

## Background

Through the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) funding, People 1st International has been engaged in a cross-regional intervention to provide businesses with the HR skills required to effectively manage their business.

The EBRD emphasises economic inclusion for development, measuring how economic institutions and education systems provide equal opportunities. Businesses face barriers when employing youth due to high unemployment and education gaps, impacting transitions to work. SMEs struggle to attract skilled labour, worsening workforce challenges.

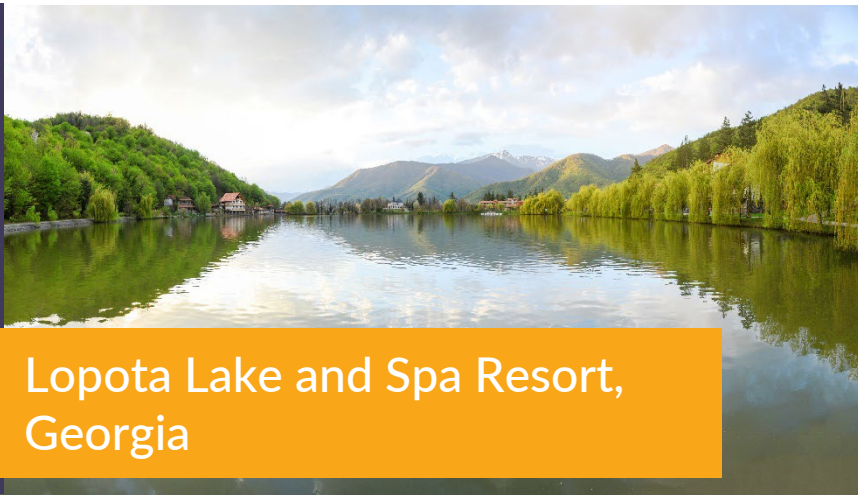
The Skills in Business Programme aims to address these issues by enhancing SMEs' capacity to recruit and retain skilled young workers through work-based learning.

The project promotes a previous phase of work where People 1st International and EBRD developed an SME Human Resource Competency Framework, comprising 15 standards linked to specific outcomes and KPIs and provided training to local HR consultants across eight countries to equip them with the tools and know-how to support local small businesses to increase the effectiveness of HR management in line with international best practice.



## Skills in Business Standards

|                           |                              |                          |                    |                             |                      |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Recruitment and Retention | 1. Developing Strategies     | 2. Competency Frameworks | 3. People Policies | 4. Employability Programmes | 5. Market Insights   |
|                           | 6. Recruitment and Selection | 7. Inclusion             | 8. Retention       | 9. Performance Management   | 10. Leavers          |
| Work-based Learning       | 11. Induction                | 12. Career planning      | 13. Learning Needs | 14. Learning Approaches     | 15. Measuring Impact |



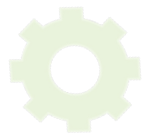
## Lopota Lake and Spa Resort, Georgia

### Objectives / Challenges

The primary objective of supporting Lopota was to enhance its HR infrastructure by developing a robust HR strategy, establishing competency frameworks, creating clear career pathways, implementing structured learning and development initiatives and measuring the impact of HR interventions through set KPIs.

Key challenges identified at the project's inception included:

- A lack of formal HR strategies and structured recruitment processes.
- High turnover rates among youth employees (16-29 age group).
- The absence of career information on the resort's website for job seekers.
- Limited employee engagement and professional development opportunities.
- A need for stronger internal career progression pathways to support retention.



### Solutions and impact



Over the course of the intervention, the following outcomes were achieved:

**HR strategy development:** A detailed HR strategy was established, focusing on eight strategic priorities, including recruitment, onboarding, employee development, performance management and diversity and inclusion. This provided a structured approach to HR management and ensured alignment with business goals.

**Recruitment & retention improvements:** To enhance employer branding and attract top talent, a dedicated 'Careers at Lopota' section has been approved and is being embedded into the resort's website. Recruitment processes were standardised, job descriptions were improved and lines of reporting and progression were made clearer with the development of detailed departmental organisation charts. A retention strategy was introduced, emphasising structured onboarding, professional development and employee recognition programmes.

**Performance management & employee development:** A formalised performance management process was introduced, incorporating structured performance appraisals and training sessions for managers. A training and development framework was created, reinforcing continuous learning and career growth opportunities. A capacity-building workshop equipped HR and management teams with the skills to communicate and implement the new strategies effectively.

Lopota Lake Resort & Spa, nestled in the Caucasus Mountains of Kakheti, Georgia, has grown rapidly in recent years, presenting significant human resource (HR) challenges.

The resort faced issues in attracting, retaining and developing its workforce, particularly due to its rural location, seasonal employment fluctuations and competition from larger hotel chains with global career opportunities.

Recognising the need for structured HR improvements, Lopota partnered with People 1st International under the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Skills in Business initiative, to enhance its HR practices and workforce development strategies.

**Competency frameworks & people policies:** Departmental organisational charts and detailed job descriptions were developed to enhance role clarity, reporting lines and career progression opportunities. A career development policy was introduced, supporting internal promotions and professional growth. An updated employee handbook was created, ensuring all policies were clearly communicated and accessible.

**Impact measurement & KPIs:** To measure the effectiveness of these interventions, key performance indicators (KPIs) were established, including:

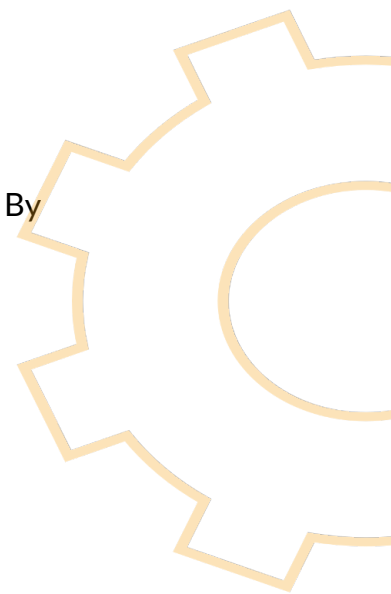
- HR strategies were finalised, with 10 managers trained to cascade knowledge to 40 employees.
- A 5% improvement target was set for youth retention rates within one-year post-project.
- A goal was set to increase the promotion rate of youth employees by 5% within 12 months after project completion.

## Summary



The Skills in Business intervention at Lopota Lake Resort & Spa has provided a solid foundation for sustainable HR management and workforce development. By implementing best practices and structured policies, the resort is now better positioned to attract, retain and develop its employees.

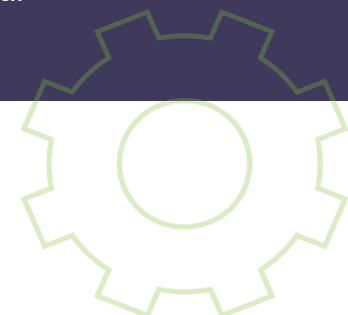
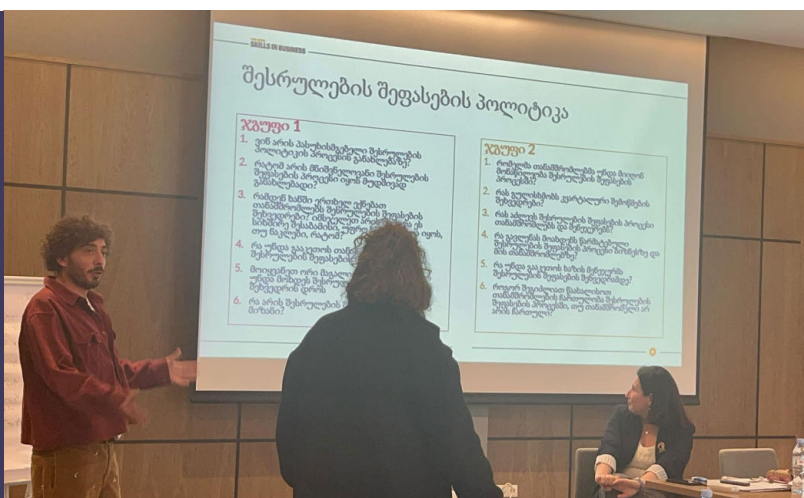
The partnership between Lopota, People 1st International and the EBRD has demonstrated the significant impact of strategic HR interventions on business success. These efforts will continue to drive positive workforce outcomes, contributing to Lopota's long-term growth and reputation as an employer of choice in Georgia's hospitality industry.



## Testimonial

*"Thank you for your constant support throughout this entire process. Your expertise and guidance have brought tremendous value to us, and we truly appreciate the knowledge and insights you've shared. It has been a pleasure working together."*

**Nino Mchedlishvili, HR Director, Lopota Lake and Spa Resort, Georgia.**





## About People 1st International

People 1st International has been providing world-class skills solutions for over 50 years. Our expertise is trusted by organisations globally and is proven to:

- Increase staff retention
- Maximise the potential of the workforce
- Increase productivity and competitiveness
- Create effective people strategies
- Build a strong commitment to vocational lifelong skills



People 1st  
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For more information,  
please get in touch:

[info@people1st.co.uk](mailto:info@people1st.co.uk)  
[people1st.co.uk](http://people1st.co.uk)

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