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*Report on the Implementation of Vocational Education Action Plan 2019 for the
Unified Strategy on Education and Science (2017-2021)*

2020

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE AND SPORT OF GEORGIA



Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Strategic task 1: Compliance of vocational education with the labour market requirements and internationalization of the system.....	4
Strategic Task 2: Ensuring the accessibility of vocational education, based on learning principal throughout the lifetime.....	10
Strategic Task 3: Promotion of vocational education and increasing its attractiveness.....	15
Risks and ways to solve them	17
Conclusion and Recommendations	18



Introduction

In 2017, a unified strategy for education and science (2017-2021) was prepared, based on an analysis of the achievements and challenges of reforms implemented in the field of education and science. The strategy covers all areas of the system: early childhood / preschool upbringing and education, general, vocational and higher education, adult education, science and research. The strategy is approved by the Prime Minister of Georgia (Order # 533 07.12.2017) and is implemented on the basis of the relevant Action Plan.

A unified strategy for education and science fully addresses the issues envisaged by the EU-Georgia Association Agreement and the relevant annexes in the fields of education, retraining and youth, science, research and technological development. It is also in line with the requirements of the Bologna Process, the recommendations of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe for lifelong learning, as well as activities agreed within the framework of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which Georgia has undertaken to fulfil. The document is based on and consistent with the priorities of the Government of Georgia.

The overall goal of the strategy is to develop an accessible system of quality education and science based on the principle of lifelong learning that provides all citizens of the country with the opportunity to achieve high quality sustainable outcomes.

One of the specific goals of the strategy is to increase the number of vocational students to support the socio-economic development of the country, to ensure their competitiveness through the development of professional and general skills. There are three strategic objectives to achieve this goal:

1. Compliance of the vocational education with the labour market needs and internationalization of the system;
2. Ensuring access to vocational education based on the principle of lifelong learning;
3. Promoting vocational education and increasing its attractiveness.

In 2019 significant progress was made in the direction of all three strategic tasks defined by the strategy:

In order to upgrade the skills of the adult population and meet the demands of the labour market, [the adult education system has been developed in the context of formal education](#) - after completing short-term vocational training-retraining programmes a state-recognized certificate is issued. Private companies can also obtain the right to run short-term programmes. [Regulatory documents for recognition of non-formal education](#) have also been developed and approved.

The preparatory work [for integration of secondary school learning outcomes into vocational education programmes](#) has been completed. Work continued [to support the dual education approach and the implementation of the private-public partnership model](#). The number of programmes implemented through dual or work-based learning approaches has increased. New [quality assurance](#) mechanisms have been developed which are in line with European quality assurance mechanisms. Preparatory work has been carried out in educational institutions to enact updated standards of authorization. [The National Qualifications Framework](#) and Classification of Learning Areas appropriate to the European Qualifications Framework have been approved and entered into force to facilitate the development of a lifelong learning qualifications system. In 2019, the vocational education system was fully embarked on [modular learning](#) - all programmes implemented in the system are developed with the involvement of the employers and include the entrepreneurship module as a compulsory component.



With the support of the World Bank, a new program, funded by the GGF, has been launched to develop a new model for [the professional development](#) of vocational education [teachers](#).

Changes were made in [Vocational Education Financing](#) - Private Education Institutions implementing vocational programmes were involved in Voucher Financing within the framework of priority areas. The amount of voucher funding for educational institutions has increased, enabling them to increase hourly wage rate for teachers by 30%. With the support of the GGF, a new project has launched aiming at developing a new model for funding vocational education.

[Within the framework of infrastructure projects](#), colleges have been equipped with the modern technics and equipment necessary for teaching within the new educational programmes. The Khulo Branch and the Construction College located in Zestaphoni Municipality hosted the first students for qualification programmes. Construction of a new college is underway in Kaspi, Shuakhevi and Chokhatauri Municipality. Preparatory work has also begun for the development of additional locations.

As part of the program [“Vocational Skills Development among pupils”](#) in 2019, the cooperation between general and vocational education institutions has deepened and the number of students who have taken the first steps in vocational education at the school base has increased. More than 9,000 students have been able to test their strengths in different professions through engaging in orientation and certification courses within the framework of the Program.

It is noteworthy that in 2018 the actual execution of [the state budget](#) for vocational education amounted to GEL 43 million and 50.9 million in 2019.

Along with the growth of new educational institutions, the new opportunities and the scale of reform, the state budget is also growing. The resources needed for all activities planned for 2020, including measures to be implemented under the new Law of Georgia on Vocational Education, were taken into account in the process of determining the VET 2020 budget. The budget for 2020 is increased compared to the budget for 2019 and amounts to GEL 70.7 million.

Particular emphasis should be given to [the role of international donor organizations](#) in vocational education reform. It is noteworthy that in the process of implementation of the new Law on Vocational Education in 2019 the support of international organizations has further increased. The Ministry organized coordination meetings of donors throughout the year where existing challenges and results were discussed. The Ministry would like to thank the EU Delegation of Georgia, the German Government, the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), the German Bank for Reconstruction and Development (KfW), the Swiss Development Agency (SDC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the British Good Governance Fund (GGF), World Bank (WB), The British Council, the European Training Foundation (ETF), the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) and all non-governmental organizations involved in the development of the vocational education system in various forms. It is also worth noting that negotiations on a loan agreement had begun with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 2019 to support a large-scale project planned to improve access to vocational education. The project shall also include a technical assistance component.

Strategic task 1: Compliance of vocational education with the labour market needs and internationalization of the system

The strategy emphasizes the importance of involving social partners as equal stakeholders in the process of development, implementation and evaluation of vocational education policy and focuses on strengthening social partnerships at all levels of the vocational education system.

However, according to the strategy, one of the main tools of internationalization is the introduction of a national qualifications framework compatible with the European Qualifications Framework, provision of exchange programmes and the provision of internationally recognized certificates. The strategy also focuses on the consideration of international experience and labour market needs in the formation of qualifications to enable students to develop complex, personal and professional skills. This can be achieved by implementing flexible educational programmes, developing professional and general skills for students, supporting entrepreneurial education, using technological advancements, innovative teaching methods and sharing best international experience.

Special attention among the challenges in the strategy is paid to the quality of vocational education, and it is determined that Georgia's quality assurance approach should be brought closer to European experience.

Activity 1.1 Strengthening public-private partnerships

Within the ongoing vocational education reform, significant measures have been taken to strengthen the public-private partnership in the system and to increase the role of the private sector. In 2019, new mechanisms of the private sector's participation have emerged in the system – activities have been carried out in order to prepare for college management outsource piloting, training-retraining programmes based on the public-private partnership were launched in 2019 (short-term certificate courses of formal education). Existing mechanisms of public-private partnership were also strengthened – development of colleges based on public-private partnerships was facilitated and implementation of work-based learning / dual programmes was supported:

(1) The introduction of [dual educational programs](#) began in 2016, which significantly increased the employment and self-employment opportunities of graduates. It should be noted that as a result of the implemented interventions, the number of dual educational programs and number of enrolled students is increasing year by year - as of 2019, 30 dual education programmes were implemented in the system. Over 600 students enrolled in dual education programmes in 2016-2019. By 2019, more than 30 students completed the dual vocational education program. It is noteworthy that the majority of graduates were employed in the same companies in partnership with which the dual education program was implemented.

It is noteworthy that, as part of the admission of fall 2019, applicants were able to enrol in dual education programmes without professional testing, just on the basis of a successful interview (competition) with a partner/private company. Also, as part of the fall admission 2019, students were first enrolled in dual education programmes in information technology and port logistics management.

In order to ensure the quality of dual education, the criteria and procedures are being developed for obtaining the status of a teaching enterprise. The process of working on the relevant regulations is supported by UNDP and GIZ. The documents will be widely discussed with employers and educational

institutions, work on the regulation will be completed in the first quarter of 2020. The procedures for its approval and the work needed for its implementation will begin since then.

(2) Since 2019, short-term vocational training programs have become part of formal education. It should be noted that any legal entity (an educational institution, a private company, a training center, association, etc.) that meets the relevant standard, can obtain the right to implement short-term courses independently or in collaboration with another institution. As of December 2019, two private companies were granted the right to implement vocational training-retraining programs and more than 50 private companies were involved in the implementation of the abovementioned programs in partnership with educational institutions.

(3) [The process of developing education institutions within the framework of public-private partnership](#) is active under the TVET reform. Currently, there are 3 educational institutions established on the abovementioned format (the Ministry supports the development of quality learning environment for these colleges and further development within the targeted program funding) and one training center. It is noteworthy that the N(N)LE Construction College “Construct2”, founded in collaboration with the Construction Company M2, was nominated as a successful example of public-private partnership at the 19th International Conference on Vocational Education organized by the European Commission in 2019.

In 2019, by the initiative of a private company, another project was launched within the framework of public-private partnership, which envisages the establishment of a new vocational education institution in the tourism sector in Zugdidi.

(4) In order to strengthen public-private partnerships, with the support of the GGF, work on development of an institution [management outsource](#) model has begun.

(5) All programs implemented in the system by 2019 are [modular ones](#), and these programs are based on the framework documents and educational standards that were developed with the involvement of employers. The role of various sectoral associations in the system is increasing from year to year, especially the role of the Georgian Farmers Association and Winemakers Association, who have fully taken over the coordination of the implementation of dual programmes in these areas with the support of donors (UNDP/SDC, GIZ). It is important to mention, that the Georgian Farmers Association and other agrarian Associations initiated establishment of a sectoral skills organization „Agro-duo“. “Agro-duo” will be the leading organization in the agricultural qualifications development process.

(6) The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia is a member of the Trilateral Commission on Social Partnerships, which is the highest platform for dialogue with social partners in the country. In 2019, the Authorization Board of Vocational Education Institutions was formed under the principle of public-private partnership. The Council has allocated quotas for the representatives of employer/their union, sectoral union, civil sector (non-governmental) and/or international organization. The private sector is also actively involved in the Supervisory Boards of Vocational Education Institutions and the Council that authorizes the implementation of training and retraining programmes.

[Activity 1.2 Development and implementation of mechanisms for recognition, mobility and compatibility of vocational qualifications in Georgia with European education space](#)

One of the important tasks of the Vocational Education Reform is to ensure that the vocational education system is compatible with the European educational space. Work began in 2015, significant steps have



been taken in this direction in 2019, both in terms of compatibility of qualifications and compliance of documents certifying vocational education with the EUROPASS documents.

The key instrument for compatibility of vocational qualifications in Georgia with the European educational space is the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), which aims to promote mobility of students and employees and establish a continuous education system. EQF qualifications are easy to understand for different countries and systems in Europe. It also allows the comparison of national qualifications of different countries. The analysis of the national qualifications framework (NQF) in Georgia began in 2015. In order to eliminate the deadlock identified by the analysis, the legislation was amended in 2018 and an [updated National Qualifications Framework Document](#) and the classification by education fields relevant to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) have been prepared. On 10 April 2019, based on the Order #69/N of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, the National Qualifications Framework conforming to the European Qualifications Framework, and Classification by education fields were approved and actively implemented. The new Qualifications Framework will support the development of a lifelong learning qualifications system. To support the implementation of the framework, the new EU Twinning project “Strengthening Capacities for Quality Assurance of Education and Governance of Qualifications” has been developed in cooperation with the ETF, which was launched in 2019.

The updated National Qualifications Framework covers 17 areas (narrow scope of qualifications) and more than 90 qualifications at the VET level.

Within the framework of the EU Twinning Project, work is underway to create an e-register of national qualifications. A concept paper was prepared in November 2019, on the basis of which, in January 2020, in cooperation with EMIS, a technical assignment project for the establishment of an electronic register of qualifications would be launched. At this moment, the “Rules for the Management, Development, Monitoring and Creation and Administration of the Electronic Qualifications Register” have been developed and initiated. Once approved, it will be possible to create and develop an electronic system / registry and access to it.

In 2019 the document certifying vocational education - Diploma and its Supplementary Form "EUROPASS" were approved, as well as the Instruction to fill in the Diploma Supplement, thereby making the Diploma of Vocational Education compatible with European standards.

In the context of compatibility with the European educational space, work has begun in 2019 to enhance English language teaching. With the financial support of the GGF, the British Council (BC) has launched a project "English for Vocational Education" aimed at improving the English language skills of vocational education students and developing a continuous professional development system for teachers. Within the framework of the project, based on research, situational analysis and international experience, specific recommendations for enhancing English language learning were developed. Following these recommendations, new models are being developed to improve the quality of English language teaching in TVET institutions. It is noteworthy that the strengthening of English language teaching is linked to one of the key areas of the strategy - promoting internationalization.

[Activity 1.3 Development of professional qualifications appropriate to labour market needs](#)

In 2014-2018, vocational education programs were reformed, with the introduction of competency-based, [modular vocational programs](#). According to the modular approach, both the design of the program and the teaching itself are based on topics (thus, one topic may even be a combination of several subjects). Modular



programs focus not only on development of professional skills (craft, vocational training) but also on basic (literacy, mathematical skills, etc.) and key (entrepreneurship, communication on foreign languages, digital competencies, etc.) skills. Compliance with labour market requirements, orientation towards learning outcomes, practical component enhancement and modern approaches to teaching and assessment are key features of modular programmes. Since January 2019, all educational institutions are required to admit students only for modular vocational education programs. Accordingly, the system has completely embarked on teaching with modular programs. It should be noted that the principle of developing modular programs involves the active participation of private companies/sector associations. In 2019, the process of implementation of programs developed within the MCA-Georgia Grant Competition has also been completed. As a result, in 2018-2019 more than 40 programs were developed in accordance with the international standards and introduced (engineering, technology and science).

In 2019 four new qualifications were initiated directly by employers and sectoral representatives. By the initiative of the French School of Hospitality and Management “VATEL” the hotel management qualification reviewed and approved.

Activity 1.4 Development and implementation of effective quality assurance mechanisms

An important task in the strategy is to ensure the quality of vocational education. In order to comply with the Law of Georgia on Vocational Education and on Education Quality Improvement in 2019, a draft amendment to the Order # 99 / N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia of 1 October 2010 [on Approval of the Statute of Authorization of Education Institutions and Fees](#) was developed. The draft amendment envisages replacing the existing 3 standards of authorization for education institutions with the new five standards: a) College mission and strategic development; b) educational programs; c) vocational students and the activities for their support; d) human resources and e) material, informational and financial resources. The project also provides a detailed description of the abovementioned standards, components / criteria, indicators and evidence. An important novelty of the project is a four-level system of assessment of conformity of vocational education institutions with the standards of authorization, which serves to facilitate the implementation of flexible and development-oriented assessment. It is also important to emphasize the quality of vocational education programs. The programs presented by an institution are evaluated separately according to the relevant standard and the Board will make a positive decision only on those programs that meet this standard. Taking into account the specificities and peculiarities, the Statute of Authorization of educational institutions has been newly developed, with separate chapters on authorization of general, vocational and higher education institutions. In line with the new Statute of Authorization and new vocational standards, technical support of the LEPL QMS has begun work to enable full automation of the authorization process of the educational institution. One component of the QMS - an online platform for annual reporting on self-assessment - is already in the final stages of completion.

Along with the development of new standards of authorization, the capacity building of those involved in quality assurance has been emerged, numerous activities have been undertaken to develop the capacity of those responsible for educational program development and quality assurance. Within the framework of the updated version of the self-assessment report form developed in accordance with the new standards, 5 workshops/trainings were held during the year, as well as 3 workshops were conducted to discuss the new standards. About 200 people involved in quality assurance participated in the workshops and trainings. In addition to support the implementation of authorization standards, in 2019 the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement signed a grant agreement with the United Nations Development Programme. Within the framework of the grant project, certification of persons responsible



for quality assurance of vocational education, creation of a body of experts, capacity building of the Authorization Board and other important activities are planned.

Activity 1.5 Support of continuous professional development of vocational education teacher and attraction of new personnel

Promoting [continuous professional development of vocational education teachers](#) and attracting new staff is one of the important directions of vocational education reform. In 2019, with the funding of the GGF and with the support of the World Bank, a project „Teacher Quality Improvement in Vocational Education“ was launched, which has already revised the VET Teacher Standard. Within the framework of the project, models of the Diversified Teacher Remuneration System have also been prepared and will be discussed with stakeholders. Once the positions have been adjusted, a specific model will be selected and the necessary measures will be taken to implement it.

To build the capacity of VET teachers within the framework of “Professional Development Program for VET Teachers and Principals” of the LEPL National Center for Teacher Professional Development, in 2019 trainings for teachers of public TVET institutions were held in 5 main fields: teaching course for VET teachers (450 teachers were trained); Individual counseling on competency-based assessment (up to 70 teachers were trained); Modular Teaching for Beginners (63 teachers were trained); Development of entrepreneurial competences (up to 200 persons were trained); Trainings in enterprises - in 10 sectors (up to 110 persons were trained).

With the support of GIZ TVET institutions cooperate with “Senior Expert Service” (SES) and German experts visited Georgia. The purpose of the visit was to support the improvement of the teaching process and teaching methods. Experts provided training in professional development of teachers in the field of tourism and construction. The process involved administrative staff and teachers of 5 educational institution. Currently there is a draft action plan on future cooperation between vocational colleges and the German Employment Agency is being developed.

GIZ supports development of a new master’s program - Vocational Education and Human Resource Development - in the field of vocational education in order to prepare qualified staff in line with international standards. Georgian Technical University, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University and Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University were involved in program development. The universities plan to accredit the program by 2020. It should be noted that the German side assisted in the development of appropriate human resources and mobilized training resources for the successful implementation of the program.

An important initiative has been implemented with the support of UNDP in order to provide the vocational education system with professionals/trained teachers. As part of the initiative, the management components of the Centre for Training and Extension of Vocational Education Teachers have been integrated into the Bachelor’s Programme in Agronomy, accredited by LEPL Samtskhe-Javakheti State University. The first students enrolled in the programme in 2019.

Activity 1.6 Strengthening entrepreneurial education and work-based learning for employment and self-employment of graduates

One of the most important mechanisms for the promotion of employment and self-employment of graduates is the strengthening of entrepreneurial learning. In order to improve the quality of teaching



entrepreneurship in vocational education institutions and introduce new services, the Ministry actively cooperates with various state and international organisations.

In order to enhance entrepreneurial education in the education system, the Action Plan 2019-2020 for establishment of Life Long Entrepreneurial Learning (LLEL) at all levels of education was approved by the order of the Minister and for its implementation the working group was formed. Since 2019, all programs incorporated in the system include the entrepreneurship module as a mandatory component. Prioritizing entrepreneurial education, however, means the use of more effective teaching methods, for which, with the support of the ETF and UNDP, it is planned to create a model for the introduction of entrepreneurial culture in vocational colleges. Work on the model began in 2019, in December a workshop was held on „Entrepreneurial TVET Institution”, attended by representatives of TVET institutions. During the meeting models of introducing entrepreneurial culture in vocational educational institutions were developed. These models will be piloted in 2020 in four educational institutions.

In addition, with US State Department financial support, the Ministry in collaboration with the University of California, implemented a project to strengthen institutions in Georgia. It aimed [promoting entrepreneurial learning](#) in two ways - (1) the development of entrepreneurship module and (2) support for the implementation of project-based learning principles. As a result, existing Entrepreneurship module and supporting materials were revised in the context of the European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp) and submitted to the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. The work was done with the direct involvement of an entrepreneurship expert and with the support of teachers. In order to revise the documents, lessons were observed, interviews were conducted and focus groups were conducted. For the revision of a draft module a two-day workshop was held with the participation of entrepreneurship teachers from 21 TVET institutions. In the framework of the second component of the project, project-based learning methodology was piloted in three vocational colleges. During 2019 work was done to [strengthen the FabLab Network](#) at TVET institutions. The processes were coordinated by the FabLab “Modusi” (LEPL College „Modusi”). Within the framework of the development of the Vocational Fablab Network, in collaboration with Tech Park Georgia, the lab managers were retrained. Working visits were also made to colleges throughout Georgia. In some colleges, students were actively involved in production of various prototypes and products using special Fablab programs.

In the field of entrepreneurial learning, activities has also been implemented to develop the capacity of teachers in vocational education. In collaboration with the ETF, a group of experts revised the Ukrainian teacher training module on “Enhancing Vocational Training in Entrepreneurship” and modified it taking into account the Georgian context. As a result, [a new training module “Developing Entrepreneurial Competences of Vocational Teachers”](#) was developed. Trainers were selected and trainings with new modules were launched at TVET Institutions. About 200 teachers were trained in entrepreneurship with this module.

It is noteworthy that in 2019 the OECD conducted a Country Assessment under the SME Policy Index - 2020. According to the assessment, the entrepreneurial education component improved from 2.70 (2016) to 4.24 points.

[Activity 1.7 Development of the TVET Management Information System \(EVET\)](#)

Education Management Information System (E-VET) includes the information on educational institutions, appropriate educational programs, staff and personal data of persons eligible for enrollment/enrolled persons (including their health status in cases specified by the legislation of Georgia), as well as the other



information specified by the legislation of Georgia. Collection, storage, processing, analysis and administration of data within the Vocational Education Management Information System by the Ministry shall be ensured by LEPL - Education Management Information System. The EVET system has been in operation since 2013 and is currently being developed. Research and analysis of relevant business processes started in 2019, which led to the formulation of the technical task required for the [update of Vocational Education Management Information System](#). By the end of 2019 relevant program modules were developed. An order of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia on the Establishment and Administration of the Vocational Education Management Information System was also drafted. The procedure for its approval is ongoing.

In 2019 important components were integrated to EVET: vocational training-retraining programs (registration for the legal entities and beneficiaries), electronic data on vocational education standards and program development component.

Indicator of the first strategic task

1. Increased employment rate of TVET graduates:
 - 2018 Tracer study result - 60% of graduates are employed.
 - 2019 Tracer study result - 62% of graduates are employed .

2. Increased number of dual programs:
 - The number of dual programs in 2018 - 23;
 - The number of dual programs in 2019 - 30.

Strategic Task 2: Ensuring the accessibility of vocational education, based on learning principal throughout the lifetime

An important place in the strategy is devoted to the development of a vocational education system based on lifelong learning. The vocational education system must become part of a unified education system and must be linked to both general and higher education. The adult education system must also be developed.

According to the reform, by integrating general education into vocational education, students who receive vocational education on the basis of basic education will have the opportunity to continue their studies at the academic level. At the same time, it shall be possible to recognize the credits obtained at the level of vocational education at the higher education level. The strategy is also focused on the recognition of competences achieved through formal education and the development of a system of recognition of non-formal education, which must contribute to improving competences and lifelong learning. In addition, in 2019, an important task was to formalize the adult education system. It is important to establish an optimal network of educational institutions in order to improve access to vocational education.

Activity 2.1 Links of Vocational Education with Other Levels of Education and Elimination of Educational Deadlock

In order to develop a flexible link between vocational education and general education levels, in 2019 work continued to integrate learning outcomes of general education (X-XII) into vocational education. The



preparatory work for implementation of so-called “integrated” programs was carried out in 2016-2018: an appropriate approach was prepared with the support of UNDP, there was established the content of the learning modules to be integrated into the vocational programs so that students could receive a full general education alongside their vocational studies. Integrated modules were piloted in three educational institutions.

Following the adoption of the law, pilot curricula and teacher textbooks were developed on the basis of piloting. “Rules and conditions for integrating the middle level of secondary school learning outcomes into secondary vocational education programs” have been developed and approved. As an appendix to this rule, following “integrated” general modules have been approved: “Communication in Georgian”; “Mathematical literacy”; “Citizenship”; “Entrepreneurship”; “Science and Technology”.

In 2019 meetings and trainings were held for public and private TVET institutions on the goals of “integration”, inclusion of “integrated modules” into the curricula and quality assurance topics. The peculiarities of eligibility for the implementation of “integrated programs” were reflected in the draft amendment to the authorization statute of educational institutions.

With the support of UNDP in 2019 work begun on the validation of learning outcomes and student assessment under the Integrated Education Program (IV level).

There are 7 TVET institutions, which will be involved in the first stage of implementation of the “integrated” programs. Based on an open competition announced by institutions, in accordance with the pre-qualification requirements, teachers were selected. With the support of UNDP in 2020, selected teachers were trained. Registration on the programs will be possible in 2020.

The GGF funded project aimed providing technical assistance in the implementation of [short cycle programs](#). Within the framework of the project, a relevant concept, draft version of the action plan and recommended approaches and methodologies for the implementation of associate degree programs were developed.

Promoting continuity of education, enhancing co-operation between vocational and general education institutions and introducing vocational education at the general education level is also a key objective of the sub-program “Vocational Skills Development among pupils”. The program is the first large-scale cooperation initiative between general and vocational education institutions, within which institutions of both levels have the opportunity to learn about each other’s opportunities and develop joint courses. The sub-program is focused on helping students transition from one level of education to another, offering 8-9th graders vocational courses and certification courses for 10-12th graders.

Activity 2.2 Flexibility and inclusiveness of the system

One of the priorities of vocational education reform is to ensure universal access to vocational education. Accordingly, vocational education reform addresses the needs of adult and various vulnerable groups such as the persons with disabilities, persons with special educational needs, ethnical minorities, IDPs, and etc.

Since 2019, the Ministry has started development of Adult Education System. Short-term vocational training programs have become part of formal education system. Upon completion of a short-term vocational training/retraining program, a state-recognized certificate with credits and learning outcomes is issued. The right to implement short-term courses may be granted to any legal entity that meets the relevant standard (independently or in collaboration with another institution). The implementer can: issue a state-recognized certificate, develop a program according to the needs and receive state funding. For the



system development, all legal acts necessary for the implementation of the approach have been developed and approved, and a funding mechanism for the training component has been identified. In addition, within the special sub-program a commission was formed to review applications submitted by targeted organizations during the year. An electronic platform Tvet.emis.ge was developed for the purposes of full automation of vocational training and vocational retraining processes, through which a legal entity submits applications to the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, both for obtaining and confirming the right to implement vocational training/retraining programs. Students are also registered online on the e-platform vet.emis.ge.

During 2019 61 applications were funded in order to implement programs in construction, IT, tourism, service, production and processing in Tbilisi, Kvemo Kartli, Ajara, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Guria and Imereti regions (training - 44, retraining - 17). As of December 2019, the number of graduates on vocational training/retraining programmes is 443.

It is noteworthy that since 2016, the representatives of [ethnic minorities](#) have been enrolled in state educational institutions on the basis of Azerbaijani, Armenian and Russian language tests, after which they pass the Georgian language module and move to studying the profession. In 2019, 76 persons were enrolled in vocational education institutions on the basis of non-Georgian language tests.

In 2019, within the framework of the program “Vocational skills development among pupils” 23 courses were carried out in the schools of Akhaltsikhe, Marneuli, Lagodekhi and Sagarejo municipalities. In order to improve the quality of teaching, Azerbaijan and Armenian teachers were involved in the process of implementing the courses.

In order to increase access to vocational education for persons with [special educational needs](#), in 2019 the minimum number of places designated for persons with special educational needs within certain program has increased from 10 to 15%. In 2019, 247 persons with special educational needs were enrolled in vocational education programs based on alternative testing. In addition, based on the assessment and recommendation of the Ministry’s multidisciplinary team, 12 persons with disabilities were provided with various types of accommodation during the test organized by the National Assessment and Examinations Center (NAEC). In 2019, in order to improve the professional orientation of persons with special educational needs and persons with disabilities, an analysis of 15 vocational programs/professions and 10 videos of professions based on universal design principles were developed. It is important to mention that during 2019 a draft document regulating inclusive vocational education was developed “Rules and Conditions for Identifying Special Educational Needs of Persons and Conducting Inclusive Vocational Education”. In all TVET institutions, students with disabilities and special educational needs are provided with the relevant support.

It is noteworthy that for every student, including vulnerable groups, [dormitories](#) are available in 5 educational institutions (Kakheti, Imereti, Adjara, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti) and preparatory work is underway to develop additional student dormitories in Tsalenjikha municipality. Also, various [targeted programs](#) were implemented in 2019, including by sectoral agencies:

- Within the framework of the “Access to Vocational Education Program for Convicted Persons and Former Prisoners”, training courses were provided for about 700 beneficiaries.
- Vocational training / retraining of jobseekers was carried out within the framework of the State Program for “Vocational Training - Retraining and Qualification Upgrading of Jobseekers” by the LEPL Social Service Agency;



- “Vocational Education Program for IDPs” consists of two components – coverage of transportation expenses for students with the refugee status enrolled in TVET institutions and promoting self-employment of certified individuals by granting equipment and supplies relevant for their professions.

Activity 2.3 Development of effective mechanisms of recognition of the formal and non formal education

The new Law on Vocational Education aims to improve the flexibility of the vocational education system, including the establishment of a credit accumulation and transfer mechanism. In 2019 the final draft of the Rule of [Recognition for Formal Education](#) was developed, a meeting was held with the educational institutions on the draft Rule. A guide to formal education recognition has been prepared.

In 2019, the recognition of learning outcomes achieved in formal education was piloted in 18 vocational education institutions. Approval of the developed rule is planned after the analysis of the pilot.

In 2019, documents for regulation of [non-formal education recognition](#) were developed and approved. Consultants of non-formal education recognition were selected and capacity building activities were implemented. Based on the implemented activities, LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement is ready to accept the applications submitted by the institutions for obtaining the right to the recognition of non-formal education.

Activity 2.4 Development of Diversified Financing Mechanisms

With the support of the GGF, the project “Diversified Financing Mechanisms in Vocational Education” has been launched since 2019. In the framework of the project based on the analysis of [Vocational Education Financing](#) in Georgia and International Experience analytical report was prepared, based on which alternative funding models were developed. The proposed models are presented to stakeholders for discussion.

The law on vocational education allows private TVET providers to get a state funding (in line with state policies and priorities). In 2019 private TVET providers for the first time were involved in voucher financing within the priority areas. 234 vocational students from private vocational education institutions received state funding.

In 2019, the amount of voucher funding has increased, which allows for a 30% increase in hourly pay for vocational education teachers. Also, changes have been made to the administrative costs of higher education institutions implementing vocational education programs. According to the amendment, within the voucher financing, it is possible to finance the administrative costs of higher education institutions, which was not allowed by the previous funding approach.

Under the new law, a legal entity of public law - a vocational education institution has the right [to raise funds permitted by the legislation of Georgia](#) - to receive income from economic activity that is not harmful to human health and does not adversely affect the quality of education. Funds raised in accordance with the legislation of Georgia shall be used only for the purpose of fulfilling the institution’s goals and fulfilling its functions. TVET institutions will be allowed to raise the funds after the publication of a relevant by-law, which must include a clear instruction for selling products produced during the courses, as well as the management of economic activities by the institution and the disposition of revenue. Completion of



drafting the relevant order regulating the economic activities of the colleges and the management of the income received is scheduled for 2020.

Activity 2.5 Development of unified, accessible, flexible network of vocational institutions (State and Private)

In 2019 the work was continued on increasing geographical access to vocational education and expanding the network of vocational education institutions. In 2019 the work was continued [to develop new locations](#) (Akhalkalaki, Borjomi, Marneuli, Tskaltubo, Khashuri, Chokhatauri, Goraberezhouli, Kaspi, Shuakhevi). The construction works in Kaspi and Shuakhevi are in the final stage. In 2019 new branch in Khulo received students for the first time. In order [to improve the existing colleges](#), full rehabilitation works of the N(N)LE college “Prestige” began and full rehabilitation works of LEPL college “Modusi” were completed. Partial rehabilitations have been carried out by a number of educational institutions as needed. TVET institutions have got the equipment and tools needed to implement the new modular programs.

Under the Agreement between the Government of Georgia and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, a Loan Agreement was signed in 2019 for the implementation of the “Vocational Training Program I”. The purpose of the program is to build and equip an [“Center of Excellence”](#) in construction and logistics for 1,200 students based on international standards. Project implementation is planned for 5 years. In 2019, situational analysis and the concept of development of the Excellence Center were prepared, according to which the main purpose of the Center is to provide vocational programs and “hub services” relevant to labour market requirements.

In order to expand the network of vocational education providers, human resources and infrastructure of public schools were enhanced within the sub-program “Vocational skills development among pupils”. As a result, it is planned to increase the scope of [vocational education programs in schools](#) along with general education. Taking this into account, in 2019, within the subprogrammecertification courses for X-XII students has been carried out for the first time, involving 15 public schools.

Indicator of the second strategic task

1. Increased number of students moving to next level of education

- According to the Tracer Study carried out in 2018 7% of the TVET graduates continue their studies in the higher educational institutions;
- According to the Tracer Study carried out in 2019 - 8%;

2. Increased participation of adults in the educational programs

According to a study conducted by the Georgian Statistics Service (Goestat), Lifelong Learning (LLL) in the 18+ population was 4.7% in 2017 and 4.2% in 2018, respectively. Data for 2019 shall be available in the first half of 2020.

Strategic Task 3: Promotion of vocational education and increasing its attractiveness

According to the strategy, it is important to improve the status and image of vocational education. In order to increase popularity and attractiveness of vocational education, the strategy highlights some of the key areas: dissemination of information on a successful employment of students, conducting awareness-raising campaigns, improvement of the professional orientation/career guidance system, system flexibility and capacity improvement, development of the new brand and communication strategy for vocational education, implementation of which shall ensure to raise public awareness of the benefits that may bring about the vocational education of any member of the society, regardless of his/her status or ability. Creating lifelong learning opportunities and providing a well-managed professional orientation/career guidance service shall ensure that an individual's personal and professional interests are developed.

Activity 3.1 Development of a career guidance and career planning service

The new Law on Vocational Education obliges the Ministry to develop a system of career guidance, counseling and career planning in formal education. It is planned to develop and approve a career guidance, counseling and career planning strategy in formal education. In accordance with the law, the system must provide assistance to anyone in determining his/her ability, competence and interest in education and making the choice of profession at any stage of education. The technical assistance of the financial agreement signed between GoG and EU provides support to Georgia in development of a unified model of career guidance, counseling and career planning. The active implementation of technical assistance shall start from 2020.

Students have the opportunity to test their strengths in a variety of jobs at the school and make an informed career decision within the ministry implemented sub-program "Vocational skills development among pupils". In 2019, the scale of the program increased and the number of schools involved exceeded 700. It is noteworthy that within the framework of the program, 200 career guidance courses were implemented in 2017, 348 in 2018 and 590 in 2019. Over 90% of projects implemented in 2017 and 2018 continued in 2019 as well meaning the sustainability of the program. In 2019, ETF nominated the Program as one of Europe's best practices.

Activity 3.2 Creation of the new brand of vocational education and implementation of the communication strategy:

To raise awareness of the educational services and opportunities available in the vocational education system, a new brand of vocational education and communication strategy were developed. Based on the strategy several events were planned and implemented in 2019, in particular the Georgian-German Days of Vocational Education were held at First Republic Square to share the results of the TVET reform and popularize TVET. The event was organized by the Ministry in cooperation with the German Embassy with



the support of GIZ and Tbilisi City Hall. The two-day scenario of the event included various thematic activities with the participation of the representatives of government agencies, international organizations, educational institutions, sectoral associations and the private sector. Exhibitions were held at various large-scale pavilions displaying various professions, educational services and employment opportunities. Along with the open exhibition space, expert reports and successful examples were also presented in the conference room of “Republic”.

To share information on educational services available to the public in the TVET system, there were a large-scale events, such as “International Education Festival”, “A Public Event of May 26 Dedicated to the Independence Day”, “Information Seminar with the Participation of the Principals of TVET Institutions”, presentation of the second phase of the EU Programme - Education for Employment, and an information campaign (one-month long) organised by the GIZ with the participation of successful rugby players, which included educational meetings with high school students, students of Tbilisi National Youth Palace and representatives of the private sector. The meetings were held at 10 educational institutions across Georgia, in order to raise awareness on vocational education. Over 1,000 participants (including about 900 high school students) were involved.

Information campaigns, TV programs, etc. were organized by the TVET institutions . As a result of the activities undertaken, 16,548 people registered for TVET programs in 2019.

It is important to mention, that in 2019, based on a results of a research conducted by the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) under the USAID’s project “Governance for Growth in Georgia” (G4G) (Evaluating the Quality of Dialogue between Public and Private Sector in 2014-2019), the Ministry has received an award for providing high quality dialogue between the public and private sector during the preparation of the Draft Law on Vocational Education. In addition, within the project ReforMeter, supported by G4G USAID and implemented by ISET Research Institute, a public evaluation of vocational education reform was carried out. As a result, the Ministry was awarded the “ReforMeter Award” for successful implementation of vocational education reform.

The third strategic task indicator

Increase in public awareness about vocational education:

- According to the survey of population attitudes toward vocational education (2015), 72% of respondents say that the attitude of the population towards vocational education is changing positively. It is desirable to carry out additional research in this area.
- Within the EU Technical Assistance, survey on attitudes towards vocational education was conducted in the following cities: Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Gori, and Rustavi. Interviews were conducted with 1920 respondents (population aged 15-24 who do not study / did not study in TVET institutions). Fieldwork was carried out in August 2017. 20% of the respondents think that attitude towards vocational education is positive, 49% think that attitude is neutral, and 27% think that attitude is negative, while 5% find it difficult to answer. 40% of respondents believe that vocational education is fashionable and 75% believe that vocational education is beneficial.
- In 2018, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia conducted a survey of labour market needs in the tourism industry. Within the framework of the survey, respondents were surveyed regarding the level of trust and confidence in vocational education institutions. According to the results of the survey: the level of vocational education institutions was rated positively by 30% of enterprises, 38% rated on average and only 4% rated negatively. 69% of enterprises expressed

confidence in the knowledge gained in vocational education institutions, out of which 23% fully trust them.

- In 2019, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia conducted a labour market needs survey in the construction industry. Within the framework of the survey, respondents were surveyed regarding the level of trust and confidence in vocational education institutions. According to the results of the survey: the level of vocational education institutions was rated positively by 27% of the respondents, on average by 41%, and negatively by 4%. At the same time, 18% fully trust the knowledge gained in vocational colleges, 54% more or less and 2% do not trust it at all.

Risks and ways to solve them

#	Description	Response
1	Delay in adopting / enacting bylaws under the new law (on vocational education)	Consultations with decision makers, constant communication with stakeholders, lobbying with relevant institutions
2	Lack of financial resources, caused by a slowdown in local economic development or a decline in international aid	Effective use of state funding/mobilization of the resources, engaging the private sector in vocational education, involving donors
3	Changing priorities at national or sectoral level	Mobilizing the private sector, teachers and public opinion to support the strategy. Dissemination of information on budget, economy and results
4	Resistance to reform by decision makers, especially at the level of administration of institutions	Increasing the role of direct beneficiaries of vocational education in the process of administration and implementation of strategy in educational institutions
5	Abilities of institutions involved in the implementation and coordination of the reform	Capacity building activities.
6	Less interest from the private sector to be involved	Awareness raising activities for private sector; specific cooperation offers
7	Stereotypes and lack of public awareness	Vocational education branding, information campaign
8	Resistance to innovation and new ideas	Sharing international experience, e.g. about the EU vocational education, international competitions, etc.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The report discusses the main directions of the implementation of the 2019 Action Plan under the Unified Education and Science Strategy (2017-2020) and the results achieved in the field of vocational education.

According to the strategy, the priorities include conforming the vocational education to labour market needs, internationalizing the system, developing vocational education based on lifelong learning, promoting vocational education and increasing attractiveness.

Significant work has already been done to eliminate the challenges that existed before the new law was adopted. In 2019, a new wave of reform was launched, which allowed an Adult Training and Re-training System development, work was also done to integrate general education (secondary level) within vocational education. The next stage of the reform aims to link vocational education to higher education through the formation of so-called “short cycle” programmes and the opportunity to recognize vocational education credits at the higher education level. Implementation of all the components of the new law shall enable the goals set out in the Strategy and Action Plan to be fully achieved. In order to achieve results, it is important to share best international experience even in the implementation process. The scope of vocational training and retraining programmes must also be increased.

Successful implementation of the strategy cannot be the sole responsibility of a single ministry and/or department. Accordingly, there is a need for active involvement of agencies, private sector, educational institutions, international organisations in the process of introducing a new Vocational Education Reform and the Law on Vocational Education, which requires the development of effective coordination mechanisms by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport. The capacity of the Ministry, relevant agencies and vocational education institutions must be strengthened along with the strengthening of coordination activities in the process of introducing a new Law on Vocational Education.

Along with the introduction of the new national qualifications framework, work must be completed towards internationalizing the system, in particular towards the introduction of international and exchange programs, as well as the improvement of teaching English, which is an important component of exchange programs.

In line with the new system, it is important to continue working on the development and implementation of a diversified financing model, thereby expanding funding sources, motivating the private sector and promoting new investments. Particular emphasis must be placed on enhancing the role of sectoral unions in the system, ensuring that compliance between skills and labour market is improved.

Despite numerous activities aimed at quality assurance, the quality of vocational education remains a challenge. It is important to continue work on the introduction of new standards of authorization, which in turn shall ensure the development of institutions and increase competition between institutions. When it comes to the quality of vocational education, qualified and TVET teachers are essential in this regard. Accordingly, a new system of entry, development and career growth for vocational education teachers must be activated, which shall have a positive impact not only on the advanced training of active teachers, but also on the inflow of new specialists into this system.

It is important in the future to continue working on access to vocational education for all persons, regardless of their social and economic status, place of residence, nationality, gender, physical and mental ability. Future emphasis must be placed on offering online and mobile courses. It is important to ensure that those beyond education are included in the vocational education system within the framework of training programs.

Vocational education is still considered a less desirable educational path compared to higher education among population of Georgia. Interested parties have less information about the new opportunities developed in the vocational education system. Accordingly, it is important to implement active and diverse communication activities within the new communication strategy. Particular emphasis must be placed on the development of a unified system of career guidance, counseling and career planning.

In order to support the employment and self-employment of TVET students and graduates, a significant emphasis must be placed on the development of key competences, including the strengthening of the entrepreneurial learning component.

In order to measure the effectiveness of the reform, research must be continued. In addition to the tracer study, it is also important to research attitudes of stakeholders.