**Beyond the balance sheet WEBINAR SERIES**

**Building Intermediary Partner Capacities for ESG Disclosure and Transparency**

What are the pathways toward more transparent ESG disclosure in emerging markets? IFC’s capacity building initiatives help partner institutions and emerging market enterprises customize their disclosure of strategic, governance, and performance information in a progressive way-- depending on the organization’s size, complexity, and operational context.

In the Europe and Central Asia region, IFC’s ESG Standards Team organized a three-week D&T webinar series to strengthen regional capacities to customize consulting and training services on sustainability reporting and communication. Building upon the success of IFC’s award-winning “Beyond the Balance Sheet” disclosure and transparency (D&T) toolkit and program, this webinar series was developed jointly by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and UN Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative (UN SSE), in partnership with the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).

IFC coordinated with 15 partner institutions to conduct this intensive three-week D&T training, which fully engaged 40 participants from seven ECA countries: Georgia, Serbia, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kosovo, Ukraine.

Topics and key questions addressed during the June 9, 16 and 23, 2021 webinar sessions included:

**Case for D&T:** How do companies in emerging markets attract capital and build resilient enterprises? Panel discussion on how organizations pursue opportunities, manage risks and report on strategic ESG performance to meet international and EU sustainability and disclosure requirements.

**Governance Disclosure:** What are the key aspects of board leadership, structure and functioning of the board of directors to include in transparent corporate disclosure?

**Reporting on Strategy:** How to communicate forward-looking strategy information in your reporting? What are the key steps (internal process & practices) in the reporting journey?

**Control Environment:** How is the company’s control environment structured? How to report on internal control, risk management and the role of the audit committee?

**Policy Support for ESG Regulation:** How do stock exchanges and regulators help to increase and support responsible investments in emerging markets? Successes & challenges?

**Reporting on Performance:** Transparent disclosure of financial and ESG performance is critical to attract capital from international investors. How best to communicate high quality performance indicators? What are the emerging opportunities?

**Sustainable Banking:** What is the vital role of regional banks and the Sustainable Banking Network (SBN) in promoting sustainable banking principles and practices?

Responding to the limits to peer-to-peer interactions posed by online venues, the D&T webinar series piloted various experiential learning opportunities. Between webinar events, the 30 partners were organized into five practice groups to discuss and form questions on D&T resources and prepare for a group presentation. In addition, all participants were invited to four informal “Ask the Expert” conversations. During the third webinar in the series, practice groups led discussions on select D&T topics and challenges.

Dilemmas posed during informal peer-to-peers discussions included “how to be transparent and honest, but not jeopardize the company?” and “what is the role of the CFO in addressing ESG?” In response to a question about who is responsible for the control environment, the emphatic IFC response was: “Everyone in the company!”

To supplement the experiential learning journey launched by this ECA webinar series, intermediary partners received copies of the D&T video recordings and slides presented during the webinar sessions. In addition, participants have open access to IFC’s “Beyond the Balance Sheet” ESG Platform. This ecosystem of resources offer self-paced learning modules, D&T gap analysis tools, regional and industry updates and community networks for companies, investor and regulators. The aim is to facilitate continuous peer-to-peer learning, networking and partnerships.