Georgia’s Innovation and Technology Agency announced the third round of Start-up Matching Grants Program. The objective of the Program is to stimulate innovation and create innovative enterprises in Georgian economy through development/adoption and commercialization of innovative products and services with the potential for internationalization. Applicants were given the time to submit applications for Startup Matching Grants financing from 31 May 2019 to 10 July 2019.

There were 195 applications submitted during the third round of Matching Grants Program. All of them passed the Environmental and Social screening procedure in compliance with GENIE Project Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). 16 of them fell under the Environmental category B. None of the received applications fell under Environmental category A that would prompt turning them down due to associated high environmental and/or social risks.

Twenty out of 195 submitted applications were selected for grant financing. Three of them fell under the Environmental category B and required further environmental and social management planning.

The applicants’ activities mostly included development of various informational technologies (websites, digital portals, platforms, applications etc.) that do not imply activities carrying risks of negative impact on natural or social environment and are expected to have positive social impact through developing and improving online services that will contribute to economic development of SMEs.

The activities of 16 applicants screened as Environmental category B included development of a power generation facility, operation of laboratories, production of ceramic products and asphalt-concrete, and waste processing.

Projects selected and approved for grant financing are listed below:

1. **ST_3_3 LiveCaller** - cloud-based customer communication software allowing companies to communicate with their web-visitor via web-call, video-call, co-browsing and chat for free.
2. **ST_3_5 Unmanned Aerial Vehicle** - creation of unmanned aerial vehicle with vertical take-off and landing modes, which works on hybrid system.
3. **ST_3_24 Logmind** - big data analytics platform providing visibility and automated insights into unstructured log data using machine learning and artificial intelligence technologies.
4. **ST_3_34 RED** - fire alarm (smoke, heat, carbon dioxide) detectors and air quality (CO$_2$, CO, VOC, Other Harmful Gases) monitor sensor devices connected to the company’s own cloud platform (www.red.ge).
5. **ST_3_43 Colours of Caucasus** - Developed a special regiments and innovative solutions of processing plants to obtain high quality dyes and mordents for long term storage.
7. **ST_3_60 Shenia** - creation and development a web platform – [www.shenia.com](http://www.shenia.com) which will enable the users to create a personalized book in Georgian, where a child is the main character of the story.
8. ST_3_63 Bizon.ge - a web-platform, web space (marketplace), where individuals and business entities are able to share (sell, rent, auction) machinery, equipment, and basic means among each other.

9. ST_3_90 RNSEED – research and development of methodology for potato seed production, clonal and in-vitro multiplication, plant breeding and micro tubers’ production & distribution.

10. ST_3_93 Atrion – creation of cloud-based application on a subscription basis that enables any organization in international development industry to successfully launch, manage, and close a development project.

11. ST_3_100 Lupi AI – an analytical tool for education-related data that enables data-based decision-making in education.

12. ST_3_111 VADAC – development of international online platform for providing affordable and academically honest online certification for the self-taught consumers and employers the world over.

13. ST_3_119 IoGreen - development smart IoT sensors and systems for automation and management of agro businesses.

14. ST_3_160 Qvevry - assembling of a new ceramic 3D printer with various pre-purchased details and printing of ceramic (clay) products.

15. ST_3_168 Inventors - the new electronically service that will sort the market accelerate processes in auto-part industry and help to make more easier the daily work of distributors such as auto-part producers, importers, local distributors, local shops, sellers of used parts, the sellers of damaged cars.


17. ST_3_186 Beauty Lab - creation of a platform, which will make the booking process easier and where they can get new customers and promote themselves at the same time, customers will enjoy reliable and time-saving product to book any procedures in any beauty salon.

18. ST_3_195 BioCure - an eco-friendly and universal petroleum product pollution cleanup solution, which simplifies and cuts cleanup process costs. BioCure technology is based on the accelerated natural bio-degradation method and is effective on any type of ground, water, groundwater, and seawater.

19. ST_3_215 Travel Guide – an innovative travel platform, which aims to develop the tourism sector innovative technologies.

20. ST_3_216 Phubber - Social Shopping Platform, a mobile application that is a mix of social network and e-commerce for apparel. Every Phubber is a seller and a buyer at the same time, they have their personal stores, where they can upload items for sale, and they also have ratings, reviews and followers.

Applications ST_3_9 RNSEED, ST_3_160 Qvevry and ST_3_195 BioCure were classified as Environmental category B and were required to develop and submit relevant safeguards documents.

For ST_3_160 Qvevry Project, Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) was developed and submitted by the grant recipient that was reviewed, revised and approved by GITA and the World Bank’s safeguards staff. ESMP is now attached to the grant recipient’s contract and the recipient is responsible for adhering to its requirements. Final version of ESMP approved by the World Bank is uploaded on GITA’s website https://gita.gov.ge/eng/static/95

ST_3_9 RNSEED and ST_3_195 BioCure procedures for safe operation of the laboratories was required as proposed projects include setting up of laboratories where samples of agricultural products (potatoes) and petroleum polluted samples (ground, water, groundwater, and seawater) will be tested. This project are not expected to have any negative environmental or/and social impacts, because the labs will not use highly toxic or radioactive chemicals and will not generate hazardous emissions. According to the national environmental legislation, the project does not require
environmental Impact assessment and permitting. Risks related to the staff being exposed to chemicals used for testing are low and can be easily mitigated by adhering to the procedures for safe operation of the laboratories. These procedures are now attached to the grant recipient’s contract and the recipient is responsible for adhering to them.

Two applications (ST_3_5 Unmanned Aerial Vehicle and ST_3_53 VTOL - Aerial Vehicle) didn’t fall under the Environmental category B, but they were requested to develop procedures for safe testing and operation of the unmanned aerial vehicles. These procedures are now attached to the grant recipients’ contracts and the recipient is responsible to follow them.

Nino Patarashvili
Safeguards Specialist