The EXPERT GROUP MEETING on
Assessment of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME)
Financial Inclusion within INFF

AUGUST 23, 2022 KAZAKHSTAN,
NUR-SULTAN, HOUSE OF ECONOMICS

CONCEPT NOTE

Context
In 2015, United Nations member States agreed on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To achieve SDGs, States also agreed on the global framework of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) that aligns all domestic and international resource flows, policies and international agreements with economic, social and environmental priorities. In the AAAA, member States called for integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs)\(^1\) to help them strengthen planning processes and overcome existing impediments to financing sustainable development.

Strong MSME sector is a “must-have” for achieving goal to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, in particular to reach SDG 8.3. Therefore, inclusive SME financing is crucial element for successful and competitive Kazakhstan and it should be prioritized in INFF development. Inclusive SME financing means that individuals and businesses have access to useful and affordable financial products and services that meet their needs and such products (i.e. transactions, payments, savings, credit and insurance) are delivered in a responsible and sustainable way.

Economic Research Institute, JSC under the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan (ERI), within the framework of the Letter of Agreement (LoA) with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) have conducted desk and field research on the current state of SMEs financing to effectively and systematically embed SME financing within a wider INFF in Kazakhstan.

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\(^1\) Integrated National Financial Framework, URL: https://inff.org
The expert group meeting will discuss the following topics:

• The conducted field research methodology;
• Preliminary results of the focus group discussion conducted in the East Kazakhstan region; and
• Preliminary results of the expert interviews.

Objectives and expected outcomes
The expert group meeting gathers experts on SME development and financing and relevant stakeholders and is expected to:

• discuss preliminary results of the field research and verify key findings;
• discuss how national development plans/strategies in Kazakhstan reflect the SME financial inclusion aspects;
• identify main needs and gaps in SME financial inclusion in various communities;
• explore areas for cooperation among entrepreneurs and financial service providers to better access financial services available at community and regional levels;
• discuss financing options to support SME sector.

Results of the expert group discussion is expected to feed into the research paper to be prepared within the LoA.

Participants
The expert group meeting will gather representatives from relevant government agencies, business development institutions, and key experts from academia, private sector, think tanks and international organisations contributing to the promotion of SME sector in Kazakhstan.

Participation will be by invitation only.

Programme overview

• Introductory session
• Session 1: Overview of the field research methodology and presentation of preliminary results of the focus group discussion by representative of ERI research team.
• Session 2: Preliminary results of the expert interviews
• Closing session (resume of the discussion and concluding remarks)

Presentation of the preliminary results will be followed by a panel discussion and a Q&A session.
**Further information**

The expert group meeting will take place in person or hybrid modality on 23 August 2022. It will be conducted in Russian. Detailed information can be found on the official event page [https://www.unescap.org/events/2022/expert-group-meeting-assessment-small-and-medium-enterprises-sme-financial-inclusion](https://www.unescap.org/events/2022/expert-group-meeting-assessment-small-and-medium-enterprises-sme-financial-inclusion). All questions regarding the expert group meeting can be directed to n.khaidarova@economy.kz, a.alimbetov@economy.kz with copy to agapi.harutyunyan@un.org and riley.green@un.org

**Programme**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>ACTIVITY/SESSION</th>
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<tr>
<td>15:00 – 15:20</td>
<td><strong>Opening</strong>&lt;br&gt;Moderator: Shaharbanu Zhakupova, Chief Researcher, ERI&lt;br&gt;• Welcome remarks by Baurzhan Mukan, Managing Director, ERI&lt;br&gt;• Welcome remarks by Agapi Harutyunyan, Senior Economic Advisor, MPFD-ESCAP&lt;br&gt;• Setting the stage.</td>
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<td>15:20 – 16:00</td>
<td><strong>Session 1. Field Research Methodology and Results of the Focus Group 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;Moderator Agapi Harutyunyan, Senior Economic Advisor, MPFD-ESCAP&lt;br&gt;• Overview of the conducted field research methodology and presentation of preliminary results of the focus group conducted in the East Kazakhstan region by Nurgul Khaidarova, Director, the Center of Competition Environment Research (CCER), ERI&lt;br&gt;• Tour de table to introduce experts&lt;br&gt;• Open discussion/ Remarks by expert group panel&lt;br&gt;• Q&amp;A session</td>
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<td>16:00 – 16:20</td>
<td><strong>Coffee break</strong></td>
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<td>16:20 – 16:55</td>
<td><strong>Session 2. Results of the expert interviews</strong>&lt;br&gt;Moderator: Shaharbanu Zhakupova, Chief Researcher, ERI&lt;br&gt;• Presentation of Expert Interview Results representative of ERI CCER team (TBD)&lt;br&gt;• Tour de table to introduce experts&lt;br&gt;• Open discussion/ Remarks by expert group panel&lt;br&gt;• Q&amp;A session</td>
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<td>16:55 – 17:00</td>
<td><strong>Closing and concluding remarks</strong></td>
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