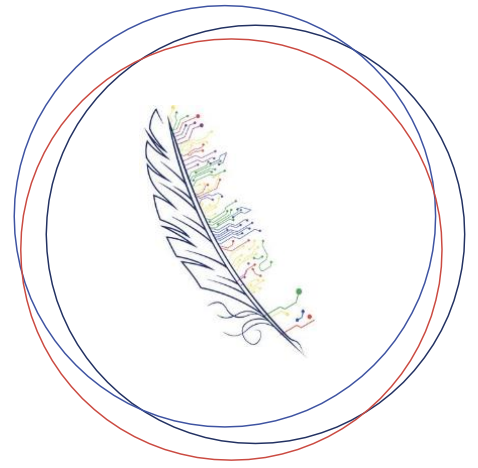


**Ministry of
Education and Science of Georgia**

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

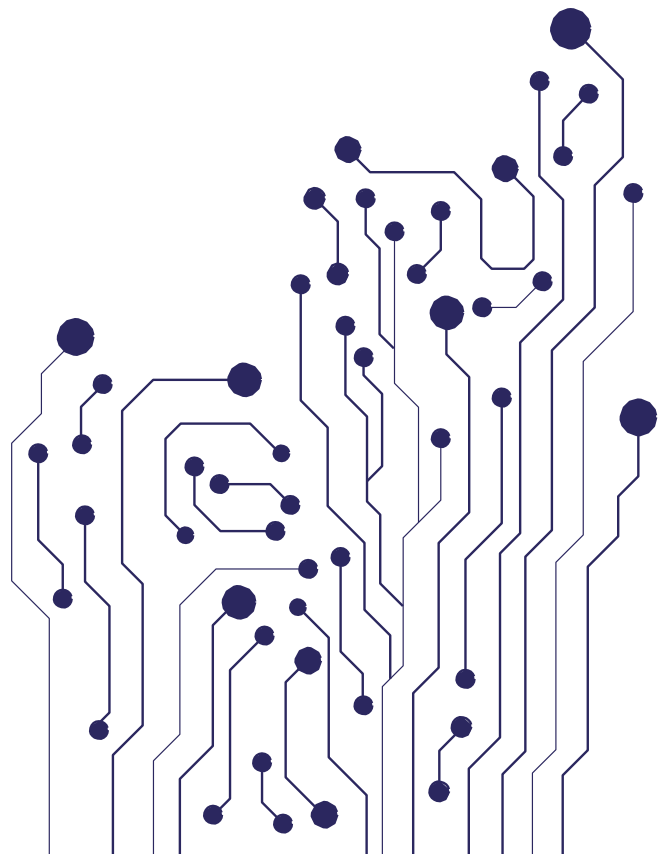


PROGRESS REPORT

**For the period of
July-December
2022**

Submitted by: Project Management Unit

www.iiq.gov.ge



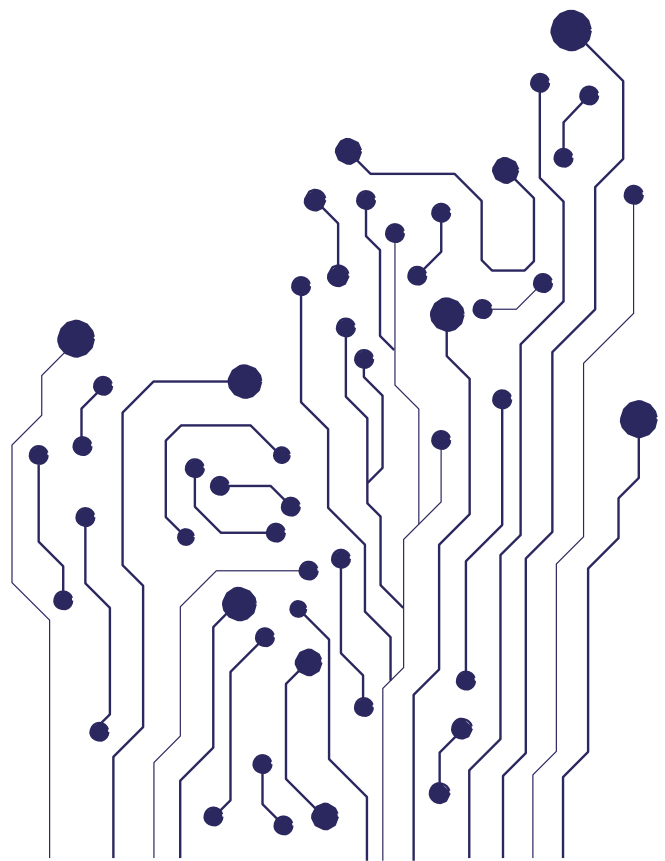


PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET

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

PROJECT NUMBER: Ministerial Decree #338

FOR: The World Bank Group



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BPF	Performance-based Funding	MoF	Ministry of Finance of Georgia
BPMN	Business Process Modeling Notation	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
CIF	Competitive Innovation Fund	MRDI	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia
CIF AU	Competitive Innovation Fund Administration Unit	NAEC	National Assessment and Examination Center
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care	NCEQE	National Center for Education Quality Enhancement
ECE	Early Childhood Education	OM	Operational Manual
EMIS	Education Management Information System (EMIS)	PAD	Project Appraisal Document
EOI	Expressions of Interest	PDO	Project Development Objective
ESIDA	Education and Science Infrastructure Development Agency	PMU	Project Management Unit (under MES)
GEL	Georgian Lari	PMT	Project Management Team (under MDF)
GITA	Georgia Information and Technology Agency	PP	Procurement Plan
GoG	Government of Georgia	QCBS	Consultants Quality and Cost-Based Selection
HEI	Higher Education Institution	REOI	Request for Expressions of Interest
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development	SRP	School Readiness Program
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	SRNSFG	Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia
IMDS	Information Management Database System	STEP	Systemic Tracking
IPE	Infrastructure and Physical Environment	TAO	Test Assisté par Ordinateur
JV	Joint Venture	TOR	Terms of Reference
MDF	Municipal Development Fund of Georgia	ToT	Training of Trainers
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation	TPDC	Teacher Professional Development Center
MES	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia	TTL	Task Team Leader
MESD	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
MoH	Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs	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 reallocation of the Project funds among components, as per approved POM:

Project Components	IBRD Financing (EUR)
1. Improving Quality of and Access to Early Childhood Education (ECE) (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)	4,325,000
2. Fostering Quality Teaching and Learning in General Education (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)	9,015,000
3. Strengthening Financing Options and Promoting Internationalization in Higher Education	8,860,000
4. System strengthening and Stakeholder Communication	3,585,000
5. Supporting Project Management, Monitoring, and Evaluations (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)	3,990,000

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 (virtual) WB Implementation Support Mission held during July 6-17, 2020. Next steps/activities specified in the Aide Memoire have been completed. The second (virtual) WB Implementation Support Mission held during February 15-19, 2021. The third (virtual) WB Implementation Support Mission/Review held during September 6-17, 2021. The fourth (virtual) WB Implementation Support Mission held during March 21-April 1, 2022. The fifth (last) WB Implementation Support Mission held during September 26 – October 3, 2022.

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

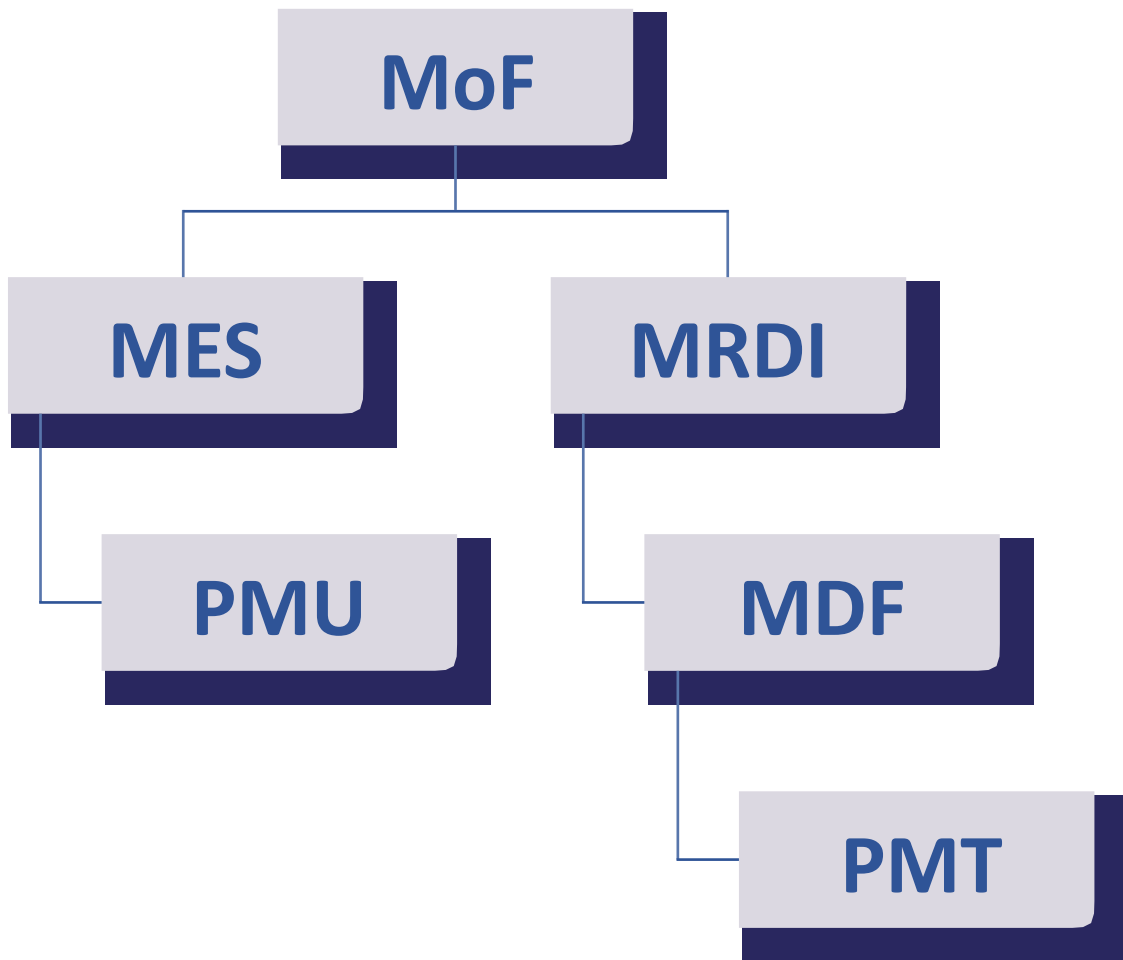
- The last revision and amendments to POM approved by the WB on May 30, 2022.
- In line with POM revision approved in May, 2022, the PMU initiated amendment of the targeted program, which was approved on July 13, 2022.
- I2Q project Steering Committee established on October 28, 2020 (Ministerial Decree 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 third official Steering Committee meeting held on December 19, 2022.

- 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



SECTION I – OVERALL PROJECT PROGRESS AND KEY ISSUES

A. THE WORLD BANK IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT MISSION

The WB task team conducted the fifth Implementation Support Mission (hereinafter – the Mission) for I2Q Project during September 26 – October 3, 2022. The key objectives of the mission were to (i) discuss the project implementation progress, including fiduciary and safeguards aspects, in both implementing entities, the Project Management Unit (PMU) of the Ministry of Education and Science (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, and (iii) organize an education development partner (DP) meeting.

Tables below provide a summary of actions agreed during the last WB Implementation Support Mission and status of their execution (see Table 1 below), as well as the status of the key agreed actions from the previous mission (held in March 2022) (see Table 2 below).

TABLE 1 - STATUS OF AGREED ACTIONS

No	Key Actions	Responsible	Due Date	Current Status
Component 1 – Improving Quality of and Access to Early Childhood Education and Care				
1	Sharing the Inception Report with the World Bank team for information	PMU	October 31, 2022	Completed. The draft Inception Report (under the contract - “Improving ECE Institution Management System and Enhancing the Quality of Programs Across the Country”) was shared with the WB on October 31, 2022. Feedback provided by the WB team was considered in the final version of the Report.
2	Complete the rehabilitation work of SRP for 41 schools	PMU	December 31, 2022	Partially completed. Note: Rehabilitation of SRP spaces in 21 schools are completed. As for rehabilitation of SRP spaces in 19 schools, estimated date for completion of works is the end of January 2023. One out of the 41 schools is currently under rehabilitation by MDF and works are expected to be finalized by September 2023.
Component 2 – Fostering Quality Teaching and Learning in General Education				
3	Share the draft school infrastructure standards with the Bank team for comments	PMU	October 31, 2022	Completed. The draft IPE Standards document was shared with the WB team on October 31, 2022. Comments provided by the Bank team were reflected in the final version of the draft document.
4	Announce the civil work tender for the first three schools for rehabilitation	MDF	October 31, 2022	Completed. Civil work tenders were announced by MDF for the following three schools: 1. Kareli N1 Public School – tender announced on October 26, 2022 2. Rustavi N21 Public School – tender announced on December 14, 2022; 3. Khashuri N2 Public School – tender announced on December 28, 2022.



5	Share detailed design documents of the remaining 23 schools in Batch 1 with the Bank team for no objection	MDF	December 31, 2022	<p>In progress.</p> <p>Note: Designs have been approved and civil works tenders were announced for three schools, as mentioned above. Detailed designs for 7 schools will be submitted by MDF to the WB for no objection by mid-January 2023. Upon approval of the WB, tenders are planned to be announced by the end of January 2023. As for the remaining schools under Batch 1 (except for 3 schools replaced due to established structural damages of the buildings), detailed designs are being prepared and expected date for submission to the WB is end of February 2023. Tenders will be announced immediately upon receipt of the Bank's no objection.</p>
6	Share detailed design documents of all Batch 2 schools for rehabilitation with the Bank team for no objection	MDF	January 31, 2023	<p>In progress.</p> <p>Note: Detailed designs are currently being developed by the respective consulting companies. As expected, detailed designs for 14 schools will be provided to the WB for review and approval in April 2023. As for the remaining schools under Batch 2 (except for 5 schools replaced due to established structural damages of the buildings), detailed designs are being prepared and expected date for submission to the WB is end of May 2023. Tenders will be announced immediately upon receipt of the Bank's no objection.</p>
7	Prepare a draft Employer's Requirements for design and build contracts and share it with the Bank for review	PMU	November 11, 2022	<p>Completed.</p> <p>MDF/PMT has shared a draft Employer's Requirements for 'design and build' contracts with the WB with a slight delay, on December 1, 2022. The document is under revision based on the remarks of the WB. A meeting is planned to be conducted in January 2023 for further discussions to support finalization of the document.</p>
8	Share the Inception Report with the Bank team for information	PMU	October 31, 2022	<p>Completed.</p> <p>The draft Inception Report (under the contract - „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”) was shared with the WB on October 28, 2022. Feedback provided by the WB team was considered in the final version of the Report.</p>

Component 3 – Strengthening Financing Options and Promoting Internationalization in Higher Education

9	Call for Proposals for the first round of CIF Grants	PMU	November 30, 2022	<p>Completed.</p> <p>Call for proposals for the first round of CIF Grants was announced on November 30, 2022 with a deadline of submitting proposals not later than February 20, 2023, 23:59 Tbilisi time.</p> <p>Note: Information on the call for proposals was published on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grants Management Portal 2. Official webpage of the MES 3. I2Q Project webpage
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Component 4 – System Strengthening and Stakeholder Communication				
10	Share the ToRs for designing and developing Learning Management System (LMS) and Education Management System (EMS) and capacity building of EMIS with the Bank team for no objection	PMU	November 15, 2022	<p>Completed.</p> <p>Note: Draft TORs were prepared by the respective Consultant (JV) and subsequently approved by the PMU on November 15, 2022. Upon approval of the Bank and discussions held with the MES and EMIS, activities with a different arrangement, tentative implementation timelines and budgets were re-introduced in the STEP system on December 16, 2022.</p> <p>TORs for LMS and EMS/eSchool systems were shared with the Bank on December 19, 2022.</p> <p>As for the activity related to the capacity-building of EMIS, considering the request from EMIS and MES, it was decided to temporarily postpone implementation due to the lack of necessary financial and human resources in EMIS (respective request submitted by EMIS on December 14, 2022 via eFlow system).</p> <p>Launch of the procurement for the LMS and eSchool/EMS activities are expected by the end of January 2023/early February 2023.</p>

TABLE 2 - TABLE 2 -THE STATUS OF THE KEY AGREED ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MISSION

No	Actions	Responsible	Due Date	Current Status
Component 1 – Improving Quality of and Access to Early Childhood Education and Care				
1	Completion of the final draft of the rehabilitation and construction standards for schools	PMU	May 2022	<p>In progress.</p> <p>Note: Following rigorous discussions of the draft IPE Standards by internal stakeholders (MES, ESIDA, PMU and MDF), draft has been finalized and approved by the PMU on December 1, 2022. Considering requirements of the law, in January 2023 a working group/committee will be established including representatives of all relevant ministries and entities (MRDI, MDF, MES, MoH, ESIDA, etc). The document will be finalized based on the remarks/recommendations provided by the working group/committee.</p> <p>The end date of the respective contract is May 15, 2023.</p>
Component 2 – Fostering Quality Teaching and Learning in General Education				
2	Launch of civil works in about 8 schools.	MDF	Fall 2022	<p>In progress.</p> <p>Note: As mentioned in the Table 1 above, civil work tenders of rehabilitation were announced for three public schools (Kareli N1, Rustavi N21 and Khashuri N2) during the reporting period. Actual works are expected to begin after 3.5 months from the announcement.</p> <p>Also, for remaining 7 schools selected for the first stage of rehabilitation (Village Agara- municipality of Kareli; Tsikhisdziri – municipality of Mtskheta; Rustavi N2; Rustavi N3; Telavi N2, Village Sadakhlo – municipality of Marneuli; Khashuri N2 Public Schools), civil work tenders are planned to be announced by the end of January 2023.</p>



3	Finalization of Engineering & Technical Designs for the 1 st Batch of 31 Schools.	MDF	August 2022	In progress – See Table 1 above.
4	Finalization of Engineering & Technical Designs for the 2 nd Batch of 29 schools.	MDF	September/October 2022	In progress – See Table 1 above.
5	Selection of consulting company to implement teacher in-service and pre-service activities.	PMU/MES	August 2022	In progress. Note: Financial proposals were opened. However, PMU awaits Ministry's position on the potential change of scope of the assignment to finalize the combined evaluation report.

Component 3 – Strengthening Financing Options and Promoting Internationalization in Higher Education

6	Call for Proposals for the first round of CIF Grants	PMU/MES	November 2022	Completed. See Table 1 above.
7	Selection of consulting company to design HED management database	PMU/MES	June 2022	Completed. Procurement procedures were completed, and the contract was signed with a successful consulting company on November 7, 2022. <u>Note:</u> As expected by the end of previous reporting period, selection process would be completed in August 2022. However, based on the request of the shortlisted companies, deadline of submitting technical and financial proposals was extended from July 1, 2022 to July 11, 2022. Opening of financial proposals was held on September 7, 2022. Upon approval of the combined evaluation report, on September 21, 2022, successful company was invited for contract negotiations and standstill period has commenced continuing through November 4, 2022.

Component 4 – System Strengthening and Stakeholder Communication

8	Finalization of Communication Strategy	PMU/MES	May 2022	In progress. Note: The contract was extended through January 20, 2023, based on the request of the Consultant. Currently final version of the communication strategy is being elaborated by the Consulting Company.
9	Launch procurement of consulting company for EMIS capacity building including development of EMS, Preschool Database and LMS	PMU/MES	August 2022	Delayed. See Table 1 above.

Note:

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

SECTION II: IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS BY PROJECT COMPONENTS

A. COMPONENT 1 - IMPROVING QUALITY OF AND ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

I2Q Project works closely with the ECE Development Division of the MES, as well as NCEQE, EMIS and TPDC to carry out the project activities towards the adopted and anticipated legislative amendments as the I2Q Project accommodates important interventions to support MES improve the access and the quality of ECE.

In accordance with requirement of the Law of Georgia on Early and Preschool Education, NCEQE along with the MES have developed a draft temporary authorization rule, and draft ECE Institution authorization standard. The draft authorization standards consist of the following four standards: (i) The Mission and Strategic Development Institution; (ii) Educational Program (Curriculum); (iii) Family and Community Involvement; (iv) Administrative Support of the Care and Education Process. The draft versions of the above-mentioned documents have been prepared, and during the summer 2022, intensive public discussions took place, where representatives of all stakeholders, such as public and private kindergartens, Kindergarten Unions and local municipalities participated. All relevant comments and recommendations presented were considered and reflected in the documents.

During the last WB Implementation Support Mission held during the September 26 – October 3, 2022,

achievements of the Component 1 were evaluated. Much attention was paid to cooperation with various parties in the implementation process - close coordination with Government and relevant agencies and support and involvement of the MES management. Numerous working meetings were conducted with ECE Development Division, NCEQE and other internal stakeholders to specify the action plan and measures taken under the Component 1. As a result, performance under the Component was evaluated as satisfactory.

On December 2, 2022, the Donor Coordination Meeting was conducted online with the MES initiation and I2Q Project coordination. The meeting was attended by the First Deputy Minister of Education and Science, – Ms. Tamar Makharashvili, structural units of the MES, representatives of different ministries, education sector donors, and PMU staff. The purpose of the coordination meeting was to discuss and streamline activities implemented by different agencies and donors to meet the I2Q Project goals. Executive Director of the I2Q Project - Tamar Sanikidze, provided detailed overview of the I2Q Project, covering all five components, including progress achieved, activities ongoing and planned interventions. Among other discussed topics, representatives of donor organizations shared important information about their relevant recent, ongoing and upcoming activities. As a result of a meeting, no overlapping activities were identified between the interventions planned/ongoing under I2Q Project and other donor-funded projects. The meeting participants agreed to further coordinate the activities and share the progress.

In December 2022, ECE Component Lead participated in the Early Childhood Education Technical Workshop on ECE Management & Leadership held in Baku, Azerbaijan. The Technical Workshop was



organized by the World Bank, and supported by the Ministry of Science and Education of Azerbaijan. Representatives of the Ministry of Science and Education of Azerbaijan, Ministry of Preschool Education of Uzbekistan, Ministry of National Education of Turkey participated in the workshop, along with Azerbaijani principals of the kindergartens, ECE professionals from Azerbaijan and the US, the WB Georgia Education Specialist, and the WB project representative from the Uzbekistan. The workshop aimed to facilitate ECE related discussion and knowledge sharing on quality, access, and leadership and management in early childhood and preschool education considering local and international practices. Also, the practitioners of the field from the US shared their best practices to raise the awareness of society and policymakers about the importance of early childhood education. Within the frames of the ECE workshop, ECE Component Lead of the Project presented Georgian country context, including overview of continuous professional development of ECE professionals, milestones of the I2Q Project, as well as upcoming capacity building activities and scale-up steps under Component 1 the Project for eliminating the gaps and improving the quality and access to ECE in Georgia.

Sub- Component 1.1 - Improving the Quality of ECE Programs Across the Country

Considering the lack of reliable ECE and SRP data and data sources, as well as the absence of relevant data collection mechanisms, for reporting on ECE-related PDO indicator concerning enrollment of 5-6-year-olds in SRP groups, PMU works with MES to collect and analyze much needed data annually. ECE Development Division disseminated SRP data survey among the 64 municipalities to obtain relevant data in October 2022. Response has been received from 100% of municipalities. Based on the received data, which reflected information as of end November 2022, the following was identified:

- Number of children enrolled in kindergartens is 145,558 (44,126 female and 45,786 male gender disaggregation does not include Tbilisi);
- Number of 5-6-year-old children enrolled in kindergartens is 45,093 (14,196 female and 14,599 male – gender disaggregation does not include Tbilisi);
- Number of 5-6-year-old children enrolled in SRP is 39,430.

It shall be highlighted that gender disaggregated data still not available for SRP enrollment. Also, despite number of mutual attempts of ECE Component Lead and ECE Development Division of MES, the Tbilisi Kindergarten Management Agency did not provide gender-disaggregated data. Deputy Minister of Education and Science responsible for coordination of the Project was briefed on the abovementioned matter.

During the reporting period procurement procedures were completed and the multi-component contract - “Improving ECE Institution Management System and Enhancing the Quality of Programs Across the Country” (Contract No: GE-MESCS-212213-CS-QCBS) – was signed with SDSURF on August 26, 2022.

At the beginning of the first phase of implementation of the assignment, a Steering Group was

created to ensure coordinated work between the consulting company, the MES and its structural units. The Steering Group consists of representatives of from all relevant structural units of MES (ECE Development Division, NCEQE, EMIS, TPDC). The Steering Group will monitor the implementation of the agreement, participate in the discussion and approval of deliverables of the project and provide feedback. The group members are also responsible for communicating the results of the observations and discussions to the agencies and structural units they represent.

After carrying out various preparatory works, on September 21, 2022, a Kick-off meeting was held at the MES. The meeting was attended by the Deputy Minister, Mr. Valerian Gobronidze, the PMU, Education Specialist of the WB - Anna Berdzenadze, SDSURF Key and Non-Key Experts, ECE and GE Development Department of the MES, Steering Group members and other stakeholders. Key-experts of SDSURF presented implementation strategies, approach and methodology. The workplan (including collaboration plan) was also developed and presented.

During visit, SDSURF's key, and non-key experts conducted number of meetings to support effective development of an Inception Report. On October 28, 2022, according to timeline stipulated in the contract with SDSURF, an Inception Report was submitted by the Consulting Company. Inception report regards to matters, such as: Georgian ECE context, best ECE practices, Georgian ECE policy review, milestones & timeline for 4 key area, Stakeholder engagement plan, responsibility allocation to key, and non-key experts, budgeting for the assignment and plans for Phase 2.

Throughout November 2022, the Steering Group members held several meetings (October 31, November 7, November 9 and November 24) to revise the document, share feedbacks and reconcile suggestions for improvement of an Inception Report.

On November 21, 2022, Key and Non-key experts from SDSURF visited Georgia to finalize the Inception phase through face-to-face meetings with Steering Group, local non-key experts and key stakeholders of ECE System in Georgia. Throughout the visit, round of meetings held with top and middle management of the NCEQE, Kindergarten Management Agency, Center for Preschool and Inclusive Education at the Ilia State University, UNICEF and others. Topics discussed on the meetings with ECE Stakeholders concerned emergent needs of the sector, progress achieved, current challenges, future collaboration for successful implementation of the assignment.

Through conducted visits, SDSURF has analyzed intersectoral communication and collaboration needs, how different actors assign different priorities to preschool education and different roles to play. This also included how perceptions on preschool education differs among those actors. In consequence of a deep and extensive revision by the Steering Group, feedback exchange and meetings with the consulting company, on December 2, 2022, the Inception report was accepted in the form of final document.

From December 2, 2022 SDSURF continued to implement Phase 2 of the assignment. Throughout December 2022, SDSURF formed focus groups of Key and Non-Key experts directed to each key area of the assignment. On December 20, 2022, ECE Component Lead and focus group of Key and Non-Key experts working on ECE Data Reporting issues held online meeting to elaborate on functional



of the platform and to discuss the timeline in accordance with relevant ongoing activities in EMIS, deadline of which is end of January 2023.

On December 21, 2022 ECE Component Lead and SDSURF Team Leader held online meeting to discuss some issues regarding general topics of Phase 2, i.e. certain details concerning piloting to be conducted in selected 6 local municipalities, and ongoing initial analysis related to ECE quality assurance framework and instruments to support school readiness and smooth transition to school.

Sub-Component 1.2 - Increasing Equitable Access to Pre-school Education for Successful Transition to School

The Project envisages introduction of modern, child-centered SRPs in about 150 general education institutions/schools.

Part of activities envisaged in the framework of sub-component 1.2 of the Project is considered under the scope of work under the above-mentioned ongoing consultancy (“Improving Early Childhood Education (ECE) Institution Management System and Enhancing the Quality of Programs Across the Country”). Namely, these activities relate to (i) revision of existing School Readiness Program and (ii) supporting the implementation of revised SRP through professional development of SRP teachers.

Tangible progress was made during the reporting period under this sub-component. I2Q Project Coordinator of Infrastructural Projects – Engineer (hereinafter – the Project Engineer) and the designated representative of ESIDA’s Construction/Project Designing Department continued with conducting site visits to 150 selected target public schools to evaluate/verify technical conditions of the buildings. As of December 31, 2022, based on conducted physical/infrastructural assessment of 129 target and 43 reserve schools, total of 121 public schools (94 schools from target list and 27 schools from reserve list) were selected for rehabilitation. Based on the assessment, inspected target 56 and reserve 16 public schools failed to meet the minor rehabilitation requirements due to the lack of necessary space, and structural damage to the load-bearing elements of the building. Such schools were replaced from the reserve school list.

In the course of ongoing minor rehabilitations of aforementioned 40 public schools, 21 are completed and rehabilitation of 19 are underway. As reported by ESIDA, estimated date for completion of rehabilitation work in 40 schools is January 2023. It should be noted that the MDF is conducting rehabilitation works in two out of the target 150 schools. SRP physical environment will be considered during the ongoing rehabilitation process of those two schools.

Given the ongoing technical process of minor rehabilitation works, and timeline, expected date for completion of rehabilitation works in all 150 SRP Groups is end 2023. It should be highlighted that according to the workplan agreed in the frames of the ongoing multi-component contract under the Component 1, considering time needed for revision of SRP and professional development of relevant teachers, introduction of the revised SRP is planned to start in September 2024. Therefore, timeline of minor rehabilitation works in 150 target schools is in full conformity with the ongoing ECE contract.

Sub-component 1.3 - Improving Infrastructure to Support Innovative Primary Education, Including Pre-school

The objective of the sub-component 1.3 is to introduce a new model of primary education (grades 1-6) accommodating preschool classes. Thus, this sub-component considers the development of general education infrastructure and physical environment standards (IPE Standards) for schools of primary education (grades 1-6) accommodating preschool classes. The sub-component also considers building from 2 up to 10 model schools with the combined physical and educational environment for SRP and elementary education beneficiaries.

The detailed information on infrastructure development is provided under sub-component 2.1 below (Section II, part B of the Report).

Immediate Next Steps:

- Support and monitor the implementation of Phase 2 of the ongoing contract - “Improving ECE Institution Management System and Enhancing the Quality of Programs Across the Country”, including but not limited to:
 - Determining functional for the ECE Data Reporting Platform;
 - Revision of the standards and technical regulations;
 - Timely submission and review of Deliverable #2 - First Progress Report, which is due on April 27, 2022.;
 - Supervision of Steering Group operation;
- Complete site-visits for infrastructural/environmental assessment of 150 target schools for introduction of modern, revised and child-centered SRP.
- Expediate completion of ongoing minor rehabilitation works in 19 SRP spaces.



B. COMPONENT 2: FOSTERING QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING IN GENERAL EDUCATION

I2Q project Component 2 – Fostering Quality Teaching and Learning in General Education supports to provide a learning environment that is conducive to quality education in selected general education schools through implementation of the four subcomponents (2.1-2.4). The present progress report briefly summarizes the key achievement for the last 6 months and next planned interventions. Besides, the separate sessions draw attention to the lessons learnt and release respective considerations for the effective continuous implementation of the Component 2 activities.

Subcomponent 2.1. Improving the 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 supports the review and modernization of School Infrastructure Standards and development of new architectural design blueprints based on international best practices. The new Standards will support innovative, inclusive and accessible spaces, conducive to fostering collaboration and project-based learning opportunities of the general education, as well as to ensure energy efficiency and safety. Under Component 2, school infrastructure standards development process has been initiated in September 2021. The consulting company, “Georgian Institute of Building (GIB)” was selected through QCB procurement method. Estimated implementation period for providing consulting services on Standards Development is September 2021 - May 2023.

The reporting period was devoted to intensive discussion of the Standards first draft, which was submitted on April 15, 2022 by the consulting company as the second deliverable of the Contract. The first draft of the Standards, depending on the levels of education and the size of the school, envisages requirements for mandatory and recommended spaces in the school building and outdoor facilities. The draft of standard generally regulates the following requirements:

- Requirements for selection land plots
- Basic requirements for building planning
- Accessibility requirements
- Requirements for the structure of the building
- Facing materials, Safety and Protection
- Sustainability and Energy Characteristics, Water and plumbing, Heating, ventilation and air conditioning, Electricity, Weak currents, Sound and acoustics
- Existing educational institutions and Furniture

The document has been intensively discussed by key internal stakeholders and as a result of a long working process a number of changes were made. The feedback was received from the representatives of the PMU, the Project Engineer, Component 1 and Component 2 leads of the I2Q Project, Preschool and General Education Development Department of the MES and ESIDA. In

October 2022, the document was shared for review with the PMT at the MDF and positive feedback regarding the document was presented in written form (via e-mail). Finally, in October 2022 the updated working version of the document was shared with the WB. The final document of the second report was updated accordingly and was accepted on November 30, 2022.

According to the Law of Georgia on General Education, the Standards of the Physical Environment and Infrastructure of Schools must be established by MES with the engagement of the relevant sectoral ministries/agencies. For the reviewing and final adoption purposes of the draft Standards, working group including representatives from all relevant Ministries and agencies will be officially established by the order of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia. With the request of the Deputy Minister of MES (dated on July 8, 2022), the relevant sectoral ministries and agencies/departments presented candidate members for the working Group including: MES, MoH, MESD, MRDI, ECE and GE Development Department of MES, ESIDA and MDF. The aim of the working group is to finalize the Standards. In this regard, the draft of the decree was developed by the PMU and shared with the MES Legal Department for their feedback on December 15, 2022, upon agreement of which the working group will be officially established.

It should be noted, that new architectural blueprints developed will be employed for the construction of up to 8 new model schools under this sub-component. 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.

Several meetings were held with MES and ESIDA regarding selection of land plots needed to construct up to 18 new model schools under Components 1 and 2 of the I2Q Project. In the process of determining the land plots, on June 28, 2022, the Head of ECE and GE Development Department of MES submitted official letter to the PMU providing cadastral information for the construction of new school buildings under the sub-components 1.3 and 2.1 of the Project. However, the letter did not contain cadastral information of three out of 18 schools due to the ongoing negotiations with various state organs. Upon review of the presented cadastral information by the PMU Engineer, it was established that cadastral information needed to be verified and revised for five schools. Thus, on July 8, 2022 the PMU addressed the ECE and GE Development Department requesting them to take necessary actions in order to clarify cadastral information and submit revised information as soon as possible. On the same day, cadastral information of 10 out of 18 schools was sent to MDF in order to start the design documentation preparation procedures and to take other necessary measures.

For the preparation of design documentation of model schools, a Draft Employers' Requirements were developed by the MDF and was presented for review and feedback to the PMU Engineer on August 3, 2022. The PMU Engineer reviewed the document and prepared appropriate recommendations. Later, during the last World Bank Implementation Support Mission conducted in September, 2022, the MDF proposed to use the 'Design and Build' contract modality for new construction to which the WB team has agreed. Accordingly, the MDF revised the Draft Employer's Requirements and



submitted to the WB for their feedback on December 1, 2022 together with the estimated total amount allocated for the schools' construction under the Project. As instructed by the WB during the last WB Implementation Support Mission, rough estimations of construction prices were conducted for each of the selected 18 schools. Estimation was determined based on (i) the construction area needed for each student, as determined by the draft IPE Standards and (ii) current construction prices considering same typology contracts within other donor funded programs in Georgia, implemented by MDF. According to the presented prices, it was revealed that the existing budget within the project is not enough to build all 18 schools, due to the exchange rate changes and other circumstances. As suggested by the WB (i) at least 7 schools in total shall be constructed under the Project (at least 2 primary schools under sub-component 1.3, and at least 5 schools under sub-component 2.1) and (ii) the Bank team did not have preference for the selection, as long as the key aims of sub-components are met. Following instruction of the WB and the letters presented by the MDF on December 5 and December 6, 2022, the PMU has immediately initiated a letter requesting the respective Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Georgia to ensure prioritization of schools for construction. Prioritization process is currently ongoing and is expected to be finalized in January 2023.

This sub-component also envisages the rehabilitation of 60 schools by MDF. Tenders have been announced by MDF for the rehabilitation works for Kareli N1 Public School (October 26, 2022), Rustavi N21 Public School (December 14, 2022) and Khashuri N2 Public School (December 28, 2022), while designs are being developed for the 49 schools. During the ongoing design works it was revealed that five schools located in different regions of Georgia needed to be replaced for rehabilitation purposes due to the newly identified circumstances related to the structural damage of those schools. According to the technical condition studies conducted by respective consulting companies, rehabilitation of those schools was not feasible. In particular, on July 8, 2022 the MDF informed the PMU regarding structural damages of the following five school buildings:

1. Ophshkviti Public School (Tskaltubo Municipality, Imereti region)
2. Perma Public School (Kaspi Municipality, Shida Kartli region)
3. Batumi N16 Public School (Adjara region)
4. Nekra Public School (Mestia Municipality, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region)
5. Idliani Public School (Mestia municipality, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region).

Upon receipt of the information, PMU requested the ECE and GE Development Department of the MES to select and propose alternative schools from the list of the reserve schools' list considering geographical locations and capacity of the schools to be replaced. Several meetings were held among the structural units of the MES and the Project Engineer to discuss the issue and identify alternative schools from the agreed reserve school list. Based on the decision of MES, following alternative five public schools were defined by the ECE and GE Development Department of MES from the reserve schools' list on August 15, 2022, which was then submitted to MDF on August 17, 2022 for further actions and their consent:

1. Ruisi Village N2 Public School (Kareli Municipality, Shida Kartli region)
2. Anaklia Public School (Zugdidi Municipality, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region)
3. Akaki Surguladze-named Shemokmedi Public School (Ozurgeti Municipality, Guria region)
4. Erge Village Public School (Khelvachauri Municipality, Adjara region)
5. Zemo Khvedureti Public School (Kareli municipality, Shida Kartli region).

As instructed by the WB during the Implementation Support Mission held in September 2022, the PMU has agreed the proposed replacement with the WB on September 29, 2022 and informed MDF regarding the final decision immediately after completion of the mission meetings.

During the reporting period, Project Engineer of the PMU was actively involved in (i) the review and evaluation of the designs of 32 schools prepared by the consulting companies (ii) weekly discussions regarding the approaches to be used together with MDF and respective consulting companies, (iii) meetings held with the directors of schools selected for rehabilitation. During the reporting period, relevant members of the PMU paid a visit to Kareli N1 school on November 7, 2022. Considering rules defined under respective tender procedures, the aim of the meeting was to discuss environmental protection document elaborated under the Project. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the school, the local community, the director of the educational resource center and MDF representatives.

Immediate Next Steps:

- Supporting establishment of a working group consisting of representatives of various line ministries and agencies. The working group will conduct a review of the draft IPE Standards, present comments and propose necessary revisions;
- Finalization of the IPE Standards document and taking necessary actions for its final approval;
- Conducting review of the detailed designs prepared by consulting companies, according to which the necessary recommendations/conclusions will be elaborated in close collaboration with ESIDA and submitted to MDF;
- Working with the relevant departments of the Ministry, to define the reallocation plan of the schools;
- Determining action plan for eight schools replaced for rehabilitation purposes. Decision shall be made - the work will either be conducted in the frames of existing contracts, or new tender will be announced for those 8 schools only;
- Completing prioritization of at least 7 schools for construction under the Project. Upon approval of the priority list by the WB, 'Design and Build' tenders will be announced by the MDF.



Sub-Components:

2.2 - Supporting the scaling up of the whole-school improvement pilot

2.4. - Development of a national assessment framework

Contract No.: GE-MESCS-212276-CS-QCBS „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” was signed on August 15, 2022, the implementation phase has commenced accordingly. 42-months contract unites major key activities of the subcomponents of 2.2-2.4. and aims at promoting the high-quality teaching and learning in selected general education schools in Georgia through implementation of three main objectives: (1) Whole School Improvement: develop a policy framework, mechanisms, and instructions for whole school improvement and support the scaling up of the whole-school improvement pilot; (2) Continuous Formative Assessment of Students: support capacity-building of school leaders and teachers to adapt, develop, and implement school-based assessment practices; and (3) National Assessment Policy Implementation: design the mechanisms and instructions to implement, pilot, roll-out, and quality assure the new national assessment policy framework. The Contract is implemented by international consortium led by IBF International Consulting S.A. in partnership with the consortium members: European Projects Management Ltd, The Chancellor, Masters and Scholars of the University of Cambridge.

Contract Management Approach. The contract assignment is a complex, policy level intervention, which will have impact on many areas of the General Education system. Hence, it should be noted that an effective implementation of the contract requires close cooperation and active engagement of MES structural units and all other key actors including the development partners. The contract management approach is based on these considerations. In order to support implementation of activities considered under the Contract, a Contract Steering Group was established. The Steering Group is composed of 16 representatives (as determined by the I2Q project executive director N962871 order of August 30, 2022) of PMU, MES ECE and GE Development Department and MES structural units including TPDC, NCEQE, EMIS and NAEC. The scope of the authority and responsibility of Steering Group includes revision of the developed documents and contract reports, provision of the respective feedback and recommendations, participation in the working meetings and workshops, coordination contract deliverables within their respective institutions. The Steering Group is operational until the closure of the contract (February 15, 2026).

During the Inception Stage (August 15, 2022 – October 15, 2022 and period for revision of the submitted report until November 30, 2022), the Steering Group conducted three working meetings (September 7, October 28 and November 30, 2022) to discuss and revise the Inception Report. In addition, the Group members provided significant support to contract key international experts. They provided numerous documents, organized meeting with decision makers and policy implementing agencies, local experts and schools. Application of this management approach is time consuming, however the initial period proved it as an effective working format for key stakeholders’ engagement and for keeping close coordination with the General education reform implementation.

During the reporting period, GE Component Lead of the I2Q Project supervised the contract implementation. For planning and evaluation purposes, the weekly meetings were conducted with the team Leader. During these meetings, the contract inception period work-related issues were discussed and activities were planned.

Coordination with donor driven other interventions supporting the General Education reform was prioritized from the commencement of the contract. Experts/PMU held 3 meetings with the GE education reform development partners in Georgia with the aim to ensure better coordination and alignment of the planned interventions. The meetings included ADB representatives meeting (at PMU office), USAID Primary Education Programs staff meeting (at USAID program office) and meeting with the WB Education Specialist, Ms. Anna Berdzenadze (at the WB country office).

Contract Implementation Approach. The implementation methodology is divided into several key stages: Inception, Pre-pilot (preparation), Pilot, Upscaling and Closure. Inception and pre-pilot stages serve as preparation phase, which include analysis, revision of existing policy and practice, revision or/and development of relevant mechanisms/tools and planning of pilot. For the purposes of implementing activities potentially influencing students learning outcomes, 200 target schools are selected considering the different criteria: geographical location (Tbilisi, regions), number of students, ethnic minority community and communities leaving in the conflict nearby zones. All mechanisms will be piloted and tested to receive the efficient information for update. During the reporting period, the respective Consultant conducted introductory and follow up visits in over 15 schools throughout the country, located both - in Tbilisi and in regions.

Progress

The Contract No.: GE-MESCS-212276-CS-QCBS kick off meeting was conducted on September 14, 2022. The meeting was attended by Contract Steering Group members, representatives of the Contract implementing consortium (key international experts and management) and other stakeholders. A day earlier, the pre-kick off meeting was organized between the experts and the PMU. The Inception Period was a well-planned, dynamic process. During this period, the international experts met all key stakeholders (over 20 meetings were held with approximately 50 representatives of MES structural units, donors, local experts, school management and teachers) and did rigorous desk research of relevant policy and practices related to contract three output areas. The Inception Report draft was submitted by Consultant on October 15, 2022. As determined by the respective contract, the Inception Report includes the context analysis related to each objective/task and deliverable defined by the Contract, relevant international practice, as well as key stakeholder engagement plan. Per recommendation of the WB, detailed Contract Action Plan was developed with specific deliverables and timetable. Three meetings were conducted to discuss the report with the Contract Steering Group members. Based on the live discussions and provided written feedback, the revised English version of the report was submitted on November 18, 2022. After acceptance of the revised Georgian translation of the document, the Inception Report was accepted by the Contract Steering Group and subsequently approved by the PMU on December 15, 2022.



In parallel to the contract planning process, the Consultant has continued working on the deliverables in all three-output areas:

Objective A – Whole School Improvement. Subsequent to the agreement with NCEQE to support the ongoing preparatory work for the school's authorization process, the Consultant developed the training module for external QA expert cohort and organized the training sessions for approximately 150 QA experts, who will be engaged in the school evaluation process. This activity feeds in development of QA system in General Education. Throughout December 5-14, 2022, the two-day training was organized for around 150 QA experts who are the members of the recently formed pool of QA Experts of the NCEQE. The training module included the experts' code of ethic, interviewing skills and other elements of the experts' responsibilities in the school authorization process. The trainings were conducted using the participatory approach (case studies, peer learning method and etc.). The training sessions were led by international experts of the Consultant in collaboration with the local experts invited from the NCEQE. The second part of the training module will be conducted in February 2023 and will cover the authorization standards and guidelines specifically. After successful completion of the training program, QA experts will take part in authorization piloting, which will be conducted in three selected schools.

Besides, the Consultant provided input to new QA standards Explanatory Guideline development. For this purpose, the workshop was organized to discuss the recently developed guidelines. The workshop was conducted on December 23, 2022 and facilitated by the NCEQE and ECE and GE Development Department of MES. Issues related to the Standard 1 (Institutional) and Standard 4 (Students' Services) were covered during the workshop. The discussion aims to ensure uniform approach towards interpretation of standards by key parties, including authorization experts, Authorization Council, schools and NCEQE staff. These activities feed into the Deliverables A1 and A2 (A1 - Develop a vision of quality assurance (QA) and contribute to the revision and finalizing of the National Framework for QA in general education, suggest improvements to the policy and legislation if needed, and plan for a pilot of the policy (with mechanisms and instructions) for general education with appropriate training; A2 - Implement the pilot of the QA - which will be sufficient for the receiving relevant information for finalizing QA mechanisms, tools and methodology, a detailed plan for scaling-up the pilot of QA, in all schools based on the findings of the pilot).

Under the same output area regarding the STEAM Activities, the key experts conducted several introductory meetings with STEM teachers and management of the target schools, as well as with representatives of donor driven projects (TPDC initiative, USAID project, etc.) to identify ongoing STEAM extracurricular activities, available resources and interest toward such activities from the students' side. Besides, the survey was drafted to determine the pilot school resources and experience, also their motivation to participate in the implementation process. The survey will be provided to schools in the beginning of January, 2023. The Action Plan and budget allocation for the STEAM activities were also discussed during the inception period. (These activities feed with the deliverables A 10 and A 11).

For the assessment of the effectiveness of learning resources (including effectiveness of textbooks)

and assuring quality of teaching and learning and to providing recommendations for improvement to decision makers (Deliverable A7), GE Component Lead worked closely with the MES and publishers to obtain the PDF versions of the textbooks, since copyright was applied. Besides, the experts of the Consultant held several meetings with the representatives of EMIS and ICT/Data Integration Manager of the I2Q Project to recommend later to MES practical and coherent EMIS components, which includes collection and interpretation of the quality management conceptual framework findings. This is needed for informed policymaking and for improvement of teaching and learning and assessment (Deliverable 3). In addition, to plan the tailored capacity building activities for teachers and principals, during the reporting period the TPDC-developed training modules were shared for revision and good coordination.

Objective B. Formative Assessments.

Throughout the reporting period, several meetings were conducted with the schools' principals and teachers to get information on the existing formative assessment practices, methodology and tools for assessing all students, including students with special education needs and for representatives of ethnic minorities. The meeting with the representatives of the 8 pilot schools was held to identify their perspectives and experience on the formative assessment. Experts shared the best international practices, and the session participants discussed current formative assessment and the general education quality enhancement systems. The experts heard the teachers' views about existing challenges in implementing the current formative assessment. Information gathered from the Georgian teachers will help international experts to analyze the local context and needs. Additional meetings were conducted with the ECE and GE Development Department and subject experts. The meetings were devoted to understanding the needs on system level, specifically on the implementation of the complex assignments, teachers' capacity building and contract specific input.

Objective C. National Assessment System Development

The objective aims at designing the mechanisms and instructions to implement, pilot, roll out and quality assure the new national assessment policy framework. Several meetings were conducted with the NEAC management and experts in the framework of which NAEC's activities and the ongoing piloting project on diagnostic assessment were discussed. The following issue was raised during the planning process: the National Assessment Framework prepared within the I2Q project was handed over the MES, however, specific mechanisms and tools to be developed under the ongoing Contract have not been identified by the Client. The multiple working meetings and discussions were held with MES respective department and MES top management in charge of the General Education. Besides, two meetings were conducted with the NAEC representatives in November and December 2022. This had an impact on the activities planning process and the consultant's presented action plan in the output area C remains general. Hence, preliminary results of the working meetings and discussions revealed that the development of the diagnostic assessments at the grades 4, 6 and 8 feeds well with the priorities of MES management and ongoing GE reform initiatives. Finalization of the consultation phase is planned for January 2023.



Sub-Component 2.3 – Supporting the Capacity-building of Teachers and School Leaders (Principals) to Adapt, Develop, and Implement School-based Curriculum

Most of the activities defined by sub-component 2.3 are included under the scope of the above discussed comprehensive capacity building activity – “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”. As for the development of continuous professional development framework of teachers, respective task is included under the upcoming activity - “Strengthening the Quality of Pre-service Teacher Education Programs and Continuous Professional Development Options”. It is worth mentioning, that as agreed with the MES and the WB, one procurement package unites certain 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 (except the one concerning review and improvement of continuous professional development framework of teachers) and 3.4 of the Project. By the end of the reporting period, opening of financial proposals was held and currently combined evaluation report is being developed. The detailed overview of the progress is provided in the Section II (C) of the report, under Sub-Component 3.4.

Sub-Component 2.4 - Development of a National Assessment Framework

As defined by the project documents, this sub-component aims to (i) provide technical assistance for developing and introducing the revised national assessment system for general education level, (ii) address the issue of quality and effective use of formative continuous assessments of students including students with disabilities and/or diverse education needs and to (iii) support the conduct a functional review and development of recommendations to establish National Institute for Education Research to use analysis to inform policy actions to improve teaching and learning at all levels of education (effectiveness, equity, and efficiency). Part of the progress related to this sub-component was addressed above, since it is envisaged under the ongoing multi-component contract - “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”.

During the reporting period a step forward has been taken with regard to the upcoming functional review considered under the sub-component as well. The TOR on Feasibility study on Establishment of National Center for Educational Research was prepared and agreed with the MES management and the WB. The main objective of this assignment is to support the development of evidence-based decision-making system in education field for effective education policy interventions based on the centralized research, national level systematic integrated data collection and analysis. The specific task of the assignment is to conduct the Feasibility Study on the Establishment of National Institute of Educational Research. The feasibility study will analyze functional, legal and operational, economic and sustainability factors for assessing the practicality of National Institute of Educational Research set up in two scenarios: (1) National Institute of Educational Research as a separate legal entity; (2)

The functions of National Institute of Educational Research is accommodated in existing institution/s. In addition to recommendations, the Feasibility Study should provide to MES the action plan and estimated costs on implementation of the proposed both scenarios. The call for international tender is planned to be published in January, 2023. Thus, estimated implementation period of the contract is March, 2023 – February 2024.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Challenge	Mitigation Strategy
Subcomponents: 2.2-2.4 Contract	
<u>Time constrains. The ongoing contract</u> (“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 a complex assignment, which unites the policy intervention in three key areas: whole school improvement, formative assessment, and national assessment system, covers the majority of the POM Activities under 2.2-2.3 and 2.4 subcomponents. The Contract timeframe coincides with the I2Q project ending.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steering carefully the reporting timelines, good action plan and implementation management - Possibility of change the Contract conditions to accept reports/deliverables in English language, Georgian translated documents will be submitted on a later stage
<u>Piloting interventions in targeted 60 schools for rehabilitation.</u> STEAM activities should be implemented in all 200 target schools that includes 60 schools selected for rehabilitation. The delay of the infrastructure works are expected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application of the flexible approaches while working with the school community including the consideration of the replacement of the target schools (reserve schools list will be used)
<u>Based on the preliminary estimations of the international consultant, the initial budget of STEAM resources 300.000 Euros is not sufficient for introduction of the meaningful activities in 200 target schools.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create regional resources sharing points, enhance school collaboration, resource sharing opportunities - Conduct the additional fundraising

Immediate Next Steps:

- Supervision of implementation of activities envisaged under the ongoing multi-component Contract No.: GE-MESCS-212276-CS-QCBS (“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”). R2 and R3 Report revision and approval is planned for the next reporting period:
 - Output area A. Continue working on schools internal and external QA system development, planning of the STEAM extra curriculum activities, assessment of the learning resources.



- *Output area B and C. Continue analysis of the formative assessment system. Make specific Contract Action Plan in the output area C, continue collaboration with the MES management, good coordination with the donors supporting the assessment system development.*
- *Carrying out the necessary measures to start the implementation of the upcoming activities considered under sub-component 2.4 – “Feasibility study on Establishment of National Center for Educational Research”, including:*
 - *announcement of the REOI.*
 - *completion of the procurement procedures and contract signature.*
 - *supervision of the contract implementation, including but not limited to revision of the first (inception) report.*

C. COMPONENT 3 – STRENGTHENING FINANCING OPTIONS AND PROMOTING INTERNATIONALIZATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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 priority for the MES. During the reporting period, the PMU has been actively working in this direction. As a result, the planned procurement procedures were completed, and a consulting company was selected to implement the work designed for the second stage of the current support.¹

More specifically, two key areas were identified that are important for the introduction and implementation of a new funding model: (i) MES needs to determine a specific model from the several proposed options elaborated during the first phase, (ii) the higher education funding reform should be supported with the development and implementation of the Information Management Database System (IMDS). This system should be a common tool for processing the relevant information for a new performance-based funding model and assessing HEI's performance and development results. Based on this data, it would also be possible to measure the institutional effectiveness of HEIs, which is important for the following reasons: 1. Quality Assurance (internal and external evaluation), 2. University Rankings, 3. Strategic Planning, 4. Capacity Building, 5. Continuous Improvement.

As part of the conducted procurement, Seatig Inc. was selected as the winner from 8 short-listed companies. Accordingly, the Contract for Consulting Services (Contract No.: GE-MESCS-212278-CS-QCBS-1) with Seatig Inc. was signed on November 7, 2022.

During the Contract duration (November 2022 – July 2025), Seatig Inc. is expected to provide technical assistance and support to the MES for determining a specific funding model from the several proposed options described in the Report - THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MODEL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCING, and also to assist and support the Client (MES) in the areas of capacity building through the development of the relevant methodology and guidelines for the implementation of the new funding model. In addition, the planning of the IMDS for the implementation of the new model of performance-based funding must consider all key functionalities and infrastructure requirements relevant for the future system design, development, testing, implementation and maintenance. IMDS should serve as a multi-user functional database system for processing the relevant information (indicators, new formula elements) for a new performance-based financing model, allowing to continuously assess HEI's performance and development results against the defined indicators and targets.

The basic requirement from the future IMDS is to operate as a user-friendly web-based platform that can be easily customized and upgraded to effectively facilitate implementation of each of the stages of the foreseen innovation process in the financing system.

It should be noted, that based on the agreed contact implementation timelines, the Consultant

¹ At the first stage, the diagnostic and analytical work was carried out, as a result of which the existing financing system in Georgia, as well as the international practice regarding the performance-based funding models, were analyzed, and the comprehensive Report - THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MODEL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCING - was developed.



has already submitted the first – Inception Report on December 6, 2022. The submitted report was analyzed by the Steering Group, specifically established for supporting the well-coordinated and effective implementation of the assignment. The members of the Steering Group are the representatives of the PMU (Higher Education Component Lead, ICT Manager, and Administrative Manager), the representatives of the MES (Head of Higher Education Development Department, Head of Higher Education Division and Head of Economic Department), as well as representatives of the EMIS (Head of Vocational and Higher Education Department and Business Analyst), and NCEQE (Deputy Director and Head of Higher Education Quality Assurance Department).

The Inception Report includes the information about the relevant approaches and methodology. It should be noted, that for the implementation of the recommended Performance-based Funding (PBF) model the Consultant plans to use a Blockchain-based funding delivery mechanism. The essence of Blockchain-based delivery is to first disburse a promise (credit in conventional terminology, or token in Blockchain terminology, or “earmarking” in the Report) to the recipients (students or Higher Education Institutions (HEI)), once the performance is met, the token will be converted to real money. Seatig’s product Quanaxy, that has already been created by the company, is a Blockchain-based PBF management software that capacitates the “earmarking” – conversion funding delivery process. Therefore, the Consultant plans to customize Quanaxy based on the specific business and IT requirements of Georgia to deliver a custom-made funding disbursement management software. Quanaxy closely resembles the current voucher system, also it is versatile and can accommodate different performance scenarios and funding delivery processes.

The Inception Report was analyzed by the PMU, MES, EMIS and NCEQE. The meeting of the Steering Group was held on December 13, 2022. The Steering Group reviewed the content of the report and its compliance with the TOR requirements. Feedback and recommendations of the Steering Group are recorded in the minutes of the meeting and shared with the Consulting Company. The Company will review the R1 accordingly and submit the revised report for approval. In addition, the Consultant discussed the PBF delivery model with the leadership of the MES. The first meeting with the PMU and MES (with two Deputy Ministers - Mr. Valerian Gobronidze and Ms. Nunu Mitskevic) was held on December 21, 2022. At the meeting, the Consulting Company introduced Quanaxy and its capabilities. Representatives of the PMU and MES got acquainted with the visual side of the system as well as the business processes built into it. As a result of the meeting, it was determined that Quanaxy can be used not only to support the implementation of a new performance-based funding model, but also for managing the existing voucher-based funding model - the system can accommodate different performance scenarios and funding delivery processes. Concerning the development of a new funding formula, the importance of identifying and agreeing on the strategic objectives and the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) was highlighted. As an approach, it was agreed, that the Consulting Company shall start with the research and internationalization components. Namely, the Company will prepare a list of quantitative and qualitative indicators and targets best matched in line with MES’s strategic vision, starting with the first strategic objective - Research, preparing the list of appropriate indicators/sub-indicators and data descriptions. The next strategic objective to work on is internationalization. The representatives of the meeting agreed that after

discussing these two priorities, the MES will be able to define and present additional strategic objectives, and the Company will gain appropriate experience and a better understanding of how to determine sub-indicators and related data for each KPI in accordance with the MES approach. In addition, the MES offered to share with the Consulting Company detailed information on existing quality assurance standards for research and internationalization, as well as EMIS regulations (with a description of business processes) and a summary of information on existing scientific databases in Georgia.

The results of the meeting with the leadership of the MES were communicated with the Steering Group as well. For this reason, the second meeting with the Steering Group was held on December 28, 2022. The members of the Steering Group agreed to process and collect all the necessary information, which the MES offered to share with the Company.

Due to the upcoming Christmas and New Year holidays, the revised report is expected to be received by mid-January.

As for the general plan of implementation of planned activities:

- During the first and second quarters of 2023 - a specific funding formula should be determined.
- By the end of 2024 - IMDS should be developed.
- During the last 6 months of the contract implementation namely in the first and second quarters of 2025, the company will continue to provide technical support for the IMDS implementation.

Specific information:

- The short-listed Companies submitted technical and financial proposals by July 11, 2022;
- On July 22 and 27, working meetings of the group of evaluators were held, based on the results of which the technical proposals were evaluated, and the relevant evaluation documentation was prepared for submission to the tender commission;
- The Financial proposals evaluation process was completed, and the Technical and Financial Evaluation Report was submitted to the tender commission for approval on September 12, 2022;
- The first meeting with the selected company was held on September 28, 2022 at 18:00 Tbilisi time, followed by the second meeting in early October 2022;
- Based on the successful contract negotiation process, the Contract was signed on November 7, 2022, for the duration of 32 months (November 2022 - July 2025);
- The first - Inception Report was submitted on December 6, 2022;
- The Steering Group with the representatives of the PMU, MES (HE development department and Economic department), EMIS, and ENCEQE, was created on December 5, 2022;
- The Inception report and the results of the meeting with the leadership of the MES was analyzed and discussed by the Steering Group (December 13, 2022 and December 28, 2022);
- The relevant feedback was shared with the Consultant on December 14, 2022 and on December 21, 2022.



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 progress.

More specifically, during July 2022, the main approaches and staffing strategy of the CIF structural units (Awards Committee, Appeals Committee and Pool of Evaluators) was agreed with MES. As a result, the candidates were selected by the Department of Higher Education Development of the MES and the list was sent to the Minister for approval. Both Awards and Appeals Committees were approved by the by Order N844623 of the Minister on July 26, 2022.

The staffing of the CIF AU is also completed. An Education Specialist, Legal and Financial specialist are already on board.

Specific information concerning the selection of the CIF AU staff:

- (i) The deadline for submitting CVs in the framework of the announced tender regarding the selection of a Legal and Education Specialists was July 8, 2022. In total, 15 CVs for Legal Specialist and 9 CVs for Education specialist vacancies were presented. Accordingly, an evaluation team was formed, and the CVs were evaluated. On July 18 and 20, working meetings of the group of evaluators were held, based on the results of which the interviews were scheduled for the most successful candidates. Interviews were held on July 22 and the evaluation team prepared a final report for submission to the tender commission.
- (ii) Ms. Nazi Parsadanishvili was selected as an Education Specialist and Mr. Giorgi Ivanidze was selected as a Legal Specialist. Both specialists started working at the CIF AU in September 2022.
- (iii) As for the Financial Specialist, the deadline for submitting CVs was extended by one week due to low competition. Accordingly, instead of July 22, the deadline was July 29, 2022.
- (iv) 5 CVs were submitted under the first procurement (by July 29, 2022). All candidates were evaluated in detail, based on submitted CVs with respect to TOR and other evaluation criteria/requirements. Considering that none of the candidates demonstrated substantial responsiveness in meeting the evaluation criteria and qualification requirements specified in the TOR, the assignment was recommended to be re-advertised with the revised qualification requirements.
- (v) The TOR was revised, agreed with the MES (August 15, 2022) and the WB. Accordingly, the tender was re-announced with the deadline of EoI submission by September 9, 2022.
- (vi) 6 CVs were submitted under the re-announced procurement (by September 9, 2022). All candidates were evaluated in detail based on submitted CVs with respect to TOR and other evaluation criteria/requirements.

- (vii) The structured interviews were conducted with 3 short-listed candidates on September 23, 2022.
- (viii) The evaluation group completed the evaluation on September 28, 2022 and the Evaluation Report was submitted to the Tender Committee for approval.
- (ix) Mr. Giorgi Sikharulidze was selected as a Financial Specialist and joined the CIF AU in October 2022.

The Pool of Evaluators:

During the reporting period, the effort was made also for creating the pool of evaluators. It should be noted, that based on WB suggestion, the experience of the SRNSF and the contract signed by the Rustaveli foundation with the European Science Foundation/Science Connect (ESF-SC), as well as, the experience of the NCEQE and GITA were analyzed. PMU shared relevant findings with the WB and even though the estimation was very rough, and PMU was not able to make it more precise, it was decided to follow the WB's recommendation on selecting one consulting company instead of 80 individual experts. This approach was also coordinated with MES and the corresponding TOR was prepared (July 2022). After receiving the feedback from the WB, the TOR was revised by the PMU and re-submitted to the WB for further recommendations (August 2022). As a result, the REoI was published on September 15, 2022, with a deadline for the submission of proposals through October 14, 2022, 17:00 Tbilisi time.

During September-October 2022, the PMU was actively trying to disseminate the information through communication with relevant local and international experts. The experience of the SRNSF was also analyzed and the invitation to participate in the competition was sent to 6 possible providers. However, despite the efforts of the PMU, which included extending the application deadline by two weeks during the competition and trying to engage the possible providers, there was still a low level of activity within the competition. Only two companies expressed interest. The working meetings of the evaluation group were held on November 14, 18, 22 and 25, 2022. Among the submitted EoIs the USA based Agoge Partners LLC was selected, which demonstrated the best qualification, relevant experience and ability to implement the tasks. Since, there are less than three qualified expressions of interest required by the guidelines for CQS, the evaluation report was submitted to the WB for approval (December 3, 2022). Based on the WB's approval (December 4, 2022) Agoge Partners LLC was invited for the submission of the Technical & Financial proposal until December 28, 2022.

On December 27, 2022 Consultant has submitted its Technical and Financial Proposals for the Client's review. The Financial proposal was for amount of EUR 435,270.00 excluding local non-resident taxes that significantly exceeds the estimated budget allocated for this assignment. The Technical Proposal was acceptable, including the qualification of the proposed Key Expert/Team Leader.

Regarding the Financial Proposal, the Client asked the Consultant for the possible reduction of costs that will not affect the quality of the grant proposals evaluation. More specifically, the Consultant proposed additional non-key staff - 11 Field Experts/Managers (10 international and 1 local) to assist the Team Leader in the management of the assignment implementation. It was clarified that based



on the Terms of Reference there was one person envisaged to manage the process, i.e. a Team Leader is responsible for coordinating and managing the evaluators' activities, overseeing quality control, and reporting to CIF AU. In addition, as proposed additional non-key staff - Field Experts/Managers are not participating in the evaluation process of the CIF grant proposals and are not a part of the Pool of Evaluators, the reduction could not affect the planned outcomes. Therefore, the Consultant was asked to reduce the number of additional non-key staff, to keep only 1 international and 1 local Field Expert (who will also help with translation services) if necessary and reduce the cost accordingly. The Client also asked to withdraw the international experts' travel costs to Georgia, since the Terms of Reference envisages the remote services. In addition, it was clarified that this assignment does not require developing a Portal/Platform for communication between CIF AU and there is no need of additional ICT Infrastructures. The respective portal at the state level for receiving CIF grant applications already exist. Thus, the costs for Portal/Platform shall be removed from the financial proposal accordingly.

Based on our estimations, the Contract Negotiation process for the Consulting Services for creating a pool of evaluators for CIF should be finalized in mid-January 2023. However, this assignment - the creation of a qualified pool of evaluators quickly and managing them effectively remains a challenge.

Cooperation with GITA to use the Grant Portal (grants.gov.ge):

During the reporting period several working meetings were held with GITA July-October 2022 to discuss the relevant regulations for the CIF, including the procedure for submission of the grant applications through the grant portal and the business processes necessary for creation of a specific module for the CIF grants.

As a result, all technical issues were identified and discussed during the meetings, including the need for additional technical assistance, as well as all relevant points related to the establishment of cooperation between the PMU and GITA for the CIF purposes. Accordingly, a draft MOU was prepared by the PMU and shared with GITA for final feedback (October 2022). The MOU between the PMU and GITA was signed in November 2022.

Based on the signed MOU, GITA took responsibility to grant admin rights to the CIF AU for publishing the CIF grant competition on the web portal, for the implementation of appropriate manipulations on the CIF module, as well as, providing the necessary technical support for the CIF AU. The PMU, in turn, took responsibility to hire an additional consulting company in case GITA is unable to provide sufficient technical support for the CIF purposes.

During the meetings with GITA and Software development team, the need for additional technical assistance was identified. Accordingly, the content of the necessary technical assistance has been clarified in close collaboration with GITA, and the relevant TOR was prepared by the CIF AU. In addition, GITA shared the information about which company provides full technical support for the existing web portal and will be able to efficiently and effectively provide the CIF AU with the corresponding services. Based on the information provided by GITA, the web portal - grants.gov.ge was created by IDEA Design Group Ltd in 2017-2018, and they remain the provider of technical

support related to the web portal. GITA presented several agreements, including current one, signed between the GITA and IDEA Design Group Ltd in different years. Based on this information and the proper justification provided in accordance with WB's procurement regulations, PMU received WB's approval concerning direct contracting.

Accordingly, the TOR for "Consulting Services for the IT support for the Competitive Innovation Fund (CIF) implementation process" was finalized and agreed with MES and WB (November 10, 2022). Based on the WB's "no objection", IDEA Design Group Ltd. was invited to submit its technical and financial proposals for the assignment. The evaluation and contract negotiation processes were carried out successfully and the corresponding contract with the IDEA Design Group Ltd. was signed on November 21, 2022.

During November 2022, additional working meetings were held with the IDEA Design Group Ltd and CIF AU, to design and test the grant's platform. All technical issues were discussed and resolved. As a result, on November 30, 2022, the first CIF grant competition was announced through the web portal - grants.gov.ge.

Call for Proposals for the first round of CIF Grants:

During the reporting period, active communication was established between the CIF Administrative Unit (AU) and the members of both Committees. A full package of regulatory documents was provided, as well as, an introductory meeting was held with Awards and Appeals Committees (September 15, 2022), during which a CIF component was presented, including the structure of the CIF, all relevant procedures, and the roles and responsibilities of the members of both Committees.


The Awards Committee (AC) held the first official working meeting on October 10, 2022. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the priorities for the first funding window, as well as the total budget to be allocated for the first grant competition. As a result of the meeting, the AC reached an agreement that, considering the importance of CIF funding and the expectations of HEIs, the amount of the total CIF budget (4.2 million USD) should be evenly distributed between the competitions under the first and second calls, e.g. 2 million USD for the first call and 2.2 million USD for the second call. The AC also drafted the preliminary outline of the funding priorities for the first call and agreed to discuss this topic further during the second working meeting in early November. During the reporting period, the CIF AU supported the activities of the AC, including sharing all the necessary information with the AC members and preparing the minutes of the AC's meetings.

Based on the results of the several working meetings of the AC (October 24 - November 4, 2022), the priorities and overall budget (2 million USD) of the first CIF grant competition were finally determined.

Accordingly, an order was issued by the PMU's Executive Director to announce the first grant competition under the CIF (November 24, 2022).

Priorities for the first funding window are the following:

- Elaboration/development of academic programs in cooperation with a foreign higher



education institution recognized in accordance with the legislation of a foreign country for the purpose of awarding joint/double academic degrees and/or promoting international accreditation.

- Development of educational programs tailored to the labor market needs (including specific needs of the Georgian regions) (Smart Specialization, Third Mission etc.).
- Development of practice oriented educational programs.
- Supporting cooperation with industry/private sector (creation/development of joint educational programs tailored to employers' needs (joint teaching/practice, research/other initiatives on different levels of education, including structured doctoral programs).
- Initiating projects/programs developing/enhancing entrepreneurship education.

Applicants must submit project proposals on the web portal – www.grants.gov.ge. The funding window is open from the 30th of November 2022 till the 20th of February (23:59) 2023.

Stakeholder engagement:

As for the meetings with HE institutions, On October 17-19, 2022, the first two-day workshop was held for about 35 representatives from various HEIs and 7 representatives from the MES, including the Deputy Minister, Ms. Nunu Mitskevich. The main goal of the workshop was to involve all public HEIs in Georgia, including all regional universities, in the implementation of the CIF grant scheme, provide general information and start preparing universities for the announcement of the first competition under the CIF. The Higher Education Component Lead and the staff of the CIF AU made thematic presentations through which the participants were provided with comprehensive information about the CIF component, as well as on all procedural, administrative, and content-related issues.

In addition, on November 30, 2022, an online meeting was held with representatives of public and private HE institutions. During the meeting, the attendees were provided with information about the CIF grant scheme, as well as about the first grant competition and the submission of grant applications - all procedural, administrative, and content-related issues. The online meeting was attended by about 70 academic staff members from different universities.

It should be noted, that for supporting the communication with stakeholders a specific email address was created - info@cif.gov.ge. In addition, all questions and answers are constantly recorded and published on the project web page - www.iiq.gov.ge.

The next meeting with HEIs is planned to be held in January 2023. Participants will have the opportunity to directly contact the CIF AU and ask questions that have arisen during the work on CIF grant proposals, as well as the CIF AU will prepare the presentation concerning the submitted questions and the corresponding answers, for further clarification.

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 include:


- (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, a major progress has been made towards the planned procurement. More specifically, the evaluation of technical proposals was completed, and the opening of financial proposals was held on December 19, 2022. Based on the combined technical/financial score, UCL Consultants Ltd (Leading Member) in sub-consultancy with Savy Business sLtd (Member) was identified as a first-ranked consultant and selected for the implementation of the assignment.

However, as a result of the opening of financial proposals, it was observed that the highest technical scored consultant, has proposed the highest price, which materially exceeds the estimated cost (USD 600,000 including taxes), and the Consultant has received the highest combined score.

It should be noted that, as usual, the proposed price is not negotiable considering the procurement method of the assignment. However, as an exception, important circumstances identified within the framework of a specific tender were taken into account. In particular:

- i) Low interest in implementing the assignment from consulting companies - despite of extension of the submission deadline of EOIs for the assignment, as well as PMU's effort to increase the competition (invitation letters with REOIs were sent to the potential consultants based on market research), only 5 consultants have submitted the EOIs, 3 were shortlisted and 2 have submitted the Technical and Financial proposals. The low competition was assumed due to the complexity of the assignment;
- ii) The need for timely implementation of the assignment - it takes approximately 32 months to complete all tasks envisaged under the TOR. Therefore, in order to complete the assignment within the overall project implementation period, it is important to start the implementation process on time;
- iii) High competence of the first-ranked Consultant - from the analysis of the received documentation, it can be seen that the Consultant has the capabilities and resources to



ensure the high-quality implementation of the activities stipulated by the TOR;

- iv) After reviewing and analyzing the I2Q project budget by the I2Q Project team, it was observed that up to USD 300,000 can be allocated for the assignment in addition to the estimated cost of USD 600,000. Otherwise, the assignment should be funded as a result of the cancellation of several planned activities due to the limited funds under the I2Q project budget.

Taking into account all the above mentioned, it was agreed with the WB to start the contract negotiations with the selected consultant. During contract negotiations, it will be important to clarify that the proposed price is significantly higher than the estimated budget specified in the issued RFP and negotiate with the Consultant to consider reducing the financial proposal due to limited additional funds available in the I2Q project budget.

Based on our estimations, the Contract Negotiation process should be finalized in January 2023. A lump-sum contract will be signed with the successful Consulting company for an estimated duration of 32 months.

Specific information:

- The original deadline for submitting EoIs was July 5, 2022. However, due to low competition, the deadline has been extended by 3 weeks to July 26, 2022; In addition, an invitation to participate in the tender was sent to potential interested parties, whose information was reflected in the market research report prepared by a short-term international expert;
- Three working meetings of the evaluation group were held on August 1, August 8 and August 17, 2022. On the results of these meetings, the evaluation report was prepared. Despite of submission deadline extension for three weeks, and the PMU's effort (based on market research, the respective invitation letters with the REOIs were sent to the potential consultants in order to increase the competition), only five companies have submitted the EOIs. Therefore, on a basis of conducted evaluation and scores assigned, the Tender Committee has approved the shortlist comprising of three Companies/JVs for the assignment.
- The technical and financial proposals submission deadline was extended based on the Company's request for an additional 2 weeks, i.e., from September 23, 2022, 17:00 Tbilisi time through October 7, 2022, 17:00 Tbilisi time.
- The Pre-Proposals Conference was held on September 14, 2022 at 17:00 Tbilisi time.
- Of the three shortlisted Companies/JV, only two submitted technical and financial proposals.
- Three working meetings of the evaluation team were held during October and November 2022 as a result of which the process of evaluating technical proposals was finalized and the evaluation report was approved by the Tender Commission on November 29, 2022.
- The opening of Financial Proposals was held on December 19, 2022.
- The Financial proposals evaluation process was completed, and the Technical and Financial

Evaluation Report was submitted to the tender commission for approval on December 26, 2022.

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.

During the reporting period, a major progress has been made towards the planned procurement. More specifically, the evaluation of technical proposals was completed, and the opening of financial proposals was held on December 20, 2022.

The submission of the combined evaluation report was delayed based on the latest communication with the MES top management about the possibility of materially changing the scope of the assignment. The work will be restored based on the final decision of the MES.


Specific information:

- The first stage of the evaluation was completed in July 2022, as a result of which 8 Companies/JVs were short-listed;
- 8 short-listed Companies/JVs have submitted the technical and financial proposals by September 5, 2022;
- The evaluation of technical proposals (submitted by 8 short-listed Companies/JV) was actively implemented, and several working meetings of the evaluation team were held during September-November 2022. As a result, the evaluation of technical proposals was finalized, and the evaluation report was approved by the Tender Commission on November 29, 2022.
- The opening of financial proposals was held on December 20, 2022.

Immediate Next Steps:

1. Complete the evaluation process, sign contracts, and start implementation for the following ongoing procurements:

- *Strengthening the Quality of Pre-service Teacher Education Programs and Continuous Professional Development Options (linked with sub-component 3.4) – finalize the*



communication with MES management and determine the scope of the activities. There are two possible scenarios expected – one is to follow the original plan, finalize the bidding and start the project in Feb 2023; another is to define the new scope and reintroduce the bidding.

- Promotion of the Internationalization of Higher Education (linked with sub-component 3.3) - assignment is expected to commence in January 2023. As an outcome of the First Phase of the project implementation, relevant surveys will be conducted to identify: a) the relevant international partner (HEI/research center) and a Georgian HEI where a joint doctoral program in the field of education and science management will be developed; b) the state of teaching entrepreneurship and disciplinary English; c) which summer and winter schools are usually held and also which subtopics within the main focus of the International Excellence School, namely innovation is most salient for them; d) a Georgian HEI that will host the International Excellence School, as well as to specify topics, number of students, number of professors and researchers, and format of the International Excellence School in close consultation with the Client.
- Consulting Services for creating a pool of evaluators for CIF - assignment is expected to commence in end-January/early-February 2023. As an outcome of the First Phase of the project implementation, relevant approach and methodology for executing the assignment, as well as the Pool of Evaluators (approximately 80 Non-Key Experts, both national and international, to conduct the evaluation of proposals submitted under CIF) should be presented.

2. Providing support to the MES in the implementation of the CIF (linked with sub-component 3.2):

- Continue consultation meetings with representatives of higher education institutions so that they have reliable information about the requirements and procedures for the CIF grant competition;
- Promoting the dissemination of information to increase competition;
- Conducting a desk review of the eligibility and completeness of the submitted Project under the first call, as well as initial screening of the submitted documents (where applicable) by the CIF AU;
- As part of the first funding window, effective coordination of signed consulting contracts and providing appropriate support to other structural units under the CIF (by the CIF AU).

D. COMPONENT 4 – SYSTEM STRENGTHENING AND STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION

Sub-Component 4.1 - Supporting data-driven decision-making accessible to the entire education system

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.

Under this sub-component a diagnostic assessment of the EMIS was conducted, identifying data needs in Georgian education system, as well as providing recommendations and proposing 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, for management and administration, planning, policy formulation, monitoring and assessment at all levels from early childhood to higher education.

In the framework of the contract/activity - "Consulting Services for Diagnostic Assessment of Education Management Information System (EMIS), Data Integration and Analytic Systems," the delivery of final reports was delayed due to the complexity and volume of work performed by the consultant, additional time was required for internal discussions with the involvement of relevant structural divisions of MES, EMIS, and consultations with the WB. Subsequently, the contract was extended until November 15, 2022. Consulting Company provided Reports on EMIS business and technical analyses, findings and recommendations on capacity building and data collection and analysis improvement for different types of levels, including policymaking on the operational level.

TORs for further activities: (i) "Upgrade of the eSchool General Education and Early Childhood Education software system and the Enterprise Architecture, Data and Domain Models for the EMIS education systems in Georgia", (ii) "Learning Systems Solutions and Support (LMS) for General Education in Georgia" (iii) "Technical and Leadership Capacity Building of the EMIS organization".

According to the TOR developed by the Consultant, the scope of services for the assignment – **"Upgrade of the eSchool General Education and Early Childhood Education software system and the Enterprise Architecture, Data and Domain Models for the EMIS education systems in Georgia"** covers (i) the upgrade of the eSchool software system supporting General Education; (ii) developing Enterprise Architecture, Domain and Data Modeling and Common System Modules for the EMIS education systems and subsystems; (iii) database streamlining & containerization of software modules and (iv) design and implementation of additional new modules of the Preschool elements.



Scope of services under the **“Learning Systems Solutions and Support (LMS) for General Education in Georgia”** activity covers design and implementation a Learning Management System (LMS) for General Education in Georgia to support public schools. The system will be designed to support the implementation of the school-based localized curricula where each school will be able to develop its own curriculum based on the 3rd generation of National Curriculum and be able to analyze, measure results and adapt the program from the results.

As for the **“Technical and Leadership Capacity Building of the EMIS organization”**, the task will envisage technical and leadership capacity building of the EMIS organization to effectively implement the revised charter, structure, scope, and strategy ensuring relevant data collection, generation, analysis and reporting for entire education system and facilitating evidence-based policy decision-making.

Significant changes were made in PP during the reporting period with regard to the above-mentioned activities. Elaboration of the detailed TORs constituted the need to regroup activities in the procurement into three separate assignments, as presented above. This scheme and budget were different from those initially determined by the PMU. According to the new estimate, the costs associated with the eSchool are higher than the pre-determined budget. Since this activity has proven to be complex assignment and a high priority for the MES, the PMU aims to implement this goal entirely. Therefore, there was a need to expand the budget. In this regard, the financial resources set for hardware and software purchases were reallocated to the primary task (eSchool activity). As for the procurement of capacity building services has been postponed due to the lack of necessary financial and human resources in EMIS.

After approval of the revised line items in STEP, TORs for the upcoming activities - **“Learning Systems Solutions and Support (LMS) for General Education in Georgia”** and **“Upgrade of the eSchool General Education and Early Childhood Education software system and the Enterprise Architecture, Data and Domain Models for the EMIS education systems in Georgia”** were submitted to WB for review and no objection on December 19, 2022.

Upon review of the submitted TORs, on December 21, 2022, the WB team provided instruction regarding the suitable procurement methods for the upcoming activities related to the eSchool/EMS development. Namely, as instructed by the Bank, two stage RFP was appropriate method (instead of the QCBS method) considering the work to be implemented under the upcoming activity. This has resulted the need to revise the TOR considering specific requirements and standard documents suitable for the proposed procurement method. Based on this, existing line item will be cancelled, and new item will be created. Since respective procurement documents are very different from the ones under the QCBS and require detailed technical information, the PMU is working closely with EMIS and other relevant structural units of the MES to revise elaborated procurement documents, as necessary. Revised documents will be submitted to the WB by the end of January 2023 and upon approval of the Bank, tender will be announced, tentatively in the beginning of February 2023. Estimated commencement period of the assignment is September 2023. As for the LMS-related upcoming procurement, the TOR is being reviewed by the Bank.

Through sub-component 4.1, the Project also supports supply and installation of Wi-Fi networks in 121 public schools of Georgia. Contracts were signed with the winner companies:

- a. On October 6, 2021 for Lot-2 - West Georgia (58 Schools);
- b. On November 30, 2021 for Lot-1 - East Georgia (63 Schools).

Both suppliers have completed wireless network arrangement works in all 121 schools in the reporting period and submitted an expertise confirmation reports, as defined by respective contracts. Upon approval of acceptance of conducted works by EMIS, final Delivery Acceptance Acts were signed with suppliers within the term defined by respective contracts – on August 17, 2022 under Lot 1 and on November 4, 2022 under Lot 2.

The sub-component also supports development of training resources and guides for schools on selected distance learning platform(s) and teaching methodology application, as well as conducting ToTs. 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 targeted 200 schools.

Based on the consultant's explanatory letter and request of the consulting company, certain modifications were made in the Contract during the reporting period. Following the scope of work determined by the contract, the Consultant presented the R2 Report - on the implementation of Phase II, including (i) outline of teachers' e-guide to distance and blended teaching based on the selected methodology (ii) draft curriculum for e-course/training modules for school teachers on distance and blended teaching and learning. The R2 Report was agreed with MES and accepted by PMU on September 12, 2022. Based on the selected methodology, the Consultant continues developing the concept and the structure of an e-course for school teachers on distance and blended teaching and learning, digital content that is interactive to facilitate the learners to achieve specific learning outcomes. According to the contract, works will be completed by March 3, 2023.

Based on the request of MES and consent provided by the WB, the Project also supports NAEC with regard to **arranging e-assessment server infrastructure and developing relevant technical documentation for ensuring proper functioning and sustainable operation of the system to be able to conduct national assessments in the framework of the Project**. Respective TOR has been developed for the assignment ("Short-term Consultant (National) to Support the National Assessment and Examination Center with the System Administration for the National e-Assessment Project") and REOI was announced during the previous reporting period. According to the scope of the work defined in the TOR, consultant shall (i) set-up a server infrastructure (in local EMIS server infrastructure) to provide simultaneous access for 10,000 students using TAO e-assessment platform; (ii) test the system on the server side, its' database and application to determine needed number of servers; (iii) conduct user simulations; (iv) undertake monitoring and analysis of services and servers; (v) develop backup strategy, (vi)



Physical and logical topology of server infrastructure describing documents. Based on the terms of the contract, consultant shall perform the services by January 22, 2023.

In November 2022, expert had provided Progress Report 1 with a delay, due to the challenges and difficulties during the scaling and expanding amount of the students up to 10,000. The report did not fully reflect requirements determined in the TOR. Hence, comments and recommendations have been provided to the consultant and updated version is expected to be submitted in early January 2023.

Immediate Next Steps:

- After receiving no objections from the WB to the TORs, start the procurement procedures planned for the following upcoming projects: “Learning Systems Solutions and Support (LMS) for General Education in Georgia” and “Upgrade of the eSchool General Education and Early Childhood Education software system and the Enterprise Architecture, Data and Domain Models for the EMIS education systems in Georgia”;
- Supervise implementation and of the assignment - *“Developing Training Resources and Guides for Schools on Selected Distance Learning Platform(s) and Teaching Methodology Application, Conducting ToT”* project.
- Supervise implementation of *the assignment: “Short-term Consultant (National) to Support the National Assessment and Examination Center with the System Administration for the National e-Assessment Project”*.

Sub-Component 4.2 - Communication and Stakeholder Consultations for Education Reform

This sub-component considers 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. Communication strategy elaborated in line with the Education and Science Strategy 2022-2030, will support MES to work efficiently toward achieving its long-term goals - dynamic communication will facilitate delivering messages to and receiving feedback from stakeholders. As a result, effective communication of education reforms shall be provided.

The respective assignment commenced on November 18, 2021 in the frames of the I2Q Project. Inception phase was implemented, and the first report was approved during the previous reporting period. Upon approval of the first deliverable on June 17, 2022, the Consultant started conducting works defined for the following stage of assignment, i.e. Initial Draft of the Five-Year Communication Strategy and 24-month Action Plan. As defined by the TOR, the elaborated draft document refers to and includes the following important aspects:

- Building a coalition of external stakeholders – NGOs, trusted public figures, private sector representatives, etc. - to support education reform and ensure its continuity over the long term;

- Strengthening or establishing working groups of school principals, teachers, and students that would accompany policy-makers in the design of specific measures and channel user feedback;
- Helping articulation a clear vision for the transformation of the education sector and rally behind it all key internal stakeholders, who in turn, will become instrumental in bringing the Georgian public on board;
- Facilitating the establishment of a mechanism of social accountability to enable the monitoring of the delivery of high-quality education services;
- Raising awareness of the shortcomings of the current education system and how it is preventing Georgian youth from thriving;
- Promoting the overall reform agenda and rally support for its specific policies: develop messages, advise on channels and suitable activities;
- Providing recommendations for rebranding, and advise on the website and social media channels;
- Showcasing 21st-century skills and explain their importance;
- Identifying early adopters and champions amongst education professionals and parents and role model desired mindsets, skills, and behaviors at a scale;
- Sensitizing parents about the importance of early childhood development;
- Fostering the full participation of ethnic minorities in the education system;
- Documenting results of the reform and amplify their reach;
- Elevating the prestige of the teaching profession and increase trust in the public school system;
- Helping manage reputational risks associated with the reform and the introduction of specific measures.

In parallel to the second stage of the assignment, the consulting company started to implement third stage-related works, which, according to the contract includes drafting a guide to monitoring and evaluation of the communication plan comprising of (i) clear, measurable and quantifiable indicators and methods to assess the impact of the communication effort on the targeted audiences for evaluating success, (ii) key concepts of monitoring and evaluation, (iii) clear vision towards short, medium and long-term objectives, as well as operative annual plans for each strategic action and (iv) the rule of amending and updating the communication strategy and action plan.

Number of meetings were held among the consulting company, Strategic Communication Department of the MES and the Capacity Development, Outreach and Communications Specialist of the I2Q Project to discuss submitted draft documents in detail and provide necessary feedback.



Upon receipt of the feedback on stakeholder mapping and stakeholder engagement, identifying the target groups, tailoring the messages, campaigns, ways for improving the media relations, the best communication tools for delivering the correct messages to the target groups and main activities, developing sustainable communication materials, tools and methods for evaluation of communication activities, draft documents were further revised and amended by the consulting company and final versions were submitted to the PMU for approval. Stage 2 and 3 deliverables were approved on December 21, 2022 based on the agreement with the MES and the consulting company commenced with the final stage of the assignment. As agreed, meanwhile, additional comments may be submitted by the Strategic Communication Department of MES earliest possible, to support completion of the contract by January 21, 2022.

The contract with the client has been amended twice during the reporting period based on the request of the consulting company, considering the need for review and analysis of the additional documentation, as well as due to a fact that review and approval of the submitted reports took more time than was envisaged under the contract. Amendments were signed on August 12, 2022 and October 31, 2022 extending the term of the contract through October 31, 2022 and January 20, 2023, respectively. None of the amendments signed envisaged any scope or price implications.

This sub-component also supports the set-up of an effective mechanism of donor coordination to facilitate ongoing reform implementation and follow-up. To discuss ongoing activities and upcoming interventions at the ECE and GE levels, the donor coordination meeting was held on December 5, 2022, with the MES initiation and Project coordination. All donors acting in the ECE and GE sectors were invited and provided updates on relevant implemented/ongoing/upcoming activities within the scope of the I2Q Project. Relevant MES staff also presented key information on the interventions planned under the Human Capital Program (PforR).

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;
- Newsletters were prepared and published;
- Workshops for stakeholders organized (Component 1, Component 2, Component 3, Component 4);
- Providing support in the frames of the ongoing Performance Evaluation (Data Collection and Analysis) for the Innovation, Inclusion and Quality Project - Georgia I2Q Baseline Survey, as this large-scale survey envisages assessments of the two indicators considered under sub-component 4.2 - (i) Parents that report satisfaction with their engagement in the whole school improvement effort and demonstrate understanding of student-centered learning through beneficiary surveys in community engagement activities and (ii) Representative groups who report that the national consultation (and feedback) process on Georgian education policy principles.

For the I2Q Project's promotional purposes, Tamar Sanikidze, the I2Q Project Executive Director visited several TV shows and provided Radio interviews. She was hosted in [Talks about Education](#)

[with Teiko Anjaparidze](#) (Radio Imedi) and had a live interview and podcast on [Businesscourier](#) (Radio Fortuna).

Immediate Next Steps:

- Supervise the implementation of the assigned tasks by the consultant selected for the ongoing assignment – *“Developing a Five-Year Communication Strategy and Action Plan for the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia”*;
- Organize donor coordination meetings;
- Organize several workshops/events within the scope of the I2Q Project
- Ensure the I2Q Project awareness raising using relevant tools.



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

This sub-component supports the development of the unified accounting policy for MES and sub-organizations under its control including (i) structural units of the MES; (ii) Territorial bodies – educational resource centers; (iii) legal entities of public law operating in the field of governance of MES, non-entrepreneurial (non-commercial) legal entities; (iv) HEIs established by the GoG (upon the proposal of the MES), scientific-research institutions established by the GoG, vocational education and general education institutions established by / with the participation of MES. The activity was not originally considered under the Project. However, based on the request of MES supported by the respective justification, the WB consented to add the activity to the Project scope.

The procurement procedures were completed and the contract has been concluded with the selected consultant in the previous reporting period - on May 2, 2022 continuing through July 2, 2023. Since approval of the Inception Report on June 3, 2022, the consulting company has commenced with actions necessary for development of the following report. Upon rigorous discussions and collaboration with MES and relevant institutions, Report 2 (analytical report on the regulatory framework and current practice on accounting and reporting of MES and recommendations for improvement, taking into account all relevant local requirements) was developed and submitted to the PMU within the timeframe defined under the contract. The report has been accepted by the PMU on August 22, 2022, based on the agreement with the Deputy Head of Economic Department of MES, as required by the respective contract.

The following report (Report 3 – draft accounting policy of central apparatus of MES and subordinated budget organizations together with scenario of methodological videos and draft training materials) was also developed and submitted during the reporting period. Upon number of discussion of the draft documents between the management of Economic Department of MES and the consulting company, the report has been revised and resubmitted. Based on the approval of MES, the report was accepted by the PMU on December 6, 2022. Upon agreement of further actions with MES, the consulting company has commenced with works required under the following phase of the contract. As defined by the TOR, Report 4 (Draft accounting policy and relevant forms of educational institutions, scientific institutions and educational resource, as well as scenario of methodological videos and draft training materials) is expected to be submitted within 2.5 months from the acceptance of Report 3.

Immediate Next Steps:

- Coordinate implementation of the activity – “Development of Accounting Policy for the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and its Subordinated Organizations”, revise Report 4 to be submitted by the Consultant. Ensure review and approval of the report by the Deputy Head of the Economic Department of MES and provide the needed support to the Consultant.

RESULTS FRAMEWORK

To measure Project's success against PDO indicator 2 (Learning outcomes of students in national formative assessments in project-supported general education schools), decision was made to contract NAEC to conduct assessments in schools which shall receive the highest level of treatment from the Project's Components. In addition, those schools had to 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 200 schools was created out of which 100 schools were selected on a stratified random basis for evaluation purposes (including 30 schools targeted for rehabilitation under the Project). The assessment shall be carried out in two rounds starting in Spring 2022. The second round shall be completed in the final year of the Project in 2025.

The contract with NAEC was signed on April 20, 2022. Completion report (Baseline Data Collection and Analysis) was submitted by NAEC on July 15, 2022. The second round (endline) of assessment shall be implemented in Summer 2025.

To explain the findings from the learning outcome assessments and to emphasize on Project's midterm outcomes and final impact the PMU and the Bank agree to conduct performance evaluation survey. 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 Endline data in 2022 and 2025 respectively.

In addition, the survey shall collect and analyze data against the following indicators given in PAD:

1. Survey of change in female attitudes towards STEAM conducted amongst girls participating in the Thematic Innovation clubs,
2. Representative groups who report that the national consultation (and feedback) process on Georgia's Education policy principles was responsive to their views through an appropriate CE mechanism,
3. Parents that report satisfaction with their engagement in the whole school improvement effort and demonstrate understanding of student-centered learning through beneficiary surveys in Year 1, 4 and 6.

Performance Evaluation Survey Contract was signed with ACT LLC on August 24, 2022. The contract envisages both – baseline and endline data collection and analysis. The first (baseline) data collection and analysis round shall be completed on January 30, 2023 (Completion Report delivery due date). The final round (endline) shall be finalized on January 2026 respectively.

During the reporting period, the consulting company has submitted three deliverables as determined by the contract, including but not limited to training manuals and stakeholder engagement plans, as well as reports summarizing pilot data collection and baseline data collection. Currently the final works are being implemented in the frames of the ongoing baseline data collection, as a result of which analytical report will be developed.



PROCUREMENTS

Following Contracts were signed:

a. As a result of REOIs:

1. CIF Financial Specialist
2. Short-term Consultant (National) to Support the National Assessment and Examination Center with the System Administration for the National e-Assessment Project;
3. CIF Education Specialist;
4. CIF Legal Specialist;
5. General Education Component Lead;
6. Performance Evaluation (Data Collection and Analysis) for the Georgia Innovation, Inclusion and Quality Project (I2Q);
7. Improving ECE Institution Management System and Enhancing the Quality of Programs Across the Country;
8. 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;
9. Consulting Services for Facilitating the Implementation of a New Model of Performance-based Funding by Creating Information Management Database System.

b. As a result of Direct Contracting:

1. Consulting Services for the IT support for the Competitive Innovation Fund (CIF) implementation process.

RFPs were issued and Evaluation Reports were prepared for the following consulting services:

1. Consulting Services for Strengthening the Quality of Pre-Service Teacher Education Programs and Continuous Professional Development Options;
2. Consulting Services for Promoting Internationalization of Higher Education;
3. Consulting Services for creating a pool of evaluators for CIF.

Next Steps:

The following contracts will be signed:

1. Consulting Services for Strengthening the Quality of Pre-Service Teacher Education Programs and Continuous Professional Development Options (conditional upon decision of MES on the scope of the assignment);

2. Consulting Services for Promoting Internationalization of Higher Education;
3. Consulting Services for creating a pool of evaluators for CIF.

Following REOIs/RFP will be announced:

1. Upgrade of the eSchool General Education and Early Childhood Education software system and the Enterprise Architecture, Data and Domain Models for the EMIS education systems Reference – February 2023;
2. Learning Systems Solutions and Support (LMS) for General Education in Georgia – February 2023;
3. Feasibility Study on Establishment of National Institute of Educational Research – January 2023.

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 (01 July 2022 – 31 December 2022), the total amount of expenditures under the I2Q Project amounted to EUR 2.7 million, which is 85.23% of the planned disbursements. As of 31 December 2022, cumulative payments for the project implementation are equal of EUR 9.3 million which is 32.01% of allocated IBRD funds (MES part - EUR 29,775,000).

***Commitments and Disbursement Projections
(from the approved Procurement Plan)
(EUR)***

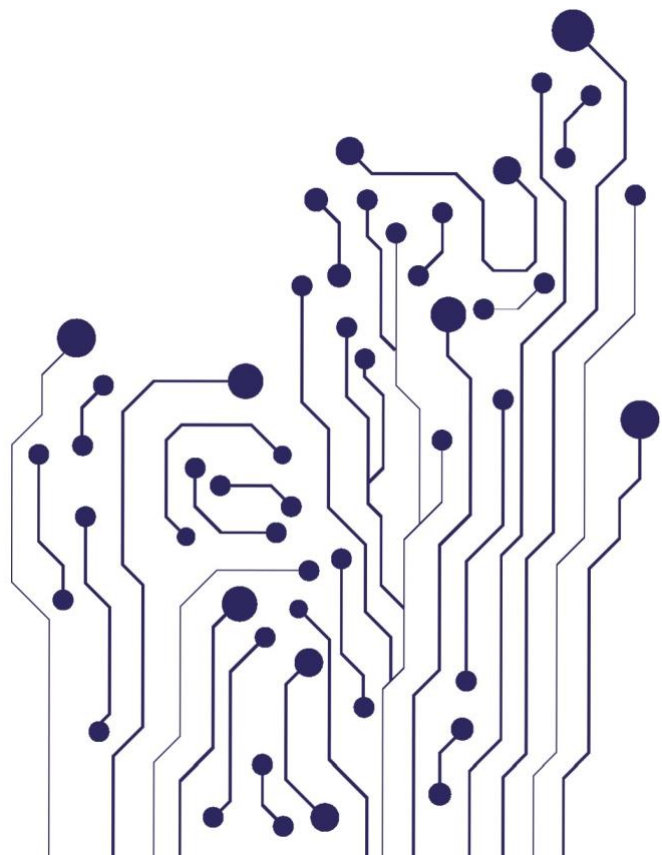
Category	Allocated amount	Signed contracts	Disbursed amount (IBRD)	Disbursed amount (Co-Financing)	Committed signed balance	Uncommitted contracts to be signed
Works, Goods, Non- Consulting Services, Consulting Services, Operating Costs and Training except 1c,2a,5a for the Project	29,775,000	17,307,933.89	9,301,413.18	30,001	7,976,519.44	4,594,868.90

Components	Actual Payments 2022 2nd Half
Component 1 – 1.1 Improving the quality of ECEC programs across the country	399,188.58 EUR
Component 2 – 2.2 Supporting the scaling up of the whole-school improvement pilot	1,409,274.98 EUR
Component 2 – 2.3 Supporting capacity-building of teachers and school leaders to adapt, develop, and implement school-based curriculum	28,671.21 EUR
Component 2 – 2.4 Assisting the development of a national assessment framework	136,590.76 EUR
Component 3 – CIF salaries	30,406.59 EUR
Component 4 – 4.1 Supporting data-driven decision-making accessible the entire education system	130,465.64 EUR
Component 4 – 4.2 Communication and stakeholder consultations for education reform	10,958.65 EUR
Component 5 - Short Term Consultants (National/International)	131,841.21 EUR
Component 5 – Other Consulting Services	96,200.82 EUR
Component 5 - PMU Salaries	297,989.11 EUR
Component 5 - Operating Costs / Miscellaneous	30,107.75 EUR
Total	2,701,695.29 EUR

SECTION IV: ANNEXES TO THE REPORT

Annex I – Indicator Performance Tracking Table

Annex II – Information on Procurement Activities



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
AND SCIENCE OF GEORGIA



საქართველოს ეროვნული ცენტრი
საგანმანათლებლო კვლევების
და ხარისხის უზრუნველყოფის
სახელმწიფო დაწესებულება



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