TERMS OF REFERENCE
TAJIKISTAN: GENDER-RESPONSIVE INVESTMENT CLIMATE REFORM

1. BACKGROUND

Strategic Fit

In line with its Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality (2016-2020) (the ‘Strategy’), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the ‘EBRD’ or the ‘Bank’) aims to increase women’s economic empowerment and equality of opportunity in the countries where it invests. Promoting women’s access to finance and entrepreneurship is one of the three operational priorities of the EBRD’s Strategy, specifically, the Bank has committed to ‘undertake targeted research to support gender-responsive investment climate reforms and discuss with authorities specific policies which are important to support women entrepreneurs in EBRD CoOs’.

In line with the priorities set out in the EBRD’s Country Strategy for Tajikistan, the EBRD has an ongoing programme to support private sector development and strengthen the investment climate in Tajikistan through, inter alia, its support to the Tajikistan Investment Council. Since 2013, the EBRD has also supported the Government of Tajikistan to improve the gender impact of its economic policy and private sector development strategies through a number of activities including a Symposium on Central Asian Business Women, targeted analytical work, and technical assistance to the Taskforce to Support Women Entrepreneurs.

The Investment Climate and Women Entrepreneurs in Tajikistan

There are approximately 52,000 women-led businesses in Tajikistan, the majority of which are sole entrepreneurs according to the baseline assessment for the EBRD’s Tajikistan Women in Business Programme. Women are under-represented across all business categories. Both national statistics and banks’ portfolio data indicate that women-led businesses are concentrated at the micro end of the spectrum and that women-led enterprises have fewer employees and lower turnover than men-led enterprises. Most women are patent-holders, a classification reserved to individual entrepreneurs running very small businesses. The larger the business, the less likely it is for it to be led by a woman: only 8% of privately-owned legal entities (larger businesses) are women-led.

MSMEs in general find difficulties in operating their businesses in Tajikistan, but investment climate problems hit women-led businesses even harder. In spite of some positive improvements which have led to Tajikistan moving up the World Bank’s Doing Business rankings in recent years, MSMEs in Tajikistan face a number of challenges. In particular, the country ranks low in terms of reliability and cost of electricity supply, tax payments and regulations, and corruption. Women entrepreneurs in Tajikistan face multiple challenges in setting up and running their businesses and for a number of reasons, tend to be impacted more than men by the same investment climate constraints. In general, women entrepreneurs

1 Maxwell Stamp, July 2016, Baseline Assessment for the Tajikistan Women in Business Programme.
report greater bureaucratic hurdles than men, including in relation to tax administration and the time it takes to register a business. For example, women-owned businesses report needing an average of 10 more days than men to register their enterprises and female individual entrepreneurs are subject to more inspections than men (although these inspections tend to be shorter).^2^  

Partly as a result of deterioration in the investment climate, the majority of businesses still operate in the informal economy in Tajikistan. Formal businesses represent only a fraction of total businesses. In 2006, the size of the informal economy in Tajikistan was estimated to represent 60.9% of GDP and tax avoidance amounted to about one-third of GDP.  

Recently there have been a number of programmes to support women’s entrepreneurship in Tajikistan – e.g. Presidential Grants, National Programme to Support Entrepreneurship including an item on women entrepreneurs. However, there is limited capacity among policy making bodies to systematically either identify opportunities for investment climate reform that addresses the needs of women entrepreneurs and/or or to assess the impact of proposed reforms on women-led businesses. The Investment Council and the Taskforce to Support Women Entrepreneurship are, however, well-placed to undertake an advisory role in this area. Improving the capacity of such institutions to undertake gender-responsive economic policy analysis can contribute to reforms that improve the investment climate for both, men and women entrepreneurs in Tajikistan.  

**Link to Investments – Tajikistan Women in Business Programme**  
The policy dialogue activities associated with this TC will complement the work undertaken by the EBRD at the investment level through the Tajikistan Women in Business Programme. By identifying regulatory and policy barriers that women-led businesses face in formalising their businesses, as well as growing and accessing finance through financial institutions; and contributing to address them through policy dialogue activities, the TC will contribute to the market’s expansion to meet women’s banking needs in Tajikistan. This is an important opportunity given the large size of the informal sector in Tajikistan, in comparison with the very small formal women-led MSME segment in the country (circa 52,000 businesses). Hence, policy dialogue and reform under this programme, and as a result of it, will contribute to expand the market for women’s banking in Tajikistan and for the successful uptake of an EBRD Women in Business Programme in the future.  

**2. OBJECTIVE**  
The Bank wishes to engage a Consultant to: (a) conduct a gender responsive investment climate assessment in Tajikistan to identify legal and policy related obstacles that women-led businesses find to start and operate their businesses, with a particular focus on those operating in the informal sector; (b) use the findings of the assessment to build capacity.  

---

www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/54a577004b59e256a296a299f36eeac26e1c2/2/TJ_BEE_Survey2009En.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&attachment=true&id=1339074918239
gender responsive investment climate reform for strategic actors and policy makers in Tajikistan; (c) support EBRD in conducting policy dialogue towards removing policy and regulatory constraints to women’s entrepreneurship; and (d) develop a methodology to replicate in other EBRD promoted Investment Councils to improve policy makers capacity to do gender-responsive investment climate policy analysis and reform.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

3.1. Gender responsive investment climate assessment

The consultant will conduct an assessment of the investment climate in Tajikistan to identify the legal, regulatory and policy related obstacles that women and men entrepreneurs face in establishing, formalising and operating their businesses. This information will be elicited through a legal and policy review; a survey of men-led and women-led MSMEs; and focus group discussions with business women (operating both in the formal and informal economy) as well as interviews with key stakeholders. A detailed methodology of the assessment is available upon request.

As part of the assessment, the consultant will use political economy analysis to undertake an institutional assessment and stakeholder map of influential actors in the policy making process in Tajikistan in order to identify strategic actors to participate in the capacity building activities as part of this project, as well as recommendations on how to enhance gender responsive policy making in Tajikistan.

3.2. Capacity building on gender responsive investment policy analysis

3.2.1 Gender Responsive Investment Climate Capacity Building Toolkit and Training Materials

The consultant will develop a toolkit with checklists to conduct ex-ante gender impact analysis of investment climate reforms, and other relevant operational tools to support policy makers in gender-responsive investment climate policy analysis and formulation. The Toolkit is meant to be used for the training of Tajik policy makers (see 3.2.2) but also for similar capacity building events in other EBRD promoted Investment Councils in EBRD Countries of Operations.

3.2.2 Training for Tajik Policy Makers

The Consultant shall design and deliver a one day training event on the topic of gender responsive investment policy analysis in Tajikistan, including members of the Investment Council of Tajikistan and the members of the Taskforce to Support Women Entrepreneurs, as well as other critical stakeholders involved in policy making, as identified by the stakeholder analysis (see 3.1). The training will build on the findings of the investment climate assessment and, the toolkit described in 3.2.1 and international best practices on gender analysis of economic policy (e.g. IFC published Guide “Gender Dimensions of Investment Climate Reform. A Guide for Policy Makers and Practitioners”).
3.3. Policy Dialogue to improve investment climate for women-led businesses

**Roadmap for gender informed investment climate reforms.** Research findings will be integrated in ongoing policy dialogue activities undertaken in Tajikistan by the EBRD through its RO Head, members of the Gender team, Sector Specialists, RO policy adviser, as well as the members of the Investment Council. It is expected that as a result of this project, reform is undertaken in at least one of the top three priority investment climate bottlenecks for women entrepreneurs identified by the assessment. Consultants are expected to identify the top three highest impact reforms and detailed roadmaps to achieve them (including strategic actors to target for advocacy, partners, institutional procedures and timelines, etc.) for EBRD’s follow up.

In addition to this, a **policy workshop** on policies to promote and support women’s entrepreneurship in Tajikistan, targeting policy makers (MPs and members of the Government), donors, and the private sector will be undertaken as part of the workshop for overall advocacy, dissemination of findings, and policy dialogue. During the workshop, the findings of the assessment will be disseminated and dialogue on critical reforms to support women entrepreneurs in Tajikistan will be spurred. This may take place in October 2017, during Tajikistan Entrepreneurship Week.

**4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

The Consultant shall report to the Bank’s Operation Leader for this assignment from the EBRD’s Gender Team on all aspects, while liaising with the EBRD RO in Tajikistan. The Assignment is expected to be implemented over a 24-month period.

**5. DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE**

The Consultant shall produce in the course of the assignment the following deliverables and an indicative schedule of deliverables is as follows:

- **D1. Inception Report and Work Plan:** Within 3 weeks of the commencement of the assignment;
- **D2. Research Tools:** Summary findings of the desk review, conceptual framework, methodology and research tools including survey questionnaires, and protocols and fieldwork technical note: within 5 weeks of the commencement of the assignment, following fieldwork in the country;
- **D3. Survey and Focus Groups Report and Data:** Within 10 weeks of the commencement of the Assignment.
- **D4. Institutional Stakeholder Analysis:** Outline to be provided by the EBRD: within 10 weeks of commencement of the assignment.
- **D5. Recommendations** on how to enhance gender responsive policy making in Tajikistan: within 10 weeks of commencement of the assignment.
- **D6. Gender-informed investment climate assessment report** compiling findings of the desk review, survey and focus groups, other fieldwork information, the institutional and
stakeholder analysis and providing recommendations, within 12 weeks of commencement of the assignment. Outline to be provided by the EBRD;

- **D7. Toolkit on Gender-responsive Investment Climate Reform** for EBRD investment councils: 3 weeks before capacity building workshop;
- **D8. Training for Tajik Policy Makers**: 4 weeks after acceptance by the EBRD of gender-informed investment climate assessment report;
- **D9. Roadmap for top three priority reforms**, identifying strategic actors to target for advocacy, partners, institutional procedures and timelines, advocacy events, etc. for EBRD’s follow up: within 4 weeks of training for Tajik policy makers.
- **D10. Policy dialogue workshop**: Date TBD to make it coincide with relevant policy event in Tajikistan;
- **D11. Knowledge product documenting results and lessons from the project**: 5 weeks before the project’s end date;
- **D12. Presentation at EBRD HQ**: Date TBD, but no later than 5 weeks before the project’s end date;
- **D13. Final project report** (synthesizing the findings from the baseline assessment, survey results and conclusions from the capacity-building workshop/event): 3 weeks before the project’s end date.

All documents will be submitted to the EBRD in English, in electronic format. The final deliverables will be translated into Russian and submitted to the EBRD. The Consultant will also be responsible for the graphic layout and overall production of the deliverables.