COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER 2020 UPDATE: GEORGIA

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN VET AND SKILLS AND EU AND DONOR COOPERATION DURING 2018–19

In September 2018, a new VET framework law was adopted. It allows the government to develop the VET system within a context of lifelong learning, with sufficient flexibility to adjust legal provisions to labour market, economic development and learner needs.

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF), adopted in 2010, has undergone major reform. In 2018, the legislator approved NQF-related amendments to the Law on Development of Quality of Education. A new VET law was finally adopted in September 2018 and a new labour market and employment strategy is due to be adopted during the third quarter of 2019. As a result of a systematic support and policy dialogue, the Georgian government intends to establish a State Employment Service in the third quarter of 2019.

The EU supported Georgia with a technical assistance project on employment and VET. This ended in November 2018 and the new technical assistance project is expected to start by end 2019.. The EU-financed twinning projects covered by the EU budget support programme will also start in 2019.

The German government approved a new dual VET project, with pilot tests in various economic sectors. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation approved follow-up funding for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to continue an agricultural skills development project. The World Bank launched a project with British government funding on continuing professional development (CPD) for VET teachers and managers. The Asian Development Bank designed a new education sector loan, which is likely to focus on VET and skills development.

AN ASSESSMENT OF MID-TERM PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ETF'S 2020 OBJECTIVES

Specific objective 1: Assist in the identification and formulation of EU support for VET and the labour market

In 2018, the ETF supported the EU Delegation and the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) in policy dialogue with the government. The focus was on performance indicators and targets for the Skills Development and Matching for Labour Market Needs (Skills4Jobs) programme. Face-to-face meetings and written consultations led to agreement on the policy matrix and indicators in September 2018.

The ETF designed twinning projects on quality assurance and qualifications and on the adherence of Georgian labour legislation to the EU acquis and Georgia's Association Agreement commitments. It developed terms of reference for the technical assistance project (EUR 4.3 million).

In policy dialogue, the ETF advised the government on VET and skills within a context of lifelong learning, labour market anticipation and matching, youth employment and transitions, entrepreneurial learning and the entrepreneurship key competence. For this purpose, the ETF conducted a review on policy implementation and progress in achieving the 2019 targets for performance indicators in the EU budget support programme. The review findings were used to facilitate policy dialogue on the progress of reform in the Programme Steering Committee meeting in June 2019 and bilateral discussions with the government. The ETF completed the Twinning Fiche on labour legislation and the tender has been launched by the EU Delegation to choose the contractor. Moreover, the ETF drafted a Skills4Jobs grant scheme proposal and the call for proposals was launched by the European Commission in July 2019.

In 2019, the ETF received a new request from the EU Delegation to conduct an assessment of key competence development in secondary general and vocational education. The study is under way and supported by the EU-financed Public Administration Reform (PAR) programme. The findings of the study will be validated with key stakeholders in December 2019 and a roadmap will be developed for policy actions in this area.

Specific objective 2: Advice policymakers and experts to further develop the NQF for lifelong learning

In 2017, the ETF cooperated with the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE), which is responsible for NQF management, educational quality assurance and inclusion of qualifications. Activities included knowledge sharing on the NQF, the European Qualifications Framework, the European credit system for vocational education and training and other EU initiatives.

In 2019, the ETF followed up its baseline analysis of the NQF and qualifications and assisted the Ministry of Education and the NCEQE in revising the NQF, which was adopted in spring 2019. The ETF supported the NCEQE in developing a concept, a subordinate act on NQF governance and monitoring, as well as other regulatory and sublegal acts related to the implementation of the NQF. Follow-up technical support on quality assurance of qualifications and provision will be provided by the EU Twinning project.

Specific objective 3: Strengthen the government's policy implementation and methodological capabilities on entrepreneurial learning and skills for small and medium-sized enterprises

The ETF continued supporting Georgia in the entrepreneurship key competence, namely by designing an in-service teacher training module together with the Teachers' Professional Development Centre and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport. The module will be piloted in 2019 and rolled out to train teachers in both secondary and vocational education. The ETF contributed to the lifelong entrepreneurial learning action plan (2017–22), which was adopted in July 2019. At the end of 2019, the ETF will organise a joint workshop with the UNDP on introducing the concept of an entrepreneurial VET college. The model and concept for the entrepreneurial school will be finalised in 2019 and ETF approaches will be tested in pilot projects to be implemented by the UNDP.

The ETF launched the Torino Process to review progress in VET policy implementation within a lifelong learning context. It will advise national stakeholders and development partners and inform the EU on reform and priority action progress. The findings of the ETF assessment will be presented and discussed at the end of October 2019. A Small Business Act (SBA) assessment has been conducted in Georgia to review progress in entrepreneurial learning and enterprise skills. The assessment used evidence and analysis from ETF activity on entrepreneurship key competence development.

In 2019, Georgia participates in ETF regional and thematic initiatives such as the Make it Match network (June 2019) and the Work-Based Learning Forum (scheduled for October 2019).

ACTIONS PLANNED FOR 2020

Specific objective 1: Assist in the identification and formulation of EU support for VET and the labour market

The ETF will continue supporting the EU Delegation in content monitoring of the Skills4Jobs programme. It will advise on the twinning projects' content and methodology and support operationalisation of technical assistance. If requested, it will advise the EU Delegation on grant scheme projects (to be selected) and on visibility actions for the Skills4Jobs programme. The ETF will be available to assist the EU Delegation and DG NEAR on any new initiative that falls under the ETF's mandate and which the EU may consider for future funding in 2020.

The ETF will participate in the EU-Georgia policy dialogue by providing a progress report on policy implementation and discussing the progress with the EU Programme Steering Committee. The findings of the ETF analysis and discussions with stakeholders will form part of the ETF assessment on sector strategy progress, relevance and credibility for DG NEAR.

The ETF will produce an annual Country Fiche for the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, provide updates and key messages for cluster subcommittee meetings and follow up on the Mobility Partnership.

In 2020, Georgia will participate in ETF regional and thematic initiatives such as the Make it Match network and Work-Based Learning Forum. A Country Fiche on work-based learning will be prepared.