

Introduction

Launched in July 2008, the OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Programme is a regional programme that contributes to the economic growth in eleven countries of the former Soviet Union and Afghanistan and Mongolia. The Programme involves close co-operation with public authorities, the private sector and civil society in these countries to support economic policy reforms and improve the business climate. It generates impact through an integrated framework based on two pillars: regional policy dialogue, peer dialogue and capacity building; and country-specific support in implementation at the regional, national and sub-national level. The regional approach allows countries to engage their peers in working to design and implement successful policies and institutions. Both pillars incorporate a sector-specific approach. As part of the Central Asia Initiative of the Eurasia Competitiveness Programme, a sector competitiveness review was initiated for the Republic of Kazakhstan to help diversify its sources of foreign direct investment and strengthen sector competitiveness. This project was designed to follow a three-phased approach over three years (2009-11): first by developing a sector competitiveness strategy (Phase 1), then by implementing specific aspects of the recommended policy reforms (Phase 2) and finally by assist in embedding mechanisms for sustainable reform (Phase 3). The objective of Phase 1 of the project, co-financed by the Republic of Kazakhstan in collaboration with the EU, is to support the country in defining a targeted competitiveness and investment promotion agenda.

This report constitutes the output of Phase 1 of the project. It provides policy-makers and the private sector with proposals for actions based on an OECD analysis of investment drivers and policy barriers to be addressed in non-energy sectors. Key recommendations across the agri-business and business services sectors include the need to stimulate quality improvements and modernise production assets by promoting access to finance, attracting modern retailers and addressing skills gaps. The report is the result of a collaborative effort with policy-makers and representatives of the private sector in Kazakhstan. It should serve as an important message for policy makers in the country.



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