

TORINO PROCESS

2014

GEORGIA



This report was prepared by Ketj Tsojniashvili from the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement.

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PREFACE

This report has been prepared within the framework of the Torino Process. It analyses vocational education and training (VET) in Georgia. The elaboration of the report has been a participatory process and a wide range of stakeholders have been involved in its development and discussion, specifically the Ministry of Education and Science, the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement, the National Centre for Teachers' Professional Development, the Education Management Information System, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, the European Training Foundation (ETF), the European Union (EU) Delegation to Georgia, the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat), the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, the Social Services Agency, the Georgian Employer's Association, the Georgian Trade Union Confederation, the Georgian Adult Education Association, and various VET providers.

The report has been prepared by Ketii Tsofnashvili from the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education reforms

Georgia has undertaken comprehensive educational reforms during the past 10 years, with the aim of creating a credible education system that is compatible with internationally accepted standards and concepts. Georgia joined the Bologna process and initiated vocational education and training (VET) reforms in 2005. The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) encouraged stakeholder involvement in the reforms (ETF, 2013a). One of the most important steps for the development of the VET system was taken in 2010: the Law on Vocational Education was substantially amended, a comprehensive national qualifications framework (NQF) was adopted, the education quality assurance framework was implemented, and multi-stakeholder governance (National VET Council (NVETC)) was established. These structural elements have given the VET system a new shape and dynamic, moving it closer to the envisioned responsiveness to market demand, and the diversity and autonomy of providers, and bringing an increased proportion of private sector providers into alignment with common quality assurance criteria.

The quality assurance framework for VET providers came into force in 2011. The almost universal coverage achieved by the public and private formal VET system is commendable, and the lessons from this initial implementation period can now be applied to future endeavours.

Development of VET education remains the government's priority. With the active participation of stakeholders and social partners, a comprehensive VET Development Strategy for 2013–20 has been prepared.

Key challenges for the VET system

There is generally only limited involvement on the part of the social partners in VET sector management structures with the government in the development of policy and the decision-making process. This is a critical issue, since social partnership is a key to the success of the sector in terms of both meeting labour market needs and ensuring the employability of VET graduates in meaningful and well-remunerated positions.

The quality of teaching and facilities varies across institutions and across programmes, and is not really comparable from one institution to another. As a result, the qualifications provide only a limited guide to the skills and capabilities of graduates from VET institutions, to the extent that employers have little or no trust in graduates' formal qualifications. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that procedures for the recognition of informal and non-formal education were defined in 2011, recognition by employers and by VET and other educational institutions of previously developed and practised skills remains limited. There is a need to raise the consistency of credits and the standard, reputation and comparability of Georgian VET qualifications to meet particular employment requirements and to enable individuals to develop further, both at work and through further education.

VET students and graduates face barriers both in progressing to higher levels of VET and in re-entering more academic education to build a broader range of experience and qualifications. The presence of these so-called 'dead-ends' in the VET system hinders acceptance and effective implementation of the concept of lifelong learning and the attractiveness of VET as a serious component of education (MES, 2013a).

Socioeconomic and political context

During the past decade there has been an improvement in the country's economy: the average gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate since 2004 has been 5.9% and real GDP reached 14 996.7 million Georgian lari (GEL) in 2013. However, the Georgian labour market did not improve significantly, and 14.6% of the Georgian population remains unemployed. Some 61% of the labour force is self-employed and 51% is employed in the agricultural sector.

During 2012–14 Georgia went through three rounds of elections, and each period of government transfer impeded stable economic growth. However, since the fourth quarter of 2013 the GDP growth rate has been relatively high (7.1%). Georgia signed and ratified the EU Association Agreement, which came into force on 1 September 2014. A Free Trade Agreement has been signed with the EU, and this will harmonise the country's economic policy with European standards. This trend creates a basis for the further economic and social development of the country (Bank of Georgia, 2014).

Relevance to the labour market

Recent research shows that employers complain about the skills of the workforce, and points to the need for a better match between the qualifications gained at educational institutions and the skills demanded by the market. Several steps have been taken to address the issue:

- introduction of an obligatory practical learning component of not less than 40% of credits per VET programme;
- initiation of school–enterprise partnerships by most of the colleges to provide the practical component;
- elaboration of occupational standards for more than 250 professions, reflecting labour market needs, in order to ensure the relevance of VET programmes for the labour market;
- stipulation by law of college tripartite supervisory boards;
- mediation of cooperation between the public VET providers and enterprises, by the Ministry of Education and Science and its agencies;
- support for social partnerships;
- introduction of regular tracer studies of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) graduates.

However, the variability in the employability of VET graduates and access to sustained job opportunities remains a challenge.

VET development

The VET Development Strategy for 2013–20 sets out the next steps for the VET reforms:

1. promoting full and equal participation of the social partners and civil society with the government in the development of policy and in decision making on the nature and operation of regulatory, promotional, and financial and technical support mechanisms;
2. establishing a flexible nationwide network of well-funded and well-managed VET providers (public and private) that are equipped with excellent facilities;
3. designing VET programmes that are relevant to the current and future labour needs of Georgia's growing and diversifying economy;

4. retraining VET educators in modern educational techniques and the latest developments in their field of expertise, and ensuring that they are capable of drawing out the best from their students in terms of both skills and personal fulfilment;
5. providing a system of nationally and internationally recognised awards and qualifications that support flexibility for VET graduates in their search for employment;
6. ensuring the full employability of VET graduates in meaningful and, where appropriate, well-remunerated and personally rewarding occupations, with the prospect of fulfilling and challenging career development throughout their future working lives;
7. promoting widespread recognition that VET is an attractive and rewarding pathway for personal development.

In addition, the Torino Process report validation meeting emphasised the following short-term priorities:

1. solving the problem of 'dead-ends' and increasing the flexibility of the VET system;
2. improving the effectiveness of sector committees;
3. improving the monitoring and evaluation of VET strategy implementation;
4. implementing the labour market information system, and institutionalising labour market research and support for professional orientation and career development;
5. strengthening social partnership at regional level;
6. functional analysis of the Ministry of Education and Science and its agencies;
7. improving quality assurance mechanisms, including self-assessment, relevance of professional qualifications to the labour market and the educational environment.

State funding has been allocated to implement these priorities. Given the limited internal resources, additional international support (financial, as well as technical) will be required.

1. VISION FOR THE NATIONAL VET SYSTEM

1.1 Introduction to the VET system

In 2005 the Government of Georgia initiated reforms to the VET system in the country and approved the Concept of VET, which envisaged the vision and approaches for VET system reforms. On the basis of the concept, a new Law on Vocational Education was adopted in 2007 by the Parliament of Georgia. Since then the law has undergone a number of substantial changes. The amended VET Law (2010) defines five levels of VET and multiple aims for VET in Georgia, combining individual, social and economic dimensions; employment is defined in its wider sense, which includes the entrepreneurial initiatives of setting up a business and self-employment (Article 5).

In 2010, the Law on Educational Quality Enhancement was adopted. According to this, in order to carry out educational activities and assure the quality of vocational education, VET institutions must undergo a process of authorisation, which, once granted, is valid for five years. Institutions must meet minimum standards relating to educational programmes and human and material resources. In the same year, another essential document, the NQF¹, was approved. The NQF systematises qualifications of all educational levels and cycles. In terms of VET, the NQF includes 391 vocational specialisation in 10 areas.

After completion of basic schooling (ISCED 2), students have access to vocational education (see Annex 1). In June 2013, as a result of changes to the Law on Vocational Education, students who want to enrol in an initial level of VET programme at a public VET institution must pass the unified VET admission test², which is administered by the National Assessment and Examinations Centre (NAEC) (Law on Vocational Education, Article 7). The occupational standards and relevant educational programmes may also set additional entry requirements. The completion of a programme at the previous level or recognition of knowledge, skills and values defined for the level and passing of the admission tests administered by colleges themselves is a precondition for transition to the next level. The VET system still faces the problem of dead-end pathways for entrants who have not completed secondary education (ISCED 3). Students with no secondary education certificate are not allowed to progress in their academic education to build a broader range of experience and qualifications. The challenge is recognised in the VET Development Strategy for 2013–20, and work is under way to find durable solutions.

It is possible for prior educational learning to be recognised for qualification levels I–III for all professions, and the recognition process is the responsibility of the educational institutions. A decree by the Minister of Education and Science (No 8/N, 3 February 2011) specified the requirements for the recognition of skills and competences relating to VET. In 2012, with stakeholder involvement, the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) elaborated a complementary document containing detailed recommendations for educational institutions on how to implement the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL). However, the relevant amendment has not yet been made to the decree (No 8/N, 3 February 2011). VNFIL is mainly used for educational purposes to continue education at next level. It should also be noted that validation at levels IV and V is explicitly

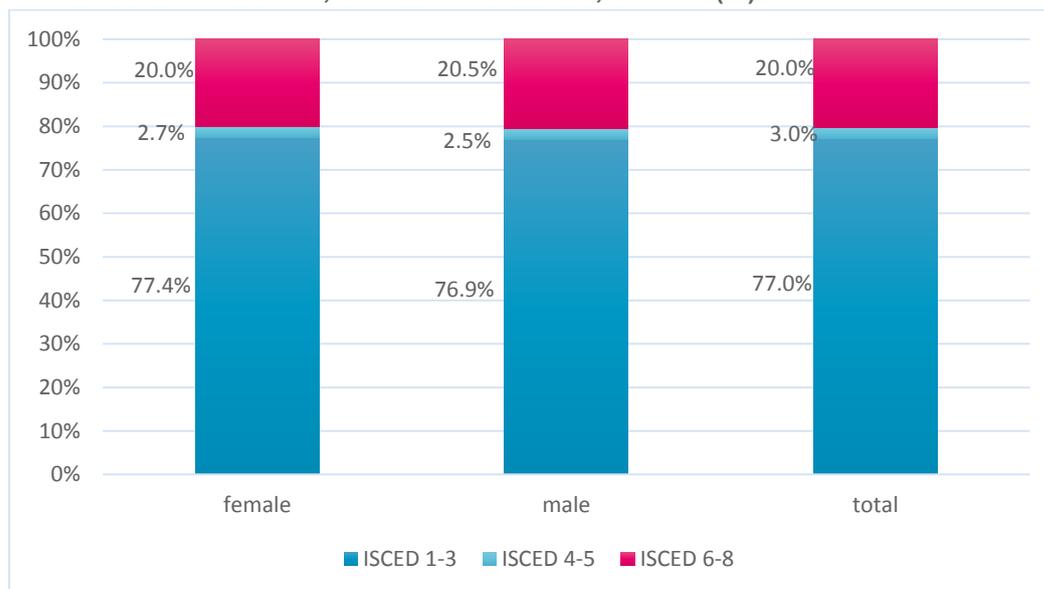
¹ The National Qualifications Framework was approved by decree No 120/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia on 10 December 2010.

² Before adoption of the law, entrants at levels I, II and III of vocational education were not required to pass any type of test. However, entrants at levels IV and V had to pass general ability skill tests (unified national examinations). According to the new law, entrants to level I at public VET institutions are required to pass the unified VET admission test, which is linked to the public funding of students' tuition. With regard to the admissions for private VET institutions, students do not have to pass any exams if this is not required by the institutions' internal regulations.

excluded from the existing legal provisions, though the Policy Concept Paper on the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (2013) contains a recommendation on this issue.

A total of 1 440 vocational education programmes based on 252 occupational standards are currently organised at 86 VET institutions, 29 higher educational institutions and 12 schools. In total, 3 167 teachers are employed at VET institutions, among them up to 500 at public institutions. The high number of teachers at private VET institutions can be explained by the short-term teacher contracts for particular programmes. Overall, 18 752³ persons are registered as students on the Education Management Information System (EMIS) database⁴. As shown in **FIGURE 1.1**, only 3% of all students enrolled are VET students.

FIGURE 1.1 NUMBER OF VET STUDENTS AS A PROPORTION OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS AND STUDENTS, BY SEX AND LEVEL, 2013/14 (%)



Source: EMIS, 2014

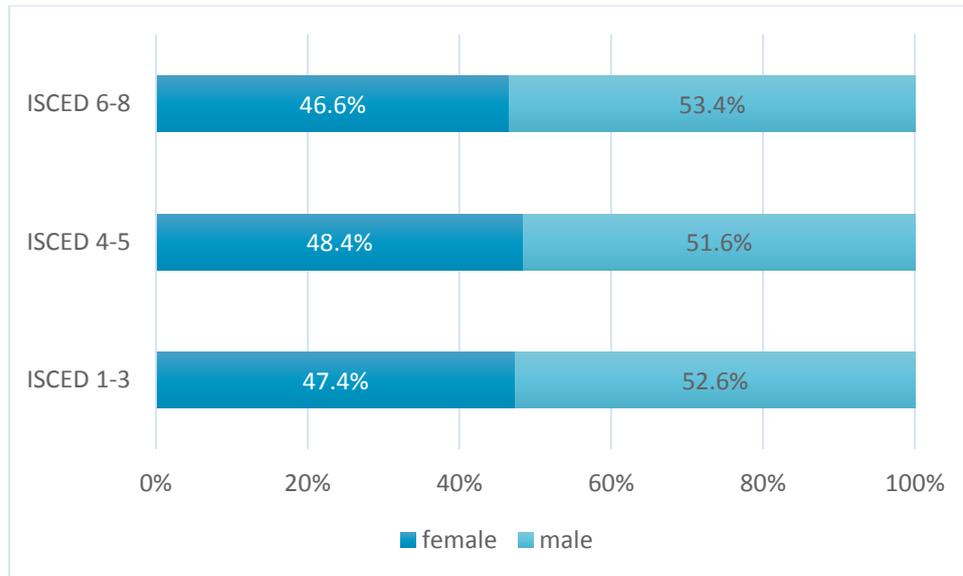
FIGURE 1.2 shows that there are slightly fewer female students than male students at all education levels. One of the reasons for this is the demographic picture of the country.

Of the 127 VET providers, 62 are located in Tbilisi and the other 65 are distributed around the 10 regions of Georgia (see Annex 3); 65% (22) of public VET providers are based in the regions. Only 56% of VET students study in the regions, while the other 44% are enrolled in VET institutions located in Tbilisi (26% of the country's total population lives in Tbilisi, and 74% lives in the regions (Geostat, 2014)). This emphasises the fact that in order to increase access to VET, consideration should be given to promoting regional coverage of VET providers and encouraging private investment.

³ There is no differentiation between initial and continuing VET programmes in the Georgian Law on Vocational Education. Thus, this is the total number of students enrolled in all VET programmes.

⁴ Only public VET providers are required to submit data to the EMIS database; private VET providers submit the data on a voluntary basis. For this reason, the data provided by the private VET institutions might not be accurate.

FIGURE 1.2 DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS AND PUPILS BY EDUCATION LEVEL AND SEX, 2013/14 (%)



Source: EMIS, 2014

1.2 Vision for the VET system

In 2013 the new VET Development Strategy for 2013–20 was elaborated with the support of the EU. It reflects European and national priorities for socioeconomic development. The strategy was approved on 26 December 2013 by the Prime Minister of Georgia. The drafting of the strategy, which was technically and financially supported by the EU, included a broad consultation process with various stakeholders and social partners. The strategy is in line with the principles spelled out within the Bruges Communiqué and Europe 2020.

The main focus of the strategy is the development of a high-quality and flexible VET system that ensures that the national and individual potential of the country's human resources is maximised, and promotes inclusion of disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals. The specific objectives of the strategy are:

- the creation of a flexible nationwide VET network promoting excellence in skills development that will equip the current and future economically active population to develop the management and technical skills necessary for Georgia to successfully compete in the modern economic environment, both at home and abroad;
- the full and equal inclusion of all segments of the population in the opportunities for personal development of their potential, and equipping them to obtain well-paid remunerative employment or self-employment to support reliable personal and family incomes within the context of sustainable career development and personal fulfilment (VET Development Strategy for 2013–20, p. 4).

The strategy demonstrates a holistic approach to VET development (see Annex 2). It incorporates multiple factors, such as participatory and transparent approaches to decision-making and the improvement of social partnership; the provision of VET institutions with modern facilities and infrastructure; high-quality VET programmes and their relevance to the labour market; the promotion of accessibility and inclusion; professional development of VET educators; internationalisation of the VET system; widespread recognition of vocational education; and flexible pathways between different educational levels that are in line with lifelong learning principles.

In order to disseminate information about the implementation of the VET Development Strategy for 2013–20 among the various stakeholders, an awareness-raising strategy has been prepared. This also aims to stimulate public interest in VET, its development and its modernisation, and to change attitudes and beliefs towards VET in a positive way.

The VET Development Strategy is aligned with the government's Socio-Economic Development Strategy 2020, one of the main priorities of which is human capital development. The strategy emphasises the importance of a flexible and labour market oriented VET system and of its popularisation for the enhancement of the quality of human capital in the country. It also highlights the role of VET in promoting the inclusive socioeconomic development process of Georgia (Government of Georgia, 2013, p. 51). The VET Development Strategy also sets out an action plan (MES, 2013b), which will be monitored by the Ministry of Education and Science. It is essential for the successful implementation of the reforms that the strategy and legislation are harmonised.

1.3 Capacity for innovation and change

Since 2012 the institutional setting for VET policy management has changed: the number of staff in the VET Development Department has increased from five to twelve, and three units have been created to coordinate the policy development, monitoring and social partnership elements of the VET system. The restructured department reflects the shift in focus towards better accountability and improved social partnership in VET. It is necessary to undertake an analysis and revision of the functions under the department's responsibility in order to avoid the duplication of functions between the ministry and its agencies (NCEQE, National Centre for Teachers' Professional Development (TPDC), EMIS, etc.).

Since 2010 staff working within the system at policy and implementation levels (ministry staff, teachers and directors) have participated in a number of courses, seminars and workshops aimed at improving their capacity for management and development. Only the EU-financed project 'Quality enhancement and capacity-building support programme in VET sector of Georgia', covered all VET providers (public and private) and ensured training in 18 modules. In 2014 the funding for VET increased significantly (173% compared to funding in 2013) compared to previous years.

In 2012, EMIS was created under the Ministry of Education and Science. EMIS is responsible for educational data collection and for providing the ministry with the information it uses to monitor and evaluate progress. The monitoring indicators were developed in consultation with VET stakeholders and international donors. The ministry is responsible for monitoring and evaluating progress, and this has been its major responsibility in recent years.

1.4 Drivers of innovation and change

Georgia has been reforming its VET system since 2005 to better align it with the European education area. The VET Development Strategy for 2013–20 reflects Georgia's European aspirations as a future accession country.

Since 2010, a number of international projects have been implemented that aimed to introduce best practice in VET and to bring together VET providers, employers and policy makers. The ETF has funded pilot projects on occupational standards and educational programmes; these have been implemented jointly with the NCEQE, and cover VET providers in urban as well as rural areas. Two more projects – 'Support for the development of policy and a methodology package for validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) in Georgia', and 'Social partnership support programme in the Georgian VET sector' – were implemented by the ETF in 2013/14.

The objective of the VNFIL policy and methodology package support programme was to establish close cooperation and interaction with the relevant stakeholders. The overall context for development of the VNFIL concept and approach in Georgia is provided by the VET Development Strategy for 2013–20.

The Strategy identifies the lack of participation of the social partners in VET sector management structures as one of the seven key challenges faced by the Georgian VET system. Reinforcement of full social partner participation has thus been recognised as a priority strategic activity. A concept paper has been prepared within the framework of the social partnership support programme. This paper outlines the main principles and benefits of effective social partnership in VET. The conditions that would allow a stronger and more systematic engagement of the trade unions and employers' organisations in the policy dialogue have yet to be established.

The project 'Quality enhancement and capacity-building support programme in VET sector of Georgia', funded by the EU in 2012/13 was entirely geared to the provision of international experience and best practice, and the integration of international practices in the national context; it covered 100% of the country's VET institutions. The project supported the launch of discussions on occupational standards and modular educational programmes, and reflected government policy.

The human capital development project 'Private sector development in South Caucasus' was also implemented in 2012/13, with the support of GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit). The objective of the project was to develop a skilled workforce in specific regions and sectors (e.g. food production and tourism) with a focus on the needs of the labour market. This involved bringing together and building the capacities of actors responsible at regional level (e.g. in employment forums), and drawing up and implementing programmes to improve skills and create jobs in line with labour market requirements.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) funded the programme 'Skills for agriculture' (2013–18). This aimed to develop high-quality education and retraining in the area of agriculture, to establish advisory services (agricultural extension system) for farmers, and to improve the livelihoods of the rural population in Georgia.

The WorldSkills Georgia project has made a significant contribution to innovation and excellence in VET. It was established to promote vocational education and quality enhancement, and to align education in Georgia with EU standards. WorldSkills Georgia was founded at the initiative of the NCEQE, with financial assistance from GIZ. It is a joint project run by the Ministry of Education and Science and the NCEQE.

The VET sector has been substantially developed since 2010. The legal framework and NQF have been revised, and the development of VET has become a participatory process, which has increased its relevance for the socioeconomic needs of the country. The comprehensive VET Development Strategy for 2013–20 was prepared with the active participation of stakeholders and social partners,

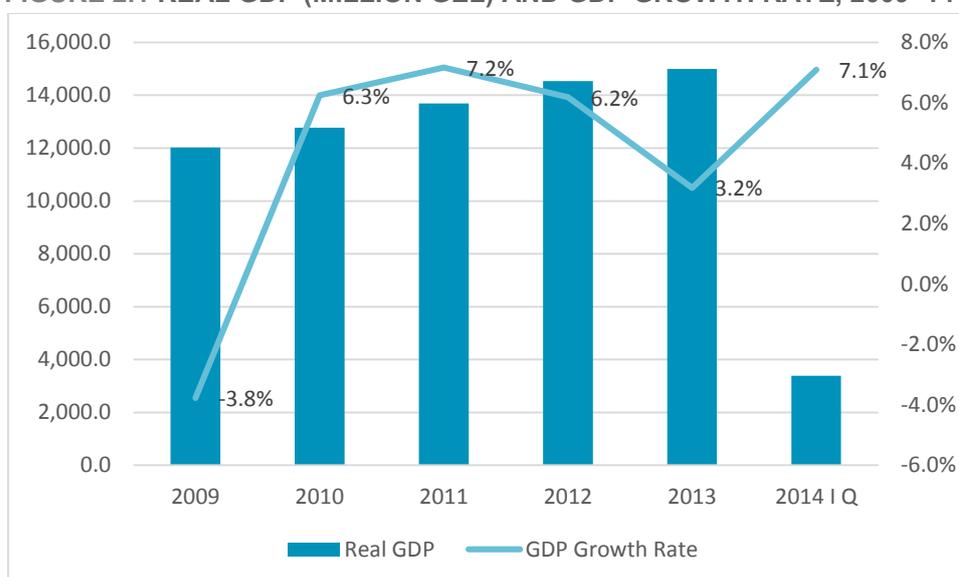
In summary, the international projects have resulted in the development of the VET strategy and concept papers, the provision of methodological and financial support adjusted to the local needs, and capacity building for further development of the VET system in the country.

2. EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY IN ADDRESSING ECONOMIC AND LABOUR MARKET DEMAND

2.1 Economic trends

Georgia's economy stabilised after the severe crisis of 2008, and the average GDP growth rate from 2010 to 2013 was 5.7%. The GDP growth rate slowed from the end of 2012, and in 2013 it decreased significantly (from 6.2% to 3.2%), mainly as a result of the political instability, the pre-election environment and the period of government transfer in the country. However, following the presidential elections in October 2013 there was a positive change in the GDP growth rate: in the first quarter of 2014 it reached 7.1% (Geostat, 2014).

FIGURE 2.1 REAL GDP (MILLION GEL) AND GDP GROWTH RATE, 2009–14 Q1 (%)

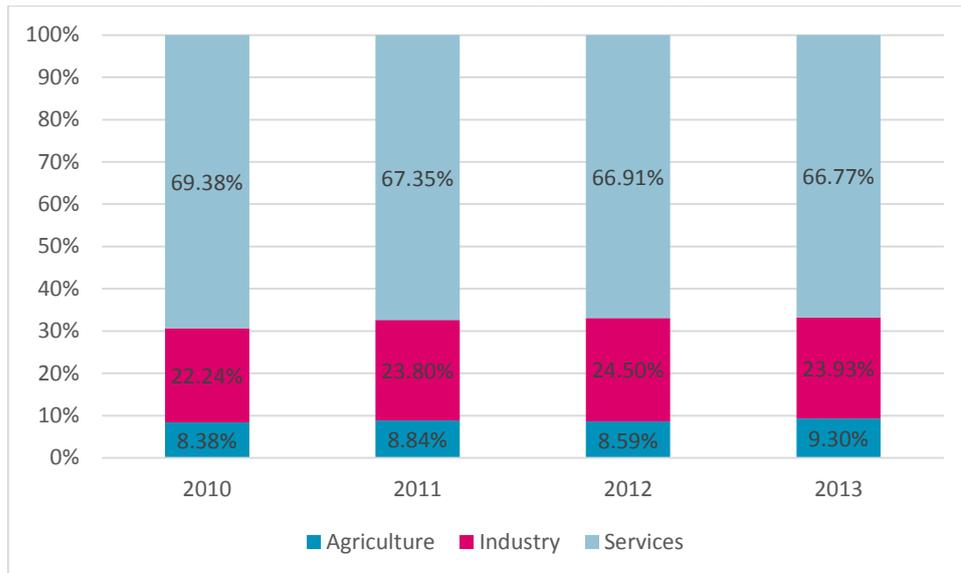


Source: Geostat, 2014

During the past five years there have been no significant changes in the proportions of the economy represented by the different economic sectors (**FIGURE 2.2**)⁵, or in the proportion of workers employed by economic sectors (Figure 2.4). Services and industry play significant roles in driving growth in Georgia; specifically, trade is the sector representing the largest proportion of GDP in 2013 (17.3%), followed by manufacturing (10.6%), public administration (10.1%), agriculture, forestry and fishing (9.3%), transport (7.8%) and construction (6.7%) (Geostat, 2014) (see Annex 5).

⁵ Construction is included in industry; financial intermediation services that are indirectly measured are excluded.

FIGURE 2.2 GDP BY ECONOMIC SECTOR, 2010–13 (%)



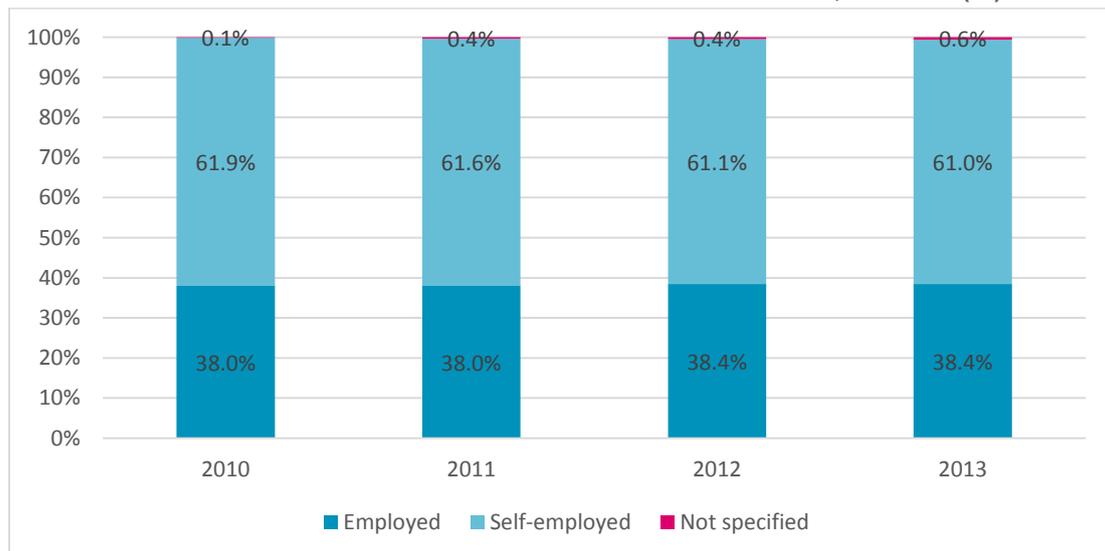
Source: Geostat, 2014

2.2 Labour market trends

Despite the improvements indicated by the economic indicators during the past decade, the Georgian labour market features a number of important limiting factors.

- Structural unemployment has been largely disconnected from high economic growth.
- Self-employment represents a large proportion of the labour market (61% in 2013); this has remained at the same level for the past four years (**FIGURE 2.3**), and is concentrated mainly in low-productivity agriculture.

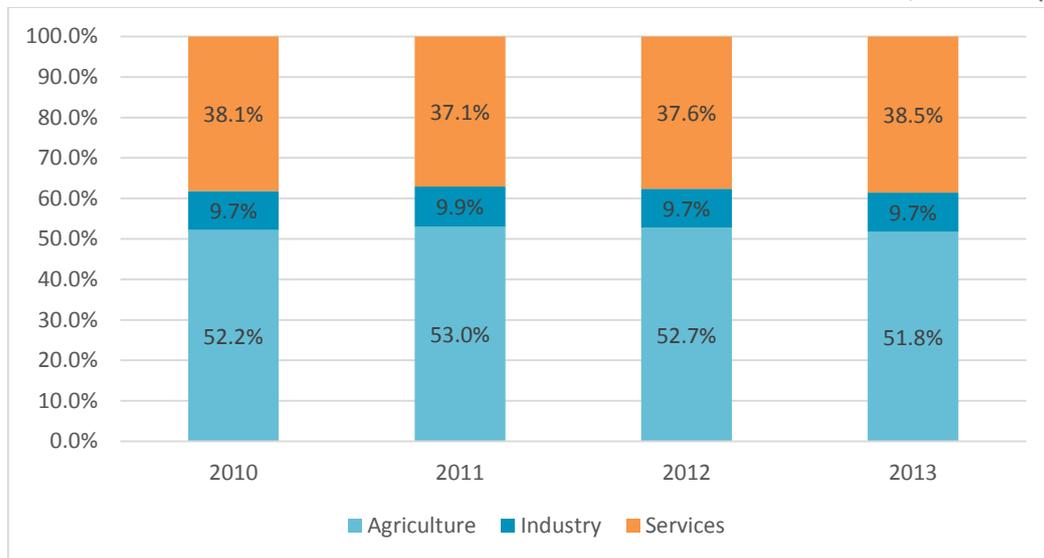
FIGURE 2.3 WORKING POPULATION BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS, 2010–13 (%)



Source: Geostat, 2014

In 2013 the unemployment rate in urban areas (25.6%) was almost four times higher than in rural areas (6.5%). As shown in **FIGURE 2.4**, agriculture has the highest employment rate compared to industry and services, while its share of GDP is the lowest (Figure 2.2). This underlines the low productivity of the agricultural sector.

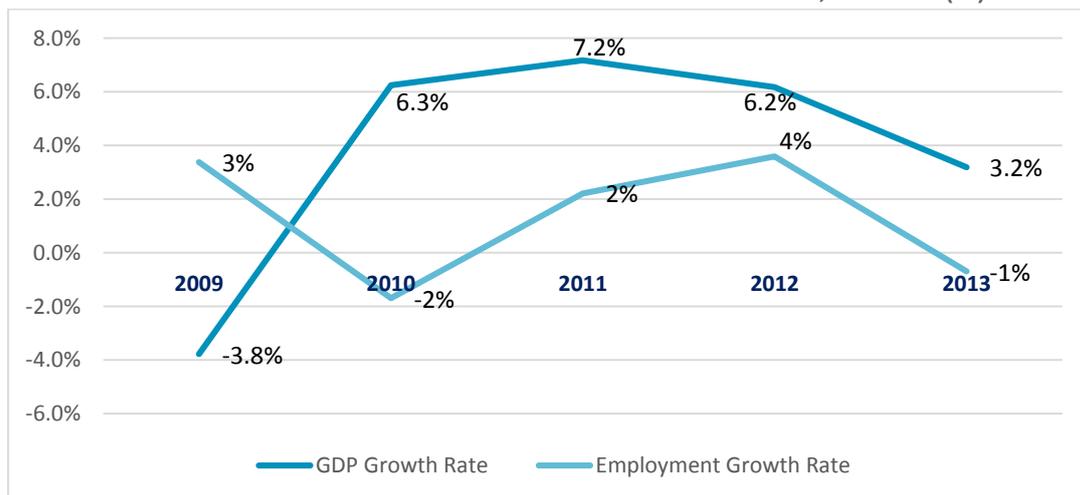
FIGURE 2.4 DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT BY ECONOMIC SECTOR, 2010–13 (%)



Source: Geostat, 2014

Real GDP growth (**FIGURE 2.5**) has resulted mainly from increased labour productivity in certain sectors, such as industry, transport and communication, and wholesale and retail trade. In parallel, a large proportion of the workforce – those working in the low-productivity rural economy and subsistence farming, and those who are unemployed – have not benefited from productivity growth and the market economy.

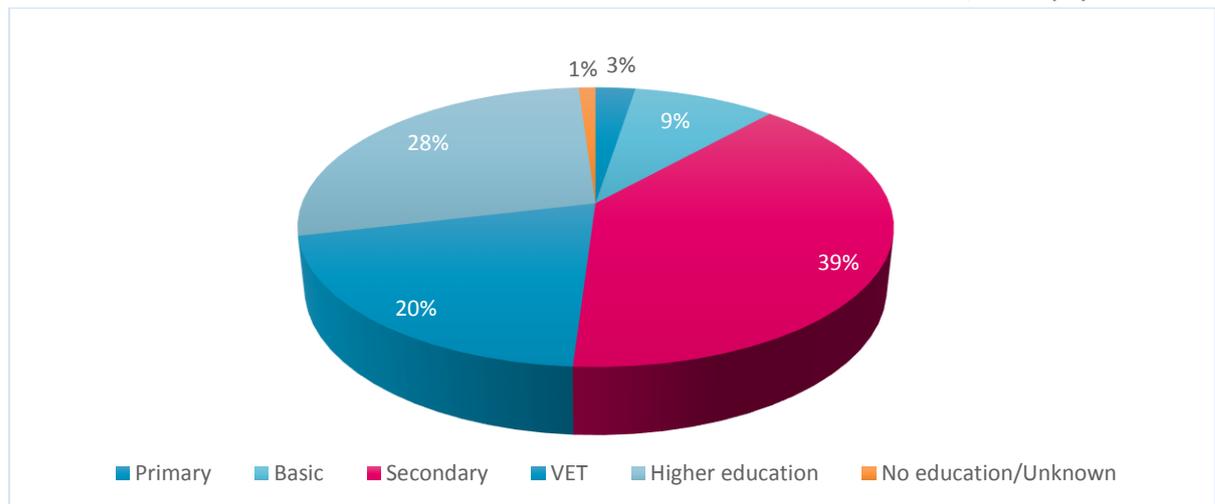
FIGURE 2.5 REAL GDP GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH, 2009–13 (%)



Source: Geostat, 2014

FIGURE 2.6 shows the distribution of the population aged over 15 by highest educational attainment level. The largest proportion is those who have attained secondary education (39%), followed by the 28% of population who have higher education.

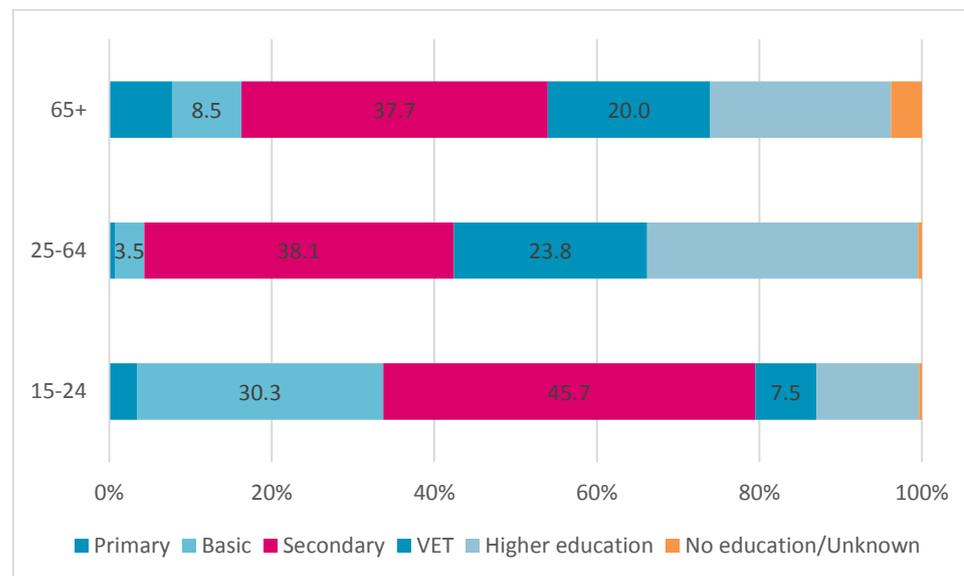
FIGURE 2.6 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF THE POPULATION AGED 15+, 2013 (%)



Source: Geostat, 2014

Despite the general lack of jobs requiring higher education, Georgia’s labour force and many of its unemployed workers are highly educated (World Bank, 2013a). As shown in **FIGURE 2.7**, 23.8% of workers aged 25–65 have higher education, which is higher than the proportion in many other countries, including high-income economies. The OECD average of higher education attainment for the same age group was 22% in 2010 (OECD, 2012). Many of Georgia’s most educated workers live in urban areas.

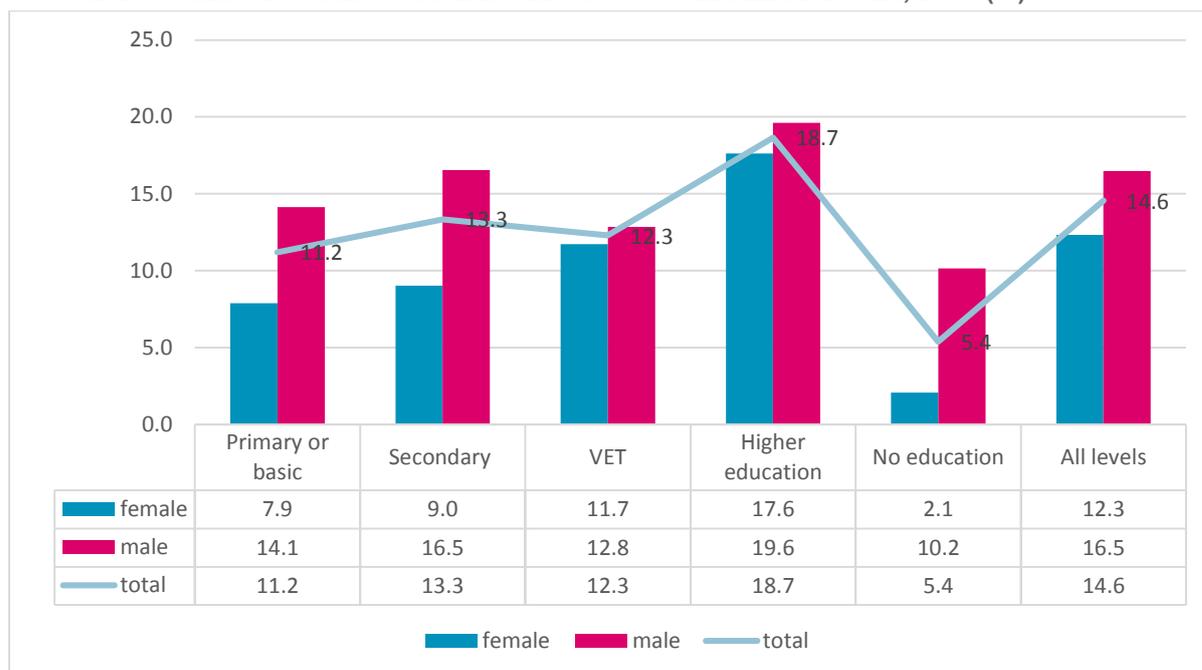
FIGURE 2.7 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF THE POPULATION BY AGE GROUP, 2013 (%)



Source: Geostat, 2014

Labour market indicators by levels of education (**FIGURE 2.8**) show a remarkably low performance on the part of higher education. The unemployment rate for those with higher education (18.7%) exceeds rates for other levels of education. The country’s overall unemployment rate in 2013 was 14.6%, while the rate for those with VET education was 12.3%. The female unemployment rate is lower than the male rate for all educational levels. This is mainly because women’s labour force participation rate is lower than men’s. Only 56.8% of women participate in the labour force compared with 77.3% of men.

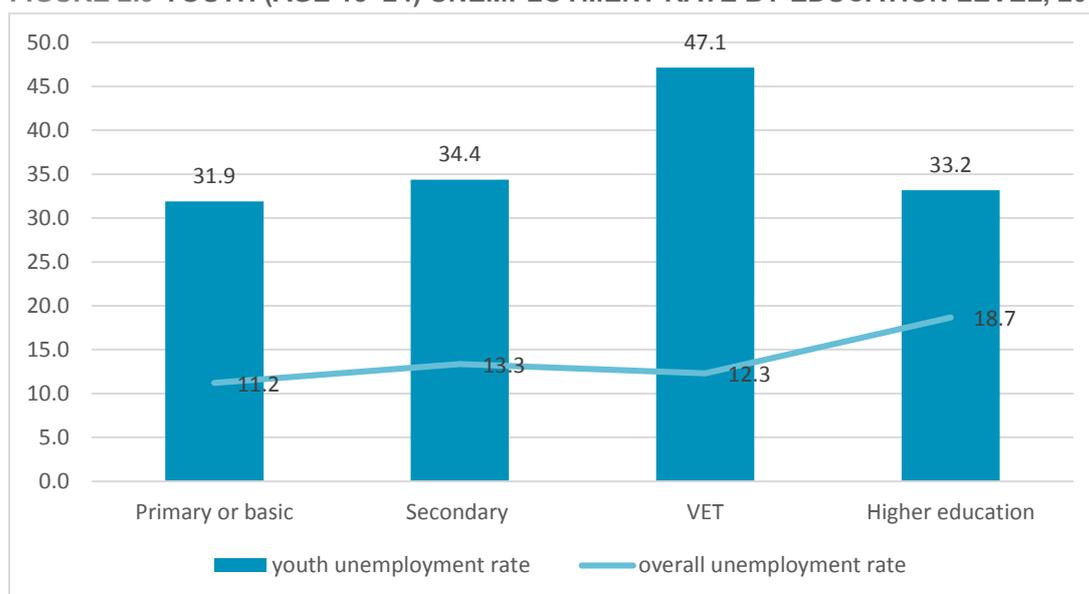
FIGURE 2.8 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY EDUCATION LEVEL AND SEX, 2013 (%)



Source: Geostat, 2014

Another important labour market indicator is youth unemployment. As shown in **FIGURE 2.9**, the youth unemployment rate is higher than the overall unemployment rate in the country, and the difference is greatest for young people with VET education. This emphasises that there are obstacles for young people in entering the labour market. One of the main reasons for this is the inflation of qualifications in Georgia. Employers do not have an appropriate attitude towards the qualification of employees for specific jobs, and believe it is better to hire a person with a higher level of educational attainment, regardless of the job type. Furthermore, in most cases job requirements specify that applicants must have work experience, which is hard for first-time entrants to the labour market to acquire.

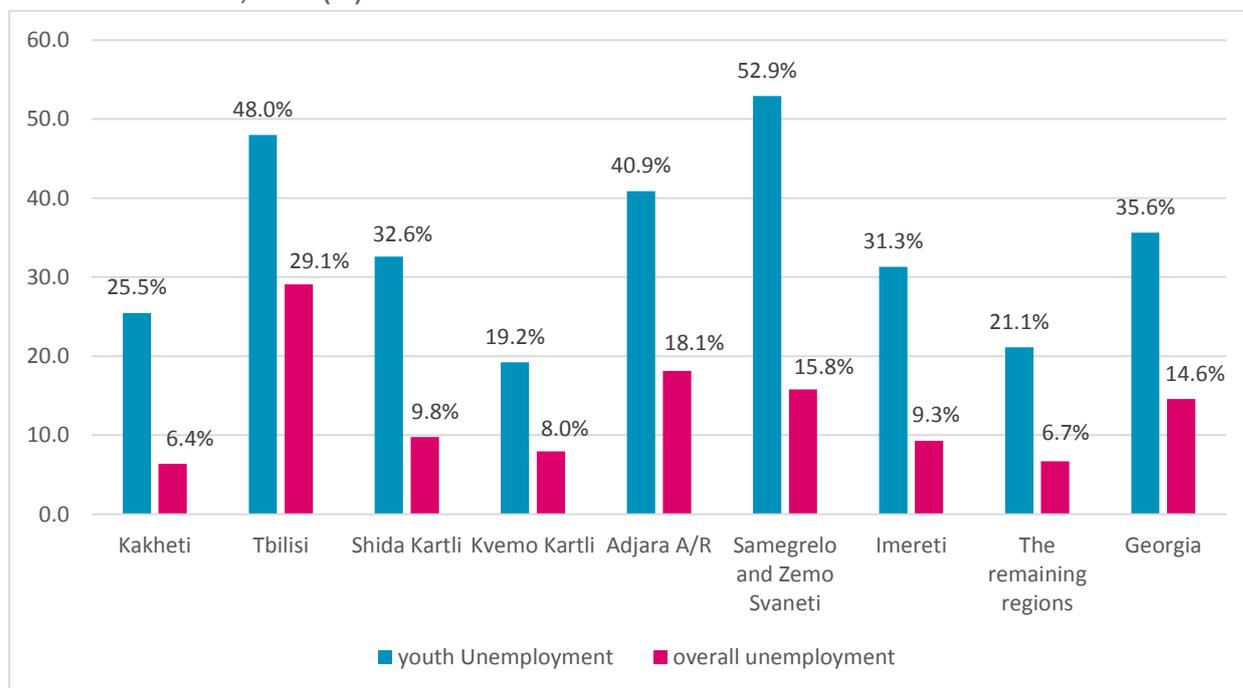
FIGURE 2.9 YOUTH (AGE 15–24) UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY EDUCATION LEVEL, 2013 (%)



Source: Geostat, 2014

The capital city, Tbilisi, has the second highest unemployment rate (29.1%) of the regions of Georgia and the second highest youth unemployment rate (48%, after Samegrelo and Zemo Svaneti region, 52.9%, **FIGURE 2.10**). This might be explained by the predominance of agricultural activities in the regions.

FIGURE 2.10 YOUTH (AGE 15–24) UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AND OVERALL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY REGION, 2013 (%)



Source: Geostat, 2014

2.3 Mechanisms for identifying skills demand and matching skills supply

Since there is no labour market information system in place, the Ministry of Education and Science has relied on its sector committees under the NCEQE as a major mechanism for identifying qualitative skills, needs and forecasts. Since 2010, the sector committees established under the National Professional Agency (a qualifications body that existed from 2008 to 2009) have operated under the supervision of the NCEQE. The objective of the sector committees is mainly to support development of the qualification system, the catalogue of qualifications, and occupational standards. However, the review by the ETF's 'Social partnership support programme in the Georgian VET sector' project stated that 'the committees could be more involved in demand-and-supply-side analysis of labour market information and in the search for improving the linkages between training systems and the labour market'. The same review also concluded that the sector committees currently suffer from underrepresentation of enterprises and professional associations and are dominated by experts and the representatives of educational institutions.

During 2013–14 the committees continued to discuss proposals for new specialisations and the corresponding skills needs, readjusted existing specialisations to competency levels on demand, etc. A 2014 amendment to the Formation of Qualifications, a fifth appendix to the NQF, stipulates the requirement for more comprehensive prior labour market studies to be submitted with applications for the introduction of new qualifications to the NQF. Reliable qualitative information about skills needs and anticipated skills demands comes from DACUM panels⁶, as since 2012 the NCEQE, with

⁶ Group of expert workers in the occupational profiles tasked with job/occupation analysis.

technical support from its international partners (ETF, EU), has started to pilot DACUM methodology to investigate skills needs and to revise its occupational standards.

Labour market and skills needs analyses have been conducted by several national and international organisations – most significantly GIZ (2012) and Millennium Challenge Agency (MCA) Georgia (2014) – at national, regional and sector levels. However, the typical shortcomings of such research in Georgia, namely, discontinuity, and sometimes insufficient coordination of research targets among institutions, remain a challenge.

In fact, legislation on quality assurance in VET makes labour market analysis an obligatory step, requiring applications for authorisation for new qualifications to carry out labour market analysis to demonstrate that there is prospective demand for the qualification.

The Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs created a new Department of Employment and Labour Policy in February 2013 and produced the Labour Market Strategy and an associated Action Plan (2013–14)⁷, adopted in August 2013 (MLHSA, 2013). Together, these represent a structured government approach and an institutional setting to coordinate, network, report and disseminate readable labour market information to the various user groups and to manage the labour market with active measures. The implementation of the strategy will produce a combined labour market research and analysis methodology and develop a solid network of responsible institutions for both skills needs identification and skills needs anticipation purposes. The implementation process has had a regrettably slow start during its first year of existence, reflecting the gaps in the country in terms of both capacities and practices. The major steps taken so far in this direction include the creation of a new informational portal of labour market management⁸, the adoption of new functions specifically related to the labour market by the Social Services Agency (SSA)⁹ and the creation of Employment Support Services (ESS)¹⁰.

Despite the aforementioned efforts, the VET offer corresponds only partially to the profiles and qualifications in demand. According to the State Audit Office of Georgia (2013), ‘The employers’ demand, identified as a result of the conducted research, partly coincides with the priority programmes defined by the Ministry of Education and Science. However, there are some inconsistencies’. As the report indicates, based on research undertaken by GIZ in 2010, this gap is especially significant in the supply of training leading to qualifications for some branches in which employment prospects are growing, such as utilities (electricity, gas, water and sewage), mining and processing, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, rail and logistics.

Moreover, as reported by the World Bank (2013b), innovative firms are more likely than traditional firms to complain about workforce skills. Despite the fact that both the State Audit Office of Georgia

⁷ The strategy targets five key measures: establishment/improvement of the legal base; formation/development of the labour market infrastructure in order to enhance the range and quality of services available to job seekers; improved labour market information, through the institutionalisation of labour market analysis and the establishment/development of a labour market database; greater synergy between the needs of the labour market and the provisions of the VET and continuing education systems; and supporting legal, temporary migration.

⁸ The www.worknet.gov.ge website is a mechanism for obtaining and analysing information about the labour market in order to develop the labour market infrastructure, reduce the level of unemployment, identify the needs of the labour market, analyse the structure and skills of the workforce, popularise professional education and training courses, and identify the main trends in the current labour market. The new portal presents statistical analyses of the current processes of the labour market, allowing key trends to be identified and predicted. The portal also allows individuals to post their career information and interests, and provides vacancy search and training matching opportunities. It also allows employers to find suitable candidates for jobs.

⁹ The statute of the SSA has recently been amended to give the agency a significant role in the coordination of the activities of the ESS at national and district level, to host the labour market information system, and to oversee the implementation of labour market and employment policies. Specific responsibility for the management of labour market issues rests with the Employment Programmes Department, which is a constituent part of the SSA.

¹⁰ The Employment Programmes Department and its 69 District Centres of Employment constitute the ESS.

and the World Bank make their judgements based on information for 2010, more recent research still points to the need for a better match between the qualifications gained at school and the skills demanded by the labour market. As outlined in research by the Millennium Challenge Agency (MCA, 2014): ‘STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) employers maintain that they have difficulty recruiting skilled STEM workers when needed [...] Many skills are in short supply, but the main STEM positions reported as hard to fill are: software engineers, engineers, technicians, electricians and fitters. The typical action taken to overcome the skill shortage was to conduct internal training and sometimes to contract external training.’

The challenge of increasing the labour market relevance of VET programmes has been addressed through a combination of efforts and instruments. These include linking VET programmes with occupational standards, the introduction of an obligatory practical learning component of not less than 40% of credits for each VET level, and requirements for formal agreements with employers for the provision of practical training places in 2010. This has formally resulted in the placement of all students in company training. However, interviews with VET college authorities indicate a number of problems in relation to cooperation with industries.

1. There are no centralised incentives or requirements for companies to provide training places. All cooperation is based on individual agreements between colleges and local industries.
2. There are insufficient training places in the vicinities of colleges. This is a problem especially for places outside the main urban areas, where there is a scarcity of large industries in the region, and where small companies have limited capability and almost no willingness to take trainees.
3. There is a need for better regulation of cooperation between the company and the college, to ensure that:
 - a. students gain the practical experience they expect;
 - b. students show commitment to their practical training placement in terms of regular attendance and performance of their duties;
 - c. responsibilities for risk management are well distributed so that in the case of accidents, no parties are damaged.

The extent of school–enterprise partnership has increased in scale since 2013 when the Ministry of Education and Science started to mediate such cooperation, and the ministry and its agencies became signatories together with VET providers and enterprises. In 2012 the ministry established a Social Partnership Unit under the VET Development Department in order to better coordinate partnerships with the industrial sector (VET Development Strategy for 2013–20). As a 2014 survey shows, although challenges remain in terms of industry awareness of VET, and cooperation between VET providers and enterprises, a number of employers have a high regard for such partnerships: ‘[E]mployers were asked about the linkage between school and VET. Most were unaware of any links but 28% [of all that were interviewed] thought the linkage was satisfactory.’ (MCA, 2014)

Another mechanism for creating better synergy between the needs of the labour market and the provisions of the VET and continuing VET (CVET) systems is the ministry’s initiative to introduce regular tracer studies of VET graduates, with the study methodology been prepared with the support of the EU. Clause 6.3 of the Strategy Action Plan provides for ‘Introduction of regular tracer studies to determine effectiveness of the VET system and identify needs for additional activities and revision’ (VET Development Strategy). There are plans to continue such studies in the future. The VET Development Department will regularly evaluate the evolution of partnerships to check for gaps and address any deficiencies. In 2012 a tracer study on employability and further paths of 2011 VET (I–III) graduates was conducted (Fretwell, 2012). The study found that 43% of individuals in the sample, both female and male, were employed in private companies or in government offices, 8% were self-

employed, while 15% were continuing their studies while holding a job. Unemployed individuals made up a further 24%.

Improvements in VET assessment and the award of qualifications in this phase of reform have been limited. However, in accordance with the new concept of VET, with new modular VET curricula to be introduced gradually by the end of the 2017 (Target 3.3 of the VET Development Strategy), assessment will be competence-based, and measures, among them the national curriculum and common assessment instruments across providers, will be put in place to ensure that the qualifications awarded by the various entities have equal credibility.

2.4 Potential of the VET system to influence economic and labour market needs

One of the priorities identified by the VET Development Strategy for 2013–20 is promotion of the role of entrepreneurship in VET, in close cooperation with employers and the business sector generally. This will involve training the workforce in vocational skills that are specifically suited to particular trades or specialties as well as relevant general competences (such as entrepreneurial skills, problem solving, personal and interpersonal skills, ICT knowledge, communication, foreign languages, etc.) in order to increase employability. More specifically, the strategy stipulates the four measures outlined in **TABLE 2.1**.

TABLE 2.1 MEASURES TO PROMOTE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

<p>Innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship in VET</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formation of 'knowledge partnerships' with innovative enterprises, design centres, the cultural sector and higher education institutions to identify new developments, new competences, professional excellence and innovation 2. Promotion of entrepreneurship in VET, in close cooperation with employers and national business support centres 3. Promotion of start-ups for VET graduates and of learning mobility for young entrepreneurs 4. Involvement of the Georgian VET system in international processes and movements for innovation (e.g. WorldSkills International)
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Source: VET Development Strategy for 2013–20

Since 2007 there has been a focus (particularly at the start of the reformed VET in 2007) on entrepreneurial skills, and on related curricula and teacher competences. In 2009 the Georgian Employers' Association (GEA) delivered an ILO-developed training package to all entrepreneurship teachers at VET centres¹¹. In 2014 Norwegian and Georgian policy makers and practitioners shared their experiences within the framework of the Norwegian assistance programme to the Ministry of Education and Science, 'Implementing inclusive education in the VET system'.

Sustaining productivity growth in Georgia will require improvements in the skills of workers, and better use of the country's labour resources. In spite of Georgia's rapid economic growth over the past decade, a large proportion of its workforce is either unemployed or engaged in low-productivity activities in the agriculture and rural sectors. Improving labour productivity is important, and requires the transfer of workers from less productive to more productive activities (World Bank, 2013a). This shift in labour resources will require an improvement in workers' skills, better matching of workers with the available job opportunities, and active communication with prospective employers.

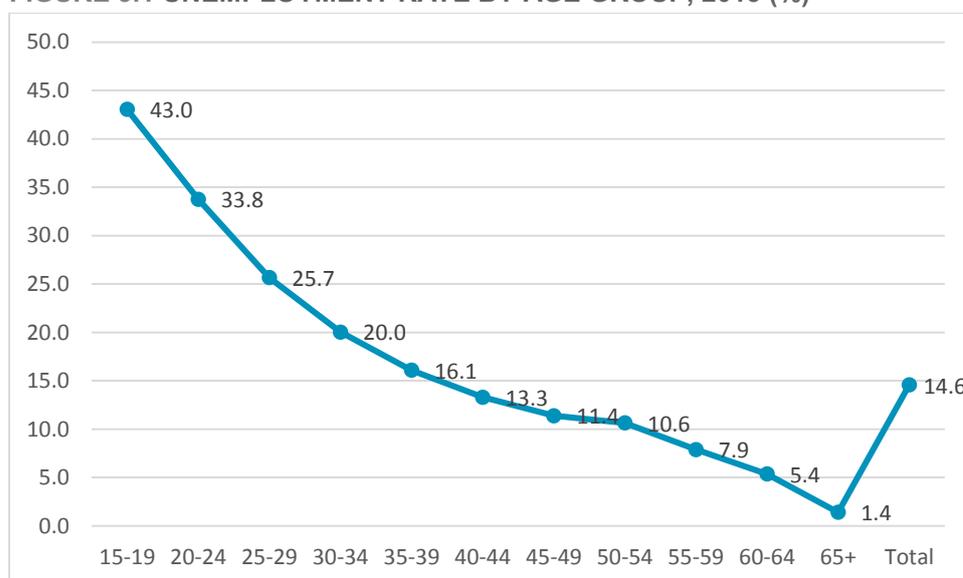
¹¹ VET centres were re-established as either technical and vocational education and training (TVET) or community colleges following the 2010 amendments to the Law on Vocational Education (2007).

3. EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY IN ADDRESSING DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND INCLUSION DEMANDS

During the past five years, Georgia’s population has increased by 1.2% (see Annex 6): the population reached 4 490 500 in January 2014, up from 4 436 400 in 2010. However, the annual population growth rate has decreased from 0.9% in 2010 to -0.3% in 2013¹². According to data for the start of 2014, the average age of the population of Georgia was 38 years, with the average age for women (40 years) exceeding the average age for men (36 years). The proportion of the population made up of young people in 2014 (13.9%) was 2% lower than in 2010 (15.9%), while the proportion of the population aged 55 years and older increased by 1.5% (up from 24.2% in 2010 to 25.7% in 2014). According to data for 2013, the natural increase rate (per thousand population) was 2.1, while the expected average life expectancy at birth was 75.2 years.

As shown in **FIGURE 3.1**, the highest unemployment rates are for the age groups 15–19 and 20–24 years, at 43.0% and 33.8% respectively; the unemployment rates decline as the ages increase.

FIGURE 3.1 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY AGE GROUP, 2013 (%)



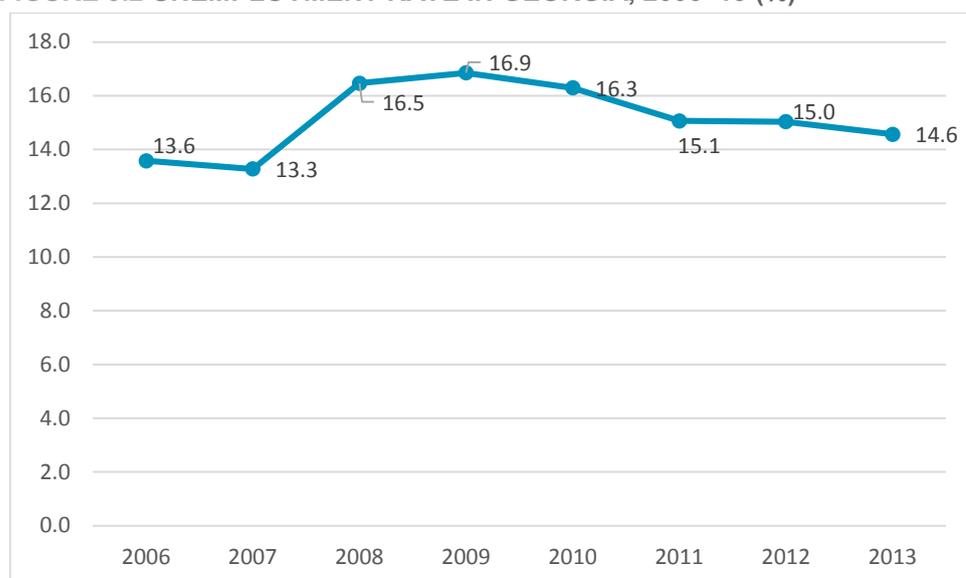
Source: Geostat, 2014

Despite the fact that the GDP growth rate decreased by 3% in 2013, the unemployment rate also decreased (by 0.4%), as shown in **FIGURE 3.2**.

The overall school dropout rate for 2012/13 was 2.39%; the dropout rate from secondary education (Grades 10, 11 and 12) was 5.86% (7 347 pupils). However, there is no information available on the length of time that secondary students who dropped out were out of education.

¹² Population growth (annual %) from <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.PO>

FIGURE 3.2 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN GEORGIA, 2006–13 (%)



Source: Geostat, 2014

Access and participation

The VET Development Strategy embodies the principles of inclusive education, which gives everyone equal opportunities to access VET.

Since May 2012 state funding has been provided in the form of vouchers for eligible students at VET levels I–III. Students can use these vouchers in VET institutions established with the participation of the state, or authorised vocational institutions implementing the priority programmes of vocational education (Government Decree No 96, 2012). The state budget allocation for vouchers for VET levels I–III was almost fully committed for 2012, given the very positive results of the three rounds of student admissions, through which an unprecedentedly high number of students (12 740) were recruited. However, concerns were raised about the voucher-based VET financing system in relation to the undifferentiated nature and low face value of the vouchers, which was likely to affect the quality of training. The problem was more severe in training for technical occupations than for service-based occupations, as the former commonly require more costly inputs and processes in terms of equipment and materials.

In August 2013 the Ministry of Education and Science reviewed the financing decree and its application in favour of differential vouchers. Other amendments to the regulation (Government Decree No 244, 2013) include a merit-based financing system and full coverage of VET for all students in public VET institutions who successfully pass the unified VET admission test. As shown in **TABLE 3.1**, the acceptance rate at private VET institutions is almost 100%, while there is more competition in public VET institutions. One of the reasons for this might be the funding policy, which finances only students who are enrolled at public institutions. It should be noted that about 21% of registered applicants did not attend for their exams. The unified examination might also have created some access barriers for socially disadvantaged students. However, the admission process has been made transparent, which was previously a problematic issue.

TABLE 3.1 NUMBER OF APPLICANTS AND STUDENTS ADMITTED TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE VET PROGRAMMES, 2013

	Number of applicants	Number of students admitted	Acceptance rate (%)
Private VET	8 424	8 110	96
Public VET	16 524	12 359	75
Total	24 948	20 469	82

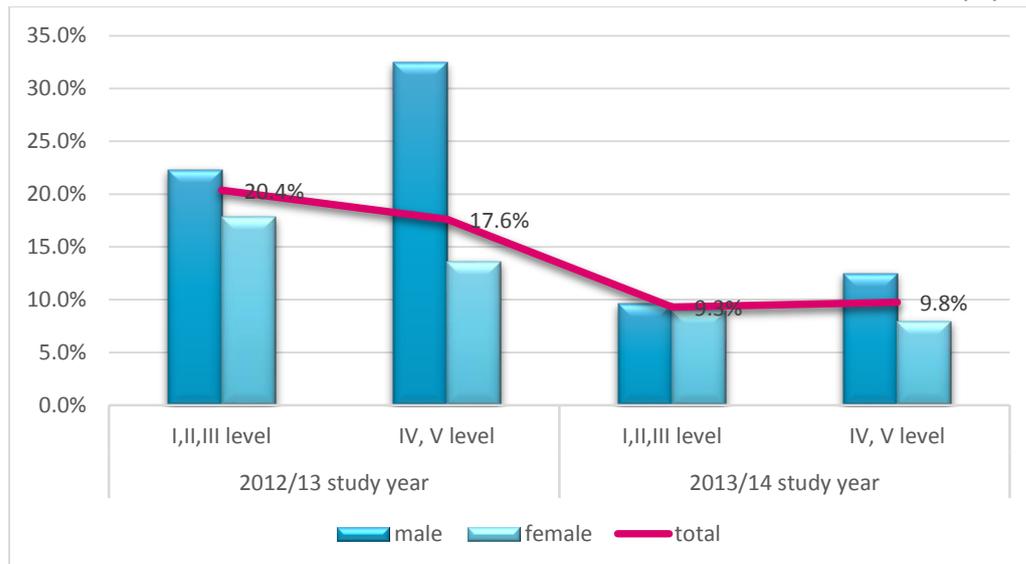
Note: The data include not only first-time entrants to VET institutions, but also those who moved from one level to another. The data on registered and admitted students at private VET institutions are provided by the private VET institutions on a voluntary basis, so they might not be accurate; however, they give an indication of the acceptance ratio at private VET institutions.

Source: EMIS, 2014

The Ministry of Education and Science is planning to evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of the new admission and funding policy in 2015.

The average dropout rate for VET students decreased by 49.7% from 2012/13 to 2013/14 (**FIGURE 3.3**). This could be the result of the unified VET admission test, since it reduces access to VET education for those students who are most likely to leave the programmes. Another factor could be the introduction of the professional orientation and information campaign for prospective VET students.

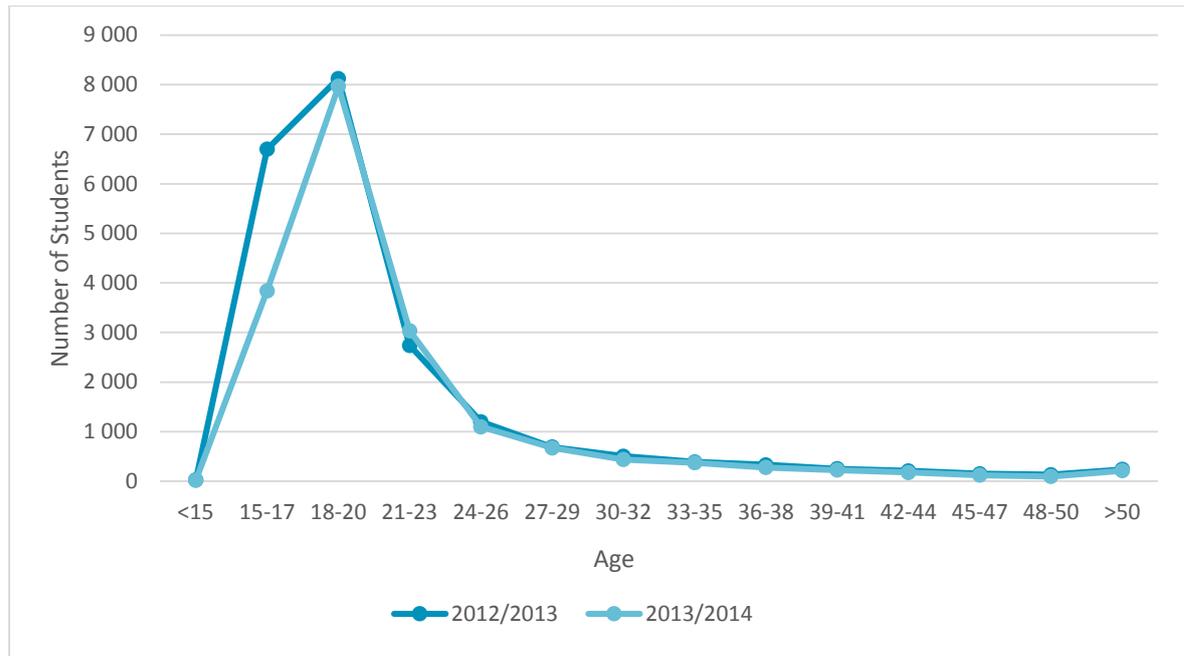
FIGURE 3.3 DROPOUT RATES FOR VET STUDENTS, 2012/13 AND 2013/14 (%)



Source: EMIS, 2014

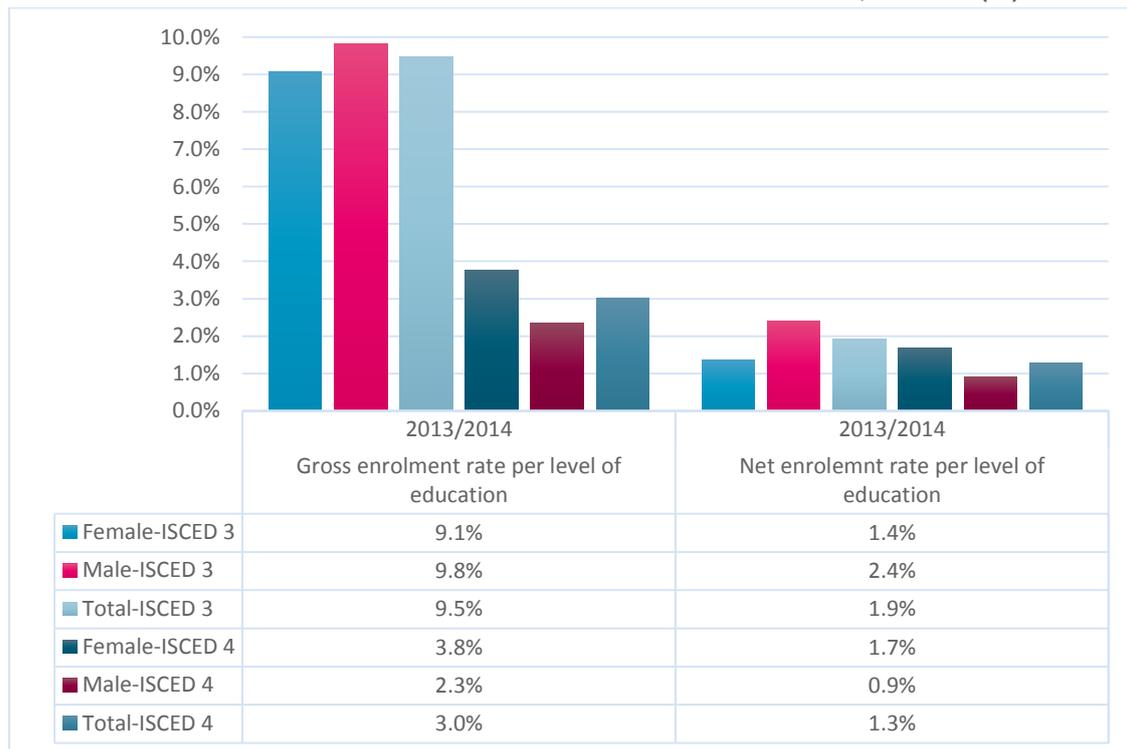
FIGURE 3.4 shows the age distribution of VET students, the highest number being in the age group 15–20 years. However, **FIGURE 3.5** shows that the gross enrolment rate is significantly higher than net enrolment. This confirms that the age distribution among VET students is wide, which is a positive factor in terms of compliance with the principle of lifelong learning.

FIGURE 3.4 AGE DISTRIBUTION OF VET STUDENTS, 2012/13 AND 2013/14



Source: EMIS, 2014

FIGURE 3.5 GROSS AND NET ENROLMENT RATES BY VET LEVEL, 2013/14 (%)



Source: EMIS, 2014

In 2013/14, 25% of VET student were from socially disadvantaged families, and 6% were internally displaced students. The proportion of students with special education needs was very low (0.7%). However, in January 2013 the Ministry of Education and Science introduced the 'Implementation of inclusive education in the VET system' initiative, with financial and methodological support from Norway's Ministry of Education and Research. The ministry has active dialogue with social partners, working in coordination with other bodies in order to create a common vision on employment.

In 2014 the main emphasis is on employers and their role in VET and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

- An analysis of international models will be conducted on the issues of employment of people with disabilities and special educational needs.
- Recommendations will be prepared for actions to increase their interest and involvement.
- An information campaign will be conducted on the role of business in employment opportunities for people with disabilities and special educational needs.

4. INTERNAL EFFICIENCY OF THE VET SYSTEM

4.1 Quality assurance

'Quality' in general terms covers almost every aspect of VET learning. This includes policy and legal frameworks, financing models, cooperation between actors, providers, the provision of VET learning, staff, curricula, and infrastructure, all of which have a role to play in a well-functioning VET system, and which contribute to increasing participation and effective learning outcomes (Broek and Buiskool, 2013).

New legislation on quality assurance in education came into force in 2010, and its implementation in VET is considered to have been largely successful, covering all VET providers, both public and private. The Law on Quality Enhancement envisages two instruments for assuring quality in the performance of the VET system: authorisation and accreditation.

Authorisation is a process for licensing educational institutions. Once granted, such authorisation is valid for five years. To become authorised, institutions must meet minimum standards in three areas, namely educational programmes, and human and material resources. From 2010 to 2014, 86 VET institutions were authorised.

Accreditation is an additional proof of quality. It refers to quality assurance at programme level, and is not mandatory. So far, 145 of the 1 440 programmes have been accredited.

Consultations with VET providers have revealed a number of shortcomings in the functioning of the quality assurance framework:

- the formal attitude towards the quality assurance system (e.g. compliance with minimum requirements rather than seeking to excel in their VET provision) (Broek and Buiskool, 2013);
- the lack of a quality culture among VET providers.

However, analysis of authorisation self-assessment reports for the past three years has revealed some positive trends (NCEQE, 2014). The analysis found that VET institutions:

- have internal quality assurance mechanisms and evaluation systems in place;
- prioritise the hiring of teachers who have practical skills and experience;
- have basic material resources and facilities;
- make an effort to provide adapted environments for students with special educational needs;
- have prospectuses that provide information on institutions, programmes, qualifications to be awarded, objectives of the relevant educational programmes, learning outcomes, credits and assessment rules.

The NCEQE is planning to review the quality assurance system in 2015 and to revise the quality assurance standards and procedures in line with the new competence-based curriculum (NCEQE, 2013).

Internal quality assurance

The internal quality assurance process is based on the four-step quality cycle: planning, implementation, evaluation and review. Institutions are applying internal quality assurance

mechanisms: they have internal quality assurance units, practise internal quality assurance and use feedback to improve educational processes. Educational institutions carry out self-assessment annually and submit their reports to the NCEQE.

VET qualification system development

The vocational qualifications framework is the part of the NQF that systematises the VET qualifications that exist in Georgia. Each level of VET is described in terms of learning outcomes according to six criteria: knowledge and understanding, ability to apply knowledge in practical situations, ability to make sound judgements, communication skills, learning skills, and the values set out in the vocational qualifications framework.

The Policy Concept Paper for development of a system for VNFIL in Georgia was produced within the context of an ETF-supported project. The objective of the project was to develop a VNFIL policy and methodology package, through close cooperation and interaction with the relevant stakeholders. The overall context for development of the VNFIL concept and approach in Georgia is provided by the VET Development Strategy for 2013–20. The strongest arguments for establishing a VNFIL system relate to the real socioeconomic needs of the country, not only the need for education system reform. The government's employment and migration policies may be expected to create a new dynamic that will substantially re-orientate the VNFIL debate towards the needs of the labour market, and the certification of low-qualified job seekers in a broad way that is not exclusively focused on qualifications acquired via schooling in the formal education system (ETF, 2014).

Georgia started to develop and centrally adopt occupational standards (for 252 occupations so far) in 2010. The NCEQE is responsible for coordinating the work of sector committees, so-called industry thematic groups whose functions are primarily the discussion and development of occupational standards. The VET Development Strategy for 2013–20 includes a plan for the revision of all occupational standards, using a revised methodology (using DACUM) and a more participatory approach. In 2013 the revision process involved consultation between the NCEQE and nearly 500 small, medium and large organisations for the purposes of updating occupational standards. About 80 occupations have been analysed in accordance with the DACUM methodology, and DACUM diagrams have been developed and validated.

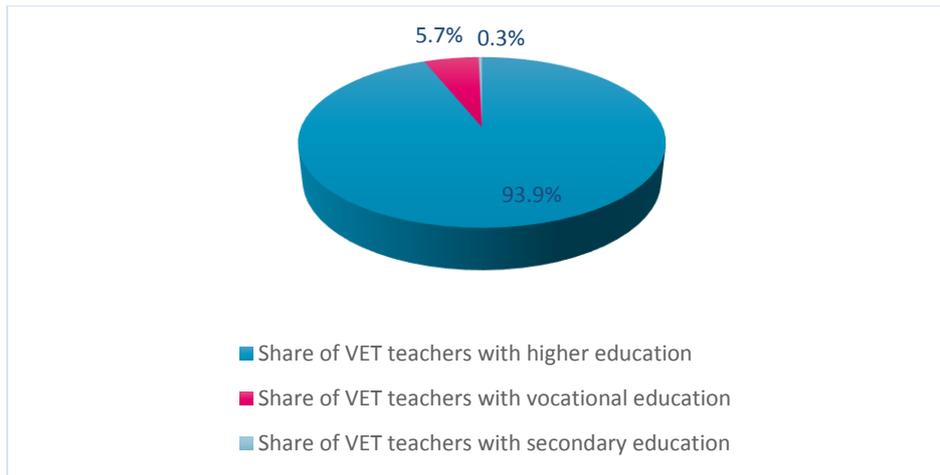
4.2 VET teachers

The minimum qualification requirements for VET teachers are set out in Article 12 of the Law on Vocational Education. According to this, VET teachers must be graduates of higher education or VET (ISCED 4) or have three years' work experience in the relevant field. Teachers' professional standards define the additional requirements for VET teachers. Occupational standards (which, apart from specifying knowledge and skills requirements for the profession, set out minimum requirements for organising educational processes, e.g. the length and credit value of the corresponding educational programmes) may also define extra requirements¹³ for the teachers of particular qualifications.

The total number of teachers in the VET teaching workforce (registered in the EMIS database) in 2014 was 3 167 (68% female and 32% male); 93.9% of them have higher education (**FIGURE 4.1**). A survey conducted by the National Centre for Teachers' Professional Development (TPDC) in 2013 showed that 85% of VET teachers are employed to teach their own subject area, while 15% are employed in different sectors. Educational programmes in VET institutions are delivered by teachers with the relevant qualifications, and VET institutions often emphasise that they prioritise the employment of teachers with practical experience in the fields they teach.

¹³ Georgian legislation does not differentiate between initial and continuing VET.

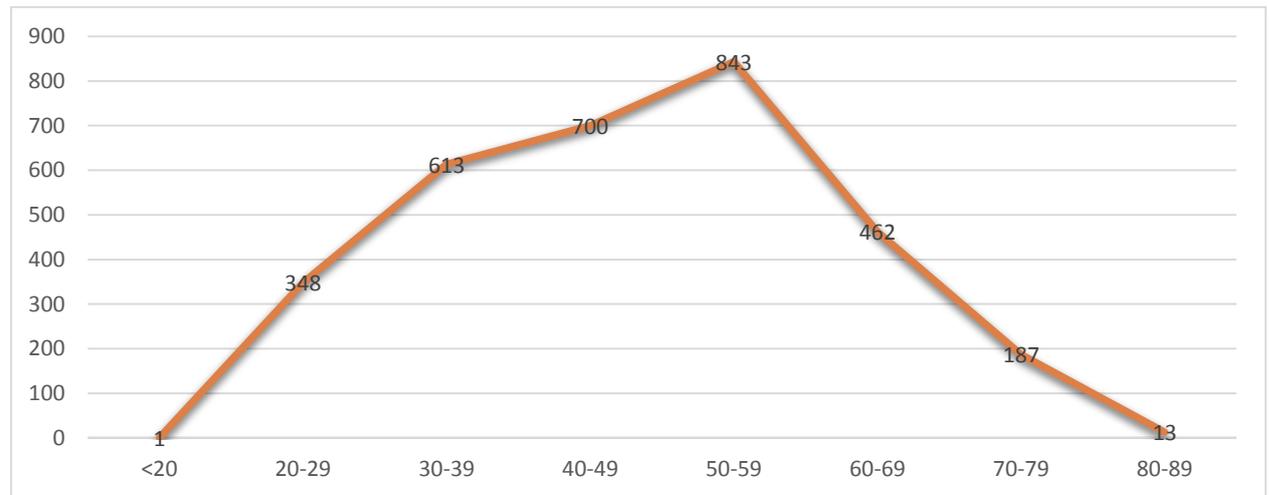
FIGURE 4.1 VET TEACHERS BY QUALIFICATION, 2013/14 (%)



Source: EMIS, 2014

FIGURE 4.2 suggests that VET teaching is not seen as an attractive profession by younger people, as 70% of VET teachers are over 40. In spite of the fact that the teacher–student ratio is quite high (an average of one teacher per five students¹⁴), VET providers have problems in attracting relatively young qualified staff because of the low salaries. The average hourly rate for teachers is GEL 6.5; however, salaries in public institutions are twice as high as those in private institutions. The minimum hourly rate of pay in private institutions is GEL 3.5 and in public institutions is GEL 7.5.

FIGURE 4.2 AGE DISTRIBUTION OF VET TRAINERS, 2013/14



Source: EMIS, 2014

The TPDC is working on a concept paper for VET teacher training and professional development. This should, among other things, define incentives and ways to attract a qualified workforce into the profession, and provide for many alternative methods of teacher induction, so that the transition from universities to teaching and/or from industry experience to school is flexible and at the same time provides adequate assistance to teachers.

The teachers' professional standards, which are currently being revised, apply to educators in every subject and define requirements with regard to teaching. Subject knowledge requirements for teachers are set by the relevant occupational standards, which comprise three main parts: development and

¹⁴ The high ratio is a result of short-term contracts held by VET teachers for different programmes.

learning theories, teaching and assessment, and professional environment. The teachers' professional standards are development oriented and thus set out requirements for regular professional development for teachers, and collaboration among colleagues and parents of the students.

There is as yet no university-level course for VET teachers' professional development. However, educational programmes at VET levels 4 and 5 (which allow for entry to the teaching profession) usually contain modules for teachers' professional development. The TPDC organises professional development courses for VET teachers on a regular basis. In addition, the NCEQE conducts training on the ongoing changes in the VET system.

4.3 Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning environment

The minimum requirements for the teaching and learning environment of VET providers are defined by the authorisation and accreditation standards, which set out various criteria, such as institutional facilities, student–teacher ratios and teaching/learning materials. All VET providers are required to meet these criteria in order to carry out educational activities. VET providers are required to have a workplace that ensures the programme learning outcomes, including field-specific facilities.

In addition, VET providers are encouraged to establish partnerships and mobilise private support in order to develop their infrastructure and increase the effectiveness of VET programmes. A number of successful examples of partnerships between VET providers and private enterprises already exist.

During the period 2012–14 the VET learning environment has been improved. Specifically, two new buildings for VET institutions have been built ('Erkvani' in Svaneti region and 'Gldani Vocational Training Centre' in Tbilisi), and two colleges ('Pazisi' in Samegrelo Region and 'Mermisi' in Tbilisi) have been completely refurbished.

Learning content

VET providers are responsible for the development of educational programmes (the learning content, curriculum and syllabuses of a programme) based on the criteria and requirements set out in the occupational standards and the NQF.

Such arrangements give VET providers a great deal of flexibility to develop their programmes according to the needs of local markets and target groups of students. Unfortunately, some VET providers lack the capacity to develop curricula independently, and for the most part simply 'copy and paste' learning outcomes from the occupational standards into the curricula, or use curricula from other institutions. Learning outcomes spelled out in the curricula are often very general and not formulated in a way that is measurable.

In view of this, and of the need for more student-oriented educational programmes that better reflect labour market needs, VET reforms are moving towards developing modular curricula. The EU-funded 'Quality Enhancement and Capacity Building Support Programme in VET Sector of Georgia' project provided support for the modularisation of curricula: the project developed most of the methodology materials and trained the teachers, and also developed one pilot modular programme in 2013. The methodology is being utilised by the Ministry of Education and Science and its agencies to plan and introduce modular VET curricula during the next three-year period. The curriculum revision process started in 2013. The new curricula will be piloted, industry by industry, from 2014, and mainstreamed in 2017.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and UNDP have supported the development of a number of textbooks in various VET fields, mainly heavy engineering and

agriculture. Under the curriculum reform process, the NCEQE will coordinate the process of textbook development for areas that are suffering the most from the lack of teaching materials.

Efficiency of use of resources

In September 2013 a new funding rule came into force (Government Decree No 244, 2013) in favour of differential vouchers. There are three types of funding for public VET providers – voucher-based funding, programme-based funding and targeted funding – which increase the efficiency and relevance of public funding.

The proportion of educational expenditure, as well as the proportion of public expenditure allocated to VET decreased from 2012 to 2013. However, as shown in Figure 3.3, the dropout rate of VET students was almost halved. This can be taken as an indicator of the increased efficiency of the VET system. A clear analysis of the efficiency of the funding strategy will be conducted in 2015 on the basis of the evaluation of the policy.

4.4 Action and assessment of progress since 2010

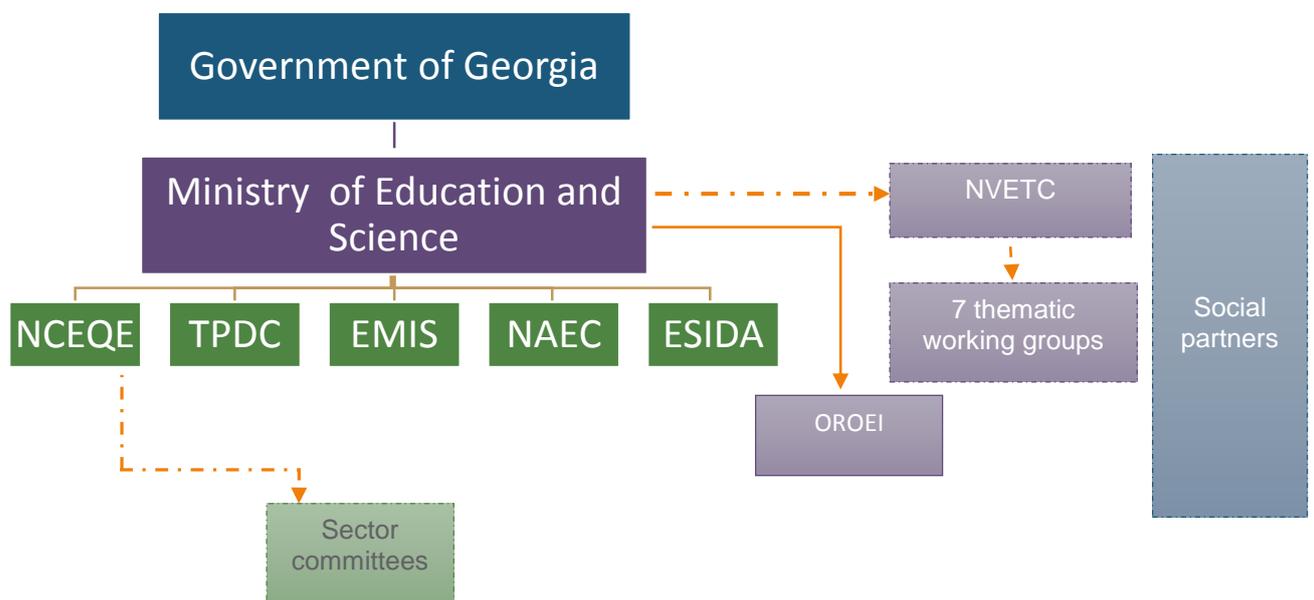
- One of the major changes that have begun to take place in the VET system is the move from a subject-based to a modular approach in the design of VET programmes.
- In 2013 the revision of occupational standards using the DACUM methodology began. This ensures the relevance of programmes to labour market needs.
- In order to increase efficiency of the VET system, the TPDC, with other stakeholders, is elaborating a concept paper on training and professional development for VET teachers.

5. GOVERNANCE AND POLICY PRACTICES IN THE VET SYSTEM

5.1 Governance of VET

Various government structures and key stakeholders are currently involved in shaping the country's VET system (FIGURE 5.1). Specifically, the Government of Georgia is developing broad national development policies and strategies. Key elements of the government's policy on education include the introduction of modern standards, an increase in funding, the development of effective financing mechanisms, improvements in educational quality and access to education, and the provision of academic, administrative and financial autonomy for VET institutions.

FIGURE 5.1 VET GOVERNANCE



The Ministry of Education and Science develops and manages sector policies, strategies and programmes in line with broad national policies. Through its agencies – NCEQE, TPDC, EMIS, NAEC, Education and Science Infrastructure Development Agency (ESIDA) and the Office of Resource Officers and Educational Institutions (OROEI) – the ministry enforces the regulatory framework, and through that implements sector programmes.

In addition, the VET Development Department of the ministry coordinates VET programmes; implements the Medium-term Action Plan; supports the NVETC and its seven thematic working groups; and monitors the educational process in VET colleges and the implementation of EU programmes in support of the VET sector.

TABLE 5.1 MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES OF NATIONAL EDUCATION AGENCIES

National education agencies	Major responsibilities in terms of VET governance and policy making
NCEQE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Quality assurance of vocational education through the authorisation of educational institutions and the accreditation of education programmes on the basis of agreed quality standards ■ Coordination of occupational standards development ■ Development and updating of the NQF
TPDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Development of VET teachers' professional development standards ■ Planning and delivery of teacher training
EMIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Development of modern information and communication technologies and the new electronic management systems and databases in the educational sector, for the monitoring of VET
NAEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Administration of the unified VET admission test
ESIDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Development of the infrastructure for educational institutions
OROEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Professional orientation and career guidance

National VET Council

The NVETC, the main advisory and consultative body for VET policy, was established in 2009 together with seven thematic working groups, in order to ensure participative governance.

The main activities of the NVETC include:

- developing proposals and resolutions relating to the VET strategy and its action plan;
- forming working groups and inviting independent experts to study VET issues and frame recommendations.

By the amendment made in Government Decree No 2012 of 13 December, new membership of the council was approved in March 2014 by Government Decree No 481. The largest share of NVETC membership is currently drawn from the government sector (14 of the 27 members). Other members are from the various trade unions, VET providers and the private sector. Thus, the balance of membership between government and other stakeholders remains a problem.

In 2013 an analysis of the effectiveness of the NVETC was conducted with the support of the ETF. On the basis of this analysis, discussions began on the reorganisation of NVETC membership. In this regard, several meetings have taken place with the social partners. The final meeting was conducted in October 2014, at which the ministry introduced a new model for the council. The model was positively evaluated by the majority of participants, including employers and trade unions. It is based on four-sided representation from the government, employers, trade unions and the non-government sector, and promotes the principle of parity in the council. The new membership was to be selected by the end of 2014, after which the council will start its activities.

Social partnership

Georgian legislation stresses the importance of the involvement of social partners and the development of social partnership at all levels of VET. Social partnership mechanisms are considered important for ensuring:

- participatory governance of VET;
- enhancement of the labour market relevance of VET.

In 2013 the Ministry of Education and Science, with the support of the ETF, elaborated a document on the 'Social partnership support programme in the Georgian VET sector'. In order to engage the business sector in VET, the ministry has established partnerships with private sector representatives of small, medium and large business organisations. With the support of the Millennium Challenge Agency, the ministry has elaborated the Strategy of Private Sector Engagement in VET, although the document has not yet been officially approved.

The Georgian Employers' Association (GEA) supports the Association of Private VET Providers in efforts towards more effective development of a part of the VET system that does not benefit from public resources. GEA also supports private VET providers because the new government funding policy finances only those students who are enrolled at public VET institutions. GEA has expressed an interest in supporting the development of employer-driven sector councils as alternatives to the current sector committees.

The Georgian Trade Unions Confederation (GTUC) is an active participant in the VET policy debate. It is one of most consistent advocates for the need to improve the permeability of pathways in education and training as a key social inclusion policy.

Sector committees

The National Professional Agency was the first entity established to create such bodies, supporting the establishment of 13 sector committees with a primary mission to discuss and elaborate occupational standards. A slowdown of activities in 2010 was followed by a phase of renewed activity, with 14 sector committees established in 2011 under the coordination of NCEQE. The committees aim to contribute systematically to the design and further development of the qualifications system (catalogue of qualifications, occupational standards), in line with labour market requirements.

One of the main priorities of the VET development strategy is to improve the participation of social partners and civil society in defining VET policy, and in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes.

MATRIX 1 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

	Objective setting	Implementation	Monitoring
Who is responsible?	Government of Georgia, MES	NCEQE, TPDC, ESIDA, NAEC, VET institutions, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs (MSY), Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection (MCS), Government of Autonomous Republic (GoAR) Abkhazia, GoAR Ajara	MES
Who is accountable?	MES	NCEQE, TPDC, ESIDA, NAEC, VET institutions, MSY, MCS, GoAR Abkhazia, GoAR Ajara	MES
Who is consulted?	MES, NCEQE, TPDC, ESIDA, NAEC, NVETC, social partners, sector committees, MSY, MCS, GoAR Abkhazia, GoAR Ajara, international partners	MES, NCEQE, TPDC, ESIDA, NAEC, VET institutions, social partners, sector committees, international partners	MES, NCEQE, TPDC, ESIDA, NAEC, VET institutions, social partners, sector committees, NVETC
Who is (only) informed?	Stakeholders	Stakeholders	Stakeholders

MATRIX 2 MODE OF ACTION/DECISION MAKING OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE

	Objective setting	Implementation	Monitoring
Full autonomy/ unilateral	Government of Georgia	MES	MES
After (obligatory) consultation	MES, NCEQE, TPDC, ESIDA, NAEC, social partners, sector committees, MSY, MCS, GoAR Abkhazia, GoAR Ajara, international partners	MES, NCEQE, TPDC, ESIDA, NAEC, social partners, sector committees, MSY, MCS, GoAR Abkhazia, GoAR Ajara, international partners	MES
If consultation, with whom?	NCEQE, TPDC, ESIDA, NAEC, social partners, sector committees, MSY, MCS, GoAR Abkhazia, GoAR Ajara, international partners	NCEQE, TPDC, ESIDA, NAEC, social partners, sector committees, MSY, MCS, GoAR Abkhazia, GoAR Ajara, international partners	NCEQE, TPDC, ESIDA, NAEC, social partners, sector committees, MSY, MCS, GoAR Abkhazia, GoAR Ajara, international partners
Who is (only) informed?	n/a	n/a	n/a

MATRIX 3 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR QUALITY STANDARDS

	Objective setting	Implementation	Monitoring
Quality standards: learning environment	MES, NCEQE	VET providers	NCEQE
Quality standards: learning outcomes	NCEQE	VET providers, NCEQE	NCEQE
Quality standards: teaching	MES, NCEQE	VET providers	NCEQE
Standards for provider accreditation	MES, NCEQE	VET providers	NCEQE

MATRIX 4 MODE OF DECISION MAKING WHEN SETTING QUALITY STANDARDS

	Unilateral	Obligatory consultation	If consultation, with whom?
Quality standards: learning environment	n/a	NCEQE	Social partners
Quality standards: learning outcomes	NCEQE	NCEQE, sector committee	Social partners
Quality standards: teaching	n/a	NCEQE	Social partners
Standards for provider accreditation		NCEQE	Social partners

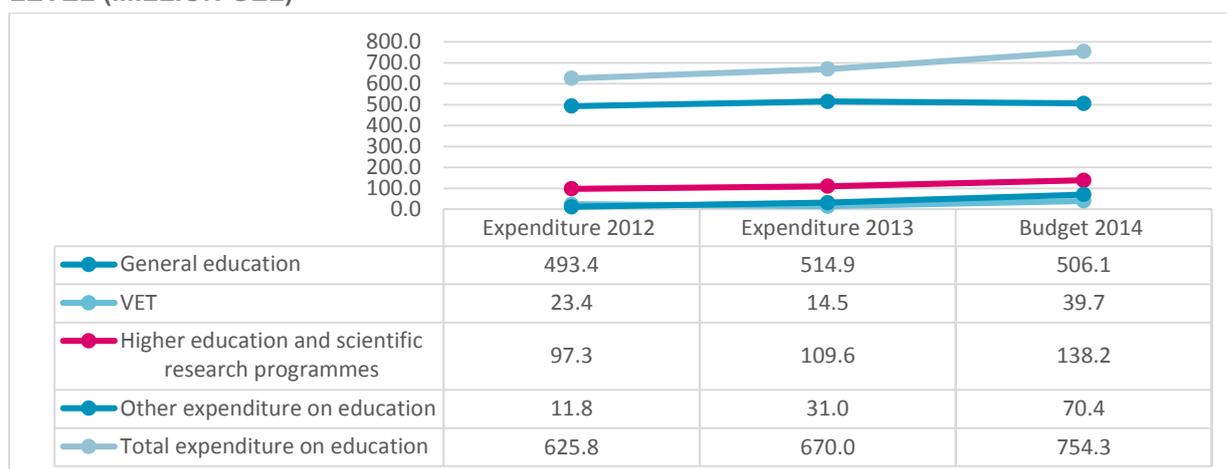
MATRIX 5 RESPONSIBILITY FOR CURRICULUM CONTENT AND TEACHING STANDARDS

	Responsible for determining	Obligatory consultation	If consultation, with whom?
Curriculum content	VET providers, NCEQE	n/a	Social partners
How curriculum is taught	VET providers	n/a	Social partners

5.2 Financing

Total expenditure on education has increased by 20.7% during the past three years, reaching GEL 754.3 million in 2014 (excluding expenditure on education by GoAR Abkhazia and GoAR Ajara) (**FIGURE 5.2**). In 2013 total expenditure on education represented 2.5% of GDP and total expenditure on VET 0.05% of GDP. According to the 2014 budget, the proportion of total expenditure allocated to education has increased by only 1.13 times), while the proportion of expenditure allocated to VET has increased 2.7 times.

FIGURE 5.2 EXPENDITURE (2012–13) AND BUDGET (2014) ON EDUCATION BY YEAR AND LEVEL (MILLION GEL)



Source: Finance Department of the Ministry of Education and Science

FIGURES 5.3 and **5.4** show the proportion of public expenditure on education by level. The diagrams show that the proportion of VET expenditure doubled from 2013 to 2014, which demonstrates that the development of VET is a priority for the country.

FIGURE 5.3 PROPORTION OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION BY LEVEL – EXPENDITURE 2013 (%)

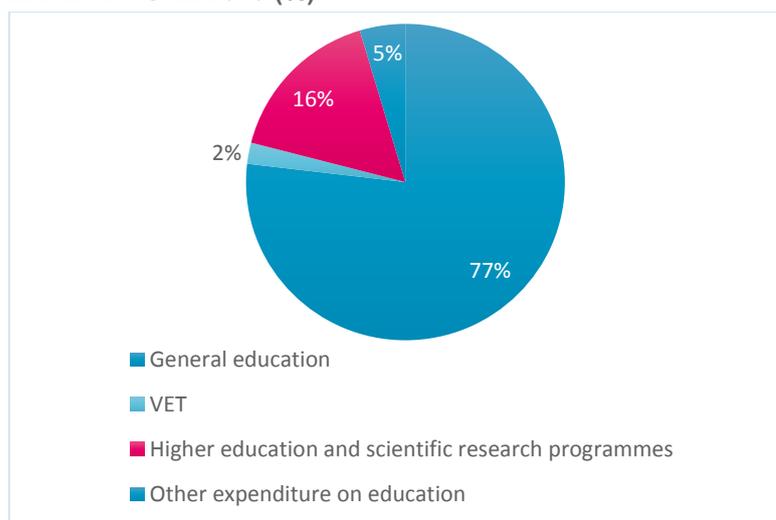
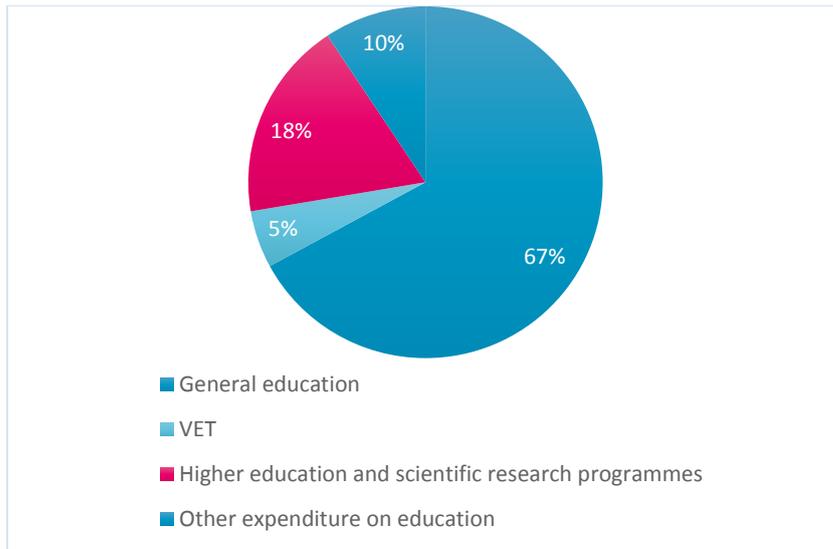


FIGURE 5.4 PROPORTION OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION BY LEVEL – BUDGET 2014 (%)



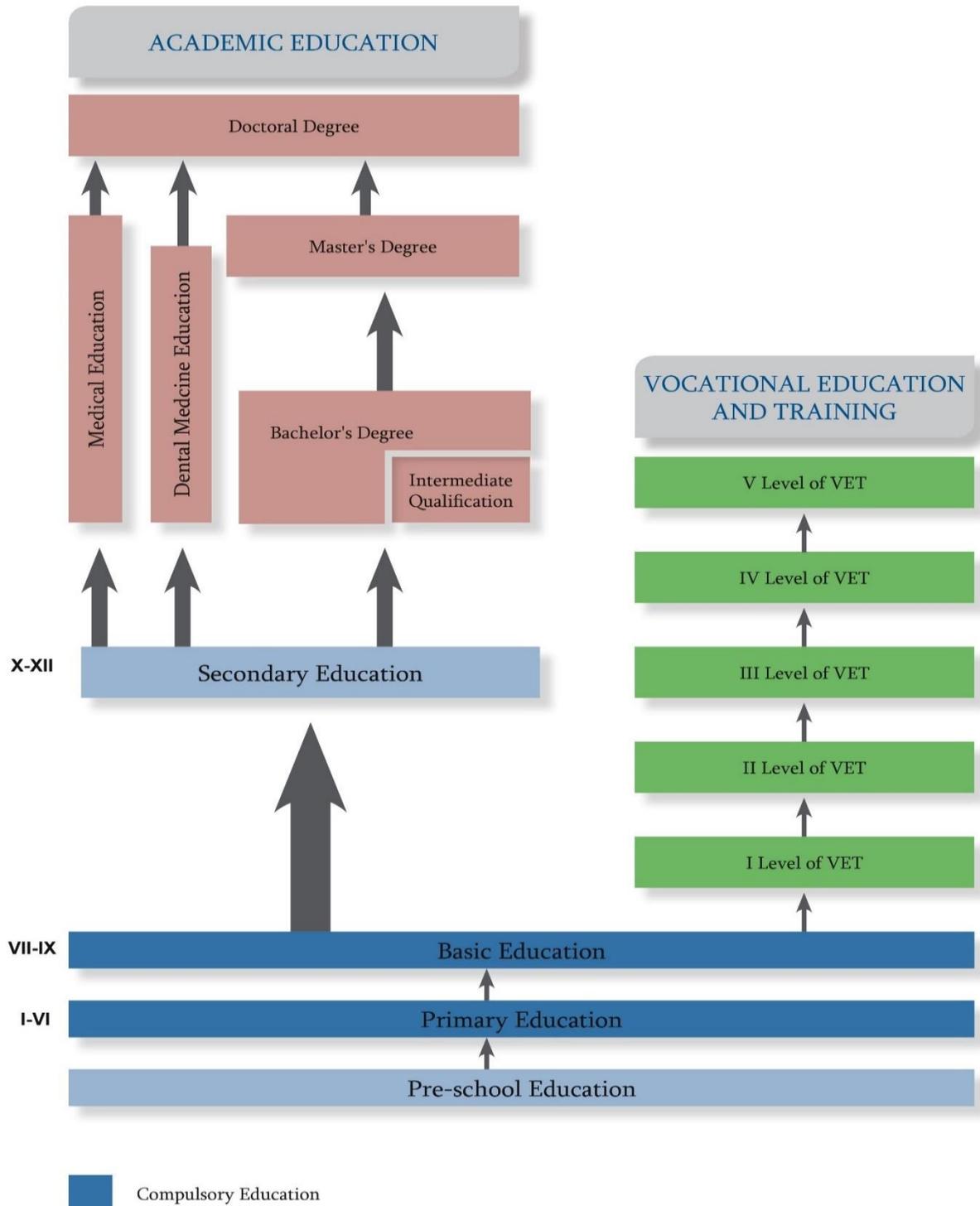
Source: Finance Department of the Ministry of Education and Science

In September 2013 new funding rules came into force (Government Decree No 244, 2013). There are three types of funding for public VET providers, which increases the efficiency and fairness of public funding:

- voucher-based funding – funding for individual students who successfully pass the unified VET admission examination and fulfil the minimum standard of competence;
- programme-based funding – covers the administrative expenditure of public VET providers (e.g. wages, operational expenditure, etc.);
- targeted funding – covers particular need-based programmes; the funding is based on individual requests.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Education system in Georgia



Annex 2. VET Development Strategy for 2013–20: matrix of outcomes and respective priority areas

Outcomes	Actions
1. A VET sector management structure that elicits full and equal participation from the social partners and civil society with government in the development of policy and in decision-making on the nature and operation of regulatory, promotional, and financial and technical support mechanisms	<p>1.1 Participation of social partners in defining policy and in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of vocational education</p> <p>1.2 Management and coordination of VET system reform by the Ministry of Education and Science</p> <p>1.3 Availability of information (statistics, indicators) and support for monitoring, regulation, and evidence-based policy development</p>
2. A nationwide network of well-funded and well-managed public and private VET providers, equipped with relevant facilities and modern, up-to-the minute equipment, accessible to all participants regardless of their social status, geographical location, gender, physical or mental condition	<p>2.1 Stronger management of VET institutions to improve the effectiveness of the provision</p> <p>2.2 Innovative and modern learning environment</p> <p>2.3 Comprehensive labour market oriented VET provider network according to regional and national development criteria</p> <p>2.4 Access to a diversified system of VET and lifelong learning for all citizens</p> <p>Responsive and effective VET financing</p>
3. A series of well-designed VET programmes relevant to the current and future labour needs of Georgia's growing and diversifying economy	<p>3.1 Labour market analysis</p> <p>3.2 Labour market oriented occupational standards</p> <p>3.3 Flexible, labour market oriented VET programmes</p> <p>3.4 Facilities and teaching materials matched to programme requirements</p>
4. VET educators prepared in modern education techniques and the latest developments in their field of expertise, and capable of drawing out the best from their students in terms of both skills and personal fulfilment	<p>4.1 Teacher training and continuous professional development, prior to entry, on entry and throughout employment</p> <p>4.2 High-quality teaching and assessment processes</p>
5. A system of nationally and internationally recognised awards and qualifications that supports flexibility for VET graduates in their search for employment or their establishment of businesses, whether in Georgia or elsewhere	<p>5.1 Quality assurance mechanisms in line with European approaches (e.g. EQAVET)</p> <p>5.2 Vocational qualifications and their award in line with European experience</p> <p>5.3 Internationalisation of Georgian VET and international mobility</p>
6. Employment of VET graduates in meaningful and, where appropriate, well-remunerated and personally rewarding occupations, with the prospect of fulfilling and challenging career development throughout their future working lives	<p>6.1 Career orientation and employment guidance system</p> <p>6.2 Innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship in VET</p> <p>6.3 Information on VET graduates' activities</p>
7. Widespread recognition that VET is an attractive and rewarding pathway for personal development: as an extension to basic secondary education for young people; as a meaningful mechanism for career development for adults; and as a way to further develop talent in new areas of specialisation for those needing to take advantage of and respond to shifts in labour market demands and opportunities	<p>7.1 Flexible pathways between VET, general education and higher education</p> <p>7.2 Awareness raising among VET stakeholders</p>

Source: MES, 2014a

Annex 3. Geographical distribution of VET institutions

Location VET	Tbilisi		Regions		Total	
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
Professional college	3	9	10	21	13	30
Community college	3	24	4	12	7	36
Higher education institution	6	11	8	4	14	15
School	0	6	0	6	0	12

Source: NCEQE, 2014

Annex 4. Pupil enrolment by year and level

Level	Grade	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Change from 2010 to 2014 (%)
Basic	9	54 821	53 088	51 606	47 093	-14
Upper secondary	10	50 486	44 995	43 732	46 111	-9
	11	48 286	44 481	39 189	42 081	-3
	12	50 084	40 257	42 387	38 079	-24
Total		203 677	182 821	176 914	173 364	-15

Source: EMIS, 2014

Annex 5. Breakdown of nominal GDP by economic sector (%)

Sector		2010	2011	2012	2013
Agriculture	Agriculture, hunting and forestry; fishing	8.4	8.8	8.6	9.3
	Mining and quarrying	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9
Industry	Manufacturing	9.2	9.9	10.2	10.6
	Electricity, gas and water supply	3.0	3.0	2.8	3.0
	Processing of products by households	3.0	3.1	2.7	2.8
	Construction	6.1	6.7	7.8	6.7
	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods	16.8	16.9	16.7	17.3
Services	Hotels and restaurants	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.4
	Transport	7.9	7.5	7.6	7.8
	Communication	3.7	3.0	3.1	2.9
	Financial intermediation	2.6	2.6	2.8	3.0
	Real estate, renting and business activities	4.9	5.4	5.5	5.7
	Imputed rent of own occupied dwellings	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.4
	Public administration	13.0	11.6	11.2	10.1
	Education	4.9	5.0	4.9	5.2
	Health and social work	6.7	6.1	6.1	5.8
	Other community, social and personal service activities	4.6	4.9	4.7	4.3
	Private households employing domestic staff and undifferentiated production activities of households for own use	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

Source: Geostat, 2014

Annex 6. Demographic data

Age	Population (thousand)					Population by age group (%)				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
0–14	756.5	759.4	761.1	762.9	769.4	17.05	16.99	16.92	17.01	17.13
15–24	705.1	690.4	675.6	648.0	623.5	15.89	15.45	15.02	14.45	13.88
25–34	660.6	675.2	688.6	692.0	695.0	14.89	15.11	15.31	15.43	15.48
35–44	602.1	607.1	615.7	615.9	618.9	13.57	13.58	13.69	13.74	13.78
45–54	638.5	643.7	643.9	635.7	631.1	14.39	14.40	14.32	14.18	14.05
55–64	451.7	476.8	496.8	508.6	525.5	10.18	10.67	11.05	11.34	11.70
65+	621.9	616.6	615.9	620.7	627.1	14.02	13.80	13.69	13.84	13.97
Total	4 436.4	4 469.2	4 497.6	4 483.8	4 490.5	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Geostat, 2014

Annex 7. VET system assessment

<p>Evaluation</p> <p>B (effectiveness and efficiency in addressing economic and labour market demand to C (effectiveness and efficiency in addressing demographic, social and inclusion demand)</p>	<p>Shared information – accepted and feedback-based (4)</p>	<p>Clear distribution of roles for evidence creation and use (3)</p>	<p>Support development of information bases and their use (2)</p>	<p>Online employers' survey (0)</p> <p>Support the development of the unified information base and its use (0)</p> <p>Development of decision-making mechanisms with stakeholders' involvement (0)</p>	<p>Development of effective mechanisms of research and information analysis (8)</p>	<p>Indicators and research (1)</p>
<p>Holistic view</p> <p>B (effectiveness and efficiency in addressing economic and labour market demand)</p>	<p>Participation and close cooperation with line ministers (3)</p>	<p>Development of effective monitoring mechanisms of the system (9)</p>	<p>Changes in the law (1)</p>	<p>Request information from private providers, update EMIS database to include all accredited providers in the system (3)</p>		
<p>Ownership</p> <p>C/B (GTUC)</p> <p>Effectiveness and efficiency in addressing demographic, social and inclusion demand/ effectiveness and efficiency in addressing economic and labour market demand</p>	<p>Make report available on the web for comments, possibility to collect feedback</p> <p>Hold stakeholder discussion (2)</p>	<p>Intensive consultation and information sharing at every stage (1)</p>	<p>Political will and effective legislation to support decision-making process (2)</p>	<p>Support involvement of social partners in the system (6)</p>	<p>Key stakeholders are involved in the development of all policy reports (1)</p>	<p>Government should ensure the coordination and strengthening of their own responsibilities (2)</p>
<p>Participation</p> <p>C (effectiveness and efficiency in addressing demographic, social and inclusion demand)</p>	<p>Monitoring mechanisms (0)</p> <p>Some networks exist (0)</p> <p>Involve a large number of actors and make them active (0)</p>	<p>Development of social partnership mechanisms (1)</p>	<p>Development of useful mechanisms for information sharing and coordination (7)</p>	<p>Development of framework for distribution of inputs to stakeholders (1)</p>	<p>All institutions should take responsibility for discussing issues under their competence (5)</p>	

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DACUM	Developing a curriculum
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESIDA	Education and Science Infrastructure Development Agency
ESS	Employment Support Services
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEA	Georgian Employers' Association
GEL	Georgian Lari (GEL 1 = EUR 0.44, 5 September 2014)
Geostat	National Statistics Office of Georgia
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoAR	Government of Autonomous Republic
GTUC	Georgian Trade Unions Confederation
ICT	Information and communications technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MCS	Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection
MSY	Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs
NAEC	National Assessment and Examinations Centre
NCEQE	National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement
NQF	National qualifications framework
NVETC	National VET Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OROEI	Office of Resource Officers and Educational Institutions
SSA	Social Services Agency
STEM	Science, technology, engineering, mathematics
TPDC	National Centre for Teachers' Professional Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

VET Vocational education and training

VNFIL Validation of non-formal and informal learning

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