implement the proposed activities. Explain the internal resources allocated for this collaboration, including whether a designated employee or team will manage the process. Indicate the expected timeline for carrying out the activities and how your company is positioned to ensure smooth and timely execution.</p> <p>(no more than 150 words)</p>	

3.12 Additional information (optional field) – Use this section to provide any other information you consider relevant (no more than 150 words)	
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