

Kyrgyzstan will discuss the implementation of competitiveness reforms at OECD Eurasia Week 2016, an international OECD conference in Paris in November

OECD workshops and steering group meeting took stock of progress in policy implementation

Bishkek, 22 September 2016. A project Steering Group meeting, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Pankratov, as well as three thematic policy workshops took place in Bishkek this week. The meetings took stock of the implementation level of the competitiveness reforms recommended by the OECD in 2013. It takes place in the context of the OECD project "Investment and Competitiveness in Central Asia", financially supported by the European Union (EU) as part of its Central Asia Invest 4 programme.

The government of Kyrgyzstan, supported by GIZ and OECD, has engaged in policy reforms to increase the competitiveness of the country, with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises as part of the project "Investment and Competitiveness in Central Asia", co-financed by the EU. To this end, three policy-specific workshops have been regularly organised in Bishkek since 2013, covering the areas of access to finance, human capital development, and investment and export promotion.

Three years later, Kyrgyzstan is able to show progress in implementing these reforms. Discussions at a project Steering Group meeting on 19 September as well as at three policy workshops on 22 September highlighted progress made in the three policy areas. Opening remarks were given by Deputy Prime Minister Pankratov and Mr. Stenbaek Madsen, Head of Operations Section at the Delegation of the European Union to the Kyrgyz Republic. The monitoring results will be presented by Deputy Prime Minister Pankratov and peer reviewed with Central Asian and OECD member countries' representatives at OECD Eurasia Week 2016 in Paris.

The workshop on human capital development was chaired by Mr. Imanaliev, Deputy Minister of Economy, and focused on workplace training. Opening remarks by Mr. Frosio, EU project manager, were followed by a presentation and a discussion on the Vocational Education and Training system in Switzerland (VET) led by Mr. Swars, Head of International Relations at the Swiss Federal Institute for VET.

The workshop on investment and export promotion discussed the strong progress in the area of investment promotion, namely the creation of the Investment Promotion Agency, and the drafting of an investment promotion strategy. Similarly, progress in the area of access of finance was observed during the dedicated workshop, in particular relating to the development of a legal framework for warehouse receipt finance that is currently developed by the Union of Banks.

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OECD EURASIA COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME

The OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Programme, launched in 2008, helps accelerate economic reforms and improve the business climate to achieve sustainable economic growth and employment in two regions: Central Asia (Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), and Eastern Europe and South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine). The Programme contributes to the OECD outreach strategy implemented by the Global Relations Secretariat.

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BACKGROUND ON THE PROJECT

In 2013, the OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Programme, in co-operation with GIZ and with the financial support of the European Union, proposed the adoption of a targeted and practical approach to support competitiveness reforms in Kyrgyzstan. It helped support policy reforms in three areas – access to finance for SMEs, human capital development, and investment and export promotion – through policy recommendations.

Three Policy Handbooks, one per policy area, were published as a result of this work. The Handbooks were peer reviewed at the OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Roundtable in December 2013. Countries from Eurasia and OECD members commented and shared their experiences. A high-level delegation from the Government of Kyrgyzstan, represented by the Deputy Prime Minister, presented the final results and endorsed the recommendations.

The OECD has monitored the implementation of the recommendations agreed in 2013 with Kyrgyzstan on how to improve its competitiveness. A project steering group meeting and the final monitoring workshops took place during a OECD mission to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in September 2016. These activities were implemented in co-operation with GIZ.