



Newsletter 03/2023

14 December 2023

Armenia • Georgia • Tajikistan • Ukraine

German Sparkassenstiftung Eastern Europe and Central Asia goes viral

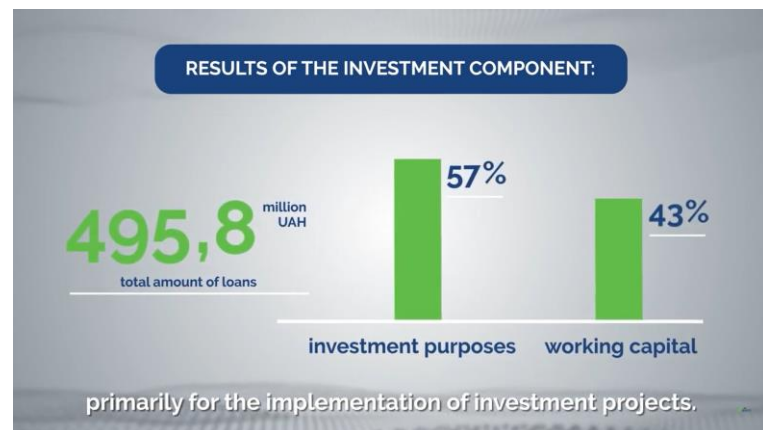
We are pleased to present our new regional website. At

www.sparkassenstiftung-easterneurope-centralasia.org

you will get detailed information about:

- our mission, core topics, and goals,
- our projects in the region and what makes them special,
- our teams and partners.

Did you know that as a result of the GIZ-funded project "Access to Finance and MSME Resilience Support", 136 small and medium-sized enterprises in **Ukraine** are able to continue their business operations even under difficult conditions?

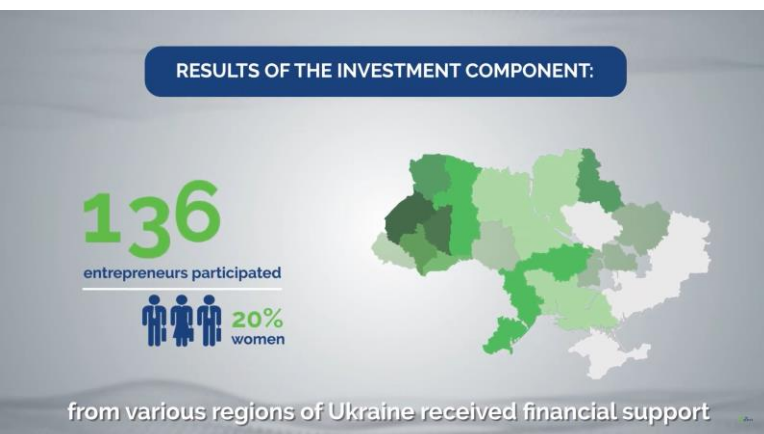


You can see the project video and other content about the people who bring our project work to life [here](#).

The GIZ-funded project in **Ukraine** is being continued with a new phase.

Well positioned for a sustainable future

In September, our partners from all countries involved in the **regional** project met for a joint planning workshop. The online meeting focused on a review of what has been achieved and wishes for the future design of the project. The cross-national exchange showed that our partners face similar challenges and that the solutions developed in the project provide valuable impetus.



We asked our partners:
Which word best describes your work with German Sparkassenstiftung?

This is what they answered:



Mentimeter, 20 responses, screenshot from the workshop

We would like to thank our partners for their great commitment, the open atmosphere, and the inspiring exchange.

The key to our customers' needs?



- Which market research method can be used for which objective and context?
- How do we design a questionnaire that provides authentic, credible answers?
- How do we find a suitable market research company?
- Examples of surveys within the Sparkassen Finance Group we can learn from
- How can we benefit from the use of generative artificial intelligence, where are the (current) limits?

The banking experts from the project offices in Armenia, Georgia, Tajikistan, and Ukraine met in the **regional** workshop “Insights into market research” to find answers to these questions. Doreen Mahnke, product manager at Sparkassenverband Westfalen-Lippe, conducted the workshop with great expertise, flexibility, and commitment.

The banking experts designed a questionnaire to analyse the needs of MSMEs in rural areas, which can be used by our partner financial institutions.

Digital transformation in the financial sector: more than „e“



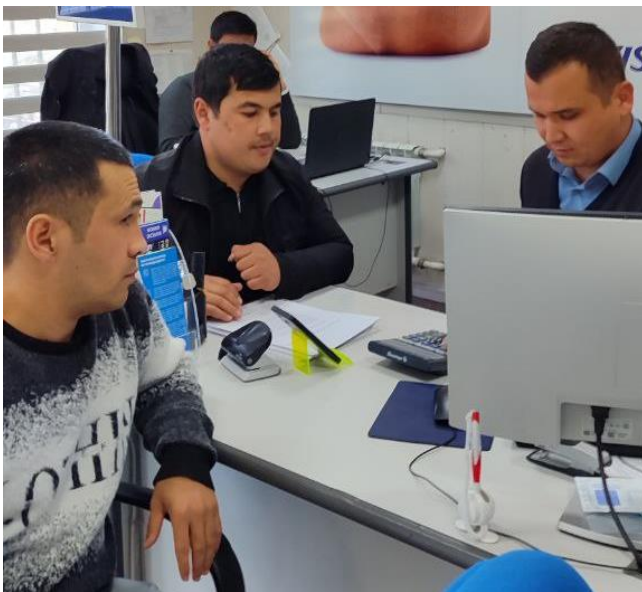
In an online panel discussion, representatives of the **Armenian** financial sector and the Sparkassen Finance Group discussed the opportunities and challenges of digital transformation from a technical, legal, regulatory and, above all, entrepreneurial perspective. They emphasised the role of people as designers of digital transformation. It is about more than converting analogue processes into e-processes. Digital transformation means rethinking and changing the corporate culture at all levels with regard to the interests of all stakeholders.

From practice for practice

Bank Eshkata, one of our partner banks in **Tajikistan**, invited trainers for financial and

entrepreneurial literacy to its branches for a three-day internship. The trainers learnt first-hand what is important in lending, deposit business, payment transactions and card business.

This experience helps them to enrich the training programme and to communicate the responsible use of finances with more practical insights. In particular, taking out a loan needs to be carefully considered.



The internship of the trainers, working at the adult education centres run by the Agency for Work and Employment, in one of our partner banks is a successful example of the networking between the supply and demand sides in our project.

New perspectives for forest protection

To support the transition from informal fuelwood related income sources to other sources of income – this was the objective of the GIZ-funded project „Enabling the implementation of Forest Sector Reform – ECO.Georgia“. In three regions of **Georgia**, 65 small entrepreneurs took part in our programmes on financial and entrepreneurial literacy, business management, and product

development. 32 of them were coached in the development of business-plans based on new or existing timber products, non-timber forest products and in eco-tourism.



During the closing event, project beneficiaries presented and offered their products. It was an excellent proof of the successful implementation of the project, which is planned to be continued in a new phase.

Watch the [project video](#).

Our current regional project

Goal

Improve access to a future-oriented, sustainable financial market for the population and MSMEs in rural areas and strengthen the sustainable use of demand-oriented financial services
 Improve the financial, entrepreneurial, and ecological competences

Countries

Armenia, Georgia, Tajikistan, Ukraine

Duration

1.1.2023-30.9.2024 (first main phase)

Partners on side

- National and Central Banks of the countries
- Commercial banks and MFIs with a strategic focus on MSMEs in rural areas
- Ministry of Labour, Migration, and Employment (Tajikistan), Associations of entrepreneurs

Partner in Germany

- Ostdeutscher Sparkassenverband
- Sparkassenverband Westfalen-Lippe
- Sparkasse Elbe-Elster, Finsterwalde

- Sparkasse Märkisches Sauerland Hemer-Menden, Hemer
- Sparkasse Muldentale, Grimma

The project is funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany (BMZ).



Armenia



Georgia



Tajikistan



Ukraine



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