

## Workshop

### Needs of enterprises in textiles sector of Albania: Ways to ensure sustainability and competitiveness

Plazza Hotel, “Marlin Barleti” meeting room, Tirane, Albania

9:00-14:00

5 June 2025

#### Background Information

Albania’s textiles, clothing, leather, and footwear (TCLF) sector faces challenges in progressing beyond basic assembly (Cut-Make-Trim, CMT model) processes, limiting its potential for value-added activities like design, sourcing, and branding. Additionally, the sector struggles with adopting sustainable business practices, hindering its alignment with EU standards and long-term competitiveness.

UNIDO’s technical assistance, through the Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP) methodology, supports Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in optimizing processes, reducing waste, and improving energy/resource efficiency to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since 2022, under the Joint UN Program Business4SDGs, UNIDO has trained twenty national experts and assisted six companies in the TCLF sector to assess performance and implement necessary improvements, which potentially could bring up to EUR 239,531 savings annually with one-time investment of EUR 332,626 in 29 suggested measures.

The ongoing joint initiative *Innovative solutions for efficient and sustainable TCLF enterprises*, implemented by UNIDO and ILO as a part of Business4SDGs program, aims to enhance the capacity of the sector by improving technical skills and promoting sustainability awareness. The program benefits Albanian companies contributing to a more inclusive and competitive future for the industry. To assess the current situation in the sector, a national survey of TCLF companies was conducted by UNIDO in 2024- 2025 with 120 companies to collect data on productivity, technology, digitalization, and sustainability gaps. These findings, aligned with SDGs 8, 9, and 12, will guide further UNIDO activities under the program to support TCLF companies in transitioning towards improved competitiveness, sustainability, and productivity increase while guiding introduction of new business models. The results of this survey and the associated recommendations to improve the situation in the sector will be shared at the workshop.

#### Rationale of the meeting

As Albania progresses towards EU integration, the meeting will address key issues facing the TCLF sector, including the need for sustainable business practices and improved productivity, transition to a new business operation model ensuring value addition and introduction of more services contributing to the value chain. The meeting will focus on discussing the results of a national UNIDO survey, which highlights gaps in technology, digitalization, sustainability, and productivity of companies in the TCLF sector. Experts in the field will exchange insights on how to overcome these gaps while moving toward resource efficiency, circular economy practices, and green production models, in line with EU sustainability goals.

## Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the meeting include:

- understanding of the sector's challenges and growth opportunities
- identification of knowledge and technological gaps in the TCLF sector
- ways of improving sustainability practices and overall situation in the sector

Participants will discuss strategies for enhancing the sector's competitiveness, improving productivity, and ensuring alignment with EU's Single Market for Green Products (SMGP), which imposes certain sustainability standards. The event will provide a platform for identifying concrete solutions and next steps that can help Albanian companies transition to more sustainable, higher-value operations. Special attention will be given to enhancing the sector's capacity to create jobs, particularly for women, youth, and vulnerable groups, ensuring inclusive growth.

## Participants

The meeting is expected to gather textile and footwear sector key stakeholders, including academia, government (Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation (MEK), Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (MIE), Ministry of State for Entrepreneurship and Business Climate), sector associations, companies, RECP experts, civil society.

## Language, Location and Registration

**Language:** Albanian/English with interpretation

**Format:** Hybrid. Zoom link will be provided to registered participants for online participation in due course.

**Location:** Piazza Hotel, "Marlin Barleti" meeting room, Tirane, Albania

**Please, use the following link to register:** <https://forms.gle/7dyfR9hYNAesA42M6>

**Deadline for registering:** 26 May 2025

## About the Project

**Business Partnerships for the SDGs (Business4SDGs)** is a United Nations Joint Programme (UNJP) implemented by FAO, ILO, UNDP, and UNIDO funded by Sweden. It aims to strengthen the capacity of Albania's private sector to align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through sustainable business practices, responsible production, and policy engagement.

The programme focuses on two main areas:

1. **Technical Capacity** – Equipping businesses with skills and tools to implement sustainable and efficient practices.
2. **Enabling Ecosystem** – Raising awareness on sustainability, building partnerships, and supporting policy dialogue.

The initiative engages a wide range of actors—businesses, chambers of commerce, associations, and development agencies—while fostering international-local cooperation. Please, contact Ms. Dorisa Cela, Associate administrator of the project, at [d.cela@unido.org](mailto:d.cela@unido.org) for more information.



## Draft Agenda

Time	Session Title and Description	Speaker
8:30	Registration and welcome coffee	
09:00– 09:15	Opening Remarks	<p><b>Ms. Fiona McCluney</b>, UN Resident Coordinator in Albania</p> <p><b>Mr. Erik Illes</b>, Head of Cooperation, Swedish Embassy in Tirana (TBC)</p> <p><b>Ms. Delina Ibrahimaj</b>, Minister for Entrepreneurship and Business Climate (TBC)</p> <p><b>Ms. Tatiana Chernvaskaya</b>, Project Manager, UNIDO</p>
9:15-9:30	Situation in the TCLF Sector: Trends and Perspectives, actual problems and challenges	<b>Mr. Edvin Prence (TBC)</b> , ProExport Association
09:30 – 10:00	Actual situation of TCLF sector –challenges, opportunities, legislative barriers, innovation and digitalization needs of the sector; Summary of survey 2024-25; results & recommendations from the draft Issue Paper.	<b>Prof. Ermira Shehi</b> , National Expert UNIDO
10:00-10:30	<p>Good practices of TCLF companies in overcoming the existing issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customization of production through digitalization</li> <li>• Connecting to leaders in sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience from SAM company by (TBC)</li> <li>• Experience from DBS by (TBC)</li> <li>• Experience from shoe company Fital by <b>Prof.Asoc. Majlinda Hylli</b>, RECP UNIDO expert</li> </ul>
10:30-10:45	Digitalization, innovation, and technology advancement: Experience from Sweden	<b>Prof.Asoc. Blerina Kolgjini</b> , RECP UNIDO expert
10:45-11:00	Questions and answers	<b>All participants</b>
11:00-11:15	<b>Coffee Break</b>	
11:15-11:30	<p>Overview of readiness for EU regulations and requirements for textile sector in Albania: from textile strategy to clean industrial deal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EBD</li> <li>• CSID (rules for reporting for SMEs)</li> </ul>	Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation (TBC)
11:30– 11:45	Facilitating textile sector introduction to international VCs (TBC)	Swiss Contact/AIDA (TBC)
11:45– 12:00	RECP as a potential solution to the TCLF sector challenges	<b>Dr. Johannes Fresner</b> , UNIDO Senior Advisor
12:00– 12:15	Experience of RECP application to textile sector in economies in transition: examples of N. Macedonia, Eastern Partner countries and Uzbekistan	<b>Prof. Tashko Rizov</b> , University in Skopje, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering
12:15– 13:00	<p>Discussion and Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Niche positioning of Albania: perspectives and opportunities</li> <li>• Strengthening capacity and infrastructure – role of University</li> </ul> <p>Clustering and integration to the potential client</p>	<b>All participants</b>
13.00-14.00	<b>Networking Lunch</b>	