Program Objective

The USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program is a new five-year initiative designed to partner with the private sector to produce industry-relevant human capacity that will contribute to high-value employment opportunities and increased economic competitiveness in Georgia. Implemented by the International Executive Service Corps (IESC), the Program will achieve this by systematically engaging employers to equip Georgians with skills demanded in sectors with high growth potential and through the creation and replication of direct linkages between training programs and employment opportunities.

Program Components

The Program will prioritize interventions under three components: C1. Incentivize private sector engagement in skills development. C2. Establish short- and long-term skills training programs demanded by the private sector. C3. Increase access to training opportunities for rural and priority populations.

Design of Competitive Grants

Central to achievement of results under the Program is an innovative approach to competitive grants (the aggregate amount $13 million), which will allow the Program to respond to gaps in the supply of skilled workers to meet high-growth industry needs, as well as address the needs of priority populations such as youth, women, rural populations, ethnic minorities, and students with disabilities. At the sector level, the Program will leave behind a network of training providers with scalable and replicable partnership models for private sector engagement in skills development.

Grants under Component I will support employers, sectoral or professional associations/councils to participate in innovative practices of engagement in skills development, enhance partnership modalities between employers and education providers, and strengthen linkages between skills training and high-value employment opportunities. These practices can be related to employer’s participation in skills training program curricula development; the
delivery of skills training programs; the development and implementation of quality assurances and standards for skills training programs; and creating direct linkages between skills training programs and employment opportunities. Examples of potential interventions include:

- Piloting different mechanisms for employers, sectoral associations/councils, industry groups, and other private sector bodies to provide input into training curriculum design and delivery.
- Developing partnerships between training providers and employers; incentivize employers, sectoral associations/councils, industry groups, and other private sector bodies to improve teachers’ capacity at training institutions.
- Creating opportunities for training providers to provide instruction at employers’ facilities.
- Engaging specialists from employers to deliver training modules.
- Increasing employer participation in career guidance system development; in organizing job-fairs and other activities to promote employment.
- Designing on-the-job learning modalities, including apprenticeships and internships;
- Increasing employer engagement in quality assurance/certification boards, sector skills councils.
- Targeted capacity building of sectoral/industry/professional associations to increase their participation in skills development.
- Designing digital or innovative solutions for increasing the quality of training courses.
- Developing educational resources.
- Elaborating schemes for future skills demand satisfaction.
- Attracting and incentivizing beneficiaries to get access to high quality skills training and employment opportunities using professional orientation services.
- Developing partnerships with internationally certified education providers.

Grants under Component 2 will support creation or improvement of: 2A) short-term skills training programs immediately addressing skills mismatches that pose current constraints to the growth of high potential sectors and 2B) long-term skills training programs that create skills highly demanded by the industry currently and/or are anticipated to be in high demand in the near future.

- The short-term skills training programs (2A) are expected to provide flexibility to meet employers’ immediate needs and build customized trainings, and where relevant, result in a certificate recognizing achievement in qualifications compatible with the National Qualification Framework and/or internationally recognized certification.
- The long-term skills training programs (2B) are expected to establish or significantly improve higher level (levels III and higher as defined by the National Qualification Framework) and high-quality skills development programs demanded by the employers in sectors with high growth potential in ways that contribute to high-value employment opportunities. Courses developed under this Sub-component must focus on providing Georgians with the skills forecasted to be in high demand by the private sector in the immediate future and should emphasize higher level skills. Skills training programs supported by this Sub-component must either be internationally certified or be compatible with an internationally recognized certification scheme by the end of the Program and provide graduates with defined qualifications of the National Qualification Framework.

Component 3 grant scheme is designed to increase the employability and incomes of unemployed populations in the regions and increase employers’ productivity. The program will support establishment - replication and significant improvement of industry-relevant long and short-term skills training programs in rural Georgia. Training programs supported by Component 3 grants should be established through employers’ participation and creating sustainable workforce development systems. International certification programs or international standards adopted during program establishment are considered as an advantage. Practical approaches for ensuring equitable access of the priority population to the market demanded skills training programs are integral to the component-specific grants.
What is the Program’s Investment Approach?

**Component 1:** Incentivize private sector engagement in skills development

COST-SHARE GRANTS – **MAX $30,000**

Component 1 Grant Objective: Incentivize private sector to pilot initiatives and innovative practices of engagement in skills development

**Component 2:** Establish short- and long-term skills training programs demanded by the private sector

COST-SHARE GRANTS under Component 2A – **MAX $300,000** per recipient

Component 2A Grant Objective: Support the establishment of high-quality short-term (less than 6 months) courses in high-value jobs in sectors with strong growth prospects.

COST-SHARE GRANTS under Component 2B – **MAX $1.5M** per recipient

Component 2B Grant Objective: Support the development or significantly improve industry-led skills training programs (over 6 months) demanded by employers.

**Component 3:** Increase access to training opportunities for rural and priority populations

COST-SHARE GRANTS – **MAX $500,000** per recipient

Component 3 Grant Objective: Expand existing, high-quality skills training programs to rural areas.

Who are eligible grant recipients?

- Private companies and business associations
- Public and private TVET colleges and universities
- Professional associations and NGOs, and their partnerships.

The Program grant recipients must be legally registered in Georgia.

The USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program will not provide grants to government entities, except for public colleges and public universities.

What are the requirements?

- Cost-share from the grantee
- Grants under Components 1 must not exceed 80% of the total estimated investment
- Grants under Components 2 and 3 must not exceed 50% of the total estimated investment
- Cash and in-kind contributions to meet matching requirements.

What are eligible grant expenditures?

- Improving teaching infrastructure
- Technical assistance and other costs related to the development/improvement of curricula, cost related to acquiring and maintaining International Certifications
- Training of instructors
- Technical assistance related to the implementation of the program justified and included in the proposal
- Costs related to environmental, health and safety measures necessary for the program implementation
- Uptake of innovative practices in skills development, including those developed under Component 1
When will the grants be released?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant type</th>
<th>Grant Release</th>
<th>Information Session*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1. Incentivize private sector engagement in skills development</td>
<td>October 2021</td>
<td>November 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>C2A Establish short-term skills training programs demanded by the private sector</td>
<td>November 2021</td>
<td>November 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3 Increase access to training opportunities for rural and priority populations</td>
<td>November 2021</td>
<td>November 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2B Establish long-term skills training programs demanded by the private sector</td>
<td>January 2022</td>
<td>January 2022</td>
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</tbody>
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*The Program will host Information Sessions in the following cities:

- Tbilisi for grant seekers from Tbilisi, Shida Kartli and Kvemo Kartli regions
- Zugdidi for grant seekers from Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region
- Batumi for grant seekers from Adjara and Guria regions
- Kutaisi for grant seekers from Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti
- Telavi for grant seekers from Kakheti
- Borjomi for grant seekers from Samtskhe-Javakheti region

The opinions expressed herein are those of IESC and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Where can I find information about the Program grants?

- USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program - IESC
  www.jobs.ge

- https://www.facebook.com/USAIDSkillsProgram

- For general questions: skillsdevelopment@iesc.org
  For grants specific questions: skillsgrants@iesc.org