

NEWSLETTER #2

JAN-JUN 2021



Welcome to the new I2Q Project newsletter

#FORBETTEREDUCATION

I2Q Project – Facilitating Education Reform Agenda in Georgia

The legal basis for Innovation, Inclusion and Quality Project - Georgia is the Loan Agreement No 8955-GE between Georgia and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), dated, June 18, 2019.

The Project is supported by the World Bank and its implementing partners are the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and the Municipal Development Fund of Georgia (MDF).

The Project Operation Manual (POM) Describes the following Five Components:

1. Improving Quality of and Access to Early Childhood Education (ECE)
2. Fostering Quality Teaching and Learning in General Education
3. Strengthening Financing Options and Promoting Internationalization in Higher Education
4. System Strengthening and Stakeholder Communication
5. Supporting Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation

Georgia Innovation, Inclusion
and Quality Project

Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia



TAMAR SANIKIDZE,
the project executive director
talks about the Projects meaning and its implementation



Briefly about I2Q Project

Innovation, Inclusion and Quality Project – Georgia facilitates the education reform agenda in Georgia. Its objective is to Improve access to early childhood education, enhance the quality of general and higher education and improve of learning environment.

I2Q Project is quite different from other programs implemented in the education sector. System strengthening efforts are core to the project and include activities to promote a culture of data-driven decision making, active communication and stakeholder engagement.

Within the scope of the project, the diagnostic studies will proceed principal interventions at different levels of education. Information gathered from the diagnostic studies will be very important and help us in further improvement of the project designs that are under development. The focus will be on the long-term interventions that will ensure to fill the gaps and authoritative settlement. Procurement procedures have just finished and the I2Q Project starts working on the Diagnostic Study of Early Childhood and General Education in Georgia to conduct a comprehensive diagnostic assessment of the sectors and provide recommendations for improvement.

Even though functions of EMIS have been reviewed several times and its capacity was strengthened, the system still faces new challenges. EMIS needs to fulfill its definite role – support policy decision-makers in data-driven decision-making. Significant political decisions should be based on solid arguments.

Early and Preschool Education

Planned diagnostic works will be completed in stages in 2022. The I2Q Project is in its active Implementation phase. Highly qualified international and local consultants are involved in preparing basic project designs. These designs will ensure the improvement of the quality of ECE programs in Georgia.

Also, under the I2Q project, school readiness groups will be opened in selected schools, in which updated and improved school readiness programs will be introduced. Teachers will be trained to implement new programs effectively and school readiness groups will be equipped with relevant educational resources, furniture and equipment. School readiness groups will be introduced in 150 schools that were selected based on criteria developed under the I2Q project.

Under the project it is planned to build new model



schools using the new infrastructure standards. A combined physical and educational environment will be created in these schools. That will support the effective integration of school readiness programs and primary education.

General Education

Highly qualified international and local experts are already working on preparing the terms of reference for Fostering Quality Teaching and Learning in General Education through introduction of effective quality management system, whole school improvement plan and programs, improved assessment policy, practice and methodology.

Besides, the I2Q Project, will also address the issue of quality and effective use of formative continuous assessments of students including students with disabilities and/or diverse education needs.

Also, the teachers will be trained to develop and implement school curricula effectively.

Work will begin in August, this year to develop the National Assessment Policy Framework and the National Education Quality Assurance Policy Framework for general education level.

New standards of modern infrastructure and physical environment will be developed to develop the school's physical and educational environment. Up to 10 model schools will be built and 60 schools, selected within the project, will be rehabilitated.

Higher Education

Significant progress has been made in the field of higher education as well. The international company winner in the international tender is already working on the Development of a New Model for Higher Education Financing.

Simultaneously with the new model, a HEIs Information Management Database System will be created. The new funding model will solve various problems in terms of education funding - it will ensure transparency of the process and allocation of funds according to the required criteria.

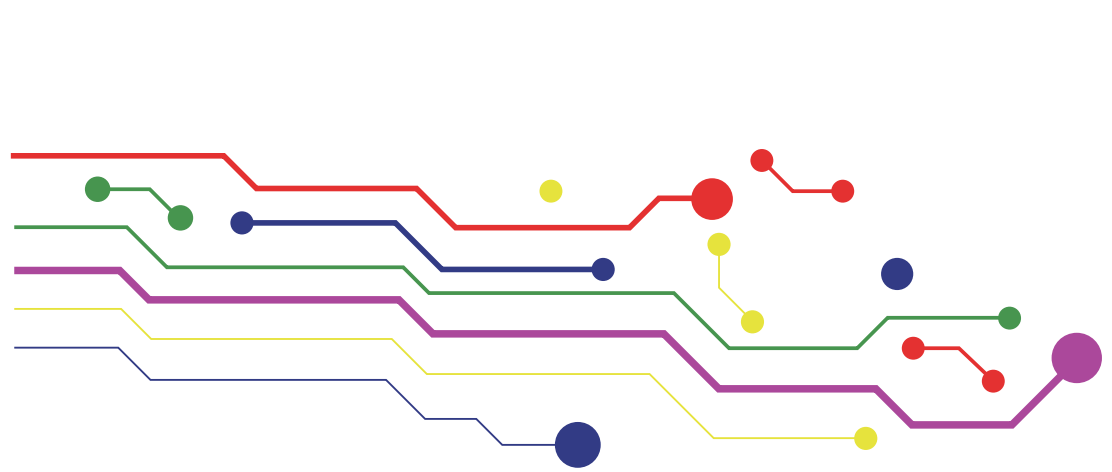
Criteria may include the enhancement of the education quality, scientific activities of the institution, etc. We will be able to talk more precisely after the international company working in this direction presents a new financing model project. Discussions on the project will end in October this year. Under the project, the Competitive Innovation Fund (CIF) will be established as a grant program to provide funding for competitive initiatives of higher education institutions. It is planned to award up to 45 CIF grants to foster modernization of higher education programs and learning environment.

Three qualified consultants (local and international) have already been selected. They have already started working on the package of documentation regulating the activities of the Competitive Innovation Fund.

Stakeholder Communication

It is crucial that the I2Q project provides active communication with stakeholders in education reform. It should be noted that education reforms have often lacked a communication component.

The I2Q project is supporting the Ministry of Education and Science to solve the issue. A tender was announced at the end of June this year to select a consulting company. The winning company will develop a 5-year communication strategy and a 2-year action plan for the Ministry with the involvement of various stakeholders and their representative groups.



Covid-19 – Significant Challenge

I2Q Project started in 2019 and faced challenges from the very beginning. The spread of the Coronavirus affected the project implementation in the very first year. The transition of the classroom learning process to distance learning across the country has significantly changed the situation in the education system. As a result, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia requested urgent support in handling the different challenges. Within the scope of the project, the survey was conducted about the Importance of Distance / Online and Blended Teaching. On the results of the survey, additional interventions were determined, such as supply and installation of Wi-Fi Networks in Schools, equip classes with computers and projectors and support and extend the maintenance of the Checkpoint cybersecurity system.

Supporting Education Sector Strategy Development

Implementation of the project coincided with the crucial period when the reporting period defined by the existing unified strategy of education and science expires. MoES is now working on the new 10-year Education and Science Strategy (2022-2032) and Action Plan (2022-2023). Based on the request of the MoES, support is provided by the World Bank and within the scope of the I2Q Project, highly qualified local and

international experts are involved in developing the strategy document.

Accountability

In February this year, the World Bank Implementation Support Mission for I2Q Project was held. The purpose of the mission was to discuss the project's ongoing and planned activities and agreement on further steps.

Twice a year project team prepares a detailed report for the World Bank. Recently KPMG has audited the special purpose project financial statements of the I2Q Project that reflects the financial position of the Project and its sources and uses of funds and movement in Designated Account for the year ended 31 December 2020. In Auditor's opinion, special purpose project financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Project as of 31 December 2020, and its sources and uses of funds for the year ended 31 December 2020 in accordance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standard: Financial Reporting Under the Cash Basis of Accounting and the World Bank Guidelines.

Currently, the project team works according to a pre-written plan that was updated in 2020 due to various priority issues for the Ministry of Education and Science, including the pandemic situation.

Implementation Support Mission



A World Bank task team conducted the virtual Implementation Support Mission for Georgia Innovation, Inclusion and Quality Project (Georgia I2Q) during the period February 15-19, 2021.

The key objectives of the mission were to: (i) discuss the ongoing project implementation progress, including fiduciary and safeguards aspects, in both implementing entities (the Project Management Unit (PMU) of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MESCS) and the Project Management Team (PMT) at the Municipal Development Fund (MDF); (ii) identify solutions to any pending issues to expediate implementation; (iii) agree on next steps and update the implementation timeline; and (iv) take part in the education sector related donor coordination meetings.



On February 16, the World Bank representatives held online meetings with I2Q Project's Executive Director – Tamar Sanikidze and Deputy Ministers of MoESCS – Ekaterine Dgebuadze and Nunu Mitskevici.

I2Q Project's Executive Director overviewed ongoing and planned activities at the meeting. She also mentioned infrastructure related projects.

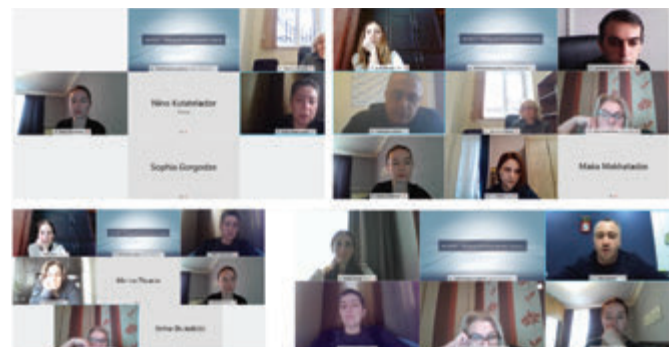
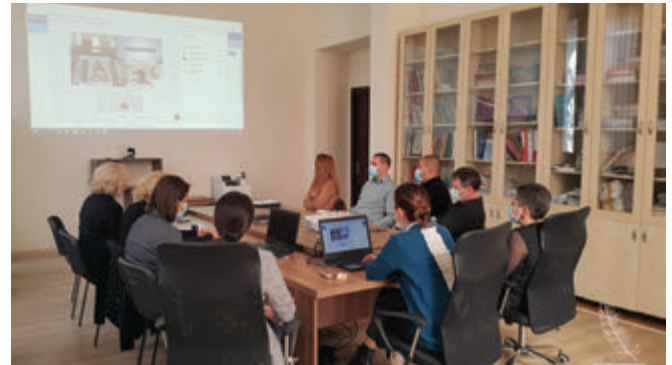
Ekaterine Dgebuadze, the First Deputy Minister talked about revision of national assessment system and quality and effective use of formative assessments of students including students with disabilities and diverse education needs.

Nunu Mitskevici, the Deputy Minister briefly reported about the progress of the education reform regarding higher education. Nino Begiashvili, the HE Component Lead who also attended the meeting talked about ongoing and planned activities of HE component. She mentioned the new model of financing HE and Competitive Innovation Fund (CIF). CIF, as a grant project, will foster the modernization of higher education programs and learning environments.



On February 17, within the scope of The World Bank Implementation Support Mission for I2Q Project online meetings were held with the heads of LEPLs of MoESCS. Participants discussed the collaboration with I2Q Project.

Sopho Gorgodze, head of NAEC, Lasha Margishvili and Kakhaber Eradze, deputy heads of NCEQE, Berika Shukakidze and Manana Ratiani from TPDC and Dimitri Beridze, head of EMIS attended the meetings. Participants discussed ongoing activities and future plans.



Coordination with Key Donors and Stakeholders

On January 26, Mikheil Chkhenkeli, the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia held working meeting with Sebastian Molineuss, the World Bank South Caucasus Regional Director. They discussed current issues of Innovation, Inclusion and Quality Project and other further plans of education in Georgia.

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On March 31, Development Partner Coordination meeting was held online. All the major donors in Georgia attended the meeting. Due to the current important issues in the education system Ekaterine Dgebuadze, the first Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, provided a brief update on the process of progress of Education Strategy 2022-2030 and Action Plan. Strategy is being developed within the I2Q Project supported by the World Bank.

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On June 1, the MES of Georgia hosted the online Donors' Coordination Meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to establish efficient communication and coordination mechanism for better alignment of the donor engagement with the Ministry's strategic priorities. The proposed donor coordination mechanism will serve as a platform to discuss developments in the education sector, present ongoing programs by donors and participants, clarify financial investment needs and promote new project ideas for donor support.

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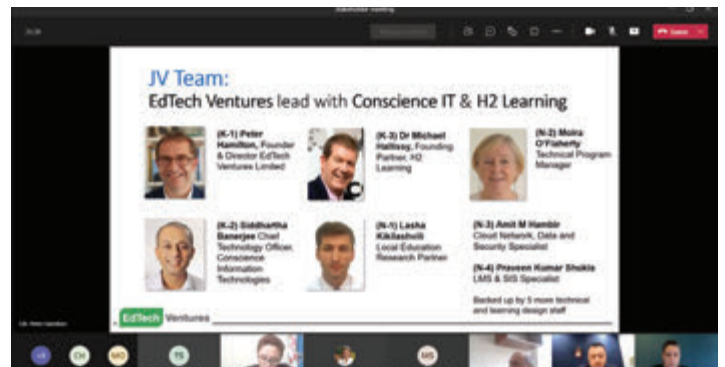


The I2Q Project Implementing Partners Held Meeting with the World Bank - PMU and PMT briefed on ongoing activities and next steps

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The I2Q Project provides improving the capacity of the Education Management Information System (EMIS). Assignment is implemented by the joint venture of international companies -EdTech Ventures Ltd (Ireland), H2 Learning (Ireland) and Conscience IT (India).

[More](#)



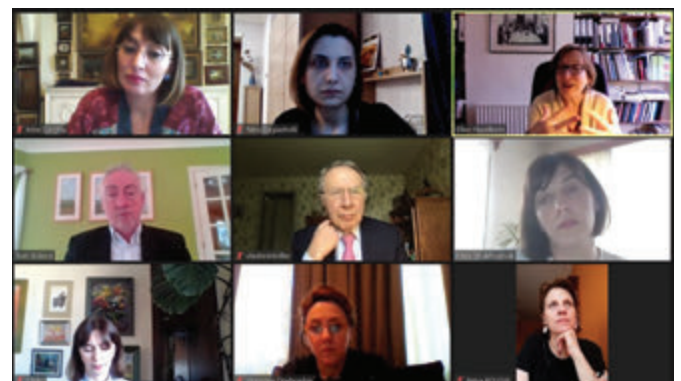
MES of Georgia is developing Education and Science Strategy 2022-2032 and action plan. The support is provided by the World Bank. Highly qualified local and international experts involved in developing the document were selected through an international tender according the WB regulations within the scope of the I2Q project.

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The IIQ Project provides support for improving funding mechanisms for higher education. Assignment is implemented by IBF International Consulting (Belgium), a multisector consulting company with 40 years' experience in higher education sector. The company was selected through an international tender.

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I2Q Project started developing on ToR for tendering basic activities for improving the ECE institution management system and enhancing the quality of ECE programs across the country. The assignment aims to cover the grounds of ECE in almost every aspect.

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I2Q Project provides improvement of the quality of ECE programs in Georgia. International short-term consultant Mrs. Trina Arsenault, selected through an international tender, will design the terms of reference for the development of terms of reference on improving ECE Institution Management System and Enhancing the Quality of Programs Across the Country.

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Systematic and robust preschool data reporting and consolidation mechanisms will be established and incorporated with the EMIS systems to strengthen intra- and intersectoral coordination for ECE.

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Proud to announce that I2Q Project ICT/ Data Integration Manager Maka Makhatadze is the winner of the Grace Hopper Award in the category of ICT Champion.

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Recent Procurement Activities

Supporting Development of the Terms of Reference on Improving ECE Institution Management System and Enhancing the Quality of Programs Across the Country (National and International Consultants)

Objective: to provide technical support to PMU for the purpose of tendering the upcoming activity for Improving Early Childhood Education (ECE) institution Management System and Enhancing the Quality of Programs Across the Country envisaged under the Component 1 of the project.

Status: contracts signed to Nutsa Fruidze (national) and Trina Arsenault (international).



Diagnostic Study of Early Childhood Education/ECE Sector (access, quality and needs) in Georgia

Objective: to conduct a comprehensive diagnostic assessment of ECE sector and provide recommendations for improvement.

Status: Contract negotiations with JV PPMI Group (Leading Member)/Lithuania, International Step by Step Association (Member)/Netherlands and Ilia State University – Centre for Preschool and Inclusive Education/ Georgia (Member)



Development of Terms of Reference on Fostering Quality Teaching and Learning in General Education (National and International Consultants)

Objective: to provide technical support to PMU for the purpose of tendering the upcoming activity for Fostering Quality Teaching and Learning in General Education envisaged under the Component 2 of the project.

Status: contract Signed to Lasha Kokilashvili (national) Moyra Hadley (international)



Short-term Consultant (International) for Support in Development of National Quality Assurance Policy Framework for General Education Level

Objective: to develop the new national quality assurance policy framework for general education level.

Status: CVs are under evaluation.



Consulting Services for Study and Evaluation of Trends in General Education in Georgia

Objective: to conduct an education system diagnostic which will include elements of governance, alignment and efficiency, quality and delivery of education, teacher/staff policies, financing, resources, and student outcomes.

Status: contract negotiations with Mathematica Inc. in sub-consultancy with Policy and Management Consulting Group/ US/Georgia.



Procurement of Technology Equipment for Schools (Laptops and Projectors)

Objective: to collect information in a single space, easily exchange lesson plans with colleagues, maintain their own communication channels, be able to disseminate information independently, hold remote teaching lessons (projectors – 898 units and Laptops – 6,350 units)

Status: contract signed to UGT Ltd.



Short-term Consultant (International) to Support the National Assessment and Examination Center with the Development of National Assessment Policy Framework for General Education Level

Objective: to provide targeted assistance to NAEC to evaluate current national assessment system of Georgia and develop the new national assessment policy framework for General Education level.

Status: contract negotiations with Eduardo C. Cascallar.



Delivery of TAO Administrative and Technical Training for NAEC

Objective: to support the National Assessment and Examination Center (NAEC) with the Project Implementation

Status: contract Signed to OAT



Developing General Education Infrastructure and Physical Environment Standards for General Education Institutions (schools) of Georgia

Objective: to develop the new, diversified and modern infrastructure standards in Georgia for General education institutions which will support 21st century teaching and learning, student centered pedagogy with creation of learning spaces which facilitates students' development.

Status: proposals are under evaluation.



Check Pont Security System Renewal and Software Licensing

Objective: to renew Check Point Security System and Software Licensing.

Status: contract signed t UGT Ltd.

Consulting Services for Diagnostic Assessment of Education Management Information System (EMIS), Data Integration and Analytic Systems

Objective: to provide research and advisory services for Data Driven Decision Support, available to the entire education system. Improve data collection, data and system management, and data use in decision-making, thereby improving different elements of the education system and contributing to the end goal of improving learning for all children and youth.

Status: contract signed JV EdTech Ventures Ltd (Leading Partner) Conscience IT (Partner) and H2 Learning (Partner)/ Ireland/India/Ireland.



Consulting Services for the Development of New Model for Higher Education Financing

Objective: to develop a new funding model with diversified funding mechanisms that includes performance-based funding options for higher education financing, aligning with the current Government's strategic priorities and good international practice.

Status: contract signed JV IBF International Consulting S.A./Belgium (Leading Partner) and Center for Strategy and Development LLC (CSD)/Georgia.



Short-Term Consultant (International) for supporting the planning process for the procurement on Information Management Database System for New Model of HE Performance-based Funding

Objective: to provide technical support to Education Management Information System (EMIS), and PMU for the purpose of tendering the upcoming activity Short Term Consultant (International) for supporting the planning process for the procurement on Information Management Database System for New Model of HE Performance-based Funding envisaged under the Component 3 of the project.

Status: contract signed to Mihajlo Babin.

Short-Term Consultant for Support Preparation of Early Childhood and General Education Sector Strategy and Action Plan (International)

Objective: to provide technical support and build the capacity required at the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia to develop a comprehensive Education and Science Strategy for 2022-2032 and Action Plan for 2022-2023 years.

Status: contract signed to Eve Eisenschmidt.



Short-Term Consultant for Support in Preparation of Early Childhood Education Sector Strategy and Action Plan (local)

Objective: to provide technical support and build the capacity required at the MES to develop a comprehensive Education and Science Strategy for 2022-2032 and Action Plan for 2022-2023 years.

Status: contract signed to Nato Panchulidze.



Short-Term Consultant for Support in Preparation of General Education Sector Strategy and Action Plan (local)

Objective: to provide technical support and build the capacity required at the MES to develop a comprehensive Education and Science Strategy for 2022-2032 and Action Plan for 2022-2023 years.

Status: contract signed to Ketevan Chachkhiani.



Short-Term Consultant for Support in Preparation of Science Sector Strategy and Action Plan (local)

Objective: to provide technical support and build the capacity required at the MES to develop a comprehensive Education and Science Strategy for 2022-2032 and Action Plan for 2022-2023 years.

Status: contract signed to Maya Okujava



Support in Preparation of HE Strategy and Action Plan (local)

Objective: to provide technical support and build the capacity required at theMES to develop a comprehensive Education and Science Strategy for 2022-2032 and Action Plan for 2022-2023 years.

Status: contract signed to Elene Cherkezia



Short-Term Consultant for Support Preparation of Higher Education, Research and Innovation Strategy and Action Plan (International)

Objective: to provide technical support and build the capacity required at the MES of Georgia to develop a comprehensive Education and Science Strategy for 2022-2032 and Action Plan for 2022-2023 years.

Status: contract signed to Melita Kovacevic.



Short-Term Consultant (National)/ Legal Expert for the Preparation of the Full Package of Regulatory Documents for CIF

Objective: to provide technical support to PMU for the Preparation of the Full Package of Regulatory Documents for CIF.

Status: contract signed to Ucha Dzimistarashvili



Short-Term Consultant (National)/ Higher Education Specialist for the Preparation of the Full Package of Regulatory Documents for CIF

Objective: to provide technical support to PMU for the Preparation of the Full Package of Regulatory Documents for CIF.

Status: contract signed to Maya Gelashvili



Short-Term Consultant (International) for the Preparation of the Full Package of Regulatory Documents for CIF

Objective: to provide technical support to PMU for the Preparation of the Full Package of Regulatory Documents for CIF.

Status: contract signed to Lisa Cowey



Tenders In Progress

Supply and Installation of Wi-Fi Networks in 121 Schools

Objective: to enable computers to connect to the Internet from any classroom. Accordingly, students/ teachers could use online educational resources in the teaching and learning process.

Status: tender is announced.



Short Term Consultant (National) for supporting the planning process for implementation of "Strengthening the Quality of Pre-service Teacher Education Programs and Continuous Professional Development Options"

Objective: to provide technical support to PMU for the purpose of tendering the upcoming activity for supporting the effective planning and implementation of the procurement on "Strengthening the Quality of Pre-service Teacher Education Programs and Continuous Professional Development Options" envisaged under the second and third Components of the project.

Status: tender is announced.



Short Term Consultant (International) for supporting the effective planning and implementation of the procurement on "Strengthening the Quality of Pre-service Teacher Education Programs and Continuous Professional Development Options"

Objective: to provide technical support to PMU for the purpose of tendering the upcoming activity for supporting the effective planning and implementation of the procurement on "Strengthening the Quality of Pre-service Teacher Education Programs and Continuous Professional Development Options" envisaged under the second and third Components of the project.

Status: tender is announced.



Developing Five-Year Communication Strategy and Action Plan for the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia

Objective: to develop 3-year communication strategy and 2-year action plan for the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia aiming at building a coalition to advance the reform, fostering public understanding on the value of modern learning and building trust in the system as it is being overhauled and encouraging participation of society in implementation and monitoring reform initiatives.

