

Georgia Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA)

Technology Transfer Pilot Program (TTPP)

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

March 2020

Introduction

The Technology Transfer Pilot Program (TTPP) is a Recipient Executed Grant project, financed under the EU-World Bank Partnership Program on Europe and Central Asia (EPPP). The Program implementation, monitoring and reporting will be performed in line with the World Bank Group's procedures and guidelines both for the BE and RE components. The BE part will be implemented by the World Bank. The World Bank will contract local and international consultants to work on specific tasks of the Program, as required. The RE component will be implemented by Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA), using in-house team and consultants, overseen by GITA management, with implementation support of the World Bank. This TTPP Operations Manual (POM) refers to the Recipient-Executed components of the Program to be implemented by GITA.

a. Purpose of the SEP

The purpose of the present Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is to outline the target groups and methods of stakeholder engagement and the responsibilities in the implementation of stakeholder engagement activities. The intention of the SEP is to activate the engagement of stakeholders in a timely manner during project preparation and implementation. Specifically, SEP serves the following purposes:

- I. stakeholder identification and analysis;
- II. planning engagement modalities and effective communication tools for consultations and disclosure;
- III. defining role and responsibilities of different actors in implementing the SEP;
- IV. defining the Project's Grievance Mechanism (GRM); and
- V. providing feedback to stakeholders;
- VI. monitoring and reporting of the SEP.

b. Project Description

The overall objective of Technology Transfer Pilot Program (TTPP) is to increase GITA's capacity to test and demonstrate the viability of technology transfer in Georgia.

The Program fits into other significant initiatives to further develop GITA's innovation capacity through the Georgia National Innovation Ecosystem (GENIE) project and other GITA-led initiatives.

The expected result and outcome of TTPP are to increase the number of inventions brought to the market and thus stimulate innovative economic activity.

Technology Transfer Pilot Program (TTPP) aims at:

- Test whether commercialization of inventions originating from public research and development institutions in Georgia are viable, and if so, demonstrate such viability.
- Build capacity of GITA and public partner organizations (to be selected by GITA) in technology transfer and commercialization process, from the initial disclosure all the way through deal closing.

Below are the main types of support that the TTPP will provide to the Applicants:

- Commercialization support via advice in all aspects and steps of the technology transfer process, from the disclosure submission, technology evaluation for commercial readiness to negotiation with commercial partners and, other transactional aspects and after transaction monitoring support (hereinafter: Commercialization support);
- Development support via funding for additional development (soft services in legal, commercial and technical areas, industrial testing, and etc) to advance commercialization transactions that still need proof of commercial readiness (hereinafter: Development support).
- Other support via connecting prospective researchers with industrial partners looking for technology development. The TTPP will deploy services to facilitate deals between the industry and R&D sector in Georgia for: contract research, service contracts, business intelligence, and support in preparing project proposals for other donor programs.

c. Summary of social and environmental risks and impacts of the Project

The project is classified as Low Risk taking in account the low impact and predictable nature of the interventions, the experience of the implementing agency in managing similar activities. Project will not directly fund civil works and no adverse impacts such as involuntary land acquisition, impacts on biodiversity, on cultural heritage, are expected. Also, the Project will not finance any of the activities listed in the World Bank Group -IFC Exclusion List. The environmental risks will be small in magnitude, of temporary nature and directly associated with the listed investments and TA activities under the Project. In few cases, the mitigation activities will need to be designed to deal with disposal of wastewater, communal, industrial or hazardous waste. Any activities that may have moderate and significant environmental and social impacts, including involuntary impacts on land or assets, and unpredictable risks for the environment, community health and safety will be deemed ineligible through the Project's Environmental and Social Screening Procedure to be used for defining grant eligibility. Any minor impacts will be identified by the Environmental and Social screening and addressed in activity-specific ESMPs.

Summary of Previous Stakeholder Engagement Activities relevant to the Project

During the preparation phase and the launch period (March 2019) of the Technology Transfer Pilot Program (TTPP), the Team met with representatives (administrators, scientists, and other staff) from around 10 research and development institutions in (RDIs) in Tbilisi to present the TTPP proposal, gauge participant interest in the program, and better understand the context and potential obstacles to its effective implementation. RDIs and education institutions were also met in Batumi and Kutaisi.

Altogether, over 100 scientific teams were exposed to collective presentations or one-to-one meetings where the Team explained how the TTPP will be deployed, what are the potential benefits for participants and how the selected scientific teams will be supported.

Through these meetings, the team also began collecting data on research initiatives with commercialization potential, including by inviting scientists to present their ongoing projects and research.

In addition, other stakeholders were met. This includes the Rustaveli National Science Foundation, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Finance, the Public Service Delivery Agency (PSDA), Enterprise Georgia, National Intellectual Property Centre of Georgia and the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. In the course of the GENIE project, a survey was administered to better capture needs and demands of companies. Representatives of the EU4Biz project and of the EBRD were interviewed as well as former MIT people who carried out a prior technology commercialization appraisal.

The overall feedback from stakeholders is that the TTPP responds to needs in most RDIs, including those that already host technology transfer offices under one form or another. Although most RDIs had already been exposed to various commercialization research training sessions and study tours, stakeholders recognized and appreciated that this TTPP initiative was the first of its kind in Georgia, as it intends to secure commercial deals and develop a “learning by doing” approach.

The idea of a centralized Technology Transfer operation led by GITA was reasonably welcomed as GITA is perceived as an organization that is more market-oriented closer to business needs versus dealing with research science only. However, stakeholders expressed concerns about the complicated legal and administrative structure of RDIs in Georgia, and the potential for knowledge ownership disputes may create unless a clear technology transfer policy and set of agreements between GITA and technology transfer ecosystem actors are put in place.

The launch period helped confirming that that vast majority of scientific teams are not aware of what needs to be done to commercialize their inventions. Though a few success stories exist across the country, the entire technology transfer ecosystem is under-equipped from the point of view of the know-how, the commercialization techniques, the standard procedures, etc.

From the point of view of the TTPP, only very few projects are “commercially ready” and the work to be done implies ensuring who are the owners of the inventions, what is the status of the intellectual property, the quality of testing of research findings. The future commercialization roadmaps need to address all these shortcomings.

An enlargement of the program will also imply a paradigm shift in the way applied research projects are financed to make sure Georgian RDIs steadily align their processes with international good practices.

Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

The Project has multiple stakeholders from government, private sector, research sector and donor organizations involved in the innovation and entrepreneurship eco-system in Georgia and relevant to the Project. The stakeholder risk is moderate and is focused on the need to coordinate with multiple stakeholders throughout the Project period.

Project affected parties include:

- 1) **Public and private R&D Institutions** – RDIs will benefit from commercialization of technologies developed by their staff. Assessing RDIs innovation technologies could allow RDIs to focus on strategic projects which have higher commercialization potential. Financial gains they could generate from commercialization should allow them to develop more long-term strategic planning and enhance the excellence and relevance of their R&D outputs.
- 2) **Researchers/Scientists** – the opportunity to commercialize applied research and technologies offered by GITA will support researchers by providing them with financial support to mature their projects and make them commercially attractive for potential business partners. Preparing project related documents and forms for the TTPP will improve their capacity to participate in other research grants and develop an entrepreneurial mindset.
- 3) **Private sector enterprises and investors** – new opportunities for business-academia collaboration will become available. They will have access to the latest applied research and technologies developed by Georgian researchers and RDIs. In addition, a channel for communication will be set with scientific community about innovation needs of the business sector.
- 4) **MoESD Management** - the opportunity to get updated about latest applied research results at RDIs which might strengthen ties with academia. Opportunity to link academia with MoESD other programs and projects.
- 5) **GITA Staff and Consultants** – opportunity to deeply understand the technology transfer process, link with academia and tools used during the commercialization.

Other Interested Parties:

- 1) **Business associations** - new opportunities for business-academia collaboration will become available. Some Business Association management will become part of the TTPP Advisory Council.
- 2) **The scientific community in Georgia** - new opportunities for business-academia collaboration will become available. TTPP will improve their capacity to participate in other research grants and develop an entrepreneurial mindset.
- 3) **Media and General Public** – success of business-academia collaboration will contribute to Georgian economy.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The TTPP will continue to consult with and engage all relevant stakeholders and interested parties in different stages of planning and implementing its programs.

a. The TTPP will organize action events for identifying stakeholders/target audiences:

- Meetings at RDIs
- Training and information workshops for researchers to guide them in filling in the TTPP forms
- Responses to frequently asked questions
- Regular communication with potential beneficiaries

b. Recurrent communication Activities:

- Regular calls and meetings with beneficiaries
- Press releases
- Photographs, photo news
- Participation in events (conferences, panels, presentations)

c. Beneficiary feedback activities

- Annual questionnaires on research programs
- Individual meetings

Timeline

Timeline of the proposed outreach, information and stakeholder engagement activities

Activity	Method	Timing	Target Group
Other promotional events	Various	Across the lifetime of the Project	Various stakeholders
Decision Making	Formal pitching and decision announcement via letter	At the time	Stakeholders
Feedback to not selected projects	Meetings at RDIs	After evaluation stage, and prior to beginning activities with selected beneficiaries	Applicants
General feedback to RDIs	Meetings at RDIs	After evaluation stage, and prior to beginning	Limited to organizations that

		activities with selected beneficiaries	presented projects for assessment
Maturation of the selected projects	In-person meetings, contract agreements	After completion of selection, onwards	Various stakeholders

Grievance Mechanism

a. GITA existing Grievance Mechanism:

The GITA has established grievance redressal procedures for GENIE project and maintains GRM in place since 2017. All complaints are to be recorded and processed by the GITA staff using the GRM. A separate GRM will be developed and maintained, as existing one is not relevant for TTPP.

TTPP Managers are responsible for ensuring that each Application receives an objective and fair initial peer review, that the process is transparent, that all applications are treated with equal opportunity and that all applicable laws, regulations, and policies are followed.

Receiving and registration of complaints

Complaints may be submitted directly to GITA, in written or electronic forms.

Everyone who wishes to express their claims can submit complaints in written to the GITA office at the address: 7 Innovations Street, district Okrokana, Tbilisi. Also, send them via email esmf@gita.gov.ge. This instrument will provide a quick and formal communication channel. The emails will be tracked, and each case followed up on, including directing the issue to the appropriate person within GITA.

Additional communication channel to receive complaints will be GITA's phone (+995) 32 2004482 / 169. This will provide a tool for all the persons that do not have an e-mail.

Information about availability of GRM will be announced during public consultations. Also, is will be posted on GITA's website.

Registration and controlling of all correspondence and emails received by GITA and tracking of the received feedback will be carried out by a designated responsible person.

Complaints Review and resolution

GITA ensures that complaints submitted directly to the agency are promptly reviewed and responded in compliance with Georgian legislation.

Each grievance will be acknowledged within 24 hours after its submission and delivered to the designated person within the agency for resolution. Review of the grievance will typically involve the preliminary review, in-depth study and assessment of problematic issues, and possibly site visit and interview of the complainant and other interested parties.

A target timeframe for resolving the grievances is up to 10 business days after its official registration (unless a grievance needs to be referred to higher authority or requires longer investigation). Grievances provided to GITA will be resolved with the involvement of relevant parties (including the complaining

party, TTPP Consultants, NGOs etc., as necessary). GITA's Safeguards Specialist will act as a Grievance Focal Point at GITA and coordinate the resolution of grievances.

All grievances received within TTPP will be logged and managed by responsible person assigned by GITA management.

Reporting

All information regarding the grievances aroused during the project implementation, received complaints and ways and means for their effective and timely solution will be collected in the semiannual progress reports prepared by GITA and submitted to the WB.

Implementation Arrangements for Stakeholder Engagement

Overview of planned communication and stakeholder engagement activities.

Target stakeholders	Topic(s) of engagement	Method	Location/frequency	Responsibilities
Public and private R&D Institutions	Program progress, program information, benefits of the TTPP, potential engagement and partnership development	Launching Event, information meetings, in-person feedback, workshops	During program implementation	Technology Transfer experts, Technology Transfer Coordinator, Head of the Department of Innovation and Commercialization
Researchers/Scientists	Program progress, program information, benefits of the TTPP, application procedures, support disbursement figures and beneficiary/applicant survey results	Launch Event, information meetings, in-person feedback, workshops	During program implementation	Technology Transfer Coordinator, Head of the Department of Innovation and Commercialization, PR and Marketing staff
MoESD Management	Program progress	in-person meetings, written reports	During program implementation	GITA Management
GITA Staff and Consultants	Program progress, knowledge sharing	in-person meetings, written reports, workshops	During program implementation	Head of the Department of Innovation and Commercialization

Potential applicants	Applicant satisfaction surveys	Online survey	Annually	Technology Transfer Coordinator
Potential investors and entrepreneurship support organizations	Pitching, Networking, matchmaking	Meetings, conferences, field visits	During program implementation	Technology Transfer Coordinator, Head of the Department of Innovation and Commercialization, PR and Marketing staff

Monitoring and Reporting of the SEP

TTPP project team is responsible for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) all activities to track, document, and communicate the progress and results of the TTPP, including monitoring of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan. The monitoring of the Stakeholder engagement Plan will be done by GITA’s Technology Transfer Coordinator. Technology Transfer Coordinator with assistance of GITA’s public relations and event management staff will be responsible producing promotional materials, organizing various events/conferences, conducting the surveys. TTPP project team including local and international tech transfer experts, technology transfer coordinator will be conducting the in-person meetings and calls with applicants. TTPP team will be responsible for overall compilation of progress and results. Feedback and grievances received through the Program grievance mechanism will be filed and included in annual reports.

SEP Resources

The stakeholder engagement activities described in this document are a core part of the program implementation. They will be budgeted under the operating cost of the program, and implemented by TTPP core staff – Project Manager, Technology Transfer Coordinator, Environmental and Social Specialist.

Annex 1:

Carried Out Engagements

1. Launch event of the Technology Transfer Pilot Program (TTPP)

Date	16 May, 2019
Location	7, Innovation str. 0114, TechPark, Okrokana, Tbilisi, Georgia
Participants	Public and Private RDI Management, RDI staff, Scientists, other academia representatives, business representatives, Georgian government representatives, World Bank representatives, Delegation of European Union to Georgia representatives, Media representatives
Information Shared	Information about the event was shared via email. Promotional materials (the TTPP Fact Sheet, Press Release, etc.) was approved by the World Bank and Delegation of European Union to Georgia.
Advertisement	Via email, phone calls. Results shared on TV News and by other media

2. Informational Meeting at Georgian National Academy of Science

Date	28 June 2019
Location	Georgian National Academy of Science Conference Hall
Participants	Academy of Science Representatives and scientists
Information Shared	Information about the TTPP and its application process, as well as potential outcome of the program.
Advertisement	Via email, call with the President of the Academy

3. TTPP General Framework Agreement Signature by GITA and Tbilisi State University

Date	17 October 2019
Location	National Science Library
Participants	GITA staff, Tbilisi State University Management, Scientists, students, media
Information Shared	Information about TTPP, its potential outcomes, process of the technology transfer. TTPP General Framework Agreement was signed by the parties. The press release was approved by the World Bank and Delegation of European Union to Georgia. https://youtu.be/D90_dso9ilw
Advertisement	Via email, social media, TV News

4. TTPP General Framework Agreement Signature by GITA and Ilia State University

Date	12 November 2019
Location	Ilia State University
Participants	GITA staff, Ilia State University Staff, Scientists and students
Information Shared	Information about TTPP, its potential outcomes, process of the technology transfer. TTPP General Framework Agreement was signed by the parties. The press release was approved by the World Bank and Delegation of European Union to Georgia. https://youtu.be/hjk5eXCfmko
Advertisement	Via email, social media

5. Individual Meetings at Universities and RDIs

Date	April – September
Location	Different University / RDIs
Participants	RDI/University Management, Scientists
Information Shared	Information about the TTPP and its application process, as well as potential outcome of the program.
Advertisement	Via email, phone calls

6. Information Session and Workshop on TTPP Application process and forms

Date	
Location	GITA Techpark
Participants	TTPP Applicants
Information Shared	Information about TTPP, technology transfer, TTPP Form detail review and Q&A
Advertisement	Via email and Phone Calls