



ევროკავშირი  
საქართველოსთვის  
The European Union for Georgia



# RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS AND COVID-19

## 2020

**MI** **meliora**  
Georgia's Responsible  
Business Awards

## GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

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## 1. Introduction – About the Contest

This year CSRDG for the third time conducts the annual Corporate Social Responsibility Excellence Contest - Georgia's Responsible Business Awards "Meliora". The Awards are organized within the frames of the Georgian Civil Society Sustainability Initiative, with the support of European Union and German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. The Contest is organized in collaboration and with the support of various business associations aiming to promote responsible business conduct in Georgia, international and local experts' organizations and CSOs.

**"Meliora" is a Latin word meaning The Best.** Therefore, every year Meliora Awards will celebrate companies operating in Georgia for most inspiring and outstanding projects and initiatives in the area of corporate social responsibility, that change Georgia for the better.

Georgia's Responsible Business Awards "Meliora" is a nation-wide effort to promote and strengthen the CSR commitment among businesses; attract attention to excellent examples of CSR projects; encourage and motivate companies to adopt best practices and become role models for others; and finally to demonstrate that a responsible business, aiming to be a force for good, by creating healthy communities and a healthy environment, achieves long-term financial value and commercial success as a result.

**Due to the challenges posed by COVID-19, we have had to make some changes to the awards scheme.** The COVID-19 crisis confirms once again that businesses, communities, society, and the environment are mutually dependent. While COVID-19 pandemic is disrupting the business of small and large companies alike, this is also a unique opportunity for responsible businesses to demonstrate how sustainable and well prepared they are to manage risks and adapt to new circumstances.

**We believe that in this extraordinary and unprecedented time responsible business is more important than ever.**

**To support businesses at these difficult times we have decided to dedicate Meliora 2020 to highlighting the projects and initiatives implemented by companies in frames of their corporate responsibility in response to COVID 19 crisis.**

**Therefore, this year the Contest comprises four Categories, covering all main areas of responsible business actions in response to COVID-19 challenges.**

Contest is open to the **companies of all sizes from around the country.**

The independent jury consisting of the leading Georgian and international experts would evaluate nominees based on the consistency and effectiveness of their efforts, sustainability of the results and proper design of the initiatives. **Amount of the invested funds would not be in no way decisive factor in evaluation process.**

*We believe our winners would be vanguard of responsible business in Georgia.*

*We believe that Meliora Awards would serve as an inspiration for the transformative action, business excellence and Corporate responsibility across the country.*

## 2. Nine reasons why should you participate in *Meliora* Awards

*The Meliora Awards are run by CSR DG, one of the most experienced expert organization in the field of CSR. CSR DG partner with International and local expert organizations and business platforms, which makes this contest one of the leading Sustainability and CSR initiatives in Georgia.*

*It is much more than just an Awards,*

1. This is a unique contest that provides the business community a chance to promote their efforts in CSR and gain recognition for best practice
2. Awards offer inspiration and opportunity to learn and share your knowledge with a wide range of organizations
3. All of the companies involved in the Awards are helping raise the bar when it comes to sustainability and to increase the awareness of the importance of CSR
4. The Awards are presented in a variety of categories, so you can easily find category suitable for your responsibility actions in response to Covid 19 crisis
5. Awards are open to large, medium-sized and small companies, which would have equal chances to win, as entries will be assessed against the scoring guide and not against each other; in each category SME could be awarded along with the large company winner.
6. The independent jury consists of the leading Georgian and international experts (from UK, Slovakia, Austria, Israel, etc.), that ensures high credibility of the evaluation process. Each category is independently judged and the bar is set high.
7. The Awards concept, categories, evaluation criteria and procedures have been elaborated in cooperation with prominent European experts from leading CSR organizations (Pontis Foundation, Slovakia and Business in the Community, the Prince's Responsible Business Network, UK), with many-years' experience of conducting CSR contests, which makes this Award scheme suited to the best international standards.
8. The Contest is conducted for the third time with more than 40 companies of all sizes and from all sectors participating in 2018 and in 2019 likewise, proving success of this awards scheme
9. And finally, glittering Awards Ceremony offer the unique opportunity to bring together, encourage and celebrate the most forward-thinking businesses and ambitious business professionals looking to move beyond mere considerations of business & profit, seeking to deliver transformational change in society and create more value within their organizations

## 3. Eligibility requirements

### *3.1. Who should enter the awards*

**The Georgia's Responsible Business Awards are free to enter.** The awards are open to the private companies of **any size registered in Georgia**. By "private sector" we mean companies that make a profit through the provision of goods or services.

The Awards are not open to civil society organizations, public-sector bodies, or state-owned companies (by "state-owned" we mean company where 50% or more shares are owned directly by State or State

established entity or/and where the control over company is otherwise exercised by state, or state-owned entities - for instance through Chief Executive Officer appointed, or through legal stipulations or corporate articles ensuring continued state control over an enterprise or its board of directors in which it holds a minority stake).

Large, medium and small companies can enter and will have equal chances to win, as entries will be assessed against the scoring guide and not against each other. The scale of the activities and results will be assessed in relation to the size of the company.

**Small and medium sized company as well as a large company winner may be awarded in each category.**

According to National Statistics Office of Georgia<sup>1</sup> a Large company is defined as a company which has more than 250 employees; SME is defined as any business with no parent company having 250 employees or less. Multinational company with more than 250 employees globally would be considered large company, even if it has less than 250 employees in Georgia.

**Last year's participants and winners are eligible to enter this year any category with any number of submissions.**

### *3.2. What can be submitted*

The programs/projects/initiatives or strategy which took place in 2020 can be entered for the Contest. The nominated program/project/initiative or strategy could be already completed, or well in progress, with some results already in place, and others clearly on track. .

Activities described in the entry should go **above and beyond any legal/statutory/regulatory requirements** placed upon the company or **regular business activity**. The submitted projects/initiatives should fit into Contest categories and reflect company's responsible actions in response to COVID-19 crisis to protect and assist its employees, customers and clients, suppliers, communities or other companies which suffered a greater damage.

**Multinationals operating in Georgia** have to demonstrate a visible initiatives and active efforts on local level - not only implementation of global strategy; its assessment would take into account the adjustment of the company's global strategy to Georgian conditions and its quality domestic activities.

### *3.3. Eligible Number of Entries*

Applicants are eligible to submit **any number of entries to any number of categories**. You may also enter **specific category with several projects**, however we recommend to consolidate activities in the same field (e.g. directed to community support, or directed to employee care), into one entry, whenever feasible. The same entry cannot be submitted twice to two or more different categories, you may only submit a specific project/initiative once.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.geostat.ge>

## 4. Key Dates

- **5 November 2020** – Official opening of the call for nominations for Georgia’s Responsible Business Awards “Meliora” 2020
- **7 December 2020** – Deadline for submitting the entries
- **7-18 December 2020** – Eligibility assessment of the entries by contest organizers
- **January 2021** – Entries assessed by Jury against the comprehensive scoring guide
- **Spring 2021** – Celebratory Gala, announcing the winners (depending on epidemiological situation awarding ceremony will be held either online or in a real space).

## 5. Categories and their description

This year the Contest comprises **four Categories**, covering all main areas of responsible business actions in response to Covid 19 challenge:

### *1. Supporting employees’ health and wellbeing during COVID-19 pandemic*

This category recognizes remarkable project/initiative/activities, which company implemented *over and above statutory obligations imposed by regulators*, aimed at employee care during COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring employees physical, mental, social and financial well-being.

### *2. Supporting clients, customers and suppliers during COVID-19 pandemic*

This category recognizes remarkable project/initiative/activities, which company implemented in response to COVID-19 crisis *over and above statutory obligations imposed by regulators*, aimed at supporting consumers/clients, ensuring their physical health, social and financial well-being and accessibility of services and products; also supporting small/medium suppliers through offering better payment terms or allowing delays in delivery dates, suspending penalties for not meeting contractual obligations, offering other types of support.

### *3. Supporting society and local communities during COVID-19 pandemic*

This category recognizes remarkable project/initiative/activities, which company implemented in response to COVID-19 crisis *over and above statutory obligations imposed by regulators*, aimed at supporting specific communities and society at large; initiatives might comprise providing humanitarian aid to most vulnerable communities and groups in need, socially disadvantaged individuals or those who found themselves without means of existence, caring about physical, mental and financial health and wellbeing of communities, transforming business solutions to adjust them to the new reality, supporting doctors and healthcare system etc.

#### 4. Supporting SMEs and most suffered industries during COVID-19 pandemic

This category recognizes remarkable project/initiative/activities, which company implemented *over and above statutory obligations imposed by regulators*, aimed at supporting SMEs and companies from most suffered industries to overcome financial difficulties, combat challenges posed by COVID-19 crisis and ensure business continuity.

## 6. Application Process: How to Enter

### Five Steps to Submit Your Application

You have to follow **five simple steps** to submit your application:

**1**

**Decide upon your nomination and select appropriate category**

**2**

**Optional:** Register for the group or individual consultation to learn more about contest requirements, application and evaluation process

**3**

**Download the Entry Form** of the appropriate category and **fill it in**; upload **Supportive Documents** on Google Drive and insert the link into your application.

**4**

**Submit your application.**

Send your completed application and requested attachments to the following email:

[csrewards@meliora.ge](mailto:csrewards@meliora.ge)

**5**

You will receive a **confirmation of your entry** via e-mail once successfully submitted

**Language:** Applicants can submit their applications in Georgian.

We have several international experts sitting on Jury. That is why all applications submitted in Georgian will be translated into English to be evaluated by international assessors.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF FIVE STEPS TO ENTER

### 1. Selecting appropriate category

Think of the initiatives/projects your company has implemented in response to COVID-19 pandemic to protect and support your various stakeholders (employees, clients and customers, suppliers, partners) and society at large; and to adapt to the “new normal” in a responsible and sustainable way. Select appropriate category.

If you have a project or initiative that you think may fall under more than one category, it is up to you to decide which is the most relevant.

#### *How many Entries can you submit?*

You may submit **any number of entries** to **any number of categories**; You can enter different categories with different projects, and, you may enter **one category with several projects**.

One entry could not be submitted twice to two or more different categories, **you may only submit a specific project once**.

**Contest organizers may recommend the applicants to move nomination into another category at the stage of eligibility assessment (before the nomination goes to the Jury). However, it is applicant's responsibility to make final decision and select relevant category.**

*If you require guidance on selecting category, please feel free to contact us by mail ([csrwards@meliora.ge](mailto:csrwards@meliora.ge)) or telephone.*

### 2. Registering for the group or individual consultation (Optional)

Before submitting applications, applicants are encouraged to register for the group or individual consultation to learn more about contest requirements, application and evaluation process.

Project organizers will conduct the consultations for all interested parties concerning application procedures and evaluation criteria. You will have an opportunity to discuss your project with CSR DG consultants and get answers to all your questions.

You can register either for individual or for group consultation. **Consultations will take place during 10-30 November 2020.** The exact date and place of the consultation and registration link **will be announced on the Contest webpage.**

**Please Remember:** attending the consultation is not obligatory – project organizers provide this opportunity to potential applicants to learn more about contest and submit a stronger application.

*This is up to you to decide, whether you use this opportunity or not. **You can still submit your Entry without attending the consultation.***



### 3. Completing the Entry Form

Please, download the appropriate Entry Form from the webpage: [www.meliora.ge](http://www.meliora.ge). There are four different categories to choose from. Entry forms for different categories are different.

If you decide to enter several nominations to different categories, a separate entry form should be completed for each nomination.

Entry forms consist of **introductory section**, requesting company details and **main sections**, requesting information about the nominated program/project/initiative, about overall CSR approach in the selected area and overall response to COVID-19 crisis

The introductory section – Company Details, is not scored but provides assessors with a good understanding of the overall business of the company in a wider context and its impact on the society, which helps them to evaluate the nomination. Application forms missing this information will not be accepted.

While completing the scored section, please be sure to **follow the instructions** laid out in the category descriptions and entry forms, also refer to the evaluation scoring guides, as the Jury will look for those elements when they select the winners.

Entry forms for most of the categories require to submit a **brief Summary** of the project (max. 200 words). Be sure to reflect all important aspects of your entry in the Summary. The Summary should be written with the expectation that **it will be published on the Contest's website, Catalogue and other award materials**.

Entry forms also require to provide a **brief quotation** (max. 60 words) **from the CEO** (or equivalent) of the nominating company why responsible business is important for the company and for him/her personally. This point is not obligatory, but very much appreciated to help assessors understand the support provided from the top of the organization. If submitted, quotation could be published in various communication materials related to the Contest (such as web-page, information brochures etc.)

***Make sure you get in your request for this early on in the process to accommodate your CEO's (or equivalent) diary/ sign off process.***

**Please be sure to complete all sections.** Incomplete applications would not be considered.

Please limit your entry to the **word limits** set out on the entry forms.

**If your contact information changes** after submitting an application, it is your responsibility to amend your details with Contest Organizers.

#### ***Submitting additional documents, links and evidence***

Our Jury will seek evidence to substantiate any claims made. Further materials would be helpful and would add to your entry, so you are encouraged to submit supporting evidence (such as photos, brochures, reports, newsletters and media coverage, videos, testimonials, URLs and anything else you feel will give the assessors a better sense of your project).

Please select **most relevant illustrative materials**.

- When providing the **extensive documents**, please indicate exact pages that you would like the Jury to pay attention to;
- Please provide good quality, high **resolution photos** (in jpg, tif or png format) to illustrate the content of your nomination.
- When providing **web-links/URLs**, please insert them into the main text of the Entry, next to the point the evidence supports.

**Please be as specific about page number or video timeframe as possible**, particularly if you are linking to a substantial report or document. Jury will not read a full report so it is important to signpost the most relevant aspects of any links to best support your submission.

**Supporting materials should be uploaded on a Google Drive, bound in a package/folder; the link should be inserted into your Entry form, in the relevant field.**

**By sending the illustrative materials, you agree with their possible publication in connection with the Georgia's Responsible Business Awards (if you do not state otherwise in the confidentiality field of the Entry form).**

### **Confidentiality**

Some of the nomination material may be internal or proprietary in nature. Any part of your submission which is confidential or commercially sensitive should be clearly marked as such in the relevant field of the Entry Form.

Any matters that are highlighted will be treated as strictly confidential and will not be disclosed outside the Awards evaluation process.

## **4. Submitting your application**

Please send your completed entry form in PDF format and attachments to the following email: [csrawards@meliora.ge](mailto:csrawards@meliora.ge)

*Do not forget, that you are requested to submit along with your Entry form:*

- Documents and evidence supporting your application
- Declaration of the Company, printed out on the letterhead, signed by CEO (or equivalent) or person responsible for the application and scanned (stating that information provided in the application is true)
- Declaration of a Partner (signed and scanned), if you mention a significant partnership with a different organization in the nomination, confirming that information provided in the application is true
- High resolution logo of your company (png or vector image).
- High resolution project-related photo for the contest catalogue (png or vector image)

**Make sure to complete the form ahead of the December 7, 2020 deadline.**

## 5. Receiving the Notification

When you submit your application via e-mail, we would respond you in a three days' time confirming the receipt.

If you do not receive a notification email within 3 business days confirming that we receive your application, please contact us on the following number: 599 690969 or via e-mail: [csrawards@meliora.ge](mailto:csrawards@meliora.ge)

## 7. FAQ and additional information for the applicants

All potential applicants will have an opportunity to address Contest Organizational Committee with a written question till 7 December on the following email: [csrawards@meliora.ge](mailto:csrawards@meliora.ge) (please indicate in the subject line – Question). Frequently asked questions and relevant answers will be published on the Contest webpage ([www.meliora.ge](http://www.meliora.ge)), in the category FAQ.

Project organizers will conduct the **consultations** for all interested parties concerning application procedures and evaluation criteria. The dates and place of the consultation will be announced on the Contest webpage.

## 8. Tips and Hints for the Applicants to write a great application

- **Start early and give yourself enough time.** Putting together a good entry takes effort and time! And you will have a lot of other things to do at work apart from this application. So, start early, and give yourself at least three weeks to gather all the data you'll need.
- **Read through the Guide for the Applicants** and guidance, provided in the Entry Forms very carefully. Refer to the evaluation criteria to know, how your application would be assessed and make an effort to address them in your answers.
- **We recommend to register for the consultation.** It is not binding in any way, but opens you an opportunity to get valuable recommendations from contest organizers and answers to your questions.
- **Get the boss on board.** Make sure your CEO (or equivalent) is aware of the Awards - you would need his/her sign off for entering the Awards; request the CEO's quote for the Entry form in good time to fit into his/her diary – if your nomination wins, your colleagues and CEO would be happy to see this quote published in contest-related communications.
- **Ensure support of your colleagues.** Responsible business is all about teamwork... Inform your colleagues about Awards and ensure their support; they'll be able to give you valuable information and feedback to make your entry compelling.
- **Create a strong summary.** The Jury has numerous entries to look through and you may have included lots of impressive facts and figures further into your entry, but burying your best bits is not a good idea – talk about them up front. A summary should be just that – summarize your entry with key facts and results in a brief paragraph to grab the Jury's attention from the first line. Write

the summary with the expectation that it would be published on the Contest website and other communication materials if your company wins.

- **Provide all necessary information.** If you are submitting an entry from a large and well-known company, do not assume the assessors already know your operations, business or products. Smaller or lesser known organizations will sometimes submit far more detailed entries giving background information and statistics to help put their entry into perspective.
- **Answer what is asked.** Make sure to answer the questions that are asked without deviating from the point or providing unnecessary information. But remember, you do not have to provide equally detailed answers to all questions to submit an entry. Provide as much information as available, as much as you consider enough to convince the Jury and present strong points of your project.
- **Use facts and Figures.** You may have the perfect project, but the Jury can't just take your word for it. You should back up your statements with testimonials, facts and figures. Images will help bring your story to life and, where complex processes and structures are concerned, a table or diagram is definitely worth a thousand words. But make sure they support your description of the project, rather than substituting for it.
- **Include impact and results.** It's important to demonstrate in your entry not only what has been done in frames of the project, but what were the results and impact. You'll have to give them hard evidence (facts, statistics and testimonials) of the benefits you've achieved for the target groups. Assessors like before and after data, and quotes from third parties, especially those who've benefited from what you've done.
- **Wider CSR strategy and approach.** This question, asked in all categories, is about giving an insight into the general CSR ethos and strategy of your company. It is important to make a clear connection between the project you are entering and the company's overall CSR strategy.
- **If at first you don't succeed...** We are all on a journey. Use this years' experience and the feedback provided to make your submission next year even more outstanding.

**We hope you find the new information useful and look forward to receiving your entry.**

## 9. Jury

Nominations will be evaluated by independent Jury (panel of the **external assessors**) consisting of the leading Georgian and international experts in the field of corporate social responsibility and separate areas of CSR, such as: community development; labour issues, consumers' protection, business ethics, cross-sector partnership etc.).

The judging process is completely independent and no representative from CSRDG (Contest organizer) sits on Jury. The Jury members, representing international organizations, civil society organizations, and Academia, have been invited to join the panels due to their impartiality, vast experience and knowledge.

The information about Jury members from Georgia would be kept confidential (all jury members sign confidentiality agreement), to avoid conflict of interests and lobbying; they would be revealed at the Awards Ceremony in December.

The list and brief biographies of the international judges are available at: [www.meliora.ge](http://www.meliora.ge)

## 10. Assessment of Entries

The evaluation process has two stages: eligibility check and assessment of entries by the Jury.

### Eligibility Check

After the deadline, all submitted entries will go through the eligibility check. Applicants, whose entries do not comply with formal requirements would be contacted and informed about the deficiencies. They will be given few days to correct their applications and/or provide requested documentation.

### Assessment of the Entries by Jury

All eligible entries will go forward to the independent Jury (group of the external assessors) and will be assessed against the comprehensive evaluation criteria scoring guidance (published at: [www.meliora.ge](http://www.meliora.ge)) Jury will also take account of the evidence provided along with the application (documents, links, etc.) to select the winners.

After reviewing the materials, Jury members may have questions and reserve the right to request additional information/documents from the nominees. However, Jury members do not address directly the nominees, but send their questions/requests via Contest organizers.

**Jury can choose not to give an award in the certain category if the entries are not deemed to be of a suitable standard.**

**Jury reserves the right to confer two prizes in each thematic category for large company and the SME.**

*Please refer also to the Terms and Conditions.*

## 11. Revealing the winners - Awards Ceremony and Prizes

Following completion of the judging process, the awards' winners will be announced at a black-tie awarding ceremony to be held in the early Spring 2021.

- Each category winner will be awarded the special prize - an elegant trophy
- All winners are free to use special logo of the “Meliora 2020 Winner” in their communication materials during a year
- All applicants, whether they are winners or not, would be invited to the prestigious Awards Ceremony.

This awarding ceremony might be held online, if epidemiological situation would not allow conducting large-scale event in a real space.

For further details about the Awarding Ceremony go the: [www.meliora.ge](http://www.meliora.ge)

## 12. About the Implementing Organization

The Centre for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia (CSR DG) is a civil society organization with 25 years' experience of successful work in the civil sector. Founded in 1995, CSR DG is one of the oldest non-governmental organizations in Georgia. Having head office in Tbilisi and branch office in Telavi, organization carries out its activities throughout Georgia at national, as well as at the regional and local levels. The *mission of CSR DG* is to promote good governance, sustainable inclusive economic growth and active citizenship for improved quality of life. To fulfill its mission, CSR DG actively works: *with public, with CSOs, with local and national level Government, and with private sector.*

In 2004, CSR DG was the first among local organizations to start talking about the importance of social responsibility (CSR) of business. Since then, in order to raise awareness and accessibility of expertise in this field, CSR DG has been actively working with both government agencies and directly with large and small business companies, media and higher education institutions.

## 13. About the Project

The Contest is organized within the framework of the EU-funded **Georgian Civil Society Sustainability Initiative** (2017-2020). The project was developed and is implemented by the consortium led by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in cooperation with four Georgian Civil Society Organizations: Civil Society Institute (CSI), Center for Training and Consultancy (CTC), Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia (CSR DG) and Education Development and Employment Center (EDEC). The project is funded by the European Union and co-funded by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. "Georgian Civil Society Sustainability" Initiative aims to improve environment for the civil society in Georgia, by empowering civil society organisations and actors, and increasing their accountability towards citizens.

Several specific objectives are designed in order to achieve the overall objective of the project. One of those is to promote CSR in Georgia, in order to foster cross-sector cooperation and involvement of the private sector in development issues. This objective envisages following targets: Promotion of CSR and responsible business conduct (through trainings, contests, web-resources, publications and other knowledge products); Promoting developing CSR enabling environment through working with government, academia, media and general public; Promoting cross sector dialogue and cooperation through multi stakeholder forums, micro-grants programs etc.

The project is fully supported by the European Union and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.