

***FIRST MONITORING REPORT***

Department of International Relations and Strategic Development (Secretariat)

**2022 Monitoring Report of the 2022-2024 Action Plan of the Unified National Strategy of Education and Science for 2022-2030**

| **mINISTRY OF eDUCATION AND sCIENCE OF gEORGIA**

2023

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# Introduction

This report, which covers the reporting period of the second half of 2022, is the annual monitoring report of the 2022-2030 unified national strategy for education and science and the 2022-2024 action plan, since the mentioned strategy and action plan, along with other relevant annexes of the policy document, were approved by the Resolution N 446 of the Government of Georgia on August 31, 2022.

The unified national strategy includes three sectoral priority areas such as: quality, equity/inclusion and governance. On the other hand, based on sectoral priorities, **15 strategic goals, 28 objectives and 161 activities** have been defined.

Within the framework of the first sectoral priority, the following specific goals and objectives are set:

**Goal 1.1: Provision of high-quality, supportive and development-oriented educational process by all early childhood and pre-school education institutions**

Objective 1.1.1: Raising the qualifications of caregiver-educators and ensuring continuous professional development in each institution of early and preschool education

Objective 1.1.2: Improving the learning environment and quality of teaching in early and preschool education institutions

Objective 1.1.3: Promoting the involvement of the child's parents/representatives and the community in the activities of early and preschool education institutions.

**Goal 1.2:**  **Providing an accessible learning process for each student in general educational institutions, focused on high attainable results and holistic development of the student**

Objective 1.2.1: Raising the qualifications of teachers and principals and providing needs-based continuing professional development

Objective 1.2.2: Creating a favorable environment for learning and teaching in general education institutions and providing them with modern diverse resources

Objective 1.2.3: Increasing involvement of parents/representatives in school life and teaching-learning process

**Goal 1.3: Development of an innovative and flexible vocational education system focused on the needs of society and economy**

Objective 1.3.1: Equipping vocational education students/trainees with the necessary skills and competencies for continuous employment in the local and international labor market

Objective 1.3.2: Promotion of continuing professional development of vocational education teachers

**Goal 1.4: Personal development of each student and preparation for the labor market by the higher education institution (HEI).**

Objective 1.4.1: Provision of programmes adapted to the labor market by the HEI

Objective 1.4.2: Facilitating an international learning experience and internationalization for students

Objective 1.4.3: Promoting the development of structured doctoral programmes corresponding to international standards

**Goal 1.5: Development of a knowledge-based society and an economy-oriented science, research, technology and innovation system**

Objective 1.5.1: Support of researchers in the implementation of research and innovative activities corresponding to international standards

Objective 1.5.2: Ensuring academic and research integrity in teaching and research

The following goals and objectives are outlined under the second sectoral priority:

**Goal 2.1: Promoting the participation of disadvantaged children in early education and school readiness programmes**

Objective 2.1.1: Ensuring an inclusive, safe and holistic development-oriented learning process in early childhood and preschool education institutions

Objective 2.1.2: Development of targeted support services of early and preschool education for disadvantaged children and children with special educational needs

**Goal 2.2: Creating equal opportunities for learning and development for every student at all levels of general education**

Objective 2.2.1: Raising the qualifications of special teachers and support staff and developing inclusive teaching competencies

Objective 2.2.2: Creation of a learning environment relevant to special educational needs in general education institutions and access to quality learning resources for each student

**Goal 2.3: Providing access to vocational education focused on diverse, inclusive and individual needs**

Objective 2.3.1: Enhancing lifelong learning opportunities through a flexible network of innovative, diverse and inclusive vocational education institutions

**Goal 2.4: Ensuring equal opportunities for access to and success in quality and inclusive higher education**

Objective 2.4.1: Development of targeted support services for disadvantaged students in higher education institutions

Objective 2.4.2: Creating a favorable learning environment for each student in higher education institutions

**Goal 2.5: Supporting public engagement in the creation of inclusive and diverse science, research, technology and innovation**

Objective 2.5.1: Enhancing interest in research, technology, science and innovation from an early stage of education

Objective 2.5.2: Supporting women's involvement in science, research, technology and innovation

The following specific goals and objectives are envisaged under the third sectoral priority:

**Goal 3.1: Strengthening the effectiveness and sustainability of the early and preschool education system**

Objective 3.1.1: Ensuring access to updated early and preschool education and development

**Goal 3.2: Improving the effectiveness and sustainability of the management of the general educational institution**

Objective 3.2.1: Development of monitoring and evaluation system of general education institutions

**Goal 3.3: Increasing the efficiency of the vocational education system**

Objective 3.3.1: Sharing of responsibility for the creation and implementation of vocational education policy between the public and private sectors

**Goal 3.4: Support for sustainable development of higher education institutions**

Objective 3.4.1: Development of financing system focused on sustainability of higher education

Objective 3.4.2: Development of digital information management system of higher education

**Goal 3.5: Increasing the effectiveness of national and regional research, science, technology and innovation systems**

Objective 3.5.1: Development of a long-term, result-oriented and targeted funding system for science, research, innovation and technology.

The present annual report was developed under the coordination of the Department of International Relations and Strategic Development of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, based on the status report submitted by the responsible departments/LEPLs. The monitoring report was prepared by the Department of International Relations and Strategic Development in accordance with the Resolution N629 of the Government of Georgia of December 20, 2019: "On the Approval of the Rules of Procedure for Development, Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy Documents" - defined in accordance with the requirements for the development of the annual report.

# Overall progress

Based on the reporting period of 6 months, at the level of objectives and goals, taking into account the full 3-year cycle of the action plan, significant progress was not expected to be achieved, however, at the level of activities, most of the preparatory work, project initiation stages and current activities were fully implemented.

During the year 2022, as a whole, the revised budget plan of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia in 2022 amounted to 1,684,835.90 thousand GEL, and the cash expenditure - 1,697,345.36 thousand GEL, including budgetary funds, taking into account the fundings, are 1,666,248.89 thousand GEL, grant - 1,209.05 thousand GEL, credit - 12,701.92 thousand GEL, and targeted grant - 17,185.49 thousand GEL.

In 2022, on the path of early and preschool education reform, revolutionary legislative changes were implemented, which provides for the authorisation of public and private institutions operating in the mentioned field and the introduction of quality assurance mechanisms in this direction. In 2022, preparatory works for the authorisation of the system began. In particular, the initial registration of early and pre-school education institutions was undertaken. Platform piloting and institution trainings related to the registration process were conducted together with the LEPL -Education Management Information System. The initial registration of private and public early and preschool education service providers in the electronic registration system was announced. More than 1,900 private and public institutions registered on the platform. A legislative change was made - individual entrepreneurs who provided early and/or preschool education services were given the opportunity to register on the platform.

With the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and in close cooperation with the relevant sectoral ministries and agencies, the draft of the temporary rule and authorisation standards for the authorisation of early and/or preschool education institutions, as well as the draft of the temporary rule for suspending and terminating the authorisation of the institution and the authorization standards was submitted to the Government of Georgia for approval. The procedure for selection of experts for authorisation of early education and/or preschool education institution, termination of activity and membership of expert corps was prepared. With the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), a pilot version of the electronic platform for self-assessment and tools for self-assessment of compliance with the standards of authorisation of institutions were developed.

In 2022, with the active participation of representatives of the field of early and preschool education, the State Standards of Early and Preschool Education were revised and prepared for approval. To improve equal access to pre-school education, a needs and capacity and readiness study at the municipal level has been planned and is being carried out, including with the intention of introducing alternative pre-school education in the future. Strengthening of municipalities in terms of management and administration of pre-school education, as well as kindergartens - in respect planning and implementation of the educational process was ongoing without interruption.

In 2022, the construction of 2 new, fully adapted schools was completed, along with the construction of 8 public schools, the construction of 2 vocational schools was brought to an end, and the construction of 4 vocational school is also underway. Responding to the adapted environment, complete rehabilitation of 3 public schools has been finished, and the full rehabilitation of another 11 public schools is underway, which will be completed in 2023.

In order to promote the reform of general education, within the framework of the "New School Model", about 600 public schools across Georgia were provided with supporting mechanisms in the process of implementing the third generation national curriculum.

In order to promote the realization of their own potential for all students, the refinement and development of the national curriculum was underway: the subject standards of the primary level of the national curriculum were prepared and approved; Optional courses continued to be created; Subject guides for primary and basic level were prepared and electronic versions were placed on the official website of the Ministry. Accordingly, the guides are available to all interested educators and individuals.

From the 2022-2023 academic year, with the support of the Ministry of Defence of Georgia and the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, teaching of the subject "Military Affairs" and "Defence and Security" began in 56 public schools with mountain status, the goal of which is to introduce basic and secondary level students to the basics of military affairs; To provide students with information about the armed forces and military service of Georgia; The student should develop the skills of safe behavior, survival and rescue skills in emergency situations. Current military personnel trained by the Ministry of Defence are selected as subject teachers.

14 school projects with non-formal education were financed and implemented in order to socialize vulnerable groups (Gypsies, Meskhetians, disabled students and the ones with special educational needs). School projects were carried out in different directions: reading club, crafting club and more. Activities around common interests brought peers together and encouraged acceptance of differences. 14 people registered for the unified national exams and 9 of them got student status, including one - a state grant. 1,075 teachers and administration employees living in the occupied territory of Georgia continuously received financial assistance; The support of non-Georgian-language schools in terms of educational resources, teacher training, teaching of the state language, etc., continued. In order to prepare entrants living in the region of Gali for the national exams, 46 teachers (from Gali) were trained.

On the basis of legislative changes, with the active involvement of interested parties, the project of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia On Amendments to Order N99/ნ of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated October 10, 2010 Regarding the Provision of Authorisation of Educational Institutions and Approval of Fees was developed, which was confirmed at the end of 2022 and entered into force on January 1, 2023. In accordance with the amendments, the authorisation standards of the general education institution were completely changed, procedures and fees were updated.

In 2022, 2,074 public schools were self-assessed. During the reporting period, the draft of the new authorisation standards and definitions of the procedures, as well as the electronic platform for diagnostic self-assessment, were prepared. At the beginning of 2022, the piloting of the diagnostic self-assessment of schools and the large-scale diagnostic self-assessment began, which, based on data collection and analysis, ended with the creation of a plan for the authorisation of public schools. Using pre-developed indicators, schools were evaluated and grouped in the authorisation schedule according to their readiness for authorisation. The implemented activities created the basis for receiving the first authorisation applications from 2023.

In the wake of the changes, the composition of the body of experts for the authorisation of the general education institution is going to change from 2023.

Within the framework of the unified national strategy, an important emphasis is placed on providing access to diverse, inclusive and individual needs-oriented vocational education, which in turn will increase the inclusiveness of the system.

One of the important conditions for improving access to vocational education is the expansion of the geographic network of vocational education. For this purpose, in recent years, a number of colleges started operating in new locations (Chokhatauri, Marneuli, Kaspi, Shuakhevi, Khulo, Keda, etc.). In 2022, the development of education institutions in new locations - in Khashuri, Tskaltubo and Lanchkhuti municipalities was completed. The mentioned institutions actively engaged in preparation for authorisation. During the reporting period, the work on the development of vocational education institutions in Borjomi, Akhalkalaki, Bolnis and Gurjaani continued.

In addition, with the support of the Ministry, in cooperation with the Basque Culinary Center and the Caucasus University, the construction works of the Gastronomic Academy of the Caucasus University continued in Gurjaani during the reporting period. The Academy will offer both Georgian and foreign students high-quality vocational education in a college that meets modern standards.

In addition, within the framework of the partnership of the Ministry and the KFW of Germany (Credit Institute for Reconstruction), the process of developing the so-called Excellence Center for Transport/Logistics and Construction in Tbilisi was actively continued. Also, negotiations continued in the direction of the development of two new centers of international level - Telavi Wine School and Dusheti Tourism School.

At the same time, a new direction of reform was taken up in the vocational education system, which implies the strengthening of public schools in order to gain the right to implement vocational education programmes. With the support of the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Development Program, active cooperation has begun with 30 public schools, as a result of which vocational education will be available in 29 more municipalities. In addition to the new locations, infrastructure works are constantly underway to meet the needs of the existing facilities.

In recent years, public interest in vocational education has grown significantly, which is evidenced by the growing number of people registered for vocational education programmes: in 2020, 14,324 people registered for 9,056 places announced for vocational educational programmes, 18,784 people registered for 13,871 places in 2021, and 24,449 people registered for 17,183 places announced in 2022.

In 2022, the Government of Georgia approved the regulatory framework for work-based learning, which is an important achievement for the Ministry and the educational sector, as well as for the partner private sector and international organisations. Work-based learning is a guarantee of relevance, quality and effectiveness of vocational education to the requirements of the labor market. By engaging in work-based learning, enterprises, in partnership with colleges, will train a highly qualified workforce with skills tailored to the needs of the enterprise. Students will develop professional and transferable skills in a real working environment and will be employed during their studies.

From 2022, the operation of the Non-entrepreneurial Non-commercial Legal Entity -Professional Skills Agency, which, in the form of public-private partnership, was founded in 2021 by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Georgia, entered into an active phase. Funding of professional training and retraining programmes with the financial support of the Ministry continued under the coordination of the Agency. In 2022, more than 5,200 people enjoyed training and retraining programmes. It is noteworthy that the introduction of the professional skills development programme among schoolchildren was also continued. In 2022, the offer of extracurricular activities for vocational students, which promotes their civic integration and development of transferable skills, was also an important benefit.

With the coordination of the Agency, there was a tendency of supporting the establishment of sectoral skills organisations. As a result, 9 sectoral skills organisation startups were founded, whose main activities are the development of qualifications in demand in the labor market, the coordination of work-based learning.

Important steps were also taken in the direction of bringing the vocational education system closer to the European educational space. Since 2022, the Erasmus+ program has been launched at the level of vocational education, and the scales in this direction will be gradually extended. In addition, a legal basis will be created for the implementation of joint and exchange programs, including in institutions located abroad. Relevant regulations have been prepared and initiated, which are scheduled to enter into force in 2023.

The year 2022 for the higher education system was distinguished by valuable initiatives and results, which are important for encouraging and consistent development of quality assurance processes of higher education. The innovations are related to the introduction of the cluster accreditation system and the implementation of evaluation processes. It is important to note the benefits that this model will bring to the higher education quality assurance system. The center started working on the cluster accreditation system model in 2020. As a result of cooperation with international experts invited within the Twinning project of public services funded by the European Union, a model project was developed and stages for its successive implementation were planned.

The model of the cluster accreditation system ensures the development of the quality assurance system of higher education and greater harmonization with the unified European system of higher education. The mentioned system implies a complex evaluation of programmes grouped by fields and determination of compliance with updated accreditation standards.

During the current year, the accreditation standards and procedures were changed, and with the updated standards and procedures, a pilot evaluation of the cluster implemented by 3 different higher education institutions was conducted. Also, in order to ensure the effective implementation of cluster accreditation, in the period of 2022, the attestation of the corps of experts in the field of humanitarian accreditation was carried out. In order to find local and international experts, new competitions were announced and sectoral characteristics of the humanitarian field were developed. International experts were involved in the evaluation processes, whose cooperation significantly contributes to the development of the internationalization aspect and increases the transparency and validity of the evaluation process.

In order to fulfil the obligations in the field of education within the framework of the association agreement between Georgia and the European Union, it was planned to improve and develop the quality assurance mechanisms of doctoral educational programmes and the scientific-research component. Accordingly, based on the feedback received from the institutions, the draft of the quality assurance framework document for the evaluation of the educational programmes at the doctoral level was revised, which is planned to be approved by 2023.

As a result of the changes made in the legislation in 2022, the accreditation of educational programmes became mandatory. Accordingly, the mentioned change has led to the need to revise the authorisation standards of higher education institutions. At the current stage, relevant activities have been initiated to refresh the authorisation standards.

In 2022, 22,121.02 thousand GEL was directed to the programme for the promotion of scientific research, within the framework of which independent scientific research units of higher education institutions are financed.

62 projects were submitted to the LEPL - Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia by scientific and research units participating in the programme at the 2022 LEPL – “Competition for support the renewal of the material and technical base of independent research units of higher education institutions.”

Considering the competition budget (1,500.00 thousand GEL), the competition commission selected 41 projects for financing, with a total budget of 1,499.75 thousand GEL. For 18 of these projects, the budget was adjusted based on the commission's recommendation and the approval of the project author. Estimates of projects can be viewed in the Unified Grant Management System - GMUS.

In order to support the promotion of science, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia organises various types of scientific-cognitive events every year, in which higher education institutions, scientific-research centers and other organisations participate. In 2022, several large-scale events were held within the framework of the “Science Promotion Program:”

In order to promote the sustainable development of research space and scientific activities of Georgia, a number of innovations were implemented in the direction of awarding state scientific grants: The procedure for financing the state scientific grant competition for fundamental research and the form of evaluation of projects participating in the competition were improved; The goals, rules and conditions of the state grant competition for applied research were updated and improved, which helped to identify projects with the potential for technological transfer, commercialization and industrialization. A third of funded research projects involve collaboration with industry.

Based on the research carried out with the financial support of the LEPL - Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia, in 2022, 203 publications (co-)authored by Georgian scientists were published in internationally refereed, peer-reviewed journals (a 34.6% increase compared to the base rate).

54 researchers received grant funding to internationalize science, expand international cooperation and conduct research in leading European scientific centers.

For the purpose of dissemination and communication of new knowledge created in Georgia, grant funding was issued for the publication of 52 monographs, and for promoting the exchange of scientific information and sharing of new knowledge, to ensure the international visibility and awareness of Georgian science, grant funding was issued for 12 international scientific events. 110 foreign scientists have been invited as plenary speakers or lecturers within the framework of sponsored scientific conferences and seasonal schools.

Informational support for Georgian researchers and universities on the ERA Talent Platform is provided by the EURAXESS Georgia portal created by the LEPL – Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia.

# Development of Preschool Education

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| **Goal 1.1:** | **Ensuring a high-quality, supportive and development-oriented educational process by all early childhood and pre-school education institutions** |
| **Objective 1.1.1:**  | **Raising the qualifications of educators and ensuring continuing professional development in each institution of early and preschool education** |

Bachelor programs of preschool education have been submitted for accreditation by the LEPL Batumi State University and Zugdidi Educational Universities. The National Center for Teacher Professional Development has created a training module for the professional development of educators (mandatory stage of professional development). 8 supplier organisations have been identified and trained. It is planned to create a system of certification of caregiver-pedagogues within the framework of the Innovation, Inclusivity and Quality Project - Georgia I2Q (IBRD) 2023-2026.

Since 2021, a total of 1071 people have completed the professional development training module for caregiver-pedagogues. 253 persons have been retrained by the center. This activity continues in 2023 as well.

In 2022, in order to promote the professional development of specialists at the level of early education, 420 early education specialists were trained in the direction of inclusive education. The activity will be ongoing in 2023 as well.

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| **Objective 1.1.2:** | **Improving the learning environment and quality of teaching in early and preschool education institutions** |

The updated State Standard of Early and Preschool Education has been submitted for approval.

"Temporary rule for the authorization of early and pre-school education institutions, as well as the suspension and termination of the institution's authorisation" was developed within the framework of the UNICEF project. The draft of the temporary rule was sent for agreement to: the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories of Georgia, Labour, Health and Social Affairs, the Emergency Management Agency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, the LEPL National Food Agency, the LEPL Education Management Information System and the LEPL National Center for Teachers Professional Development.

An electronic system for primary registration of early and preschool education services and/or providers of preschool and education services and/or an institution implementing only school program readiness was created, where until December 31, 2022, public and private kindergartens operating throughout Georgia wishing to continue their activities until obtaining authorisation had registered. In addition, immediately after the implementation of the relevant regulation, up to March 31, all individual entrepreneurs were given the opportunity to register in the mentioned system.

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| **Objective 1.1.3:** | **Promoting the involvement of the child's parents/representatives and the community in the activities of early and preschool education institutions.** |

A Positive Parenting brochure was created and printed, and a Positive Parenting programme was also developed. The resource - "Advice to parents of children under 6 years old" was printed. In order to raise parents' awareness, together with the representatives of the Rustavi Kindergartens Association, a working meeting was held with the parents of children under 6 years of age, and they were handed out a brochure On Positive Parenting. Also, in 5 pilot municipalities, where the "Game" curriculum was introduced, a seminar on the importance of positive parenting was held with the association’s leaders, methodists and practitioners.

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| **Goal 2.1:** | **Promoting the participation of disadvantaged children in early education and school readiness programmes** |
| **Objective 2.1.1:** | **Ensuring an inclusive, safe and holistic child development-oriented learning process in early and preschool education institutions** |

The training module (by the teacher's house) "Bilingual school readiness programme in preschool institutions" was created and approved. A school readiness guide (a set of activities) was created, translated into native languages, printed and sent to the resource centers in the target municipalities.

In order to support the provision of inclusive, quality early and preschool education for all children, the Inclusive Early and Preschool Education Guide was prepared, which will help institutions to plan and implement current processes according to the principles of inclusive education.

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| **Objective 2.1.2:** | **Development of targeted early and preschool education support services for disadvantaged children and children with special educational needs** |

Review/development of the school readiness programme, development of an implementation policy document within the framework of the World Bank project is planned no later than the 1st quarter of 2026. Within 5 target municipalities (Dmanisi, Marneuli, Dusheti, Keda, Oni) the reasons for being left out of early and pre-school education were explored, support was provided to identify children left out of early and pre-school education and to include them in the educational process. A strategy is being developed to include children left behind in early and pre-school education in the educational process.

Remote workshops were held with preschool education specialists and educational resources were provided: "Early childhood and transition to school"; "Getting Ready for School - A Transition Guide".

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| **Goal 3.1:** | **Strengthening the effectiveness and sustainability of the early and preschool education system** |
| **Objective 3.1.1:** | **Ensuring access to updated early and preschool education and development** |

The primary needs of alternative models are explored. Work has begun with municipalities to identify children left beyond pre-school education. The development and implementation of an increasing salary policy for caregiver-pedagogues employed in the field of early and preschool education within the framework of the World Bank project is planned no later than the 1st quarter of 2026.

# Development of General Education

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| **Goal 1.2:** | **Providing an accessible learning process for each student in general educational institutions, focused on high attainable results and holistic development of the student** |
| **Objective 1.2.1:** | **Raising the qualifications of teachers and principals and providing needs-based continuing professional development** |

There are currently 2,086 public schools operating throughout Georgia, of which 975 schools are headed by certified principals/acting principals (47%).

Within the framework of the Inclusive Education Promotion Program, the relevant working group has worked on updating the professional standard of the special teacher, the standard has been initiated and is ready for approval. The mentioned activity was carried out at administrative expense.

A package of changes to the teacher's professional development and career advancement scheme, a working version of the guide for the senior/lead teacher's practical part and a working version of the evaluation rule for the senior/lead teacher's practical part were developed.

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| **Objective 1.2.2:** | **Creating a favorable environment for learning and teaching in general education institutions and providing them with modern diverse resources** |

Technical review criteria were developed. The content and technical criteria of the primary level textbook were approved; Rules for reviewing textbooks N4 and N5 Acts have been approved and are available on the website <https://mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=7147&lang=geo>

Within the framework of the Programme for Providing Pupils with Textbooks, the budget envisages the creation of new textbooks.

A competition for approval was held on class X school textbooks; From the new academic year, school textbooks corresponding to updated standards have been introduced in X classes. A competition for approval has been announced for the school textbooks of class XI of the secondary level and classes I and II of the primary level.

In the framework of the general education reform, in order to support schools in the process of implementing the third generation national curriculum, in addition to expert support (intensive coaching, consulting meetings, webinars), a package of documents supporting the implementation of the third generation national curriculum was prepared and sent to all public schools across Georgia with the following composition: (1) theoretical foundations of the national curriculum; (2) subject guides for building the school curriculum; (3) formative assessment tools; (4) complex task patterns; (5) video guides based on approved textbooks for elementary and basic level.

The resources supporting the implementation of the third generation national curriculum are located and are periodically developed on the website of the resources created within the framework of the general education reform <https://education.geolab.edu.ge/?fbclid=IwAR2i8OWPCveUQHH353KCF92wBPAiBHr2xcJxXmm0jZv5jsi6QgkXNvmQMVI>

Communication channels were created (general education reform page on social network and YouTube channel, where programs for target groups and thematic rubrics are posted) <https://www.facebook.com/generaleducationreform>

In the process of implementing the third generation national curriculum, in order to support schools, the Ministry of Education and Science, with the financial support of the World Bank, provided computer equipment (notebook, projector) to 600 schools.

Within the framework of the general education reform, as a summary of the 2021-2022 school year, regional conferences of teachers were held on the basis of 68 educational resource centers, where 1114 speakers shared their experience with their colleagues in the form of implemented complex assignments and school projects. New/updated training modules for teachers have been suggested; Educational resources have been created in various subject areas.

The works for the first stage of the construction of the European school are underway.

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| **Goal 2.2:** | **Creating equal opportunities for learning and development for every student at all levels of general education** |
| **Objective 2.2.1:** | **Raising the qualifications of special teachers and support staff and developing inclusive teaching competencies** |

Of the 9,014 graduates/active students studying to teach, 131 have studied at least one year in inclusive education, which is 1.5% of the currently registered 2,113 special education teachers. 326 of them are studying to be teachers at different levels. Bachelor's degree - 151, master's degree - 83, teacher training educational programme - 92.

Within the framework of the inclusive education promotion programme, the training of support specialists for inclusive education is actively underway. Accordingly, updating and preparation of training modules are also ongoing.

In order to confirm the competence of a special teacher, the LEPL National Assessment and Examinations Center conducted the Senior Special Teacher Examination in July 2022. 749 practicing teachers and 1761 teacher candidates registered for the exam. It should be noted that in 2022, despite the interest, only 33% (812) of the exam participants managed to overcome the barrier of minimum competence. In particular, only 32.7% of practicing teachers and 37.3% of applicant teachers passed the established limit.

The work on updating the professional development programmes of teachers and special teachers within the framework of the inclusive education promotion programme has been started.

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| **Objective 2.2.2:** | **Creating a relevant learning environment for special educational needs in general education institutions and providing access to quality learning resources for each student** |

In order to conduct diagnostic evaluations of students of IV, VI and IX classes, preparatory work is underway, after the completion of which the specific term and forms of conducting will be determined. A catching-up and accelerated learning curriculum has been prepared for approval. In the general education management information system (eSchool), a relevant module has been created, where information about a student with special needs shall be reflected.

41 public schools are included in the "Introduction of State Standards in Preschool and School Institutions of National Minorities" programme. In 2022 the model integrated language and subject learning matrices/guides in the following subjects were created: Arts, Mathematics, Self and Society, Science. 10 subject experts/coaches and 54 assistant teachers of primary level have been trained.

In 2019, the LEPL Education Management Information System implemented the translation of the approved primary textbooks. Since 2020, this function has been transferred to the LEPL Educational and Scientific Infrastructure Agency.

For non-Georgian-speaking schools/sectors, newly printed school textbooks of grades I-IX have been translated and delivered. Class X textbooks are being translated. The mentioned budget includes the translation of textbooks needed for non-Georgian language schools within the framework of the Textbook Provision for Students programme.

For the reporting period, with the aim to support the education of students with special educational needs:

* the project "No child without education" is underway, which aims to strengthen the quality and inclusiveness of the national education system, to provide comprehensive, consistent and multifaceted educational support tailored to the individual needs and abilities of each child, and to improve the quality of inclusive education practices in the learning environment;
* electronic support for the Georgian Braille font was created, which enabled blind people to read the information displayed on the computer screen using an electronic Braille screen. They are enabled to type text using the braille keyboard and use the computer to the fullest, both in the study and work environment, as well as in everyday life.
* there are 12 integrated classes for students with sensory (hearing) and autism spectrum, educational services are provided to children with long-term hospitalized chronic diseases and hospice beneficiaries;
* braille and embossed textbooks were printed for students with sensory impairments, audio versions of grade VIII and IX grade textbooks were created, technical aids were purchased;
* the guide "Promoting the education of gifted children" was prepared. The guide introduces the reader to the specific characteristics of gifted learners, their learning needs, and ways to organise and support the learning process so that the learning environment matches the needs and wants of the gifted learner.
* a "collection of activities" was prepared. A collection of activities intended for special educators, teachers, specialists involved in inclusive education, parents and all those interested in the child's development and learning process. In the guide, according to the areas of child development, the peculiarities of development are described and relevant activity samples are provided, which a specialist or an interested person can use in the teaching-learning process.
* in cooperation with the Ministry, the "Innovations for Inclusive Society" organisation has prepared guides for schools and parents to support the transition process. The goal of the guides is to provide schools and parents with information related to the transition to school, to support them in preparing the child/school properly so that the transition process is less stressful.
* in 2022, 2 fully adapted new school buildings were built, 3 school buildings were fully rehabilitated, where full adaptation is envisaged, various types of adaptation were implemented in 18 schools (arrangement of a ramp, crane lift, adapted sanitary unit).

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| **Goal 3.2:** | **Improving the effectiveness and sustainability of the management of the general education institution** |
| **Objective 3.2.1:** | **Development of monitoring and evaluation system of general education institutions** |

The general education management information system (eSchool) shows students enrolled in all schools operating throughout Georgia.

The updated standard of the school principal was approved (order N109/ნ, 26/09/2022)

<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5574156?publication=0>

# Development of Vocational Education

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| **Goal 1.3:** | **Development of an innovative and flexible vocational education system focused on the needs of society and economy** |
| **Objective 1.3.1:** | **Equipping vocational education students/trainees with the necessary skills and competencies for continuous employment in the local and international labor market** |

Objective outcome indicator 1.3.1.1: The number of graduates of dual programmes is 653.

Objective outcome indicator 1.3.1.2: According to the survey of graduates conducted in 2022, considering the data of the graduate survey of 2020-2021, the share of self-employed people is 20%.

In order to develop an innovative and flexible vocational education system focused on the needs of society and the economy, it is of key importance to equip vocational students/trainees with the skills and competencies necessary for continuous employment in the local and international labor market, as well as to promote the continuous professional development of vocational education teachers. In this direction, significant progress has been recorded both in terms of facilitating access to educational programmes, increasing the participation of the private sector, developing educational resources, supporting international mobility and other important directions.

On August 9, 2022, the Government of Georgia with the resolution N416 approved the rules and conditions for the implementation of the vocational education programme/short cycle education programme/professional training programme/professional retraining programme in the form of work-based education, and by the resolution N451 of the Government of Georgia of September 5, 2022, the rules and conditions for obtaining the status of an educational enterprise by a person were approved. The regulatory documents (projects) for the development of the professional standard and the professional educational standard were also developed, which were based on a new methodology for the development of qualifications. The profession standard represents a set of tasks and duties related to a specific profession and it is closely related to the labor market, therefore, their development will be carried out with high involvement of the relevant field.

Regulatory acts (projects) for the implementation of joint and exchange programs in professional education were prepared; In order to improve the administration of joint and exchange vocational education programs, a technical task for the development of digital modules of joint and exchange programs was created for the electronic system of vocational education management - eVET; Agricultural students of vocational education institutions have the opportunity to participate in international practice in the Federal Republic of Germany. The program is implemented to promote international mobility and aims to study the best practices in the field of agriculture. International practice is carried out in cooperation with AgroKontakte International. Six students participated in the program in 2022.

From 2022, the Erasmus+ program was launched at the level of vocational education, and the scale is going to be gradually increased in this direction.

In order to share international experience, during the reporting period, cooperation between institutions implementing vocational education programs and experts of the organization "Senior Expert Service (SES)" continued.  Within the framework of cooperation, with the support of GIZ, a visit of German experts was made to Georgia within the framework of the "Senior Expert Service". The purpose of the visit was to support the improvement of the educational process and teaching methods. Also, with the coordination of the colleges and the support of various partners, the visits of foreign experts were carried out in order to share their experience. In total, 20 expert visits were made in 2022.

During 2022, negotiations on cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the Italian company (U.C.M. – Italy association) were successfully completed. Within the framework of cooperation, vocational students of "Blacksea", "Ikaros", "Aisi" and "Modus" colleges and higher education institutions - Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University and Iakob Gogebashvili Telavi State University took Italian language courses, also, master classes were held by Italian chefs. 63 vocational students involved in the project will go to Italy in June of this year for a 3-month internship. The costs will be fully funded by the inviting party. Also, payment will be provided during the internship.

Work continued in the direction of integrating the general education component in vocational education. Training on integrated programs is available in almost all regions of Georgia. During the year, educational institutions were actively supported in order to add new programs, including integrated programs. During the reporting period, 8 education institutions (6 public and 2 private) obtained the right to implement 29 integrated programs through authorisation. As a result, at the system level, 91 integrated programs are implemented in 27 education institutions. Currently, 1,250 students with basic education study on integrated programs. Within the 2022 admission, 570 people were enrolled in integrated programs. These types of programs are implemented by both public and private vocational education institutions.

In 2022, a total of 157 programs of 56 legal entities were added to the system of vocational training and retraining programs (74 of them through obtaining the right), of which 122 are vocational training programs, and 35 are vocational retraining programs. Of the mentioned legal entities, 27 belong to state education institutions, 3 to state non-education institutions, 18 to private education institutions, and 8 to private non-education institutions. It should be noted that the Non-entrepreneurial Non-commercial Legal Entity - Vocational Skills Agency has conducted an intensive campaign to interest the private sector in vocational training and retraining programs.

Vocational training and retraining programs are available in all regions of Georgia (except Abkhazia). From 2019 to the present, more than 11,500 people have been enrolled in vocational training programs.About 150 programs were funded in 2022, which is 50% more than the previous year.

During 2022, an analysis regarding the development of key competences was completed and a "Concept for the Development of Key Competences at the Vocational Education Level" was developed, which includes a needs analysis and recommendations. On the basis of the mentioned concept, working on the development of informal education courses and resources focused on the development of key competencies was set about

In 2020, at the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the existing educational module of civic education was evaluated and a new module was developed and approved in accordance with the identified needs. The updated module provides a holistic approach to the teaching process of civic education and is focused, on the one hand, on acquiring factual and conceptual knowledge, and on the other hand, on developing the necessary skills for citizenship in a democratic society. Within the framework of the project, a teacher's guide, a student's manual were also developed and a cycle of civic education teacher trainings was implemented (107 civic education teachers were trained). Together with IFES, the Agency for Vocational Skills plans to increase vocational development opportunities for teachers. From June 1, 2022, all vocational education institutions are obliged to implement the new civic education module within the programs.

With the support of the United Nations Development Program, the agency developed the concept and implementation mechanisms of digital and integrated learning in vocational education, which formed the basis for the development model of the electronic learning platform (LMS) for vocational education, which is currently being developed with the support of the Asian Development Bank.

In order to pilot a new approach to foreign language teaching within the framework of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) project, a technical task document for the introduction of a new model of English and German language teaching was developed in 2022. The mentioned approach envisages the assessment of students' needs and teaching according to the relevant levels of competences of the European CEFR language framework for foreign language teaching. The piloting of the foreign language teaching center concept is planned on the basis of regional hubs (Kutai and Telavi), after which a plan for the introduction of the concept in other vocational schools will be developed and the final foreign language teaching policy document will be designed.

Within the framework of the United Nations Development Program project, electronic textbooks were developed to support the teaching of integrated general modules in the following areas: "Science and Technology", "Mathematical Literacy" and "Citizenship". Additionally, a set of complex tasks was developed for the integrated general module "Science and Technology". Moreover, in cooperation with the organisation "Action Against Hunger" Shuttle methodology guides for students and teachers were developed. The objectives of this methodology are: promotion of social inclusion, increasing opportunities for employment/self-employment of participants, promotion of development of entrepreneurial and professional skills of participants. A new electronic guide "Entrepreneurship" was developed for teaching entrepreneurship (see link: http://entrepreneurship.ge) together with a collection of relevant tasks (toolkit). By the end of 2022, a total of 7 different learning resources have been developed. All of them are in digital format. In 2023, it is planned to develop the following educational resource: "Communication in Georgian", a guide for teaching sports and a guide for teaching the integrated module of aesthetics.

In 2022, in accordance with the new authorisation standards, which came into force in 2020, 8 state-based education institutions underwent re-authorisation (with a total of 138 programs), 5 private institutions (with 18 programs) also underwent re-authorisation, and one new authorised college with 1 program was added to the system. It should be emphasized that by 2027, all institutions implementing vocational educational programs will be authorised/reauthorised in accordance with the new standards.

In order to share the best European experience in the process of introducing the quality assurance system of vocational education in 2022, the National Center for the Development of the Quality of Education has started to evaluate the quality of the vocational education system according to the indicators of the European Quality Assurance of Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET). A system assessment 2022 analysis document based on five EQAVET indicators was developed. During 2023, the National Center for Education Quality Enhancement will continue to work in the mentioned direction.

With the support of the United Nations Development Program, the National Center for Education Quality Enhancement created self-assessment tools for vocational educational institutions in 2020. The mentioned tool is used by the National Center for Education Quality Enhancement as an effective external evaluation mechanism. In addition, the Non-entrepreneurial Non-commercial Legal Entity - Vocational Skills Agency has support mechanisms in place to ensure compliance of institutions with standards.

In order to share best practices and promote cooperation among teachers, 12 sectoral networks were created, through which teachers of the sector united around professional goals and projects. These directions are: agricultural sector, healthcare, personal services, entrepreneurship, integrated modules (communication in Georgian, quantitative literacy, entrepreneurship, citizenship, science and technology: chemistry, physics, biology, physical geography). Also, 12 subject experts of integrated general modules were selected and trained, who provide facilitation and methodological consultation to the teachers of sectoral networks. In order to facilitate the effective organisation of the work of sectoral networks, the concept of networks of sectoral teachers was created, which includes an overview of directions of cooperation and recommendations.

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| **Objective 1.3.2:** | **Promotion of continuing professional development of vocational education teachers** |

Objective outcome indicator 1.3.2.1: In 2022, based on the research of teachers' needs, the Professional Skills Agency developed a 3-day training-module in the direction of teaching-evaluation, according to which approximately 20% of teachers of vocational education institutions (509 teachers) were trained.

During 2022, work continued on the regulatory framework developed with the support of the World Bank, within which the concept of the vocational education teacher standard has already been created; Concept of vocational education teacher training, assessment and continuing professional development; Code of ethics and manual of ethics for vocational education teacher; The approach also takes into account the development of an electronic platform for teachers. The main part of the technical task of the electronic platform for teacher development has already been created.

In addition, the agency was working on the draft of the vocational education teacher standard and the regulatory act on teacher training, evaluation and continuing professional development. Also, the plan of the modules of the vocational education teacher training program and the concept of teacher training and entry into the profession were developed.

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| **Goal 2.3:** | **Providing access to diverse, inclusive and individual needs-oriented vocational education** |
| **Objective 2.3.1:** | **Enhancing lifelong learning opportunities through a flexible network of innovative, diverse and inclusive vocational education institutions** |

In 2022, the construction of a new vocational education institution was completed in the municipalities of Khashuri and Tskaltubo, and also in 2022, the construction of the new educational building of the Non-entrepreneurial Non-commercial legal entity college "Horizonti" was completed in the municipality of Lanchkhuti. Also, the construction of vocational education institutions has started in Gurjaani (with the cooperation of the Basque Culinary Center and Caucasus University), Bolnisi and Borjomi.

A new direction of reform has started in the vocational education system, which envisages the strengthening of public schools in order to gain the right to implement vocational education programmes. At this stage, in order to expand the geographical network, the Ministry is guided by the Ministry's medium-term action plan, as well as agreed action plans within the framework of ADB and UNDP projects.With the support of the Asian Development Bank, the United Nations Development Program and the European Union, the Vocational Skills Agency has started to strengthen 30 selected public schools to obtain the right to implement vocational education programmes and short-term training programmes. From 2023, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the capacity building of an additional 30 general education institutions will begin.

Objective outcome indicator 2.3.1.1: in 2022, 156 persons with disabilities enrolled in vocational programmes from basic and full general education levels.

Objective outcome indicator 2.3.1.2: the rate of transition from school to vocational education is 5.4% for persons with special educational needs having basic education and 18.9% for persons with special educational needs having complete general education.

Within the framework of the new methodology for the development of qualifications, sectoral maps are created in cooperation with organisations of sectoral skills, which implies the identification of important skills in a specific sector and the formation of appropriate qualifications. The process is multi-stage and involves the engagement of broad groups of employers in the identification of important competencies for the market and the process of developing vocational programmes based on these competencies. Moreover, with the support of the European Union, based on the joint cooperation of the CSRDG, ACT and the Skills Agency, a methodology and a toolkit for researching local labor market trends were developed. With the support of the Asian Development Bank, the piloting of the mentioned approaches begins in 2023, in which direction a contract has already been signed with a research organisation.

In 2022, within the framework of the partnership between the Ministry and the German Reconstruction Credit Bank (KFW), the process of developing the Center of Excellence for Transport/Logistics and Construction in Tbilisi was actively continued. Negotiations were also actively in progress between the parties in the direction of the development of two new institutions of the international level - Wine Center in Telavi and Tourism Excellence Center in Dusheti. For this purpose, preparatory works were carried out during the reporting period. In particular, a feasibility study was conducted, a number of working meetings were held, as well as meetings with local authorities. Within the framework of bilateral negotiations between Germany and Georgia, it has been agreed to allocate grant funding in the amount of 24 million euros for the implementation of the mentioned projects. The agreement is scheduled to be signed in 2023.

With the support of the UN project, in cooperation with the Vocational Skills Agency and the Center for Counseling and Training (CTC), a methodology for organisational assessment of vocational schools was developed in order to promote the introduction of intra-institutional entrepreneurship. In addition, with the support of the Asian Development Bank, the Skills Agency developed a concept document for the development of regional hubs. It is important that the transformation of the college into regional hubs is a continuous process and implies the continuous development of the capabilities of the main colleges of the region in order to combine and strengthen the functions of the regional hub. For this purpose, with the support of the ADB, the European Union and the United Nations, the Vocational Skills Agency has already started multilateral work in different directions with two colleges, "Iberia" and "Prestige". Based on the methodology, the new organisational structure of "Iberia" College has been prepared. The charter and organisational structure of "Prestige" College is being revised according to the mentioned methodology, with the support of UNDP and "Sunny House", policy documents for the development of youth and student services in regional hubs have been developed.

With the support of ADB, a communication strategy project was developed, which provides for the promotion of the opportunities of a number of professions and fields and raising public awareness with complex approaches.

In 2022, the Vocational Skills Agency implemented a vocational education promotion campaign within the framework of the sub-programme for the promotion of vocational education, which was aimed at raising public awareness of vocational education, including professions, and increasing the prestige and attractiveness of vocational education. With the promotion of the campaign, the number of persons (interested persons) registered for vocational education programmes increased by 30% compared to the data of 2021.

Vocational education system allows learning results achieved within the framework of non-formal education to be recognized at the level of vocational education. The goal of this is to recognize the education achieved beyond formal education for a willing person, to promote lifelong learning, personal development, continuing education and/or qualification and/or employment/career growth/self-employment. 8 institutions have obtained the right to recognize non-formal education[[1]](#footnote-1). Non-formal education recognition services are available in almost all broad areas where professional qualifications are presented. During the reporting period, re-certification of nine certified consultants and additional certification process of new consultants was carried out by the National Center for Education Quality Enhancement. During 2022, the process of recognition of non-formal education took place in two educational institutions. As a result, 19 persons obtained partial recognition, and the study results necessary for the achievement of the qualification stipulated by the vocational educational standard for 1 applicant were fully confirmed and the institution issued a document confirming the qualification - a diploma.

During 2022, work continued on the agreement on the rule "On the identification of special educational needs of a person and the implementation of inclusive vocational education", which will promote the maximum involvement of people with special educational needs and disabilities in vocational education, as well as the practical implementation of the principles of inclusiveness at the level of vocational education.

With the support of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the concept of inclusive development at the level of vocational education was developed, which involves tailoring vocational education services to groups with various additional needs. In 2022, additional services were developed for students, including groups with additional needs: (1) an orientation service was developed for persons with disabilities and people with special educational needs (2) a document for the development of psychosocial services was developed (3) mechanisms for the development of extracurricular services were developed and introduced.

During the reporting period, the Non-entrepreneurial Non-commercial legal entity - Vocational Skills Agency reworked the strategy of professional orientation, counseling and career planning in formal education, in which the concept of development of career management services at the level of vocational education was designed. A professional network of career managers was created and capacity building activities were implemented in several stages; A continuous development model for career managers, a career education course, and new open door day services at the vocational education level are being developed.

With the financing of the Ministry, in 2022, orientation and certificate courses for the development of vocational skills were restored in public schools. In 2022, orientation courses were available for 1,000 students of general education institutions, and certificate courses - for 10th-12th grade students of more than 100 schools. Preparatory work is underway to introduce short-term training courses for 10-12th grade students of general education institutions.

In the process of administering the updated model of student selection in vocational educational institutions, a new rule for enrollment in vocational education programmes is provided, and the agency conducts training for the selection commission, where attention is focused on the essence of gender stereotypes and the need to minimize them. Guidelines for the administration of selection methods are also available for selection commissions, including mechanisms for ensuring gender equality. For the analysis of the issue of gender equality, the processing of gender-segregated data has been started on the basis of the database obtained from the LEPL Education Management Information System. At the same time, gender analysis of the data of individual vocational schools is underway.

In terms of increasing access to vocational education, the new programme of training in the state language is also noteworthy, after the implementation of which, the vocational education system will provide the offer of the state language learning programme, which will create an opportunity for non-Georgian speaking applicants, including representatives of ethnic minorities, to enroll in a vocational education programme after they successfully overcome the training programme in the state language. During the reporting period, the draft of the order of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia "On the procedure for developing and implementing the state language training programme and approving the fee for services provided by the LEPL National Center for Education Quality Enhancmenet regarding the state language training programme" was developed. The rules for enrolling students in the programme, a methodological package for the selection of applicants, supporting study materials for A1 and A2 levels were also developed. Work has begun on the Programme Funding Procedure, Programme Implementation Guide, Teacher Training Module and A1 Level Manual.

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| **Goal 3.3:** | **Increasing the efficiency of the vocational education system** |
| **Objective 3.3.1:** | **Sharing of responsibility for the creation and implementation of vocational education policy between the public and private sectors** |

Impact indicator 3.3.1: Number of sectoral skills organisations - 9 sectors have established initiative groups of sectoral skills organisations.

Objective outcome indicator 3.3.1.1: employer satisfaction rate - according to the 2022 “Employer Satisfaction Survey with Vocational Education[[2]](#footnote-2)” the employer satisfaction rate is 60%.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia has introduced and strengthened various forms of partnership with the private sector. As a result, the vocational education management model has changed since 2021. In 2022, the Vocational Skills Agency, established jointly by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Georgia, began to actively operate. On the initiative, in 2022, the Resolution of the Government of Georgia N416 came into force, on the basis of which the role and functions of sectoral skills organizations in the vocational education system were defined. A sectoral skills organization is an organization created by a specific economic sector - a non-entrepreneurial non-commercial legal entity that is representative and ensures the process of creating and implementing sectoral skills policies in the sector. As of today, initiative groups of sectoral skills organizations have been established in 9 sectors. The mentioned sectors are: tourism, information and communication technologies, energy, wine, agriculture/agroduo, healthcare and personal services, construction and engineering, artisan, sports. Up to 70 sectoral unions/associations are united in the initiative groups of sectoral skills organizations.

Based on the Resolution N416 of the Government of Georgia, the regulatory framework for work-based learning was also defined, which is an important achievement for the Ministry and the educational field, as well as for the partner private sector and international organisations.

A Guide to Sector Skills Organisations has been developed, which provides information to interested sectors on the main key issues related to the Sector Skills Policy and the new institutional mechanism - the Sector Skills Organisation, and also outlines the procedures needed to establish a Sector Skills Organisation.

For the development of an effective and flexible system of vocational education, it is essential to introduce a renewed model of financing, which will contribute to the growth of financial and human resources and more effective management of the budget in the conditions of the growth of the scale of vocational education. During the reporting period, with the support of the international community of Germany, taking into account the best international practices, a new approach to the financing of vocational education was developed, which provides for a model of financing based on the results of institutions.

In 2022, the Vocational Skills Agency became a member of several international platforms:

* Official representative of WorldSkills International Georgia;
* Member of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA);
* Member of World Economic Forum (WEF) Network, Skills Accelerators.

With the support of the United Nations Development Programme and the European Union, work is underway on an electronic platform supporting the management, evaluation and monitoring of vocational education. The technical task of the platform has been designed and the development of the platform is in progress.

# Development of Higher Education

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| **Goal 1.4:** | **Personal development of each student and preparation for the labor market by the higher education institution** |
| **Objective 1.4.1:** | **Provision of programmes adapted to the labor market by the higher education institution** |

The activities required to complete the task have started. The study determined to evaluate the achieved result will be completed in 2024.

At the initiative of the The Non-entrepreneurial Non-commercial Legal Entity - Saint Andrew the First-Called Georgian University of the Patriarchate of Georgia in cooperation with the National Center for Education Quality Enhancement, a change was made in the "National Qualifications Framework" and it became possible to grant qualifications in the field of cyber security. As a result, a Georgian-American English language programme was developed in cooperation with Northern Kentucky University (USA), and in addition to the Georgian qualification (Master of Information Technology Security), the graduates will receive the Northern Kentucky University Cyber Security Master's degree. In addition, the necessary financial support for the implementation of the programme was provided by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. Admission to the programme is carried out from the current year. In addition, cyber security courses are integrated into the educational programmes of all three levels of the STEM direction.

In 2022, the Competitive Innovation Fund (CIF) grant competition was announced, within the framework of which the projects submitted by the universities will be financed.

Within the framework of the project financed by the European Union program Erasmus+, measures are being taken to integrate the third mission into the strategic development plans of higher education institutions, after which a policy document will be developed based on the relevant analysis.

In order to strengthen inclusive education at the university level, amendments were made to the Law of Georgia "On Higher Education". The change creates the basis for the implementation of the special teacher training educational programme. The mentioned programme is planned to be launched from the 2024-2025 academic year. In addition, in the integrated bachelor-master educational programme of teacher training, as well as in the programme of primary level teacher of general education, it became mandatory to take into account the special teacher training module, which will allow higher education institutions to train teachers who will have the right to special education at the same time.

Work is underway on the sectoral characteristics of the regulated educational programme of the Master of Special Education.

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| **Objective 1.4.2:** | **Promotion of international learning and internationalization for students** |

According to the information system of higher education management, the number of joint programmes is 27. According to the data of November 1, 2022 of the Higher Education Management Information System, the share of active students enrolled in joint programmes is 0.1% of the total number of active students.

Within the framework of the "Study in Georgia" programme, financial support is being provided to three state universities: Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia Technical University and Ilia State University in order to obtain international accreditation (in accordance with ABET accreditation and ACS certification standards) and further development of higher undergraduate STEM programmes. For the purpose of support, 890.00 thousand GEL was transferred to the universities in 2022.

In 2022, the Competitive Innovation Fund (CIF) grant competition was announced, within the framework of which the projects submitted by the universities will be financed, the second competition will be announced in May, and the results will be announced at the end of 2023.

Scholarship for Hungarian Students and Researchers 2022 - The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia has funded 1 Hungarian citizen to attend a short-term course at LEPL - Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

Czech Scholarship Programme 2022-2023 - 6 citizens of Georgia were funded by the Ministry of Education, Science, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic for the purpose of attending a short-term course/visiting for a research to higher education institutions of the Czech Republic.

Scholarship for Czech students and researchers 2022 - 2 Czech citizens were funded by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia to conduct a research visit to Ilia State University.

Review of applications of current grant holders - 32 scholars enrolled in an academic programme lasting more than one year were extended funding for the 2022-2023 academic year on the basis of relevant high academic performance.

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| **Objective 1.4.3:** | **Promotion of development of structured doctoral programmes corresponding to international standards** |

The activities required to complete the objective have started.

According to the data of the higher education management information system, 1 joint doctoral programme has been implemented in cooperation with foreign education institutions.

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| **Goal 2.4:** |  **Ensuring equal opportunities for access to and success in quality and inclusive higher education** |
| **Objective 2.4.1:** | **Development of targeted support services for disadvantaged students in higher education institutions** |

In 2022, the share of persons enrolled in the Georgian language training programme based on the general language skills test was 4.2% of the total number of persons enrolled in higher education institutions. In addition to the above, according to the data of the LEPL - Education Management Information System, at the first and second level of education, within the framework of the social programme, state grants were awarded to 1508 persons, of which 77 were disabled. Other categories of data about students are not collected in the higher education management information system, since, according to the current legislation, the LEPL - Education Management Information System does not need it in the process of performing its functions. Therefore, there is no legal basis for their collection, storage and processing.

In 2022, within the framework of the social programme, 1508 students enrolled in the first and second level of education received a state grant.

The objective-related activity is an annual event that has been fully completed by 2022.

The activities required to complete the objective have started. The study determined to evaluate the achieved result will be completed in 2024.

“State Scholarships for Students” - within the framework of the programme, 3029 successful students of 11 legal entities under public law - higher education institutions are provided with scholarships in the amount of 150 GEL per month in the months of January and February of the 2021-2022 academic year, 2755 students are provided with scholarships in the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year, and 2930 students in the fall semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. Also, with the Dimitri Gulia and Kosta Khetagurov scholarship, in the amount of 300 GEL per month, 5 students are provided in the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year, and 7 students are provided in the fall semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. 4,309.50 thousand GEL was spent within the programme. An amendment to the law on higher education has been initiated so that the educational training programme in the Georgian language will continue until the 2030-2031 academic year.

As part of the education financing preogramm for students living in the villages near the dividing line with the occupied territories of Georgia, 2163 students were financed with tuition fees in the first semester of the 2021-2022 academic year, 2041 students in the second semester, and 1631 students were financed with tuition fees in the first semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. The amount spent within the programme amounted to 6,131.39 thousand GEL.

Within the social programmes of the Ministry, in the academic year 2022-2023, 1400 students of 14 categories won state training grants, and 108 students of 4 categories received master's training grants. The budget of state programmes amounted to 2,725.00 thousand GEL.

In 2022, 1,715.62 thousand GEL was spent for the financing of persons living in the occupied territories enrolled without the unified national exams.

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| **Objective 2.4.2:** | **Creating a favorable learning environment for each student in higher education institutions** |

All authorized HEIs have been adapted to meet the needs of students with disabilities, and research on the needs of students with disabilities has been initiated, after the completion of which the necessary resources for learning/teaching will be created.

The research of needs has been started, based on the results of which the necessary resources for learning/teaching will be created.

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| **Goal 3.4:** | **Support for sustainable development of higher education institutions** |
| **Objective 3.4.1:** | **Development of financing system focused on sustainability of higher education** |

The activities required to complete the objective have started. With the support of the World Bank, within the framework of the "Innovation, Inclusion and Quality Project - Georgia I2Q", a company has been selected, which works together with the Ministry in the direction of creating a database system for information management of higher education institutions. Working meetings are actively taking place.

The methodology is planned to be updated after the development of a new model of higher education financing. Within the framework of the project financed by the European Union program Erasmus+, relevant training courses have been developed and educational programs are being developed.

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| **Objective 3.4.2:** | **Development of digital information management system of higher education** |

Information about students with active and suspended status is reflected in the higher education management information system. In addition, the education management information system ensures the production of a special electronic program (digital archive) in order to reflect information about authorized and closed/liquidated educational institutions.

By the end of 2022, Uni-Grants have been created and implemented. The functionality of the calculation of state master's grants and state program funding has been added to the system, through which the automated calculation of state training and state training master's grants is carried out. Higher education institutions are provided with a view of the calculated amounts and lists of students to be financed, and if necessary, a way to request corrections with the appropriate functionality. After verification of the data in advance and confirmation by the HEIs through a special button, the calculated amounts shall be submitted to the Department of Economic Development of the Ministry.

# Development of Science

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| **Goal 1.5:** | **Development of a knowledge-based society and an economy-oriented science, research, technology and innovation system** |
| **Objective 1.5.1:** | **Support of researchers in the implementation of research and innovative activities corresponding to international standards** |

According to the latest internal statistical data of the European Commission, as of December 21, 2022, 16 (sixteen) grant agreements were signed with Georgian participants within the framework of "Horizon Europe" with a total of 13 organisations, of which the direct contribution of the European Union is 2,172,090.3 euros.

“Technology transfer pilot program” was completed and Georgian technology was licensed within its framework. In particular, on June 22, 2022, in Metz, France, the Georgian Innovation and Technology Agency and "The Technological Research Institute for Materials, Metallurgy and Processes (IRT M2P)" signed a "Joint Research and Licensing Agreement", within the framework of which the French research institute, on the one hand, will finance the final development of the Georgian technology (LEPL -Technology of Ferdinand Tavadze Institute of Metallurgy and Materials Science - production of multifunctional ceramic materials and armor elements based on the Ti-B-N-C system) and, on the other hand, will ensure its sublicense transfer to French companies.

As of 2022, a total of 246 startups were financed within the framework of state co-financing programs: in 2022, 40 projects among them received co-financing grants for startups (100.00 thousand GEL grant until 2022 and 150.00 thousand GEL from 2022). 27 startups received funding in 2022 within the framework of the small grants program. Within the framework of the integrated development program of pilot regions, in 2022 in pilot regions (Imereti, Kakheti, Guria, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti) 14 startups won small grants for pilot regions (30.00 thousand GEL) and 33 startups - innovative entrepreneurship grant (100.00 thousand GEL).

During the year 2023, it is planned to start the works to develop the relevant normative base.

During 2022, the concept of a grant competition for beginning scientists was prepared; A bilateral competition with the CNRS to promote mobility and internationalization of researchers is under development. Works were carried out using administrative resources. 6 competitions were held and grant funding was awarded to scientists at different stages of career development. Out of these, 4 competitions included international mobility and research trips to foreign universities.

It is planned to start the works to develop the relevant normative base. The working version of the charter of the center to be founded has been developed. The stages of the work to be performed are defined.

Within the framework of the Scientific Research Promotion Program: "Open Science" - Development Promotion" sub-program, 41 scientific research structural units were funded to process bibliometric data. Funding was issued in 2021.

In the direction of technology transfer, the improvement of the support system began in 2021, when the Innovation and Technology Agency of Georgia prepared it and the Government of Georgia issued and approved "The procedure for technology transfer of innovative projects by the LEPL Innovation and Technology Agency of Georgia and the establishment of service fees" on the basis of Resolution N111 of March 19, 2021.

In addition, along with the development of the relevant legal act, the "Pilot Program of Technology Transfer" was underway, the implementation of which began in 2019 and ended in 2022. This program was the first precedent, and within the framework of the pilot program, the capabilities of both the Georgian Innovation and Technology Agency, as well as the higher education institutions and research institutes in Georgia, were significantly increased.

Based on the acquired knowledge and experience, the Agency is actively working to further improve, refine and bring the aforementioned government resolution into line with international standards. In this regard, the process of consultation with international experts has been started, and if appropriate changes are needed, a change project will be prepared and the technology transfer support system will be further improved.

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| **Goal 2.5:** | **Supporting public engagement in the creation of inclusive and diverse science, research, technology and innovation** |
| **Objective 2.5.1:** | **Enhancing interest in research, technology, science and innovation from an early stage of education** |

In 2022, 437 applicants participated in the "Co-financing Program for Startups" grant competition, and 40 projects received funding. 223 applicants participated in the small grants program and 27 projects were financed. Within the framework of the integrated development program of pilot regions in 2022, 316 applications were submitted in 5 pilot regions (Imereti, Kakheti, Guria, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti) and 47 projects received funding. In 2022, various innovative and technological hackathons in Tbilisi and regions had 680 participants. Also, competitions were held at Technoparks, where 266 participants took part. As part of the international accelerator program (500 Georgia), 239 applications were submitted for participation in the project in 2022 and 15 startups were selected for acceleration. In addition, in 2022, the Innovation Agency, in its own innovation centers and partner institutions, implemented 8 pre-acceleration programs in 4 regions of Georgia (Racha-Lechkhumi, Imereti, Kakheti, Guria), where 259 beneficiaries passed the acceleration course.

Additionally, in 2022, 22 startups were accelerated within the framework of the "Acceleration Program for Georgian innovative startups" project implemented together with the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP); 4 startups went through a 3-month free internship program in Italy as part of the "STEM Study Visit to Italy" project implemented by the Italian Embassy in Georgia and the Italian Technological Innovation Association COTEC. At the initiative of the European Union, under the management of EUROCHAMBRES and financed by EU4Business: Connecting Companies, about 20 startups participated in the activities planned within PLAT4FOOD (project partners: Veneto Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Italy, Vratsa Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Bulgaria, Union of Small and Medium Enterprises - Moldova) and 4 Georgian startups applied for projects within Horizon Europe.

During 2022, 8 grant contests were held and 2 grant contests within the framework of the "Promotion of Science - scientific popular cognitive films support program", as well as various scientific events and festivals.

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| **Objective 2.5.2:** | **Supporting women's involvement in science, research, technology and innovation** |

Classification of researchers according to the position level - in category A, the number of women is - 41% (Category A: researchers with the highest position who lead the research process. For example, "research leader", or "full professor").

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| **Goal 3.5:** | **Increasing the efficiency of research, science, technology and innovation systems** |
| **Objective 3.5.1:** | **Development of a long-term, result-oriented and targeted funding system for science, research, innovation and technology** |

In total, 119 project applications (72 organizations) were submitted to the Horizon Europe program with the participation of Georgia in 2021-2022. The success rate of project proposals submitted from Georgia is 17.17%.

The following were developed and implemented in 2022:

1) a new funding model of the "Applied Research State Grant Competition" and 3 types of researches were identified and financed for the first time through competition: usability proof-of-concept, pilot and implementation research projects.The new funding model ensured the encouragement of science-business connections and the financial contribution of the business sector to research.

2) a new funding model for supporting the research of scientists with high scientific productivity - "State scientific grant competition for interdisciplinary research in the field of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The new funding model ensured that outstanding scientific hypotheses were identified and funded.

In 2022, funding of 42 scientific projects (21,654,850.00 GEL) was continued within the framework of the "Scientific Research Promotion" program.

From 2022, a working group staffed by scientists and specialists in the field - clustering advisory council - has been working with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, which has started work on developing a model of cluster arrangement of science. The cluster model of science shall increase the number of funded successful scientific projects.

During 2022, grant funding was conducted and awarded in the competition for outstanding quality scientific research, including the increased grant funding for the 2021 fundamental research competition. Funding for national grant competitions in 2023 increased to 33,800,000 GEL.

During 2022, work was underway to create a financing model of cooperation between higher education institutions the industrial sector, preliminary studies, opinion polls were conducted, and several European analogue models of several financing schemes were selected. Based on the researched information, a model corresponding to the new Georgian reality is being developed.

Within the framework of the TWINNING project, a sample cooperation agreement was prepared for a university/research institute and a business for the implementation of research projects and other services.

In 2022, more than 600 training and competition-type events in innovative entrepreneurship, technology and STEAM directions were implemented in Tbilisi Fablab and regional Technoparks (524.0 thousand GEL was spent on 23 events of them).

2,255.40 thousand GEL was allocated to the experimental biomedicine center to create a "core facilities center" on the basis of the LEPL Ivane Beritashvili Experimental Biomedicine Center. A digital laboratory of humanitarian profile was opened at Gori University.

During 2022, bibliometric data of 41 scientific research units were collected, and negotiations are underway to create an open science electronic database and develop a policy.

Within the framework of the programme for the promotion of scientific research, as a result of the implemented sub-programme "Support for the development of open science", the information about independent scientific-research units and scientific-research institutions integrated in the LEPL higher education institutions included in the system of the Ministry, as well as scientific productivity of the LEPL scientific-research institutions has been processed, including information about the projects implemented within the framework of grants financed by local or international donors, published publications and existing infrastructure during the last 20 years.

In 2022, the "Open Science Forum" was held in Georgia for the first time, which was held in the format of a tripartite meeting - with the participation of the European Commission and the European Open Science Cloud Association. Within the framework of the forum, a training session was held for EOSC ambassadors, where European open science cloud-compatible platform developers and experts from Europe shared their best experiences with forum participants.

With the involvement of the Innovation and Technology Agency, in cooperation with the university and the private sector, more than 10 international or local accelerators and incubators are already operating on the basis of Georgia (500 hundred startup, Impacthub, Startup Bureau, Spark, Redberry, Startup Grind, BTU Entrepreneurship Center, TBC Startupper, Clevertone, Ilia Uni, Tbilisi State University R&D, MediaLab, Vault Academy, Business Incubator "ABC", Future Laboratory, etc.).

In August 2022, the Innovation and Technology Agency of Georgia signed a 17.5 million GEL contract with 500 Global (500 Startups Incubator L.L.C), according to which 500 Global will train startups in Georgia for four years. The global acceleration program will be held twice a year, and startups from all over the world will have the opportunity to undergo an intensive training course, which will end with a demo day. A competition was announced in 2022, where a total of 239 applications were submitted. 15 startups were selected from them and are currently undergoing an intensive acceleration course with world-class mentors. In addition, the winning startup of each cohort will participate in the international program organized by 500 Global (2022 budget 3,590.00 thousand GEL).

Additionally, with its own resources, in 2022, the Innovation Agency, in its innovation centers and partner institutions, implemented 6 acceleration programs in 4 regions of Georgia (Racha-Lechkhumi, Imereti, Kakheti, Guria), where 192 beneficiaries took the acceleration course (2022 budget 178.20 thousand GEL).

# Summary of Monitoring Results

As mentioned in the introduction, the monitoring period of this report includes the reporting period of 2022. The strategy itself and action plan, together with the annexes of the policy document, were approved by the Resolution N446 of the Government of Georgia on August 31, 2022, although the corresponding quarters of 2022 were planned as the deadline for the implementation of a number of activities. Thus, depending on the reporting period, at the level of objectives and goals, taking into account the full 3-year cycle of the action plan, at the level of activities, progress was recorded from 161 activities not only within the framework of the events planned during the year, but also in relation to the following years. The preparatory work for a number of activities provided by the action plan, the initiative stages of the projects and tangible results at the level of implementation of current activities were revealed.

More specifically, a total of 22 activities were planned to be implemented in 2022. Of these, 6 activities were not performed or were canceled and temporarily suspended, 7 were partially implemented, and 10 were largely or fully implemented. It should be noted that in advance, in the given reporting period, 33 activities were largely or fully implemented, while working on 51 activities has been started.

It can be concluded that 31% of the activities included in the action plan have been completed, and 24% of the activities are in the initial stage of implementation and are expected to be completed within the agreed time.

The process of monitoring the implementation of the action plan revealed that about 20% of the activities were implemented ahead of time.

Taking into account the above, in order to achieve the goals defined by the strategy and action plan, the main recommendation is the revision of the action plan by sub-sector working groups and sectoral departments/LEPLs, as well as strengthening the coordination of monitoring activities at the initial stage of implementation among the responsible agencies in order to timely identify and eliminate risks.

1. As of December 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. "Study of Employer Satisfaction with Vocational Education" conducted by the Vocational Skills Agency in 2022 with the support of the United Nations Development Programme [↑](#footnote-ref-2)