

PROMOTING

# DECENT JOBS,

EQUALITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



# CEFE PANORAMA

YEARLY REVIEW 2024

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## Harnessing Innovation, Celebrating Continuity: CEFE International's Journey into the Future

As the year draws to a close, CEFE International reflects on a period of growth, innovation, and renewal. It has been a year where the dynamic interplay between emerging technologies and steadfast dedication to sustainable development has paved the way for transformative achievements. At the heart of this evolution are two key themes: the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in development cooperation and a significant generational change in our management team.

### AI in Development Cooperation: Bridging the Digital Divide

Artificial Intelligence is no longer a distant concept but a tool reshaping the landscape of development cooperation.

At CEFE International, we are embracing AI as a means to enhance the effectiveness and reach of our initiatives. From predictive analytics that identify underserved communities to tailored training programs powered by machine learning, AI is helping us reimagine how we deliver impact.

However, while we celebrate these advancements, we remain vigilant about the challenges AI brings. Issues of data privacy, ethical application, and digital inclusion require careful navigation. Our approach is grounded in CEFE's core values: ensuring that AI serves as a tool for empowerment rather than exclusion. By integrating AI with human-centered methodologies, we are taking deliberate

# CEFE International reflects on a period of growth, innovation, and renewal.

steps to harness its potential responsibly, ensuring no one is left behind.

### A Generation Change: Welcoming a New Leadership Era

This year also marks a momentous transition within CEFE International's management team, an official generational change that symbolizes both continuity and renewal. We are proud to introduce our new leadership team: Pauline Sautter, Marlinde Bärenz, and Tom Bühler.

Pauline and Tom are no strangers to CEFE International, having been integral to our journey for many years. Pauline, who has spearheaded our efforts in business cooperation, brings a deep understanding of fostering partnerships that align with our mission. Her sharp analytical mind and collaborative approach have been pivotal in building bridges between the private sector and development initiatives.

Tom, who leads our MSME division, has consistently demonstrated his passion for

empowering small businesses and creating inclusive economic opportunities. His meticulous attention to detail and innovative thinking have been instrumental in shaping our strategies for sustainable growth in this sector.

What makes this transition even more exciting is how Pauline and Tom complement each other. Their shared commitment to excellence, coupled with a collaborative working style, ensures a seamless partnership that embodies the very ethos of CEFE International. Together with Marlinde, whose leadership has been marked by vision and innovation, this new team is set to steer CEFE International into an era of renewed purpose and impact.

### Celebrating the Legacy, Embracing the Future

This generation change is not merely a shift in titles; it represents the evolution of CEFE International's journey. It honors the contributions of those who have led before while opening doors to new ideas and approaches. Change is often accompanied by

uncertainty, but at CI, it is a sign of growth, resilience, and unwavering commitment to our work.

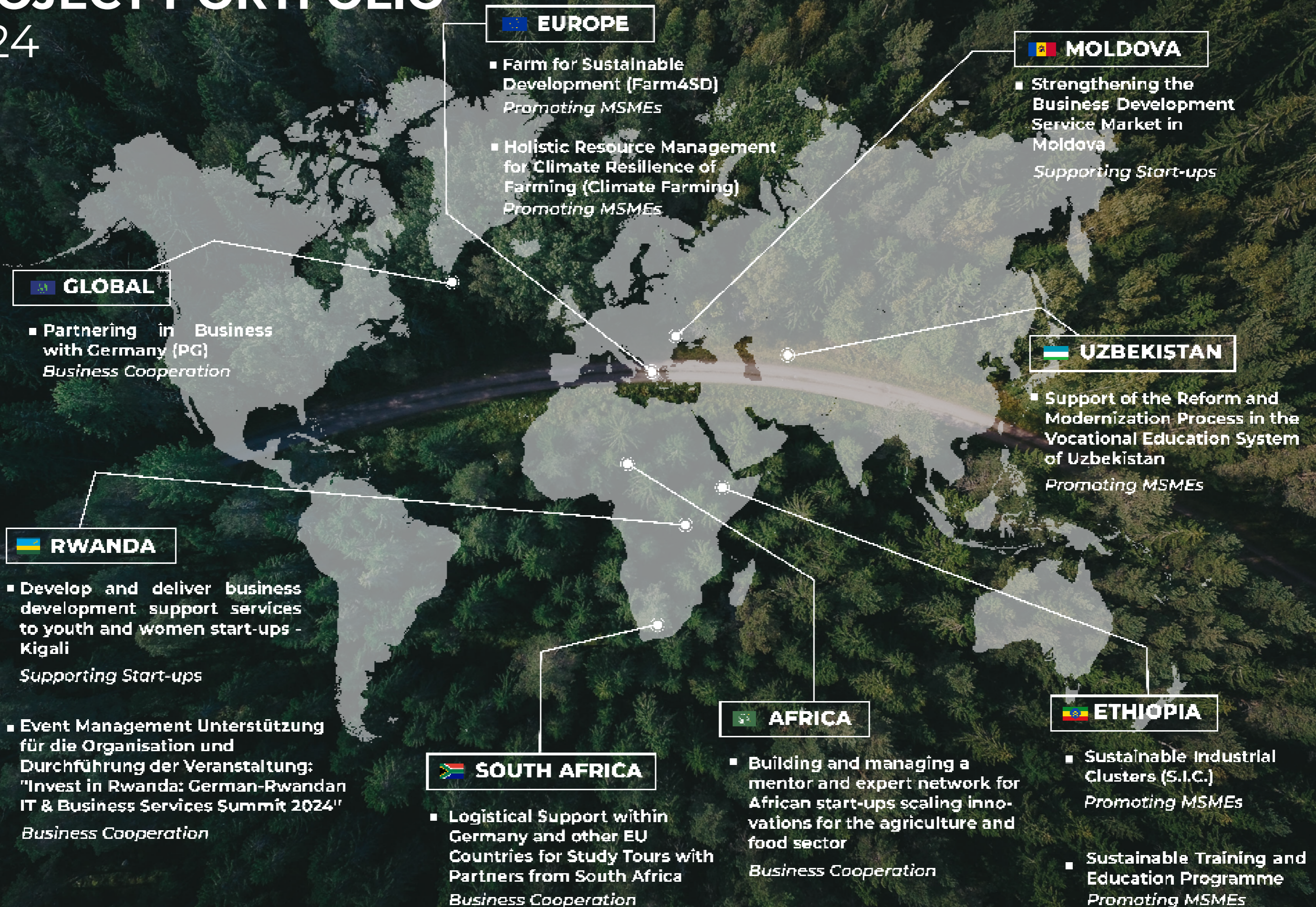
### A Call to Collaboration

As we embark on this new chapter, we invite all stakeholders, partners, and supporters to join us in shaping the future. Let us continue to push boundaries, embrace innovation, and champion inclusion. Together, we can turn challenges into opportunities and make a lasting impact in the lives of those we serve. Here's to another year of driving positive change—through innovation, collaboration, and a shared vision for a better world.

Marlinde Bärenz

# PROJECT PORTFOLIO

## 2024



# Business Cooperation Division

Forging global partnerships, and leading sustainable business solutions



In 2024, CEFE International's Business Cooperation (BizzCoop) division recorded further personnel expansion and demonstrated its expertise by receiving additional awards and extending existing contracts.

## “BMWK/Partnering Business in Germany/GIZ:

CEFE International GmbH (CI) has welcomed 4 delegations from Moldavia/Uzbekistan/Azerbaijan and three groups from Vietnam to Germany on behalf of the BMWK/Partnering Business in Germany/GIZ.

The global programme was developed by Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK), with the objective of promoting foreign trade and investment. The programme is designed to facilitate the formation of successful business relationships between small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) from developing and emerging countries and their German counterparts. CEFE International has also got the award for the next phase programme with 4 delegations each year and a duration of first phase from 2025-2026.

## Event management projects in African countries, working closely with GIZ/AU.

In 2024 the CEFE International Taya Consortium supported in the execution of more than 40 events in African countries such as Egypt, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Zambia, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Kenya, South Africa, Malawi, Benin and Burundi. This comprehensive approach ensures that events run smoothly, allowing participants to focus on the content of the meetings rather than the logistical challenges. The collaboration

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
- 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE
- 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

with GIZ/AU reflects the division's commitment to making a tangible impact on the ground, particularly in African countries. Contract was extended until the end of 2025.

## Invest in Rwanda: German Rwandan IT & Business Services Summit 2024

In 2024 CEFE International got awarded for the Event management support for Invest in Rwanda: German Rwandan IT & Business Services Summit 2024. The event was realised successfully in June 2024 in Berlin for 142 people including high ranking representatives from the German and Rwandan side. The CI team's responsibility was:

- Individual counselling of and coordination with the client on the events (basic principles).
- Event planning and organisation including invitation management, promotion of the event, logistics, catering.
- Technical management online and on site (e.g. via a corresponding app).

Logistical Support within Germany and other EU Coun-

tries for Study Tours with Partners from South Africa CEFE International and BizzCoop got awarded by GIZ to provide logistical support for up to 6 study tours in Germany or in neighbouring European countries with participants from South Africa. CI is supporting the GIZ in the implementation of the trips from the time the participants arrive in Germany during 26.08.2024 until 31.10.2026.

The aim of BizzCoop is to lead international business relations services, facilitating connections between German SMEs and international partners. We can demonstrate expertise in professional event management, offering comprehensive services that encompass planning, technical support, and participant management. Having considerable expertise in organising large-scale events. It also has significant regional expertise in Africa as well as in Germany, having successfully executed over 40 events in 2024 across 11 countries.

In 2024, CEFE International has initiated efforts to establish a branch in Heidenheim, in the South of Germany, where one of the Managing Directors and Head of the Business Cooperation Division, Pauline Sautter, is based. The location offers strategic advantages for CI, including proximity to a strong network of potential partners, supporters and clients. First ties for impactful future collaborations have already been made. One of the pilot projects tied to this new destination is the

### GLOBAL



*Our client-centric approach allows us to provide tailored solutions, offering individualised consultation and maintaining a focus on sustainable, long-term partnerships.*

“Partnering in Business with Germany”, for which Heidenheim was officially approved as a project location within the latest project proposal.

These competencies demonstrate our ability to deliver impactful international projects and foster enduring collaboration.



**Lina Sinzinger**

Business Cooperation's Division Manager

# A Year of Milestones in the Now and Yes Journey

Empowering youth and women entrepreneurs in Kigali through the Now and Yes Journey



In 2024, CEFE International, in collaboration with ENABEL and the City of Kigali, made remarkable progress in empowering youth and women entrepreneurs through the Now and Yes Journey. This collaborative effort, designed to support the entrepreneurial ambitions of individuals in Kigali, has successfully guided participants through key stages of business development. By providing essential skills and targeted training, the program has equipped them to face the challenges of starting and growing their businesses.

## Kick-off Success: Empowering 500 Entrepreneurs

The year began with a dynamic promotional campaign that laid the groundwork for the selection of 500 promising participants, carefully chosen by a dedicated committee from the City of Kigali. These participants represent a diverse mix of aspiring entrepreneurs from the three districts of Kigali—Kicukiro, Gasabo, and Nyarugenge. In March and April, the first rotation of kick-off camps took place, where participants were introduced to essential entrepreneurial skills such

as business planning, marketing strategies, and financial management. These camps provided the foundational knowledge necessary for success. Special thanks go to the local districts for their invaluable support in coordinating the provision of training venues at youth centers and sector meeting rooms, which allowed the program to reach its full potential.

## Focused Coaching for Growth: Personalized Guidance

Following the kick-off camps, the program shifted to small group coaching sessions,

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- 1 NO POVERTY
- 4 QUALITY EDUCATION
- 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

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*By focusing on their specific needs, the coaching sessions provided targeted strategies and practical tools to help them integrate their learnings and make meaningful progress in their business ventures.*

where participants were grouped into teams of five, each with a dedicated trainer. This coaching format allowed for more personalized attention, enabling participants to dive deeper into their individual challenges and opportunities. Furthermore, specialized coaching was provided to participants in technical and vocational sectors, including agriculture, bakery, and the arts, ensuring that their unique challenges were addressed through tailored guidance. The TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) coaching played a crucial role in preparing entrepreneurs from these sectors to succeed in their respective industries.

## Financial Focus: Change Camp

In July, the program launched its Change Camp, which brought the participants' focus to a critical area of business success—financial planning. The camp centered on equipping participants with the tools they need to manage their finances effectively, including investment planning, cash flow management, and understanding profit and loss statements. These financial

skills are fundamental for any entrepreneur looking to sustain and scale their business in the long term. With a deepened understanding of how to manage their business finances, the participants were empowered to take control of their financial future, reducing the risk of failure and improving their chances of securing funding and long-term success. The Change Camp was a pivotal moment in the Now and Yes Journey, as it provided participants with both the confidence and competence to handle their business finances.

## Ongoing Support: 1:1 Business Plan Coaching

From August to December, the program entered its final phase of personalized 1:1 coaching, where each participant received focused support to develop and refine their business plans. These tailored coaching sessions were designed to help participants turn their ideas into concrete, actionable plans. By working closely with expert trainers, the entrepreneurs were able to fine-tune their business strategies, assess the feasibility of

RWANDA

their plans, and set clear, realistic goals for the future. This individualized support helped participants strengthen their business concepts and prepared them to take the next step toward launching and scaling their businesses. The process also offered a valuable opportunity for participants to discuss their specific business challenges, seek advice, and receive constructive feedback that will help them in the future.

## Looking Ahead: Continuing the Journey

As 2024 draws to a close, CEFE International remains deeply committed to supporting the entrepreneurial journeys of Kigali's youth and women. The program has already laid the groundwork for sustainable success, but the journey is far from over. In the last trimester of the journey, the focus will shift towards ensuring that the program's beneficiaries have access to the financing they need to bring their business ideas to life. With continued support in areas such as funding, business development, and market access, the Now and Yes Journey will continue to nurture the growth of entrepreneurs in Kigali, helping them overcome barriers and achieve their full potential.



**Lisa Wernz**  
Project Manager & CEFE Network Coordinator

# Reforming Uzbekistan's Vocational Education System

A Leap Towards Sustainable Development through enhancing the role of private sector in the system



Uzbekistan is undergoing reform agenda in vocational education and training (VET) system. The project "Support to the Process of Reforming and Modernizing the Vocational Education System of Uzbekistan" (TexVET), funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, actively engages stakeholders across sectors in the light industry.

The project aims to create sustainable employment and income opportunities and this initiative aligns with the government's vision of creating sustainable employment, promoting green growth, and enhancing the quality of life for its people. The TexVET project focuses on building a national dual vocational education and training system that aligns with international standards and meets the evolving needs of the labor market, particularly in the textile, leather, and manufacturing industries. Co-

laborating with the national association of textile and garment industries (Uztextileprom and Uzcharmsanoat), the project integrates a multi-level strategy to address policy, institutional, and individual developments in vocational education.

Within the framework of the TexVET project, the consortium CEFE International-EKVI-TA Italia, implements a series of targeted training sessions in selected pilot regions of Uzbekistan.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- 1 NO POVERTY
- 4 QUALITY EDUCATION
- 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

The trainings focus on providing participants with practical skills and knowledge that give them a competitive edge in the labor market.



*By fostering collaboration and sharing experiences among participants, the sessions are creating a continuous and spreading result of innovation and best practices across industries.*

An example was the training on "Green Solutions for Uzbekistan Textile Industry", which highlighted the region's readiness to embrace sustainable practices, with robust private-sector participation.

Another workshop on Modern HR emphasized the inclusion of rural youth, women, and individuals with disabilities, ensuring equal access to training and career opportunities. By integrating gender-sensitive practices, health and safety, and environmental awareness into training curricula, the project aims to build a future-ready workforce capable of driving sustainable industrial growth.

As part of its project, the consortium has successfully conducted 50% of its intended workshops across pilot regions in 2024. These workshops address key areas crucial to modernizing the VET system:

## UZBEKISTAN

1. New Green Technologies and Approaches in Textile and Leather Production:

- Focused on decarbonizing industries through water conservation, waste reduction, and energy efficiency.
- Promoted sustainability practices to align with Uzbekistan's Green Year 2025 goals.

2. Training for Instructors in Dual Education:

- Enhanced pedagogical and mentoring skills for vocational educators.
- Strengthened partnerships between VET institutions and private companies, ensuring practical alignment with industry requirements.





### Outcomes and Future Steps

- **Strengthened Collaboration:** Improved dialogue between government, private sector, and education institutions.
- **Enhanced Training Capacity:** VET schools and colleges now offer industry-aligned training programs.
- **Sustainability Integration:** Participants are adopting green practices, advancing Uzbekistan’s environmental goals.
- **Gender Inclusion:** Increased focus on women’s participation in the workforce, especially in managerial roles.
- These sessions have covered topics ranging from sustainable green practices and decarbonization in the textile industry to gender-sensitive HR management and market-focused strategies for global competitiveness.
- In Bukhara, for instance, the training attracted over 18 representatives from private companies, sparking significant interest in expanding similar workshops to other regions. Meanwhile, in Termez training highlighted the unique contributions of educators who split their roles between teaching and working in industry, bridging the gap between academic knowledge and practical application.
- Participants have praised the initiative for its relevance and practicality, with demand growing from companies and associations in other regions to host similar events.

### 3. Up-to-Date Gender-Sensitive Human Resource Management:

- Equipped participants with modern HR strategies to promote inclusivity and diversity in the workplace.

The initiative aligns closely with Uzbekistan’s broader development goals, including the government’s declaration of 2025 as the “Green Year,” emphasizing clean energy and sustainable practices. By integrating green skills into vocational education and focusing on sustainable practices, the project is paving the way for a greener and more prosperous Uzbekistan.

Through the project, a total of over 188 different representatives from the industry mainly private sector from the selected regions have actively participated in 9 thematic training sessions in the last quarter of 2024 .

By targeting key areas of the textile and leather industries, as well as the vocational education sector, these participants are now equipped to apply their newly acquired expertise within their respective companies and institutions. Their efforts are expected to drive innovation, enhance sustainability, and foster inclusivity, contributing significantly to the modernization and growth of Uzbekistan’s vocational education and industry sectors.

**Sardor Saidrasulov**  
Team Leader





# Erasmus+ Project Climate-Farming: An Innovative Response to Agriculture's Climate Challenges

Preparing agricultural enterprises for the impacts of climate change while increasing their resilience.



In 2024, CEFE International's Agriculture lies at the heart of numerous environmental and climate challenges. Issues such as soil degradation, the increased frequency of extreme weather events, and declining biodiversity pose significant threats to farmers worldwide. At the same time, agricultural practices contribute substantially to the climate crisis. The EU co-funded Erasmus+ project "Climate-Farming," coordinated by CEFE International, directly addresses these challenges, aiming to future-proof farms.

Running from 2022 to 2025, ClimateFarming focuses on preparing agricultural enterprises for the impacts of climate change while increasing their resilience. At its core is the ClimateFarming Cycle—a structured approach that guides farmers and advisors in systematically assessing farm vulnerabilities and developing tailored climate adaptation strategies.

These competencies demonstrate our ability to deliver impactful international projects and foster enduring collaboration.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

13 CLIMATE ACTION

## Achievements and Insights

Significant progress has been made since the project's inception. In November 2023, a successful "Train-the-Trainer" workshop was conducted with students from the University of Kassel in Germany. The course combined online sessions with two in-person training days, where participants engaged with the five steps of the ClimateFarming Cycle through exercises, discussions, and practical activities such as soil assessments. Feedback indicated high satisfaction and underscored the importance of combining theoretical learning with hands-on practice.

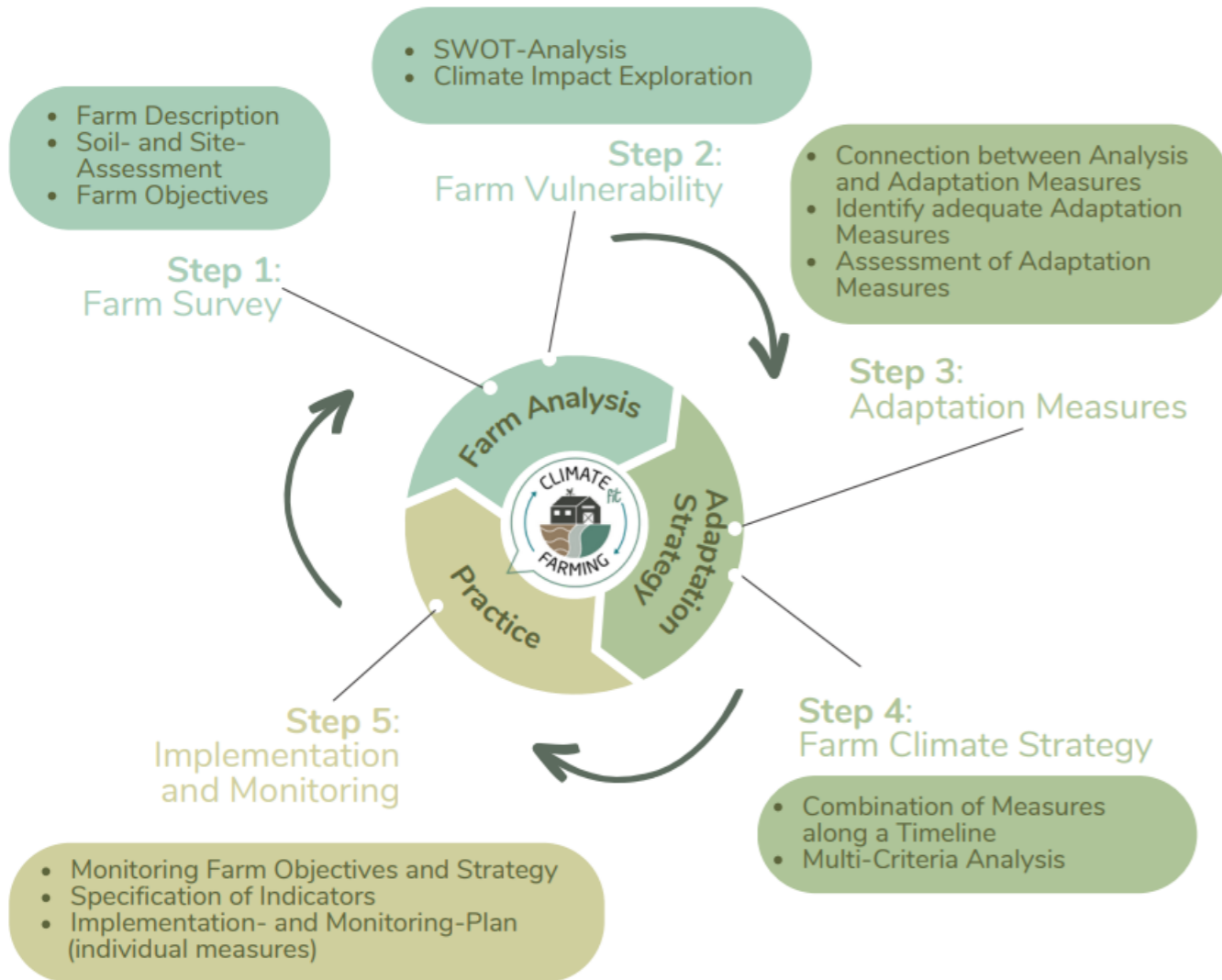
Other training and events, including workshops in the Czech Republic and Luxembourg, have reached a wide audience. These events introduced agroforestry practices and climate adaptation strategies while fostering interaction among participants. For instance, the Czech workshop combined theoretical presentations with practical tree-planting exercises, providing attendees with actionable insights into climate-resilient farming.

## The Project's Structure

The project consists of five key work packages:

- Project Management: Ensuring effective coordination and promoting green practices.
- Consultation Materials: Developing frameworks and catalogs that provide practical tools for farm advisors.
- Training Programs: Conducting "Train-the-Trainer" workshops and multiplier training across partner countries.
- Practical Implementation: Conducting field trials and workshops directly on farms
- Online Learning Platform: Making materials accessible through a virtual learning environment.





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*The ClimateFarming Cycle has proven to be a flexible tool that enables farms to conduct soil analyses, develop adaptation measures, and implement them strategically.*

Practices such as reduced tillage, cover cropping, and field edge strips have been shown to enhance both soil structure and biodiversity

**Challenges and Solutions**

The project encountered challenges, particularly in simplifying the complexity of its educational materials to make them accessible to all target groups. Collaborative efforts among project partners successfully addressed these issues by revising content based on feedback from training participants. Additionally, a shortage of advisors specializing in climate-friendly agricultural practices highlighted the need to develop such expertise. ClimateFarming aims to fill this gap through specialized training initiatives.

**Multiplier Events and Public Impact**

A highlight of the project has been the “Multiplier Events,” which present results and methodologies to a broader audience. Events like the presentation at the Foire Agricole in Luxembourg and the Open-Field Day in the Czech Republic have demonstrated ClimateFarming’s practical relevance and facilitated valuable exchanges between science, policy, and practice. In Luxembourg, visitors explored measures such as aggregate stability tests and soil improvement strategies

**Looking Ahead**

By the project’s conclusion in 2025, additional workshops, evaluations, and the dissemination of the digital learning platform are planned. Further iterations of the ClimateFarming training programs will integrate lessons learned, with an emphasis on more hands-on activities and group discussions. The goal is to establish ClimateFarming as a standard approach for climate-friendly agriculture across Europe.

This project is a powerful example of how international collaboration and innovative strategies can address global challenges. By equipping farmers with tools to adapt to climate change, the ClimateFarming Cycle benefits both agriculture and the environment—ensuring a sustainable future for all.

You can also enrol to the ClimateFarming Course: [learning.climatefitfarming.eu](http://learning.climatefitfarming.eu)



**Laura Pollin**  
Project Manager



Follow us on: [www.climatefitfarming.eu](http://www.climatefitfarming.eu)

# From Awareness to Impact: A Year of Progress in Promoting Decent Work in Ethiopia

Improving knowledge of decent work principles and delivering targeted training



## A Grateful Collaboration

The Decent Work Agenda Training and Campaign project in Ethiopia represents a remarkable collaboration between partners committed to fostering sustainable development and decent work practices. Contracted by GIZ, CEFE International and Jethro Leadership and Management Institute (Jethro LMI) implemented this initiative with

unwavering dedication. Together, we contributed to empowering managers, workers, and educators in Ethiopia's Integrated Agro-Industrial Parks (IAIPs) and their value chains, aligning with the Ethiopian Government's vision for economic transformation. This project has been part of the Ethio-German Sustainable Training and Education Programme (STEP), implemented by GIZ and the Ethiopian

Ministry of Labor and Skills and co-funded by BMZ and the EU. CI and Jethro LMI as a consortium have been contracted from March 2023 to August 2024.

## Specific Objectives and Achievements

The project had two primary objectives: improving knowledge of decent work principles and delivering targeted training.

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- 1 NO POVERTY
- 4 QUALITY EDUCATION
- 5 GENDER EQUALITY
- 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

ning. Key achievements include:

- A 20% improvement in post-assessment scores for 435 of the 592 participants who took pre- and post-tests, surpassing the target of 50 managers and 200 workers.
- Training 132 managers (38 women) and 492 workers (241 women, 49% gender balance), totaling 624 participants, exceeding the overall training target.

These milestones highlight the project's success in fostering a deeper understanding of decent work principles among participants.

## Project Highlights and Methodology

The project was executed across Dila, Shashamene, Yirgalem, and Addis Ababa, using innovative methodologies to maximize impact:

- Rapid Context assessment was conducted and published.
- Tailored training materials were developed and validated by stakeholders.



Campaigns leveraged grassroots mobilization, including door-to-door initiatives and partnerships with organizations like Setawee, ensuring broad participant engagement.

The WEZE branding amplified awareness efforts through culturally sensitive materials, including pocket guides, posters, and multimedia content.

## Voices from the Field

Interactive training techniques, such as role-playing, group discussions, and multimedia tools, ensured participants connected theoretical concepts to real-world applications.

Participants reflected positively on the training's impact:

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*“Decent work is essential for improving not only workers’ rights but also productivity and economic outcomes. Awareness is key,” shared Woineshet R., a worker participant.*

- Abezash, a manager, noted, “As a private business, we strive for profitability while ensuring employee safety and rights.”

**Challenges and Lessons Learned**

While the project achieved notable success, challenges included societal resistance to addressing labor rights and employer hesitancy in adopting new standards. Key lessons include:

- Engaging senior leadership to secure organizational buy-in is critical.
- Sustained training initiatives and partnerships with local organizations are essential for lasting change.

- Addressing cultural barriers through tailored awareness campaigns ensures greater acceptance.

**The Road Ahead**

The journey to embedding decent work principles in Ethiopia’s industrial sector continues. Future efforts should:

- Expand training to increase depth with include senior leadership and policy-makers.
- Strengthen accountability mechanisms and data-sharing practices.



- Build strategic alliances with NGOs, educational institutions, business associations, and labor organizations to sustain the impact.

pest gratitude to GIZ for trusting us to execute this impactful initiative. Their guidance and support were instrumental in achieving these results.

**Acknowledgment**

This project’s success is a testament to the collaborative spirit fostered by GIZ, CEFE International, and Jethro LMI. We extend our deepest

As we reflect on this journey, we are proud to have contributed to promoting decent work and sustainable development in Ethiopia. We look forward to future opportunities to work with GIZ and other partners in building more inclusive and equitable workplaces.



**Marlinde Baerenz**

Manager Director & Promoting MSMEs’ Division Manager

# Scaling Digital Agriculture in Africa

Supporting start-ups by providing them with tailored mentorship, technical expertise, and access to networks.



Africa's agriculture sector is undergoing a profound transformation, driven by the rise of digital technologies. Across the continent, start-ups are introducing groundbreaking solutions to address challenges such as limited market access, inefficiencies in farming practices, and resource management constraints.

At the forefront of this revolution is the Scaling Digital Agriculture Innovations through Start-Ups (SAIS) Investment Readiness Program—an initiative implemented by GIZ on behalf of the German Federal

Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and co-financed by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the EU. The program serves as a catalyst for empowering African agricultural start-ups, equipping them to scale their operations and secure critical investment to drive systemic change.

The SAIS Investment Readiness Program offers comprehensive support to promising start-ups, providing them with tailored mentorship, technical expertise, and access to networks. Annually, a cohort

of start-ups undergoes an intensive nine-month program designed to hone their leadership skills, market strategies, financial acumen, and investor readiness. SAIS's goal is not only to nurture these enterprises but also to create ripple effects across Africa's food systems, contributing to food security, economic resilience, and sustainable agricultural practices.

Since its inception, the program has selected 47 start-ups from 15 countries. These start-ups tackle diverse challenges, from leveraging big

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
- 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE
- 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

”

*Each participant receives tailored guidance to refine their business models and amplify their impact.*

data for crop health monitoring to developing mobile platforms that connect farmers with buyers. The role of CEFE International within SAIS is to manage the requests for support prepared by the start-ups and a GIZ navigator. This includes short-term expert (STE) support, all online, additional service provision, and equipment. Start-ups have received resources such as IT hardware, soil-testing equipment, motorbikes and much more to improve their operations. For service enhancements, SAIS has facilitated among many others company registrations, website development, marketing strategies, or workshops on finance readiness. Short-term experts provide guidance in areas like business development strategy, storytelling for pitches, and due diligence, empowering start-ups to overcome hurdles and scale effectively.



To date, the program has processed over 170 requests from start-ups for expert services, additional support, and equipment. This responsive approach ensures that the unique needs of each start-up are met, enabling them to maximize their impact.

Inclusivity is a cornerstone of the SAIS program, which caters to both anglophone and francophone regions. Group training sessions on topics such as investor engagement and digital marketing are supplemented with one-on-one coaching. By addressing gaps in access to capital and technical expertise, SAIS provides start-ups with the tools they need to thrive in competitive markets. The program also acts as a source of employment by engaging short-term experts from diverse fields. These experts bring specialized knowledge and help start-ups refine their strategies, ensuring that their solutions are both innovative and sustainable.

SAIS has been operating in Africa so far. Starting in 2025, the program will also extend

to Sri Lanka and will run until 2027. If you are a CEFE trainer or coach with substantial experience in providing direct advisory services to agricultural start-ups, we encourage you to contact us. Please share your CV and outline your areas of expertise. Experts for the project are selected directly by the start-ups from our expert database.

Additionally, if you are aware of start-ups already registered in Africa or Sri Lanka that are highly innovative and operate in agriculture, food processing, or relates sales, we can connect them to the relevant calls for proposals.

For inquiries, please contact: Malaika Nabukalu, nbukalu@cefe.net



**Damalie Malaika Nabukalu**

Project Assistant

# Partnering in Business with Germany

Strengthening Global Connections and Expanding Opportunities



As part of CEFE International’s ongoing commitment to fostering global business growth, the Partnering in Business with Germany (PG) programme remains a cornerstone of international business connections. Partnering in Business with Germany is an instrument of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) to promote foreign trade.

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH has been commissioned to implement the programme on behalf of the BMWK. PG addresses bu-

siness leaders from 18 countries to engage in hands-on experiences with German companies, providing unparalleled insights into the German market and foster international cooperation. Over the years, this initiative has made remarkable strides, and CEFE International is proud to continue its involvement in this transformative programme.

### Expanding Reach: 2024 and Beyond

In 2024, CEFE International hosted four international delegations in Cologne, con-

tinuing a long-standing tradition of guiding managers from diverse industries. We welcomed three groups from Vietnam, with two delegations of mixed sectors and one focusing on green technologies. Additionally, a group with participants from Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Uzbekistan participated, concentrating on smart farming. Each delegation gained insights into how German businesses approach innovation, efficiency, and sustainability through company visits, workshops, and hands-on activities.

In November 2024, CEFE In-

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- 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

strong reputation and expertise in facilitating international business development and cross-cultural exchanges.

### Looking Ahead

CEFE International looks forward to 2025, excited to conduct the programme for four international manager delegations and potentially expand their place of implementation to Heidenheim in the south of Germany. This new location aligns with GIZ’s vision of offering Partnering in Business with Germany in various regions across Germany, ensuring a broader

international reached a significant milestone by signing the contract to be again included in the pool of Business Development Centres (BDCs) for the upcoming contract phase. Ranked third out of 18 BDCs, this recognition highlights our

GLOBAL

range of industrial hubs can benefit from the programme. Heidenheim, known for its sectoral focus on engineering, advanced manufacturing, and its strong culture of innovation, offers participants an exceptional opportunity to engage with businesses at the forefront of industrial advancements.

For CEFE International, this expansion represents more than logistical adaptation—it’s a strategic move toward establishing a permanent branch in Heidenheim. Hosting the PG program in this region serves as a pilot, reinforcing CEFE International’s commitment to deepening its presence in the South of Germany.

### Building Lasting Partnerships and Expanding Horizons

The PG programme is not just about sharing knowledge—it’s about fostering meaningful, long-term partnerships between German and international businesses. Recent visits by Vietnamese delegations to Talentbrücke GmbH & Co. KG and Alfred Talke GmbH & Co. KG exemplify this approach.

At Talentbrücke, participants explored Potential Analysis, International Projects, and International Recruiting, while also expanding their professional networks. Lars-Rosario Scarpello, Co-Managing Director of Talentbrücke, reflected:





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*By facilitating dynamic interactions between German businesses and international managers, the programme creates a platform for shared innovation and mutual benefits.*

“This opportunity allowed us to make connections visible and create new links. As a result, we successfully expanded our professional network as an SME beyond borders.”

For the Vietnamese delegation, the visit provided opportunities to explore collaborations in workforce integration and recruitment strategies.

At TALKE, the focus was on Green Technologies, including hydrogen-powered trucks and IT-integrated warehouse systems. The delegation discussed cost-efficiency, regulatory compliance, and infrastructure innovations. TALKE’s Managing Director, Christoph Grunert, emphasized: “Engaging with such a forward-thinking delegation allows us to build bridges into emerging markets and create mutual value.”

These exchanges highlight the collaborative spirit of the PG programme.

Beyond professional growth, these experiences often lead to lasting partnerships, enriching the participants’ networks and enabling them to tackle global challenges together.

By bridging cultural and professional divides, the PG programme continues to empower businesses globally, driving innovation, sustainability, and prosperity. CEFE International remains committed to fostering these connections and is excited for what lies ahead.

### A Christmas Thanks from Group 18

*In December’s chill, where Cologne beams bright,  
With Christmas markets and festive light,  
We pause to reflect, with hearts sincere,  
On the two weeks we’ve spent with you here.*

*Lina, Zura, Laura so kind,  
Ronja, Amy, and Jillian, you shine.  
Guiding Group 18 from Vietnam’s shore,  
You’ve opened our minds to learn and explore.*

*Through governance lessons, your wisdom flowed,  
In company tours, your knowledge showed.  
With patience and care, you led the way,  
Inspiring us more with each passing day.*

*Cologne’s charm is its twinkling trees,  
Its cathedrals grand, and crisp winter breeze.  
Yet your support, your warmth, your grace,  
Have made this city a special place.*

*So as Christmas nears, with joy to share,  
We send our thanks, beyond compare.  
For teaching us not just the art of the trade,  
But lessons of friendship and bonds you’ve made.*

*May your holidays sparkle, your days be bright,  
With happiness glowing like Cologne at night.  
From Group 18, with hearts so true,  
A Merry Christmas and thanks to you!*



**Pauline Sautter**  
Manager Director & Business Cooperation's Division Manager



# Erasmus+: Farm4SD

## Small and Medium Farm Holders as Agents of Sustainable Change in Agriculture and Society



... and it's a wrap! This October, our two-year, Erasmus+ funded project "Farm4SD – Small and Medium Farm Holders as Agents of Sustainable Change in Agriculture and Society" came to an end. Over the last 24 months, we have developed two training courses, for farmers and VET-educators in agriculture respectively. The aim of our training offer is to equip farmers with the capacities to be prepared for economic and ecological challenges in the future and become agents of change, further promoting the goals of sustainable agriculture.

We started off with an analysis on the status quo of the knowledge of European farmers on sustainability, funding opportunities, entrepreneurial skills and soft skills. From surveys, in direct contact with our target group, and desk research on current teaching offers in the sector, we developed our methodological framework and lessons plan. Knowing the true needs and knowledge gaps of farmers and educators allowed us to develop tailor-made courses that offer true value. In the self-learning materials, farm holders can get input on Embedded Sustainable

Farming concepts, Sustainable Business Planning for Farmers, Market Understanding, Human Resource & Digitalization, Financial Literacy, Identification of public and private sources of funding, Networking & Creativity skills, Time management, Agility and critical thinking, as well as Teamwork and self-management.

The course for VET-educators tackles issues such as the Sustainable Transition of the Agricultural Sector, Critical Soft Skills for Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Financial Management of an agribusiness & Funding opportunities, Ethi-

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

13 CLIMATE ACTION

”

*The aim of our training offer is to equip farmers with the capacities to be prepared for economic and ecological challenges in the future and become agents of change, further promoting the goals of sustainable agriculture.*

cal standing in sustainable agriculture, European qualification instruments as well as Training methods and tools.

EUROPE

In this project, we worked closely together with six consortium partners: BC Naklo from Slovenia, Hof und Leben from Germany, The Polish Farm Advisory, PI4SD from Greece, Readlab from Greece and Readlab Brussels. This multinational team composition allowed us to obtain an international perspective and to develop materials useful for farmers across the continent. Further, we were able to disseminate the materials in training sessions and multiplier events across five countries, reaching 1.700 participants across different activities.

Overall, we consider this project to be a success for our target group, while also providing our internal team with learning opportunities on the EU as a donor organization, as well as entrepreneurial skills with a specific focus on the agricultural sector. If this article has sparked your curiosity, you can access our courses free of charge at <https://training.farm4sd-project.eu/>.



**Ronja Backhaus**  
Project Manager



# Sustainable Industrial Clusters in Ethiopia

Creating decent jobs and to move towards more stable economic growth in Ethiopias’ textile, garment and leather industries.



Since 2021, we have been providing experts in a consortium, together with dss+, for GIZ’s Sustainable Industrial Clusters (SIC) project.

The objective of the project is to create decent jobs and foster more stable economic growth in Ethiopia’s textile, garment, and leather industries.

So far, more than 80 assignments have been conducted—ranging from small projects addressing social, economic, and ecological issues within the overarching SIC project. One of these assignments was organizing the visit of a buyers’ delegation to Ethiopia. Following our successful organization of the first-

ever internationally hosted buyers’ forum in Sub-Saharan Africa during the Africa Sourcing & Fashion Week in 2023 (see CEFE Panorama 2023), we were asked to plan and implement a second program.

Sixteen CEOs and high-level managers joined the buyers’ delegation, primarily from Germany. The companies they represented were substantial, with one ranking among the top 10 largest clothing suppliers in Europe. Remarkably, most of these companies had not initially planned to visit Ethiopia, but, thanks to our team’s promotion, they quickly changed their minds.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- 5 GENDER EQUALITY
- 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
- 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
- 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

”

*On the ground, they were highly impressed by the potential of the local industry, the quality standards, and the organizational processes of the factories they visited.*

For some participants, this visit resulted in concrete plans to source clothing from Ethiopia.

The factories visited and their employees are supported by SIC and our expert team, providing advisory services in areas such as wastewater management and capacity-building activities related to workers’ empowerment and gender equality to promote decent work.

This tremendous success was made possible by three individuals working on the assignment: Brigitte Heuser, Meryem Abob, and Alexander Demissie.



- **Brigitte**, as the project broker, brought invaluable commitment and networks to secure the buyers’ participation. She promoted the delegation visit through various channels, including the Apparel Sourcing Club (sourcing-club.net—an initiative by her and Sven Eriskat, one of our key experts in SIC and other projects).
- **Alex**, Managing Director of AfricaRising, organized the first delegation visit and was responsible for the conceptual design and programming of this one. As a key expert, he has contributed to several SIC assignments, promoting a sustainable Ethiopian textile sector with decent jobs.

- **Meryem**, as the on-site lead, was always ready to solve logistical challenges and organizational hurdles up to the very last minute. She is an expert from our local partner, TAYA, which has become a close collaborator over the past few years—not just in SIC.

A big thank-you goes to our consortium partner dss+, to all the team members working passionately to achieve the project’s goals, and, of course, to our colleagues at GIZ for enabling such a successful cooperation.





# CEFE Network Activities

# 2024

# CEFE Network Activities and Achievements in 2024

Shared Leadership and Global Collaboration Transforming CEFE in 2024



The CEFE network has experienced a transformative year in 2024, marked by significant strides toward sustainable leadership and global collaboration. Our focus on restructuring has paved the way for innovative solutions, shared leadership, and the strengthening of our community.

Introducing Shared Leadership and the CEFE Network Board

In a landmark move to enhance governance and inclusivity, we developed a system of

shared leadership positions and established the CEFE Network Board (CNB). Open applications for these roles were announced in March, inviting passionate CEFistas to step forward and contribute to the network's future.

We are thrilled to announce that in June, two outstanding leaders were elected: Hannah Laya Grande from ADFEC, CEFE Philippines and Laura Gayoso from CEFE Venezuela.

**Laura Gayoso:** We believe that through shared leadership, we

can harness the collective wisdom and diverse experiences of our global network. Hanna and I envision a CEFE that not only celebrates its rich history but also adapts to the evolving needs of our members. By leveraging technology and fostering a culture of continuous learning, we aim to enhance the training experiences we offer, making them more relevant and impactful.

One of our primary goals is to facilitate greater collaboration among CEFistas across different regions. We look forward

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- 4 QUALITY EDUCATION
- 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
- 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
- 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

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Together, we have the power to transform challenges into opportunities and create a brighter future for the CEFE community and beyond.

GLOBAL

embracing the innovations and challenges of today.

Our vision is clear: to create a cohesive branding for all CEFE trainers that amplifies our global impact, to develop an accessible and intuitive database of trainings, tools, and activities that empowers every CEFE member, and to unify our community, building stronger connections and shared purpose.

These platforms are not just initiatives; they are stepping stones to a CEFE that excites, inspires, and fulfills the aspirations of every member, trainer, and partner. I am committed to listening, collaborating, and taking bold steps with Laura and all of you. Together, we will sha-

to encouraging the exchange of ideas and best practices and ensuring that everyone has a voice in shaping our future.

Let us embrace this exciting journey together, working hand in hand to unlock opportunities for all CEFE members. With the support of the Global Community, we will cultivate a vibrant network that thrives on collaboration, innovation, and shared success.

**Hannah Laya Grande:** I am deeply honored and excited to step into the role of Shared Leader for the CEFE community, a network I have admired and been a part of for years. This opportunity to work alongside my incredible co-leader, Laura, is both humbling and inspiring. Together, we aim to guide CEFE towards a future that reignites the passion and camaraderie that made our community thrive in the past decades while



pe a CEFE that makes a tangible, lasting impact worldwide, a CEFE that we are proud to call our own. Let's ignite the future—together!

Their election symbolizes our commitment to diverse representation and shared leadership, bringing fresh perspectives from different corners of the globe.

**First Operational CNB Meetings and Formation of Think Tanks**

The newly formed CNB hit the ground running, holding its first operational meetings and setting strategic directions for the network. One of the key outcomes was the formation of two specialized think tanks:

1. Brand Guideline Think Tank: Tasked with developing cohesive branding strategies to unify our global presence.

2. Community Platform Think Tank: Focused on enhancing our digital platforms to foster better communication and collaboration among CEFistas worldwide.

These think tanks are supervised by our shared leadership team, ensuring alignment with our overall vision and goals.

**Looking Ahead: Expansion and Core Focus Areas**

We are excited about the prospect of creating more think tanks in the near future. These groups will drive development in our four core areas:



- **Quality Assurance:** Upholding the highest standards in our programs and initiatives.
- **Concept Development:** Innovating and refining our methodologies.
- **Upgrade CEFista:** Investing in the growth and development of our members.
- **Network Empowerment:** Strengthening connections and collaboration within our global community.

**A Leap Towards Sustainable Leadership**

The initiatives undertaken this year mark a significant step towards sustainable leadership within CEFE. By embracing shared leadership and establishing the global CNB, we are not only decentralizing decision-making but also fostering a more resilient and adaptive network.

We are grateful for the dedication and active involvement of our community members. Together, we are shaping a future where CEFE continues to thrive as a leader in entrepreneurship training and development.



**Join Us in Celebrating and Building the Future**

As we reflect on the progress made in 2024, we invite all CEFistas to participate actively in our ongoing initiatives. Your insights, passion, and collaboration are the driving forces behind our collective success. Here's to a year of innovation, shared leadership, and strengthened bonds within the CEFE network!

*"The 'see you soon' moment at our joyful and connecting CNB meeting - a beautiful way to end and look forward to the next chapter together!"*



**Lisa Wernz**  
Project Manager & CEFE Network Coordinator



**Hannah Laya Grande**  
CEFE Thailand



**Laura Gayoso**  
CEFE Venezuela

# Association of CEFE Trainers in BiH (CEFE BiH) – 2024 Recap

From Youth Entrepreneurship to Rural Women’s Employment



In 2024, CEFE Bosnia and Herzegovina (CEFE BiH) successfully completed five projects: “Mind Your Own Business”, “Local Employment Partnership Gradiska”, “Partner Approach to Local Development in Tuzla”, “Partnership, Employment, Entrepreneurship” and “Empowering Youth in the CCI Sector through Education and Entrepreneurship” and began the implementation of two new projects: “CINS4YOUTH” and “Women from Rural Areas: Path to (Self)Employment.”

- The project “Mind Your Own Business” intended to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and networking of key actors in the labor market to better meet the needs of

employers and unemployed individuals. **As a result**, 12 new businesses were established, 21 beneficiaries underwent retraining and upskilling, 42 people were employed (30 newly employed and 12 self-employed).

- The project “Local Employment Partnership Gradiska” aimed to enhance employability in Gradiska by connecting unemployed individuals with local industry needs and the labor market. **As a result**, 13 businesses were established, and 13 individuals were employed.
- The project “Partner Approach to Local Development in Tuzla” pursued to improve employment in local communities by

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- 1 NO POVERTY
- 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
- 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

supporting local employment partnerships (LEPs) as mechanisms for better access to formal jobs. It focused on transforming labor supply and demand by creating new jobs in emerging industries and providing targeted education for unemployed individuals in high-demand fields. This helped existing businesses expand their operations. **As a result**, 17 new businesses were established, 21 individuals underwent retraining and



upskilling, and 29 people were employed.

- The project “Partnership, Employment, Entrepreneurship” aimed to enhance the business and entrepreneurial ecosystem in Lukavac by fostering collaboration among labor market stakeholders. **As a**

**result**, 19 startups were established, and 5 individuals were employed.

All four projects described above were supported by the European Union and implemented by the International Labor Organization in BiH within the framework of the “European Union Support



**to Local Partnerships for Employment – Phase II” project (LEP II).**

entrepreneurship, empower youth, and support local economic development.

The “Empowering Youth in the CCI Sector through Education and Entrepreneurship” project, supported by the U.S. Embassy in BiH, aimed to inspire youth in the cultural and creative industries (CCI). At the final event, **26 participants presented their business ideas** to experts and peers. Around **40 young people attended a seven-day workshop** in Blagaj, developing skills, exchanging ideas, and working on business initiatives with mentors. The project aimed to foster



*The long-standing successful cooperation of CEFE BiH with the International Labour Organization (ILO) in BiH continued through the EU for Employment project, funded by the European Union in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Embassy of Sweden in Sarajevo.*

Under this project, CEFE BiH is implementing two important initiatives:

- **CINS4YOUTH**, a project aimed at the activation and employment of young people up to 29 years old from the Sarajevo Canton, with a particular focus on the municipalities of Centar Sarajevo and Novo Sarajevo, with the goal of helping at least 50 secure jobs and engaging 300 participants.
- **Women from Rural Areas: Path to (Self)Employment**, a project focused on the economic empowerment of women



from rural areas in the Visoko region, aiming to employ 35 women (8 self-employed, 27 employed) and engage 200 women in activation activities.

At a ceremony held on September 12, 2024, at the Europe House in Sarajevo, certificates were presented to the project implementers by H.E. Luigi Soreca, Head of the EU Delegation to BiH, and H.E. Helena Lagerlöf, Ambassador of Sweden to BiH. On behalf of CEFE BiH, the certificates were received by **President Zoran Kulundžija** (CINS4YOUTH project manager) and **Vice President Tamara Bjelic** (Women from Rural Areas: Path to (Self)Employment project manager).



**Zoran Kulundžija**  
CEFE BiH



**Tamara Bjelic**  
CEFE BiH

# From Challenge to Solution: CEFE Empowering Coffee Farmers through Actionable Insights

Enhancing farmers' skills in problem analysis and developing solutions to improve coffee yields.



Each year, the Caribbean's agricultural sector faces turmoil due to the impact of climate change and the region's inability to shield farms from hurricanes, storms and drought. Jamaica, the largest island in the English Speaking Caribbean lost over USD 16B in produce of various kinds and in July 2024, a workshop was facilitated by Business Works Limited, operators of CEFE Caribbean Centre for Entrepreneurs, Enterprise & Ecosystem Development (CCEED) under the Government of Jamaica| World Bank Second Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI II) for the West Rural Coffee Farmers Group aimed at enhancing their skills in problem analysis and developing actionable solutions to improve coffee yields.

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*The workshop, grounded in a competency-based approach, was designed to be engaging and participatory, with a focus on fostering innovation and long-term impact*

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- 1 NO POVERTY
- 4 QUALITY EDUCATION
- 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
- 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Arising from this project, are the following fruits – a CEFE Activity for Problem Solving transferrable to all farms.

## JAMAICA

### Building Engagement Through Icebreakers

The workshop begins with an icebreaker session, where farmers introduce themselves and share their biggest challenges related to yields. These challenges are recorded on a whiteboard, which help to establish common ground and set the stage for the deeper problem-solving work that follows. This activity builds rapport among partici-

pants and ensure a collaborative atmosphere throughout the session.

### Problem Identification & Root Cause Analysis

Next, participants engage in problem identification and analysis, working in small groups. Using problem analysis cards and a problem tree approach, they identify the root causes of issues affecting yields, such as soil quality, pests, and climate challenges. Groups are encouraged to define the causes and effects of each problem, providing a clear picture of the complexities at play in farming.

### Brainstorming and Validation of Solutions

Once the problems are identified, the groups move to brainstorming solutions. They propose practical, innovative solutions and score them based on relevance, feasibility, and resource availability. In the next activity, role-playing scenarios helped validate these solutions in real-life contexts, such as pest outbreaks or drought, with farmers offering feedback to one another.

### Action Planning and Reflection

The final segment of the workshop focuses on action planning, where farmers create concrete, time-bound plans to address one identified pro-

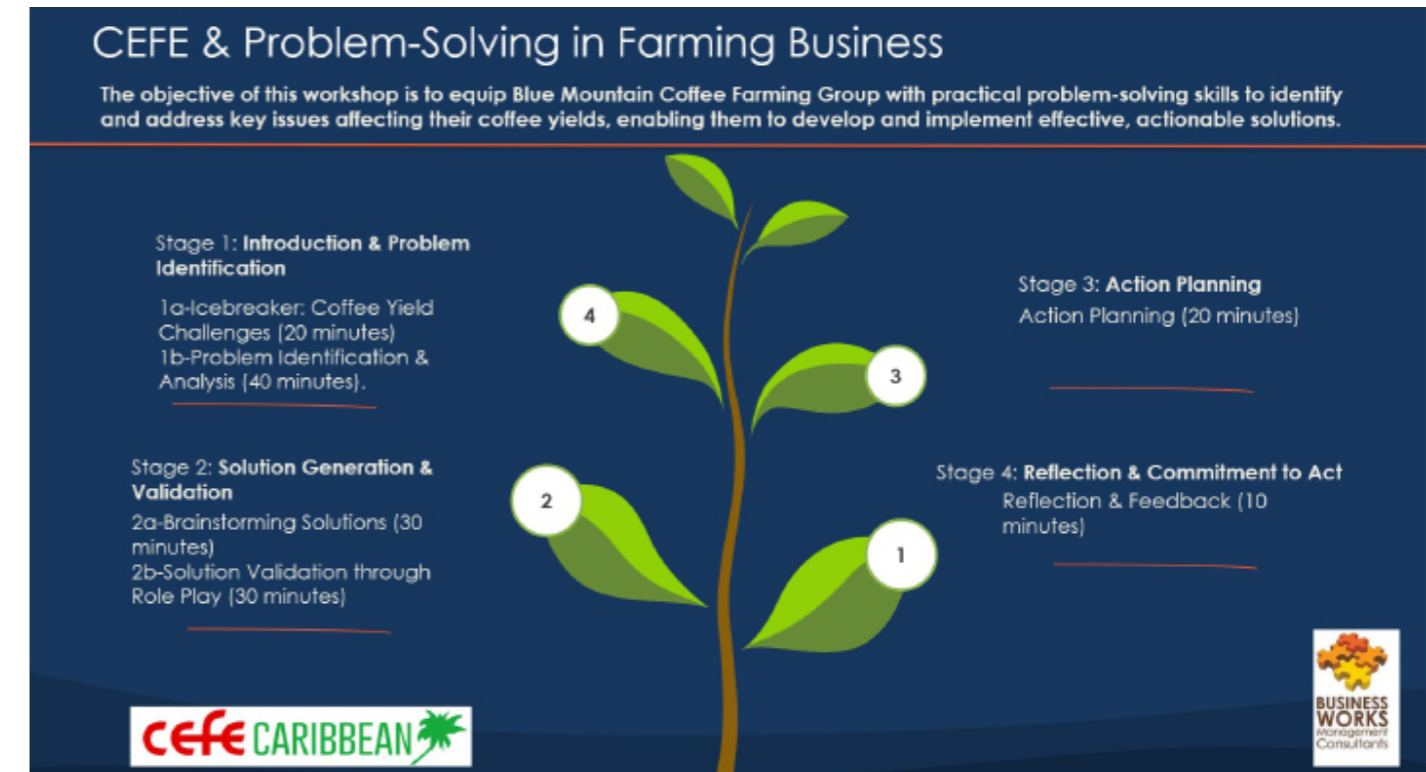


blem. Each plan included specific actions, resources needed, and timeframes. The session concluded with a reflection where participants identified one immediate action to take and considered potential challenges.

This workshop empowers farmers to tackle yield challenges head-on, equipping them with skills, tools, and a roadmap for long-term success.

Here is the CEFE Competency-Based Learning Activity for Farmers:

#	Activity	Description	Duration	Outcome
1	Icebreaker: Coffee Yield Challenges	Participants introduce themselves and share the biggest challenge affecting their coffee yields. Challenges are written on a whiteboard.	20 minutes	Builds rapport and sets context for problem analysis.
2	Problem Identification & Analysis	In small groups, farmers receive problem analysis cards. Discuss and prioritise the top 3 problems affecting yields using a problem tree approach: Identify root causes (e.g., poor soil, pests) and define effects (e.g., low yield, poor quality).	40 minutes	Groups identify key problems, causes, and effects, ready for solution generation.
3	Brainstorming Solutions	Each group brainstorms 3 practical solutions for identified problems. Solutions are scored based on: Relevance to yield issues, feasibility, innovative thinking, and resource availability.	30 minutes	Groups present and discuss their proposed solutions.
4	Solution Validation through Role Play	Groups engage in a role-play scenario (e.g., pest outbreak). Apply solutions and receive peer feedback.	30 minutes	Farmers validate solutions, considering real-world applicability.
5	Action Planning	Participants create an action plan: Identify one key problem, outline 3 specific actions to solve it, set timeframes, and identify resources.	20 minutes	Clear, actionable plans ready for implementation.
6	Reflection & Feedback	Farmers reflect on: What they learned, one immediate action to take, and one potential challenge.	10 minutes	Strengthened commitment to applying problem-solving skills.



In conclusion, this competency-based learning activity is designed to empower Coffee Farmers but is very relevant for all farmers. It is proven to be impactful by strengthening their problem analysis and solution-building skills. Through engaging exercises

such as group discussions, brainstorming sessions, and role-playing scenarios, participants will not only gain valuable insights into the challenges affecting their coffee yields but also walk away with practical, actionable plans for improvement. As they colla-

borate, innovate, and reflect, these farmers will be better equipped to tackle the issues they face, ensuring a more sustainable and prosperous future for their coffee farming practices.



**Andrea Livingston-Prince**  
CEFE Jamaica



# A pathway towards business sustainability via capacity building in-depth coaching

Enabling SMEs to create new value-added products and services.



In today's rapidly evolving economic landscape, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face numerous challenges that threaten their sustainability. These challenges include market volatility, resource scarcity, and increasing competition. To navigate these complexities, businesses must adopt innovative frameworks that not only enhance their operational capabilities but also foster sustainable practices. Capacity Building In-depth Coaching framework aims to empower SMEs through the CEFE approach, enabling them to create new value-added products and services.

## The Need for Sustainable Practices

Sustainability has become a critical focus for businesses globally. As stakeholders increasingly demand responsible practices, SMEs must integrate sustainability into their core strategies. This integration can lead to enhanced brand loyalty, improved operational efficiencies, and access to new markets. However, many SMEs lack the necessary skills and knowledge to implement sustainable practices effectively. This is where the Capacity Building In-depth Coaching framework comes into play.

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
- 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE
- 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
- 13 CLIMATE ACTION

## Overview of the Capacity Building In-depth Coaching Framework

The Capacity Building In-depth Coaching framework is designed to provide a structured approach for SMEs to develop their capabilities in sustainability. This framework comprises several key components:

- Assessment of Current Capabilities: The first step involves evaluating the existing skills and resources

within the organization. This assessment helps identify gaps that need to be addressed to achieve sustainability goals.

- Customized Coaching Programs: Based on the assessment, tailored coaching programs are developed to meet the specific needs of each SME. These programs focus on enhancing skills related to sustainable practices, such as resource management, waste reduction, and eco-friendly product development.
- Experiential Learning Exercises: Practical learning experiences are integral to the framework. These exercises allow participants to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world

## THAILAND

scenarios, fostering deeper understanding and retention of sustainable practices.

- Implementation Support: The framework provides ongoing support during the implementation phase. Coaches work closely with SME representatives to ensure that new strategies are effectively integrated into daily operations.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Continuous monitoring and evaluation are essential for measuring progress and adjusting strategies as needed. This iterative process ensures that SMEs remain on track towards achieving their sustainability objectives.



THAILAND

The Role of CEFE in Enhancing Value Creation



The CEFE approach is instrumental in facilitating the creation of new value-added products or services for SMEs.

By leveraging experiential learning and capacity building, CEFE empowers organizations to innovate and adapt in a competitive marketplace. Each step of the Capacity Building In-depth Coaching framework is designed to en-

hance organizational capacity, enabling SMEs to respond proactively to market demands while maintaining sustainable practices. For instance, through targeted coaching sessions, SMEs can learn how to redesign their products using sustainable materials or implement energy-efficient processes that reduce operational costs. Such initiatives not only contribute to environmental sustainability but also enhance the overall value proposition of the business.

Conclusion

The Capacity Building In-depth Coaching framework represents a significant advancement in promoting business sustainability among SMEs. By

integrating the CEFE approach into this framework, organizations can build essential capacities that drive innovation and create value-added products and services. As we move beyond 2024, it is imperative for CEFE members worldwide to embrace this framework as a pathway towards sustainable business practices. Through continuous learning and adaptation, SMEs can not only survive but thrive in an ever-changing business environment. This article aims to inspire action among CEFE members and encourage collaboration in implementing the Capacity Building In-depth Coaching framework across diverse sectors, paving the way for a sustainable future for businesses worldwide.

Success Case

**Location of the Enterprise:**  
65/490 Moo 5, Khlong Mai, Phan Thong, Chonburi Province, Thailand 20160

**Business Type and Products:**  
Production of home decorative items, CNC Laser carved wooden products

**Main Products of the Business:**  
Clocks, lamps, picture frames

**Industry Sector:**  
Wood carving industry for home decoration

**Product Photos:**



Project: Promotion of SMEs through the Application of the Bio-Circular-Green Economy Model  
 Entrepreneurs: Mr. Chaiyamarit Kingkaew  
 Enterprise: Really Trend Limited Partnership  
 Activity Scope: The Development of Upcycled Products

Project Description

Integration of design and development of Upcycled Products applying knowledge and creating added value with the principles of the circular economy. This involves developing products by conducting research, experimentation and transforming waste materials into new creative products, as well as learning how to calculate the carbon footprint of products reduced through the use of recycled materials.

Project Photos:



Project Outcome & Impact

**Success:** Development of new products from waste materials to create a high value "lamp" measuring 13.5 x 13.5 x 31 cm. This reduces wood waste from clock production, and decreases the amount of new raw materials. It also opens up opportunities to increase income and boost sales revenue.

**Economic Results:** Increase revenue by 15% or 93,800 baht per year.

**Environmental Results:** Reduce losses by more than 30% per year. Reduce carbon footprint (CF) by 4.3207 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per year, accounting for 39.55%.



Success Case

**Location of the Enterprise:**  
9/8 Taksin Maharaj Road, Tha Pradu, Mueang Rayong, Rayong Province, Thailand 21000

**Business Type and Products:**  
Fabric printing

**Main Products of the Business:**  
Bags, souvenirs, screen printing services, Embroidery of logos

**Industry Sector:**  
Textile product manufacturing

**Product Photos:**



Project: Promotion of SMEs through the Application of the Bio-Circular-Green Economy Model  
 Entrepreneurs: Mr. Amnat Suksawang, Ms. Wannapa Prasong  
 Enterprise: Mee Item Buff Co., Ltd.  
 Activity Scope: The Development of Upcycled Products

Project Description

Design and development of upcycled products by applying knowledge and creating added value with the principles of the circular economy. This involves developing products by applying scrap sack cloth from production to create new, creative products, as well as learning how to calculate the carbon footprint of upcycled products.

Project Photos:

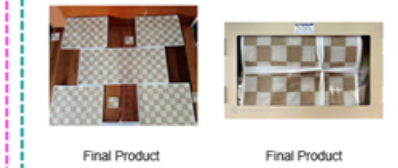


Project Outcome & Impact

**Success:** An upcycled prototype product has been developed: a "Family Set" table decoration set consisting of 9 pieces made from leftover sack cloth. This includes table runners, placemats, and coasters, transforming waste materials into valuable products. This helps reduce waste, creates business opportunities, and increases revenue.

**Economic Results:** Revenue increase from new products is 108,000 baht per year.

**Environmental Results:** Reduce leftover sack cloth 10 kilograms per year and reduce the carbon footprint by 67.032 kilograms CO<sub>2</sub>e per year.



Success Case

**Location of the Enterprise:**  
50/1 Moo 2, Tapong Subdistrict, Mueang Rayong District, Rayong Province, Thailand 21000

**Business Type and Products:**  
Production of Banana Chips

**Main Products of the Business:**  
Crispy banana chips

**Industry Sector:**  
Food Industry

**Product Photos:**



Project: Promotion of SMEs through the Application of the Bio-Circular-Green Economy Model  
 Entrepreneurs: Mr. Wit and Ms. Nattarin Wongthayapadung  
 Enterprise: Thai Mee Dee Interfood Limited Partnership  
 Activity Scope: The Development of Upcycled Products

Project Description

Design and Development of Upcycled Products by developing knowledge to create added value according to the principles of the Circular Economy. This involves developing products by applying waste materials - banana stems from production into new, creative products, as well as learning how to calculate the carbon footprint of upcycled products for circular economy products.

Project Photos:



Project Outcome & Impact

**Success:** Developed banana stems into surface materials for decoration and created three prototypes of upcycled products: a multipurpose box, a photo frame, and a tray. This adds value to banana stems instead of using them solely as fertilizer, opening opportunities to increase income from the sale of these upcycled products.

**Economic Results:** Generated income from the sale of new products of approximately 90,000 baht per year.

**Environmental Results:** Reduced banana stems discarded by at least 960 kilograms per year and helped reduce carbon footprint by 32.6 kilograms CO<sub>2</sub>e per year.



Widhoon Chiamchitrong  
CEFE Thailand



Kiti Charuarayanan  
CEFE Thailand



Wanchai Jongrisawat  
CEFE Thailand



Malai Chomphuka  
CEFE Thailand

# FACES: Advanced Training for Sustainable CEFE Practitioners

Enabling facilitators to advance in their CEFE careers



Developed by CEFE Venezuela, FACES (Formación Avanzada de CEFistas Sustentables) returns as the next step and level for CEFE facilitators. This program serves as an accelerator for implementing CEFE methodologies, enabling facilitators to advance in their CEFE careers. This time, the program welcomed #Cefistas who graduated from TOTs conducted between 2022 and 2023, forming the 3rd generation of advanced CEFE practitioners in Venezuela.

From May 15 to June 1, 12 CEFE practitioners embarked on an intensive 12-day learning journey. This program not only enhanced their skills as CEFE facilitators but also broadened their horizons, equipping them to design products for specific target audiences, address diverse needs, and develop practical tools with critical insight to create new exercises.

Working in triads, each practitioner conducted individual practice sessions, delivering the full CAV process across its five stages while also co-facilitating their teammates' sessions. They developed new exercises based on real-world needs, tested these exercises, and concluded the program by designing an Alpha Prototype as a team. This Conceptual CEFE Product allows them to address specific audiences by implementing a CEFE-based training program with a defined scope and duration.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- 1 NO POVERTY
- 4 QUALITY EDUCATION
- 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
- 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

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*During this introspective journey, participants became aware of the gap between their current level as CEFE practitioners and the advanced facilitators they aspire to become after obtaining their CEFE Facilitator Licenses.*

The prototype was presented to a panel of four experts from diverse fields, including entrepreneurs, experienced facilitators, and human talent specialists. These experts provided valuable feedback to fine-tune the products, enabling the participants to confidently enter the market with high-potential solutions.

With this cohort of 12 Advanced CEFE Practitioners, we now have a total of 40 licensed CEFE practitioners, certified by CEFE International, who continue to elevate their performance and expertise under the #CEFE methodology.

VENEZUELA



**Laura Gayoso**  
CEFE Venezuela



**Juan Moya**  
CEFE Venezuela



# CEFE Alliances in Support of Higher Education and Team Development CEFE in Universities

Expanding Impact Through Education and Corporate Growth in 2024



Understanding that strengthening competencies among young people is one of the pillars for sustainable growth in the country's economy, in 2024, our approach to education through universities was solidified by integrating CEFE methodology as the foundation for learning in academic subjects.



*Strengthening competencies among young people is one of the pillars for sustainable growth*

In February 2024, the first formal partnership was established with the administration of the Bicentenary University of Aragua (UBA), located in Maracay, Aragua State. This collaboration aims to jointly develop programs focused on experiential learning to enhance entrepreneurial skills in students throughout their university careers. As part of this partnership, UBA played

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a leading role by using its online learning platform for asynchronous sessions and assignments during the first cohort of the e-TOT digital CEFE program.

Continuing the effort to strengthen entrepreneurial competencies in young people, we concluded the first quarter of 2024 with a special participation in the entrepreneurial ideas program at the Metropolitan University in Caracas. In this program, we sponsored the presentation of new projects, with over 50 entrepreneurial ideas competing as part of their final year projects. The Top 10 ideas were presented to a panel of experts, in which we participated.

### CEFE Corporate Continues to Grow

The year 2024 marked a significant expansion in the impact of the CEFE methodology for developing and strengthening team competencies within organizations, setting a clear direction for CEFE in Venezuela. In partnership with Ticket Services, a private company that provides benefits management services for employees,



we carried out a CEFE intervention with managers and leaders in the human talent departments of major companies in Venezuela.

Calox International Laboratories, with programs executed throughout the year.

### Looking Ahead to 2025

Thanks to this partnership, several organizations in Venezuela have participated in CEFE-based programs focused on competency development and team strengthening. These programs addressed the needs identified in human resources departments, expanding CEFE's impact as a training methodology in the country.

For 2025, the projection for CEFE Corporate is to execute 45 short, high-impact projects in the private sector. These initiatives will contribute to the development of employees, who, in turn, will align their efforts toward achieving goals and objectives for the coming year.



**Laura Gayoso**  
CEFE Venezuela



**Juan Moya**  
CEFE Venezuela

# Strengthening Facilitators in Venezuela

Empowering a new generation of CEFE facilitators for greater impact in Venezuela



## CEFE Local Network Continues to Grow

After nine years of operations since 2015, strengthening the local network of CEFE facilitators to continue contributing to the development of productive economic and social environments has been a constant year after year.

As of 2014, we have reached a local network composed of 194 facilitators, executing the 9th TOT (Training of Trainers) cohort in Caracas. This cohort, made up of 21 partici-

pants, welcomed individuals from various cities across the country: Margarita, Coro, La Victoria, Maraca, El Tigre, and a large number of participants from Caracas. Notably, we also welcomed a (nowadays) colleague from Costa Rica, who spent 12 days, from June 19 to July 6, living, learning, and practicing CEFE with a focus on implementing the CEFE methodology in corporate environments and open public training according to each new CEFE colleague's area of expertise. To continue advancing to the next level

of expertise in the use of the methodology, FACES (Advanced Training for Sustainable CEFE Facilitators), a program developed by CEFE Venezuela, returns as the next step, the following level.

This training is designed as an accelerator for the implementation capabilities of CEFE facilitators, aimed at advancing their CEFE career. This time, we have #Cefistas who graduated from TOTs conducted between 2022 and 2023, forming the 3rd generation of advanced #Cefistas from Venezuela.

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

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*Over the course of 12 days, 12 CEFE facilitators followed a higher-level learning path, where they not only enhanced their skills as CEFE facilitators but also expanded their horizons*

With this cohort of 12 Advanced CEFE Practitioners, we now have a total of 40 licensed CEFE practitioners, certified by CEFE International, who continue to elevate their performance and expertise under the #CEFE methodology.

Over the course of 12 days, from May 15 to June 1, 12 CEFE facilitators followed a higher-level learning path, where they not only enhanced their skills as CEFE facilitators but also expanded their horizons to evolve into CEFE facilitators capable of generating products for specific audiences, addressing different needs, and possessing practical ability and critical judgment to develop new exercises.

In triads, each CEFE facilitator executed individual practices, completing the entire CAV (CEFE Action Learning Cycle) in its 5 stages, while also co-facilitating their teammates' practices. They developed new exercises based on real needs and tested these exercises, ultimately concluding the program by developing an ALPHA Prototype. This CEFE Concept Product allowed them to address a target audience by implementing a training program under the CEFE methodology, defining the duration and scope of the program developed as a prototype. This prototype was then presented to a panel of 4 experts from various fields (entrepreneurs, experienced facilitators, and human resources specialists), who provided feedback to fine-tune the details and prepare the product for the market with high potential.

During this introspective journey, the facilitators became aware of the gap between the current #Cefista and the #AdvancedCefista they are aiming to become after obtaining their CEFE Facilitator License.

With this group of 12 Advanced CEFE facilitators, we now have 40 CEFE facilitators who have obtained their CEFE License, awarded by CEFE International, continuing to elevate their performance using the #CEFE methodology.



**Laura Gayoso**

CEFE Venezuela



**Juan Moya**

CEFE Venezuela

# CEFE Macedonia

Revolutionizing tourism and education in the western Balkans with virtual and augmented reality technologies



CEFE Macedonia, in collaboration with partners from Albania, Italy, Kosovo, and North Macedonia, is spearheading the transformative V.I.R.TU.A.L. project. Running from January 2023 to December 2025 and co-financed by the Erasmus+ program of the European Commission, this initiative introduces cutting-edge technologies—Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and simulators—to vocational education and training (VET) institutions. This aligns with the Education 4.0 vision, aiming to elevate competencies, skills, and employability among VET students in the tourism sector.

## Pioneering Innovation in Tourism Education

Through partnerships with leading VET providers like TU-CEP (Italy), Professional College Tirana (Albania), European University (Albania), and the University of Business and Technologies (Kosovo), alongside experiential learning organizations like CEFE Macedonia and technology experts from ARTES Italy, the project is setting new standards in education.

In 2024, the project team developed comprehensive guidelines for educators on utilizing free and publicly available VR

tools. These guidelines, featuring 10 adaptable “Educational Scenarios,” are designed to help teachers seamlessly integrate VR and AR technologies into their classrooms, enriching the learning experience and fostering creativity across various sectors.

## Real-World Applications

As one hotel owner emphasized:

*“By creating virtual scenarios that replicate real-life situations, employees can practice skills, handle challenges, and refine their performance in a safe and controlled environ-*

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- 1 NO POVERTY
- 4 QUALITY EDUCATION
- 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

*ment. From managing difficult customer interactions to familiarizing themselves with hotel layouts, VR simulations empower staff with confidence and skills to enhance guest satisfaction.”*



*“Educational Scenarios,” are designed to help teachers, enriching the learning experience and fostering creativity across various sectors.*

Hotels and businesses in the tourism sector are adopting VR to revamp traditional employee training programs, achieving better-prepared teams and improved guest experiences.

## Milestones Achieved

The V.I.R.TU.A.L. project reached key milestones in 2024:

- **June 2024:** Over 100 participants attended the “Virtual Technologies in Education and Tourism Sector in North Macedonia” event in Skopje, organized in collaboration with

the Agency for Promotion of Tourism. Attendees, including educators, government representatives, and business leaders, explored the benefits of virtual technologies in education and tourism.

- **September 2024:** 40 professors and trainers participated in a study visit to Tirana, Albania, to explore innovative educational materials and their applications.
- **October 2024:** 40 students experienced VR-powered education during a study visit to Pristina, Kosovo.
- **November 2024:** 30 students traveled to Perugia, Italy, to delve into the practical applications of VR and AR technologies in education.

## Sharing Results Globally

To extend its impact, the V.I.R.TU.A.L. the project shares its outcomes with the CEFE Global community, enabling integration into other societies and revolutionizing education and tourism. Key deliverables include:

- Dual training paths in VET Map for tourism and catering
- Skills catalogue in tourism and restaurant sectors
- Report on tasks to be developed to improve skills and professional figures through VET

## MACEDONIA



- Guideline for teachers on using VR AR Technologies
- Report on the toolkit piloting process (experiences of teachers)
- Training Curricula for tourism sector in VET (house-keeping and waiters)
- Trainers Guide for Curricula implementation (for teachers/trainers)

## The Future of Tourism Education

The V.I.R.TU.A.L. project exemplifies how technology can bridge gaps in education and industry, equipping students with the skills needed for a dynamic tourism sector. By combining innovation with practical training, this initiative paves the way for a more competent and confident workforce, driving progress across the Western Balkans and beyond.



**Jovan Stalevski**  
CEFE Macedonia

# CEFE Method: A powerful tool for empowering diverse training environments

Since 1996, CEFE Chile has been applying the CEFE Method in diverse contexts, facilitating over 65 training workshops across Chile and Latin America.



At Fundación Trabajo para un Hermano in Concepción, Chile, we began applying CEFE in 1992, immediately after the first TOT in Chile. In 1996, we decided to transfer CEFE, and since then, we have facilitated and managed more than 65 Facilitator Training workshops in Chile and other countries in Latin America. In the last three years, we have had the great opportunity to share CEFE in new training environments. Our experience,

perseverance, and belonging to the CEFE International Network have allowed us to introduce CEFE into these new spaces. In 2023, we facilitated a Training of Trainers (ToT) for teachers from technical-professional high schools. As part of a project managed by a local university, we were asked to train teachers to implement CEFE in 10 secondary education institutions. This project allowed us to conduct field

mentoring, where we were pleased to see the teachers, now also CEFE practitioners, working with CEFE exercises with young people and observing how they participated and drew meaningful lessons from the sessions. We edited a manual with exercises to be applied in various subjects of the regular curriculum. In the context of a crisis in formal education in Chile,

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- 1 NO POVERTY
- 5 GENDER EQUALITY
- 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

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*The introduction of experiential learning methodologies in classrooms is welcomed as a very relevant proposal, requiring teacher training to take on the role of facilitators.*

One training space we have had the great opportunity to support, even before the pandemic, is the ORIGINARIAS PROGRAM by UN Women, which aims to empower indigenous women in Chile and improve their living conditions. By managing training processes as its primary contribution, the program has chosen CEFE as the foundational methodology, especially in the areas of en-

## CHILE



trepreneurship, leadership, empowerment, and generally in the development of skills for development with cultural relevance and a gender approach. CEFE, with its use of the experiential learning cycle, a focus on people, cultural context adaptability, and above all, collective knowledge construction, is enabling training processes that are well-received by indigenous women. The dynamics of CEFE exercises and the tools that complement them are very similar to traditional methods of knowledge transfer in indigenous cultures. Learning through concrete experiences, reflections in circles

where everyone expresses themselves, and collective actions are embraced with great gratitude. In several facilitator training processes, we have observed how participants embrace CEFE and create exercises to address topics of their interest, such as gender-based violence prevention, racism, ancestral nutrition and health, among many others.

In 2024, we facilitated a TOT in Punta Arenas, marking the southernmost CEFE transfer in the world. This last TOT was for the members of the Cooperativa Rosas Silvestres, carried out as part of a capacity-building project for this feminist organization, which aims to become a reference for experiential training in the Magallanes region.



**Jorge Tagle**  
CEFE Chile



# Special Notes



# From Teacher to Change-maker: A Journey with CEFE Macedonia

CEFE Macedonia leading the way in transforming educators into changemakers



Until 2023, my professional life revolved around a familiar cycle: teaching, training, and school projects. Despite my curiosity and passion for learning, opportunities to explore beyond my role as a language teacher were limited. Everything changed when I met the inspiring team from CEFE Macedonia.

It was a chance encounter in April 2023 at a school bazaar in Ohrid that set the wheels in motion. The president of

CEFE Macedonia invited me to join a study visit to Estonia. I accepted without hesitation, guided by intuition—and it proved to be one of the best decisions of my life. The synergy and positivity within the team during that trip were indescribable.

Shortly after, I joined another transformative CEFE project: a Training of Trainers (TOT) program in Ankara, Turkey. The CEFE methodology, based on experiential learning through

games, was a revelation. It opened my eyes to an entirely new dimension of teaching—engaging, innovative, and impactful. Inspired, I returned to my school with a mission to share this knowledge.

I conducted local CEFE training, introducing my students to a method unlike anything they had experienced before. Through interactive activities and games, they explored topics beyond their regular curriculum, discovering new skills

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in an engaging way. Their enthusiasm validated the power of the CEFE approach. Trust between me and the CEFE Macedonia team grew, and I continued to implement the methodology, seeing increased interest and participation from students every day.

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*Thanks to CEFE, my personal and professional horizons have expanded beyond imagination.*

## Transformative Success

As a mother tongue teacher and grammar specialist, I never envisioned myself excelling in entrepreneurship. Yet, with CEFE’s support, I developed business competencies and became a certified CEFE trainer. My journey was marked by remarkable milestones:

- First place for the best green entrepreneurship business idea (out of 30 schools).
- First place for the best marketing plan at the Youth Educational Rendezvous (competing with 40 schools).
- €2,000 grant for the most innovative environmental protection idea.
- Approval of an Erasmus+ project to promote mental health awareness, with a student exchange planned for June 2025 in Ohrid.

## A Better Future Through CEFE

CEFE Macedonia has not only enriched my career but also transformed my perspective. I’ve learned that with dedication, perseverance, and support, no barrier is insurmountable. The methodology has equipped me to empower young people with essential skills like financial literacy and entrepreneurship—critical for thriving in today’s world.

Beyond professional growth, CEFE has brought incredible friendships and a sense of purpose to my life. Together, we are building a community that fosters learning, innovation, and change. I am grateful to CEFE for giving me the opportunity to grow, educate, and inspire.

To CEFE Macedonia: Thank you for making me a better person and for empowering me to make a difference in the lives of others.



**Irena Raleva Najdevska**

CEFE Macedonia

# Empowering Youth Through Financial Literacy and Business Skills

Transforming Education with CEFE Experiential Learning Approach



## Introduction: Joining the CEFE Team

As a business and entrepreneurship teacher in a secondary vocational school, I've always aimed to inspire and engage my students with innovative methods. A few years ago, I joined the CEFE trainer team through the "train-the-trainer" program, which transformed my approach to teaching by blending my classroom experience with

CEFE's dynamic and experiential learning methods.

## What I Learned and Achieved

One important lesson was the value of creating a safe environment for students to experiment and learn from their mistakes.

Implementing CEFE methodologies in my school, I introduced a business simulation

where students created enterprises, calculated costs and revenues, and pitched their ideas to teachers and local entrepreneurs. This exercise not only helped them understand business concepts but also boosted their confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities.

I also conducted financial literacy workshops, providing students with essential money management skills, which cul-

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minated in their participation in a national financial literacy competition. Their performance confirmed the effectiveness of the CEFE approach in preparing young people for the real world.

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*The CEFE training introduced me to the power of experiential learning. I learned to design workshops that actively involve participants through practical exercises and real-world simulations.*

## Success Stories from My Journey

One inspiring outcome was when a group of students used the skills learned in a CEFE workshop to compete in a national entrepreneurship competition. Their project, a sustainable business idea, earned them second place and created new opportunities.

Another participant, who struggled with personal finances, learned to budget effectively through the financial literacy



workshops and even began saving to invest in a small business. These transformations reinforce my belief in the power of CEFE training.

## Applying CEFE Beyond the Classroom

Being part of the CEFE community has motivated me to extend my efforts beyond the classroom. I organized workshops for young entrepreneurs, focusing on financial planning and business development, fostering connections between students, local businesses, and the wider community.

## Professional Growth and Future Plans

The CEFE trainer journey has been a key part of my professional development. It has enhanced my ability to design and deliver impactful workshops. I plan to continue expanding my expertise by exploring advanced CEFE methodologies and building new partnerships within the CEFE

network. My future goal is to create more opportunities for hands-on entrepreneurial experience and expand collaborations with other schools and organizations to implement CEFE-inspired projects on financial literacy and entrepreneurship.

## Conclusion: A Shared Vision for the Future

Becoming a CEFE trainer has been transformative for both me and my students. Together, we are helping shape a future where young people are empowered to innovate, lead, and thrive in both their personal and professional lives. Through CEFE, I am excited to contribute to a global mission that fosters entrepreneurial ecosystems and drives change at local and international levels.



**Vesna Efremova**

CEFE Macedonia

# Navigating Recruitment in International Development Cooperation

Enhance your visibility, demonstrate your expertise, and position yourself for success



Fuente: Unplash

In the competitive world of international development cooperation, standing out as an expert requires a strategic approach. Drawing from my experience as an Acquisition Manager at CEFE International, where I work closely with experts to bring transformative projects to life, I've gained valuable insights into what it takes to stand out and secure opportunities in this dynamic sector. This role has provided me with a deep understanding of the skills and strategies

that organizations value most when recruiting professionals in international development. With this knowledge, I aim to share practical tips that can help you enhance your visibility, demonstrate your expertise, and position yourself for success in this competitive field:

## 1. Strengthen your online presence

An optimized online presence is essential for showcasing

your expertise and achievements.

- Craft a professional profile: Ensure that platforms like LinkedIn effectively highlight your key skills and areas of expertise. Use keywords aligned with your specialization—such as “project evaluation,” “capacity building,” or “sustainable development”—to make your profile easier to find.

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- Showcase your achievements: Go beyond job descriptions and focus on quantifiable results.
- **Engage with the sector:** Share insights on trends, comment on industry discussions, and participate in relevant forums.

## 2. Explore recruitment platforms for development professionals

Several platforms specialize in connecting international development experts with opportunities. While these tools should complement other strategies like networking, they are valuable resources: **Devex:** Offers access to development jobs, tenders, and project information. **As-sortis:** Focuses on positions with international organizations and NGOs.

Invest time in creating detailed profiles on these platforms to increase your chances of being noticed by recruiters.

## 3. Tailor your applications strategically

Based on my recruitment experience, one-size-fits-all applications rarely succeed in



Fuente: Unplash

this field. To make an impression:

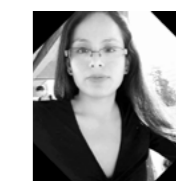
- Tailor your CV and cover letter to each opportunity, emphasizing your relevant skills and experiences that align with the organization's mission and project goals.
- Highlight your knowledge of current trends in development cooperation, such as climate resilience, digital innovation, or gender mainstreaming. Demonstrating awareness of these priorities adds value to your application.

By connecting skilled professionals with opportunities that match their expertise and passion, we ensure that each project benefits from the knowledge and experience needed to create lasting change.

We invite you to follow us on LinkedIn for updates and opportunities and to visit our website to learn more about our projects. Don't forget to register in our expert's database to be considered for future collaborations. Together, we can advance sustainable development and create lasting impact. Take the next step—your expertise is needed!



*At CEFE International, we understand that aligning the right expertise with the right projects is essential for driving meaningful and sustainable impact.*



**Cristina Ramirez**

PR and Digital Media Manager



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