

Call for proposals

Technical assistance for the GO4SDGs and UNDA SPP SME Assessment and technical advisory work streams in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

1. Introduction

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the voice of the environment within the United Nations system. UNEP acts as a catalyst, advocate, educator and facilitator to promote the rational utilization and sustainable development of the global environment.

UNEP's work includes assessing global, regional and national environmental conditions and trends; developing international and national environmental instruments; and strengthening institutions for the sensible management of the environment. UNEP has a long history of contributing to the development and facilitation of intergovernmental platforms for the development of environmental agreements, principles, multilateral guidelines and studies aimed at addressing global environmental challenges.

The [Global Opportunities for Sustainable Development Goals \(GO4SDGs\)](#) was launched by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the German Ministry for the Environment in 2019 with the goal to support policy champions, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and youth in integrating sustainable consumption and production, and inclusive green economy approaches in their policies and decisions to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals as well as the Paris Climate Change Agreement.

The GO4SDGs “SMEs Assessment” work stream in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) is led by the UNEP Regional Office for Europe and the Green Growth Knowledge Partnership (GGKP). This work stream focuses on rapidly deploying an SME self-assessment solution on a region-by-region basis; the output of which will support the uptake of resource efficiency practices by providing SMEs with simplified and tailored access to existing support services such as capacity building, financing solutions and SME networks. The objective of this workstream is three-fold:

1. Deploy a system through which the needs of individual SMEs can be easily ascertained and that takes into account their sector of activity and location.
2. Develop a dynamic database of resource efficiency support services existing in the target region and which can be easily upscaled and replicated.
3. Match the existing resource efficiency support services with the identified SMEs based on their specific needs, and work with the organisations providing the support services to upscale and replicate them as required to meet the increased demand from SMEs.

The GO4SDGs workstream is also supporting the work of the United Nations Development Agency (UNDA) project “Enhancing sustainable public procurement (SPP) for the regional transition to inclusive green economy in EECCA”. The UNDA SPP project, which is led by the UNEP Europe Office and implemented jointly with UNECE and GGKP, aims to strengthen the capacity of selected countries in the EECCA region on sustainable public procurement and enhance the capacity of the business sector in the project countries to comply with sustainable public procurement regulations and procedures and respective sustainability criteria. Due to the focus of the GO4SDGs workstream on SME assessment, this project will support the SPP project in relation to the component focused on

assessing the capacity of SMEs to comply with new sustainability criteria for public procurement in three focus countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine) within the EECCA region.

The GO4SDGs workstream will thereby ultimately support SMEs implement resource efficiency actions that will help them manage the impacts of the current COVID crisis, improve their ability to comply with SSP criteria and build resilience for both future crises and growing market competition.

The “Integrated Greening Operations” (I-GO) solution for SMEs is being developed as part of the GGKP [Green Industry Platform](#) (GIP) work programme in collaboration with the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) initiative. The I-GO solution has been designed to build on the vast amount of support services (guidance, tools, SME networks, financial solutions, training programmes and technical assistance) that GIP has collected from leading organisations and experts from around the world and tailor it to the specific needs of individual SMEs.

The core of the I-GO solution consists of an easy to use SME self-assessment tool that produces a customized list of recommendations on how best to approach improving the resource efficiency of the particular SME’s operations. Each recommendation comes with links to the relevant knowledge products and support services that can directly enable the SME to implement the necessary resource efficiency actions, taking into account their location and sector of activity. In effect, the I-GO solution ensures SMEs can easily understand what resource efficiency opportunities are available to their business to become more sustainable and that they have access to the necessary guidance and support services. All the resource efficiency knowledge products and support services are hosted by the GIP [SME Support Centre](#)

The I-GO solution is also ideally placed to support SMEs improve their ability to comply with product specific environmental standards and labels, i.e. address downstream environmental requirements as well as improve the resource efficiency of their own operations. This combined impact will help SMEs improve their access to global supply chains, tap into export opportunities, and apply to public tenders with newly introduced sustainability criteria.

In addition, by matching SMEs to the existing resource efficiency support services most suited to their individual needs, the I-GO solution is also actively able to identify where specific support services can be upscaled and/or replicated to meet the demand of identified SME needs.

I-GO Solution – The steps to transform knowledge into action:



The development of strategic I-GO partnerships with international, regional and national organisations engaged with SMEs in the EECCA region is key to the successful deployment of the I-GO solution in this region. These I-GO partnerships are necessary to ensure the effective compilation of the wide range of existing resource efficiency information and support services (e.g. through NGOs,

business associations and governmental organisations) and to enable access to the numerous different location and activity specific SME networks (e.g. through large companies with supply chains and business associations).

Through their multiplier effect, these strategic I-GO partnerships will play a leading role in building awareness of the I-GO solution and its benefits amongst SME networks. The established I-GO partnerships will also help I-GO partner organisations provide critical support to their SME networks during the COVID crisis.

2. Objective of the call of proposals

UNEP invites universities, research centres, think-tanks, business associations, National Cleaner Production Centers, NGOs and other civil society organizations to submit their proposals to provide technical assistance for the GO4SDGs “SME Assessment” workstream and UNDA Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) project in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA).

The applicant entity must demonstrate, based on the information requested below, that it is duly qualified and has the necessary experience to carry out the service described in the scope, duties and responsibilities of the technical assistance.

Only non-profit organizations will be eligible.

3. Scope, duties, and responsibilities

The project covers the EECCA region as well as a more in-depth focus on Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. The work will involve:

- Supporting the development of key partnerships with international, regional and national organisations and companies engaged with SMEs in the EECCA region and the three focus countries
- Assessing the ability of SMEs to comply with sustainability criteria related to priority product groups and providing them with advisory services
- Compiling existing SME resource efficiency and sustainable procurement knowledge products and support services and carrying out a comprehensive gap analysis
- Supporting the development and delivery of combined I-GO and SPP virtual training workshops
- Updating the SME Self-assessment tool recommendations and content, and subsequent translation into Russian
- Supporting communication campaigns to build awareness of the benefits of I-GO and SPP.

The work related to SPP will cover 2-3 priority product groups most relevant to individual focus countries from the examples below:

Examples of product groups relevant to Ukraine	Examples of product groups relevant to Kyrgyzstan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detergents • Cleaners • Paints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local seedlings • LED light bulbs • Organic fertilizer

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road repair • Repair and construction work • Computer equipment and office equipment • Catering services • Furniture (school, office) • Linen (bedding, underwear) • Cable products • Office paper and paper products • Timber • Cleaning services • Household appliances and equipment • Outdoor lighting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-cycle wastewater treatment services (without septic tanks and cesspools) • Protective medical masks, Protected medical uniforms, Disinfectants such as antiseptics and hand soap
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The contracted party will deliver on this work by carrying out the following duties:

3.1. Compilation of potential I-GO partners

The first stage of the project will require extensive research to build a compilation of potential I-GO partners with SME networks in the EECCA region, as well as separate potential I-GO partner compilations for each of the three focus countries. This stage is considered a desk-based review process and it is therefore not necessary to have direct interaction with the identified potential I-GO partners.

I-GO partners can be considered to be of two types:

- Organisations that provide publicly accessible resource efficiency information (guidance, tools and case studies) and/or support services (financial incentives, training and technical assistance) services relevant to SMEs. These organisations, as an I-GO partner, would have the opportunity for their information/services to be promoted through the I-GO solution as well as the green industry platform. In addition, such organisations would benefit from feedback received from I-GO users to help improve/update their information/services. The key benefits for this type of I-GO partner are the increased uptake of their information/services and comprehensive user feedback to support improvements/updates.

And/or

- Organisations that engage directly with SME networks, typically in a leadership or supporting role. Such organisations can range from, for example, large companies with SME supply chains to business associations to development organisations. To be a potential I-GO partner, such an organisation would be deemed willing to actively promote the benefits of the I-GO tool amongst their SME network and support the gathering of feedback from SMEs through surveys, etc. The key benefit for this type of I-GO partner is the ability to provide active support to their network in dealing with the impacts of COVID-19, improving their sustainability and strengthening their market competitiveness.

Typical examples of potential I-GO partners include for the EECCA region:

- International development organisations active in the region
- Regional government organisations and SME initiatives
- International and regional business associations and industry led initiatives
- International and regional service providers
- Multinational companies with supply chain interests in the region

For the individual focus countries:

- International development organisations active in each country
- Government ministries, agencies and initiatives supporting SMEs
- National business associations and industry led initiatives
- National service providers
- Large companies with supply chain interests in the individual countries
- National Cleaner Production Centers

The potential I-GO partner compilations must include details of a relevant key contact person for each organisation, a detailed description of the organisation and its SME network, an evaluation as to how relevant the organisation would be as a potential I-GO partner and recommendations on how to best engage with the organisation.

A presentation of the potential I-GO partner compilations must be given to the project team at the conclusion of the task and include an overview of a proposed outreach campaign to engage directly with the potential I-GO partners.

The potential I-GO partner compilations, presentation and proposed outreach campaign overview should be prepared in English.

3.2. Partnership development

The second stage of the project will be to actively engage with the potential I-GO partners identified in Stage 1 and support the development of formal I-GO partnerships with interested organisations.

As part of the outreach activity it will be required to also gather additional information on the general needs of both potential partner organisations and their SME networks regarding productivity improvements, COVID crisis impacts and barriers to resource efficiency uptake. The specific activities of this project stage include:

- I. Conducting – in close cooperation with UNEP- an active outreach campaign to develop concrete relationships with potential I-GO partners identified in the pipeline. This outreach campaign will require direct engagement with the potential I-GO partners in order to present the I-GO solution, confirm their provisional interest and agree a senior representative to be the main point of contact. This step will include one regional outreach campaign and three national outreach campaigns for the focus countries.
- II. Supporting the dissemination of one regional and three national surveys amongst the potential I-GO partners, and where possible their SME networks, to understand the current key SME needs and barriers to resource efficiency uptake. The survey should be prepared in English and Russian.

- III. Support the administration of putting in place formal I-GO partnerships with interested organisations and companies

3.3. Training workshops

The third stage of the project will involve supporting the development and delivery of one regional virtual I-GO information workshop for I-GO partners and three national virtual I-GO and SPP training workshops for I-GO partners, SMEs and related SPP stakeholders. The specific activities of this stage will include:

- I. Developing and delivering a virtual dual-language regional I-GO information workshop (1.5 – 2 hours) for identified I-GO partners. The objective of the workshop is to support I-GO partners:
 - Identify the opportunities for upscaling and replicating existing resource efficiency support services such as capacity building and financial solutions
 - Learn about the I-GO solution, its application by SMEs and its planned deployment process.

This regional workshop activity will require:

- Sourcing and managing participants
 - Developing presentations
 - Providing a translation service for simultaneous English and Russian
 - Developing a summary report that includes attendee feedback and lessons learned.
- II. Developing and delivering one dual-language national I-GO and SPP training workshop (2-3 hours) per focus country, for which the target audience are I-GO partners, SMEs and related SPP stakeholders. The objectives of the workshops are to:
 - Provide information on the I-GO solution, its application by SMEs and its planned deployment process (20-30% of workshop)
 - Introduce the progress of the UNDA SSP project to date, present the main regulations and procedures governing SPP in the specific focus country and provide insights to example eco-labelling requirements for priority product groups (70-80% of workshop)

This national workshop activity will require:

- Developing country adapted SPP training material in English and Russian for each workshop, taking into consideration the relevant national procurement regulations and procedures for the priority product groups. The training material will also be able to draw on existing UNEP materials, case studies and toolkits.
- Sourcing and managing participants

- Delivering the training workshops
- Providing a translation service simultaneous English and Ukrainian for the Ukraine workshop, English and Russian for the Kyrgyzstan workshop and English and Russian for the Kazakhstan workshop
- Developing a summary report that includes attendee feedback and lessons learned.

3.4. SME virtual sustainability assessments and advisory services

The fourth stage of the project will be to carry out virtual assessments of 40 SMEs in the three focus countries and provide subsequent advisory services. The virtual assessments will have the aim to assess the ability of the SMEs to comply with sustainability criteria for the priority product groups and then provide advisory services to support the assessed SMEs access the guidance and supports service needed to improve their ability with sustainability criteria.

The specific activities of this stage will include:

- I. Developing a virtual sustainability assessment questionnaire for each focus country that will assess the baseline capacity of SMEs in relation to their ability to comply with sustainability criteria
- II. Identifying 10 SMEs in Kyrgyzstan, 20 SMEs in Ukraine and 10 SMEs in Kazakhstan that have taken part in the SPP training detailed in 3.3 and which are willing to participate in the virtual assessments
- III. Carrying out the SME assessments through a virtual format, e.g., online questionnaire, telephone interview
- IV. Development of a summary report outlining the analysis of the SME virtual assessments
- V. Following the deployment of the finalised SME self-assessment tool (see 3.6 and 3.7), accompany (virtually) each the SMEs in the use of the SME self-assessment tool and provide advice on the application of the main recommended knowledge products and supports in the form of a business plan, in particular those related to sustainability standards and certification.
- VI. Development of a summary report outlining the results of the SME advisory services

3.5. Compilation of resource efficiency knowledge and support services

The fifth stage of the project will involve the compilation and gap analysis of best practice resource efficiency and sustainable procurement related knowledge products and support services available in English, Russian, Kyrgyz, Ukrainian and Kazakh) and relevant to the region and the individual focus countries. This project stage will require both independent research and well as engagement with potential I-GO partners to build up a comprehensive regional database and three national databases of the existing resource efficiency and sustainable procurement related knowledge and support services that can be integrated into the I-GO solution. The sustainable procurement related knowledge

products and support services should be relevant to the priority product groups. The final compilation of knowledge products and support services will be hosted by the SME Support Centre.

The specific activities of this stage will include:

- I. Desk-based research to compile existing resource efficiency and sustainable procurement related knowledge products (case studies, technical guidance, standards/certifications and toolkits) and support services (training, solution provider lists, financial incentives and technical assistance) relevant to the region and three focus countries and in English, Russian, Kyrgyz, Ukrainian and Kazakh. The objective should be on the quality of the knowledge products and supports services more so than just the quantity and these can come from the region but also outside the region if relevant. The compilation overview should be prepared in English and provided in excel format (template will be provided by the project team) for approval by the project team, but the best practice knowledge and support services referenced in the overview do not need translation.
- II. Uploading the approved knowledge and support services within the SME Support Centre web-based system.
- III. Carry out a gap analysis of the compiled knowledge products and support services, considering international best practice knowledge products and support services and suitability for the SME self-assessment tool. Develop recommendations as to what new developments would be required or existing products/services adapted/translated to fill the gaps in the region and three focus countries. These recommendations should be prepared in the form of a short report.
- IV. In addition to the gap analysis in (II), review how SME resource efficiency relevant service providers are categorised and quality checked in the region and three focus countries. Provide recommendations as to how quality controlled lists of relevant solution providers could be developed in the three focus countries and managed by local entities. These recommendations should be prepared in the form of a short report.
- V. Based on the gap analysis in point II, provide recommendations as to which resource efficiency and/or sustainable procurement related standards/certifications are of main importance for SMEs to consider in order to gain market presence and comply with SPP criteria related to the priority product groups. These recommendations should be prepared in the form of a short report.

As many of potential I-GO partners will be important sources for these activities, it would be expected that this project stage will also be carried out in parallel to stage two.

3.6. Adaptation and translation of SME self-assessment tool

The sixth stage of the project will involve updating the SME self-assessment tool content (recommendations) to be most applicable to the region and three focus countries using the outputs from 3.4 and 3.5. The regional and focus country specific versions of the SME self-assessment tool will require translation into Russian.

The specific activities of this stage will include:

- I. Adapting the generic recommendations (provided by the project team) of the SME self-assessment tool where required for the main SME business sectors (3-4 broad types) of the region and three focus countries. The adapted recommendations should be prepared in excel format.
- II. Building on 3.5 (II), detail which knowledge products and supports services should be linked with which individual recommendation. This matrix should be included in the excel overview of recommendations from (I).
- III. Translating the SME self-assessment tool content (3-5 webpages, 30-40 questions and 30-40 recommendations) into Russian, with some possible text variations between the region and focus countries.
- IV. Uploading the adapted and translated content within the SME self-assessment tool web-based system.

3.7. Promotional Campaign

Once the I-GO partnerships have been put in place, the resource efficiency knowledge compilation integrated into the I-GO solution and SME sustainability assessments , **a comprehensive promotional campaign will be undertaken to support awareness building of the benefits of the I-GO solution and SPP in the region and the three focus countries.** This seventh stage will include the following key activities:

- I. Supporting the design and development of an I-GO and SPP promotional campaign for the region and the three focus countries, in particular taking into consideration how it can be deployed through the various I-GO partners
- II. Managing the engagement with I-GO partners during the promotional campaign
- III. Providing a technical help desk function for SMEs and SME service providers using the I-GO self-assessment tool during the I-GO promotion period

Ultimate results of service

The contracted organisation delivering these activities will be working under the Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) sub-programme in the UNEP Europe office. Working under the supervision of the Regional Coordinator, the contract organisation will contribute to improving the uptake of resource efficiency measures amongst SMEs in Europe.

1. Expected duration and deliverables/products

The expected start date of the contract is May 2021. The duration of the services is to the end of 2021. As the project must be completed during 2021, a possible reduced project duration period should be allowed for in case of any delay to the start of the project.

Date	Product/deliverable
31.05.2021	One regional and three national potential I-GO partner compilations in excel format and conclusion of a presentation of the compilations with recommendation on how best to engage with the potential partners.
30.06.2021	Report detailing confirmed potential International, regional and national (three focus countries) I-GO partners, as a result of an active outreach campaign targeting initiatives and organisations identified in the partner compilation documents.
31.07.2021	Excel document outlining best practice SME resource efficiency and sustainable procurement related knowledge products and support services relevant to the region and three focus countries.
31.07.2021	Report outlining the results of one regional survey and three national surveys on SME resource efficiency needs and barriers carried out amongst the potential I-GO partners and their SME networks.
31.07.2021	Report detailing the results from 40 SME virtual sustainability assessments that review the SMEs ability to comply with sustainability criteria.
31.08.2021	Delivery of I-GO and SPP virtual training workshops, including managing participants, agenda, translation, training materials, and workshop summary
31.08.2021	Report detailing the results of a gap-analysis of compiled knowledge products and support services, also covering service provider listing recommendations, recommendations for development of new or adaptation of existing products and services and recommendations on standards/certifications most relevant to SMEs. All approved knowledge products and support services uploaded to SME Support Centre.
30.09.2021	Excel compilation of adapted and translated SME self-assessment tool content and all approved content uploaded to the SME self-assessment system.
30.09.2021	Development of priority I-GO and SPP promotional campaign deployment options through I-GO partners.
30.11.2021	Report detailing outcome of advisory service to SMEs following sustainability assessment.
17.12.2021	Report summarizing the promotional activity with each engaged I-GO partner.
17.12.2021	Summary report of support provided to I-GO users through the technical help desk function.

2. Obligations

The selected entity shall:

- Have the necessary equipment and personnel for the development of the technical assistance products.
- Allow UNEP to provide up to 3 rounds of comments to each product delivered, without implying any cost to the contracting entity.

3. Selection criteria

The contracted organisation will be expected to provide a team with the required qualifications and experience to successfully deliver the outline activities in the EECCA region and three focus countries. It is expected that the core team members will have advanced degrees in environmental management, sustainable development and/or environmental studies, and/or social science; a first level degree with relevant experience can be considered in place of an advanced level degree.

The core team members of the contract organisations should be able to demonstrate the following experience:

- A minimum of 7 years year accumulated work experience working in the field of environment and sustainable development related projects and that includes experience with an international development organization.
- A sound understanding of SME resource efficiency in the EECCA region, specific experience within the three focus countries is desirable.
- A sound understanding of public procurement within the three focus countries.
- Relevant work experience in economies in transition or developing countries, as well as a deep understanding of context in the EECCA region.
- Strong project management experience and planning, training, liaison and organization skills; initiative to identify alternatives ahead of project challenges.
- Communications experience, particularly with outreach, presentation, and coordination at various stakeholder levels.
- Knowledge of the UN system is an advantage.
- Fluency in oral and written English and Russian is required. Team members delivering activities related to the focus countries should also have the relevant language abilities.

6. Information required

The proposing organization should provide UNEP with the information below in a PDF document.

A. General information

- a. Name of the proposing entity
- b. Country of origin and registration:
- c. Type of legal entity / organization:
- d. Date of formation:
- e. Address:
- f. Website:
- g. Name of the contact person:
- h. E-mail address:
- i. Phone number:

B. Technical proposal

- a. Organizational profile: present a brief description of the proposing entity, including size (number of workers), type of activities carried out and the geographical scope of its work (max 250 words).
- b. Describe the specialised knowledge and experience with similar initiatives that can be applied for the implementation of the proposed activities. This should include the organisation's experiences implementing similar, local and/or regional work. The organization should detail at least 4 experiences in a table like the one below. Experience with other United Nations organizations and/or multilateral organizations is desirable.

Table 1. Background studies

Name of the study	Contractor	Year of execution	Duratuon	Vaule of contract	Relevance for this technical assistance

C. Work plan and approach

- Provide a general description of the methodology to be used for the development of the reports
- Identify the gaps and challenges in terms of existing information for the development of the reports and how it plans to address them.
- Develop a work plan, detailing the planned activities and the timeline for their implementation.

D. Work Team

- Describe the structure of the proposed team/staff, and the work tasks (including supervision) assigned to each.
- Present the curriculum vitae of the proposed staff who will be involved in the development of the report, highlighting academic qualifications, specialized courses and relevant work experience.
- Demonstrate the language abilities of the core team members (English and Russian).

F. Financial Proposal

The applicant entity should estimate the cost of the technical assistance using the table below. Please note that the purchase of office equipment, rental of workspace and any other costs associated with the day-to-day operation of the entity are not eligible expenses. The estimated budget for this activity up to 120,000 USD.

Type of Expense	Unit	Cost per Unit	Total Cost

7. Form of presentation and deadline

Proposals must be submitted in digital format (PDF) and as a single file. The proposals must be sent to the following e-mail addresses: to Rie Tsutsumi, Regional Coordinator Resource Efficiency, UNEP (rie.tsutsumi@un.org), and to Hannes Mac Nulty, Green Industry Platform (hmacnulty@ggkp.org) no later than **Tuesday 30 March, 2021, 22:00 (CET)**.

To facilitate communication, the subject line should be: " GO4SDGs "SME Assessment" work stream in Europe"

The proposal must be submitted in English.

Interested partners can contact the project team for information on the ongoing UNDA SPP project and relevant partners. Information requests and general questions should be sent no later than Friday 19 of March 2021. Responses will be delivered through a Frequently Asked Questions document that will be shared with partners prior to the submission deadline.