

Ten Moves Ahead: Armenia's Education Governance and Financing for Equitable Access

Rapid Education Diagnosis (RED)





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List of acronyms

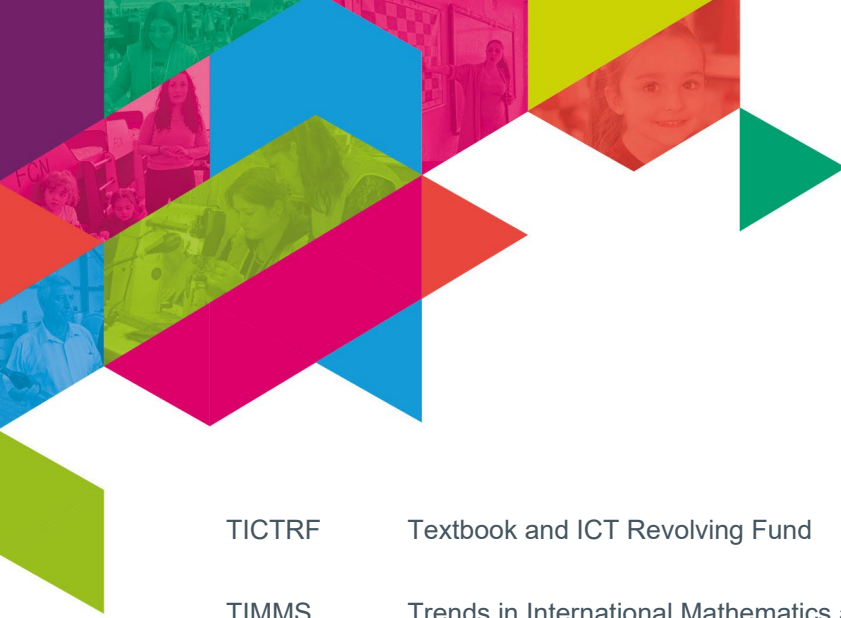
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AMD	Armenian Dram
ANQA	National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance
ARMSTAT	Statistical Committee Republic of Armenia
bn	Billion
ATC	Assessment and Testing Centre
CBIT	Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency
CEP	Centre for Educational Projects
CIF	Competitive Innovation Fund
CVET	Continuing Vocational Education and Training
EC	European Commission
EE	Energy Efficiency
EIB	Education Inspection Body
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
ETF	European Training Foundation
EQF	European Qualifications Framework



EU	European Union
FG	Focus Group
FY	Fiscal Year
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
HE	Higher education
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IVET	Initial Vocational Education and Training
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LAN	Local Area Network
MoESCS	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MoF	Ministry of Finance
m	Million
MLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs



NCEDI	National Centre for Educational Development and Innovations
NCET	National Centre for Educational Technologies
NCVD	National Council for VET Development
NCVETD	National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Development
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIE	National Institute for Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
RA	Republic of Armenia
RED	Rapid Education Diagnosis
RPPC	Republican Pedagogical-Psychological Centre
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SER	Support to Education and Skills Reforms
SQF	Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics



TICTRF	Textbook and ICT Revolving Fund
TIMMS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WBL	Work-based Learning



Synthesis for policymakers

The Rapid Education Diagnosis (RED) is a holistic, evidence-based and data-rich assessment of the Armenian education sector focusing mainly on three dimensions of analysis: inequalities, financing and governance.

This work was undertaken as the first component of the regional programme Support to Education Reforms and Skills (SER) in the Eastern Partnership. Funded by the European Union (EU – DG ENEST, formerly DG NEAR) and implemented by the European Training Foundation (ETF), the €2.5 million programme (2024-2026) also comprises two complementary components aimed at strengthening institutional capacity and promoting peer learning and training.


The RED follows a methodology previously developed by the ETF and successfully applied in other countries. By contributing to the identification of the critical elements, including system's weaknesses, policy gaps, bottlenecks and risks, it aims to help the Government of the Republic of Armenia (hereafter, RA or Armenia), the European Union (EU), and development partners to target their priority interventions effectively, to identify institutional capacity development needs and to inform the policy dialogue between the EU and Armenia. Consequently, the report places greater emphasis on challenges rather than on the progress and achievements of the current education policy reform (Education Development Programme 2030), which nonetheless merit acknowledgment.

This synthesis for policymakers presents the main considerations for the attention of the above-mentioned stakeholders, while the supporting quantitative and qualitative evidence, together with the data sources, is provided in the core document.

Context

The Republic of Armenia faces various challenges in its education sector notably linked to its broader socio-economic context. The country suffers from a declining population, particularly due to a high emigration rate and a relatively low fertility rate. Shocks such as the influx of over 100 000 Armenian civilians from the Nagorno-Karabakh region, including nearly 30 000 children¹,

¹ According to the Migration and Citizenship Service of the Republic of Armenia, 28 641 children (0-18 years old) from Nagorno-Karabakh were forcibly displaced in 2023.



following the September 2023 military operation, create further challenges for the education sector.

Armenia is an upper-middle-income country; however, it still faces significant economic inequalities, with 24.8% of the population living below the national poverty line in 2022². Geopolitical instability diverts priority attention from education, with nearly half of the state budget allocated to security, defence and social protection. While Armenia can potentially count on the financial support of one of the oldest and largest diasporas worldwide, remittances have sharply declined over the last decade.

At the policy level, the education strategy adopted in 2022 was enacted into law, demonstrating significant political interest.

Main findings


Overview of the education system performance

Enrolment trends

The Armenian education system, which mandates 12 years of compulsory education, provides substantial coverage from primary levels onward, aligning with neighbouring countries and international averages. Although preschool education, intended for children aged zero to five, is not mandatory in Armenia, enrolment rates for three- to five-year-olds³ have been rising, with two-thirds of this age group now attending school. However, early childhood care for infants aged zero to two remains minimal. Access to primary and lower secondary education has remained consistently high, despite minor fluctuations. Gross enrolment ratios (GER) in primary education have experienced a slight decline in recent years, while lower secondary GER has shown modest progress. Upper secondary general education has achieved significant advancements in access; it accounts for approximately two-thirds of the students that completed lower secondary education, the remaining third attending vocational education and training (VET) programmes. Higher education has also shown a steady but slower increase in participation. Higher education enrolments are stagnating after a steep decrease in the second half of the 2010s; they also signal

² World Bank, Poverty and Inequality Platform <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC?locations=AM>

³ The population targeted by preschool education is referred to as the age group of 3- to 5-year-olds, and this age group's population is used for the calculation of enrolment indicators. Even though there are some children in preschool who are already 6 years old, this convention avoids double-counting with the population of 6- to 9-year-olds, meant to attend primary education.



a risk of loss of human capital, taking into account that students in the first cycle of higher education represent the vast majority of higher education enrolments (89%).

Quality and relevance

To assess and benchmark quality of education systems, participation of countries in international assessments is fundamental. While Armenia has been participating in TIMMS since 2003, it will join PISA for the first time in 2025. This makes it slightly difficult to assess and benchmark accurately the average quality of learning⁴. As far as vocational education and training is concerned, its place and role, as a solid bridge between education and labour market, remains to be enhanced, in particular as relevance to labour-market needs would need to be monitored and ensured, and modern (dual) teaching methods further developed.

Inequality analysis


By law, education access should be granted to all children alike, starting from six years old⁵. However, in practice, disparities exist in terms of availability and quality of educational opportunities, depending first and foremost on the place of residence – this includes both differences between urban and rural areas and between regions.

Inequalities in access and retention

Data on access to various education levels reveals evident disparities, particularly in preschool education. Despite a 12% increase in the involvement of children aged zero to five in preschool from 2019 to 2023, access to this level remains significantly limited in Armenia due to insufficient capacity to meet demand, with notable urban-rural differences. Socio-economic status also plays a role, as disadvantaged groups face greater challenges in accessing preschool compared to more advantaged groups, despite State affirmative action measures aimed at complementing community efforts towards equity.

⁴ MoESCS comments received in March 2025 shared that last international learning tests (TIMMS 2023) were indicating above-average levels (surpassing the 500-point threshold) in mathematics and science, with a proportion of students failing to meet the minimum threshold decreased (82% now surpassing the minimum threshold and 40% reaching the intermediate level).

⁵ According to the Law on education: 'The general education starts from the age of 6 years old (article 15, clause 3). 'A 12-year general or vocational education is compulsory up to the learner's age of 19, if this right was not executed earlier' (article 18, clause 7).



In 2023, the total capacity of public and private institutions met only about 37% of the potential demand for children aged zero to five, and 77% of the demand for children aged three to five – insufficient to meet the actual needs, except in some specific regions.

While access to primary and lower secondary education is essentially universal and does not show significant inequities, regional disparities emerge in Grade 9 graduation rates. In 2023-2024, these rates ranged from 75% in Armavir to over 92% in Lori.

Gender disparities in students' academic performance are also visible in most regions, in favour of girls in some regions and in favour of boys in others, although these differences balance out at the national level. However, in Grade 9, a higher proportion of girls than boys achieved excellent results in 2023-2024. Additionally, there are significant regional gender differences in the proportion of youth who continue in general education or attend VET programmes beyond Grade 9, raising questions about the reasons behind these disparities and their impact on young people's future opportunities.

Inequalities in Quality: Teaching and Learning Conditions

The Armenian education system faces several challenges in providing equal learning opportunities for all children. These challenges relate to the characteristics of the schools, of the teaching force, and to the overall learning environment, with marked differences between urban and rural settings. For instance, 77% of rural schools have fewer than 250 students, while 70% of urban schools have more than 250 students. This goes along with significant disparities in the availability and quality of teaching staff, e.g. 98% of teachers have a pedagogical qualification in Yerevan, compared to only 80% in Tavush; the pupil-teacher ratio also varies significantly, from 7.3 in Aragatsotn to 14.4 in Yerevan.

Furthermore, there are substantial differences in the quality of learning environments, with rural schools often suffering from inadequate infrastructure – some regions report that close to half of general education schools require significant renovation and many rural schools have limited access to digital resources.



Until recent policy measures⁶, key issues related to the teaching force included:

- a shortage of teachers, especially in STEM subjects, the arts, foreign languages, and physical education, particularly in rural areas, compounded by an ageing workforce;
- a less attractive job profile compared to other professions, with the average teacher's salary being significantly lower than the national average;
- an increasing, yet generally low, pupil-to-teacher ratio in state general education schools.

It will be important to assess the impact of the newly introduced measures over time, such as the mentor school project, particularly regarding the long-term attractiveness of the teaching profession.

Financial analysis

Education Budget


Given the socio-economic, demographic and geopolitical challenges facing the country, nearly half of the State budget is allocated to social protection programmes (including those targeting children and vulnerable families), as well as defence and national security. Despite recent significant increases in the education budget, public spending on education remains low compared to international figures. Between 2020 and 2023, the State education budget ranged from 2% to 2.3% of the gross national product⁷ (international benchmark is 4-6%), while it accounted for an average of 7.7% of the State budget⁸ (rising to 8.7% in 2024, but still far below the international benchmark of 15-20%). In the current context, the prospects for a significant increase in education spending in the short term, particularly from domestic resources, are limited. Furthermore, challenges persist in budget planning and execution. In 2023, the budget execution rate was 94% of the revised budget, despite in-year revisions consistently reducing the approved education budgets, while the overall State budgets have been revised upwards.

The largest portion of public spending has been allocated to the general education programme, which has accounted for an average of 63% of the education budget over the past five years.

⁶ As per MoESCS' precisions, more than 3 000 new teachers entered the system during 2023-2024, the majority of which were young, STEM-subject teachers. Policies for teacher salary increase were introduced based on an attestation process asserting quality which 20% of teachers passed while about 1 300 additional teachers belong to categories ensuring extra payments. STEM-field teachers (8 200) get extra payments to their salaries (+25%), as well as teachers who work in rural settlement schools (3 200).

⁷ UIS September 2024 data release.

⁸ State budget data.



Capital expenditure in the education sector has seen a remarkable increase over the past five years, namely related to ambitious infrastructure building and renovation objectives. From 3.62% in 2021, its share of the total education budget rose significantly, averaging 16.4% during 2022-2023 and reaching 40.7% in 2024. The Establishment, Construction, and Improvement of General Schools and Preschool Institutions, as titled in the State Programme for the Development Education until 2030 (hereinafter Education Development Programme 2030), alone, represents one-third of the education budget.

The 2024/2025 academic year marks the second year of implementing a new school funding formula. This approach bases funding for general education institutions on a per-class parameter, replacing the previous per-student funding model. To date, no comprehensive analysis has been conducted to evaluate the impact of this change.

Public Policy Financial Sustainability

The action plan for the Education Development Programme 2030 was costed using a methodology based on estimated unit costs. However, the costing process did not account for projected fiscal space or medium-term budget constraints. As a result, the costs provided are primarily for informational purposes rather than serving as a foundation for developing medium-term expenditure frameworks or annual budgets. Furthermore, the share of these estimated costs which has secured funding (either from domestic or international donors) is not mentioned.

The MoESCS prepared a report on the programme's implementation in 2023, detailing progress for each activity in the action plan. However, the report lacks financial data, which limits the ability to conduct a thorough analysis of public spending on the programme's implementation⁹. This omission also hinders evidence-based planning necessary to ensure the Programme's sustainable financing.

⁹ MoESCS clarified that the majority of the Programme activities were funded from the state budget and that these allocations are reflected in separate state budget performance reports, in the form of budgetary measures. Currently, the Government of Armenia has initiated public administration reforms, which include the harmonization and interlinking of strategic documents. This process also entails aligning the Education Strategy with the sector's budgetary measures. ETF recommends assessing the success of these efforts at the occasion of the next progress monitoring occasion.



Governance Analysis

Governance Structure

Armenia has a semi-decentralised education system, hence a complex model of policy implementation. Provisions for cooperation between MoESCS and other ministries are implicitly formulated in legal documents – these include the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure (MTAI), the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA), the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, all of which contribute towards various organisational aspects of educational operations.

Although the MoESCS statute mandates the ministry to contribute to the balanced territorial development of the education sector (among other sectors under its responsibility, namely culture and sports), there are several limitations in the implementation of this principle. For instance, the policy is applied uniformly across all areas, without a differentiated approach based on the specific needs, capacities or resources of each region. Additionally, the statute does not specify how the MoESCS should collaborate with regional educational authorities and local authorities, in particular municipalities/communities responsible for preschool provision; nor does it analyse the implementation of territorial education policy. Similarly, there is insufficient clarity regarding how regional governors carry out their monitoring functions in the education sector.

There are several departments within the ministry, each with its own specific mandate and tasks, but there is generally no regular or timely mechanism for information exchange, consultation, and mutual support. The Department for Strategic Planning and Monitoring is expected to play a crucial role in consolidating the overall education outcomes in the country and informing the design, planning and monitoring of mid- and long-term state programmes in education, sports and culture. Despite the critical importance of this department, its current functional capacity is disproportionately low compared to its designated mandate.

Outside of the ministry, at least eight key agencies are involved in the design, monitoring and supervision of the state educational programmes – they all have diverse responsibilities and should play a vital role in implementing state policies.



Governance challenges

The assessment of the education sector's governance focused on inter-ministerial coordination, internal cooperation across MoESCS departments and with the agencies and organisations linked to the ministry, alignment with educational policy objectives and operational efficiency. It led to identify four main challenges.

- **Structural complexity and coordination:** Several structures have overlapping mandates, which can lead to inefficiencies in the use of available resources and potential duplication of efforts. The coordination of common tasks and joint activities is currently managed through informal, ad hoc mechanisms, without clear overarching supervision. These challenges are most visible within general education.
- **Policy alignment:** There is limited alignment between the objectives of the various agencies and the strategic goals of the MoESCS, resulting in gaps in the implementation of the education policy. The revised action plan for the state education programme does not clearly define the roles and responsibilities of these organisations in delivering specific outputs.
- **Use of data, monitoring and accountability mechanisms:** Despite significant and successful improvement efforts over the last years, the education management information system (EMIS)¹⁰ remains underused for informing policy decision and planning. The existing monitoring and accountability frameworks are either underdeveloped or inconsistent, which affects the transparency, effectiveness and quality assurance of operations, as well as the accountability of implementing stakeholders.
- **Resource allocation:** Funding and human resources are unevenly distributed across departments and agencies. As a result, some entities face challenges in meeting the increasingly ambitious goals set for them, without corresponding increases in their resources.

¹⁰ MoESCS shared that improvement efforts are currently being deployed within the framework of the World Bank (WB) credit program, including for developing and testing data analysis and visualisation tools, which should be integrated into EMIS, revising the design of the database structure and its use, implementing a data storage and archiving infrastructure, setting up a quality assurance and control tool, and an AI-driven forecasting system. These efforts should enhance the system's ability to generate reports and perform analyses. The WB project is expected to be completed by December 2025, after which the MoESCS plans to make a comprehensive update of the system, an upgrade of all subsystems within the education management system, and to release mobile applications.



Recommendations

RED's recommendations for improving the performance of the education sector have been organised into three main focus areas, which relate to complementary objectives and offer for each a menu of possible priorities for improvement. Beyond aiming to maximise the impact of the on-going education reforms and policies, these recommendations also endeavour to improve the usual operations of the education system, through:

- improving the governance of the reform
- enhancing the resources to the sector
- reinforcing the institutional capacity of the MoESCS to perform its key functions.


Area 1: improving the governance of the reform (and maximising its chances of success)

1.1 Set up formal coordination frameworks at all levels - to improve reform implementation and maximise results

- Add a chapter on governance in the Education Development Programme 2030 and its action plan, with a view to de-cluster the management of the sector.
- Strengthen interministerial cooperation by operationalising the relationship between MoESCS and the Ministry of Finance, and revise collaboration methods as needed to ensure a stronger link between policy and funding.
- Implement the regulation and reinforce collaboration methods for effective interministerial partnership between MoESCS, MLSA, Ministry of Health, MTAI and the Police for the case management of vulnerable children.
- Create frameworks for regular coordination between MoESCS and regional Departments of Education.

1.2 Ensure participatory governance mechanisms – to improve reform relevance, monitoring and acceptance

- Refine (or associate) the action plan into (to) a real, operational roadmap or dashboard for effective monitoring of progress.
- Create effective reporting tools to be filled in by public institutions implementing the reform.
- Define a framework, tools and consultation mechanisms for regular lessons learnt of pilot interventions and feedback loops from partners on the ground (including teachers and



schools directors, with allowing for anonymous feedback) and entrust an organisation (Strategic Planning Department?) for its consolidation and use.

- Organise an open discussion on the current mechanisms of policy dialogue with representatives of the main stakeholders of the education system and collect improvement suggestions in terms of channels, rhythm and desired content for a two-way communication – and act upon these suggestions.
- Extend the deadlines for public online consultations that are legally required to allow sufficient time for useful contributions and follow up by sharing information on the feedback collected and possibly on remediation measures adopted.


1.3 Organise annual joint-sector reviews - to steer the reform and inform remediation measures

- Learn about international good practice and adopt a robust methodology for effective, evidence-based joint-sector reviews.
- Organise at least once a year a one-week joint-sector review gathering all levels of stakeholders, civil society and development partners, and combining technical and political discussions.

Area 2: enhancing the resources of the education sector

2.1 Optimise state budget utilisation

- Analyse the reasons behind budget underspending and in-year revisions and include the findings in the relevant reports.
- Refine the formal collaboration framework between the Strategic Planning and Monitoring Department and the Finance and Budget Department, and the line departments within the MoESCS to ensure coordinated planning and financing of the education strategy.
- Review and simplify as possible (without jeopardising transparency) the procurement procedures by the educational institutions.
- Secure a budget line/funds to enable the Strategic Planning Department to fulfil its role.
- Ensure appropriate levels of funds for deploying well-facilitated pilots of new reform measures and their proper evaluation to reduce policy ambiguity or conflict, and ensure their sustainability over time for effective scaling-up.
- Enhance the capacity of relevant stakeholders at national, regional, municipal and school levels to use the EMIS as the main basis for budget preparation and financial reporting.

- 
- Update EMIS fields as needed to capture and consolidate financial information from the ground to the central levels

2.2 Diversify financing sources

- **Schools:** Upon verification of legal room for manoeuvre and gathering of international good practice on income-generating activities, encourage both VET and general education schools, through promotion campaigns, to develop these; or review as needed the legislation to allow them.
- **Diaspora:** Add a dimension to the strategic approach to diaspora in the Education Development Programme 2030 in a perspective of resource mobilisation – explore and discuss the possibility of incentives for diaspora contribution (and learn from others’ experiences of diaspora education funds, as a possible long-term objective to channel diaspora funds into the education system).
- **Private sector:** Review and adapt the regulatory framework and incentive schemes to promote stronger private-sector involvement especially in VET institutions, including through public–private partnership models.
- **Preschool institutions:** Based on a review and an exposure to different models of preschool management, propose alternative models (including their funding schemes) enabling an increased preschool offer, especially in rural areas.

2.3 Increase efficiency in the use of resources

- **Provide the framework:** List, update and disseminate general principles for the optimal use of resources (e.g. through a circular), such as facilities consumption, multiple use of premises across various education services (e.g. general education, non-formal education, adult continuing training, etc.).
- **Delegate responsibility** and encourage creative asset management schemes: entrust school directors to submit a proposal for efficiency gains based on the abovementioned framework and guidelines to be prepared by MoESCS.
- **Ensure accountability:** Map the stakeholders involved in state budget use and assess channels currently used for ensuring their accountability at national and sub-national levels; create accountability tools whereby actors receiving and managing public money report regularly on their decisional criteria and practices for allocating resources, alongside sharing monetary accounts.

- **Make a cost-benefit analysis** of the outsourcing options for service provision, in particular the outsourcing strategy, beneficiaries, operational area and tendering rules (e.g. private companies, NGOs, teacher training, textbook creation, printing or delivery, etc.) and enforce most efficient options.

2.4 Ensure equity

- **Map and evaluate all the current or recent financial measures**, in particular for levelling inequalities (e.g. rewards and financial incentives for teachers and other personnel, scholarship schemes for students, subsidies, etc.).
- **Set up transparent principles allowing for differentiating the financial support to regions and for affirmative action**, depending on their respective needs, own resources, capacity and potential (priority to remote regions).
- **Create equity measurement tools** inspired from international good practice and entrust the relevant line departments with their regular use.

Area 3: reinforcing the institutional capacity of the MoESCS to perform its key functions

3.1 Vision-building for the education sector

- Review and reinforce the **articulation** – pathways, coordination or synergies – between the **various sub-sector strategies** as formulated in the various chapters of the Education Development Programme 2030 (or its action plan).
- Develop, make explicit and/or make more concrete the strategic steps and actions planned to make **VET and HE more relevant** to the labour market.
- Differentiate more clearly the **vision(s) for preschool services**, between early childhood development and care for zero- to two-year-olds and preschool education for three- to five-year-olds.

3.2 Planning, monitoring and evaluation

- Re-position the **body in charge** of planning, monitoring and evaluation to a higher hierarchical level to **legitimate leadership** (Strategic Planning Department or equivalent attached to the Minister's Cabinet?).
- Visualise, review and clarify the **governance of the data cycle** from production to quality check, analysis and use, including various actors in charge of each step, time frame, guidelines to follow, specific capacity-building needs (see also data collection and analysis).

- Adopt a **differentiation approach** in the design of the reform measures **according to the target audience** (e.g. new, young versus senior teachers and the certification process).
- **School offer planning**: Adjust the norms for places by specialty in VET to the data collected with MLSA and reflect on possible sanctions if not respected, as a way to make quality assurance effective. Do an analysis of preschool waiting lists and revise criteria for priority access in a perspective of inequality levelling.

3.3 Implementation of the education policy at the national and sub-national levels

- Propose a **self-assessment tool for all executive agencies** and departments to reflect on their mandate vs their human resources.
- Do a **functional review of regional Departments** of Education and redefine their roles in a realistic manner related to their position, within elected authorities and their resources.
- Facilitate the **'legal literacy'** of stakeholders and beneficiaries on the operational rules of the education system by developing and updating a user-friendly storage of legal documents on the MoESCS website, including a search engine by key words.
- Explore and discuss room for manoeuvre for revising the level of **teacher recruitment processes** or introducing **teacher mobility schemes**, in order to also address teacher shortage issues through greater geographic fluidity.

3.4 Data collection and analysis

- Complete the **list of data gaps** identified in this report through a systematic consultation of main data users, relating these missing data to their expected use, and revise EMIS fields accordingly if needed, including financial flows, specific data regarding schools, teachers and children (suggestions available in the core report).
- Do a **review of the whole education data cycle process** from collection to use, to identify weaknesses, including redundant requests to actors, inefficiencies, inputting and analytical capacity building needs, requirements to streamline the processes and facilitate their use throughout the policy cycle, and pre-requisites for inter-operability with other important national databases (see also in governance).
- Design and ensure resources for a **capacity-building plan** based on user-friendly guidelines' addressing the various data producers in order to ensure quality of data inputs.
- Develop a framework and methodology for the production and use of **qualitative data**, in order to assess the impact of new measures or programmes in almost real time, namely before impact might be seen through EMIS quantitative data.

- **Require NCET and ARMSTAT to collaborate** and:
 - systematically calculate and share key indicators compatible with international benchmarking by education level (ISCED 1, 2, 3);
 - improve the accessibility of EMIS and ARMSTAT online platforms by providing comprehensive footnotes and metadata;
 - make statistical reports available in spreadsheet formats (e.g. xlsx or csv) instead of just PDF to facilitate data analysis.
- Track data on applications for school principal positions: digitalise the submissions and assessment processes of the candidate's school development plan to ensure consistency and transparency of the process.
- Chose an appropriate methodology for using **employability measurement tools** and then coordinate with MLSA for integrating a skills-needs request into employers' surveys, and with VET colleges to implement tracer studies.
- Evaluate the current operability of the sectorial committees, and in coordination with MLSA, explore the possibility of transforming them into more active sector skills councils in charge of regular **labour market skill-needs' intelligence** able to steer the VET and higher education offer.

3.5 Research and innovation

- Identify officially a body entrusted with the **research and innovation function** and clarify the scope of its mandate (e.g. ad hoc studies, international good practice benchmarking, evaluations of pilot initiatives, etc.).
- Conduct a number of **ad hoc studies** on specific aspects of the Armenian system.
- Define and apply **guidelines for pilots**, including lessons-learnt phase.
- Increase the **analytical capacity** of NCET (training plan for staff).
- Collect **international good practice** on the topics currently under strategic reflection in Armenia and do an analysis of the elements of applicability to the Armenian context, including, for instance, on alternative models for preschool management, school income-generating activities, etc.



3.6 Quality assurance and pedagogical norms

- Define and distribute the key responsibilities for quality assurance among the main existing bodies (or set up a new one?), revising as needed their mandate: Education Inspection Body (EIB), National Centre for Education Development and Innovation (NCEDI), regional departments, National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation (ANQA), etc.
- Revise the reporting and accountability frameworks in great detail, including on the funds received from the MoESCS.
- Make the process for educational staff recruitment, while clarifying paths from one status to the other (in particular, have a differentiation approach for the attestation process depending on the profile and seniority of staff).
- Put in place monitoring and accountability methods of all recruitment processes (teachers, school principals, etc.) ensuring a good balance between effectiveness and quality (especially in remote and border areas), transparency and equity.
- Pedagogical guidance: the expected role of the MoESCS in providing the appropriate pedagogical framework (curricula development, teacher training, etc.) is essential. However, it was not the focus of the RED, hence recommendations have not been developed in this area.

Among these many recommended lines of action, ETF recommends the following immediate priorities for support from the EU or other donors:

- reinforce the Strategic Planning Department (position and hierarchical power, human resources, analytical and planning capacity);
- map and assess the impact of the various financial incentives and supports put in place, for teachers and students, against the objective of inequality levelling;
- put in place transparent accountability frameworks and user-friendly reporting tools at all levels.

Conclusion

While this Rapid Education Diagnosis (RED) may not offer entirely new insights into the challenges facing the Armenian education system – challenges that practitioners are likely already familiar with, either empirically or intuitively – it provides a comprehensive, systematic, data-driven, and hopefully user-friendly clarification of this knowledge. The wide sharing of these findings



should help build consensus on the most pressing issues and priorities. However, the true value of this diagnosis lies with policymakers, who, through the consultation and planning processes they will choose to implement, will determine how to engage with, build on, refine, or plan the follow-up to RED recommendations.