



European Alliance for Apprenticeships

Member states – Planned reforms/initiatives

Georgia

EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS
MEMBER STATES – PLANNED REFORMS/INITIATIVES

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Ministr(y/ies)	N(N)LE Skills Agency
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The national commitment

Planned reforms and initiatives

Recent key policy changes in the Georgian vocational education and training (VET) system have aimed to create a new institutional arrangement for VET governance, in which key functions and responsibilities are delegated to the public and private sectors. In 2021, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the Georgian Chamber of Commerce jointly established a non-commercial legal entity, Skills Agency (SA). Public and private sectors are equally represented in the SA governance system.

This new model of management creates equal cooperation opportunities through public-private partnerships in VET, and facilitates the development of VET policies and services that will raise the quality and relevance of the skills ecosystem and significantly decrease the labour market mismatch.

One of the key priorities of SA is to support further development of the work-based learning system. Particular attention will be paid to expanding dual education opportunities.

The introduction of dual education programmes in Georgia began in 2016. Significant activities and promotion measures supported by donors mean that the number of dual programmes implemented, and the number of students enrolled in them is increasing from year to year. As of 2021, more than 100 private companies are involved in the implementation of dual programmes.

As part of its Private Sector Development Programme in the South Caucasus, the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) has supported the introduction of dual education programmes in the winery, tourism, and construction sectors. The Swiss International Development Agency and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have supported initiatives to develop dual education in the agricultural sector.

The introduction of a new regulatory framework for work-based learning (WBL), including dual education, can be considered the most significant recent development. With the support of GIZ and the UNDP, rules and conditions for the implementation of vocational training in the form of WBL have been developed.

Reforms and activities that aim to support the development of apprenticeships include:

- **Development of a regulatory framework on WBL**, which is due for final approval in 2022. The draft regulation clearly defines the roles and

responsibilities of stakeholders (e.g., VET colleges, companies) involved in WBL, student rights, quality assurance, etc.

- Development and finalisation of a regulatory document on the '**rules and conditions for granting a company the status of a training enterprise**', based on extensive consultations with stakeholders. Private companies who are co-implementers of dual VET programmes must obtain training enterprise status by successfully proving that they have sufficient human, technical and administrative resources for programme provision. In terms of enforcing the regulation, implementation will start with the support of SA. Furthermore, respective amendments to the Law of Georgian on Vocational Education are planned to guarantee a role for the private sector in the WBL system.
- **A regulatory body for WBL.** For the first time in VET legislation, the private sector has been defined as an equal partner which coordinates and implements the wide range of processes in VET system. On a macro level, SA defines the regulatory and methodological framework for WBL. Thus, the coordinating bodies for WBL processes and development of the dual education programme are Sector Skills Organisations (SSOs), who are new key players in the current VET governance system. SSOs are responsible for obtaining the status of learning enterprises from private companies and undertaking external quality assurance processes. Other SSO functions related to WBL include supporting partnership development between VET schools and the private sector; supporting development and provision of (both dual and short-term) VET programmes; coordinating partnerships between training enterprises and VET schools; monitoring the protection of students' rights; and participating in mid-term and final assessment and evaluation. Private companies (who have already successfully obtained the learning enterprise status) and VET schools are responsible for development and provision of dual VET programmes, in close coordination with SSOs. SSOs are planned to be functional in all economic sectors of Georgia by 2022–2023. At present, two SSO start-up groups have been created (Tourism and ICT) which, in partnership with SA, are piloting the key SSO functions. The SSO national building process is ongoing in all key economic sectors, and SA is legitimate to carry out their key functions before SSOs are established and fully operationalised in respective economic sectors.
- **Capacity building.** SA has already recruited human resources to form the WBL in-house task force, which will provide parties engaged in the provision of WBL with the support they need. This includes providing tailored training sessions and workshops for SSOs, private companies and VET schools on the new WBL regulatory framework and procedures, developing guidelines and methodological resources for parties that are

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implementing WBL programmes, and digitalising the learning enterprise status-obtaining process, including by developing video instructions.

- Improving the image and demonstrating the benefits of dual education.** Awareness raising on dual education and demonstrating its benefits is one of the key priorities of the SA communication strategy. This is a core part of SSOs' ongoing national building process, where sector representatives (sector associations, private companies) are familiarising themselves with the benefits of WBL and, in particular, dual education systems, as well as how to become a part of this process. Furthermore, SA's WBL-assigned staff have started communicating with existing dual education programme providers and potential private companies to expand their participation and the number of dual programmes. Communication tools, including short introductory videos, have been developed, with the support of donor organisations. Recent donor driven cost-benefit analysis of dual education programmes conducted in several sectors demonstrated the clear benefits for all parties involved (the private sector, students, VET colleges) in both the medium- and long-term. This information will be used to inform communication activities with the private sector.

Targets and/or indicators

Dual education programmes increased from 3 to 23 in 2016–2017. As of the end of 2020, 34 dual programmes have been introduced in the system.

The Vocational Education Strategy 2022–2027 is focused on developing WBL and dual education, in particular. The key targets are:

- Increasing the number of dual programmes implemented by 50%;
- Increasing the number of dual programme graduates (see below).

	Baseline	Target	
		Mid-term	Final
Year	2021	2025	2027
Indicator	332	800	1200

Budget of the reform/initiative

- Vocational education (including dual VET) is financed from the state budget under the conditions provided by Government Decree no. 299 of 2013.
- The state budget supporting VET reform in 2022 is EUR 30 million.
- EUR 48.85 million in EU funding for 2018–2022 is supporting the Skills Development for Matching Labour Market needs EU-Georgia FA Ref. Decision 2017/040-319.

Key stakeholders involved

Cooperation and partnership with external development partners

The introduction of dual education programmes in Georgia began in 2016, with support from external development partners.

As part of its Private Sector Development Programme in the South Caucasus, GIZ supported the introduction of dual education programmes in the winery, tourism and construction sectors. The Swiss International Development Agency and UNDP supported initiatives to develop dual education in the agricultural sector. As of 2021, more than 100 private companies are involved in the implementation of dual programmes.

In 2021 a regulatory document for WBL was introduced, with the support of the UNDP and GIZ.

Partners involved in the initiative

The partners involved in the initiative are SA, the Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (VET Development Department).

Further measures planned as a follow-up to the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships

The new regulatory framework for WBL considers key aspects of the Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships. In line with the recommendation, the framework defines the criteria for learning and working conditions, as well as for framework for implementation of the WBL system.

The framework arguably defines the most important criteria in relation to the learning and working conditions of apprenticeships, conclusion of a written agreement on the rights and obligations of the student, employer and vocational institution in dual education programmes. According to the regulation, WBL programmes must entail the substantial part of the workplace component. In dual education programmes, therefore, the workplace component should cover a minimum of half of all learning outcomes, as defined by the programme modules. In WBL programmes, delivery of a set comprehensive learning outcomes is strictly defined and delegated among the programme providers (private company and VET college). Finally, the WBL regulation demands that dual education programme students must be paid in line with national labour legislation. The private companies are responsible for provision of safe working conditions for students. In regards to learning and working conditions, SSOs are responsible for providing constant monitoring and supportive measures for WBL programme providers.

In terms of the framework conditions, new WBL regulations provide clear and consistent measures for equitable partnerships in WBL programme development and provision, including the precise procedures for obtaining learning enterprise status for private companies who are willing to be engaged in provision of dual education programmes. As already mentioned, on a sector level, SSOs play an active part in the design, governance, and implementation of dual education programmes and apprenticeship schemes. SSOs are responsible for coordinating the valid and reliable assessments of learning outcomes and, in general, quality assurance of WBL provision in private companies. In addition, SSOs provide constant support to private companies to accelerate the teaching and assessment capacities and internal QA of WBL.