Call for Ideas
Competitive Grant Facility for Work Force Development

Introduction

In December 2011, MCC selected Georgia as eligible to develop a second MCC five-year compact to promote sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. As part of the compact development process, the Government of Georgia (GoG) identified a need to improve the quality of human capital, particularly to address a shortage of skilled technicians and professionals in key economic sectors as a constraint to the country's continued growth. The GoG then proposed a compact program to address this constraint, including professional education or technical/vocational education and training (TVET).

A number of recent reports have highlighted the mismatch between the skills available in the Georgian labor market and the skills needed by industry. These reports emphasize the need to develop quality job skills in order to meet the needs of industry and business. This research indicates a priority to develop level IV and V job skills, especially in the broad areas of construction, transport, information technologies, and agriculture (including but not limited to primary production, processing, and value adding). While the activities proposed for the TVET project of the compact program will emphasize job skills at levels IV and V in the areas listed above, there also are needs to develop short-term training programs at levels I to III, as well as continuous education and re-training opportunities. Proposals in the technical areas not listed above will also be considered.

Recent studies also show that, although existing TVET programs – particularly at levels I to III – provide opportunities to socially vulnerable[1] students, they also exhibit sizeable gender imbalance in program enrollments and returns to training. In particular, a smaller share of women than men enroll in some types of professional skills/TVET programs. For levels IV and V, attention will need to be paid to ensuring the equitable participation of students from socially vulnerable and/or language minority groups.

Objective of the "Call for Ideas"

The Call for Ideas is intended to inform the design of the proposed TVET project in the compact. It is an opportunity to gather ideas on the types and scale of programs/practices that might be funded as part of the proposed compact. Using information from the Call for Ideas, MCA-Georgia[2] (MCA-G) and MCC will design a competitive grant facility as part of the proposed compact. Following approval and signature of the proposed compact, MCA-G will finalize the documentation for the competitive grant facility and commence the process of calling for proposals for programs/practices to be funded as part of the proposed compact.

Competitive Grant Facility

The Government of Georgia and MCC are contemplating that the proposed compact will include a competitive grant facility of approximately USD $12-15 million to co-finance investments in industry-led skills and workforce development programs. The facility will consist of two components as described below. In order to achieve substantial impact and reach broad beneficiaries, a range of proposals, including those requiring considerable financial support and those requiring relatively less financial support, are acceptable.

Component 1 – Course-related Program Development Grants: Grants will be provided to existing organizations to either establish new course programs or to upgrade or expand their current programs; the focus will be on training in

[1] As defined by the Government of Georgia.
[2] MCA-Georgia is a special purpose entity established by the GoG to manage the implementation of the Compact program.

the areas where providers can demonstrate a strong demand in the market.[3] Selected programs may receive technical assistance to support effective implementation. Possible types of investments include: facility improvement; equipment; teacher professional development; curricula development; twinning with a foreign provider; or other technical assistance. As part of proposals, or as a form of technical assistance, twinning relationships with foreign providers are encouraged. Curriculum, and practices developed under Course-related Program Development Grants would be required to be shared with other providers. As part of the Grants, recipients will be required to document and disseminate these curriculums, and practices along with lessons learned from use of the Grants. Course-related Program Development Grants may range between USD $500,000 - $3 million.

Component 2 – Best Practice Grants: Best Practice Grants will identify and support existing or promising provider procedures, operations, and other best practices not directly related to new course program development. Examples of best practices could include the use of industry discipline-based advisory boards, development or expansion of the use of competency-based training (CBT) curricula, the availability of career advice services or incentives that promote gender and social equity in program participation and job placement, the use of industry specialists as practical skills teachers, outreach and support activities that promote access for disadvantaged groups. Best Practice Grants would support TVET provider best practice and would fund the documentation and dissemination of the identified best practice. Best Practice Grants may range between USD $100,000 - $400,000.

Who should reply to the Call for Ideas?

The Call for Ideas is open to any government agency, public or private company or corporation, professional association, TVET college or university, NGO, or other legal entity active or planning to be active in Georgia in the provision of professional/technical training and education. The training programs should result in professional certificates, diplomas or otherwise measurable skills that allow trainees/graduates to respond to job-market demands – key criteria include number of employed beneficiaries and increased incomes of beneficiaries. Internal programs limited to corporate employees are not eligible.

Training providers (public and private), and businesses may suggest ideas for either:
1) creating new program offerings or upgrading or expanding existing programs; or
2) supporting, documenting, and sharing best practice in delivering professional education/TVET.

How to participate

Written proposal. Respondents must submit proposals in the format set forth in Annex 1.

What will happen after the Call for Ideas?

I. If the Call for Ideas generates sufficient interest and viable proposals, a matching grant facility with a detailed operating structure would be designed and incorporated in the Georgia MCC compact.
II. A Request for Proposals will be launched under the Georgia MCC compact.
III. Proposals will be evaluated by an independent professional panel according to published criteria.
IV. The highest ranked proposals will be approved and funded subject to funding availability.

[3] For example, strong industry demand could be demonstrated by high employment rates among current graduates; discussions with employers/industry about their needs; employer commitments to allow the use of their equipment; employer commitments to take on interns; other employer contributions in cash or in kind to the program.

Evaluating the Responses to the Call

Priority will be given to ideas for programs/practices that leverage private sector partnerships and industry engagement.

Priority will be given to ideas for programs/practices that specifically address gender and socially vulnerable imbalances in TVET participation.

We are committed to a speedy, transparent and fair evaluation of ideas. MCA-G will convene a panel of local and international experts. The panel will consider how the proposed programs/practices meet the criteria listed below and how they can contribute to the overall compact objective, taking into account GoG and other donor initiatives in the sector.
Specifically, the evaluation panel will review:

- Partnerships
  - Type of investment proposed (i.e. facility improvement; equipment; teacher professional development; curricula development; twinning with foreign provider; other technical assistance)
  - Potential cohort sizes
  - Length of proposed program/practice and timeframe for delivery
  - Type and level of private sector contribution or industry engagement
  - Academic partnerships and level of partner participation
  - Area of study
  - Sustainability of the program/practice
  - The experience and technical and financial capacity of the proposing entity.
  - The impact the program/practice will have in terms of benefits to women and socially vulnerable groups.
  - The existence of evaluation criteria by which the program/practice's degree of success can be measured
- Amount of funds requested. This should explain in general terms how much will be spent on facilities, equipment, teacher professional development, twinning, and other large areas. Detailed budgets are not required.
- Justification that the funding requested meets the objectives of the Call for Ideas.
- Level/nature of partner participation (financial or non-monetary)
- Academic partnerships and level of partner participation
- The timeframe of proposed program/practice, including start date and length of program/practice
- Projected potential cohort sizes that could benefit from proposed program/practice.
- Technical assistance that is expected to be needed to manage this grant

Key Dates and Deadlines

		Date
1	Release of the Call for Ideas	January 25, 2013
2	Deadline to reply to the Call for Ideas	February 15, 2013
3	Feedback to respondents	February to March, 2013

Registration, Questions/Clarifications, and Submission

- All interested respondents should register their interest with an email to call@mcageorgia.ge
- Questions and clarifications(written in English and Georgian) should be provided in writing via email to call@mcageorgia.ge
- All questions will be answered in writing and made available to all registered respondents (www.mes.gov.ge, www.mcageorgia.ge)
- Questions will be answered within ten working days. The deadline for submission of questions is January 31, 2012.

Note:

All participants are advised that nothing contained in this announcement is intended to be construed as creating an obligation or committing MCC, MCA-G, the Government of Georgia or the Government of the United States to provide funding or assistance in relation to the proposed activities or any individual activity. The compact is subject to negotiation, approval, and signing between the Government of Georgia and the Government of the United States. The receipt of a reply to the Call for Ideas does not guarantee that the proposed program/practice will be funded.

General comments

- Replies should be kept to no more than five pages. Information about your organization can be attached as an appendix and not be included in the five pages.
- Replies need to be in both English and Georgian.
- Replies need to be received by MCA-G no later than 18:00 (Tbilisi Time) on February 15, 2013.
- Replies should be emailed to call@mcageorgia.ge
- **All sections listed below need to be completed**

#	Item	Comments
1.	Cover letter	This letter should be signed by the CEO (or senior manager) of your organization and any participating partners and should clearly indicate support for the proposed program/practice. The letter should be no more than ½ page in length.
2.	Legal entity	Detail the legal identity of your organization
3.	Contact details	List how we contact you and who can provide us with more information if needed
4.	Which category of funding?	Clearly indicate which of the categories you are applying for. Does your proposed program/practice fit into Component 1 or 2?
5.	Your work in the TVET sector?	Tell us what programs/practices you currently offer, your existing teaching capacity in terms of staff and physical capacity
6.	Your project	Briefly explain your program/practice. • A summary of the key stages/phases, outputs, who would be involved and costs (we don't want a detailed project plan). Clearly indicate: o Program/practice area (specific certifications or certification disciplines you would like to develop). o Why this program/practice? (Evidence of potential for marketability?) o Total cost of your program/practice.[4] o Likely tuition level and length of program/practice. o How your program/practice will benefit women and/or socially vulnerable groups.
7.	Sustainability	Tell us how your program/practice will continue to operate after MCA-G support ends.
8.	Alignment with the Compact	How does your program/practice fit with the objectives of the compact outlined above?
9.	Linkages	How does this program/practice link with other work being done in the TVET sector in Georgia?
10.	Matching funds	What financial contribution will your organization or partners make to the program/practice? What in-kind contribution will you or your partner organizations make (e.g. scholarships, apprenticeships, equipment, etc.)?
11.	Evaluation Criteria	In what specific ways may the results of this program/practice be measured? (for example, improved earnings of graduates, improved employment rates, etc.)
12.	Other points you think are important	List other key points you think are important.
13.	Your organization	Appendix (not part of the five pages) general information about your organization. Please note whether or not you have received and/or are applying for funding from the GoG or other donors for the activity described in this response.

[4] This should explain in general terms how much will be spent on facilities, equipment, teacher professional development, twinning, and other large areas. Detailed budgets are not required.