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Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

HELVETAS GEORGIA

WINS Global Consult

LEDP GEORGIA Local Economic Development Project in Georgia

Terms of Reference

External Mid-Term Evaluation

Local Economic Development Project (LEDP) in Georgia

1. Introduction

This Terms of Reference (ToR) sets out the framework for the **External Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the Local Economic Development Project (LEDP) in Georgia, Phase 1 (2023–2026)**, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by the HELVETAS-WINS consortium with partners.

The evaluation will provide an **independent, formative assessment of the project's progress, results, and strategic orientation** at the start of its final year of the first phase. It will assess the project's **relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and scalability** with a focus on the interventions in the wine, tea, and eco-tourism sectors, as well as institutional mechanisms such as common marketing organizations, business associations, and inter-municipal cooperation platforms.

The findings will serve both **accountability purposes** (for SDC and stakeholders) and **learning purposes** (for the project team and partners), generating evidence-based recommendations to **inform decision-making and the design of a potential Phase 2.**

2. Background

The Local Economic Development Project (LEDP) in Georgia aims to foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Georgia's regions. The project responds to long-standing challenges of fragmented collaboration between the private sector, public institutions, and civil society, which have constrained the ability of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to grow, innovate, and create jobs.

The LEDP runs from **December 2023 to November 2026**, covering **11 municipalities across three regions**:

- **Samegrelo–Zemo Svaneti:** Senaki, Zugdidi, Poti, Khobi, Abasha
- **Guria:** Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti, Chokhatauri
- **Kvemo Kartli:** Tetritskaro, Bolnisi, Marneuli

The project's overall goal is that **women and men in targeted municipalities leverage opportunities from inclusive local economic development to improve their income and quality of life**.

The project's Theory of Change is built around three outcomes: (1) increasing **profitability and job creation** among local enterprises, enhancing the economic attractiveness of targeted municipalities, (2)enhancing the economic attractiveness of targeted municipalities, (2) improving national responsiveness to local economic needs, and (3) it assumes that by equipping local actors with the necessary tools and capacities and encouraging SME innovation, the project will contribute to better livelihoods and inclusive growth.

2.1. Key Sectors and Interventions

LEDP focuses on three economic sectors with strong local identity and growth potential, as identified through Value Chain Analyses (VCAs) and participatory validation workshops:

- **Wine sector (Kvemo Kartli):** The **wine sector intervention in Kvemo Kartli** addresses the dual challenges of low product quality and limited access to high-value markets, which keep many small wineries trapped in informal sales and unable to compete with larger producers. To overcome these barriers, the project introduces a coordinated support package that combines **specialized consultancy services in viticulture and oenology** with **practical business and marketing training**, enabling winemakers to raise quality standards and position their products more competitively. In parallel, the project supports the creation of a **regional Wine Degustation Space in Asureti**, offering small producers a shared outlet to reach tourists and residents while strengthening links to distribution channels. To sustain these efforts, the project invests in building the capacity of **local wine associations** in Bolnisi, Asureti, and Marneuli, preparing them to jointly manage sector coordination, collective branding, and advocacy and eventually act as a common marketing organisation. Through this multi-layered approach—quality improvement, business skills development, market access, and institutional strengthening—small wineries will be able to diversify markets, including retail, HoReCa, and export, while leveraging the region's Georgian-German heritage as a unique selling point. Over time, the intervention aims to transform Kvemo Kartli into a recognized wine-producing region where local identity, improved quality, and stronger collective action generate higher incomes, jobs, and sustainable economic resilience.
- **Tea sector (Guria):** The **tea sector intervention in Guria** tackles the sector's weak market access, low visibility, and limited coordination that leave much of Georgian tea unsold and undervalued. To address these systemic gaps, the project will support the establishment of a **centralized tea auction system**, complemented by a digital platform, where processors can transparently grade, showcase, and sell their tea to both local and international buyers. This will be reinforced by capacity building for processors and the **Georgian Tea Producers Association**, strengthening their ability to advocate, coordinate, and market the sector. At the same time, processors will receive training in quality control, packaging, and promotion, while being linked to support schemes from Enterprise Georgia, Rural Development Agency, and municipalities for equipment and infrastructure upgrades. By connecting producers,

blenders, packers, and buyers through one transparent marketplace, the intervention is designed to reduce unsold volumes, ensure fair pricing, and modernize the Georgian tea sector. Over time, this systemic solution will expand producer–buyer linkages, attract premium markets for sustainably produced tea, and create fairer, more resilient income opportunities for farmers and processors, including women, youth, and marginalized groups.

- **Eco-tourism (Kolkheti National Park area):** The **Kolkheti National Park (KNP) eco-tourism intervention** addresses the fragmented infrastructure, weak services, and lack of institutional coordination among the six adjacent municipalities from Samegrelo and Guria that have kept the region's rich natural and cultural assets underutilized. The project supports the establishment of an **inter-municipal Eco-Kolkheti Working Group**, which is evolving into a permanent association uniting municipalities, the private sector, and civil society to jointly plan, manage, and promote tourism in the region. In parallel, LEDP invests in **demonstration infrastructure**, such as the Chaladidi Visitor Center (Senaki Municipality) and eco-trail facilities, to showcase quality visitor services and stimulate replication by local entrepreneurs. Business acceleration efforts, including tailored finance, advisory services, and market linkages, enable micro and small enterprises—particularly women, youth, and disadvantaged groups—to enter and thrive in the eco-tourism value chain. In parallel, to leverage the Municipal Development Fund (MDF)'s expertise in infrastructure investment, LEDP is preparing a comprehensive proposal for MDF (under the Ministry of Infrastructure) to support the development of integrated tourism infrastructure across the Kolkheti National Park area. The proposal will also integrate lessons from inter-municipal coordination, ensuring that infrastructure development benefits all six municipalities and supports the broader Eco-Kolkheti Working Group's objectives of unified planning, resource management, and joint promotion. A unified **Kolkheti brand** and joint promotion campaigns will connect local actors to national and international markets. Through this combination of governance innovation, infrastructure upgrading, and inclusive business development, the intervention aims to transform KNP into a recognizable, sustainable eco-tourism destination that generates jobs, diversifies livelihoods, empowers marginalized groups, and safeguards the park's unique biodiversity.

These interventions pilot innovative, scalable models of local economic development by combining **business initiatives**, **institutional strengthening** (BAs, CMOs), and **inter-municipal cooperation**.

2.2. Political Context and its Effect on LEDP

Since late 2024, Georgia has entered a period of heightened political polarization following parliamentary elections. The government's decision to **pause EU integration**, coupled with the adoption of the so-called **"Foreign Agents" (FARA) Law** and a new **grant registration law**, has

reshaped the operating environment for civil society and donor-funded projects. This has been accompanied by mass protests, international criticism, and a shrinking civic space.

These political shifts have had **direct implications for LEDP**:

- **National-level engagement (Outcome 3)** was disrupted. Plans to transform the National LED Core Group into a Policy and Practice Lab stalled, as key partners withdrew from collaboration with government bodies due to reputational and operational risks.
- **Civil society actors** faced new restrictions, making them more cautious in engaging with donor-supported initiatives and local authorities.
- **Municipalities**, once open to inter-municipal and international cooperation, became more risk-averse, slowing progress on cross-level dialogue.

In response, LEDP has **strategically reoriented** its efforts:

- Strengthening **regional and sectoral systems** (wine, tea, eco-tourism) where tangible results are achievable.
- Piloting **Common Marketing Organisations (CMOs)** as more sustainable, member-driven alternatives to weak Business Associations.
- Supporting **inter-municipal cooperation** in the Kolkheti region as a model for collaborative governance.
- Deepening cooperation with **other donor programs** (UNDP, GIZ, Swisscontact, EU Delegation) to pool resources and safeguard results.
- Reduce activities at national level, except for the promotion of the MSD approach, and focus on regional economic development.

The project also prioritized the consolidation of its **Monitoring and Results Measurement (MRM) system**, aligned with the **DCED Standard**. A **DCED pre-audit (October 2025)** marks a milestone in strengthening evidence-based learning and accountability.

Through these adjustments, LEDP continues to pursue its mission under challenging conditions, focusing on **localized, participatory, and market-driven approaches** that are resilient to political volatility and relevant for donor decision-making on a possible Phase 2.

2.3. Key Partners and Their Roles

Category	Partners	Role	Added Value	Limitations
Strategic Partners	MRD, MoESD, MEPA	Align LED with national policies	Policy expertise, national visibility, Sustainability	Political volatility, centralized structures
Implementation Partners	EG, NALAG, Agri Centers, local consultants	SME support, finance facilitation, capacity building	Technical know-how, outreach channels, sustainability	Resource limits, bureaucracy, dependent on higher political decisions
Knowledge Partners	ISET-PI, VETs, universities	Research, training, sector analysis	Analytical capacity, education networks	Reduced engagement: vulnerability to FARA and grants laws, limited applied LED focus
Coordination Partners	GIZ, Swisscontact, UNDP, EU, FAO	Technical assistance, donor co-funding	Experience in PSD, systemic facilitation, complementarity	Balancing donor priorities, cautious in politics
Market Actors	SMEs, CMOs, BAs, Fis	Products/services, markets, finance, advocacy	Private sector ownership, systemic potential	BAs weak, CMOs emerging, SMEs under-resourced
Civil Society	Local CSOs	Inclusion, community engagement, advocacy	Local trust, bottom-up initiatives	Shrinking civic space, limited political leverage, vulnerability to FARA and grants laws
Institutional Anchors	APA, KNP Admin, Municipalities	Resource governance, inter-municipal cooperation	Mandated roles, sustainability potential	Limited budgets, weak coordination without facilitation, dependent on higher political decisions

3. Objective, Scope, and Focus of the Evaluation

3.1. Evaluation Object

The evaluation will focus on **the first 2 implementation years of LEDP's Phase 1 (Dec 2023–Feb 2026)**. It will assess the project's three outcomes, with particular attention to the **sectoral interventions in wine, tea, and eco-tourism**, as well as the enabling environment and institutional mechanisms introduced under Outcomes 2 and, to a lesser extent, 3. The review will consider both results to date and the plausibility of achieving intended outcomes by the end of the phase.

3.2. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the Mid-Term Evaluation is to provide an independent, formative assessment of LEDP at the beginning of its final year of Phase 1. By making clear references to the project's logframe, indicators, and targets, the MTE will ensure that a systematic assessment of progress against planned results is made. The MTE should be conducted in line with the **SDC Evaluation Policy and How-to Note on Evaluation** (2018; revised OECD-DAC criteria, 2019) to ensure consistency with SDC's quality standards and accountability requirements.

The evaluation serves two complementary functions:

1. **Accountability** – to provide SDC, the Swiss public, and partners with evidence on the project's performance, use of resources, and early results, structured around the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria.
2. **Learning and Adaptation** – to generate actionable lessons for the project team, partners, and stakeholders, ensuring that strategies and approaches are refined for greater effectiveness, sustainability, and systemic change in a volatile context.

The Objectives of the MTE are:

- Assess the **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and potential for replication and scalability** of the approaches and mechanisms promoted through the LED project.
- Review the extent to which LEDP has adapted to Georgia's **changing political and economic environmen**t, including restricted civic space and stalled national-level engagement.
- Test the **validity of the project's Theory of Change** and assess **how effectively systemic and participatory approaches contribute to sustainable market transformation**.
- Assess the project's **implementation and results against the updated Logframe** (including indicator targets) and budget as of February 2025, taking full account of the local and global implementation context.
- Provide evidence on the **viability and scalability of institutional mechanisms** (e.g. Common Marketing Organisations, Business Associations, inter-municipal cooperation platforms) as systemic solutions.

- **Inform decision-making on the design of Phase 2,** ensuring that donor confidence is secured and that the project's strategic direction remains aligned with SDC's cooperation objectives.
- Specify **how the evaluation findings will be used** by SDC, LEDP management, and implementing partners to inform strategic steering and the Phase 2 design.

Main users of the evaluation report would include SDC, HELVETAS, EG, ISET Policy Institute, NALAG, participating local self-governments, and relevant line ministries (MRD, MoESD, and MEPA at the technical level). All key stakeholders will be involved in the evaluation process to enhance ownership of the findings, draw lessons learned, and ensure greater use of the evaluation results.

3.3. Scope

The evaluation will cover **Phase 1 of LEDP**, focusing on progress achieved up to the mid-term review in early 2026.

The evaluation will be guided by the **OECD/DAC criteria (2019)** and will assess:

- **Relevance** – alignment with the needs of targeted stakeholders and local development priorities.
- **Coherence** – complementarity and synergies with other donor and government programs.
- **Effectiveness** – achievement of intended outcomes and early systemic changes in LED systems.
- **Efficiency** – optimal use of financial, human, and technical resources.
- **Sustainability and scalability** – durability of results and potential for replication in other regions/sectors.

LEDP is implemented in **11 municipalities across three regions** (Kvemo Kartli, Guria, Samegrelo–Zemo Svaneti). The MTE will assess a **representative sample of municipalities**, balancing (1) resource constraints – focusing on a manageable set for in-depth analysis, (2) strategic importance – selecting cases of strong progress and areas with specific challenges; (3) diversity of contexts – ensuring regional and sectoral variation; and (4) feasibility – considering logistical and operational factors to ensure data quality.

The MTE will concentrate on:

A. the **three sectoral interventions** (Outcome 2) that form the backbone of Phase 1:

- **Wine sector** (Kvemo Kartli)
- **Tea sector** (Guria)

- **Eco-tourism** (Kolkheti National Park) and

B. The complementary capacity building interventions (Outcome 1 and 3) on:

- **Organisational development** (LSG Economic Units, Sectoral Associations)
- **Institutional development** (intermunicipal collaboration and coordination)
- **Policy development** (Policy & Practice Lab, Smart Specialisation Strategy).

3.4. Tentative Evaluation Questions

Relevance

- Q1. How valid is the project's Theory of Change in capturing the overall logic and intended results, and to what extent are the sectoral and capacity development interventions aligned with the overall log-frame and evolving context?
- Q2. To what extent were selected localities, sectors, and implementing partners chosen based on market opportunity, feasibility, and their potential to benefit to target population including disadvantaged groups (e.g., women, youth, minorities, IDPs)?
- Q3. How well do the overall project and its interventions address underlying systemic barriers—such as poor coordination, weak support services, or exclusionary practices—that hinder inclusive local economic development?

Coherence

- Q4. How well is LEDP aligned with SDC's Cooperation Strategy and complementary initiatives (e.g., UNDP M4EG, GIZ PITD, Swisscontact RSMED), and how are synergies or conflicts being managed?

Effectiveness

- Q5. To what extent are the project's outcomes and outputs being achieved in line with the log-frame indicators and targets, and how are the results from each intervention contributing to the achievement of overall project objectives?
- Q6. What early signs of systemic or long-term change are emerging (e.g., in market linkages, governance structures, or institutional practices), and how significant or credible are they?
- Q7. To what extent has the project effectively engaged disadvantaged groups (e.g., women, youth, minorities, IDPs), and what evidence exists that these groups are benefiting from project outcomes across the targeted sectors?
- Q8. What significant unintended effects (positive or negative) have been observed, how have they influenced the project's implementation, and how has the project responded?

- Q9. In which areas has the project achieved the strongest results, what factors have contributed to these successes, and how can the LED project build on or expand these achievements? Conversely, in which areas have results been less evident, what have been the constraining factors, and how has project management addressed them?

Efficiency

- Q10. To what extent have project resources (financial, human, technical) been used efficiently to achieve outputs and outcomes, and how effectively has the project leveraged partnerships, co-funding, and local capacities to maximize value for money?
- Q11. To what extent have the project's management structure, implementation strategy, and operational processes supported timely and cost-effective delivery of the expected results? Are expenditures proportionate to the results achieved?
- Q12. To what extent has the project's MRM/KML system contributed to efficient implementation by enabling timely performance tracking, informed decision-making, and adaptive management?
- Q13. What internal and external factors (including, FARA, grants law, ongoing protest and political shifts) have influenced the project's efficiency and adaptability? How effectively has the project adapted its implementation strategy in response to these factors?

Sustainability and Scalability

- Q14. What is the likelihood that supported services, institutions, and coordination mechanisms will continue post-project, and what factors affect this?
- Q15. Which approaches or interventions show high potential for replication or scaling, and what conditions or capacities are needed to support this?
- Q16. To what extent are local actors (e.g., SMEs, municipalities, associations) equipped and motivated to independently maintain and build on project outcomes, and what gaps still need to be addressed?
- Q17. How do the project's results, lessons, and systems-level changes inform the design and strategic orientation of a potential second phase?

4. Methodology

The evaluation will apply a **mixed-methods approach**, combining quantitative and qualitative data to ensure robust and triangulated findings. The methodology should be proportionate to the scope of the MTE and aligned with OECD/DAC criteria (2019) and SDC's evaluation standards.

Key elements include:

- **Document review** – analysis of project documents (ProDoc, logframe, intervention guides, monitoring data, semi-annual/annual reports, baseline/midline studies, DCED pre-audit results, partner reports, etc).
- **Key informant interviews (KIIs)** – with project staff, municipalities, government agencies, SMEs, sectoral associations, CSOs, financial institutions, donor/implementing partners, etc.
- **Focus group discussions (FGDs)** – with SMEs, communities, women's and youth groups, to capture perspectives on inclusiveness and local ownership.
- **Field visits & case studies** – to selected municipalities across the three regions, examining the wine, tea, and eco-tourism interventions as practical pilots of systemic change.
- **Participatory validation** – workshops with stakeholders to test findings, discuss lessons, and co-develop recommendations.

Analytical approaches:

- **Contribution analysis** – to assess the plausibility of LEDP's contribution to observed outcomes and emerging impacts.
- **Political economy lens** – to interpret how the national context (e.g., FARA law, decentralization reforms, civic space restrictions) has shaped the project's effectiveness and sustainability.
- **Gender Equality & Social Inclusion (GESI) analysis** – to evaluate how women, youth, minorities, and disadvantaged groups participate and benefit.
- **Systemic change framework (M4P/DCED)** – to assess scale, sustainability, crowding-in, and systemic effects beyond direct beneficiaries.

Sampling Strategy:

The sampling strategy will combine purposive and stratified approaches, ensuring adequate representation across target regions, intervention sectors (wine, tea, eco-tourism), and key stakeholder groups (government, private sector, CSOs, communities).

Quality assurance:

The evaluators are expected to apply recognized standards of evaluation quality, including reliability, impartiality, transparency, and ethical considerations. Draft findings will be validated with SDC and project stakeholders before finalization.

Flexibility:

- The methodology must remain adaptive to Georgia's dynamic political context.

- The inception phase should refine the scope, sampling, and data collection plan to ensure feasibility and rigor.
- A risk mitigation strategy should be included in the inception report addressing:

- Access issues in politically sensitive areas.

- Safety concerns from protests or instability.

- Data quality risks (e.g., socially desirable responses).

- Seasonal/rural constraints during winter fieldwork.

- Logistical delays or restrictions from local authorities.

- Mitigation may include flexible sampling, conflict-sensitive methods, triangulation, confidentiality safeguards, and contingency plans (e.g., remote interviews).

5. Timeframe and Process

The Mid-Term Evaluation will be conducted over a period of approximately **14 weeks** between January and April 2026.

The indicative level of effort will be:

- International consultant/team leader: 20 days
- National consultants/thematic experts: 40 days

The process will combine desk review, field data collection, participatory workshops, and analysis. The schedule is designed to respect the time availability of stakeholders and account for rural seasonality, local holidays, and logistical constraints.

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Activity	Dates	Responsibility	Description	Deliverable
Kick-off meeting with evaluation team	08.01.2026	LEDP, SDC, Consultants	Online/onsite; align expectations and methodology	**The Meeting Minutes** taken by LEDP and shared with the participants no later than **09.01.26**
Sharing of requested documents	08–09.01.2026	LEDP	Evaluation team receives access to SharePoint folders; archiving system explained	**Share Point Folders** shared with the consultants no later than **09.01.2026**
Inception phase (desk review, initial interviews)	09–26.01.2026	Consultants	Review of key documents; preliminary data collection; online interviews with LEDP staff; drafting the Inception Report that should include detailed evaluation methodology (balanced sampling strategy, data triangulation methods, data collection and analysis method, guides and questionaries, etc.), adjusted evaluation questions, and timeframe	**Draft Inception Report**, submitted to LEDP and SDC no later than **26.01.26**
Feedback on Inception Report	27.01–02.02.2026	LEDP, SDC	Written and/or oral feedback of each separately to consultant	The **report with comments** shared with the consultants no later than **02.02.26**
Logistical preparation for field mission	27.01–06.02.2026	Consultants, LEDP	Travel, scheduling, translation; LEDP provides contacts and technical info, consultants handle stakeholder communication; logistical plan submitted with final inception report	**Logistical Plan** submitted as an annex or chapter in the Final Inception Report no later than **06.02.26**

Activity	Dates	Responsibility	Description	Deliverable
Reviewing the comments and finalisation of the Inception report	03.02 - 06.02.2026	Consultants	Revised report incorporating LEDP feedback	The **Final Inception Report** submitted to LEDP no later than **06.02.26**
Field mission: data collection (interviews, FGDs, workshops, data entry & transcription)	09.02–01.03.2026	Consultants	Visits to wine, tea, and eco-tourism municipalities; national stakeholders' interviews; additional LEDP staff interviews; consultants enter and transcribe data in parallel with collection	**The databases and transcribes/notes** fro m the interviews submitte d to LEDP not later than **01.03.26**
Preparation for debriefing workshop	02–09.03.2026	Consultants Participants: LEDP, SDC	Synthesis of preliminary findings; preparation of presentation materials; alignment on key discussion points	**Debriefing Workshop** conducted no later than **09.03.26**
Data analysis, Draft Report preparation, and preparation for the Validation Workshop	09–30.03.2026	Consultants	Triangulation and systemic analysis of collected data to identify findings, patterns, and lessons. Preparation of the full **Draft Evaluation Report**, including preliminary conclusions and recommendations aligned with DAC criteria and the project's Theory of Change. Development a plan and materials for the **Validation Workshop**, including a draft agenda, visual presentation of key findings, and participatory exercises that ensure the findings are tested and refined through stakeholder feedback.	**Draft Evaluation Report & Draft Validation Workshop Plan and Materials** submitted to LEDP and SDC no later than **30.03.26**

Activity	Dates	Responsibility	Description	Deliverable
Feedback on Draft Report and Validation Workshop Plan/Materials	31.03–03.04.2026	LEDP, SDC	Written and verbal feedback	**The Report and Plan with comments** shared with the consultants no later than **03.04.26**
Preparation for validation workshop	04–08.04.2026	National consultants	Finalization of workshop plan and materials based on LEDP feedback; logistics and invitations	**The Validation Workshop (3-4 hours, face-to-face)** conducted no later than **10.04.26** **The Notes** from the workshop submitted to LEDP no later than **13.04.26** **Participants**: LEDP team, SDC, Stakeholders
Finalisation of the Evaluation Report	20.04.2026	Consultants	Maximum 30 pages + evaluation grid + annexes; incorporating feedback from validation workshop	**The Final Evaluation Report** submitted to LEDP and SDC no later than **20.04.26**
Management Response	Apr–May 2026	LEDP	Internal LEDP process to review and respond to evaluation findings	**Management Response** Report prepared by LED/Helvetas and submitted to SDC no later than **mid-May 2026**
Dissemination of results	May 2026	LEDP	Sharing results with project partners, donors, and other stakeholders	**KML materials** prepared and shared no later than **end of May 2026**

Proposed structure of the evaluation report:

Cover page

Table of contents

Acronyms and abbreviations

Acknowledgments

Main Body:

- Executive summary (3 pages max.)
- Introduction
- Description of the project
- Methodology
- Findings, incl. results
- Conclusions
- Recommendations and lessons learnt

Annexes (compulsory):

- Terms of reference
- Filled out SDC Evaluation Grid
- Complete list of stakeholders and others consulted and interviewed
- Detailed description of the review process, including data sources and possible

methodological weaknesses and limitations

- Analysis of the intervention logic (log frame or ToC): extent to which objectives

have been achieved

- Other deliverables that were requested in the ToR

6. Reference Documents

After signing the contract, the MRM manager will provide the evaluator(s) with a package of key documents to support the desk review and inception phase. These will include, but are not limited to:

Project-specific documents

- LEDP Project Document (Phase 1, 2023–2026) and approved log frame.
- Financial agreements and budget documentation.
- Annual and semi-annual progress reports (2023–2025).

- Intervention guides and sector/value chain analyses (wine, tea, eco-tourism).
- Monitoring and Results Measurement (MRM) system documents, including DCED compliance tools and the pre-audit report (2025).
- Baseline and scoping studies (e.g., tea sector in Guria, wine in Kvemo Kartli, eco-tourism around Kolkheti National Park).
- Workshop reports, partner agreements, and minutes of key coordination meetings.
- Political Economic Analysis (PEA) (2024, 2025).
- Smart Specialisation Analysis.

SDC strategic documents

- Swiss Cooperation Programme South Caucasus 2022–2025.
- SDC Evaluation Policy and How-to Note on Evaluation (2018, with DAC 2019 criteria).
- SDC thematic guidance on private sector development, market systems development, and local governance.

Contextual documents

- Relevant national laws, policies, and strategies (e.g., Economic Development Strategy, regional development policies, tourism and agriculture strategies).
- Donor program documents (e.g., UNDP M4EG, GIZ PITD, EU Delegation, Swisscontact RSMED) for coherence analysis.
- Political economy analyses and recent studies on decentralization and civic space in Georgia.

Other resources

- A list of key stakeholders and contact persons for interviews (national, regional, and local levels).
- Any additional reference material identified during the inception phase.

7. Team Composition and Qualifications

The evaluation will be conducted by an **independent external team** with demonstrated expertise in evaluation and in the thematic and geographic areas relevant to LEDP.

Role	Responsibilities	Essential Competencies
Team Leader	Leads overall coordination and management of the evaluation. Ensures methodological rigor and quality assurance. Oversees analysis, report drafting, and presentation of findings. Main contact for LEDP and SDC.	- Minimum 10 years of experience leading complex evaluations in development cooperation. - Strong knowledge of systemic/market systems development (MSD/M4P), private sector development, and local economic development. - Proven application of OECD/DAC criteria, SDC/SEVAL standards, and contribution analysis. -Excellent skills in qualitative and quantitative evaluation methodologies. -Fluent in English; excellent analytical writing and synthesis skills. - Experience managing multidisciplinary teams and coordinating multi-stakeholder evaluation processes.
National/Local Expert(s)	Conduct fieldwork, organize interviews and focus groups, provide contextual and political economy insights. Translate and support communication with Georgian-speaking stakeholders. Facilitate validation workshop.	- At least 5 years of experience in evaluation, research, or development projects in Georgia. - Strong knowledge of the Georgian governance system, SME ecosystem, and rural/municipal development. - Excellent facilitation, interviewing, and stakeholder engagement skills. - Fluent in Georgian and English (written and spoken). - Experience contributing to participatory and inclusive evaluations. - Ability to synthesize findings from diverse local perspectives.
Thematic Expert (MSD/Private Sector/LED)	Brings thematic expertise in systemic change, private sector development, and/or local economic development.	- Minimum 7 years of experience in MSD, value chains, LED, or related economic development fields.

	Contributes to ToC/logframe analysis, indicator interpretation, and assessment of sustainability and scalability.	- Familiarity with DCED Standard for Results Measurement and systemic change diagnostics. - Expertise in inclusive economic development and market facilitation tools. - Ability to analyse constraints/opportunities in business environments. - Knowledge of gender and social inclusion within private sector development. - Fluent in English; ability to provide actionable, technically sound recommendations.

8. Reporting

The evaluator(s) will report to the **MRM Manager** and/or the **Team Leader of LEDP** for the entire duration of the assignment. Operational support (logistics, access to stakeholders, scheduling of meetings) will be provided by the project team. Regular communication will be maintained through email, online calls, and in-person debriefings as needed. Draft deliverables will be submitted to LEDP for feedback, with the final report to be delivered to LEDP.

9. Suitability and award criteria

Evaluator(s) must be **independent of Helvetas, SDC, FDFA, and the implementing partners** and must not have been involved in the design or implementation of LEDP. Proposals will be assessed based on the following **suitability and award criteria**:

Suitability criteria (minimum requirements):

- Proven independence from SDC, Helvetas and project co- implementers.
- Demonstrated expertise in evaluation of development programmes using DAC/SDC standards.
- Relevant thematic expertise in local economic development, private sector development, and/or market systems development.
- Regional and contextual knowledge of Georgia and/or the South Caucasus.
- Proven experience in applying gender-sensitive and inclusive evaluation methodologies.
- Fluency in English; Georgian language capacity within the team is required.

Award criteria (weighted for scoring):

- Understanding of the assignment and quality of proposed methodology.
- Relevant experience with similar evaluations (team CVs and past assignments).
- Experience with systemic/market systems evaluations and DCED Standard.
- Ability to facilitate participatory processes and communicate findings clearly.
- Financial offer (value for money).

The weighting of technical and financial criteria will follow FDFA procurement standards: **70% technical / 30% financial**.

10. Application procedure

Technical and financial proposals must be submitted by email at procurements.geo@helvetas.org no later than **31st October, 18:00 Tbilisi time**.

The **technical proposal** (maximum 15 pages) should include:

1. Understanding of the assignment.
2. Proposed methodology and approach.
3. Experience with similar assignments (including CVs of proposed experts).
4. Draft evaluation workplan and timeline.
5. Draft report outline.
6. References from similar assignments.
7. Any other relevant information.

The **financial proposal** (maximum 1 page) should be submitted separately and must clearly outline:

- Daily rates of each team member in **CHF**,
- Estimated number of working days, and
- Any other direct costs (travel, accommodation, logistics).

11. Contracting

The contract will be awarded by Helvetas Georgia (within two weeks) following an analysis of technical and financial proposals in accordance with internal procurements policy.