



**Ministry of Education and Science
of Georgia**

**Georgia Innovation, Inclusion
and Quality Project (I2Q)**

PROGRESS REPORT

For the period of July-December 2021

**Submitted by:
Project Management Unit**

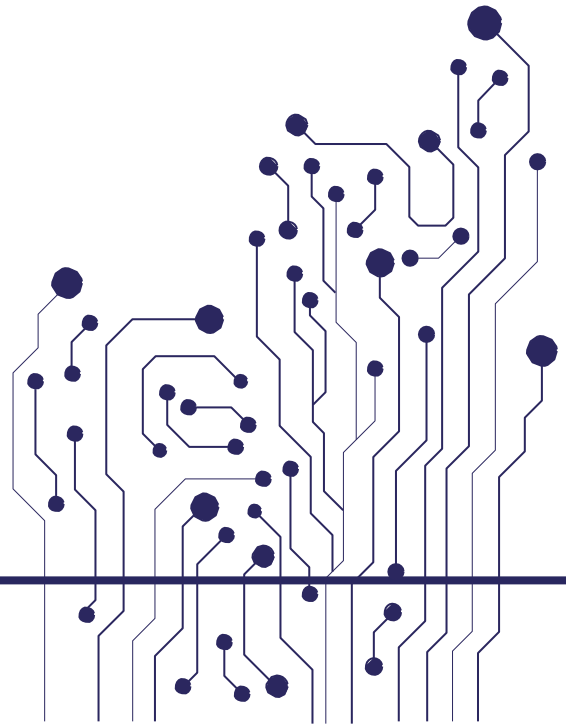
PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE: Georgia Innovation, Inclusion and Quality Project (I2Q)

PROJECT NUMBER: Ministerial Decree №338

FOR: The World Bank Group

PROJECT DURATION: March 5, 2020-March 5, 2026



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CIF	Competitive Innovation Fund	PAD	Project Appraisal Document
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care	PDO	Project Development Objective
EMIS	Education Management Information System (EMIS)	PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
EOI	Expressions of Interest	PMU	Project Management Unit (under MES)
ESIDA	Education and Science Infrastructure Development Agency	PMT	Project Management Team (under MDF)
EU	European Union	PP	Procurement Plan
GEL	Georgian Lari	REOI	Request for Expressions of Interest
GITA	Georgia Information and Technology Agency	SRP	School Readiness Program
GoG	Government of Georgia	STEP	Systemic Tracking
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development	TAO	Test Assisté par Ordinateur
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
MDF	Municipal Development Fund of Georgia	TOR	Terms of Reference
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation	ToT	Training of Trainers
MES	Ministry of Education and Science	TPDC	Teacher Professional Development Center
MoF	Ministry of Finance	TTL	Task Team Leader
MRDI	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
NAEC	National Assessment and Examination Center	USD	United States Dollar
NCEQE	National Center for Education Quality Enhancement	VET	Vocational Education and Training
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development	WB	World Bank

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Government of Georgia has signed the Loan Agreement for financing the implementation of Georgia Innovation, Inclusion and Quality Project – Georgia I2Q (I2Q Project) with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). The Project development objectives are to (i) expand access to preschool education and (ii) improve the quality of education and the learning environments and enhance relevance of higher education programs. The loan amount is 90 million Euros.

Original Loan agreement N8955, Section III, Withdrawal of Loan Proceeds

Category	Amount of the Loan Allocated (expressed in EUR)	Percentage of Expenditures to be financed (inclusive of Taxes)
(1) Works, Goods, non-consulting services, consulting services, Operating Costs and Training for the Project except for Parts 1(c), Part 2(a) and Part 5 (a) for the Project	29,775,000	80%
(2) Works, Goods, non- consulting services, consulting services, Operating Costs and Training under Part 1(c), Part 2(a) and Part 5(a) for the Project	60,000,000	80%
(3) Front-end Fee	225,000	Amount payable pursuant to Section 2.03 of this Agreement in accordance with Section 2.07 (b) of the General Conditions
(4) Interest Rate Cap or Interest Rate Collar premium		Amount due pursuant to Section 4.05 (c) of the General Conditions
TOTAL AMOUNT	90,000,000	

In 2020, in order to respond to epidemiological outbreak Covid-19 all governmental entities, including MES had to make severe budgetary cuts and thus faced significant challenges in financing various ongoing or upcoming projects. MES faced problem in finding budget for co-financing I2Q project activities. Constraints in budgetary funds would have affected and hindered the smooth and timely implementation of the project. Pandemic situation had already caused delays in project implementation. Therefore, MES sent an official letter to MoF and the WB requesting restructuring of part of the loan agreement managed by MES and instead of 80/20 disbursement scheme, asking for 100% disbursements from the IBRD.

The loan restructuring request was approved by the MoF as well as by the WB and the new scheme was ratified by the Parliament of Georgia on September 30, 2020. Therefore, the counterpart financing has been removed from the loan agreement Category (1) amounting to EUR 29,775,000 for Works, Goods, Non-consulting services, Consulting services, Operating Costs and Training for the Project except for Parts 1(c), Part 2(a) and Part 5 (a) for the Project.



The Table in Section III. A of Schedule 2 to the Loan Agreement is amended to read as follows:

Category	Amount of the Loan Allocated (expressed in EUR)	Percentage of Expenditures to be financed (inclusive of Taxes)
(1) Works, Goods, non-consulting services, consulting services, Operating Costs and Training for the Project except for Parts 1(c), Part 2(a) and Part 5 (a) for the Project	29,775,000	100%
(2) Works, Goods, non- consulting services, consulting services, Operating Costs and Training under Part 1(c), Part 2(a) and Part 5(a) for the Project	60,000,000	80%
(3) Front-end Fee	225,000	Amount payable pursuant to Section 2.03 of this Agreement in accordance with Section 2.07 (b) of the General Conditions
(4) Interest Rate Cap or Interest Rate Collar premium		Amount due pursuant to Section 4.05 (c) of the General Conditions
TOTAL AMOUNT	90,000,000	

The Project Development Objectives are to (i) expand access to preschool education and (ii) improve the quality of education and the learning environments.

The loan will be dedicated to:

- 1) Improvement of the quality of and access to early childhood education;
- 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 and
- 5) Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation.

Table below represents the project financing as per approved POM:

Project Components	IBRD Financing (EUR)
1. Improving Quality of and Access to Early Childhood Education	7,487,440
2. Fostering Quality Teaching and Learning in General Education	63,999,026
3. Strengthening Financing Options and Promoting Internationalization in Higher Education	9,902,629
4. System strengthening and Stakeholder Communication	3,697,035
5. Supporting Project Management, Monitoring, and Evaluations	4,688,870
Total Components	89,775,000
Front End Fees	225,000
Total Project Costs	90,000,000

II. SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT PROJECT DATES



- The Loan Agreement was signed on June 18, 2019.
- Project was ratified by Parliament on October 16, 2019.
- Loan became effective on November 27, 2019.
- Official project launch event was held on March 5, 2020.
- Targeted program approval by the MES on March 9, 2020 (Ministerial Decree No. 338).
- Project implementation period: November 2019 - March 2026.
- The Loan Agreement has been restructured and became effective on October 15, 2020.

Note: Due to the budgetary cuts as a result of a pandemic, the loan restructuring was conducted to accommodate the Government request to eliminate requirement of 20 percent co-financing (The table in Section III.A of Schedule 2 to the Loan Agreement).

- The first WB Implementation Support Mission held during July 6-17, 2020. Next steps/activities specified in the Aide Memoire have been completed. The second WB Implementation Support Mission held during February 15-19, 2021. The third (last) WB Implementation Support Mission held during September 6-17, 2021.

Note: Implementation of activities defined in the Aide Memoire is provided below in respective parts of the report.



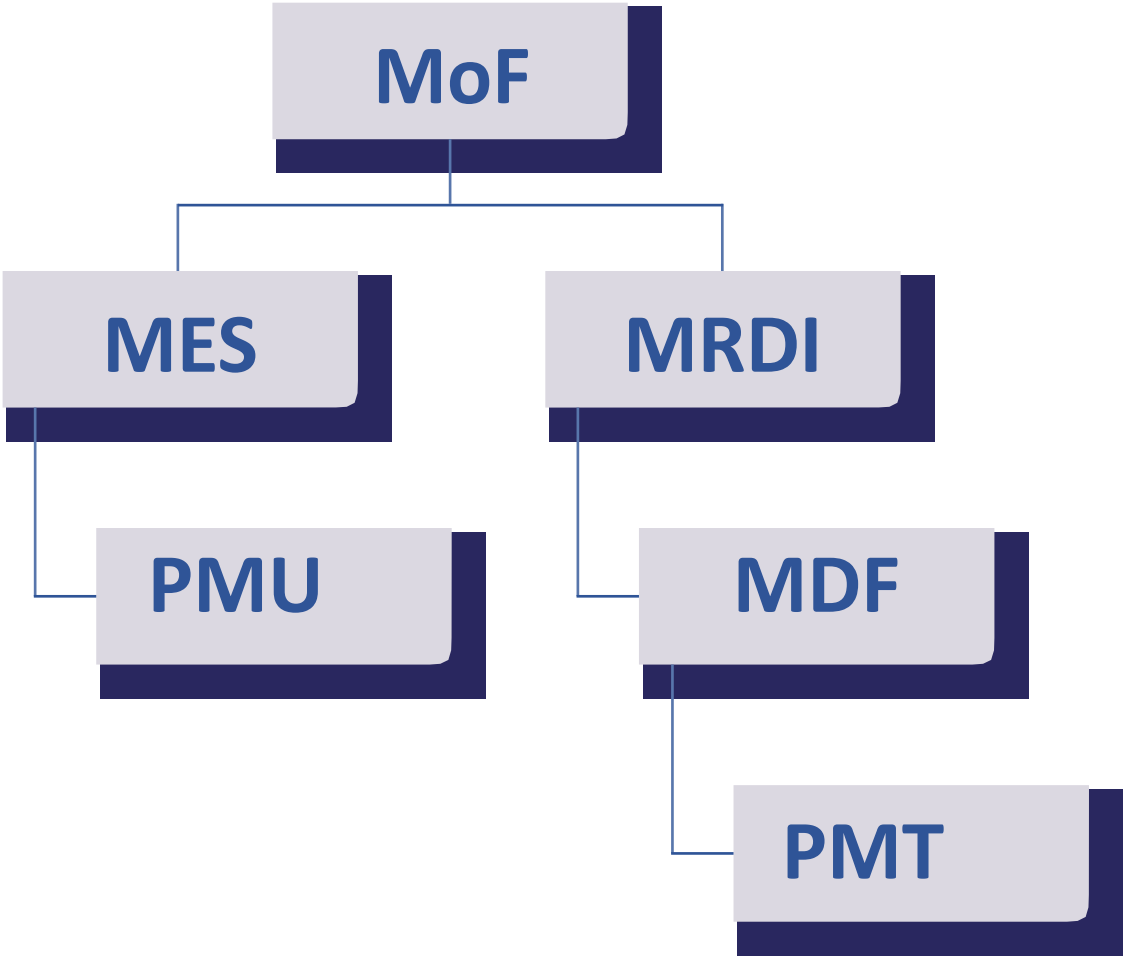
- The first revision and amendments to POM approved by the WB on August 14, 2020. The second (last) revision and amendments to POM approved by the WB on November 4, 2020.
- Note: POM defined activities and implementation mechanisms were reviewed and clarified to reflect priorities and needs of MES.
- In line with POM changes, the MES has approved revision of targeted program. Respectively, program budget and PP have been amended and the Project is implemented in accordance with the revised project documents.
- I2Q project Steering Committee established on October 28, 2020 (Ministerial Decree No. 1046328).

Note: The first official Steering Committee meeting held on December 15, 2020. The second official Steering Committee meeting held on November 26, 2021.

- The full package of Internal Regulations of the Project prepared in late 2020 was approved by the Executive Director of the Project on April 12, 2021.

The I2Q Project will be implemented over a six-year period by the following implementing partners – the MES and the MDF operating under the MRDI. The PMU created within the MES supports implementation of the designated project components, as specified in Legal Agreement. The PMT created within MDF supports implementation of relevant subcomponents under Component 1 and 2 aimed at improving the education infrastructure.

III. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE:





IV. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT OPERATION

The Project is implemented in line with approved project documents (Loan Agreement revised on September 16, 2020; PAD as of April 22, 2019; POM lastly revised and approved on November 4, 2020; the targeted program approved by MES (Ministerial Decree No. 338) lastly revised on March 25, 2021 and the approved PP). Project scope has been enriched during the reporting period in order to accommodate the activities requested by MES and approved by the WB. The detailed overview of the activities is provided in the relevant sections of the report. Respectively, the project PP has been revised and approved to include additional activities, as well as other specific dates, as agreed during the last WB Implementation Support Mission.

The Project is fully operational with 12 signed contracts (4 - IC, 1 - DC, 2-QBS, 2-RFB, 2 - CQS and 1 – RFQ) and 4 ongoing tenders. Significant progress has been made under various components, including but not limited to finalizing design works for number of upcoming large-scale capacity-building projects, development of new financing options for higher education and completion of the procurement of supply and installation of Wi-Fi networks target 121 schools.

SECTION I - OVERALL PROJECT PROGRESS AND KEY ISSUES

A. THE WORLD BANK IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT MISSION

The WB task team conducted the third (virtual) Implementation Support Mission (hereinafter – the mission) for I2Q Project during September 6-17, 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 MES, and the Project Management Team (PMT) at the Municipal Development Fund (MDF); (ii) identify solutions to any pending issues and agree on next steps to expediate implementation; and (iii) take part in the education sector related donor coordination meetings.

During the mission, extensive discussion was held to review the progress towards achieving the Project Development Objectives (PDOs). The PMU has addressed results framework-related challenges and suggested alternatives to several indicators, including the two PDO-level indicators: (1) Percentage of 5-to-6-year-old children enrolled in School Readiness Programs and (2) Learning outcomes of students in national formative assessments in project-supported general education schools. The issue was further discussed with the WB and solutions achieved.

During the mission, the Aide Memoire was developed, and the respective implementation timelines were agreed. The detailed description of the progress made during the reporting period is provided under relevant parts of the report.

Table below provides a summary of actions agreed during the third (the most recent) WB implementation support mission and status of their execution.

STATUS OF AGREED ACTIONS



#	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT STATUS
COMPONENT 1 – IMPROVING QUALITY OF AND ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE				
1	Selection of consulting company to implement activities under subcomponents 1.1/1.2/1.3 - Improving ECE Institution Management System and Enhancing the Quality of Programs Across the Country, Increasing Equitable Access to Preschool Education for Successful Transition to School	PMU	End March 2022	In Progress/on track. Note: Evaluation of EOIs completed and the Short List Evaluation Report submitted to the WB for review and no objection. Estimated period for the implementation of the assignment is March 2022 – July 2025.
2	Agreement on the final selection criteria and final list of the beneficiary schools (total of 150) for SRP	PMU	End October 2021	Completed. Additional selection criteria, as well as the list of 150 target and 129 reserve schools have been submitted to the WB for review and approval on October 28, 2021. WB's approval obtained on November 15, 2021.
3	Completion of the first draft of the infrastructure and physical environment standards for schools	PMU	May 2022	In progress/on track. The PMU accepted/approved the first deliverable that accommodates all the comments from relevant stakeholders and the WB. The Consultant is currently working on the development of the second deliverable, i.e. First Draft of Standards.
COMPONENT 2 – FOSTERING QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING IN GENERAL EDUCATION				
4	Development of the criteria for selection of the schools to be constructed under the project	PMU	End October 2021	In Progress. Note: Long list of schools to be constructed has been identified in close collaboration with MES and ESIDA in October 2021. The selection criteria and the priority list of the schools to be constructed under the Project has been developed agreed with MES submitted to the WB for the review and approval on December 29, 2021.



#	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT STATUS
5	Finalization of Engineering & Technical Designs for the 1st Batch of 31 Schools	MDF	April-May 2022	In progress. The design works for the first batch of 31 schools will be completed by end June 2022.
6	Procurement of Companies to commission technical designs for the 2nd batch of 29 schools	MDF	December 2021	Completed.
7	Selection of consulting company to implement activities under subcomponent 2.2/2.3/2.4 - (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)	PMU	End February 2022	On track/in progress. <u>Note:</u> First step of evaluation – evaluation of EOIs completed and the Short List Evaluation Report submitted to the WB for review. Estimated period for the implementation of the assignment is end February 2022 – August 2025.
8	Finalization of concept and policy framework for quality assurance system for general education in close collaboration with National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement.	PMU	December 24 2021	Delayed/now on track. The process of developing the QA policy framework has been delayed due to the termination of the contract with the selected consultant (details provided under respective part of the report). After prior approval of the WB issued based on the justification provided, PMU has conducted direct selection of a Consultant and concluded a contract on November 20, 2021 continuing through March 19, 2022.
9	Finalization of national assessment policy framework for GE level in close collaboration with NAEC and Ministry.	PMU/NAEC/ MES	January 31 2022	In progress/on track. <u>Note:</u> No cost extension of contract term until end of February-first half of March, 2022 will be needed, considering the time required for internal discussion and review of the deliverables by the relevant structural units of MES.



#	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	CURRENT STATUS
COMPONENT 3 – STRENGTHENING FINANCING OPTIONS AND PROMOTING INTERNATIONALIZATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION				
10	Consultation Workshop with key stakeholders to discuss and solicit feedback on the draft new financing policy options for HED	PMU	October 15 2021	Completed. Note: Upon MES's decision, workshop format was altered, details of the workshop conducted can be found in relevant section of the report.
COMPONENT 4 – SYSTEM STRENGTHENING AND STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION				
11	Delivery of remaining part of goods (notebooks and projectors) from the selected company	PMU	Laptops by end September 2021; Projectors by end October 2021	Completed Currently, all goods are distributed according to the distribution scheme agreed with MES and the WB. For the exact dates of distribution, see relevant section of the report.
12	Distribution of the acquired goods to select schools	PMU	Laptops by end September 2021; Projectors by end October 2021	Completed Currently, all goods are distributed according to the distribution scheme agreed with MES and the WB. For the exact dates of distribution, see relevant section of the report.

B. SUPPORTING EMERGING PRIORITIES OF THE MES

The need of supporting MES in implementation of various activities that were not originally envisaged by the project has been constituted by COVID-19 pandemic circumstances. Transition to distance/blended learning format has posed numerous challenges and the pandemic is still affecting educational system. Currently MES implements blended learning in GE institutions. While in the 2020-2021 academic year teaching in schools was mainly implemented remotely, in the current academic year schools are authorized to carry out learning process in classic format. According to the latest regulations, parents are eligible to choose their preferable format of teaching and learning. It is important to note that considering the epidemiological situation, in order to avoid outbreak, individual classes and/or schools may be temporarily transferred to distance learning, as necessary. With these rules in place, as of December 24, 2021, 55 schools and 313 separate classes are engaged in distance learning process. The rest of the school population continues learning in face to face format.

During the reporting period, it was requested by MES and agreed with the WB to support the following tasks:

i. Strengthening of Decentralized Management System and Revision of School Principals' State Standard

On October 6, 2021 the First Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, Ms. Ekaterine Dgebuadze addressed the PMU with a letter stating that in order to support decentralization process in the framework of the ongoing GE reform, it is crucial to strengthen (i) the role of local educational resource centers (as a middle level management unit) and (ii) school management system and quality. Ms. Ekaterine Dgebuadze has kindly requested support from the Project with regard to recruiting short-term consultant in order to (i) develop the concept and approach for strengthening decentralized management system via reforming Educational Resource Centers as well as to (ii) develop the strategy and action plan for improving school management with a special emphasis on revision and upgrade of school principals' state standard.

As this intervention corresponds with the aims and objectives of the Project, particularly Component 2, the WB has provided its' consent to support the aforementioned assignment under the I2Q Project by hiring short-term national consultant, as requested by the First Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Georgia.

Similar studies have been conducted by individual higher- education institutions in Georgia since 2019 (for authorization purposes). However, the institutions are using different approaches and methodology for conducting these surveys and there is also no data available on national level, which would allow MES to analyze and process this information systematically.



Considering the aforementioned, it was discussed and agreed during the recent WB implementation support mission (September 6-17, 2021) that the Component 3 of the I2Q Project would also support the development of a unified methodology and instruments to track graduates and collect employer feedback at higher education institutions. As agreed with the WB and MES, the assignment envisages the following:

1. Elaborating structure of the Student Tracking System in Georgia which includes a comprehensive outline on the design of the Student Tracking System starting from the data submission to the development of the new policy in the higher education;
2. Developing the relevant methodology for the tracer study, including methodology for collecting information by HEIs;
3. Developing the Terms of Reference for the development of the Student Tracking System platform.

iii. Development of the Unified Accounting Policy

MES is currently working on improving financial management policy and practices by introducing the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). Introduction of IPSAS and compliance with international standards will contribute to better accountability and transparency of public finance spending.

Based on “Instruction for Financial Accounts Plan of Budgetary Organizations and its Use” approved by the Minister of Finance of Georgia on January 15, 2020, MES is obligated to develop and approve:

- Financial Accounts Plan of an organization and the rule for its use;
- Initial accounting document forms for financial accounting and international standards (IPSAS) of financial accounting of public sector, which will be used by MES and its agencies – including the content, financial records, when, in which case, how, based on what, etc.
- Unified funding rule and the list of initial documents and forms of financial accounts proving completed work of general schools and higher education institutions, as well as other budget or private organizations under the MES’s targeted programs.

MES has addressed the PMU with the request to support development of the Unified Accounting Policy in the framework of the I2Q Project. As stated by MES in the provided justification, the development of a unified accounting policy is essential for the whole system and particularly for education institutions considering the specificity of their activities.

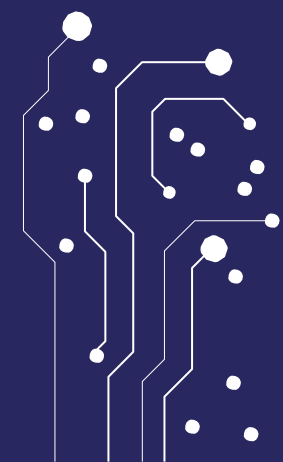
The development of financial accounting policy will help public schools to ensure effective use of financial resources. Efficient management of financial resources and improvement of financial reporting will be a tremendous support to school development. Therefore, this intervention is closely linked with “whole school improvement” envisaged under the I2Q Project.

Development and implementation of the Unified Accounting Policy shall also benefit the higher education institutions. The Public Higher education institutions are different from one another, taking into account the peculiarities of their organizational structure, size and specific fields of studies. Therefore, studying business processes of higher education institutions should take place individually, because important operations of other higher education institutions may be overlooked, which can be quantitatively and qualitatively essential for the unified consolidated financial reporting. These findings must be regulated by an accounting policy document, which will support universities with their future activities. It is noteworthy that the project plans to establish a Competitive Innovation Fund (CIF), which will award grants to state universities. Universities will need help with the management of grants and administering/recording expenses, with the management of financial processes and operations to accurately reflect them in the financial reporting.

Considering the aforementioned linkages and connections with the objectives of various activities of the I2Q Project, on November 15, 2021 the WB has provided its consent to support the development of the unified accounting policy of MES and its' subordinate structural units/agencies. Based on the approval of the Bank, MES has prepared the TOR with assistance of the PMU, which has been respectively submitted to the WB for review and approval via STEP on December 21, 2021.

Apart from activities described above, the Project has also supported various emerging priorities of MES, such as:

a. Development of Education and Science Strategy for 2022-2032 and Action Plan for 2022-2023. The assignment has been successfully completed in October 2021. MES has developed ten-year strategy and two-year action for the ECE, GE, HE and science sub-sectors. In December, 2021, MES has published draft Strategy and Action Plan documents on its' official web-site for public consultations. Based on the feedback received, the draft documents will be reviewed and submitted to the GoG for approval. Based on the information received from the International Relations and Strategic Communication Department of MES, approval of the Strategy and Action plan is expected in February 2022.





- b. Financing TIMSS 2023 Project Participation Fee. Payment has been made in summer 2021. NAEC is implementing the respective works.
- c. Procurement of Technology Equipment for Schools (Laptops and Projectors). Procured equipment have been distributed to 433 public schools, including 72 newly rehabilitated schools as requested by MES and approved by the WB. According to the latest information received from ESIDA, the state consolidated tender for purchasing laptops is planned to be announced in March 2022. The details of this procurement and its' aims is provided in Section II, part B of the report.
- d. Supply and installation of wi-fi to 121 public schools of Georgia. Contracts have been concluded with the selected companies and the implementation is in progress.
- e. Delivery of TAO administrative and technical training to support the NAEC with the project implementation. The assignment has been successfully completed.
- f. Check Point Security System Renewal and Software Licensing. The assignment has been successfully completed.

The PMU intends to reflect all the additional activities in POM and submit it to the WB for review approval in the first quarter of 2022.

C. RESULTS FRAMEWORK REVIEW

The PMU on behalf of the MES management shared certain concerns with the WB during the WB Implementation Support Mission in September 2021 about the indicators at both PDO and Intermedium Results levels in terms of their applicability to provide accurate, adequate, effective, and efficient measurement of the Project implementation and impact. The concerns raised on the PDO level indicators were not related to project objectives but rather were of technical nature. These relate to methodology and measurement and the need to find appropriate instruments to measure the project success against existing Project Development Objectives. Based on consultations, the WB recommended keeping the Project Development Indicators as it is and avoid the second restructuring at this early stage of the Project implementation; particularly given that both expanding access to preschool education and improving learning outcomes of students in project supported schools still remain important priorities in the Government's new draft education sector strategy and also, still feasible to be achieved and tracked by this Project.

As discussed in greater details with the WB, it was agreed to jointly identify the ways both to support achievement of these indicators and monitor progress with respect to the two concerned PDO indicators.



Given early delays in the project and accompanying COVID related complexities, the WB thinks the proposed restructuring is unnecessary at this stage and will further delay the implementation; However, if there are changes required and those will become much more obvious during the full-scale implementation and finalization of the ongoing diagnostic studies, the PMU will have an opportunity to restructure the project during the project mid-term review.

Decision has been made to employ NAEC on a direct contracting basis to assess Students' Learning Outcomes baseline data (no objection received from the bank on December 22, 2021). Such a decision was based on both cost effectiveness and expertise rationale which proceeded from the analysis of the Georgian marketplace in the field of data collection and learning assessment.

In addition, NAEC is a partner institution under the Georgia I2Q Project, and we believe that their involvement into the learning assessment activities shall provide further benefits from the Project's sustainability perspective. NAEC's involvement in collaboration with EMIS shall contribute into the creating overall database on Project's interventions specifically.

The assessment shall be carried out in schools which shall receive the highest level of treatment from the Project's Components and shall accommodate specific criteria based on geographical location and vulnerable student groups (e.g. low-income families, ethnic minorities, children with special needs). The pool of approximately 250 schools shall be created and submitted to the Bank for review in the first quarter of 2022. The first round of learning outcomes assessment shall be carried out by June 2022. Sample size of schools for conducting learning assessment will be selected from the aforementioned pool.

To emphasize on Project's midterm outcomes and final impact the PMU shall, in addition, conduct performance evaluation survey (see Annex 1). The survey shall accommodate both quantitative and qualitative research techniques to measure implementation success as well as to evaluate results achieved. Performance evaluation shall be carried out in two rounds to assess Baseline and End line data in 2022 and 2025 respectively.

Currently the PMU is working with MES to identify the project targeted schools which the PMU plans to share with the WB in January-February 2022.

SECTION II: IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS BY PROJECT COMPONENTS

A. COMPONENT 1

IMPROVING QUALITY OF AND ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The reform of ECE has been underway in Georgia since 2007. Within the framework of the reform, the Law of Georgia on Early and Preschool Education was adopted by the Parliament of Georgia on June 8, 2016. The Law establishes a legal basis for universal access to preschool education ensuring development and quality. Moreover, the Law defines the organizational structure of preschool education institutions and the rules for their establishment, operation, and accountability, as well as mandatory nature of authorization.

The GoG approved the following state standards that are mandatory under the Law:

1. National Standards for Early and Preschool Education and Care;
2. Professional Standards for Caregivers and Pedagogues;
3. Technical Regulations – Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Standards for Preschool Care;
4. Catering and Diet Nutritional Value Standards at Early and Preschool Education and Care Institutions.

MES is responsible for the education component of ECE, which incorporates development, implementation, and monitoring of educational standards, resources, materials, as well as developing and implementing education programs and resources, according to the Law of Georgia on Early and Preschool Education.

Paragraphs 6 and 7 of Article 28 of the Law of Georgia on Early and Preschool Education provides that, from April 1, 2019, to December 31, 2021, each local municipality and the self-governing city had a responsibility to conduct gradual authorization of institutions that provide ECE and preschool education. However, authorization process has not even started yet. Tentative reason is the lack of readiness and institutional capacity of implementing parties to carry out such work.

Recently, in November 2021, the Parliament of Georgia has initiated changes of the current legislation addressing the transition period requirements of the Law of Georgia on Early and Preschool Education.

Authorization is the procedure for obtaining the status of an Early Childhood Education institution and the status of a preschool education institution. Authorization is to ensure that the requirements of authorization standards are met. It will encourage the development of capabilities and competencies among children and contribute to their well-being in long term perspective. Developing a long-term plan and primary activities for authorization was of utmost importance. For authorization purposes, a



transition period is defined until January 1, 2030.

During the transition period, no later than December 1, 2022, upon the submission of the MES, by the resolution of the GOG, the temporary rules and procedures for authorization of ECE and Preschool Institutions, as well as suspension and termination of authorization status of institutions (hereafter - temporary rule) shall be approved. According to the draft law, the proposed changes provide that the authorization will be conducted by the NCEQE during the transition period, in accordance with the pre-approved temporary rule. During the transition period, the decision on the authorization of institutions will be made by the Board of Authorization of ECE and Preschool Education Institutions (hereafter - the Authorization Council). Upon the recommendation of the MES, the Prime Minister of Georgia appoints and dismisses the members of the authorization council. According to the draft law, a deadline of transitional period will be postponed until January 1, 2030.

The authorization shall apply to both, public and private kindergartens. It is important that the reform will help private kindergartens to provide quality services in accordance with the state standards, which are focused on performing an educational process tailored to the needs and interests of the children.

As provided by draft law, EMIS should create an appropriate electronic system for the initial registration of institutions (hereafter - the electronic registration system) no later than July 1, 2022 and institutions should register in the electronic registration system no later than January 1, 2023. The explanatory note of the draft law determines the estimated budget for establishing ECE information management database system, developing authorization standards, creating electronic self-evaluation platform and provides estimated annual cost of authorization for the period of 2025-2030. The Draft Law is not approved yet but is discussed by the Parliament of Georgia.

At this point the PMU is working closely with the MES management to streamline project activities towards the anticipated legislation changes as the I2Q Project accommodates important interventions to support MES improve the access and the quality of to ECE. Specifically, the Project will support development of the systematic and robust ECE and preschool data reporting and consolidation mechanism, as well as incorporating it with the (EMIS, and development of Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) of ECE institutions, defining appropriate mechanisms and ECE quality monitoring instruments at the national level.

The I2Q Project contributed to the ongoing efforts of the MES in designing the new comprehensive Education and Science Strategy for 2022–2032 and Action Plan for 2022-2023. In response to the request of the MES, and based on the no objection granted by the WB, following two consultants have been recruited to develop the ECE sub-sector strategy and action plan:

- *Short-Term Consultant (International) for Support in Preparation of GE and ECE Sub-Sector Strategy and Action Plan;*

- *Short-Term Consultant (local) for Support in Preparation of ECE sub-Sector Strategy and Action Plan.*

Services have been commenced during the previous reporting period and the work was finalized in October 2021. The assignment was implemented under the close supervision and coordination by the PMU and completed successfully. Submitted reports were analyzed, the relevant recommendations were prepared and shared with MES relevant counterparts to reconcile positions and agree on the final feedback. Based on the feedback, the revised reports were resubmitted by consultants and approved by the MES. The final Report was received following the time-frame of deliverables within the period of the contract on September 13, 2021. Analysis, revision and preparation of recommendations from the MES and its' relevant counterparts was considered and adjusted. Final document was resubmitted by the consultant following acceptance of the Report by the PMU and MES on October 28, 2021.

Sub-Component 1.1

Improving the Quality of ECEC Programs Across the Country

Consulting services for the assignment - Diagnostic Study of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Georgia has commenced on July 21, 2021 for the duration of 11 months including time needed for the approval of the submitted reports, continuing through June 21, 2022.

Inception Report and First Progress Report have been submitted by the consulting company considering the deliverable timelines provided in respective contract. Aforementioned included:

- a detailed and clear study design and action plan outlining the scope of work;
- approach and methodology for executing the assignment including a detailed timetable and detailed description of the duties and responsibilities of key and non-key experts.

In order to obtain the feedback, after analyzing the aforementioned deliverables by the PMU, it was further discussed with the First Deputy Minister – Ekaterine Dgebuadze and other ECE stakeholders, such as representative from TPDC, NCEQE and GE and ECE Development Department of MES. As a result, several issues have been identified that needed adjustments in the Inception Report, such as studying ECE resources, as well as adjusting interview sample and questions for the interview. The Inception Report has been accordingly revised by the Consultant and approved by the PMU on October 6, 2021. The Consultant continued developing second deliverable – the First Progress Report.

Considering the terms of the contract, the First Progress Report includes all research tools such as questionnaires, rubrics and other instruments to be used for the data



collection (development, translation and piloting of instruments). The submitted First Progress Report was analyzed by the PMU and presented in person to the First Deputy Minister – Ekaterine Dgebuadze, Early Childhood Education Development Division Head, GE head of EMIS, the Head of Standard Development and Implementation Division of TPDC. Attendees expressed their comments, reconciled their positions and agreed on the final feedback on October 28, 2021 during the presentation. Coordinator of Quality Assurance Systems Development of NCEQE could not attend the presentation in person, and was acquainted with the presentation and the deliverable document via email. According to their interim set of comments, the spotlight was on number of target case study kindergartens and number of target case study municipalities. Recommendation was well reflected and on behalf of reducing number of Kindergarten in Tbilisi, was added another local municipality – Ozurgeti. As a result, four urban municipalities (Tbilisi, Zugdidi, Ozurgeti and Marneuli) and three rural municipalities (Khelvachauri, Tianeti, and Akhaltsikhe) were selected. Final recommendations on stakeholder engagement, list of stakeholders for upcoming interview schedule and interview questions were provided to the Consultant on December 16, 2021, followed by revised First Progress Report, that was accepted by the MES on December 23, 2021.

Development of the design stage of the upcoming capacity-building activities commenced on May 10, 2021. The TOR for the assignment - Improving ECE Institution Management System and Enhancing the Quality of Programs Across the Country, was developed by two short-term consultants:

- *Short-term Consultant (International) for Development of Terms of Reference on Improving ECE Institution Management System and Enhancing the Quality of Programs Across the Country.*
- *Short-term Consultant (National) for Support in the development of Terms of Reference on Improving ECE Institution Management System and Enhancing the Quality of Programs Across the Country.*

Implementation of the assignment has been completed on September 10, 2021, as determined by respective contracts. The Covid-19 pandemic situation was also considered, and Covid-19 mitigation requirements stipulated for executing the assignment. Short-term consultants developed TOR, Market research, Budget for the assignment and evaluation criteria. The TOR and supporting documents for the assignment - Improving ECE Institution Management System and Enhancing the Quality of Programs Across the Country were submitted to the WB for NOB on October 7, 2021. The WB recommended adjustments in the TOR, regarding clarification of the Scope of Work, Deliverable timetable and role and Responsibilities of the national government. REOI has been announced on October 8, 2021. However, additional adjustments have been made to the introduced REOI from the WB procurement team

that related to the General and Specific Requirements provided in the TOR.

The introduced tender for the capacity building project envisages:

1. Developing QAF for ECE institutions, defining appropriate mechanisms and ECE quality monitoring instruments at the national level. For this reason, the best international practice shall be implemented, shall be considered the results of already achieved progress, and requirements of national legislation. The project is intended to support design, pilot and implementation of QA monitoring instruments.
2. Developing the systematic and robust ECE and preschool data reporting and consolidation mechanism and incorporating it with EMIS.
3. Developing ECE teachers' certification and merit-based pay system.
4. Developing in-service teacher training modules in alignment with professional standards and on modern child-centered pedagogical approaches considering gender, diversity, inclusive education, ECE subject-matter knowledge and group management.
5. Revision of the existing SRP.
6. Introducing revised modern and child-centered SRPs in selected 150 schools.
7. Supporting the implementation of revised SRPs through professional development (PD) of SRP teachers and offering much needed equipment, furniture, and technology.

The REIOs was announced on October 8, 2021 with the deadline of submitting EOIs through November 16, 2021. In total 10 EOIs were received. The initial evaluation team with the amended composition was approved by the Tender Committee on November 8, 2021. Representatives from ECE stakeholder entities were presented in the evaluation team, such as NCEQE, PMU and TPDC.

PMU was informed about a possible conflict of interest between TPDC representative of the initial evaluation team Ms. Nino Labartkava, as Ms. Labarkava holds an academic position of Associate Professor at the Iv. Javakhishvili State University. Bidder company "Sofreco" from France, listed Iv. Javakhishvili State University as one of the sub-consultants. Based on the information provided, in accordance with World Bank Procurement Guidelines 3.17 d (ii), the procurement specialist determined a conflict of interest in the current composition of the bidding firms as part of one of the evaluation team members. The renewed evaluation team with the amended composition was approved by the Tender Committee on November 22, 2021.

The new evaluation team was assembled with five representatives from ECE stakeholder entities. ECE expert from ECE Development of MES, representative of NCEQE, ICT/ Data Management Component and ECE Component Leads and Procurement Specialist from the PMU. The team conducted evaluation according to the General and Specific



Requirements using the scoring system and tools predetermined for the evaluation. The evaluation was completed by December 14, 2021 and the Shortlist Evaluation Report was submitted to WB for no objection on December 30, 2021. Currently the PMU is expecting WB's approval to the Shortlist Evaluation Report in order to upload the draft Request for Proposals in STEP for Bank's review and clearance.

Phase two of evaluation is assessing Technical and Financial Proposals from the five shortlisted Companies. The shortlisted companies will have approximately 1.5 months to prepare their Technical and Financial Proposals.

Sub-Component 1.2

Increasing Equitable Access to Pre-school Education for Successful Transition to School

In order to improve access to preschool education for a successful transition to school starting with 5-6-year-old children in SRPs, the I2Q Project envisages introduction of modern, child-centered SRPs in about 150 general education institutions/schools.

During the previous reporting period (January – June 2021) the PMU has developed initial criteria in close collaboration with MES in order to select 150 schools for introduction of revised, modern, and child-centered SRPs across the country. As agreed with the WB, the initial criteria were used for the initial screening of the eligible schools for the introduction of the School Readiness Program (SRP) from the total pool of schools across Georgia. As a result, the PMU has identified the long list of 279 schools in close collaboration with relevant department of MES and agreed the list with the First Deputy Minister of Education and Science – Ms. Ekaterine Dgebuadze. The criteria and the long list of 279 schools was submitted to the WB for review on June 28, 2021 and the Bank provided approval on July 12, 2021.

In order to identify 150 target schools from the long list, as requested by the WB, the PMU has subsequently developed additional selection criteria. While initial criteria ensure the identification of schools' long list based on various criteria, including equity considerations, additional criteria are specifically based on equity considerations, ensuring prioritization of schools from the long list of initially selected 279 schools, where the situation is the most critical in this regard and development of SRP Groups is most needed.

The First Deputy Minister of Education and Science - Ms. Ekaterine Dgebuadze requested to include a fair proportion of ethnic minority schools from Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti. On October 26, 2021, Ms. Ekaterine Dgebuadze revised and approved initiated additional criteria and the list of 150 target and 129 reserve Schools, accommodating the fair proportion of ethnic minority schools as requested.

The list of 150 target schools includes (i) 25 schools located in high-mountainous regions and (ii) 21 schools located in the areas densely populated with ethnic minorities. As for the regional distribution, the picture is as follows:

- Adjara - 13 schools;
- Guria - 5 schools;
- Tbilisi - 28 schools, including 3 ethnic minority schools;
- Imereti - 26 schools;
- Kakheti - 23 schools, including 6 ethnic minority schools;
- Mtskheta -Mtianeti – one school;
- Samegrelo- Zemo Svaneti - 28 schools;
- Samtskhe-Javakheti - 2 ethnic minority schools;
- Kvemo Kartli - 12 schools, including 10 ethnic minority schools;
- Shida Kartli - 12 schools.

Additional equity-based criteria as well as the list of targets 150 and 129 reserve schools for introduction modern, child-centered, and revised SRP, were submitted to the WB for review and approval, that being provided on November 15, 2021.

As planned, rehabilitation of SRP classrooms in up to 150 schools will not be financed from the Project budget. Thus, in order to conduct minor rehabilitations, ESIDA has included part of the needed amount – 1,000,000 GEL in the budget of 2022.

Throughout December 15-17, 2021, Project Coordinator of Infrastructural Projects - Engineer, and representative of ESIDA's Construction/Project Designing Department, started conducting site visits to 150 selected target public schools in order to evaluate/verify technical conditions of the buildings. As of December 31, 2021, visits were conducted in 20 public schools of Marneuli and Gori municipalities. Report on the conducted site visits is being developed. Based on the evaluation report, the list of 150 target schools can be modified and schools from 129 reserve included, if some schools will not be eligible for minor rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation projects will be prepared considering the measurements and findings revealed during the site-visits. The estimated date for completing site-visits and developing projects is May 2022. Based on the surveys conducted during the site visit, ESIDA representatives have already started preparing detailed projects and cost estimations for rehabilitation works. Estimated commencement of actual rehabilitations is June 2022.



Sub-component 1.3

Improving Infrastructure to Support Innovative Primary Education, Including Pre-school

This sub-component also envisages the development of general education infrastructure and physical environment standards (IPE Standards) for schools of primary education (grades 1-6) accommodating preschool programs, according to which construction of new school buildings will be conducted. Development of IPE standards is in process. The procurement process has been finalized and the work towards developing IPE standards has commenced on September 15, 2021. Expected implementation period of the task is September 2021 – May 2023. It shall be stressed that even though the duration of the contract is 20 months, the main works are expected to be completed by the end of May 2022 and the remaining 12 months will be used for revisions during the design stage, as well as time needed for approval of the submitted reports. The detailed information regarding the activity is provided under sub-component 2.1 below (Section II, part B of the Report).

This sub-component also envisages development and adoption of new architectural blueprints for the construction of up to 10 new model schools. The project designs will consider the modern learning environment, types of furniture materials, dimensions and layout, renewable energy and carbon-neutral materials, as well as accessibility standards to ensure accommodation for children with disabilities.

As for the construction of up to 10 new model schools, the PMU has worked with MES and ESIDA to select the land plots. In order to define the list of schools to be constructed under the I2Q Project, the MES has been searching for the land plots and setting priorities for the upcoming years.

Selection took place based on two set of criteria. At the first stage, the long list comprised of (i) public schools which, based on the expertise conclusions, should be demolished and (ii) locations, where new schools need to be established, based on educational needs. Afterwards, the PMU together with the relevant department of MES defined additional set of criteria based on which MES and ESIDA defined the short list of 10 target and 3 reserve public schools to be constructed under the Project. The list is formulated based on the following criteria:

1. Schools located in high mountainous settlements;
2. Schools Located near the conflict zone, near the existing border line;
3. Schools located in villages settled with ethnic minorities;
4. Schools located in rural and urban settlements.

The selection criteria and the list of schools has been finally approved by the First Deputy Minister of Education and Science and was submitted to the WB for their review and approval on December 29, 2021.

Immediate Next Steps:

- Completion of the assignment: Diagnostic Study of Early Childhood Education/ECE Sector will be supervised. The works shall be completed by June 21, 2022.
 - *Close coordination with necessary entities in order to fulfill the comprehensive diagnostic study.*
 - *Close collaboration with the consultant, providing diagnostic study of EMIS, with the findings and draft recommendations of the ECE diagnostic study, to study the perspectives of development of the systematic and robust ECE and Preschool data reporting and consolidating mechanism.*
- Complete the evaluation process and sign the agreement for the assignment: Improving ECE Institution Management System and Enhancing the Quality of Programs Across the Country. Estimated deadline for contract signature is March 18, 2022. The implementation of envisaged activities by the Consultant will be supervised during the term of the contract. The assignment is expected to be completed in July 2025.
 - *Collaborating with the representatives of the LEPLs and ECE development division in the process of the implementation of the assignment;*
 - *Providing support to in implementation of the assignment;*
 - *Assistance in creation of structural unit for support in fulfilling the assignment.*
- Monitoring the ECE and SRP enrollment rate across the country as determined by the PDO indicator:
 - *Collaboration with ECE Development division to expand their annual data collection process with gender-based ECE beneficiaries.*
 - *Collection of the gender-based data on 5 to 6-year-old children enrolled in SRPs including percentage of female and male children enrolled.*
- Continue site-visits and complete the assessment of 150 target schools for introduction of modern, revised and child-centered SRP in order to expediate rehabilitation works.
 - *Develop a detailed measurement projects and cost estimations with ESIDA's participation in order to rehabilitate 150 target schools.*
- Finalize work with regard to identifying land plots to expediate the design and construction works of new model schools envisaged under the Project.
 - *Receiving approval of the WB on the submitted selection criteria and the list of new model schools to be constructed.*
 - *Planning and conducting site-visits of the selected land plots.*

B. COMPONENT 2

FOSTERING QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING IN GENERAL EDUCATION

Georgia has seen remarkable progress in modernizing and improving its general education system. Reforms have improved access, quality, and equity in general education, upgraded curricula and introduced per-capita school financing policy, increased decentralization and enhanced schools' autonomy. MES introduced free textbooks for all public schools and school transportation for remote schools, developed infrastructure, granted personal netbooks to all first graders, and introduced various performance-based incentive mechanisms for teachers and students. The Georgia's teacher professional development system has undergone several reforms since 2009 when it became a state regulated profession. These reforms include (i) establishment of education and professional development criteria for the teaching profession; (ii) development of a teacher career advancement scheme; (iii) introduction of a teacher hiring policy; and (iv) introduction of mentorship program. Key initiatives such as the Teacher Professional Standards (TPS), National Certification Exams (NCE), and introduction and further evolution of Teachers' Professional Development Scheme (TPDS) facilitated implementation of the reforms. These policy actions have resulted in universal participation of different socio-demographic groups in education. Created in 2018, the New School Model (NSM) was designed as a supporting mechanism to rollout the third-generation curriculum reform and bring about learning gains through a whole school improvement process.

The progress made in the education sector is commendable. However, despite significant achievements and large-scale reforms carried out in recent years, the Georgian General Education system continues to face many challenges. For example, students remain 2.5 years behind the average for Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries across all three subjects in PISA. General Education sector continues to face a number of key challenges, including inequitable access to education opportunities for females and vulnerable groups, especially in remote areas. Furthermore, investment in teachers' training and professional development was not fully translated for improvements in their quality and effectiveness. System has also faced various challenges due to the COVID-19 circumstances, which has further widened the gap in terms of accessibility to quality education and presumable further increased learning losses.

In order to achieve a high degree in quality and availability, it is important to robust the educational capacity of the country, more work is needed to further scale up the modest improvement in learning outcomes at all levels of school.

To address some of the challenges, it is important to have the World Bank support for improving the quality and accessibility of general education sector under the I2Q project in order to continue to support the development of teaching-learning quality, efficiency, equity and capacity development.



Specifically, the project will create incentives to improve student learning, create equal conditions and focus on the attainment of results, by improving teaching practices in the classroom. The project will put a special emphasis on equity and addressing the needs of female students, ethnic minorities and those with special needs or disabilities, by providing them with specialized support, particularly in the regions of the country.

The objective of the Component 2 of the I2Q Project is to provide a learning environment that is conducive to quality education in selected general education schools. Select project-supported schools, including but not limited to the MES's pilot program schools, would be provided with innovative and accessible resources as part of a school improvement package to strengthen the implementation of the whole school approach.

In order to achieve project objectives, the PMU works closely with the relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to TPDC, EQE and NAEC. To ensure their engagement, other than having regular daily working relationship, the relevant representatives of MES are invited to participate in actual evaluation of tenders, revision and observation of deliverables, etc. Other than that, discussed and elaborated reports are submitted and approved by the MES top management.

The I2Q Project contributed to the ongoing efforts of the MES in designing the new comprehensive Education and Science Strategy for 2022 – 2032 and Action Plan for 2022-2023. In response to the request of the MES, and based on the no objection granted by the WB, following 2 consultants have been recruited to develop the General Education Strategy and Action Plan based on the competitive bidding:

- *Short-Term Consultant (International) for Support Preparation of General Education Strategy and Action Plan;*
- *Short-Term Consultant (local) for Support in Preparation of General Education sub-Sector Strategy and Action Plan.*

The implementation of the assignment has commenced during the previous reporting period and has been successfully completed in October 2021.

The assignment was implemented under close supervision and coordination by the PMU. The submitted reports were analyzed, the relevant recommendations were prepared and shared with MES relevant counterparts to reconcile positions and agree on the final feedback. Based on the feedback, the revised reports were resubmitted by consultants and approved by the MES. The final Report was received following the time-frame of deliverables within the period of the contract on 25th of September, 2021. Analysis, revision and preparation of recommendations from the MES and its' relevant counterparts was considered and adjusted. Final document was resubmitted by the consultant following acceptance of the Report by the PMU and MES on October 28, 2021.

Sub-Component 2.1

Improving Educational Infrastructure to Support Learning

This sub-component aims to foster high-quality learning environments and enhance school safety. To this end, this sub-component would support the review and modernization of school infrastructure standards and develop new architectural design blueprints based on international best practices to support innovative, inclusive and accessible spaces, conducive to fostering collaboration and project-based learning opportunities as well as to ensure energy efficiency and safety.

The PMU has started the procurement process of consulting services for the development of the General Education Infrastructure and Physical Environment Standards during the previous reporting period. A consulting company Georgian Institute of Building (GIB) was selected and the services have commenced on September 15, 2021. Expected implementation period of the task is September 2021 – May 2023. The duration of the contract is 20 months, however main works are expected to be completed by the end of May 2022. As for the remaining 12 months, this period will be used for revisions during the design stage, as well as time needed for approval of the submitted reports.

The aim of the assignment is to develop diversified and modern General Education Infrastructure and Physical Environment Standards that shall also accommodate pre-school classes in close cooperation with ESIDA and MDF. The standard should specify minimum requirements for mandatory application and recommendation part that will be applicable considering different needs (geographic, climate, school size, number of students, education level etc.). The standards shall employ the best practices for the construction of a new buildings for an appropriate level of general education, considering geographical diversity as well as country's economy and resources.

On November 1, 2021 the consulting company has submitted the first deliverable as defined with the contract – detailed framework and outline of IPE standards, including justification for recommended approach and the review of legislation, as well review of recommendations and international standards related to schools.

The report has been revised and analyzed by the relevant staff of the PMU, MES and ESIDA, as a result of which recommendations have been prepared and the feedback has been provided to the consultant on November 15, 2021. The package of documents has been adjusted respectively and final version of the report was submitted to the PMU on December 3, 2021. The document has been once again reviewed, agreed with ESIDA and approved on December 21, 2021.

This sub-component also supports the construction of up to 8 new model schools. The designs will consider modern learning environment, types of furniture materials, dimensions and layout, renewable energy and carbon neutral materials, as well



as accessibility standards to ensure accommodation for children with disabilities. Construction works within the project will be undertaken by the MDF, while school selection process is conducted by PMU with the supervision of MES and in cooperation with ESIDA.

During the reporting period, several meetings have been held with MES and ESIDA regarding selection of land plots needed to build up to 8 new model schools. The Ministry, in close cooperation with ESIDA has obtained information from all schools across Georgia where there is a need to build a new school building. Based on the information received, the long list of up to 79 new schools was developed. The long list comprised of (i) public schools which, based on the expertise conclusions, should be demolished and (ii) locations, where new schools need to be established, based on educational needs. Afterwards, the PMU together with the relevant department of MES defined additional set of criteria based on which MES has identified the short list of 8 target and 4 reserve public schools. Following criteria have been considered during the selection process:

- Schools located in high mountainous settlements;
- Schools Located near the conflict zone, near the existing border line;
- Schools located in villages settled with ethnic minorities;
- One school intended for students with special needs, specifically for students diagnosed with hearing impairment and deafness;
- Construction of one new school is considered in one of the newly developed districts in Tbilisi, with no school.

The selection criteria and the list of schools has been finally approved by the First Deputy Minister of Education and Science and was submitted to the WB for approval on December 29, 2021.

This sub-component also envisages the rehabilitation of up to 60 schools by MDF. In this regard, the project Engineer is to (i) observe the MDF construction and rehabilitation works related to the project and advise/propose for correction in case of any defects/variation/additional/deletion of items identified; (ii) monitor construction project progress, maintain quality and recommend action to prevent delays; (iii) work closely with MDF and the contractor related to the safeguards, environmental and social issues; (iv) travel to the Project sites as necessary; (v) Review the school designs (with the assistance of consultants) submitted by MDF and provide recommendations to MES.

At the end of the previous reporting period (January-June 2021) MDF was conducting procurements of consulting services for detailed design preparation for reconstruction/rehabilitation of public schools. Evaluation process of submitted documentation (under MDF announced procurement) from the consulting companies for preparation of school designs, has been completed, and accordingly, the contracts have been signed

for 10 Lots (which includes all 60 schools). According to the respective contracts, preparation of designs for the first batch of schools (31 schools) will be completed by end June 2022 and designs for the second batch of schools (29 schools) will be completed by end September 2022.

In August 2021, PMU has been informed by ESIDA regarding the deformations in load-bearing structures of four schools from the agreed list of 60 schools, namely, public schools N113, N84, N62 and N89 of Tbilisi. As provided, according to the conclusion of Levan Samkharauli National Forensics Bureau, considering the degree of damage, schools N84 and N113 of Tbilisi are dangerous and need to be demolished. As for schools N62 and 89, additional examinations shall be conducted in order to fully assess the condition. Considering the aforementioned, the PMU has consulted with the Ministry and ESIDA regarding the issue.

Based on consultations, it has been decided to pause the respective procurement process and replace the aforementioned four schools with schools from the reserve list agreed with the Bank. Considering the aforementioned, as suggested, on August 11, 2021 the WB has issued no objection to consider following four public schools instead of the schools N113, N84, N62 and N89 of Tbilisi:

1. LEPL - Gogita Kiknadze Tbilisi №182 Public School;
2. LEPL - Tbilisi №31 Public School;
3. LEPL - Dimitri Uznadze Tbilisi №22 Public School;
4. LEPL - Tbilisi №120 Public School.

Later in September, 2021, the similar circumstances have been detected with regard to one of the schools. On September 1, 2021 MDF has provided PMU with an expertise conclusion presented by the Tsageri Municipality, according to which Orbeli Village Public School considered under Lot 5 of the procurement needs to be demolished. Thus, MDF addressed the PMU with the request to suggest alternative school from the reserve school list upon the approval of MES and the WB. It should be noted that respective lot considers schools on the territory of Mestia and Tsageri and the contract has already been concluded with the selected company. The PMU has addressed ESIDA with the request to provide alternative school. Considering the fact that the pool of reserve schools does not consider a school located in Mestia or Tsageri, ESIDA has suggested to replace Orbeli Public School with Chitatskari Public School located in Zugdidi Municipality (also from the reserve school list). The issue has been agreed with the First Deputy Minister of Education and Science, which has been followed by no objection issued by the WB on September 27, 2021.

Based on the newly established circumstances presented by MDF letter presented on December 13, 2021, it became known that as a result of the technical condition assessments of the building, the design company determined that load-bearing



structures of public schools located in the villages/cities of Sadakhlo (Marneuli Municipality), Duisi (Akhmeta Municipality), Senaki N3 and Abasha N2 (Samegrelo Region) were damaged and needed strengthening. In order to study and analyze this issue, on December 15, 2021 the PMU Engineer together with ESIDA Structural Engineer held a site visit to the aforementioned school. Currently ESIDA is preparing conclusions regarding the technical conditions of the aforementioned schools. The issue of replacement will be discussed and the decision will be made based on the assessment provided by ESIDA.

Sub-Component 2.2

Supporting the Scaling up of the Whole-school Improvement Pilot

This sub-component focuses on the GoG's ongoing whole-school improvement pilot program in general education. The aim of this sub-component is to assess schools and offer additional support to enhance quality of teaching and learning and improve school management.

The sub-component envisages various activities, including multi-component diagnostic study of the GE system - Study and Evaluation of Trends in General Education in Georgia. During the reporting period, PMU has finalized the procurement and concluded the contract with the selected consulting company - "Mathematica Inc/USA". The services have commenced on August 11, 2021 and will continue through June 30, 2022.

This assignment includes evaluation of elements of governance, alignment and efficiency, delivery processes, teacher/staff policies, financing, resources, and student outcomes. Multi-component study of secondary education institutions (schools) will analyze the current situation, determine the impact of recent reforms, identify development dynamics and trends. Set of recommendations will be prepared for developing whole school development approach and implementation plan.

The consulting services under this assignment shall focus on reviewing and analyzing all relevant information for the purpose of generating recommendations that will contribute to the improvement of schools and General Education system. The Consultant is expected to conduct the study and based on the results and findings provide recommendations and conclusions including options for improvement and expansion of the whole school improvement program. The findings and recommendations of the study should give decision makers a full picture of the current situation and enable effective intervention and transformation planning both to improve the quality of general education and to bring the learning process up to modern standards and create an effective learning environment and school culture.

The company "Mathematica" has launched diagnostic study and evaluation of trends in general education in August 2021. As part of the mission, the team met with the

representatives of the Curriculum Department and of other departments and agencies (NAEC, EMIS, ESIDA, TPDC, NCEQE) of MES to discuss the ongoing whole school pilot and lessons learned to inform the design of respective activities under the project.

The company prepared the Inception Report (R1) on September 10, 2021 with a detailed and clear study design and action plan, scope of work, approach and methodology for executing the assignment including a detailed timetable and detailed description of the duties and responsibilities of key and non-key experts. clear mapping of the reforms whose impacts need to be studied by the project, two scenarios: in case of international travel restrictions caused by COVID 19 and without the restrictions.

Multiple meetings and discussions were held by the consultants with the PMU, the MES's top management team, TPDC representatives and local experts. The action plan and methodology presented in the first deliverable (R1) were analyzed in details. Based on the feedback, the report has been respectively revised by the Consultant and the final version of the package of documents was submitted on December 21, 2021. The final documents has been agreed with the MES and approved by the PMU on December 24, 2021.

Various activities considered under sub-component 2.2, as well as sub-components 2.3 and 2.4 are envisaged under one procurement package - **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**. Design stage of the assignment has been finalized by the selected short-term consultants (one international and one local) during the reporting period. Consultants implemented work in different directions and developed the detailed TOR under the close supervision of the PMU and in close collaboration with relevant MES counterparts. Consultants attended scheduled meetings with the various stakeholders and relevant agencies (DPGE, TPDC, NCEQE and EMIS), the Executive Director of the I2Q Project - Ms. Tamar Sanikidze and the First Deputy Minister of Education and Science – Ms. Eka Dgebuadze. A total of 12 online and face to face meetings with the relevant stakeholders as well as number of consultations were held with the PMU in order to discuss questions of short-term consultants during the process. As a result of the discussion, various issues and conditions were clarified.

The design stage of the comprehensive capacity building activity envisaged under Component 2 has been finalized. Complete package of documents includes TOR, Estimated Budget, Market Survey, Evaluation Criteria and REOI document, which has been accepted by MES and approved by the PMU. The documents' package was submitted to the WB for review on September 2, 2021. TOR has been updated based on Bank's comments and has been re-submitted on October 4, 2021.



Estimated procurement period for hiring the consulting company is October 2021 – February 2022. Estimated implementation period of the respective capacity building activity is end March 2022 – July 2025. It is noteworthy to mention that the key findings of the ongoing diagnostic study will be available by the time the company starts analysis of various relevant documents and information.

This project aims to promote high-quality teaching and learning and includes the following three pillars:

A. Whole School Improvement: develop a policy framework, mechanisms and instructions for whole school improvement and support the scaling up of the pilot to help the schools improve quality.

B. Continuous Formative Assessment of Students: support capacity-building of school leaders to adapt, develop, and implement school-based assessment practices, which helps the students to strengthen their weaknesses and overcome learning difficulties.)

C. National Assessment Policy Implementation: design the mechanisms and instructions to implement, pilot, roll out and quality assure the new national assessment policy framework.

REOI was announced on October 7, 2021 with the deadline of submitting EOIs through November 5, 2021. The procurement **“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”** is in progress.

During the previous Implementation Support Mission held on February 15-19, 2021, it was agreed to commence several activities in order to expediate implementation. Therefore, among other issues, it was agreed to launch preparatory work for the development of new quality assurance policy framework for general education level and respectively, go forward with recruitment of international consultant. The contract was signed with Short-Term Consultant (International) (August 3, 2021 - December 24, 2021). Despite of the Consultant’s qualification and experience, which was demonstrated in CV and extensive support provided by the PMU, the Consultant could not demonstrate the professional skills of planning and selecting the appropriate tools and methods. Moreover, communication problems were identified with stakeholders during the Consultant’s working process. The contract with the consultant was terminated based on the prior agreement with the WB. The first deliverable provided by the Consultant was prepared as a result of huge effort and involvement of the PMU. Considering the fact that the first report/deliverable was valuable for further activities and would be used for further steps for developing the QA policy framework, the respective (first) payment was made in favor of the Consultant.

Given the importance to have QA policy framework developed before the

commencement the comprehensive assignment (Fostering Quality Teaching and Learning in General Education), the PMU requested NOB from the WB on direct selection of the Consultant to implement the assignment per revised TOR. Based on the approval of the WB, the contract has been concluded with the Consultant for the period of 3.5 months commencing from November 20, 2021 continuing through March 19, 2022.

The Consultant completed the first task. The relevant report was submitted within the specified timeframe. In the revised R1 the situation analysis is based on research by the OSCE and other experts, as well as on data collection in November 2021. The problem of accreditation of public schools is also addressed. The report has been accepted by MES and approved by the PMU.

As mentioned in the section I (B) of the report, based on prior approval of the WB, the I2Q Project supports additional activity of MES, i.e. Developing Concept for Strengthening Decentralized Management System via Reforming Educational Resource Centers as well as Strategy and Action Plan for Improving School Management. As requested by the First Deputy Minister – Ms. Ekaterine Dgebuadze, in order to hire a short-term local consultant, the REOI has been announced on November 11, 2021. Due to the small number of received applications, the deadline for submission of applications was extended through December 2, 2021. The evaluation has been finalized, successful candidate has been selected and contract negotiations are underway. Estimated Implementation of the Assignment is January – May 2022.

Sub-Component 2.3

Supporting the Capacity-building of Teachers and School Leaders (Principals) to Adapt, Develop, and Implement School-based Curriculum

The aim of this sub-component is to support capacity-building and improve continuous professional development framework for teachers and school leaders in all general education institutions. School principals' recruitment policy and framework will be revised, in order to attract best and brightest professionals to become school leaders.

As agreed with the MES and the WB, most of the activities defined under sub-component 2.3 (except the one concerning review and improvement of continuous professional development framework of teachers) are included in the scope of work of the consulting company to be selected for the task – Fostering Quality Teaching and Learning in General Education.

As for the development of continuous professional development framework of teachers, respective task is envisaged under the consultancy to be procured i.e. “Strengthening the Quality of Pre-service Teacher Education Programs and Continuous Professional



Development Options”. Based on the current PP, one procurement package unites teacher professional development activities defined under Components 2 and 3 of the I2Q Project. Therefore, the scope of work covers the activities envisaged under the sub-component 2.3 and 3.4 of the Project. Detailed overview of the progress is provided in the Section C, under Sub-Component 3.4 of the report.

Sub-Component 2.4

Assisting the Development of a National Assessment Framework

This sub-component will provide technical assistance for developing and introducing the revised national assessment system for general education level. The aim of the assessment system is to inform education policy makers and other relevant stakeholders on challenges and strengths of the general education system functioning, assist in identifying different factors affecting students learning outcomes and allowing for evidence-based policy decision making. The sub-component 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.

During the previous Virtual Implementation Support Mission held on February 15-19, 2021, it was agreed to expediate work towards design and implementation of national assessments and to recruit international consultant in order to support NAEC and MES with the development of concept and the policy framework. The objective of this consultancy is to provide targeted assistance to NAEC to evaluate current national assessment system of Georgia, identify gaps and to propose solution under new national assessment policy framework. Based on the new National Assessment Policy Framework will form the basis for developing appropriate tools and mechanisms for national wide implementation.

TOR for the assignment has been developed and the REOI has been announced during the previous reporting period (January-June 2021). Procurement procedures have been finalized and the contract has been concluded with the selected short-term international consultant on October 1, 2021 continuing through January 31, 2022.

The expert submitted first deliverable within the timeframe defined with the respective contract. The first feedback was sent to the Consultant (November 8, 2021), based on which the Consultant the revised the report and the final version of R1 report was submitted to the PMU on November 10, 2021. Report has been approved and the Acceptance Act has been signed on November 15, 2021.

With the aim of preparing the second deliverable, Consultant’s visit to Georgia was planned in order to undertake various meetings with different stakeholders. Therefore, amendment was signed in order to add reimbursable expenses into the Contract.

During the period of November 1-5, 2021 the Consultant held numerous meetings with various stakeholders, including focus groups with school principals and teachers.



On November 1, 2021, a working meeting was held among the GE Component Lead and PMU, the Consultant and the First Deputy Minister of Education and Science, Ekaterine Dgebuadze, in order to discuss the long-term vision and objectives of the assessment policy in details.

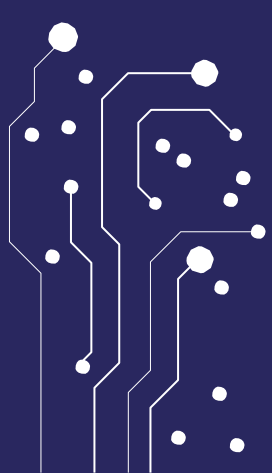
Meetings with stakeholders continued throughout November and the Consultant began desk surveys. As a result, the Consultant submitted the list of all relevant research design and methodology and the second report in English, as provided with the respective contract. He also researched successful international experiences. The Consultant was assisted daily by the GE Component Lead in finding various materials/information, organizing workshops, etc. The second report has been submitted by the Consultant on December 7, 2021. The PMU and NAEC have revised and discussed the document on the basis of which the first feedback has been provided to the Consultant (December 21, 2021). The Consultant has revised the report as requested and submitted to the PMU on December 23, 2021. Currently, the PMU and NAEC are in the process of reviewing the submitted revised document.

During the reporting period delivery of TAO Administrative and Technical Training to Support the National Assessment and Examinations Center (NAEC) was implemented within the set timeframe. The consultancy envisions capacity building of NAEC staff in administering TAO platform. The general objective of this assignment is to strengthen further use and maintenance of TAO, as well as its integration to other components of e-assessment system need though capacity building of technical staff. Scope of work envisages delivery of the standard package on depth TAO architecture, database structure, platform administration services designed for the technical staff, therefore includes illustration of TAO structures and hand-on practices on how it works. Topics were organized into a series of online sessions. The main assignment was completed on September 15, 2021, and the payment was conducted. The additional consultations specified in the contract (20 in total) were completed in December, 2021.

Immediate Next Steps:

- Complete the evaluation process and sign the agreement for the assignment **“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”**.
 - *Tentative implementation period of the activity is February 2022 – August 2025.*
 - *Supervision Consultant activities and Monitoring implementation of the assigned tasks and services under the contract.*

- Ensuring timely completion and providing supervision on the development of:
 - **National Assessment Policy Framework for GE level with the targeted implementation completion of end- February/mid- March 2022;**
 - **Quality Assurance Policy Framework for GE level with the targeted implementation completion of March 19, 2022.**
- Ensuring timely completion and providing supervision of the implementation of the envisaged activities by the consulting company conducting the ongoing multi-component diagnostic study (“**The Study and Evaluation of Trends in General Education in Georgia**”). The targeted completion deadline is July 2022.
- Supervision and monitoring of the implementation of tasks envisaged under the activity-**Developing Concept for Strengthening Decentralized Management System via Reforming Educational Resource Centers as well as Strategy and Action Plan for Improving School Management**. Targeted implementation period – January 10, 2022 – May 10, 2022.
- Oversee the implementation and timely completion of the design stage of the activity -**“Strengthening the Quality of Pre-service Teacher Education Programs and Continuous Professional Development Options”**.
 - *Targeted implementation completion date – March 15, 2022.*
 - *Commencement of procurement/announcement of REOI planned for April 2022.*
- **Providing supervision of the consulting company implementing the assignment – “Developing General Education Infrastructure and Physical Environment Standards for General Education Institutions (schools) of Georgia”**.
 - *Estimated implementation period – September 15, 2021 – May 15, 2023. Completion of the main work to be completed by the end of May 2022.*
 - *Initiate the establishment and coordinate activities of the inter- institutional committee comprising of different stakeholders, including representatives from relevant government institutions, such as the Ministry of Economy, MRDI, etc. to discuss and agree the IPE Standards prepared under the I2Q Project.*
- Upon receipt of the WB’s approval on the selection criteria and the list of schools to be constructed under the I2Q Project, conduct site visits together with ESIDA technical staff in order to study the site areas and engineering communications.
- Based on the assessment and recommendations provided by ESIDA, deciding upon the issue of replacing 4 schools targeted for rehabilitation.
- Coordinating activities to implement student learning assessments in collaboration with NAEC and M&E Specialist of the Project in order to measure baseline of the PDO indicator i.e. identifying project target schools, sample size for conducting the assessment, etc.





C. COMPONENT 3

STRENGTHENING FINANCING OPTIONS AND PROMOTING INTERNATIONALIZATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

During the last decade, internationalization has become one of the major priorities of higher education institutions (HEIs) around the world. Despite the fact that there are great variations and diverse approaches applied in terms of interventions and efforts across the globe, the impact of internationalization is becoming even more remarkable. Herewith, it should be noted that the process of internationalization is marked and marred mostly by the international mobility of students, staff, and programs.

From 2003 onwards, the GoG embarked on a mission to reform and modernize the education system, starting from early education to higher education. The reform process encompassed the transformation of every aspect of the education system. In 2005, Georgia joined the Bologna process triggering the wave of reforms of the higher education system: specifically, the three-cycle structure of higher education, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, and the higher education quality assurance system were introduced. As a result, the institutional accreditation process has been developed and established as a mandatory procedure to define the status of a higher education institution. The introduction of an institutional accreditation system was part of the country's policy agenda to modernize the national higher education system and determined the basic quantitative, input-based parameters that HEI had to conform to be allowed to operate and to issue the state-recognized diploma. Besides, the admission preconditions of students in the HEIs of Georgia adopted in 2005 replaced a previous admission system that was not transparent and was subject to corruptive practices.

After finalizing the first cycle of institutional accreditation, the new law on Educational Quality Enhancement was adopted in 2010. Thus, the educational quality assurance issues have been defined by the specific law which defined the authorization of educational institutions and accreditation of educational programs as the mechanisms of external quality assurance for Higher Education.

The main basis for reforming the system in 2015, on one hand, was the analysis of the implementation of authorization and accreditation mechanisms, feedback from the HEIs, experts, and other stakeholders; while on the other hand, the revision of the QA standards and procedures was based on ESG 2015. Thus, the main purpose for revising the system was to strengthen the development-oriented and outcome-based function of quality assurance and to ensure its compliance with the requirements of Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015).

In 2017, the quality assurance standards and procedures were revised with the wide participation of HEI representatives, national and international experts. As a result of the recent reforms (2015-2018) National Center for Education Quality Enhancement

(NCEQE) became a member of ENQA, obtained the listing in EQAR, and gained the recognition of the World Federation of Medical Education (WFME).

As the quality assurance framework for the national education and training system is closely linked with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the abovementioned reform covered this direction as well. The aim of this reform was to improve coherence and linkages between the sub-systems (general education, VET, and higher education) and compatibility with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The transition to new the NQF was supported by the EU Twinning project “Strengthening capacities for quality assurance and governance of qualifications”. As a result, in 2018, the Parliament of Georgia adopted amendments to the Law of Georgia on Development of Educational quality and the relevant subordinate acts have been approved, as Ministerial orders.

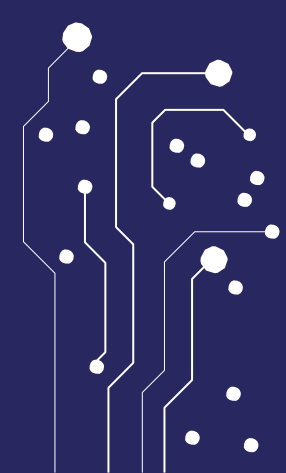
The Bologna Process and concomitant reforms, international partnership programs, public-private partnerships, and the recent EU-Georgia Association Agreement served as the major driving forces and catalysts to boost the internationalization process in Georgia.

Despite significant achievements in recent years, the Georgian higher education system continues to face many challenges. In order to achieve a high degree of competitiveness in the international educational market, it is important to robust the educational and research capacity of the country, and a set of competitive advantages should be factored in this process as well.

The positive factor for advancement in the international educational market is that Georgia already has experience in the development and implementation of international partnership programs, as well as of attracting and managing foreign students for over 15 years. It is also worth noting that both, public and private institutions have worked jointly in this regard.

Georgia brings international standards and resources to the sector through several international partnership projects. The Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact for Georgia implemented a successful model of international collaboration of universities in which San Diego University partnered with three Georgian universities (Ilia State, Iv. Javakishvili State, and Technical State Universities). This case represents an example of Georgia’s ability to carry out high-end international projects.

EU-Georgia Association Agreement fully entered into force on July 1, 2016, implies cooperation in the sphere of education and research. Closer relations with the EU educational system and cooperation with different European institutions are taking place among others through the Bologna process, Erasmus Mundus/Erasmus+, and Tempus programs. The European research funding is also becoming more accessible and stimulating different types of partnerships and cooperation, just to mention Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Program for Research and Innovation. As of today, 35 of 287 projects from Georgia received funding of EUR 3,637,140 in total. In this regard remains challenge to raise Georgian scientists’ competitiveness.





It should be also noted, that due to high performance and participation Georgia holds the 6th place among 141 Erasmus+ partner countries. 37 Georgian HEIs collaborate with the Universities of 33 European countries. More than 30 HEIs have been involved in CBHE projects; up to 10369 scholarships have been funded for student and staff exchange programs. For the present, 7 Georgian HEIs participate in 8 programs of Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree (source – National Erasmus Plus Office).

Although these measures are aimed at getting international experience for students, academic and administrative personnel, they are not sufficient to make significant impacts at the systemic level. Consequently, additional resources are needed for the internationalization of higher education, the attraction of foreign students, and the establishment of the country as a regional educational center.

The main challenge for the HEIs in the force major pandemic situation was also to maintain the quality standards of teaching and learning, while switching to an online mode of program delivery. Before pandemic HEIs in Georgia offered mostly the traditional classroom learning and teaching through contact hours. It's noteworthy, that all leading HEIs in Georgia have had already adopted mechanisms and technical facilities for online/distant learning (like Moodle or Argus (Ilia State University) e-platforms), though they were mostly used for administering purposes and not for delivering the educational programs. With the announcement of state of emergency (March 21, 2020) the HEIs were recommended to switch completely to online teaching format. With this respect, the situation with pandemic can be considered in some "positive" key, as it triggered the wide and quick implementation of online teaching methods. This transfer of educational process to online mode in most cases was rather successful, despite the challenges of different types, including technical, methodological, administrative issues and the unpreparedness of the academic staff.

When institutions moved online, the primary focus was on acquiring the tools required for online learning, including purchasing licenses, ensuring access to technology and equipment. Both asynchronous (recorded lectures) and synchronous methods of teaching (via ZOOM, TEAMS, MEET, etc.) were implemented at HEIs. The library resources were digitalized, the schedules were re-shaped, especially for the disciplines with strong laboratory or practical component with the attempts to postpone contact classes. Generally, no changes to curricula were made and the intended learning outcomes remained the same, which in fact became a big challenge for the staff involved in programme implementation, as the same learning outcomes should've been received with different methodology. Due to this in some cases the drop in quality of teaching and learning was reported. The re-shaping of the syllabi mostly touched the assessment methods (the recommendations were made to emphasize the share of final exams in overall assessment (as some of the students had limited or no access to IT facilities during the semester); to switch to oral exams, or to compulsory use of the e-learning platforms for testing). Not only the teaching process, but also other university services were switched to distant mode. During the 2020-2021 academic year, HEIs moved from the emergency mode to hybrid or fully online

arrangements, as the national Covid-19 safety measures shifted depending on the status of the pandemic.

There are additional issues concerning the science, technologies and innovations. More specifically, Georgia has no conceptual and systemic vision or policy for developing science, technologies and innovations. This is mainly caused by country not having high tech economic sector, industrial development policies as well as a program defining development of innovations and science and being main moving and stimulating factor of demand on technology.

Nowadays science system does not fulfil its direct task – It does not generate new and competitive knowledge, in turn, greatly decreasing development potential of the country's education system.

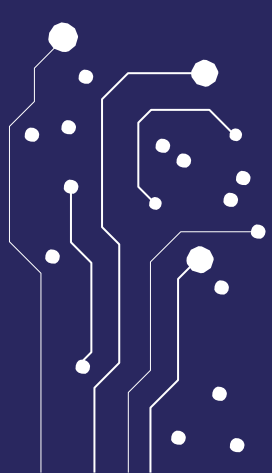
Science, technology and innovation system stands apart of the economy and is rendered not functional, which limits formation and development of the so called “knowledge-based economy”. Science does not create competitive products and services thus it cannot support the country in entering and finding niche on both domestic and international technology markets. Therefore, it gives no positive outcomes and does not compensate spending of the state. Because of underdevelopment and unprofitability existing science system is not of interest to the private sector investors and is on constant state dotation.

Within 2017-2018 EU research and innovation framework – Horizon 2020 – European Commission Policy Support Facility (PSF) to Georgia assessed Georgian science, technology and innovation (STI) system and issued recommendations for system's further development.

Despite these recommendations, Georgian science still has no long-term state development concept. The main problems in the sphere are of complex character and countering them requires systemic changes that will not always fit into the competency of a single ministry but will demand coordinated action with other ministries as well. Therefore, it is necessary to have the unified strategy and conceptual vision at the state level.

Therefore, the internationalization of HE and Science remains a priority for GoG. It should be underlined, that internationalization of higher education is not an end in itself, but an instrument for quality enhancement, and has to be supported by the government and universities - this is the main idea and the integral part of the “Higher Education and Research Strategy 2032”.

More specifically, in 2017, within the Public Administration Reform initiative, The GoG took the responsibility and approved the Unified Strategy for Developing National Education and Science System 2017-2021 (governmental decree #533). Based on the strategy implementation results, achievements, and envisaging the upcoming system strengthening needs GoG will need to approve the sector development strategy for 2022 - 2030. The lead responsibility for developing and implementing the Education





Sector Strategy as well as monitoring the strategy implementation results lies with MES.

The I2Q Project contributed to the ongoing efforts of the MES in designing the new comprehensive Education and Science Strategy for 2022 – 2032 and Action Plan for 2022-2023. In response to the request of the MES, and based on the no objection granted by the WB, following two consultants have been recruited to develop the ECE sub-sector strategy and action plan:

- *Short-Term Consultant (International) for Support Preparation of Higher Education, Research and Innovation Strategy and Action Plan;*
- *Short-Term Consultant (local) for Support in Preparation of Higher Education sub-Sector Strategy and Action Plan;*
- *Short-Term Consultant (local) for Support in Preparation of Science sub-Sector Strategy and Action Plan.*

The assignment was implemented under close supervision and coordination by the PMU, and completed successfully in October 2021. During the implementation process, several working meetings were held with the MES, strategic department team and the selected short-term Consultants. The Consultants have received and discussed internationalization recommendations suggested by ERASMUS+ experts. Those recommendations alongside with feedback from other stakeholders were considered in the final version of the Document. The submitted final Reports were agreed with MES (October 4, 2021) and approved (October 5, 2021). In addition, the issues concerning the relevant Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, and Costing of the Priority Activities, were also discussed with the department of International Relations and Strategic Development of the MES, and the relevant document was attached to the final Report.

Sub-Component 3.1

Developing new options for higher education financing, including performance-based options to support the Government's strategic objectives

With respect to Component 3, higher education financing reform is considered as the top priority for the MES. It is important to highlight that changing the funding formula shall affect the united national examination format and content.

3.1.1. The Development of a New Model for Higher Education Financing

Concerning the development of a new model for higher education financing, the assignment was completed successfully. More specifically, during the reporting period:

- First workshop was held from 14:00 to 17:30 on July 1, 2021 using ZOOM business technology provided by the IBF. The list of invitees included more than 100 people designated by all stakeholders, 91 persons registered for

the workshop and the number of actual participants was 55. The presenters were the project experts Vladimir Briller, Ellen Hazelkorn, Tom Boland and Petya Koleva. Irine Darchia and Manana Mikaberidze were moderating the sessions, monitoring the audience and taking care of Q&A. Irine Darchia also took part in the discussion and clarified some issues concerning the legislative requirements of Georgia and process of consultations.

- The Progress Report was received (July 2, 2021) and analyzed (July 2-7, 2021), the relevant recommendations were agreed with the MES and the feedback was sent to the IBF experts' team (July 7, 2021). Based on the feedback, the revised report was received (July 9, 2021), analyzed (July 9-12, 2021), and approved (July 13, 2021).
- The Draft Assessment Report was received (July 16, 2021) and analyzed (July 17-28, 2021), the relevant recommendations were agreed with the MES and the feedback was sent to the IBF experts' team (July 29, 2021). Based on the feedback, the revised report was received (August 4-9, 2021), analyzed (August 5-9, 2021), and approved (August 9-12, 2021).
- The draft of the part of the IBF's Final Report relating to the reform of the voucher system and PBF models was received (August 23, 2021). These ideas were discussed with the MES (August 24 – September 7, 2021) and feedback was sent to the IBF expert team (September 7, 2021).
- Based on the request of the IBF dated September 14, 2021, and on the Explanatory Note No. MES 2 21 0000916332 issued by the Higher Education Component Lead of Georgia Innovation, Inclusion and Quality Project ("I2Q") on September 14, 2021, the Parties agreed to extend the contract duration of the Contract due to complexity of the current tasks for additional 17 calendar days from October 12, 2021 through October 29, 2021. This time was needed for reconciliation of the mutual opinions of the MES, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia and stakeholders involved in the implementation of the I2Q Project and the development of the Final Report.
- The submitted final Report (by October 11, 2021) was agreed with MES and approved (October 27, 2021).

Key points of the final report:

1. Without increasing the overall funding of the Higher Education, it is not possible to arrive at the tangible results;
2. The increase can be reflected in voucher funding with certain modifications;
3. PBF funding model with several potential alternatives.

Recommendations:

1. Increase the overall level of funding to the higher education system, aiming over time towards 3% of GDP. The risk is that without adequate funding the



HEIs will be put under such financial pressure that the prospect of successful reform will be undermined.

2. Remodeling the voucher system - creating a core funding model as understood internationally. Provide public funding according to the total number of registered students in public universities (it can increase the number of students that the system accommodates). While the amount of funding is determined by the number of students and the discipline mix (as a block grant) the university can decide on its internal allocation.
3. Introduce a differentiated model of funding which reflects the different cost of programmes/fields of study. It is recommended that a unit costing exercise be carried out for the HE system in Georgia at the earliest opportunity. As an interim, it is recommended that the voucher value of programs that are lab-based should have a value 1.5 times the standard voucher value and those that require clinical practice should be set at twice the standard value.
4. Put in place measures to mitigate the effects of annual variation in student numbers in order to ensure stability of funding for the universities. Provide funding to a university on the basis of the average funding that would have been made available to it in each of the preceding three years if no moderator was applied; Or limit the change in funding for each university to plus or minus 2% (it can be more) of the overall increase (or decrease) in the total budget for the sector in that year.
5. Provide financial resources to universities to support equity of access to, and participation in, higher education. It is recommended that the funding model contain specific targeted funding – provide an additional amount per student who is identified as part of a disadvantaged group (from lower socio-economic backgrounds/ethnic minorities/with disabilities).
6. Introduce performance-based funding (PBF) by allocating it either - (i) by making a portion of core funding available subject to a PBF model, or (ii) by providing additional funding as a separate fund to be allocated through a PBF model.
7. The introduction of a PBF model can be done in parallel with any of the other reforms. There is no fixed rule as to what proportion of core institutional funding should be targeted for performance assessment. Internationally, it is generally in the range of 3% to 7%. The level of funding should be such as to mean that no institution could afford to ignore it. On the other hand, it should be of a scale that if it was applied to a HEI it would not destabilize the institution and prevent it from achieving its performance targets in subsequent years.
8. The terms of performance agreements, including the performance indicators, should be the subject of dialogue with the universities and the HAEIs (MES and MCYS respectively) with indicators of performance chosen that are appropriate

and relevant to the individual institution. The process of dialogue with the HEIs should result in a performance agreement to be signed by the MES and the president of each HEI covering a three-year period and providing interim performance indicators (based on the institution's strategic plan, its coherence and completeness) for each year and final indicators for the end of the period.

9. The new funding model should be applicable to all public institutions and disciplines, including higher arts education. The current funding provided to the MCSY funded HAEIs would remain in place as funding reform is implemented with change occurring only to ensure that at the end of the process the funding model of the HAEIs is fully comparable with the MES funded universities.
10. Based on the analysis of the country context the following 5 strategic objectives are proposed to be used in the assessment process: 1. Education; 2. Research & Knowledge Transfer; 3. Internationalization; 4. Regional Engagement; 5. Widening Participation.
11. Indicative phasing and timeframe for PBF - work should commence on the design of a performance funding model, and continue in parallel with the proposed reform of the core funding model. Incorporation of a performance element into public funding model for Georgian higher education will be completed over a period of years. The following is an indicative timeline:
 - During 2021-2022, MES will continue to develop the model of performance-based funding in consultation with the HEIs, other Government Ministers and external stakeholders. MES will also identify the national objectives on which the system will be based.
 - During 2022 the MES will conduct a series of seminars/workshops to explain the system to the HEIs, their management, staff and students and external stakeholders, including other Ministries.
 - By end 2022 the MES will issue to the universities a statement of the PBF process and what will be required by them, as well as a statement of national objectives and performance indicators. In addition, the MES will issue to the universities a sample format of the agreement that the universities are expected to prepare.
 - The process will commence in 2023 leading to the conclusion of performance agreements between the MES and the universities by the end of that year. The agreements will cover the period 2024 - 2026.
 - In each subsequent year, from 2025, performance in the previous year will be assessed and funding allocations made accordingly. In this first cycle the allocations will be notional only.

Further steps:

For the gradual introduction of the new financing model, as well as for the effective



implementation of the subsequent task related to the development of a HEIs Information Management Database System, MES needs to determine a specific formula from the several proposed models described in the IBF's Report.

As agreed with the Minister, after presenting the Final Report, MES took the leading role in the dissemination process and shared the Report with the Education and Science Committee of the Parliament of Georgia, as well as with all authorized Higher Education Institutions (including Higher Arts Education Institutions) operating in Georgia.

It should be noted, that with PMU's support the Final Report was translated into Georgian and was provided in both English and Georgian languages, as requested by the MES. Some stakeholders have already sent their feedback to the MES. However, the process is ongoing, and through January 2022, MES will continue to gather and analyze the relevant ideas from the main stakeholders. A series of workshops will start in February 2022, and thoughts on a specific model will be agreed upon with the Higher Education Institutions and other relevant ministries.

3.1.2. The Development of a HEIs Information Management Database System

Component 3 provides support for improving funding mechanisms for higher education. In order to provide technical support to the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and PMU for the purpose of tendering the upcoming activity 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, one short-term international consultant has been recruited.

It should be underlined, that the statistical processing of the relevant information for a new performance-based funding formula is an important part of HEI's performance review. This multi-user database system will be accessible to different stakeholders with varying levels of access and designed as a common tool for reporting and assessing HEI's performance and development results.

The selected short-term international consultant, Mr. Mihajlo Babin, developed the ToR for the relevant procurement – "Consulting Services for Facilitating the Implementation of a New Model of Performance-based Funding by Creating Information Management Database System". The assignment was completed successfully.

During the reporting period, daily assistance was provided to the international Consultant finding various materials/information, organizing working meetings, etc.:

- The First Progress Report was received (July 15, 2021) and analyzed (July 16-27, 2021), the relevant recommendations were agreed with the MES, EMIS and the feedback was sent to the Consultant (July 28, 2021). Based on the feedback, the revised R1 was submitted on August 3, 2021.
- An additional discussion (for additional explanations of the feedback submitted

to the First Progress Report) was held on 30 July, 2021. The working meeting was attended by: Mr. Mihajlo Babin, Ms. Maka Makhatadze and Ms. Nino Begiashvili.

- Next working meeting was held on 6 August, 2021. The working meeting was attended by: Mr. Mihajlo Babin, Ms. Maka Makhatadze, Ms. Nino Begiashvili, EMIS's team and HEI's representatives.
- The R2. Progress report was submitted (September 25, 2021) and approved (October 1, 2021).
- Based on the discussions with EMIS and MES, it was agreed that the feedback/comments (concerning the R2. Progress report) would be reflected in the R3.
- Based on the request of the Consultant dated September 20, 2021, and on the Explanatory Note No. MES 1 21 0000952313 issued by the Higher Education Component Lead of Georgia Innovation, Inclusion and Quality Project ("I2Q") on September 21, 2021, the Parties agreed to extend the contract duration for additional 42 calendar days from October 1, 2021 through November 11, 2021. This time is needed to the Client (MES) to review and approve the submitted reports. The proposed time extension does not cause any scope or price implications. Moreover, based on Consultant's request, the banking details were changed (Contract Amendment No. 1).
- The R3. Final report was submitted (October 25, 2021), the first feedback was sent to the International Consultant (October 27, 2021), based on which the revised Final report was submitted on October 29, 2021.
- Approval Date of the R3. Final report by the PMU – November 8, 2021
- The final Acceptance Act signature date – November 15, 2021.

The final ToR for procurement of "the Consulting services for facilitating the implementation of a new model of performance-based funding by creating information management database system" was agreed with MES and submitted for WB's review and no objection (November 15, 2021). At the current stage, the procurement is ongoing. Expressions of Interest must be delivered electronically not later than January 6, 2022, 17:00 hours.

During the last WB implementation support mission (September 6-17, 2021) it was discussed and agreed that the Component 3 of the I2Q Project would also support the development of a unified methodology and instruments to track graduates and collect employer feedback at higher education institutions. Therefore, concerning the Student Tracking System, the relevant letter was sent to the WB team to share their opinion and suggestions on this issue. Having in mind specificity of the new task (i.e. development of a unified methodology and instruments to track graduates and collect employer feedback at higher education institutions) and the experience of the Consultant (Mr. Mihailo Babin), with the MES consent, PMU suggested expending the scope of work of Mr. Babin. Specifically, PMU proposed to add the aforementioned task to the Consultant's contract,



since Mr. Babin has relevant experience, is already well acquainted with the HE system of Georgia and has reviewed reports submitted by IBF.

Based on these discussions, the existing Contract was amended. More specifically, according to the Contract Amendment No. 2 (November 10, 2021) the aforementioned task (task B – the Development of the Terms of Reference for the Student Tracking System platform) was added to Mr. Babin’s Contract. The R4. Progress report was already submitted (November 28, 2021). The R4 was analyzed (November 29 – December 6, 2021), and approved (December 8, 2021).

Sub-Component 3.2

Setting up Competitive Innovation Fund (CIF) for public and private universities, in partnership with private sector

Concerning the sub-component 3.2, the establishment of a Competitive Innovation Fund (CIF) (for public and private universities), we also have a tangible result. The assignment was completed successfully. The selected one international and two local consultants submitted the Final Reports, with the final version of the operational manual for CIF (in Georgian and English Languages) on December 17, 2021.

The final set of documents includes the following Annexes:

A1	Guidelines for Applicants
A2a	Assessment criteria and guidelines for evaluators
A2b	CIF Assessment Summary
A3	Proposal Submission Form
A4	Budget Template
A5	CV Template
A6	JV/ Consortium agreement Template
A7a	Confidentiality Statement - CIF
A7b	Confidentiality Statement - Applicant
A8	Applicant Statement
A9	Grants Financing Agreement
A9a	CIF - Financial Report Form
A9b	CIF Progress Report - Draft - ENG
A10	Terms of Reference For the selection of Audit

During the reporting period, daily assistance was provided to the international/national Consultant finding various materials/information, organizing working meetings, etc.:

- The working meeting was held on July 5, 2021 to discuss the CIF implementation arrangements (participants: CIF experts' team, Ms. Tamar Sanikidze, Ms. Nino Kutateladze, Ms. Nino Begiashvili).
- An additional discussion was held on 9 July, 2021. The working meeting was attended by: CIF experts' team and Ms. Nino Begiashvili.
- The working meeting was held on July 22, 2021 with MES representatives to discuss the CIF further. The working meeting was attended by: CIF experts' team, Deputy Minister, Ms. Nunu Mitskevichi, Ms. Maia Shukoshvili, Ms. Tamar Sanikidze and Ms. Nino Begiashvili.
- The R-1 was received (August 5, 2021) and analyzed (August 5-12, 2021), the relevant recommendations were agreed with the MES and the feedback was sent to the team (August 13, 2021). Based on the feedback, the revised report was received (August 19, 2021), analyzed (August 19-22, 2021), and approved (August 23, 2021).
- The R-2 (International Consultant) was received (August 20, 2021), analyzed (August 20-25, 2021) and approved (August 26, 2021).
- The R2. Progress reports (2 local Consultants) were submitted (October 26, 2021) and approved (October 29, 2021).
- The R-3 Progress report (International Consultant) was submitted (October 25, 2021) and approved (October 29, 2021). Taking into account the content of the upcoming R-4, we agreed with MES that our feedback/comments should be reflected in the Final Report.
- A working meeting was held with Ms. Nunu Mitskevichi (Deputy Minister) and representatives of the Higher Education Department of MES, on October 25. I2Q Project Higher Education Component lead presented the results of ongoing work and progress made within the Competitive Innovations Fund documentation. The participants discussed the first draft version of the operational manual for CIF. The discussion results have been sent to a group of experts working on the document for further improvement (November 2, 2021).
- The R-4 Final Report (International Consultant) was received (December 3, 2021), analyzed (December 3-13, 2021), and the first feedback was sent to the team (December 13, 2021).
- The revised R-4 Final Report (International Consultant), and the R3 - Final Reports (2 local Consultants) were submitted on December 6-7, 2021. A working meeting was held with Ms. Nunu Mitskevichi and Mr. Valerian Gobronidze (Deputy Ministers), and representatives of the Higher Education Department of MES, on December 13, 2021. I2Q Project Higher Education Component lead presented the results of ongoing work and progress made within the Competitive Innovations



Fund documentation. The participants discussed the revised draft version of the operational manual for CIF (English and Georgian versions). The discussion results have been sent to a group of experts working on the document for further improvement (December 13, 2021).

- The revised R-4 Final Report (International Consultant), and the R3 - Final Reports (2 local Consultants) were submitted on December 17, 2021. The final set of documents were agreed with MES (December 20, 2021) and approved (December 21, 2021).

The CIF will be established as a Competitive Grant Mechanism coordinated by the MES, to award up to 45 CIF grants to foster modernization of higher education programs and learning environment.

The strategic aim of the CIF is to ‘foster modernization of higher education programs and learning environment and strengthen the labor market linkages’. This aim is fully aligned with the strategic framework for social-economic and higher education (HE) in the Republic of Georgia including the Social-economic Development Strategy of Georgia (Georgia 2020), the Unified Strategy of Education and Science 2017-2021 and the ongoing Bologna Process.

Strategically, the CIF is conceived as a tool that enables university units to link their strategic planning with actual prospects for strategic implementation of these plans. This is achieved by ensuring that funding applications are based upon and justified by a university’s initial diagnosis of its principal strengths and weaknesses in the context of environmental opportunities and risks. By taking this approach, the CIF will accelerate processes of constructive change and institutional modernization by promoting both cooperation and competition among participating departments, faculties and universities.

Specifically, the CIF is envisaged as a dedicated instrument to help HEIs to realize their Strategic Development Plans in line with the strategic direction and priorities of the Republic of Georgia and MES.

Under the overall management of the MES, it will provide support to (public) HEIs who have the ambition and determination to implement changes that will provide measurable benefit to students, academic and administrative staff, researchers, future employers, and other stakeholders. It will enable HEIs to modernize to international standards, upgrade educational programs together with teaching and assessment methods, support the professional development of academic staff, build stronger linkages with other HEIs in both the Republic of Georgia and abroad, mainstream innovative and good practice into the teaching and research environment as they fit the national culture and environment, close the gap to both research institutes and the labor market and compete in the international research area. The impact of the CIF should be visible in future authorization and accreditation reports issued by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement as well as in metrics for Georgia and individuals HEI positions in international teaching and scientific rankings and national statistics for employment. In the long term (10 years) the impact of the

CIF should contribute measurably to the statistics relating to innovation alongside those of NSF and GITA.

The CIF funding pool can be accessed by groups within the university community to carry out new initiatives and innovative approaches to address the existing problems in teaching, learning, integrating research into teaching and learning using technology and modern pedagogical approaches, and supporting development of university management system. More specifically, the funding windows are for the public universities targeting specific development and innovation issues identified in their Strategic Development Plans (SDPs), and for public HEI led consortia projects encouraging cooperation in joint projects uniting the public and private universities and companies, research institutions, and foreign companies (non-university institutions) who are eligible to be involved in the project as consortium participants.

The design of the CIF grants scheme is designed to respect university autonomy while encouraging institutions to think holistically about their planning and development. The types of CIF funded projects that are envisaged to be supported include improvement and upgrade of programs. This may include:

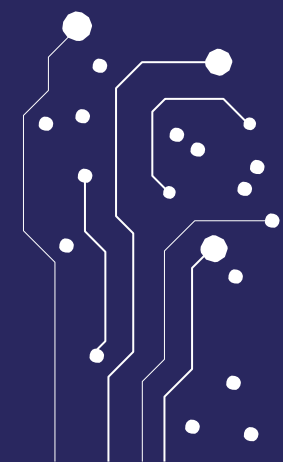
- developing program content to reflect the latest trends in the field;
- introducing innovations in terms of teaching and learning including support for classroom teaching utilizing technology and modern pedagogical approach, such as problem-solving and project-based learning, and improvement of e-learning methods;
- engaging relevant employers to reinforce the linkages with labor market;
- modernizing and upgrading labs and physical infrastructure to meet the program objectives;
- improvement of gender imbalances in the education system, especially in STEM subjects including supporting HEIs to attract female students to STEM programs and help narrow the gender gap in STEM fields.

The CIF will be implemented in 2 phase – a pilot in the first year (2022) for around 5 projects followed by 2 calls a further 35 the following years (2023-2024).

Sub-Component 3.3 Internationalization of Higher Education

The content of the sub-component has been modified and reflected in the revised POM, in line with the strategic vision of the MES regarding internationalization of higher education. The modified activities under the sub-component includes:

- (i) development of a joint doctoral (PhD) program that will provide comprehensive knowledge to identify and research complex issues within the field of education and science management, in partnership with international institutions/universities;
- (ii) support of the development of entrepreneurship module for higher education





studies (Bachelor's and Master's degree programs) as well as module for enhancing English language skills for students considering discipline requirements;

(iii) establishment of an International Excellence School, which provides a focused academic environment with short-term courses. The International Excellence School will foster international academic and scientific collaboration across selected disciplines and accelerate development of the most promising emerging areas that are in line with national strategic priorities.

During the reporting period, in close collaboration with the MES, two draft TORs were developed (October 29, 2021) for the selection of one short-term international and one short-term local Consultants to provide technical support to PMU for the purpose of tendering the upcoming activity - supporting the effective planning and implementation of the procurement on "Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education" envisaged under the third Component of the I2Q project.

ToRs were submitted for WB's review and no objection. At the current stage, both procurements are ongoing. It should be noted, that due to the low competition, it was necessary to extend the application deadline. At this stage, the deadline for accepting all applications has expired and the process of evaluating the received CVs is in progress. The assignment is expected to be completed by May 16, 2022, as indicated in the current PP.

Based on the assignment, the Consultants will be responsible for developing comprehensive TOR/evaluation criteria, supporting the effective planning and implementation of the procurement of the consulting services for the upcoming activity – "Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education". The comprehensive ToR should be agreed with MES and WB by June 30, 2022, and the corresponding Contract should be concluded from December 18, 2022, to September 27, 2025.

Sub-Component 3.4

Strengthening the quality of pre-service teacher education programs for all levels of education

The content of the sub-component has been modified in line with the strategic vision of the MES to bring an adequate supply of well-trained teachers into the classroom. The proposed activities under this sub-component shall be focused on the interrelated issues: (i) capacity assessment, (ii) capacity building through high-quality professional training, (iii) strengthening programs, and standards for teacher education and (iv) university-based teacher's professional development with particular emphasis on improving teaching and learning methodologies. The scope for this sub-component has been further clarified in the revised POM.

It should be mentioned, that based on the current PP, one procurement package unites teacher professional development activities defined under Components 2 and 3 of the I2Q Project. Therefore, the scope of work covers the activities envisaged under the sub-

component 2.3 and 3.4 of the Project. Accordingly, the two selected short-term Consultants (one international and one national) carry out their activities under the supervision of the Leads of both the Higher and General Education Component.

During the reporting period:

- Concerning the selection of short-term national consultant (for conducting preparatory works and develop comprehensive ToR and evaluation criteria under the sub-component 3.4 - Strengthening the Quality of Pre-service Teacher Education Programs and Continuous Professional Development Options), the selection process was completed by August 18, 2021.
- Concerning the selection of short-term international consultant (for conducting preparatory works and develop comprehensive ToR and evaluation criteria under the sub-component 3.4 - Strengthening the Quality of Pre-service Teacher Education Programs and Continuous Professional Development Options), the selection process was completed by August 18, 2021. However, the contract negotiation was not successful with the selected international consultant. Therefore, procurement was re-announced. Based on the re-announced procurement, the selection process was completed by October 25, 2021.
- The first Reports (R1) were submitted by an International and National Consultants on November 15, 2021.
- The R1 was analyzed by the PMU, MES, and TPDC. A working meeting was held with the Deputy Ministers (Ms. Eka Dgebuadze and Ms. Nunu Mitskevichi), with the Higher and General Education Departments of MES and the representatives of the TPDC, on November 24, 2021, to present and discuss the R1. As a result of discussions, the first feedback was sent to the International and Local Consultants (November 25, 2021), based on which the revised Reports were submitted on the first of December, 2021.
- Based on the agreed next steps, the second Reports will be submitted by January 7, 2022.

The selected Consultants (International and National) shall perform the Services during the period commencing November 1, 2021 and continuing through March 15, 2022.

The Consultants are responsible for developing comprehensive TOR/evaluation criteria, supporting the effective planning and implementation of the procurement of the consulting services for the upcoming capacity-building activity – “Strengthening the Quality of Pre-service Teacher Education Programs and Continuous Professional Development Options”. The comprehensive ToR should be agreed with MES and WB during March, 2022, and the corresponding Contract should be concluded from August 23, 2022, to December 25, 2025.



Immediate Next Steps:

- Providing support to the MES in the stakeholders' consultation process and concluding the work involving the choice of a specific funding formula, combining current student voucher allocations as a core funding and new elements of performance-based funding for gradual implementation throughout 2022-2025, which will be based on the proposed policy options for the reform of higher education, as well as different financing options for higher education described in the IBF's report.
- Providing support to the MES in the establishment and implementation of the CIF, as a Competitive Grant Mechanism. Supporting activities include, but are not limited to:
 - *supporting the process of approving the relevant regulatory documentation by the MES;*
 - *assistance in the creation of structural units for CIF;*
 - *recruiting the relevant staff for CIF PIU, etc.*
- The implementation of envisaged activities by the following already selected short-term Consultants will be supervised during the term of the Contracts:
 - *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; Task B - the Development of the Terms of Reference for the Student Tracking System platform).*
 - *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".*
 - *Short Term Consultant (National) 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".*
- Complete the evaluation process concerning ongoing procurements and:
 - *Short Term Consultant (National) Signing of the contracts with the one short-term Consultant (International) for supporting the planning process for Implementation of "Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education" and one short-term Consultant (National) for supporting the planning process for Implementation of "Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education" (by February, 2022). The implementation of envisaged activities by short-term Consultant will be supervised during the term of the contract.*

- *Signing of the contract with the selected Company for “Consulting Services for Facilitating the Implementation of a New Model of Performance-based Funding by Creating Information Management Database System” (by April, 2022). The implementation of envisaged activities by short-term Consultant will be supervised during the term of the contract.*
- Start the implementation of procurement procedures planned for the next reporting period, concerning the following upcoming capacity-building activities:
 - *“Strengthening the Quality of Pre-service Teacher Education Programs and Continuous Professional Development Options” (March, 2022).*
 - *“Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education” (June, 2022).*



D. COMPONENT 4

SYSTEM STRENGTHENING AND STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION

The objective of this sub-component is to improve the capacity of the entire education system to collect, analyze and disseminate data and information for monitoring and decision-making purposes and activities, including among others, gender disaggregated information. Going forward, EMIS should collect an expanded range of actionable data to both improve teaching and learning and provide insights into how education can be linked with different sectors to advance a wider range of development objectives. This will include aspects related to data collection, governance, links to other internal and external organization's data systems, security and maintenance, and a focus on strengthening the capacity of the NAEC and the NCEQE in these areas.

This sub-component will support a diagnostic assessment of the EMIS and identify data needs in Georgia, as well as provide recommendations and propose several options for capacity building of the EMIS, to enable further development and upgrades of the system, to strengthen and reorient the EMIS as a set of operational processes increasingly supported by digital technologies, which allows the collection, aggregation, analysis, and use of data and information in education, including for management and administration, planning, policy formulation, monitoring and assessment at all levels from early childhood to higher education. The sub-component will also support EMIS in developing a Learning Management System (LMS) software for a collaborative e-platform for sharing teaching and learning practices. It will target not only teachers and school leaders, but also parents and students, including children with disabilities and diverse learning needs. The e-platform will support and strengthen the development of peer-to-peer school networks using resources such as lesson plans, videos, images, weblinks, and developing eLearning. Collected data will allow evaluating eLearning and school-based program design and overall eLearning strategy so that schools can pinpoint areas for improvement.

Sub-Component 4.1

Supporting data-driven decision-making accessible to the entire education system

The PMU has finalized procurement and concluded a contract with a Consultant for implementing the assignment "Consulting Services for Diagnostic Assessment of Education Management Information System (EMIS), Data Integration and Analytic Systems" during the previous reporting period (on June 8, 2021). The selected consultant has developed an Inception Report (first deliverable) and submitted the report to the PMU in June 2021. As determined with the contract, the report included a description of the approach and methodology for executing the assignment, including a detailed action plan and working schedule, as defined with the respective contract.

The report has been reviewed by various structural units of MES, including but not limited to ECE, GE, VET, HE departments, as well as by the Department of Strategic Development and International Relations and EMIS. Considering the comments of the PMU and other stakeholders, the feedback was sent to the company regarding the inception report. The report has been updated accordingly and submitted on time for stakeholder's review. Upon final review, the report has been approved on August 11, 2021. After the stakeholder's approval, preparatory works have started to initiate development and collection of the essential documents which will be required for the selected company to perform works under the assignment - Diagnostic Assessment of Education Management Information System (EMIS), Data Integration and Analytic Systems.

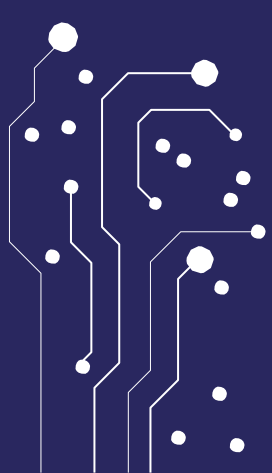
As provided in the inception report, the business analysis and stakeholder analysis were scheduled to take place during July-August 2021, before the technical analysis, in order to ensure unbiased input from the selected business stakeholders.

The technical analysis began in August and continued through September-October 2021 to support the completion of the recommendations by the end of December, 2021. However, technical analysis took longer than expected and the period for submitting the third report consisting of discussions on assessment findings and recommendations was postponed to January 2022.

During the summer 2021, meetings and interviews were held with MES leadership, various departments and national centers of MES regarding their needs, existing challenges, data needed for decision making, etc. In addition to conducted meetings and interviews, in order to gather more detailed and authentic information, the consulting company has prepared and submitted questionnaire to the aforementioned stakeholders. Based on the analysis of the feedback received, the Consultant provided several recommendations in order to expand the range of solutions available for the education system in Georgia.

Recommendations:

- i. Upgrading the eSchool (the Information Management System for General Education Institutions) to a more modern, integrated, and maintainable platform. Development of a Learning platform to support schools with extra learning resources, particularly supporting schools with more advanced materials for STEM and advanced levels in more specialized subjects where shortages of qualified and experienced teachers are present.
- ii. The selection of optimum software development tools and the resources to support the required work. Currently, Java, .Net, and PHP in addition to a range of software tools are used for various purposes. Design and development strategies based on modern development frameworks should also be considered.





- iii. An analysis and recommendations on organization development and capacity building at the EMIS organization to effectively implement the revised charter, structure, scope, and strategy.
- iv. Streamlining of the multiple databases and database technologies used to be more maintainable and sustainable, and to better support data analytics, future data mining, and AI-based solutions. Automating data reporting and dashboards to provide a faster response on data and to significantly reduce the workload.
- v. Considerations of an integrated data tracking methodology to identify students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders through the systems, including consideration of the use of National Id. and other identifiers.
- vi. Developing Hosted Cloud Services, which should be addressed for most of the EMIS services to provide greater efficiency, system redundancy, and capacity bottleneck elimination.
- vii. A review of existing data protection regulations in Georgia is required together with a review or update of principles on data protection for minors on which EMIS system design can be based.
- viii. There is a need for capacity and capability building in both teaching and administrative staff to be better prepared to increase the application of ICT in teaching and learning processes and to support better administration and interaction with the EMIS systems among the administrative staff. Using MOOC trainings for school Principals, Administrative Staff, and Teachers' professional development.

The current state analysis interviews took place during August-September, 2021 with key stakeholders in the EMIS team. The current state analysis report, including flowcharts and database scheme for the main systems has been completed by the end of December 2021. As determined by the Consultant's workplan, the business analysis was carried out in advance and the reporting is kept separate from the technical analysis report.

Different departments within the EMIS organization completed a problem analysis in the 4th quarter of 2021. Full details of the research will be included in the Current State Technical Analysis report. During the interviews and conducted technical researches in relation to the EMIS, the Consultant has identified some challenges and issues, which need to be agreed with the MES and EMIS.

In particular:

1. A path to modernizing and streamlining the eSchool and EMIS solutions based on a single high-level architecture model; eSchool should be replaced completely. This should be done as a platform modernizing, with a full master

architecture, a very careful selection of the development tools, and the start of streamlining of the systems and databases.

2. An architecture for distributed systems, based on the standards where SIS and LMS solutions each do the tasks they were designed for, and data can be shared from general education, universities, private schools and further education;
3. These recommendations will have an impact on the capacity building needed at EMIS. A rationalized design and clear decisions on what parts should be done in-house, outsourced or purchased will be a key factor in the capacity building plan;

A very high-level model for Core EMIS Services and an outline for a distributed platform and data architecture will be included later in the document for discussion and further analysis in the technical analysis phase.

The consulting company recommends that until the draft recommendations are presented and agreed with the MES and the directions and solutions are identified, any actions on these issues will be meaningless. The PMU has discussed this topic with MES. According to MES, it is better to wait until the consulting company completes the assessment and review and provides final recommendations for building the capacity of the EMIS, as well as for improving data collection and analysis.

Based on consultations with MES, in order to expediate performance and ensure efficient implementation of tasks under the sub-component 4.1, PMU has suggested to the WB to expand the scope of the diagnostic assessment. Specifically, proposed amendment considers revision of the assignment by adding tasks considered under two separate procurements envisaged under PP: “Short Term Consultant (International) to support the planning and implementation of the Capacity Building of EMIS” and Short-Term Consultant (National) for supporting effective Implementation of the “Design and Development of LMS and EMS for the National Education System and its Beneficiaries”. This approach will be cost-effective, time-efficient and will ensure higher quality of work, since the assignment will be implemented by qualified company, having a thorough knowledge of the system. Considering the justification provided by the PMU, the WB provided opinion that the scope of “Consulting Services for Diagnostic Assessment of Education Management Information System (EMIS), Data Integration and Analytic Systems” could be amended to encompass development of the TORs for the assignments “Support the planning and implementation of the Capacity Building of EMIS” and “Design and Development of LMS and EMS for the National Education System and its Beneficiaries”. As agreed with the WB, the proposed amendment of the scope of services will also result in prolongation of the contract term until June 30, 2022. Therefore, the PMU plans to conduct respective amendments to the PP in the framework of the assignment the assignment “Design and Development of



Learning Management System (LMS) and Education Management System (EMS) for the National Education System and its Beneficiaries”.

The sub-component also supports equipment of selected public schools with the necessary computer equipment. The tender for the purchase of school equipment (laptops and projectors) was announced on October 19, 2020. The contract was signed during the previous reporting period, specifically on March 1, 2021 and considered delivery of the following equipment: (i) Lenovo V15 G2 ALC 3850 pcs; (ii) Acer Extensa EX215-22 2500 pcs and (iii) Acer MR Projector PV11.001.X118H 898 pcs.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic situation, that affected manufacturers’ performance, the company requested to negotiate on the extension of delivery deadlines. The WB has agreed on suggested negotiations. Respectively, the contract was amended on July 12, 2021, defining a different delivery schedule of the equipment. The revised schedule provides the following deadlines:

- a) 3,850 Lenovo laptops – until July 15 2021;
- b) 2500 ACER laptops – until August 10, 2021;
- c) 898 ACER projectors – until October 15, 2021.

The first part of the laptops (3,850 Lenovo laptops) has been delivered within the specified timeframe. As for the second part (2500 ACER laptops) and third part (898 ACER projectors), the delivery has been delayed, and hence late delivery sanctions were applied as per the contract.

The delivery of the above equipment was made in stages:

Delivery 2: September 20, 2021 -1680 pieces of notebooks;

Delivery 3: September 21, 2021 - 820 pieces of notebooks;

Delivery 4: October 8, 2021 - 898 projectors.

For the distribution of equipment MES identified 475 schools, where the whole school improvement is being implemented, according to the following criteria:

- To cover as much regions as possible where MES has provided trainings to trainers within the whole school improvement project, where teachers have been trained, and trainers assist in parallel;
- Optical Internet connection;
- Wi-Fi infrastructure installed in previous years.

ESIDA would distribute the procured equipment among 475 public schools as initially agreed with the WB. However, based on the request of MES and approval of WB, considering the necessity and urgency, part of the equipment – 1067 laptops has been temporarily provided to 72 newly rehabilitated public schools. Also, installing a Wi-Fi network will be supported in 121 out of the 475 schools mentioned above. Respective contracts have been concluded, and the works are expected to complete in May 2022.

The principle of distribution of laptops is focused on the number of students in the

classroom, laptops will be available to support teachers in the distance learning process. Thus, this scheme supports not only the traditional learning process, providing schools with the minimum number of required computers, but also meets the needs of distance learning.

Currently all of the procured laptops and projectors have been delivered to 361 beneficiary and 72 newly rehabilitated public schools. Delivery of the procured laptops has been completed by the end of October, 2021, as for the projectors, the delivery has been completed in December, 2021. After completion of the state procurement procedures by MES, same number of laptops will be provided to remaining 114 project target schools.

Through sub-component 4.1, the I2Q Project also supports supply and installation of Wi-Fi networks in 121 public schools of Georgia where the whole school improvement is being implemented by the MES. The tender for the project “Supply and Installation of Wi-Fi Networks in Schools Located in East and West Parts of Georgia” has been re-announced on June 9, 2021 in order to promote the competitiveness of the international bidding process and encourage more international bidders to participate. The deadline for submitting bids was extended from July 8, 2021 until July 22, 2021.

Then tender was successfully finished and the contracts were signed with the winner companies:

- October, 2021 for wi-fi Lot-2 West Georgia (58 Schools) with awarded Green Systems LLC, USD 858,400.00
- November, 2021 for wi-fi Lot-1 East Georgia (63 Schools) with awarded UGT LLC, USD 840,420.00
- The estimated implementation period of the project is – October 2021 – May 2022.

Apart from the aforementioned activities, TOR for the consulting services - “Developing Training Resources and Guides for Schools on Selected Distance Learning Platform(s) and Teaching Methodology Application, Conducting ToT” has been developed and agreed with MES. After receiving no objection from the WB, REOI has been announced on December 9, 2021 with the deadline of submitting EOIs through December 24, 2021. Due to the scarcity of applications, the deadline has been extended through January 17, 2022.

The overall objective of the assignment is to develop an e-guide and e-course for teachers on distance and blended learning methodology to increase teacher capacity for distance and blended pedagogy across all public schools and grades, as well as to conduct online ToT for the relevant MES and TPDC representatives and teachers from the project of targeted 200 schools. Expected implementation period of the assignment is February 2022 – July 2022.



The sub-component envisages procurement of hardware and software to support the implementation of big data, analytics, dashboards, mapping and security software, servers and storage infrastructure, and hardware. According to the plan, the estimated period for contract conclusion is June 20, 2022 and the deadline for submitting the TOR to the WB is February 28, 2022. However, it is preferred to develop TOR and announce the procurement after finalizing EMIS diagnostic study, since the study will provide recommendations on technical strengthening and capacity building of EMIS. Therefore, the PMU plans to conduct respective amendments to the PP and postpone commencement of procurement procedures until the respective period.

Immediate Next Steps:

- Complete the evaluation process concerning ongoing procurements and, signing of the contract with the selected Company for the activity - “Developing Training Resources and Guides for Schools on Selected Distance Learning Platform(s) and Teaching Methodology Application, Conducting ToT”;
- Supervise implementation of envisaged activities by the Consulting company of “Consulting Services for Diagnostic Assessment of Education Management Information System (EMIS), Data Integration and Analytic Systems”. Agreement with MES on the report, business analysis, and recommendations presented by the company.
- Amendment of the scope of work of the Consultant conducting Diagnostic Assessment of EMIS. More specifically, adding by adding tasks considered under two separate parallel activities envisaged under PP: “Short Term Consultant (International) to support the planning and implementation of the Capacity Building of EMIS” and Short-Term Consultant (National) for supporting effective Implementation of the “Design and Development of LMS and EMS for the National Education System and its Beneficiaries”.
- Completion of the design stage for the activity - Design and Development of Learning Management System (LMS) and Education Management System (EMS) for the National Education System and its Beneficiaries
- Completion of the design stage for the activity - Capacity Building of EMIS to Effectively Implement the Revised Charter, Structure, Scope and Strategy Ensuring Relevant Data Collection, Generation, Analyses and Reporting for Entire Education System and Facilitating Evidence Based Policy Decision-making.

Sub-Component 4.2

Communication and Stakeholder Consultations for Education Reform

This sub-component envisages the development of an effective communication strategy on the current education reforms and proposed project activities, as well as an action plan to engage various stakeholders and their representative groups. In addition, an effective mechanism of donor coordination will be set up, that will facilitate ongoing reform implementation and follow-up.

REOI for the assignment Developing Five-Year Communication Strategy and Action Plan for MES was announced by the end of June 2021. Based on the conducted evaluation and successful negotiations, Publicity Group LLC was selected as a Consultant. A lump-sum contract was signed on November 18, 2021, for the period of six months.

For developing the first report, with the support of Capacity Development, Outreach and Communications Specialist of the Project, the Consultant organized and conducted desk research, held numerous consultations and discussion meetings with the relevant staff of MES and other relevant stakeholders, and carried out other necessary activities.

Considering the deliverable timelines provided in the contract, submission of the first deliverable was due within the first month from the commencement of services, i.e. December 18, 2021. However, considering the large number of stakeholders' representatives to be interviewed and the tightness of their schedule at the end of the year, interviews took longer time than scheduled. Therefore, submission of the report has been delayed.

On December 30, 2021 the Consultant held a presentation of a draft version of the first report (Preparation and Analysis). The draft version was discussed together with the Strategic Communication Department Representatives of MES and the relevant recommendations were given immediately. Based on the received feedback, the Consultant agreed to modify and finalize the report before the official submission. The Strategic Communication Department of MES will provide overall supervision, feedback, and guidance to achieve the overarching goal and specific objectives of the consultancy.

On December 21, 2021, the Donor Coordination Meeting was conducted online with I2Q Project initiation and coordination. The meeting was attended by representatives of ECE and GE education sector donors, including I2Q Project TTL – Ms. Nino Kutateladze, and PMU staff. The First Deputy Minister of Education and Science, Ms. Ekaterine Dgebuadze highlighted the importance of donor coordination to ensure effective allocation of resources and transparency of the processes through timely and permanent information sharing. The purpose of the Donor Coordination meeting was In order to discuss and streamline activities implemented by different donors on ECE and GE levels. Tamar Chkonia, ECE Component Lead, and Lia Gigauri, GE Component



Lead gave a presentation on ongoing activities under respective components of the project, while Executive Director of the I2Q Project - Tamar Sanikidze, provided overview of upcoming activities.

Representatives of donor organizations shared important information about their relevant recent, ongoing and upcoming activities. Among other discussed topics, given the linkages with the I2Q Project activities, the several activities shall be highlighted. Specifically, the GIZ in the framework of the ongoing project - “Promotion of the Exclusive Authority-Kindergarten Management and Development Reform in 10 selected Municipalities” has funded the development of online platform for registering children in kindergartens age children. This activity is linked with I2Q Project, since the latter envisages the establishment of the systematic and robust preschool data reporting and consolidation mechanism and incorporating with the EMIS systems. USAID funded project, that is implemented on the primary level of GE, is another important area for the collaboration and coordination of activities, since the USAID project includes the support and capacity building of GE institutions in curriculum implementation, national assessment, teacher training, etc. Ms. Nino Kutateladze, the Senior Education Specialist of the WB has also briefed the meeting participants about the upcoming, large-scale WB-funded Human Capital Program-for-Results (PforR). The PforR supports major human capital reforms in Georgia in the area of education, health, social protection and employment. It aims to make the human capital delivery system in Georgia more efficient, inclusive and connected. The project is prepared by the GoG with the support from the WB.

As mentioned at the meeting, cooperation with donors would continue in the future through sessions of soon-to-be established Donor Coordination Council and Donor Coordination Platform. The draft ToR for the Donor Coordination Platform is prepared, and REOI will be announced after receiving approval regarding the TOR from the MES and the WB. The Donor Coordination Council and the Donor Coordination Platform will ensure efficient communication and will serve as a coordination mechanism for better alignment of the donor engagement with MES strategic priorities, promoting new project ideas for donor support, etc.

For the I2Q Project’s promotional purposes, Tamar Sanikidze, the I2Q Project Executive Director has visited several TV shows and given Radio interviews. She was hosted by [Business Course with Salome Metskhvariashvili](#) of Business Media Georgia, #BMGLIVE (TV PIRVELI); Tamar Sanikidze also was a favorable interviewee in the [Women’s narrative - TV zone](#) (BM.GE) and in [Talks about Education with Teiko Anjaparidze](#) (Radio Imedi).

In addition, the following tasks have been undertaken/completed during the reporting period:

- Regular updates of the Project website and social media pages have been conducted;
- Newsletter layout was drafted;
- Project's branded promo materials prepared.

Immediate Next Steps:

- Supervision of implementation of the assigned tasks by the consultant selected for the assignment: “Developing Five-Year Communication Strategy and Action Plan for the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia “;
- Finalization of TOR, announcement of REOI, conducting evaluation and conclusion of the contract for the assignment: Supporting MES in Development of Donor Coordination Platform;
- Supervision of implementation of the assigned tasks by the consultant selected for the assignment: Supporting MES in Development of Donor Coordination Platform;
- Ensuring the I2Q Project awareness raising using relevant tools.



E. COMPONENT 5 SUPPORTING PROJECT MANAGEMENT, MONITORING, AND EVALUATIONS

Procurements

Progress

Following Contracts were signed

- **As a result of ROIs and RFBs:**
 1. Diagnostic Study of Early Childhood Education/ECE Sector (access, quality and needs) in Georgia;
 2. Consulting Services for Study and Evaluation of Trends in General Education in Georgia;
 3. Supply and Installation of Wi-Fi Networks in Schools - LOT-1;
 4. Supply and Installation of Wi-Fi Networks in Schools - -LOT-2;
 5. Short-term Consultant (International) for Support in Development of National Quality Assurance Policy Framework for General Education Level;
 6. 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;
 7. Developing General Education Infrastructure and Physical Environment Standards for General Education Institutions (Schools) of Georgia;
 8. Developing of Multi-year Communications Strategy and Action Plan;
 9. 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”;
 10. 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”;
 11. Purchase of Vehicle for I2Q Project.

- **As a result of Direct Contracting:**

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

- **REOIs were announced and Short Evaluation Reports were prepared for the following consulting services:**

1. Consulting Services 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;
2. Improving ECE Institution Management System and Enhancing the Quality of Programs Across the Country;
3. Short-Term Consultant (National) for Developing Concept for Strengthening Decentralized Management System via Reforming Educational Resource Centers as well as Strategy and Action Plan for Improving School Management;
4. Short Term Consultant (National) for supporting the planning process for Implementation of “Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education;
5. Short Term Consultant (International) for supporting the planning process for Implementation of “Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education.

- **REOIs were announced for the following consulting services:**

1. Consulting Services for Facilitating the Implementation of a New Model of Performance-based Funding by Creating Information Management Database System;
2. Developing Training Resources and Guides for Schools on Selected Distance Learning Platform(s) and Teaching Methodology Application, Conducting ToT.

The Draft ToR was sent to the WB and is under review for the following consulting services:

“Development of accounting policy and related forms for the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the sub-organizations under its control in accordance with the instruction approved by the Minister of Finance of Georgia and Training of key personnel of the Ministry of Education and Science”.



Next Steps:

- **The following contracts will be signed:**
 1. Consulting Services 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;
 2. Improving ECE Institution Management System and Enhancing the Quality of Programs Across the Country;
 3. Short-Term Consultant (National) for Developing Concept for Strengthening Decentralized Management System via Reforming Educational Resource Centers as well as Strategy and Action Plan for Improving School Management;
 4. Short Term Consultant (National) for supporting the planning process for Implementation of “Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education;
 5. Short Term Consultant (International) for supporting the planning process for Implementation of “Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education;
 6. Consulting Services for Facilitating the Implementation of a New Model of Performance-based Funding by Creating Information Management Database System;
 7. Developing Training Resources and Guides for Schools on Selected Distance Learning Platform(s) and Teaching Methodology Application, Conducting ToT;
 8. Development of accounting policy and related forms for the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the sub-organizations under its control in accordance with the instruction approved by the Minister of Finance of Georgia and Training of key personnel of the Ministry of Education and Science”.

- **Following REOIs will be announced:**
 1. Procure Hardware and Software to Support the Implementation of Big data, Analytics, Dashboards, Mapping and Security Software, Servers and Storage Infrastructure, and Hardware – March, 2022;
 2. Strengthening the quality of pre-service teacher education programs and continuous professional development options, supporting capacity-building of teachers and school professionals to develop and implement school-based curriculum – April, 2022;
 3. Design and Development of Learning Management System (LMS) and Education Management System (EMS) for the National Education System and its Beneficiaries – April, 2022.

SECTION III: PROJECT FINANCES

The financial and administrative support for the I2Q Project, as well as procurement management under the Project, as defined with the Loan Agreement and the World Bank (IBRD) rules and procedures, is performed by the PMU under MES. The PMU maintains the Project financial management system in line with the World Bank requirements and performs disbursement of the loan proceeds accordingly.

During the reporting period (July 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021), the total amount of expenditures under the I2Q Project amounted to EUR 2,63 million, which is about 80% of the planned disbursements. EUR 1.63 million from total expenditures was paid through Direct Payments, while EUR 1 million was paid from Designated Account. As of December 31, 2021, cumulative payments for the project implementation are equal to EUR 5.56 million which is 18,7% of allocated IBRD funds (MES part - EUR 29,775,000).

The detailed information on the projected disbursements for the period of January-June 2022 is provided in the Annex IV of the report. Overall amount expected to be disbursed during the aforementioned period is EUR 2.95 million. The projection is based on the implementation timeline and the respective scheduled payments in the frames of the ongoing activities and the estimated disbursement schedule of the upcoming activities considered under the existing PP, as well as other budgeted operational costs. Currently no critical implementation issues are observable, which may hinder achievement of the projected disbursements.

Commitments and Disbursement Projections

(from the approved Procurement Plan)

(EUR)

Category	Allocated amount	Signed contracts	Disbursed amount (IBRD)	Disbursed amount (Co-Financing)	Committed signed balance	Uncommitted contracts to be signed
Works, Goods, Non-Consulting Services, Consulting Services, Operating Costs and Training except 1c,2a,5a for the Project	29,775,000	8,816,429	5,561,122.91	30,001	3,225,305	8,492,186



Components	Actual Payments 2021 2nd Half
Component 1 – Diagnostic Study of Early Childhood Education/ECE Sector (access, quality and needs) in Georgia	76,114.34 EUR
Component 2 – Consulting Services for Study and Evaluation of Trends in General Education in Georgia	- EUR
Component 2 – Developing General Education Infrastructure and Physical Environment Standards for General Education Institutions (Schools) of Georgia	15,511.43 EUR
Component 2 – Short Term Consultants (National/International)	9,482.40 EUR
Component 2 – Delivery of TAO Administrative and Technical Training to Support the National Assessment and Examination Center (NAEC) with the Project Implementation	26,679.80 EUR
Component 3 – Consulting Services for the Development of New Model for Higher Education Financing	193,677.42 EUR
Component 3 – Short Term Consultants (National/International)	38,850.40 EUR
Component 4 – Consulting Services for Diagnostic Assessment of Education Management Information System (EMIS), Data Integration and Analytic Systems	45,747.15 EUR
Component 4 – Supply and Installation of Wi-Fi Networks in 121 Schools Located in East and West Parts of Georgia	298,330.72 EUR
Component 4 – Procurement of Technology Equipment for Schools (Laptops and Projectors)	1,493,114.05 EUR
Component 4 – Short Term Consultants (National/International) – Education and Science Strategy 2022-2032 and Action Plan 2022-2021	72,622.80 EUR
Component 5 - Short Term Consultants (National/International)	107,994.96 EUR
Component 5 - PMU Salaries	229,041.74 EUR
Component 5 - Operating Costs / Miscellaneous	27,045.63 EUR
Total	2,634,212.84 EUR

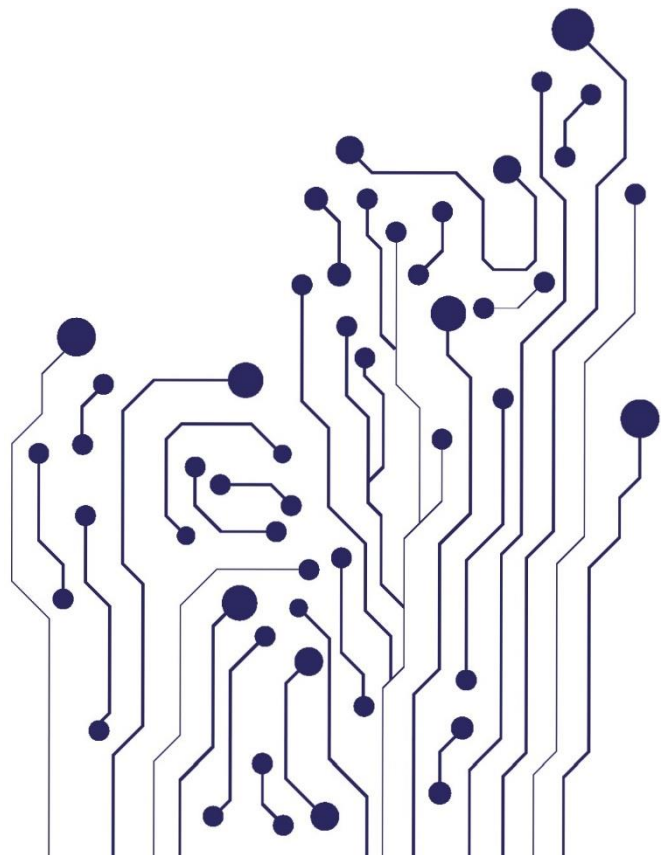
SECTION IV: ANNEXES TO THE REPORT

Annex I – Indicator Performance Tracking Table

Annex II – Information on Procurement Activities

Annex III - Performance Evaluation Framework

Annex IV – Expenditure Statement and Disbursement Projection



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
AND SCIENCE OF GEORGIA



საგარეო ურთიერთობების, განათლების, მეცნიერების
და კულტურის სამინისტრო
საგარეო ურთიერთობების განყოფილება



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